

THE WONDERWORKER

The Official Newsletter of the Western Rite Communities of the Russian Orthodox Church
Outside Russia

The 50 Year Anniversary of the Falling Asleep of

**St. John Maximovitch of
Shanghai & San Francisco**

SPECIAL ISSUE: ST. JOHN OF SHANGHAI & SAN FRANCISCO 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

A Foreword on St. John Maximovitch of Shanghai & San Francisco from

His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion



His Eminence Metropolitan
Hilarion; First Hierarch of the
Russian Orthodox Church
Abroad

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the blessed repose of St. John (Maximovitch), the Wonderworker of Shanghai and San Francisco.

Unquestionably St. John is the heavenly patron and benefactor of our Western rite communities in the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. St. John was very conscious of the Church's catholicity, its universality, and he cherished the sacred heritage of the Undivided Church in both its Eastern and Western manifestations. He was aware of the multitude of Saints who pleased God in the West before the Great Schism of 1054, he venerated their memory and strove to make them better known to other Orthodox Christians. He revered the patristic and liturgical traditions of the Orthodox West. As ruling bishop of the Western European Diocese, he blessed and supported the restoration of the liturgical traditions of ancient Orthodox Christian Gaul and of other Western cultures.

For us, St. John is also a shining and remarkable example of sanctity, of Christian fervor and zeal for the Faith, and an intercessor for the return of lost sojourners in this world to their true spiritual homeland in the Orthodox Church.

O holy hierarch John, pray to God for us!



From The Dean's Desk



"Christ, invisible to the bodily eye, manifests Himself on earth clearly through His Church ... The Church is the Body of Christ both because its parts are united to Christ through His divine mysteries and because through her Christ works in the world."

-St. John of San Francisco

As Orthodox Christians, and especially as members of the Western Rite Communities of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, St. John (Maximovitch) is a spiritual giant. By all accounts of his earthly life and ministry, St. John would never have allowed anyone to think of him so. His humility and tireless labor in the vineyard of the Lord was evident to anyone who knew him or of him.

We in the ROCOR Western Rite communities, as a part of the Body of Christ, and as outlined above in the quote from this wonderworking hierarch and Saint, are the hands and feet of Christ in the world. We are, as St Paul describes, *'Stewards of the mysteries of God'* (1 Corinthians 4:1). Our witness to the faith once delivered to the Saints is a testament to the manifestation of Christ Himself.

The life and ministry of this great Saint was one of the major reasons and impetus for my conversion to Holy Orthodoxy. By his holy intercession, many have received great miracles, blessings, and the spirit and zeal to make the Orthodox Church their spiritual home. We are proud to have this great wonderworking Saint as part of the historic Western Rite in Holy Orthodoxy.

May the missions and parishes of the ROCOR Western Rite Communities continue to ask the holy prayers of our heavenly spiritual benefactor to continue in us that great mission and vision he held for the Orthodox West. May they continue to be a safe haven for those seeking the True Church, and may they continue to grow in grace and numbers.

St John the Wonderworker, and heavenly patron, pray to God for us !

In Christ,

Archpriest Mark Rowe

Dean, ROCOR Western Rite Communities



With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and Ruling Bishop of the ROCOR Western Rite Communities,

2016 ROCOR ANNUAL WESTERN RITE CONFERENCE



***"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens,
Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.. (Hebrews 4:14)"***

October 10 - October 13, 2016

Mt. Alvernia Retreat Center ~Wappingers Falls NY

158 Delavergne Avenue, Wappingers Falls, N. Y. 12590-0858

~Further information will be forthcoming.



Any questions, contact Fr Mark Rowe at
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Parish Spotlight

Holy Archangels Orthodox Parish in Waterville, Maine



Holy Archangels Orthodox Church, in Waterville, Maine, is an Orthodox parish of the ROCOR Western Rite Communities that was started in October of 2015 with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion; First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia.

Waterville, Maine, which is generally considered to be the gateway to central Maine, is a City of 16,000 (aprox) situated on the I-95 corridor that is about 75 miles north of Portland, ME and about 20 north of Augusta, ME; Maine's Capitol.

The Parish is blessed to worship in a spacious rented Suite on the second floor of the Bourque-Lanigan Post #5 American Legion building at 21 College Ave.; just 100 yards from the center of Town. Our weekly schedule of services include 1st Vespers and Compline on Saturday evening at 6:30pm, Matins at 9am on Sunday morning followed by the Liturgy (Mass) of St. Gregory at 10am (with a common meal following the Liturgy), and Vespers and Compline at 6:30pm on Wednesday evening. The clergy serving the parish are: The Very Rev. Archpriest Mark Rowe (Rector), the Rev. Nicholas (Roger) Poulin, the Rev. Matthias Brookes, and the Rev. Deacon Abraham Fortier.

As a Christian community, our individual and collective desire is to ".....Know ... the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom (he) has sent." Our attitude is to "keep our hands busy" and wait on God. Though we are a small parish, we seek to be a witness of Christ in our community. Currently, to make our presence more known in the community, we are having the Church signs made and installed. We are on a busy State Route with an above average traffic volume in the area. The signs will be illuminated at night. In the same vein, we have gained the landlord's approval and are awaiting City Approval for a larger banner-style sign to install on the front lawn that will be very visible to all who drive by. Our location is blessed to be the sole polling station for the City of Waterville. Last November, we were granted permission from the landlord and the City to have a table in the foyer, as voters exited, for the express purpose of passing out flyers containing information about the Orthodox Church, and Holy Archangels Church, specifically. This gave opportunity to speak with those who were interested to know more. We intend to do the same this coming November, God willing.

As we move forward, our hope is to add more work, as we are able. This would probably start with adding to our Wednesday night Vespers, an Akathist service to invite the public to for the sake of praying for their loved ones (and them) who have dire needs; such as Cancer, drug addiction, despair etc. We are also considering having "advertised" lectures on Christian topics (catechesis) that could also attract students from nearby colleges.

We, truly, consider ourselves blessed to have come to the Orthodox Church. In the face of the disturbing societal trends, and the increasing godlessness in the world, we are eager to help those who love Christ to come to the only place where the fullness of Christianity can be found; The Orthodox Church. Glory to God in all things!

