



On the Occasion of the Feast of the Holy Icon of the *Panagia* "Swift to Hearken" (1 October)

## Our All-Holy Lady "Swift to Hearken"\*



From the Life of the  
Romanian Monk Vasile Ilie  
(1902-1931)

**O**ne spring day in 1931, the humble novice Vasile Ilie of the Romanian Monastery of Sihastria was praying in front of the Church.

At that moment, he saw a fearsome vision. In his fear, he began to call out in a loud voice: "Most Holy

*Theotokos*, have mercy on me!"

And to the Fathers who gathered around him, he said: "Bow down, Fathers, bow down. Look, our Lady has come! The Mother of the Lord with the Savior in her arms is before us! There she is, standing above us."

"Brother Vasile, why are you shouting so?" the Fathers asked him.

"Fathers, when I was praying in front of the Church, a crowd of frightful demons suddenly appeared with flaming rods in their hands and started to torment me savagely and to call out: 'In vain are you praying, because you will not be saved! You are ours. You are a sinner.' Then I began to call upon the Most Holy *Theotokos*. At that instant, a white cloud descended from heaven, bursting with white light, and rested above the Church. Inside the cloud, I saw the Mother of God with Jesus in her arms, Who said to me: 'Fear not, for after three days you will come to us.' Christ then blessed us

all and returned with His Mother to Heaven. Fathers, the Mother of God has great strength and boldness before the Lord, and hears swiftly to our prayers.”

“Brother Vasile,” said the Abbot, “Do not let the enemy deceive you! Turn your mind from these things and be very attentive, because many are his wiles!”

He then said to the other monks:

“If, after three days, Brother Vasile departs from us, then in truth the Most Holy *Theotokos* did appear to him. If not, then he has been deceived by the Devil.”

After exactly three days, at the same hour, Brother Vasile Ilie reposed in the Lord with prayer on his lips.



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\* See Monk Seraphim, *Χαρίσματα καὶ Χαρισματοῦχοι* [*Spiritual Gifts and Those Endowed with Spiritual Gifts*] (Oropos: Holy Monastery of the Paraclete, 1989), Vol. II, pp. 83-84.