

## **A Collection of Ukrainian Saints, volume II**

Translated and compiled by Sava Beljovich

### **---ST. ELISEY PLETENETSKY---**

Oleksandr Mykhailovych was born between 1550 and 1554 in Lviv in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to a noble family, his father was a relative of the Righteous Prince Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski. His mother's maiden name was Tomasevich; she originally from the village of Pletenychi, near Zolochiv in the Ruthenian Voivodeship, thus the young Oleksandr was nicknamed “Pletenetsky”.

His early life and the names of his parents are not recorded. He was educated at the Brotherhood school in Lviv and later in Ostrog. Originally Oleksandr wished to pursue a military career like his father, but by his own admission he wished instead to become a: “...soldier for Christ.” He visited the Merzhyhirsk Transfiguration Monastery and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, after deciding to live in Merzhyhirsk he was tonsured a monk with the name Elisey after the Prophet Elisha.

Fr. Elisey moved to the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in the suburb of Leshchyn in Pinsk where he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite by 1595. The following year he travelled to Brest-Litovsk to organize resistance to the union with the Roman Catholic church, on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1596 he organized a council in Volodymyr to condemn the Uniates along with the Archimandrite of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra Fr. Nikifor (Tur), there they wrote an Apologia against the Unia.

In December 1596 Fr. Elisey was removed as the Archimandrite of the Leshchyn Monastery by the Polish-Lithuanian authorities, however Prince Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski vetoed this action, thus Fr. Elisey continued to lead the Orthodox Brotherhood of Leshchyn. In 1599 Archimandrite Nikifor reposed and the Brotherhood of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra convened to elect a new Archimandrite.

Prince Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski and the Zaporozhian Cossack Ataman Samilyo Kishka recommended Fr. Elisey to succeed Archimandrite Nikifor. In September the Uniate bishop Hypatyi Potiy arrived in Kyiv attempting to be enthroned as Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia, and called for a Uniate to be elected as the Hegumen of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. King Sigismund III Vaza had the Uniate

bishop Krzystof Casimirsky dispatched to the Lavra, but the armed retinue of Prince Konstanty would stop Krzystof from entering the Monastery.

In 1601 the False Dimitri I (in actuality a man by the name of Grigori Otrepyev, a wanted criminal) visited Kyiv and went to the Lavra wishing to receive a blessing and take communion. Fr. Elisey refused to give a blessing to the False Dimitri and publicly exposed him for his deceit. Prince Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski had the False Dimitri removed from Kyiv. Despite Fr. Elisey realizing the man who he was speaking to was not St. Dimitri of Uglich, he was slandered by his brother-monks for not accepting the impostor as the Tsar of Russia.

The election of Archimandrite Elisey was recognized by the Orthodox, but not recognized by the state. The Roman Catholic Pope Clement VIII issued a bull condemning the Orthodox election of Fr. Elisey and demanded the Lavra be given to the Papists. Prince Konstanty sent a request to the Sejm to review the issue – and despite the Orthodox Church being illegal after the union of Brest-Litovsk – in July of 1603 the election of Fr. Elisey was confirmed, by February 1605 King Sigismund III Vaza would grant Fr. Elisey a charter to serve as the Archimandrite of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra.

After being confirmed as the Archimandrite of the Lavra, Fr. Elisey restored the cells and mandated the Fathers live in the Caves – as many of the monks began to live outside of the Monastery grounds. He resumed the full cycle of services according to the rule of St. Basil the Great and began repairs on the Holy Ascension Church in the Lavra. He also established a kitchen that fed the poor for free, giving bread or vegetables from the Monastery pantry to anyone who asked.

Fr. Elisey would establish the Holy Trinity Monastery in Kitaevsky, originally intended as a Hermitage for the Hermitic Fathers while repairs were done at the Far Caves in Kyiv-Pechersk. He would also serve as a spiritual father to the Sisterhood of the Voznesesky Convent and founded the Holy Ascension Monastery in Pechersk to help house the monks who were fleeing monasteries that had been taken over by the Uniates.