A Brief Life of Our Father Among the Saints

ARCHBISHOP JOHN WONDER-WORKER OF SHANGHAI AND SAN FRANCISCO

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Saint John was born on the 4th of June 1896 on the country estate of his parents, descendants of nobility, Boris Ivanovich and Glaphira Mikhailovna Maximovitch in the little town of Adamovka in the Province of Kharkov. At Baptism he received his name in honour of Saint Michael the Archangel. His paternal ancestors were of Serbian extraction. One of his ancestors, Saint John, Metropolitan of Tobolsk, was an ascetic of holy life, a missionary, and a spiritual writer. Saint John of Tobolsk lived in the first half of the 18th century and was glorified in 1916. His glorification was the last celebrated during the reign of the Tsar Martyr Nicholas.

Saint John was an obedient child; his sister recalls that it was very easy for his parents to raise him. Ruminating about his future during his youth, he could not make a definite decision as to a career, being unsure as to whether he should dedicate himself to military or civil service. He only knew that his future life would be guided by an insuperable desire to stand up for the Truth, which was nurtured in him by his parents. He was inspired by the examples of those people

who live their lives for the Truth.

He commenced his education at the Poltava Military Academy which, Vladyka himself would later say, "was dedicated to one of the glorious pages of the history of Russia." He was an exemplary student, but he disliked two subjects; gymnastics and dancing. He was well liked at the academy, but nevertheless felt he should choose a different path. This idea was especially furthered by contact with the well known religious instructor at the academy, Archpriest Sergei Chetverikov, author of books about Saint Paisius Velichkovsky and the Holy Optina Elders, and with the rector of the local seminary, Archimandrite Varlaam. The day of Michael Maximovitch's completion of the military academy coincided with that of Archbishop Anthony's (Khrapovitsky) investiture to the cathedra of the See of Kharkov. This renowned hierarch and theologian was the main advocate of the restoration of the patriarchate in Russia, subsequently the Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich, and finally the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Throughout his life this Archpastor inspired the church-oriented academic youth in all matters spiritual thanks to his principal attribute - his sincere love for them. Having heard about young Michael Maximovitch, of whom many spoke in church circles, Archbishop Anthony desired to meet him. It was in Kharkov that Archbishop Anthony became Saint John's spiritual guide. This relationship continued throughout Archbishop Anthony's whole life.

In Kharkov Michael entered Law School, which he completed in 1918, and served for a while in the Kharkov court during the days when the Ukraine was ruled by the Cossack leader, (Hetman) Skoropatsky. But the heart of the future hierarch was far from this world. When not studying, he spent all of his free time at the university

reading spiritual literature, especially favouring the lives of saints. "While studying the worldly sciences," said the Saint during his election to the episcopacy, "I delved all the more into the study of the Science of sciences, into the study of the spiritual life." Visiting the monastery in which Archbishop Anthony lived, Michael had the opportunity to pray at the tomb of an ascetic of the first half of the 18th century, Archbishop Leletius Leontievish, a deeply revered but not yet glorified righteous one. The soul of the young saint was pierced by a thirst to obtain the true goal and path of life in Christ.

A great impression was made upon Michael by Bishop Varnava (subsequently the Patriarch of Serbia) during his visit to Kharkov. The young Serbian bishop, who was warmly greeted by Archbishop Anthony, related to him the suffering of the Serbian people under the Turkish Yoke. This was in January 1917, before the revolution, when the Serbs, who were battling against Germany, Austria and Turkey, had almost no territory which was free of enemy occupation. Through the inspiration of Archbishop Anthony the response of the Russian people in support of the Serbs was unanimous. In this example, Michael recognized the universal significance of the Church and the duty of a bishop to respond to the needs of all Orthodox people. In turn, Bishop Varnava, upon becoming Patriarch, was particularly hospitable and helpful to the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

The Russian Revolution forced the Maximovitch family to flee their homeland and evacuate to Yugoslavia, where Michael was able to begin his theological studies at the University of Saint Sava which he completed in 1925. During his last year, Michael was tonsured a reader in Belgrade by Metropolitan Anthony, who also, in 1926, tonsured him a monk in the Milkovo Monastery giving him the name John in honour of his distant relative, the recently glorified Saint John of Tobolsk. Shortly thereafter he was ordained hierodeacon. On the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, the young monastic became a hieromonk. During these years he was a religious instructor at the Serbian State High School, and in 1929 he became an instructor in the Serbian Seminary of the Holy Apostle John the Theologian in the city of Bitol - part of the Ochrid Diocese.

In Bitol, Saint John won the love of his students and it was here that his spiritual struggles became known to those around him. Saint John prayed continually, served the Divine Liturgy daily, or attended Liturgy and partook of Christ's Holy Mysteries, fasted strictly and usually ate once a day late in the evening. With fatherly love the Saint instilled in the seminary students high spiritual ideals. They were the first to discover his great ascetic podvig noticing that the Saint never lay down to sleep, and when he did doze off, it was only from utter exhaustion and often during a prostration in the corner under the icons. Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich) valued and loved the young hieromonk John. Upon leaving the seminary once, he turned to a small group of seminarians and said, "Children, listen to Fr. John. He is an Angel of God in the image of a man." The seminarians themselves were convinced that Saint John truly lived an angelic life.

His patience and humility were similar to the patience and humility of the great ascetics and desert dwellers. He relived the events of the Holy Gospel as if they were taking place before his eyes. He always knew the chapter where to find an event and, when needed, could always quote a given verse. He knew the character and details of every student, so that at any moment he could assess what a student knew or did not know. Saint John had a special gift of God: an unusually good memory. Consequently, such assessments of his students could be made without referring to any previous records or notes. Mutual love bound Saint John and the seminarians together. For them he was the incarnation of all of the Christian virtues. They did not see any shortcomings in him, not even in his speech (Saint John had a slight stammer). There was no problem, personal or social, which he could

not solve quickly. There was not a question for which he could not find an answer. His answer was always concise, clear, complete and exhaustive because he was truly an educated man. His education, his "wisdom," was based on the most stable foundation, "the Fear of God." The Saint prayed zealously for his seminarians. Each night he would make his rounds, checking everyone; adjusting one's pillow, another's blanket. Upon leaving the room he blessed the slumberer with the sign of the cross.

