



St John's Church News No 72: September 2015

**ЦЕРКОВЬ СВТ. ИОАННА ШАНХАЙСКОГО
ST JOHN'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Military Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 2AN**

His Holiness Kyrill, Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russias
Most Rev. Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of ROCOR
Very Rev. Mark, Archbp of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain

For this newsletter in electronic form: www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/zchurchnews.htm

Исповедь / Confession and Contact: о. Андрей / Fr Andrew: **T:** 01394 273820 /

E: frandrew_anglorus@yahoo.co.uk / **W:** www.orthodoxengland.org.uk

Русская и Украинская Школа, Театр и Рисование / Russian and Ukrainian School,

Drama and Drawing Classes: Sophia Bown: safi@mail.ru

Воскресная Школа / Sunday School: Mary Kisliakova: mary0170@yahoo.com

Сторож / Caretaker: Paul Hopkins, 69, Military Road

Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE2T2sYTy8s>

Расписание Богослужений / Services in September

Saturday 5 September

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 6 September

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия. Service for those going back to school or studies / Краткий молебен для учащихся

Saturday 12 September

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 13 September

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Saturday 19 September

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 20 September

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

2.30 pm: Vigil for the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God / Всенощное бдение праздника Рождества Пресвятой Богородицы

Monday 21 September: Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God / Рождество Пресвятой Богородицы

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия.

Saturday 26 September

5.30 pm: Vigil for the Exaltation of the Life-Giving Cross / Всенощное бдение праздника Воздвижения Животворящего Креста Господня

Sunday 27 September: Exaltation of the Life-Giving Cross / Воздвижение Животворящего Креста Господня

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Baptisms in July and August:

11 July: Eva Camper

11 July: Ludmila Camper

18 July: Ioann Izotiev

18 July: Victoria Perry

15 August: Nika Kuzhinskaite

15 August: Tatiana Kuzhinskaite

22 August: Daniel Yaremenko

29 August: Maxim Butens

29 August: Nicolas Krebs

31 August: Antony Novitsky

NEWS

Washing and Painting of Back of Church

At the very end of July and start of August the back of the Church was washed and painted. The difference is remarkable. This means that since 2012 the whole exterior of the Church has been repainted.

Insurance of the Church

On 18 August we paid our annual insurance premium, but with a new company, which has saved us £1200.

HOLY HIEROMARTYR BENJAMIN OF PETROGRAD AND THOSE WITH HIM

Commemorated July 31/August 14

Today the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of one of the early stars in the pleiades of new martyrs and confessors of the Communist yoke, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kazansky) of Petrograd and Gdovsk, together with Archimandrite Sergei, Yuri, and John.

Hieromartyr Benjamin was born Vasily Pavlovich Kazansky in 1873, in a village near Kargopol, now of Archangelsk province, to the family of Priest Pavel and his wife Maria Kazansky. He was raised in a spirit of piety, and loved to read the Lives of the Saints, contemplating the struggles of the martyrs, and wishing that he too could make that same sacrifice for Christ's sake. Little could he know during that peaceful time in a quiet village that such an opportunity would indeed arise in his native Orthodox land.

Longing to serve the Church, Vasily entered the Petrozavodsk Seminary and then the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy. As a student, he participated actively in the "Society for the spread of religious and moral enlightenment in the spirit of the Orthodox Church," and organized talks with workers. In 1895 he received the monastic tonsure with the name Benjamin and was ordained a hierodeacon, and the next year a hieromonk. After graduating from the Academy in 1897, Hieromonk Benjamin was appointed teacher of Holy Scripture at the Riga Theological Academy, then in 1898 the Inspector of the academy in the city of Kholm. A year later he was made inspector of the Saint Petersburg Seminary. In 1902, after being elevated to the rank of Archimandrite, he was appointed rector of the Samara Seminary, and three years later of the Saint Petersburg Seminary.



The scholarly yet pastoral hieromonk Benjamin was called to the hierarchical rank on January 24, 1910, when he was consecrated bishop of Gdovsk, a vicariate of Saint Petersburg, by other future martyrs and confessors such as Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky) and Archbishop Tikhon (Belavin) of Yaroslavl—the future Patriarch of Russia.

Bishop Benjamin became a zealous archpastor, often visiting the poorest and furthest neighborhoods of Saint Petersburg, serving the peoples' needs like a parish priest, dressed simply in his ryassa with no outer signs of his episcopal rank. He put great effort into saving women from a life of prostitution, preaching to them in the "Society of the Most Pure Theotokos". His sermons were very effective, and many repented of their sins and changed their lives.

He was always able to reach the hearts of simple folk, and his flock loved him for this, calling him “our batiushka Benjamin”. His evangelical simplicity, compassion, pastoral accessibility, sincere smile and quiet, clear voice endeared him even to those of other faiths.



After the revolution in February, 1917, Bishop Benjamin was chosen by the overwhelming majority of clergy and laity at the diocesan council as Archbishop of Petrograd and Ladoga, and then six months later as Metropolitan of Petrograd and Gdovsk.