Fr. Elisey's charitable actions and efforts to restore Orthodoxy did not go unnoticed. Shortly after his appointment as Archimandrite, Hypatiy Potiy set up a special commission to investigate Fr. Elisey, attempting to find something to charge him with and open the way so the Uniates could seize the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. The attempts of the Uniates to detain Fr. Elisey by force were stopped by

the Zaporozhian Cossacks, so they would adopt a new strategy.

The Uniates bribed the monks of the Monastery to slander Fr. Elisey: First for his charity by giving away reserves of food to the poor and needy, for which the wayward monks claimed: "... (the supplies) would be more suitable for the monastery and for us monks..."

After this slander was defeated, they started to claim Archimandrite Elisey was a drunkard, glutton and abusive towards the monks. In 1608 Hypatiy Potiy and the Uniate Orsha Zenkovich selected the Uniate archdeacon Antony Grekoyvch to enter the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and lead the rebelling monks against Fr. Elisey. The Zaporzhian Cossacks and the Orthodox nobility protested this action and set up a counter-investigation which would eventually clear Fr. Elisey of all charges against him.

Antony Grekoyvch would be removed from the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and would later drown in the Dnieper river after attempting to flee the Cossacks after murdering a Sich rifleman. Fr. Elisey seeing the imminent danger of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, sent a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople Timotheos II to be given stavropegial status. This would be confirmed by the Sejm in 1611 and King Sigismund III Vaza granted the charter, thus ending the attempts of the Uniates to seize the ancient Monastery.

In the spring of 1612 Fr. Elisey would invite Metropolitan Neofitiy of Sofia to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, who would ordain new clergy and consecrate new churches for the Orthodox. Due to Metropolitan Neofitiy not getting permission from the government, both him and Fr. Elisey were arrested and brought to Lublin to stand trial. Hypatiy Potiy would pay false witnesses to come forward and claim Fr. Elisey and Metropolitan Neofitiy were organizing a revolt against the government.

The court eventually ruled all the churches Metropolitan Neofitiy consecrated were to be given over to the Uniates and Metropolitan Neofitiy to be executed as a Turkish spy. The Zaporozhian Cossacks broke him and Fr. Elisey out of prison and would protect them against the Uniates. Hypatiy Potiy would die due to obesity on July 18<sup>th</sup> 1613 and shortly thereafter the charges against Fr. Elisey and Vladyka Neofitiy were dropped.

The Uniate bishops Mykhailo Ragosa and Joseph Veliamen Rutsky would bring up new charges against Fr. Elisey and would convince King Sigismund III to revoke

the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra's stavropegial status. Zaporozhian Ataman (St.) Petro Sahaidachny would support Fr. Elisey's legal battle and arranged for lawyers to review the case. One of the lawyers discovered that Ragosa had borrowed money from the Lavra, and was thus unable by Polish law to seize the property.

Eventually Ragosa and Rutsky would be forced to concede their case and in 1616 King Sigismund III reinstated the ownership of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra to the Orthodox. In 1615 Fr. Elisey would establish a printing house at the Lavra, he would purchase printing equipment from Vladyka Gideon (Balaban) and his son Theodore Balaban from their printing house at Stryatyn. They printed both religious and educational works at the Monastery in three languages: Slavonic, Polish and Latin.

The first book printed in the brand new printing house was a Book of Hours (1616), which was very popular in Ukraine and was re-printed in Russia. Later a Nomocanon and a Sluzhebnik (Missal) were printed in 1620, a book about poetry (1618) and commentaries on the New Testament by St. John Chrysostom (1624). The most important work printed during Fr. Elisey's tenure as Archimandrite was Fr. Zacharias (Kopystensky)'s "Book of the One Faith" (1621), a polemic work against the Uniates. During the first year of the printing, eleven different books were published.