During the first week of Great Lent, Saint John ate nothing more than one prosphora a day, the same during Passion Week. When Great Saturday came his body was completely exhausted. But on the Day of the Holy Resurrection of the Lord he was revived, his strength returned. At Paschal Matins he triumphantly exclaimed, "Christ is Risen!" as if Christ resurrected specifically on that holy night. His face shone. The Paschal joy which the Saint radiated was imparted to everyone in the church. Anyone who was ever in church with Saint John on Pascha experienced this.

In 1934 the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad decided to elevate Saint John to the rank of bishop and assign him to Shanghai as vicar bishop of the Diocese of China. As for Saint John himself, nothing could have been further from his mind, which is obvious from an account of one of his acquaintances from Yugoslavia. Once, when meeting him on the tramway she asked him what had brought him to Belgrade. He answered that he came to Belgrade because he had mistakenly received a notice in place of another hieromonk John, who was to be made a bishop. When she saw him again the next day, he told her that the mistake was worse than he had expected, because it turned out that they had decided to consecrate him a bishop. When he objected, pointing out his stammer, he was told that the Prophet Moses had the same difficulty. The consecration took place on the 28th of May 1934. Saint John was the last bishop to be consecrated by Metropolitan Anthony.

The young bishop arrived in Shanghai from Serbia on November 21, 1935, the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Many people had gathered on the dock to meet their new archpastor who wholeheartedly undertook his responsibilities and soon became an established figure in the city of Shanghai. The completion of a large cathedral as well as the resolution of an existing jurisdictional conflict awaited him. Saint John quickly quelled this conflict and, in time, established relations with the Serbs, Greeks, and Ukrainians in his diocese. The Saint completed the construction of the huge cathedral in honour of the Icon of the Mother of God "Surety of Sinners" and a three story house with a bell tower. He dedicated special attention to the spiritual education of the children. He personally taught the Law of God to the upper classes of the Commercial Institute and always attended the examinations for the religious courses in all of the schools of Shanghai. He was the inspirer and leader in the construction of churches, a hospital, an asylum for the mentally ill, an orphanage, a home for the elderly, a community dining hall - in short, all of the social undertakings of Russian Shanghai. The Saint was one with his flock. He participated directly in the work of virtually all emigrant organizations.



However, while participating actively in such an array of worldly affairs, he was foreign to the world. From the first day of his arrival in Shanghai, the Saint, as before, served Divine Liturgy daily. No matter where he was, he was always present at Divine Services. Once, as a result of his continual standing, the Saint's foot was severely swollen and a group of physicians, fearing gangrene, prescribed immediate hospitalization. The Saint refused. The Russian doctors informed the Parish Council, that they could not take any responsibility for the health and

even the life of the patient. The members of the Parish Council, after extensive requests and even threats to forcefully hospitalise him, compelled the Saint to agree, and he was sent to the hospital. That evening however, he left the hospital on his own and at six o'clock was serving the All-Night Vigil as usual.

He performed all of the daily services completely and unabridged, so that, at Compline, five or more canons would be read, so as to honour all of the Saints. The Saint did not allow unnecessary conversations in the sanctuary and personally made sure that the servers behaved as they should, compiling for them a rule of conduct, to which he strictly, yet affectionately, constrained adherence. After Liturgy Saint John remained in the sanctuary two or three hours, concerning which he once commented, "How difficult it is to tear oneself from prayer and return to worldly affairs." At night he remained vigilant as opposed to sleeping. He never went "visiting" specifically, instead, he would appear unexpectedly to those in need, in any weather and at the most unusual hours. Daily he visited the sick with the Holy Gifts. Often he was seen, at some late hour, in inclement weather, walking on the streets of Shanghai with his bishop's staff in hand and his rassa blowing in the wind. When asked where he was headed in such weather, the Saint would reply, "Not too far away, I need to visit so-and-so," and when they escorted him to that place the "not too far away" was frequently two or three kilometers.

"While concerning oneself with the salvation of men's souls," said the Saint, "one needs to remember that people also have bodily needs which clamorously declare their presence. One cannot preach the Gospel without manifesting love in one's deeds." One of Saint John's manifestations of such love was the founding of the Orphanage of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk for orphans and children of needy parents. He called together some women and, with their help, began with eight little children and organized an orphanage which gave refuge to many hundreds of children in its fifteen-year existence in Shanghai. Vladyka himself gathered sickly and hungry children from the streets and from the dark alleys of Shanghai. Once he brought in a little girl to the orphanage, having "bought" her from a china-man for a bottle of vodka.

The parishioners of the Shanghai diocese had deep feelings of love and respect for their archpastor, as is evident from the following excerpts from a letter written by them to Metropolitan Meletius in 1943:

"We, worldly people, laymen, cannot touch his (Saint John's) breadth of knowledge of theology, his erudition, his homilies, deeply penetrated with apostolic faith, pronounced almost daily and often printed. We, the people of Shanghai, will speak about what we see and feel in our multiracial city from the day of arrival of our Bishop, that which we see with our sinful eyes and that which we feel with our Christian heart."

"From the day of his arrival: the sorrowful phenomenon of the division of churches has ceased; the Orphanage of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, which currently feeds, clothes, and educates 200 children was built from nothing; gradually the conditions of the alms house in the name of Saint Philaret the Merciful have improved; the sick in all Shanghai hospitals are visited by priests, are administered the Holy Mysteries on a timely basis and, in the event of death, even the homeless are buried with a proper funeral; the mentally ill, who are located in a hospital far from the city, are visited by him personally; those incarcerated in the prisons of the "Settlement" and the French Concession have the opportunity to pray in the place of their imprisonment during the Divine Liturgy and to receive Holy Communion monthly. He directs serious attention to the upbringing and education of the youth in a strict Orthodox and nationalistic spirit. In many of the non Russian schools our children are now taught the Law of God. During all of the difficult moments in the life of our community we see him leading the way, defending us and our age-old Russian moral principles to the end. All of the sectarian organizations and heterodox confessions now understand that to combat such a pillar of the Orthodox Faith is very difficult. Our Bishop tirelessly visits the churches, hospitals, schools, prisons, civil and military organizations, always

bringing with him reassurance and faith. From the day of his arrival not one infirm person has been left without his prayer and personal visit. By the prayers of our Luminary many have received relief and health. He, like a torch, illuminates our sinfulness, like a pealing bell awakens our conscience, and calls our souls to the Christian struggle, calls to us, as the Good Pastor, so that for a minute we might be diverted from the earth, from worldly corruption, and lift up our eyes to heaven, from whence our help comes. He is the one, according to the words of Apostle Paul, who is an example: in word, in life, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (I Tim. 4:12)."

