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Romanian Patriarch: God does not hate! Hell is the state of the soul that did not respond to love with love

The Patriarch of Romania on Sunday addressed the congregation at the Holy Archangels – Huedin Church in Bucharest and offered his reflections on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

‘The Gospel reading we have heard today is the strongest proof that after physical death human soul continues to exist,’ His Beatitude said November 3.
Patriarch Daniel explained that hell does not mean ‘tar boilers’ nor ‘material fire,’ but a pain of rebuke of conscience for the good that someone was able to do on earth, and they did not do it, for the evil deeds of which they did not repent.’

“It is a tormenting suffering of the selfish man who has not responded to God’s merciful love,” the Patriarch said defining hell.

It is unfair to affirm that God hates us

Recalling the words of Saint Isaac the Syrian, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel cautioned that ‘it is unfair to affirm that God hates those in hell and loves those in heavens, because He is defined as merciful love for all.’

‘However, His merciful love gives joy to those in heaven who responded to His love, but in those who did not respond to His love causes the rebuke of conscience, regret, sorrow.’

‘This is the torment of hell. It is not about boilers with tar that burn something material, but it is about a spiritual reality, a state of the soul that did not respond to love with love, who lived selfishly and was insensitive, careless about the poverty, sickness and suffering of others.’

Everything depends on the human soul

The Patriarch went on to offer details about the state of the souls in heaven.

‘What is heaven? Heaven is the joyful communion of those who were merciful and now are in direct contact with the humble and merciful God.’

‘Everything depends on the human soul. From this life we prepare ourselves for hell or heaven.’

“We prepare for heaven if we gather merciful love in the soul, through prayer and good deeds. Heaven begins in the soul of man. And if wickedness, envy, hatred, selfishness, spiritual complacency and self-seclusion, self-sufficiency are gathered in the soul of man, then hell has already begun inside the soul,” Patriarch Daniel highlighted.

In the end, everything depends on the evil or goodness in us.

“If we have goodness in the soul we go to heaven, and if we have evil in the soul we go to hell.”

“Therefore, let us ask God to forgive our sins, cleanse us of every evil deed lacking merciful love, and to empower us to feel the merciful love of God in our souls, which is acquired through prayer, and let us show it through good words and deeds.”

The Patriarch said that our Church is inspired by the Gospel of the love of Christ when it organizes homes for the elderly, for orphaned children, canteens for the poor, pharmacies, medical offices and hospitals.

“There is no salvation without love. There is no mercy if we are not merciful to those who ask for our help,” concluded His Beatitude.

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