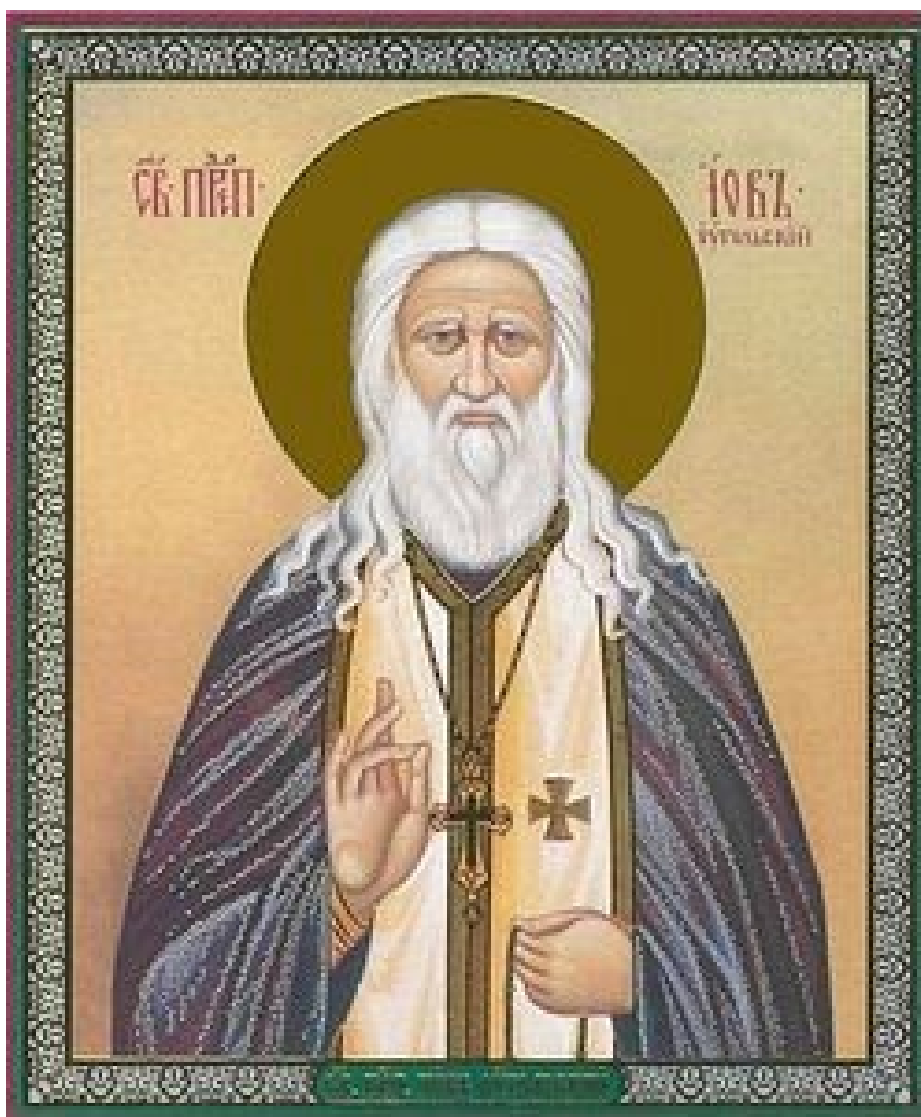


Another New Saint for Carpatho-Russia

Those who read Russian may already have read the article in this section of our site concerning Archimandrite Job (Kundria) (+ 1985). This was written by Yuriy Danilets, one of the foremost Carpatho-Russian historians of our time. Archimandrite Job has now become St Job of Ugolka. Below is the extraordinary story of the life of this new intercessor for his much-suffering native land and the whole world.



Rejoice, O our holy father Job, boast of the Carpathian land and marvellous intercessor for us!

Archimandrite Job (in the world Ivan Kundria) was born on 18 May 1902 (on the eve of St Job's day). He was born in Carpatho-Russia (the eastern and central part of which are now called Transcarpathia and are in the Ukraine, but were then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). He was born one of eight children in the village of Iza

near Khust to the family of George Kundria (a Romanian name) and his wife Anna Madiar (clearly a Hungarian name). The surnames of his Carpatho-Russian parents were typical of the surnames given to Carpatho-Russians by their Hungarian Catholic masters, who had exploited and persecuted western and southern Slavs, Carpatho-Russia and parts of Romania for centuries.