His flock was not mistaken in giving such a great assessment of the work of its pastor. People truly felt in him a readiness "to lay down his life" for the flock. During the Japanese occupation, when two presidents of the Russian Emigration Committee were killed in succession and fear gripped the Russian colony, Saint John, despite the undoubted danger to himself, declared himself the temporary head of the Russian colony.

After the repose of Metropolitan Meletius and the end of the war in 1945, increased pressure was put upon the Russian emigrant clergy by the Moscow Patriarchate, with the aim of subordinating them to the new Moscow Patriarch Alexei I. He was the successor to Patriarch Sergius who, in 1927, promulgated the declaration committing the church to cooperation with the Soviet authorities. In the Far East almost all of the hierarchs subordinated themselves to the newly chosen Patriarch. Saint John, having denied such subordination, was exposed to extremely great pressure and threats from his ruling bishop, Archbishop Victor. The Saint's response to these threats was simple: "I am subject to the Synod Abroad and I shall walk on the path that it directs for me."

After a long delay caused by the war, an order arrived from the Synod of Bishops elevating Bishop John to Archbishop with direct submission to the Synod. The Chinese National Government and the city authorities acknowledged Archbishop John as the sole head of the Russian Orthodox Church in China.

The miracle-working power and clairvoyance of Saint John were well known in Shanghai. Once, during Bright Week, Saint John came to the Jewish hospital to visit the Orthodox patients there. Passing through one ward, he stopped in front of a screen, concealing the bed upon which an elderly Jewish woman lay dying. Her family members were awaiting her death nearby. The Saint raised a cross above the screen and loudly proclaimed: "Christ is Risen!" upon which the dying woman regained consciousness and asked for water. The Saint approached the nurse and said, "The patient wants to drink." The medical staff were stunned by the change which had taken place in one who only moments earlier was dying. Soon the woman recovered and was discharged from the hospital. Such incidents were numerous.

It so happened that Saint John was urgently called to administer Holy Communion to a dying man in the hospital. Having taken the Holy Gifts, the Saint headed there with another clergyman. When they arrived they saw a young man, about 20 years of age, playing on a harmonica. He had already recovered and was to leave the hospital shortly. The Saint called him over saying, "I want to give you Holy Communion right now." The young man immediately came up to him, confessed, and received Holy Communion. The amazed clergyman asked Saint John why he did not go to the one dying, but detained himself with an obviously healthy young man. The Saint answered simply, "He will die tonight, but the other, who is seriously ill, will live yet many years." That is precisely what came to pass. The Lord manifested similar miracles in Europe and America through His Saint.

At the end of the 1940's as the communists came to power, Russians in China were forced to flee again, most via the Philippine Islands. In 1949 almost 5000 refugees from China were located in a camp of the International Refugee Organization on the island of Tubabao. They lived there in tents under the most primitive

circumstances. All of the children of the orphanage were brought there, as were the elderly and infirm. They lived under the continual threat of fierce hurricanes, since the island is located in the path of seasonal typhoons which pass through that part of the Pacific Ocean. During the twenty-seven-month existence of the Russian encampment, only once was the island threatened by a typhoon, which, however, changed its course and passed around the island. Every night Saint John would walk around the entire camp blessing it with the sign of the Cross on all four sides. Later when the people had departed for various countries and the camp had been almost completely evacuated, a fierce typhoon swept over the camp and leveled it to the ground.

More than once Saint John had to appear before representatives of civil authority to intercede for the needs of the Russian refugees. It was recommended to Saint John that he personally petition in Washington D.C., so that those in the camp could come to America. He flew to Washington and, contrary to all human obstacles, succeeded in having immigration laws changed and the exodus of his flock was realized.

In 1951 Saint John was assigned to oversee the Western European Diocese. At first he administered the diocese from Paris and later from Brussels. He continually traveled throughout Europe serving Divine Liturgy in French and Dutch, and, as before, in Greek, Chinese, and later in English. The following was written about him in Paris: "He lives outside of our plane (of existence)." It is no accident that in one of the Catholic churches a priest said, addressing the youth: "You require proof. You say that there are no more miracles, no saints. Why do you need theoretical proof, when a living Saint walks the streets of Paris, Saint Jean Pieds {Saint John the Barefoot}!"

While in Europe, Saint John collected information on a number of ancient Saints venerated in the West, but forgotten in the East. Upon his recommendation their veneration was restored and their names recorded in the Church calendar.

Saint John's spirituality, his knowledge of languages, and, most of all, his example, attracted many French, Dutch and other Europeans to Orthodoxy. Such was the missionary significance of his stay in Europe.

In the Fall of 1962 Saint John arrived in his last Diocesan See, and again, just as many years ago in his first Diocese, on the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. At first he came to assist the aging and infirm elder, Archbishop Tikhon and after his repose (March 17, 1963 o.s.) Saint John became ruling Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco. Again the Saint arrived to find an unfinished church, dedicated to the memory of the Mother of God, and once again, as in China, the Church was torn by discord.

Saint John's first priority was to resume and complete the construction of the new Diocesan Cathedral of the Most Holy Theotokos "Joy of All Who Sorrow", which had been entirely halted due to a lack of funds and sharp disputes as to the solution of the financial dilemma paralyzing the church community. The Lord mercifully helped His Saint in this, who was suffering greatly as a result of this discord, yet continued both by prayer and by tirelessly overseeing the construction, to inspire everyone to sacrifice and work.

Saint John had to endure much at that time, even the necessity of appearing in an American civil court. The last years of his life were full of the bitterness of slander and persecution. Sometimes Saint John aroused envy, unfavorable criticisms, or bewilderment in people, when he dealt with them strictly adhering to church rules. At that time, someone asked who was responsible for the division in the Church. The Saint answered simply: "the devil".

