

## Father Seraphim Rose: Holy Beacon

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By: Turbo Qualls (c) 2007 It has been twenty five years since the kingdom of heaven gained a son and the kingdom of man lost one of its greatest beacons. Fr. Seraphim Rose was in life a man of crushing integrity, and incredible conviction. He possessed an otherworldly vision of what life should be, and it is in this patristic vision that his legacy of being a modern vanguard of truth is carved. It is because of this very legacy that Fr. Seraphim is remembered as a modern point of reference by which many have come in contact with the living tradition of the Church Fathers and the Holy Orthodox Church. The patristic vision that Fr. Seraphim acquired is the essence of Orthodoxy, and it is this essence which has captured the hearts of both lovers of truth as well as those who would seek it. Fr. Seraphim's pursuit for truth spanned decades and took many turns; yet, it is his submission to truth that the power and fulcrum of his life and testimony are found. Eugene Rose entered academia in the early fifties; interestingly, this is was the time in which the unrest of what would be the social revolution of the 1960's was beginning to bubble and stir. It is within the walls of colleges such as Pomona College and U.C. Berkeley, that the young Eugene Rose would be introduced to the philosophies of the world and those who penned them. Writers such as Nietzsche, Alan Watts and Rene Guenon, helped to lead Eugene to the cross roads of both intellectual criticism and ultimately the road of self criticism. This road took Eugene and many of his generation to a point of personal and spiritual crisis, and regardless of it being the nihilism of Nietzsche, or the exaltation of the pursuit of truth by Guenon, these philosophies left Eugene needing more. It is within the blank walls and many bars of despair and unrest that the light of Christ was seen so brightly by the then Eugene and soon after his conversion, the humble Fr. Seraphim Rose. His tumultuous journey of social and personal criticism, would not only open the doors of his mind and heart, thus allowing him to submit himself to the truth of Christ and Orthodoxy, it would lay the foundation for his steadfast commitment to not compromise that truth, and his own personal humility. This humility would become a hallmark of his work, for it is through his humility that Fr. Seraphim would be able to acquire the mind of the Church Fathers, and thus the mind of Christ. Fr. Seraphim was blessed with the ability to see things at their root. His education was both the prison and the key; however, it is within his desire for truth and his disappointment and later disillusionment with the education of his day, that he was brought the context by which the kingdom of man flourished and grew. This personal history so impressive yet in many ways so familiar to many of us, is the door way by which the then and current state of Western society would be both scrutinized and made apparent by the writings of Fr. Seraphim. Whether it is his appraisal of the New Age and all that entails or his succinct teachings of spiritual development, Fr. Seraphim saw the light of Christ and never turned back. His refusal to shrink back in the face of an ever changing and sick world brought him much controversy and Grace. The paradox of both intense spiritual energy and intense spiritual sobriety allowed him to approach and present the truth of Orthodoxy in a way that was quite unique and necessary for the modern age. It is his love for Christ's creation that led Fr. Seraphim to another paradox: ancient truths will save the modern man. The light of Orthodoxy is transcendent and timeless, it is a tradition of men and women being healed and transformed, brought from the temporal to the timeless, and it is in the light of Christ's work of the Orthodox Church that the darkness of this world and the work of the demons are shown for what they truly are. This dark kingdom gained unprecedented influence in Fr. Seraphim's time, and this influence has only intensified. This ever pressing darkness has used many methods, but at its core has sought the same goal and thus remained the same. This goal is the obstruction of truth and the destruction of all that is of Christ; ironically, it is only the ever bright and eternal truth of Christ that can dispel this darkness and thus free man. Rene Guenon had explained in his book *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, that the elimination of traditional spiritual principles' has led to a drastic degeneration of humanity, and that modern science's tendency to reduce everything to an exclusively quantitative level had corrupted man's conception of true knowledge. Eugene Rose would take this concept, and thus be forced to no longer rely on the modern scientific outlook, in other words, he would now see that science is only a means as a way to gain knowledge, but this knowledge would be of the lowest kind. This would be a backdrop by which Fr. Seraphim would be able to show modern truth seekers the hollowness of modern thought, and that the diluting of thought and truth would lead to nothing more than death, both of the mind and the spirit. However, both in the past and even currently, the stone cold sobriety and analysis by which Fr. Seraphim operated have been unfortunately mistaken for just plain coldness. Nothing could be further from the truth! In order to present the truth of Christ and his Church, sobriety must be of the utmost importance; consequently, for the modern reader who is used to fuzzy feelings and easy explanations of deep and at times harsh realities, Fr. Seraphim as well as all of Orthodoxy seems like nothing but a dry, dead corpse. This lack of intellectual and spiritual resolve is the exact thing Fr. Seraphim sought to combat. Yet in his surgeon like precision, Fr. Seraphim would continue to not only present but grow in the one thing that gives the harsh pursuit of truth, life. He would call this Orthodoxy of the heart, and it is through this ever growing love for the person of Jesus Christ, that Fr. Seraphim would sound the call to the now millions of us in the modern age to reconcile ourselves to the ancient truth of Orthodoxy. Holy Fr. Seraphim, Pray for us!