The dramatic events which took place in Iza and the whole region around it at the beginning of the century made a profound impression on the child Ivan. These events came about through the restoration of Orthodoxy in Carpatho-Russia at that time. With their ancestors forced by starvation either into emigration to the coal mines and steel mills of the USA or else into becoming Catholics (Uniats), the generation of Ivan's parents were now returning to their age-old Orthodox faith. The cruel Hapsburg rulers of Carpatho-Russia and their Hungarian allies were not standing for this and there took place a horrendous genocide, the first of so many to take place in the twentieth century.

During the First World War the Hapsburgs opened concentration camps for the Carpatho-Russians, notably at Talerhof in Austria. Thousands of civilians, men, women and children, died there and hundreds of civilians were hanged in Carpatho-Russia itself. All has been described in detail in the book 'The War Crimes of the Hapsburgs'. (Little wonder that the racist Slav-hater Hitler had grown up under the Hapsburgs). In all, in the twentieth century the village of Iza was to give the Church 160 monks and nuns, several confessors and martyrs, whose canonisation is now delayed only by fanatical present-day Ukrainian nationalism, and one saint – St Job.

Ivan finished school in Iza and then studied husbandry, saving money to go to Mt Athos, where he wished to become a monk. In 1924-25 he was obliged to serve in the Czechoslovak Army in Mikhailovtsy. This town is now in eastern Slovakia, since after the First World War and the collapse of the Slav prison of the Hapsburg Empire, Carpatho-Russia had been given to the new country of Czechoslovakia. He proved to be brave and sturdy soldier, but it was only later that Ivan to realise how useful this experience was to be.

During the 1920s and 1930s, with freedom and the restoration of Orthodoxy, dozens of monasteries and convents opened in Carpatho-Russia. Many also sought to live the monastic life in the Russian monastery of St Panteleimon on Mt Athos. Unfortunately, the Greek government was even then set on hellenising the Holy Mountain and from 10 September 1926 would not allow Non-Greeks to settle there. This phyletist persecution meant that although Ivan walked all the way to Athos twice at this time, he could not stay on Mt Athos. He would return to the mountains of what was fast becoming the Carpatho-Russian Athos.

Thus, at this time the Monastery of St Nicholas was already open in the village of Iza. There, in 1928 Ivan completed seminary-type studies and set off with others to found a skete at the nearby site of Gorodilovo. In 1930, Ivan his elder brother Hieromonk Panteleimon and others sold everything they had and bought land in Gorodilovo to found this skete. Like St Sergius in Radonezh, they dedicated it to the Holy Trinity. From Athos St Panteleimon's sent the brothers a particle of the relics of St Demetrius of Salonica for the new skete. The first rector was Archimandrite (since 2001 St)

Alexis (Kabaliuk). On 22 December 1938 Fr Alexis tonsured Ivan a monk, giving him the name of Job.

In 1939 Carpatho-Russia was occupied by Hitler's Fascist allies, the Hungarians. Unable to face Hungarian tyranny all over again, over 40,000 Carpatho-Russians decided to emigrate to Russia in a little-known and tragic episode of European history. Proceeded by the cross and icons, whole villages emigrated, men, women, children livestock, farm carts, entering Russia from the Polish border. Among them was Fr Job.

What these poor Christian people did not know, such was the state of ignorance at that time, was that Orthodox Russia had been persecuted almost out of existence by Western materialist atheism, which had come to power in Russia in 1917. Thus, the Carpatho-Russian refugees, thinking to find refuge in Orthodox Russia, were sent to the windswept Arctic wastes of Siberia. Most of them died, martyrs to the butchery and starvation rations of the bandit Stalin and his henchmen, perishing in temperatures of minus 50 degrees and below. Fr Job always wept when he recalled this period of his life.

So desperate for cannon fodder as a result of his hapless military tactics was Stalin that in 1942 Fr Job, who had been sentenced to 25 years, was released. He was sent to the Front to fight the Nazi hordes of the equally mad Austrian corporal. As a Czechoslovak citizen Fr Job was to serve in the artillery of the Czechoslovak Volunteers Brigade under General Ludwig Svoboda. Here, as a monk, he refused to fire shells and would secretly defuse them before they were fired off.

During this time he met St Luke of Simferopol, who may well have tonsured him reader. In any case to the end of his life Fr Job kept two portraits in his cell, one of General Svoboda, the other of Archbishop Luke the Surgeon. Fr Job foretold the end of the war, after which General Svoboda, who had much valued Fr Job, briefly appointed him a guard at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Moscow.