In 1964, construction of the largest church of the Russian Church Abroad in America, adorned with five golden domes, was essentially complete. The elevation of the magnificent crosses, the grandeur of which is visible

when sailing in the San Francisco Bay, was proceeded by a solemn procession (over a mile) with masses of people participating. The procession was almost canceled due to heavy rains, but the Saint, without any hesitation, led the procession with hymns into the drenched streets of the City. As the procession began the rain stopped. The crosses were blessed in front of the new cathedral and when the main cross was elevated, the sun broke through and a dove lighted upon the brightly shining symbol of Christ. This visible triumph of the elevating of Orthodox crosses, symbols of Christ's victory, shining on the hills of a contemporary Babylon where satanism has been openly professed, was the crowning victory of the life of the Saint on earth.

While accompanying the Wonder-Working Kursk-Root Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos to Seattle, Saint John, having served Divine Liturgy there in the Saint Nicholas Cathedral, remained in the altar for three hours. It was the 19th of June (o.s.) 1966. Then having visited some of his spiritual children who lived near the cathedral with the Wonder-working Icon, he proceeded to a room in the church house where he was staying. Suddenly, those accompanying the Archpastor heard the sound of someone falling to the floor. When they ran up the stairs they discovered him lying on the floor and already departing this world. They sat him up in an armchair before the Wonder-working icon and the Saint peacefully reposed in the Lord. At that moment, his extraordinarily difficult struggle of depriving himself of rest and sleep ceased. They laid him on a bed that was in the room, a blessed berth, giving him rest and sleep after 40 years of abstinence. "Sleep now in peace!" cried Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery, who zealously loved him. In the conclusion of his homily during the funeral he said: "Sleep now in peace, O our dear, beloved Vladyka. Rest from your righteous works and struggles. Rest in peace until the General Resurrection." The solemn funeral of Saint John took place on June 24, 1966 (o.s.) in the Cathedral of the Most-Holy Theotokos, the Joy of All Who Sorrow, in the city of San Francisco. The funeral began at 6.00 p.m. and finished after 1.00 am, as a result of the multitude of people, who came to bid farewell to their reposed archpastor. Metropolitan Philaret officiated at the funeral in concelebration with Archbishops Leonty and Averky, Bishops Sava and Nektary and a multitude of clergy.

The air of the funeral was strikingly poignant and exaltedly prayerful. None of its participants shall ever forget it. Despite the deep sorrow of the countless admirers of Saint John, a kind of special joy predominated, enveloping all of the faithful.

The body of Saint John remained in an open casket in the cathedral for five days and, despite the hot summer weather, was untouched by even the slightest hint of corruption or stiffness. His hands were soft and pliant. And all of this, despite the fact that nothing whatsoever was done to his body at the mortuary.

The words of Bishop Ignaty (Brianchaninov) in his work, *Thoughts about Death*, involuntarily come to mind: "Have you ever seen the body of a righteous one which has been abandoned by the soul? There is no smell of corruption. It is not frightening to be near it. During his burial sorrow is mixed with a kind of intangible joy." All of this, according to the words of the ever memorable Bishop Ignaty, is a sure sign that "the reposed one has obtained mercy and Grace from the Lord."

After his blessed repose, just as during his life, Saint John continues to perform various miracles and healings for those who turn to him with faith. People, during difficult moments in their lives, when no earthly power is capable of helping, have beseeched his intercession before the Lord. Letters, as well as prayer lists, have been placed under the miter on the tomb of the Saint and many have received the help for which they had hoped.

In the fall of 1993 the Synod of Bishops charged the Archbishop Anthony of Western America and San Francisco, together with a commission comprised of two other archpastors, to examine Saint John's remains. In the evening of September 28, 1993 (o.s.), after a pannikhida served in the sepulcher by members of the

commission, Archbishop Anthony gave a brief homily, calling all participants of this holy work to be reconciled and himself asking forgiveness of everyone, blessed those present to open the tomb. Having removed the lid of the sarcophagus, the participants withdrew the metal coffin of the Saint and noticed that in many places it had completely rusted through. With the fear of God and with prayer, they opened the coffin. The face of the Saint was covered and everyone immediately turned their attention to his white, incorrupt hands. Having prayed, Archbishop Anthony removed the "aer" from the brow of Vladyka and exposed the incorrupt face of the God-glorified Saint. At this moment a kind of supernatural spiritual peace, an extraordinary reverent silence was felt. No one was amazed, no one spoke. All problems seemed to vanish, such was the Grace-filled experience of standing beside the Saint's relics.

At the next meeting of the Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Anthony reported that the honorable relics of Saint John were examined by the Synodal Commission comprised of himself, Archbishop Laurus of Syracuse and Holy Trinity, Bishop Kyril of Seattle and twelve other persons chosen by the diocesan bishop. Having heard Archbishop Anthony's report and the Report of the Commission for the examination of the relics of Saint John, the Synod of Bishops blessed the continuation of the efforts in preparation of the Glorification of Saint John, which was scheduled for June 19 (o.s.), the day of his blessed repose.

In these frightening days of general apostasy from God, the Lord has not abandoned his people and has sent them a great intercessor. Standing before the throne of God is a courageous defender of the Church of Christ; a struggler and ascetic according to the tradition of the stylites who took upon themselves the strictest form of self-mortification and, at times, taking upon themselves "foolishness for Christ's sake," which exceeds the wisdom of this world; a good and loving pastor who laid down his life for his sheep; a teacher and nurturer of Orthodox youth; a miracle-worker and unmercenary healer; an apostle and missionary; a deep theologian; a beholder of mysteries and a hierarch of universal significance, who unwaveringly followed that which he had promised before God and men in his testimony read during his election to the episcopacy: "What greater benefit can one bring to one's neighbor, other than to prepare him for eternal life..."

Through the prayers of our holy father John, may the Lord God preserve us from every evil, strengthen our faith, and help us to journey upon the true path to salvation. To our God, Who is wondrous in His Saints, be all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Reproduced from the website of
St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Howell, NJ*



Rachel's Corner

Fr. William Bauer's battle to save Cierra Marie, the unborn child of a mentally handicapped mom...