Right after his election to the Saint Petersburg cathedra His Eminence Benjamin announced: “I stand for the Church’s freedom. She should be alien to politics, for in the past she suffered much from them. To place a new path upon the Church now would be a great mistake. The most important task right now is to build and improve our parish life.”

In those confusing times it would have been hard to find a man more foreign to politics than Metropolitan Benjamin. He put all his energy into his social programs, and into defending the Orthodox people from the fierce persecutions now encroaching upon them from enemies of the Church. In 1918, the new government published a decree “On the separation of Church from the state and the schools from the Church”, which was everywhere received as a signal to begin the destruction of the Church and its leaders, and to plunder its property. A wave rolled over the county leaving behind it closed church and monasteries, desecrated icons and relics, arrested, tortured, exiled and executed bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and laity. The Church was deprived of its clergy and any means of existence.

After the civil war, in 1921, Russia was stricken by an unprecedented famine amidst the general destruction, and this was used as an excuse to persecute and rob the Church under the slogan, “the proletarian campaign on Church valuables”. In Petrograd, they began this campaign in 1922. “We will give it over ourselves,” said Met. Benjamin, blessing the churches to submit anything of value that was not used in Divine Services to be used to help those in need.

But the authorities were not satisfied with the Metropolitan’s voluntary charity, because their aim was confiscation, and the declaration of Church property as state property—whether or not it was sacred was of no concern to them. By this time a schism had formed of

renovationists calling themselves the “Living Church”, and collaborating with the Communist authorities against those faithful to the lawful Patriarch, Tikhon. Although initially there were no arrests in connection with the people’s unrest over the sacrilege, on March 24, 1922, twelve of the schism’s organizers published an article in the *Petrograd Pravda* accusing the lawful clergy of resisting the decree on confiscation and participating in counter-revolutionary conspiracies. In 1922 Metropolitan Benjamin was arrested, and on June 10 of the same year, 86 people were put on trial.



Patriarch Tikhon and Met. Benjamin

At his trial, Metropolitan Benjamin was as always simple, calm, and of pure conscience concerning himself and the others. When he was faced with his sentence, he said to the tribunal: “I do not know what sentence you will pass upon me—life or death—yet whatever your pronouncement, I will raise my eyes upward with the same reverence, make the sign of the Cross (here he crossed himself broadly) and say, “Glory to Thee, O Lord God, for all things!”

On June 5, 1922 the tribunal pronounced his sentence, and on the night of August 12-13, Metropolitan Benjamin along with Archimandrite Sergei (Shein), and laymen Yuri Novitsky and Ivan Kovsharov were shot to death outside of Petrograd.

Hieromartyr Archimandrite Sergei (in the world Vasily Pavlovich Shein) was born in 1866 in the village of Kolpina, Tula Province. He had been a member of the State Duma and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1917-1918, and assistant chairman of the Society of unified Petrograd Orthodox parishes.

Martyr Yuri (Yuri Petrovich Novitsky) was born in 1882 in Umani, Kiev Province. He was a professor of criminal law in Petrograd University, and chairman of the Society of unified Petrograd Orthodox parishes.

Martyr John (Joan Mikhailovich Kovsharov) was born in Odessa. He was a lawyer, and gave legal counsel to the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petrograd.

The memory of Holy Hieromartyrs Benjamin, Sergei, and martyrs Yuri and John is honored in the feast of the Synaxis of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, and separately on this day, July 31/August 13.¹

Although the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad canonized the new martyrs earlier, the Moscow Patriarch passed the resolution for canonization in 1992. At the Council of Bishops in Danilov Monastery, His Holiness Patriarch Alexy gave a sermon on the New Martyrs being canonized at this council held March 31-April 4, which we cite below in part:



His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II

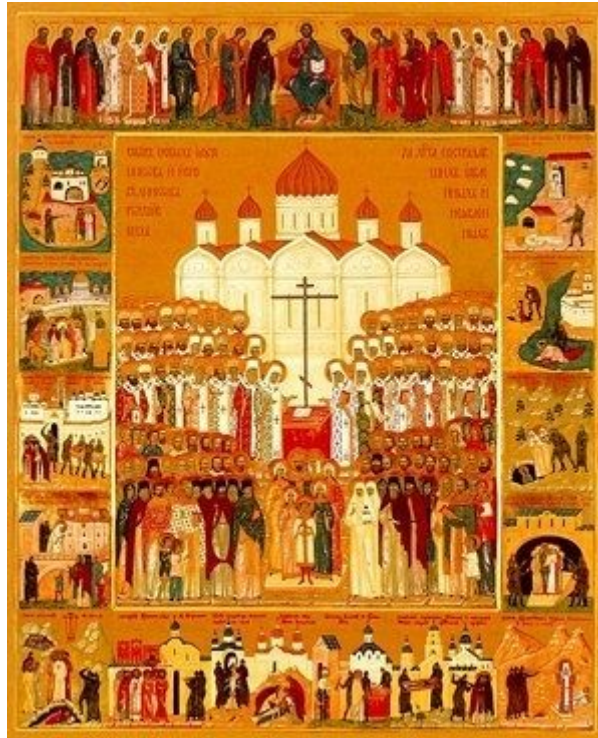
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

Martyrdom is bearing witness to the Truth of Christ and God's Church to the death, and Christ Himself, the "Faithful Witness" (Rev., I:5), *to this end was born, and for this cause came into the world, to bear witness unto the truth* (John 18:37), and to give up His life through suffering on the Cross for the redemption of many.

