

# The Acts of the Abbot Hilarion

## Three Excerpts

By Gary Young, CR

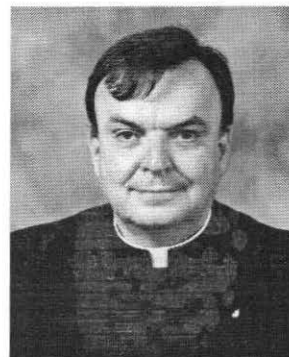
1

One day when the brethren were engaged in  
The manual labor,  
A young zealot came to the  
Abbot Hilarion  
And told him that he had become inspired with an idea of  
Competing in saintliness  
With the ancient desert contemplatives.

Hilarion sighed and looking up from his basket weaving said,  
“I have a better idea!”  
He smiled.  
“Compete with the saint you were when you awoke this morning.  
That would be more beneficial and”  
He added,  
“You would have a better chance of success.”

2

One summer night  
When Hilarion had just fallen asleep,  
He entered a fantastic dream.  
He saw himself before the Throne of God  
Everything bathed in a golden light.  
Hilarion’s old cowl had become a purple cloak.  
His tonsure was crowned with an olive wreath.  
His tanned skin had been bleached.  
Cool breezes fanned his face.  
He awoke and wiped perspiration from his brow.  
“What a nightmare!” the abbot said to himself.



Gary Young, CR

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Then he got on his knees and prayed:  
“Lord, never clothe me with riches.  
You are wealth enough.”

3

Once, when Hilarion was in the privy  
At a distance from the monastery,  
He overheard a self-styled director outside,  
Who was lecturing to a gaggle of novices  
About spiritual paths and the speaker’s  
Expertise with them, and, of course,  
His willingness to impress them.

The outhouse rocked and  
Hilarion roared at the retreating “master.”  
“Be an expert on what you know,  
Which is all too little.  
The doctrine you spread needs  
The kind of repository I am occupying and  
From whence you should be reigning.”