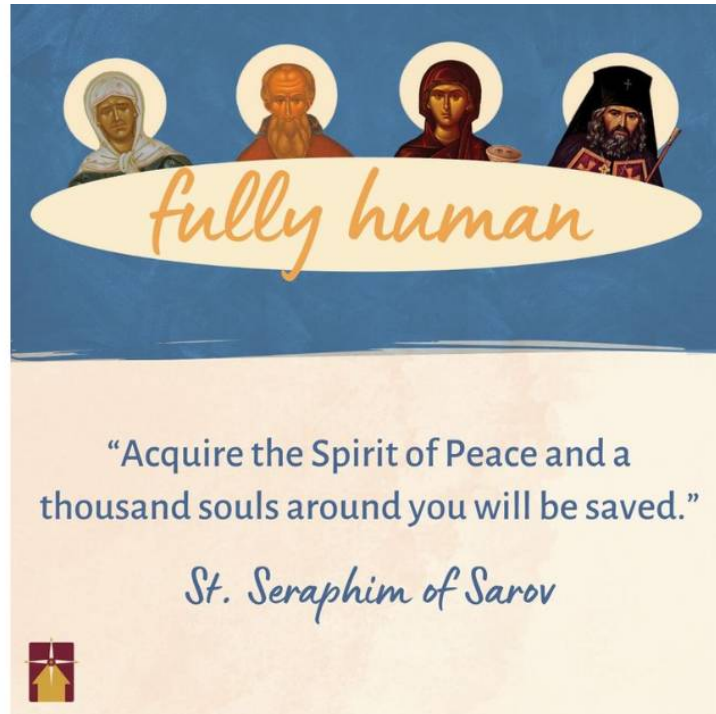


## **Fully Human “Acquire the Spirit of Peace and a thousand souls around you will be saved” St. Seraphim of Sarov**



From time to time we encounter people who have a special grace about them, “a spirit of peace.” In their presence we feel embraced by a calm, a sense that all is well and will be well, even if we don’t feel particularly well.

Parents and Caregivers, those who receive our care need, more than anything, to sense this “peace which passes all understanding.” A tall order for us mere mortals, yes. But not impossible, because God is with us and “with Him all things are possible.”

Today we honor a role model of peace in our church, Saint Seraphim of Sarov. I believe he can be a mighty intercessor for caregivers who not only struggle to deal with their own anxieties and needs, but often are called upon to manage the fears and needs of others.

Here are a few ways we can follow his lead:

1. Be a comforter.

St. Seraphim was an abbot of a female monastery for a time and suggested that he

tried to be more like a mother to his nuns than a father. He wished to nurture and comfort them gently, understandingly. Through his prayers, we can do the same.

## 2. Bring your cares to the Mother of God.

The saint had such a devotion to the Virgin Mary. When he was sick and near death she visited him and even healed him with her staff. She consoled him. He spent countless hours kneeling in prayer before her icon “The Joy of All Who Sorrow,” including during his final breaths. He was found kneeling and deceased with his hands crossed over his chest in imitation of Our Lady in the icon, which brings us to another lesson:

## 3. Guard your heart.

Like the Mother of God, like Saint Seraphim, not only would we benefit from the posture of prayer they exemplified, but also by living a life of vigilance. Many temptations assail those who have great responsibilities. When we are entrusted to care for others, our bodies and souls may grow weary and this is when we are most vulnerable to forgetting God’s loving promises. Cultivating a regular time of prayer, even for a few minutes a day, can help us protect our hearts wherein our Peace lies.

## 4. See Christ in our near and dear ones.

St Seraphim commonly addressed his neighbor as, “My Joy!” “My Joy, Christ is risen!” he would say encouragingly to the downcast, even outside the paschal season. Pray for the eyes to see the beauty in our loved ones, and perhaps make it a practice to address them in the same way. The power of these true words, “My joy,” can transform our mindset. We begin to see the beauty that is present in others, they will sense our acceptance and love, and they will know peace and project it outward to those who encounter them.

The Spirit of Peace is catchy that way.... a thousand souls around you will be saved.

Learn more about Fully Human here.

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