In the words of the Apostle, we have been redeemed *with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot* (1 Peter 1:19). To bear Christian witness is to give glory to God in living and in dying: *If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord* (Romans 14:8).

The persecution of Christ's Church that arose in Russia in our time was God's will. And once again, as in ancient times, the blood of martyrs was shed in witness to the victory of Christ. Holy Patriarch Tikhon of All Russia, in considering the trials that had been visited upon his flock, courageously called upon them to share with him the cup of martyrdom. "If it becomes necessary to suffer for the sake of Christ, we call upon you, beloved sons and daughters of the Church, we call upon you to suffer together with us. If a redeeming sacrifice is required, the death of the innocent sheep of Christ's flock, I bless the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to pain and death for His sake."

It would be impossible to name all the new martyrs of the Russian Church in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, we express the hope, that the proposed canonization of these first witnesses to the Truth, who in martyrdom shed their blood for Christ, will form the beginning of a further churchwide process of glorification of the many confessors of the Orthodox faith in our Church.



An icon of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church

Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky) of Kiev and Galich was the first bishop to become a hieromartyr in the new era of persecution. With spiritual majesty and evangelical simplicity in his episcopal office he confirmed the remarkable unity of an upright life and a martyr's end, bearing witness to the faith of Christ “unto death” (Rev. 12:11). He completed his earthly service to God and the Church on January 25, 1918, in the city of Kiev—the cradle of Christianity in Russia, ascending here to his Golgotha.

Another bishop and inspired man of prayer—Metropolitan Benjamin (Kazansky) of Petrograd and Gdovsk, spiritually nourished his faithful children, while persecution from without and factions from within threatened to shake Christ's Church. Faced with imminent death he said, “I am a faithful son of my people, whom I love and have always loved. I have given my life for them and I am blest in that the common people have repaid me with that same love, placing me in that position which I now hold in the Orthodox Church. I do not know what sentence you will pass upon me—life or death—yet whatever your pronouncement, I will raise my eyes upward with the same reverence, make the sign of the Cross and say, “Glory to Thee, O Lord God, for all things!”

The Archimandrite Sergius and the faithful, Yury Novitsky and John Kovsharov, who were murdered along with Metropolitan Benjamin as his faithful fellow warriors, went to the slaughter along with their bishop.²

* * *

Through the prayers of Holy Hieromartyr Benjamin and all the New Martyrs of Russia, may the Lord give us also the strength to confess His Name at all times.

¹ Information from <http://days.pravoslavie.ru/Life/life356.htm> [Russian]

² The translation of Patriarch Alexy's homily is from <http://www.holy-trinity.org/feasts/newmartyrs-canonization.html>.

THE BLESSED WARRIOR ST. THEODORE (USHAKOV)
Commemorated July 23/August 5

July 23/August 5 is the day of commemoration of the glorification of St. Theodore (Ushakov), an admiral of the Russian navy of a brilliant undefeated career who lived a life devoted to the teachings of Christ and the services of the Church, and finished his life in the quiet peace of the Sanaksary Monastery. Below is an account of his life and glorification from [Sputnik/The Voice of Russia](#).



On August 5th, 2001 at the Monastery erected in honor of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Sanaksar, they glorified the blessed holy warrior Fyodor Ushakov, canonized as a local saint of the Russian Orthodox Church. This was the first appearance of a saint in shoulder-straps—a navy officer—in the Russian church calendar. For what spiritual valor did our Lord thus pay homage to this legendary admiral, who brought glory to the Russian Navy with many a victory at the end of the 18th century? To tell us this is a layman, writer Valery Ganichev, author of a number of books about Fyodor Ushakov, and in actual fact, one who stood at the source of that which led to his glorification. Asked what inspired him to turn to the life story of the great navy officer, Valery Ganichev replied:

“Upon graduating from Kiev University I worked in the town of Nikolaev, a shipbuilding center in the south of the country. This was in the distant 50’s –60’s. These places are linked with the activity of Admiral Ushakov, who participated in the grand-scale epopee of opening up the virgin southern territories—Novorossiia and the Crimea; built up the Black sea Fleet and its base—Sebastopol. In scope, this epopee could be compared to the conquering of the American Wild West or the discovery of Australia.

I was greatly interested in the personality of Fyodor Ushakov. So I started collecting material on him. Working on the books devoted to Fyodor Ushakov, I marveled at his whole-hearted nature, unwavering conformity to the Lord's commandments and selfless dedication to his homeland. I began to see farther than his military valor, recognizing the valor of the spirit, thanks to which he, in effect, became the great navy officer he was.

What kind of a man was Fyodor Ushakov? He was born in 1744 on the Volga, in the family of a military man. He was baptized in the Church of the Epiphany-on-the-Isle, as if receiving from above a blessing to “serve on water.”