To provide paper for the printing Fr. Elisey funded the construction of a paper mill in Radomyshl which was completed in 1618, the Radomyshl paper factory was the first paper mill in central Ukraine and still survives today as a museum, having an extensive collection of Holy Icons. In 1619 Fr. Pambo (Berdnya) moved to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and took over the printing, which freed Fr. Elisey to teach in the Brotherhood school. Fr. Elisey wrote several letters to Fr. (St.) Pambo, which survive to this day.

Fr. Elisey came into contact with many of the important Orthodox figures of his day, including the Archpriest Fr. Lavrenty Zyzany, Tarasii Zemka (who would later take over printing at the Lavra after the repose of St. Pambo Berdnya), Archimandrite Job (Boretskyi) and Archimandrite Petro Mohilya. He would invite Archimandrite Job (Knyahnytsky), the founder of the Manyava Skete to Kyiv to help direct the Brotherhood school. He also served as a spiritual father to the Orthodox nobleman Mikahil Vyshnevetsky and his wife Raina Vyshnevetsky (the aunt of St. Petro Mohilya). He also sent letters to Fr. (St.) Ivan Vyshensky, where they discussed the waning spiritual life in the Russian lands.

In this time Fr. Elisey would distribute alms to the poor, often taking gifts given to him by Ataman Petro Sahaidachny or (St.) Elizabeth Gulevichivna and giving them to the poor and needy. He personally taught classes in the Monastery school and showed an interest in many of the secular sciences, often speaking how they were related to Theology and God's Law. Fr. Elisey took an active part in the restoration of the Orthodox Hierarchy in 1620 and was present along with Ataman Petro Sahaidachny when Job Boretskyi was enthroned as the Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia by Patriarch Theophanes III of Jerusalem.

In the following years Fr. Elisey would personally bless the Zaporozhian Cossacks before battles, and would be present at the funeral of St. Petro Sahaidachny. In the last few years of his life Fr. Elisey had positioned Fr. Zacharias Kopystensky to become his successor as the Archimandrite of the Kyiv-Pecherk Lavra. A few months before his repose he resigned as the Hegumen of the Monastery and took the Greater Schema with the name Euthymios, after St. Euthymios the Great.

He reposed on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1624 but due to the intrigues of his enemies even after his repose, he would not be buried until February 17<sup>th</sup> 1625. In the four months he remained unburied, there was no sign of corruption on his relics. He would be buried in the catacomb of the Church of the Holy Dormition in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra – which he helped restore during his life time – and would be buried next to Princess Eupraxia Vsevolodovna (the sister of St. Vladimir Monomakh).

The epitaph on his tomb read: “Elisey Pletenetsky: Saved the Great Lavra – which had fallen into disrepair – from complete ruin. Restored old monasteries, built new ones and left the Churches with everything everywhere and appointed new priests. ...”

Fr. Zacharias Kopystensky – his successor as Archimandrite, – read the eulogy at his funeral. The portrait of St. Elisey was placed in the main monastic dwelling, this portrait would inspire many of icons of him, which can be found throughout Ukraine. Unfortunately after the Bolsheviks took over Ukraine, they destroyed the tomb of St. Elisey Pletenetsky. A statue of St. Elisey was placed at the Radomyshl paper mill in 2003. The Orthodox Church commemorates St. Elisey Pletenetsky on October 29<sup>th</sup> the date of his repose, as well as the Feast of All Saints of Kyiv-Pechersk.

## **---ST. IVAN VYSHENSKY---**

Ivan Vyshensky was born in the village of Sudova Vyshnia in the Lviv region sometime in the 1550s. His secular name, the names of his parents and much of his early life are unknown. He was more than likely of Rusyn ancestry and of a common background, as by his own testimony he did not receive a formal education. He also claimed to have lived an especially immoral and dissolute life before becoming a monk.