By Melissa Clement of LifeNews.com

Many prolifeers were part of the ultimately successful campaign to prevent the forced abortion of a mentally disabled woman. Elisa Bauer delivered her baby, Cierra Marie, on May 2, 2013. She weighed 5 lbs., 7 oz. and measuring 17 inches long.

The writer of this article (Melissa) was part of that band of heroes and she graciously agreed to provide this background.

“When the time comes, as it surely will, when we face that awesome moment, the final judgment...”

I’ve often thought, as Fulton Sheen wrote, that it is a terrible moment of loneliness. You have no advocates, you are there alone standing before God — and a terror will rip your soul like nothing you can imagine. But I really think that those in the prolife movement will not be alone. I think there’ll be a chorus of voices that have never been heard in this world but are heard beautifully and clearly in the next world — and they will plead for everyone who has been in this movement. They will say to God,

“Spare him, because he loved us!” — Congressman Henry Hyde

Since joining the movement 13 years ago, this quote has always motivated and comforted me. My prolife efforts have focused on education, policy, legislation, and elections. As such, I have

always looked forward to meeting the “choir” – the babies I saved, unknowingly. I am not a sidewalk counselor or a crisis pregnancy center volunteer or a maternity home social worker. I lack the skills and the mental toughness necessary to be that kind of hero. So, long ago, I made peace with the fact that the babies I would save would most likely be unknown to me in this lifetime.

That changed last October. I received a call that changed many lives and, in the end, saved one.

The voice on the end of the other line was frantic, “I need the name of a good prolife attorney and a good prolife OBGYN in Reno.” The details were sparse due to the nature of the case. All I knew was that there was a young woman who was going to be forced to abort her child.

None of the information that I heard made sense and part of me wondered if I was the victim of a prank because certainly, in this day and age, in this country, no woman could be forced to abort her child by a judge. I supplied the name and contact information for two prolife men, an attorney and an OBGYN, with the guarantee that they were very able and very prolife. I figured that was the end. Perhaps another choir member added, but it wasn't mine to know.

Later that day I received a call from Jason Guinasso, the attorney I had recommended. He told me the facts of the case, the Bauer case, and even now they are unbelievable. A (Nevada) county judge was in the process of ordering Elisa Bauer, a 32 year old mentally disabled woman, to abort her baby against her wishes and the wishes of her parents/guardians. Because her parents and guardians chose to support the growing life within Elisa, the judge had appointed new guardians and a new attorney and the wheels were set in motion to abort the baby and sterilize Elisa. Jason accepted the case and, with little preparation time and a recognition that this was an uphill battle at best, tilting at windmills at worst, he began to craft a defense of this baby's life. His efforts were nothing short of heroic.

What was my role in this life and death struggle? I listened, took notes, worked to get the word out through social media, badgered old media, contacted medical and legal experts recommended by fellow state directors of NRLC and prayed. After sitting through several hearings, it was apparent that many people outside of Elisa's family were concerned and wanted the best course of action for her. The problem was there was a very stark contrast between the two choices considered in that courtroom. It was a stark clash of worldviews.

One side viewed pregnancy as a medical condition best “remedied” through termination when a perfect child and a perfect mother is not guaranteed.

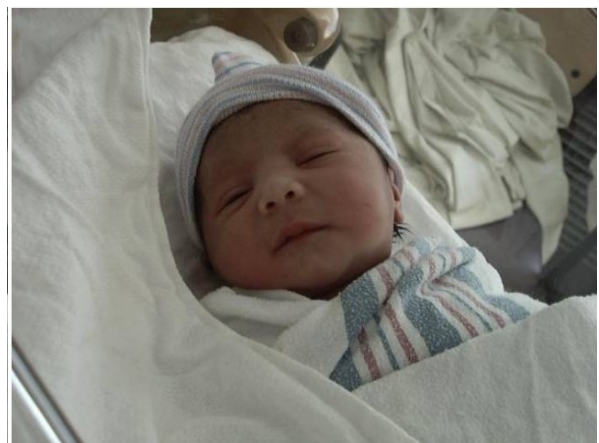
The worldview represented by the Bauer's attorney, Jason Guinasso, presented a calm and rational alternative. Namely that a physically healthy mother and a healthy baby can be supported throughout the pregnancy, even when the circumstances are not ideal, and that a number of qualified adoptive parents stand ready to raise this baby.

Over the course of the three hearings, I watched as the culture of life prevailed. The bias against life, so apparent from the opposing side during the first hearing, thawed, and in the end, all parties involved gathered and informally discussed the issues involved and agreed that the most pressing issue must be dealt with first, the pregnancy. Judge Walker entered court on Tuesday, November 14, 2012, and announced that an abortion was no longer an alternative.

As her attorney, Jason Guinasso wrote recently, “Yesterday, Cierra Maria was born to Elisa Bauer.

She is five pounds and seven ounces and approximately 17 inches long. Her APGAR scores were 8 and 9. She has a lot of dark hair and a nice pink skin tone. She is sweet and good natured. By all measures, she is perfectly healthy and sublimely beautiful. Thanks to your prayers several months ago, this is the child we helped bring into the world.”

My role in this story was humble. I was merely a connector, a conduit. But it is a story we all need to hear. We all have a role to play in saving lives.



It is also an example of the strength of National Right to Life. This fantastic, diverse network of grassroots volunteers and professionals allowed us to tap into the talents of countless medical legal and media experts, all of whom worked to save this baby's life. Perhaps, seeing Cierra's picture today will give them a glimpse of their own choir.

(Editor's Note: Fr. William Bauer and his family are recent additions to the Western Rite Communities)

Ordinations, Baptisms & Chrismations

Ordinations & Awards

On Thursday, June 2, 2016 (May 20 O.S.)- Feast of the uncovering of the relics of St Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow and wonderworker of all Russia,

William Bauer (Fernley, NV) and Jonathan Cook (Severn, MD) were tonsured Readers and ordained Subdeacon by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion.



Father William Bauer was ordained to the Diaconate by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion in the Church of St. Nectarios at St Nicholas Monastery (ROCORM) in Ft. Myers, FL.