His birthday, February 13th, falls between the commemoration days of two warrior-martyrs—Fyodor Stratilat, and Fyodor Tiron. This, likewise, is an omen of Ushakov's military calling. So it is hardly surprising that as a youth, he chose to join the naval corps. By God's will he was sent to the Black Sea, where in battles with the Turks the Russian Black Sea Fleet was born. It was here that his God-given talent as a naval commander was manifested in full measure. For a number of spectacular victories during the second Russian-Turkish war of

1789-1791 Ushakov was elevated to the rank of Rear Admiral and placed at the head of the Black Sea Fleet. The Turks feared him, calling him, deferentially, "Ushak-Pasha." Finally, in the celebrated battle of Tendre in 1790 he routed the Turkish fleet and thus put an end to the Turkish domination on the expanses of the Black Sea. Thus, Russia was able to hold its own among other great seafaring nations.

In the course of his service, Ushakov participated in forty campaigns and never once suffered defeat. This is unparalleled in world history. To us today this might seem a miracle, an unbelievable stroke of good fortune. Indeed, it was a miracle, but, from the point of view of an Orthodox believer, one worked by God.

Ushakov was a profoundly religious man, always staunchly believing in our Maker's providence, convinced that He granted victory to the Orthodox warriors while all of man's skills were "nothing without divine intervention." After each victory he ordered a service in church to thank the Lord for yet another victory granted him. Even Ushakov's ships bore names of the Saints—"Saint Pyotr", "Saint Pavel", "The Nativity of the Mother of God", etc. According to the witness of contemporaries, despite an extremely busy schedule Ushakov daily went to the church services and never undertook any activity of importance without first attending the Liturgy. And indeed, busy he was. Ushakov was involved in not only navy matters proper, but in the construction of the naval base Sebastopol. Due to his excellent administrative skills the latter was turned into a real city, with attractive stone buildings, gardens and churches.

A true Christian, Ushakov closely followed the biblical commandment "love thy neighbor as you love thyself" in all of his deeds. It is true he was at times obliged to severely reprimand his subordinates for violating naval discipline, fighting their weaknesses: inclination to heavy drinking, slatternliness, idleness, and idle talk. And yet, there was no other commander in the whole of the Russian fleet who showed such concern for the sailors, their health and proper diet. "An ill sailor will be unable to serve the Navy as he should," he would say. There were times when the fleet experienced great hardships, not receiving money from the state coffers on time, and at such moments the Admiral would dip into his own pocket. History has preserved a decree dated October 18th 1792, where it is written: "Due to lack of funds and in view of a need to ensure the good health of the men, I allot, out of my own means, thirteen thousand and five hundred roubles, of which I order that ten thousand go towards buying fresh meat, and the remaining three and a half thousand be used for the needs of the hospitals."

We do not know if the generous impulses of the great man were ever fully reimbursed by the state from its coffers, yet Ushakov was indeed repaid for his generosity in the love and complete devotion of his sailors, ready to follow him in the face of any danger.

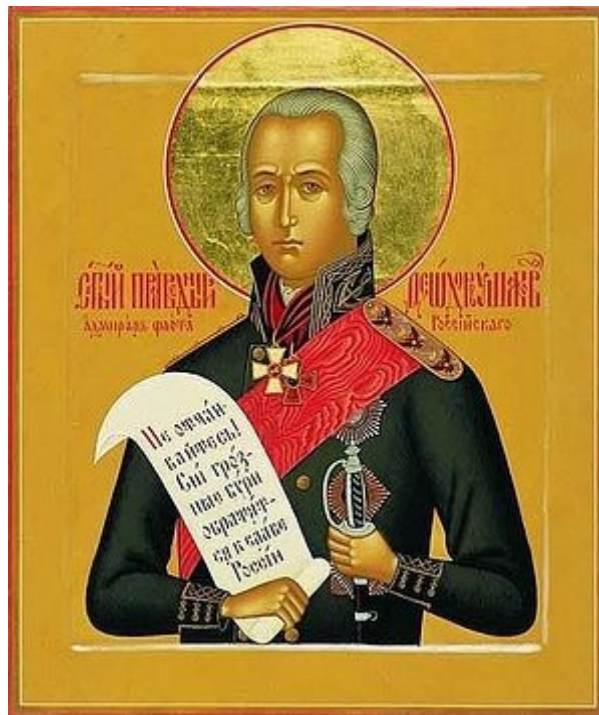
Unlike the famous British naval hero Admiral Nelson, Ushakov knew no defeats. Possessing an unorthodox mentality and unique sea battle tactics, Ushakov could come out victorious in the most difficult situations. One of the most striking examples of this is the capture of the island of Corfu during the Mediterranean campaign of 1799. The aggressive policy of France in this region had made Russia form a temporary union with its former enemy—Turkey—to send joint military-naval forces towards the Ionic isles with the purpose of liberating them from French domination. This foreign campaign brought Ushakov European fame."