Sometime during the 1570s he travelled to Mount Athos and was tonsured a monk with the name John (Ivan) after St. John the Forerunner. He lived on Mount Athos for over 20 years in various different Monasteries and eventually as a Hermit under a vow of silence. He would return to Ukraine and break his vow of silence upon hearing of the union of Brest-Litovsk. Fr. Ivan was already familiar with the teaching of the Roman Catholics and the heresies of the Latins even prior to leaving Ukraine for Greece; the union inspired him to abandon silence and publicly preach against the heretics.

Fr. Ivan returned to Ukraine in 1604 and settled in the Assumption Monastery in Lviv, while also preaching throughout Galicia, Volhynia, Podilla and Luts'k, usually attracting large crowds due to his zeal and knowledge. He spoke particularly harshly against the "Polonization" of Ukraine. His preaching attracted the attention of Prince Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski, who would financially support him and he wrote to often. Among those who would hear Fr. Ivan's sermons included Stefan Adam Mazepa (father of Ivan Mazepa) and Bogdan Khmelnytsky.

During this time he would also study Calvinism and other Protestant beliefs as to have apologetic material against them as well. Fr. Ivan wrote several articles condemning Protestantism and publicly debated the Polish Calvinist Mykola Rej. He wrote particularly harshly against the idea of there being no Priesthood or Episcopacy and the rejection of the Holy Mysteries of the Church, contrasting the teachings of the Protestants with that of the Holy Fathers and the Holy Scriptures.

Fr. Ivan did not just focus on refuting Papism and Protestantism, but also preached much about the spiritual life, often preaching about the need for asceticism and living piously. He also condemned many folk practices such as singing and dances on Feast days of the Church, as well as superstitions people commonly believed. He often reminded people not to look for worldly joys but for Heavenly Joys and the Kingdom.

Eventually Fr. Ivan would be slandered by some of the Fathers at the Assumption Monastery in Lviv in 1606, causing him to relocate to the “Univ” Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God outside of Lviv . He would remain on good terms with Fr. Yuriy Rohatnyets of the Assumption Monastery and wrote several letters to him, he also wrote to a pious patroness of the Assumption Brotherhood named Dominika.

He was noted for having a sharp intellect and a good sense of humour, often being able to condescend to people's spiritual states to guide them. He spoke “common speech” often being derided as being an uneducated peasant due to his grammar and vocabulary. More than anything he was noted for his humility and extreme asceticism by his contemporaries.

He would go to the Manyava Skete in 1606 at the request of Sts. Job and Theodosius of Manyava, where he helped establish the Skete and became one of the first monks of the Manyava Brotherhood along with Fr. Zacharias Kopystensky. He lived at the Manyava Skete for many years, writing several books in that time. He wrote sixteen books during his lifetime, but only four survive today.

In the 1610s he would return to Mount Athos and lived as a cave-dweller on the Holy Mountain. He ordered his co-strugglers to seal up the entrance of the cave with bricks, only leaving a small hole so they could bring him food. He took on another vow of silence and completely withdrew from the things of this world. He would repose in 1624 at the age of 70.

Of his four surviving works we have include “The Denunciation of the Devil and the false peace”, “The Announcement”, “The Report” (a work dedicated to refuting the claims the Jesuit Peter Skarza), and an unseemingly untitled book dedicated to Prince Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski about the spiritual life of Athoinite Monks.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Ukrainian poet Ivan Yakovych Franko would write extensively about St. Ivan Vyshensky in his work “Ivan Vyshensky”. Franko's work revitalized the veneration of St. Ivan in Ukraine, and would also be the first publishing of his letters. Many streets in Ukraine are named after St. Ivan Vyshensky, and several icons of him exist, including a proto-icon made in the early +20<sup>th</sup> century at the St. Michael cathedral in Kyiv.

## **---THE NEW MARTYR DANYLO BRATKOVSKY---**

Danylo Bogdanovych Bratkovsky was born in 1642 in the Volhynia region of Ukraine and was baptized with the name Danylo after the Prophet Daniel. The Bratkovsky clan was a princely family, having hereditary ownership of properties in Bratslav and Volhynia. Unlike many noble families, none of the Bratkovsky family had converted to Papism after the Unia. From a young age Danylo had showed piety and zeal for Orthodoxy.