Extraordinarily, later in 1945 Fr Job was not sent back to Stalin's death camps, where he would surely have died. Helped by the patronage of General, later President, Svoboda, he returned to his native Carpatho-Russia and the monastery of Gorodilovo. Here, on 16 November 1945, he was ordained hierodeacon and on 7 April 1946 hieromonk. Within a year he had been appointed rector and abbot. The monastery began to grow in all ways. Fr Job set an example to all, serving the liturgy daily and working as one of the monks. He was hard-working, simple, modest, merciful, obedient, prayerful, humble and loved by all. In 1950 he was appointed spiritual father of the monastery in Mukachevo.

Sadly, in 1956 a new 'bishop' was appointed by the Soviet authorities – his task being to close monasteries. The sovietisation of Carpatho-Russia, which until then had enjoyed religious freedom much as before the Soviet takeover of 1944, was the task of this Bishop Barlaam. Fr Job opposed this and with others petitioned Patriarch Alexis in Moscow to remove the tyrant. Bishop Barlaam was furious and closed Gorodilovo. There began a period of wandering for Fr Job from one monastery to another, each being closed in turn.

It was only in 1962 that Fr Job was appointed priest in the remote village church of Malaya Ugolka, formerly known as Monastyrets, near Khust. Here in exile, out of the way in an obscure village, the Soviet regime thought to rid itself of the holy man, just as it did with many other elders, such as Fr Seraphim of Rakitin or Fr Nicholas on the island of Talabsk.

The church in Malaya Ugolka was dedicated to St Demetrius of Salonica, of whom Fr Job had long ago received relics from Mt Athos. Local people knew the village by its much older name of Monastyrets. It was here, probably in the tenth century, that monks had taken refuge from the mission of St Cyril and Methodius in Moravia, driven out by Hungarian pagans and German schismatics, and settled in this Carpathian fastness. Even the dedication of the church kept the memory of Sts Cyril and Methodius, who had come from Salonica. This was not only the most ancient but also the largest monastery of Carpatho-Russia, with, in the fifteenth century 330 monks. Persecuted by Uniatizing Hungarian Catholics in the seventeenth century, they were massacred by invading Turks in the eighteenth century and the monastery ruined, only its memory surviving.

Fr Job, now a parish priest, soon won the hearts of all the villagers with his humble love. He was often invited to visit other churches and monasteries and in all in the 1960s he consecrated 32 altars, with the blessing of his bishop. Here, in this remote if picturesque village exile, decided on by the Communists, Fr Job became known as an elder, a starets. People came to him from all over the Ukraine and Russia. Carpatho-Russian peasants and lumberjacks from surrounding villages and University professors and engineers from Moscow all received his wise advice. There were many cases of exorcism too. He would walk miles through the remote mountains to give communion to the sick, at one time escorted by four laymen for fear of attack from wolves.

Fr Job was clairvoyant, worked miracles and predicted the future, notably prophesying that Communist oppression would end after seventy years, as indeed it did. He found husbands for girls and wives for young men, and many barren women gave birth through his prayers. None of his marriages ever broke up. He was also responsible for sending some 150 young men to monasteries, seminaries and Theological Academies. For twenty-three years Fr Job served the liturgy and the full daily round of monastic services, acquiring the Holy Spirit.

Aged 82, on St Vladimir's Day, Sunday 28 July 1985, he reposed peacefully, having served the liturgy, preached at length and served Vespers. After his repose miracles of healing continued. On 22 October 2007 clergy, headed by the diocesan Bishop Hippolytus, proceeded to recover his relics from the village cemetery. They uncovered the relics, the fragrance of myrrh and incense filling the air. His body had quite dried up, his wooden coffin, Gospel, cross and vestments were all intact. The relics were taken into the wooden village church, where Fr Job had served for twenty-three years.

On 18 March 2008, having gathered and examined abundant materials as evidence, the Khust Diocesan Commission for Canonisation, decided to glorify Fr Job. On 8 May 2008, meeting at the Kiev Caves Lavra, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and the

Holy Synod added the name of Archimandrite Job to the host of saints, listing him as a locally-venerated saint of the Khust Diocese, to be commemorated on 15/28 June.

On 18 September 2008 Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev came to Malaya Ugolka to celebrate St Job's glorification. A Divine Liturgy in the open air in front of the Church of St Demetrius of Salonica was celebrated by a host of hierarchs and clergy. The rite of glorification took place during the service, St Job's life read out and his troparion and kontakion sung. Metropolitan Vladimir blessed everyone with the icon of the new saint and then all kissed the icon and venerated his holy relics.

Holy Father Job, pray to God for us!

(Translated and compiled by Fr Andrew on 16/12/08 with the help of the new book: 'An Ascetic of Carpatho-Russia' by Grigoriy Rachuk, which was printed on the very day that the decision to glorify Fr Job was taken).