On Friday, June 3, 2016 (May 21 O.S.) on the feasts of SS Constantine and Helen,

Father William Bauer was ordained to the Sacred Priesthood and Father John Cook was ordained to the Diaconate by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion in the Church of St. Nectarios at St Nicholas Monastery (ROCORM) in Ft. Myers, FL.



Fr. William Bauer

During the liturgy, at the Little Entrance, upon recommendation of the Dean of the Western Rite Communities, Hieromonk Ezekiel (Vieages) was awarded the Naredrennik for his service to the Church by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion.



Hieromonk Ezekiel

On Saturday, June 4, 2016 (May 22 O.S.) on the feast of the Righteous Melchisedec and the commemoration of the Second Ecumenical Council,

Nicholas Rowe was tonsured a Reader and Father John Cook was ordained to the sacred priesthood by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion in the Church of St. Nectarios at St Nicholas Monastery (ROCORM) in Ft. Myers, FL.

During the liturgy, at the Little Entrance, Father Mark Rowe, Dean of the ROCORM WR Communities, was presented to the Metropolitan by The Very Rev. Archpriest Stephanos Shagoury, Chaplain of St Nicholas Monastery for elevation to Archpriest by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion in accordance with the decree from the ROCORM Synod of Bishops.

AXIOS ! AXIOS ! AXIOS ! MANY YEARS !



Fr. John Cook Invested



Fr. Mark Rowe being Invested as an Archpriest



*Newly-Tonsured
Reader Nicholas Rowe*

Baptisms / Chrismations

Jonathan Cook and his wife Tamara were chrismated by Father David Kinghorn (St. Cuthbert's, RI) at the request of the Dean at St John the Baptist Orthodox Church (AWRV) Lewistown, MD on Sunday, May 29, 2016, the feast of St Brendan the Navigator. They will attend the mission St Tikhon's in the greater Richmond (VA) area.



Michael Vance and his two daughters Ciara and Siobhan were chrismated on Sunday, May 29, 2016, the feast of St Brendan the Navigator by Father Mark Rowe, Priest-in-Charge of St. Brendan's Orthodox Mission, Lynn Haven FL.



Upon return from his ordination in Florida, Father William Bauer chrismated his flock at the parish of St Columba in Fernley, NV. A photo of some of the newly chrismated members is below.



May the Lord Continue to Bless Them!!!

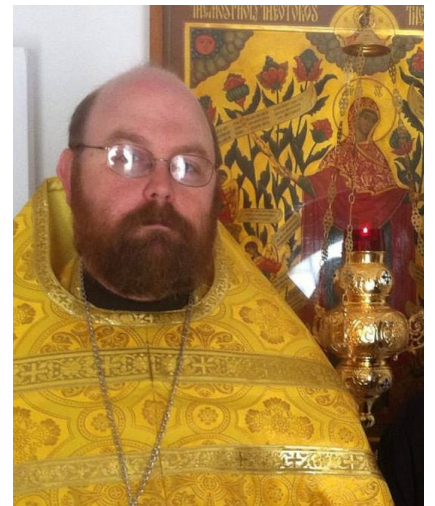
"The Long Way Home"

The Story of Father John Cook & His Family's Journey to Orthodoxy

When Father Mark requested that we write up an introduction of how we came to Orthodoxy, Fr. John and I were a bit overwhelmed. It is important to understand that when we look back, it seems like this is where God has been leading us all along. From the time Father John was an altar server, he knew he was called to be a priest.

Father John was raised Roman Catholic and I was raised LCMS Lutheran. When I was in 3rd grade, my parents moved over to ELCA Lutheran. Father John and I met in high school. He was raised an Army Brat, born in Germany, and I had lived in the Baltimore/Washington corridor near Fort Meade, MD my entire life. My mother was diagnosed with cancerous brain tumors in our Junior year of high school. She passed away that summer and he and I met that fall when school started back. We started dating right before prom and graduated high school, started college, and got married in the Lutheran Church where I was confirmed all in less than a year.

While I am brushing past that year like it was nothing, one of the things that almost caused us to break up was Father John (then just Jonathan to me) hearing God tell him he was supposed to be a priest. He went and spoke to the Franciscan Friar because he had already asked me to marry him and he did not know what he should do and the friar told him that it would all work out as God intended. On our first anniversary we married in a sacramental ceremony in the local Roman Catholic parish.



Within three years he was in the Army and we had two children, our son, Nicholas Adam, and our daughter, Cheyanne Storm. After he spent a year in Korea, he came home to civilian life. We purchased a home near both sets of parents and he found a job doing computer work as a contractor for the government. We were sporadically attending both Lutheran and Catholic services. We would attend Catholic services on Saturday evening and Lutheran services on Sunday morning. Occasionally, his parents would join us for the Saturday evening services. He spoke to me about his calling and thought that it was possible that he might be a Deacon in the Catholic Church if they would allow him, but he needed my support. When he spoke to the priest, he was told that he was too young to be a Deacon (he could have been a priest at the same age, but not a Deacon).

During this time, I was struggling with my faith. Even prior to us discovering my mother's illness, I was very close to my Youth Group. It was the first place I truly came to understand that God is a God of love and mercy. In my immaturity, I had believed MY FAITH would 'save' my mom. God would heal her of her cancer because MY FAITH would move mountains. When my mother died, I was in shock and numb. I told everyone that, "God knows best. He did what was best for us and for her." But I did not really understand why I could not have it both ways, that my mom would be healed AND still be with us.

When Jon was assigned to a position in Germany, he was excited to go. I had been able to show our children places I played while I was growing up and he wanted the same opportunity. I had never lived so far away from my family. Even when he was in the military, the furthest from home I had lived was 3 months of living with my best friend's family in Texas, but most of the time we lived on an Army base 3 hours from our parents. This seemed like we would be 'on our own' for the first time since we had gotten married. God was there, but I wasn't paying attention. Jon's parents decided to send us on a Marriage Encounter sponsored by the Catholic Church. While on the ME weekend, I came to terms with a lot of things that had not made sense to me about Catholicism. Jon and I renewed our marriage vows and two months later we moved to Germany.