Prince Danylo spent much of his early life in Lutsk, where he was educated at the Exaltation of the Cross Brotherhood school. He would be transferred to Kyiv and be taught the Kyiv-Bratsky Brotherhood school. While in Kyiv he would meet Semyon Gurk – a Cossack officer under Ataman Semyon Paliy – which led the young Danylo to gain a great respect for the Cossacks. Semyon Gurk would also be impressed by Prince Danylo, writing in his chronicles: “...Danylo is a great man, a scientist, an excellent poet and a pious man of great intellect...”

He would marry and have several sons and daughters, all of whom would later move to the Russian Empire, but their names were not recorded. There are no surviving portraits of Prince Danylo that were made during his lifetime either. He would later travel to Italy to study there, where he learned Latin. After completing his studies, he would become a courtier and accountant for King Jan III Sobieski.

It was in the Polish royal court he would meet Ivan Mazepa, the Ataman of the Zaporozhian Cossack Host. At Ivan Mazepa's suggestion Prince Danylo became more of a public figure, entering the Sejm to defend the rights of the Orthodox in Volhynia and throughout Ukraine; speaking harshly against the Uniates in the government and public speeches

In the late 1680s the Uniates attempted to hold a Council in Lublin – attempting another union with Rome – Prince Danylo upon hearing of this immediately went to Lublin and with the support of the Fathers of the Lutsk Brotherhood, gave public speeches condemning the Uniates and reminding the Orthodox of the heresies of the Papists.

Due to Prince Danylo's efforts, the Lublin unia failed, with the majority of the population remaining Orthodox. As a result the Jesuits slandered him before the King and Sejm, claiming Prince Danylo was inciting an insurrection against the Commonwealth and was working for the Russian government. They also accused



him of being a sorcerer and an Arian heretic. Prince Danylo would appear before the Sejm and would defend himself against these charges. Upon the Sejm hearing his defense, all the charges would be dismissed.

He travelled to Volhynia and Kyiv after the slanders of the Jesuits, delivering public speeches to the Orthodox faithful, rallying many to stand fast to the Orthodox Faith. In this time Prince Danylo would take to heart the suffering and plight of the Orthodox peasantry in Ukraine; he would speak especially about the actions of the Catholic nobility, with their tendencies to steal, deceive and reap the rewards done by their Orthodox subjects.

One incident that would change Prince Danylo's entire worldview came when he was travelling across Ukraine and happened upon a peasant: Bratkovsky – being a noble – asked the peasant to take his horse for him to be rested for the night after a long journey. The peasant was offended and inconvenienced, yet still fulfilled his request. Upon learning of the man's disposition and how he fulfilled the request despite the personal cost, Prince Danylo was shaken and embarrassed by this encounter, after which he strove for a more spiritual lifestyle and greater obedience to others.

In 1697 Prince Danylo Bratkovsky would publish a collection of satirical poems, “the World examined in Parts”, dedicated to King Augustus III and written in old Polish. In 114 separate poems, it expounded on Orthodox morality and highlighted the persecution of the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – especially in the parts “Equality”, “Dispute of the Poor with the Lord”, and “Banquet at the Sejm”.

The book was popular, selling over four thousand copies by the end of the year. It would also cause the Jesuits and Papists to slander him further, at one point organizing public burnings of the work. Prince Danylo would not use his intellectual gifts and rhetorical skills for speaking against the Papists alone: In 1700 he would visit Ataman Ivan Mazepa in an attempt to broker a deal between him and Ataman Dezhava over who controlled the Right-bank of Ukraine.

His attempts to negotiate a peace between Ataman Mazepa and Ataman Dezhava at the Sejm were rejected by the Polish nobility, Ataman Semyon Gurk on the Left-bank would also attempt to broker a peace at the Sejm. The main reason the peace by Prince Danylo and Ataman Gurk were rejected was because to the Polish Catholic nobility it favoured the “Greek Faith”.