"In the course of practically three months," continues Valeri Ganichev, "Ushakov liberated the Ionic isles. Their residents, predominantly Orthodox Greeks, rose up against the French and thus aided the Russians in their liberating mission. The last to fall was the island of Corfu, an impregnable fortress with a three thousand strong garrison. This was a brilliant operation that not only spread far and wide Ushakov's fame, but went down in the annals of military-naval history worldwide. For the seizure of Corfu Ushakov was granted the rank of Full Admiral.

Indeed, the residents of the isles welcomed Ushakov as a liberator and protector of Christians. On the following day after the capture of Corfu, Ushakov ordered a special service in church, in gratitude to the Lord for His benevolence and aid, and on March 27, 1799, the first day of Holy Pascha, he prescribed the organization of large festivities, inviting the clergy to make a religious procession with crosses and banners and the holy relics of St. Spyridon

Trimifuntsky, profoundly revered in the Christian world. Here, on the islands, the God-loving admiral manifested yet another of his God-given talents: that of statesman and public figure. He not only ensured "peace and order" for the Greeks, but gave them one of the most democratic for that time constitutions, setting up the "Republic of the Seven Islands," opening an episcopal faculty on Corfu and inviting an Orthodox bishop, which they had not had since the sixteenth century.

When the time came for Ushakov to leave the Ionic isles, their population turned out with tears in their eyes to see him off. They presented him with medals with the inscription: "These peoples unanimously proclaim him to be their father." Children were named in his honor, and one and all promised to never let time obliterate his merits and achievements from their memory.



I would like to make note of one little-known fact: Ushakov's mission in the Mediterranean was not limited to the liberation of the islands. He received orders to aid, from the sea, the successful maneuvers of Field Marshal Alexander Suvorov, who was routing the troops of Napoleon in Northern Italy. Having landed in Southern Italy, Ushakov's expeditionary forces took Naples. However, soon the political situation altered and Ushakov was recalled back to Russia.

The demise of Emperor Pavel I greatly changed the Admiral's destiny. The successor to the throne, Emperor Alexander I underestimated the role of the naval forces, and as a result the outstanding talents of the naval commander were not given their due or employed any further. Then Ushakov, not without a great deal of anxiety and torment of the soul made the decision to retire. He settled on an estate in central Russia, not far from the Sanaksary Monastery, where lie the remains of its first Father-Superior, his uncle, also an Ushakov.

Having once chosen a seafaring career, Ushakov never set up a family of his own, remaining a confirmed bachelor. According to his contemporaries, "neglecting all society dazzle and bustle, the Admiral did not close his heart to his fellow men. With the fervor that he once displayed in serving his Motherland, he now rushed to the aid of all those who came to him."

He donated generous amounts towards the treatment of all retired sailors and veterans of the war with Napoleon in 1812, as well as people who found themselves destitute, without a

roof over their heads or the bare necessities. His adjutant, a former sailor, would grumble: "There's no stocking up for all these in want, soon we shall have nothing left for ourselves!" The Admiral would pat him on the shoulder, reminding the fellow that "if even in a minor way" one needs to help others worse off than you.

He also contributed greatly to the Sanaksary Monastery, at times living there for lengthy periods, praying in his own solitary cell, recalling all his deceased one-time comrades-in-arms, relatives, and people accidentally met on the road. Thus, in prayer and mercy he lived out his final days. Ushakov died in 1817, at the age of 74, and was buried at the Sanaksary Monastery. Paying tribute to the memory of this great man, the local papers wrote: "You knew him as a great naval commander, we knew him for his outstanding charity to others."

"I knew so much about Theodore Ushakov, and finally came to the conclusion that the church should address its attention to the life story of this God-fearing, charitable and honorable man. In 1995 I wrote to the holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexi II, with this initiative. During our personal meeting the Patriarch supported my proposal and asked that the materials be transferred for further study to the Synodal Commission on the canonization of Saints and Martyrs. His Holiness added that the Church showed great care and subtlety in deliberating such issues, and he hoped that the Russian fleet would soon acquire its holy patron.

The aforementioned commission worked during the course of five years, gathering testimonies, witness accounts, documents, and facts pointing to the occurrence of a miracle. And finally, as the Lord would have it, on November 30, 2000 a decision was made to canonize Fyodor Ushakov as a local saint of the Saransk Eparchy," said Valeri Ganichev.

Any canonization is the testimony of the Church to the holy nature of the believer. Thus the Church not only pays due homage to the deeds and life of the saint, but also calls on all of the Orthodox believers to follow in the footsteps of holy people, and to learn and imitate their good deeds. And still, on what facts did the holy Church base its ultimate decision to canonize Ushakov? A member of the Synodal Commission on Canonization, Archpriest Maxim Maximov explains:

"As is known, the grounds for canonization are as follows: a staunch dedication to one's professed faith, and preparedness to defend that faith to the grave—thus the martyrs are glorified; a life of virtuous deeds in humility, that is, along the road to salvation—thus the pious noblemen, the clergy, the devout believers are glorified. If we take a close look at the life led by Admiral Ushakov, we shall see what a truly remarkable life it was. A man of high, noble rank, he was in essence a devout Christian and was able to remain such despite the fact that the society he lived in at the time was not noted for its Christian norms. This was the rule of Catherine II, who, putting it mildly, conducted an anti-Church policy.