When Tammi and I moved to Germany it was an exciting time for me, but Tammi was very hesitant. She had never been this far away from home and to me it was a kind of coming home as I had lived a good portion of my childhood in Germany. While we were in Germany we attended a joint Lutheran/Catholic/Anglican parish and, in looking back at it, God was leading us more clearly than ever. Tammi found a group of women at the chapel known as the PWOC (Protestant Women of the Chapel) who were a great support group but also allowed for bible study and retreats. I found that I could assist as a Lay Minister and became fully involved in the local parish holding many positions of lay leadership within the parish from Altar guild to President of the parish council. During this time I converted to become an Episcopalian as the Lutherans and Episcopalians had an ecumenical agreement and could worship together. This solved our issue of going to Catholic mass on Saturday and Lutheran service on Sunday. However shortly after my reception they consecrated Gene Robinson and I decided I could no longer be an Episcopalian. This brought my search to the Old Catholics which I discovered were not very far away from where we lived in Stuttgart, Germany and began a discovery process of who they were and what they believed. Our son was diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes during our third year in Germany and it prompted us to return to the US in 2003 about four years after we arrived in Germany.

Our experiences in Germany made us a family that prayed and played together so to speak. We had developed a different outlook on who we were and how God was directing us. Once back in the US, I looked into the Old Catholic church in the US and after much searching found a group that held to the original tenants of the Utrecht Union. I entered the Seminary in 2003 where I completed Bachelors and Masters degrees and where I was introduced to the teachings of the Orthodox Church as most of my reading material was Orthodox related. I was ordained an Old Catholic Priest in 2006 and attempted to start a mission, but found that I was helping out Anglicans more and more. In 2009 I became an Anglican and went through the many jurisdictions APA, ACPK, ACA, ACC, ACNA all the while feeling pushed in that direction each step of the way moving closer and closer to Orthodoxy. My wife and I had many discussions and I remember telling her once before we first became Anglican that eventually we would have to choose East or West as all of these small churches needed a firmer foundation.

Tammi volunteered to research Sunday School plans for traditional Anglicans, but she could not find any. She found evangelical, she found Protestant, she found Catholic, she found Orthodox, but everything she found, she ended up going to Catholic or Orthodox teaching. She started to try to create Sunday School plans, but found that she was repeatedly going to Catholic and Orthodox sources for the early church to develop teaching material and she began to wonder why we would keep ourselves apart if we were trying to truly be obedient and submit to the authority of the Early Church Fathers. She started to research saints and one year, for the month of May, in honor of Mother's Day, she decided to study the female saints of the Early Church and she read about St. Nino, Equal to the Apostles, Enlightener of Georgia. The story of St. Nino resonated with her because of St. Nino's youth, her fearless faith in God's Will, and her obedient trust that God was in control and no pain she faced could defeat her love for the Lord.

In looking back at our journey, God continued to reveal more and more to us about the Orthodox faith, all the while moving us ever closer to coming home. During our 12 years of ministry I took to heart what my first Bishop told me: One, "There is nothing going on now that has not been discussed by brighter and holier minds than ours. Whenever you have a question turn to the church fathers and the ecumenical councils you will find your answers." And two, "If you ever find yourself saying, 'This is what the church teaches, but this is what we believe' you are in the wrong place." As our journey through Anglicanism continued, I found those two statements continually coming to mind and found that when I tested everything with that guidance, Orthodoxy made sense.

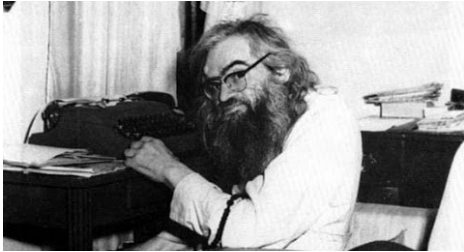
Finally, the words that resonated the most for us were, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

Although it took a while for us to realize where we needed to be I am sure you all understand that things seemed to fall into place. Not exactly as we envisioned, but for the better.

One of the things that Father Mark explained to us was that we needed to choose a saint for whom we would be named, who would help guide us and pray for us. Tammi choose Saint Tamara, Queen of Georgia, because she wanted to honor her mother for having named her for a saint who inheirited the faith from ancestors who were enlightened by St. Nino. I choose Saint John the Wonderworker. I choose St. John for many reasons, but most of all due to how he kept what appeared to be a chaotic schedule and his concern for all around him. I am in awe of the way he touched all he came in contact with and the impressions and guidance that he left. I felt akin to his life as I have an extremely hectic schedule and always want to leave places better than how I found them. I look to him as an example of strength and love and ask him to pray for me to guide my family on our path in Orthodoxy.

How the Faith of the Thief Proved Stronger than that of the Apostles

By St. John Maximovitch



The Apostles wavered in their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, because they anticipated and desired to see in Him an earthly king, in whose kingdom they could sit at the right and the left hand of the Lord.

The thief understood that the Kingdom of Jesus of Nazareth, despised and given over to a shameful death, was not of this world. And it was precisely this Kingdom that the thief now sought: the gates of earthly life were closing after him; opening before him was eternity. He had settled his accounts with life on earth, and now he thought of life eternal. And here, at the threshold of eternity, he began to understand the vanity of earthly glory and earthly kingdoms. He recognized that greatness consists in righteousness, and in the righteous, blamelessly tortured Jesus he saw the King of Righteousness. The thief did not ask Him for glory in an earthly kingdom but for the salvation of his soul.

The faith of the thief, born of his esteem for Christ's moral greatness, proved stronger than the faith of the Apostles, who although captivated by the loftiness of Christ's teaching, based their faith to a still greater extent on the signs and wonders He wrought.

Now there was no miraculous deliverance of Christ from His enemies — and the Apostles' faith was shaken.

But the patience He exhibited, His absolute forgiveness, and the faith that His Heavenly Father heard Him so clearly, indicated Jesus' righteousness, His moral superiority, that one seeking spiritual and moral rebirth could not be shaken.

And this is precisely what the thief, aware of the depth of his fall, craved. He did not ask to sit at the right or the left hand of Christ in His Kingdom, but, conscious of his unworthiness, he asked in humility simply that he be remembered in His Kingdom, that he be given even the lowest place. + St. John Maximovitch of Shanghai and San Francisco, From [Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai & San Francisco](#), *"Why the Wise Thief Was Pardoned"*



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