Ushakov's Christian nature was manifested, first and foremost, in the way he relied on God's providence in all of his deeds, as a recourse in all circumstances, and, indeed, it saved him, and not only him. Never losing a battle, not one of his sailors or ships was ever taken prisoner. This is almost inconceivable. We are all aware of how precious little a man's life is worth at times of war; how people, wielding great power, tend to settle other people's lives as though they were alien to them. Ushakov, though, in conditions of war, nonetheless was an example of true Christian faith. His prime task was not to secure victory at all costs, but to do so by preserving the lives of those entrusted unto him. Driven by this faith, he cared for them in difficult circumstances, and, moreover, displayed unbelievable clemency towards his enemies. When the Russian and Turkish forces jointly liberated Corfu from the French, the admiral paid the Turks a ransom for every one of the captured Frenchmen.

Generally, this was a man who all of his life thought liturgically, i.e. he never took a single important decision without attending the Liturgy at church. What other commander ever does that, all the more so in conditions of war?!

Admiral Ushakov was canonized not for his military heroism—this isn't enough in itself for canonization—but for the way he managed to convey the image of a true Christian in conditions of battle, serving his duty on the frontlines, yet always ready, as he did on more

than one occasion, to sacrifice his life for others. This is why his memory lived on among the people.

Even in Soviet times, the highest of awards for the sailors was the Order of Admiral Ushakov.”

“I would like to remark on yet another aspect of his life,” says Maxim Maximov. “Never having married, he remained, consciously virginal and a faster. In other words, he professed Christian virtues in reality, not just as words on paper. This was his personal vision of life according to the Bible: once a person had decided not to marry, it signified that he should dedicate his life to God's service. Such was the main preoccupation in the later years of his life, which ended at the monastery, not due to the whim of a wealthy person, but by private conviction. This is how he saw his taking leave of this world, and he found peace and sanctuary in this,” said Archpriest Maxim. When asked whether there had been note of any miracles connected with Ushakov's name, he answered the following: “There were, at minimum, two miracles of an overall Church significance. The first being the fact that, due to strong belief in God's providence Ushakov did not lose a single battle in war time. Secondly, thanks to Ushakov, the Sanaksary Monastery was saved from imminent danger of destruction. I am referring to the monastery that he linked his life with, and where he was buried. This is no minor fact, since there are testimonies proving that the monastery was threatened with complete annihilation. There are also testimonies of people who, upon praying and addressing their supplications to him, received help and benediction.

Touching upon the significance of Ushakov's canonization for modern-day man, Father Maxim stressed:

“Every time has a demand for its own saints. This is not to say that it searches for them, finding them with difficulty. Society simply matures enough to be able to assess and give due credit to one's deeds and valor. In our time of shattered values and ideals, Ushakov's valor of spirit is important as an ideal, an example for today's military, showing that it is quite possible to combine zealous military service with true Christian devotion and love for one's neighbor. Without a shining example it is impossible to emulate these Christian virtues. However, the Lord is always watching over us, presenting before us worthy, pious saints that serve to bear witness to the Gospel truths and wisdoms. He, who is willing to listen shall hear,” said Father Maxim.

The glorification of the blessed warrior Fyodor Ushakov in the assembly of Russian saints became a noteworthy event in the life of the Church. Hundreds of believers came in August 2001 to the Sanaksary Monastery in order to take part in the solemn festivities. We continue with an account of the event by Valeri Ganichev, a participant of the latter:

“Present for the glorification of Theodore Ushakov were seven admirals, commanders of all of Russia's fleets, the clergy, monks, pilgrims, and secular attendants. When the admirals emerged from the chapel bearing on their shoulders the coffin containing Ushakov's relics the heavy clouds that had been shrouding the sky suddenly parted, letting through a radiant shaft of sunlight that illuminated the procession. Everyone exclaimed! It was a miracle! The orchestra began to play. The coffin with the relics of the admiral was placed onto a special platform. At that moment, for some reason, there was no shroud to cover him with. Then the commander of the Black Sea Fleet removed the flag of the Black Sea Fleet from its staff and used it as a shroud over the relics. In this too was the hand of God, for a great admiral ought to lie under the flag that he served.

In the center of the monastery a tent was set up containing icons; the glorification took place here. This was an unforgettable sight:

200 clergymen in golden robes, with prayers and chants glorified the blessed Ushakov. After the glorification, his relics were kissed. On the following day, a Liturgy was served in his honor as a saint.

By God's providence I was the sole witness to how the relics of the saint were placed into a shrine made in the shape of a ship. Possibly this was due to the fact that, although a layman, I had chanced to stand at the fountainhead of the glorification. From now on the shrine of Admiral Ushakov stands next to that of his uncle, the first Father Superior of the Monastery,

also Fyodor Ushakov, earlier glorified as a local saint. Two saints of the Ushakov family brought glory to their Motherland, each in his chosen walk of life: one—that of the Church, the other—that of the Military.

“The Russian fleet has received a patron saint,” says Valeri Ganichev, “and I hope from now on one will be able to see an icon of the blessed warrior Fyodor Ushakov in crew-quarters, so that sailors might address their prayers to him.”

Edited by OrthoChristian.com

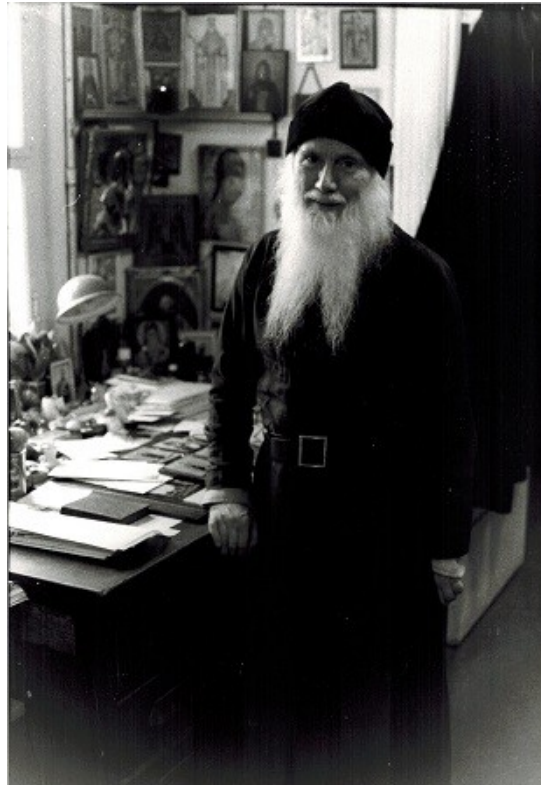
[Sputnik](#)

05 / 08 / 2015

ARCHIMANDRITE VLADIMIR: A PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE

[Archimandrite Joasaph \(McLellan\)](#)

Today, the afterfeast of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, is also the anniversary of the repose of Archimandrite Vladimir (Sukhobok), who used to run the Jordanville Monastery bookstore. Fr. Vladimir reposed in 1988. The following is a personal remembrance of Fr. Vladimir by Joseph McLellan (later Archimandrite Joasaph, †2009), who graduated from Holy Trinity Seminary in 1985. It is republished with permission from [Orthodox America, Vol. IX, No. 6](#) (January 1989).



Archimandrite Vladimir (†1988)

In the course of our lives we are sometimes privileged to meet people who bear witness to God’s power to transfigure sinful human nature and to make out of ordinary men extraordinary vessels of His grace. Such a person was Archimandrite Vladimir of Holy Trinity Monastery. It was only fitting that he departed this life the day after the Feast of Transfiguration. Archpriest Valery Lukianov, in his eloquent tribute to Fr. Vladimir,

described him as the monastery's "little sun." Indeed, he radiated such kindness as to warm the hearts of those fortunate to have contact with him. And there were many. A great crowd of people from all over North America packed the monastery church for his funeral—in spite of it being a weekday. He was a rare person altogether, and it would seem that no words could do justice to his memory. But for those who never met him, even a second-hand acquaintance, provided in the personal glimpses which follow, can perhaps serve to edify and inspire.

Pilgrims to Holy Trinity Monastery will remember Fr. Vladimir from the office and the bookstore which he oversaw for the last 21 years of his life. Upon meeting him for the first time one could not but be struck by his appearance: he was short, little more than five feet tall, and had a long, snow white beard. Even more striking was his seemingly inexhaustible energy. His speech, his movements—all were brisk and precise. And he was always animated and cheerful. Even though the office was a place where money changed hands, an administrative center where people came on business, it felt like a holy place because Fr. Vladimir made it a place of prayer. Before leaving the monastery, pilgrims would often come to Fr. Vladimir for a blessing; he would sometimes serve a short moleben for them, and always blessed them with a cross from the Holy Land and anointed them with holy oil, usually from the tomb of the Mother of God.

I met Fr. Vladimir on my first visit to the monastery 13 years ago. On that occasion he gave me my first prayer book in Church Slavonic. Later as I came to visit the monastery for longer periods and eventually entered the seminary, I learned that such generosity was characteristic of him, even legendary. He used to give away so many books and icons that I wondered how the bookstore could ever show a profit. Often the "price" for something would be a candle lit before the icon of St. Seraphim of Sarov, next to the monastery's main church. Fr. Vladimir had great veneration for St. Seraphim, and it seems to me now that his "business" practice was based on St. Seraphim's advice; he exhorted people to be "wise merchants" by using their abilities on earth to store up treasures for themselves in heaven. Fr. Vladimir did just this, using the resources available to him to do as much good as possible for others. Like the sower in the Gospel parable, he spread spiritual literature and holy icons far and wide, often without any material compensation.

Like St. Seraphim, Fr. Vladimir had a special love for the Mother of God. He was never happier than when the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God visited the monastery—the very Icon before which St. Seraphim was healed as a child. At those times he would be busy serving molebens and akathists, and arranging for the Icon to visit people's homes and monks' and seminarians' cells. Often he would keep the Icon in his own cell overnight and pray before it: When the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God began to stream myrrh, he saw it as a reminder of her mercy to the world, and sent paper reproductions of the Icon together with cotton soaked in the myrrh to many of the people who wrote to him, usually accompanied by a short note describing the miracle and a reminder to pray to the Queen of Heaven.

I have known two people who showed as strong belief as Fr. Vladimir in the power of prayer. You could never get advice from him that did not include instructions to pray. He himself put this advice into practice on every possible occasion. After compline, many people would go downstairs to venerate the icons in the lower church where, more often than not, they would find Fr. Vladimir serving a panikhida. He took upon himself the responsibility of keeping the lists for commemoration up to date, and he constantly remembered the living and the dead in prayer, both in molebens and panikhidas and during Proskomedia. At one point a group of seminarians started singing the akathist to the Mother of God every Friday night in church after compline. When Fr. Vladimir learned about this, he began regularly serving the akathist for them.

That was another characteristic trait: Fr. Vladimir was always anxious to encourage people's good intentions. You might say he invested in people. If he saw that someone had talent as an iconographer, for example, he often encouraged them by commissioning them to paint for

orders the office had received. He was also a great supporter of the seminary choir, knowing that it gave the seminarians an opportunity to do something enjoyable while beautifying the services.

Individual cases of his generosity are too numerous for human reckoning. Large sums of money passed through his hands from those requesting his prayers to those in need of help. To give an example from my own experience, I needed a large sum of money in order to graduate. I had most of it in a savings account and my parents were willing to give me the rest, but there was no way I could get it all together in time to avoid an unpleasant consequence. In the office one day I approached Fr. Vladimir for a blessing. Sensing I was in difficulty, he led me to a quieter place and asked what the problem was. "I see. That's a lot of money. Well, I can give it to you if you want, and you can pay me back when you're able." I somehow managed to stammer out my thanks, but he was all business. "Meet me here in an hour, and I'll have it ready." When he gave it to me, I said something to the effect that I didn't know how to thank him. He said, "It's all right; this way you'll graduate, and you'll pray ..." He was a wise merchant.

Fr. Vladimir loved birds and was always feeding them. You couldn't step into the office's main storeroom without tripping over one of Fr. Vladimir's 25-pound bags of birdseed. At night he could often be found in the refectory, cutting dried bread crusts into small pieces for his birds. Probably as a result of this, the monastery was a regular stopping place for many different kinds of migrating birds, some of whom I had never seen before in the Northeast. In fact, the only time I ever recall seeing Fr. Vladimir angry was when cats frightened away some birds

Fr. Vladimir had a gift for teaching: he taught 3rd- and 4th-year Church History at the seminary. Instead of presenting us with dry outlines of events, he tried to inspire us with the lives and labors of the holy men and women, the "principals" in Church history, beginning with the holy Apostles. His own life was an inspiring example. It is always possible, after all, to read about Christianity in books, but in Fr. Vladimir we had before us a living icon of what the goal of our life in Christ, in the Church should be. And that was the best lesson of all.

Fr. Vladimir also had unimpeachable moral authority, both within the monastery community and outside. Although he did not hear confessions, he had keen discernment and many people turned to him for advice. A fellow seminarian once pointed out to me that while other people could chastise you at length and have no effect, all Fr. Vladimir had to do was say one word, and you would instantly be overcome with a feeling of repentance. Likewise, when we had an idea for a project, we would use Fr. Vladimir's opinion as a test to see if the idea was worthwhile. If he approved, we would go to Archbishop Laurus for his blessing. If, on the other hand, Fr. Vladimir didn't like the idea it usually meant it wasn't worth bothering the Rector about it.

Because of the kindness and hospitality he showed to visitors, as well as his reputation as a man of prayer and spiritual discernment, Fr. Vladimir received mail from people all over the world who wrote to him with their troubles and sorrows. Keeping up with this correspondence was probably a greater burden than most of us realized. It was at night, after the rest of the monastery had gone to bed, that he read and answered his mail. Those who worked with him often came into the office to find him somberly reading a letter, occasionally sighing and crossing himself, suffering with the person who had written him. He frequently served panikhidas and molebens right there in the office in answer to the many requests he received for prayer.

Fr. Vladimir loved children, and it was always touching to watch him around them, because they obviously loved him in return. This was certainly true of my younger sister and brother, even though they did not speak Russian and Fr. Vladimir's English was limited although he understood it very well. It seemed to me that he would have made a wonderful father, in fact, in the course of his monastic life, he had become precisely that: a father in Christ to generations of younger monks and seminarians, clergy and lay people all over the world. I believe that it was about people like Fr. Vladimir that the Apostle Paul wrote: *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.*

Fr. Vladimir spent nearly forty years in the monastic life, which was for him a great happiness, although he bore his share of suffering, both spiritual and physical. In the last months of his life he endured a painful brain tumor. Now, however, he has gone there *where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing*. And just as he sowed an abundance of goodness in his life, so shall he reap the reward of his labors. May his memory among us be eternal.