The state of Ukraine at this time was precarious, with most of the Eastern portion of Ukraine being under the control of the Russian Empire and the Western portion being controlled by Cossack voivodes and Orthodox nobility. Despite the relative autonomy of the Orthodox, the Uniates still had legal protection and tried to subvert much of the local order.

The Polish-Lithuanian government eventually decided to intervene in the dispute and attempted to occupy the Right-bank, which since the 1620s had been a Free Territory of the Cossacks. This would cause the Zaporozhian Ataman Semyon Paliy to launch an uprising in 1702 against the Polish forces led by Adam Mikolaj Sienaiawski of Hranow. Ataman Semyon would send a letter to Prince Danylo Bratkovsky asking for his support, which Prince Danylo pledged. Due to his influence among the Orthodox people of Ukraine, almost the entire population of the Right-bank supported the “Paliyivshchnya” (Paliy's uprising) as it became known as.

Prince Danylo did not take in active combat role, offering only moral and material support to Ataman Paliy, after the initial success of the uprising, the Cossacks gained fewer and fewer victories. Prince Danylo would be captured by the Polish forces while carrying letters from Ataman Ivan Mazepa and Ataman Semyon Paliy. They wanted to execute him by firing squad, but due to his noble status he would be given a trial instead.

He would be imprisoned in the Lutsk castle for a month. He was allowed to send letters and have a notary arrange his estate, the notary assigned to him was named Samilo Velychko, who would chronicle his sufferings at the hands of the Poles. The Jesuits instructed the Polish authorities to extract a confession that the uprising of the Cossacks was part of a larger conspiracy by the Russian Empire and the Orthodox Church to destroy the Commonwealth, but Prince Danylo would refuse to sign any document presented to him with these claims.

He would be brutally tortured, being placed on the “rack” and having his limbs broken. Eventually the Uniate bishop of Lutsk would visit him and offer that if he converted to Papism he would be pardoned, which Prince Danylo refused. Samilo Velychko would write: “...the apostates of Poles and Uniates put him through the worst tortures imaginable...”

Prince Danylo would write in prison: “...for what a miracle all of our Saints in

Kyiv have worked, because I am in His Mercy... I wish to save my soul; and I call upon all the Saints whom I have asked to be my helpers, so that they may come to my aid during my agony and death. Such is my sinful soul! Which I give to the hands of my God, that my body may return to earth. I wish for it to be buried with my ancestors and my Starets with the Saints in the Lutsk Brotherhood Church.”

Eventually Prince Danylo would be marched in the streets, being mocked and scorned, whilst crowds jeered at him, in an attempt to humiliate him into converting to the Latin faith. In his final letter, Prince Danylo exhorted his children to keep the Orthodox Faith, of which he was suffering for, and to not grieve over his death. When he was offered a last meal, he suggested any food might be given to the poor instead.

His execution was particularly brutal, being described by witnesses as being “Turkish”. Semyon Velychko writes he was “beheaded seven times” meaning his arms and legs were cut off, his torso was split, before being beheaded. One of the poems from “the World examined in Parts” mentions a man being split into seven pieces, which would turn out to have a prophetic significance. During the brutal execution, he endured the tortures and pains bravely, not saying as much as a word or making any cry of pain.

In his will he requested his children give 30 gold coins to the peasant who rested his horse years prior. He reposed on November 26<sup>th</sup> 1702 and after his Martyrdom he was subjected to a damnatio memoriae by the Polish government, with his name being struck from records and considered a traitor in official Polish histories. His children would flee to Russia, but due to the Bratkovsky family's association with Ataman Ivan Mazepa, they would become private individuals and eventually faded from the historical record.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the veneration of St. Danylo Bratkovsky would be brought into popularity by the works of the famous Ukrainian playwright Mykhailo Petrovych Starytski. During the Soviet period St. Danylo Bratkovsky would once again be subject to a damnatio memoriae, with the Bolsheviks destroying his relics. In the 1980s and 1990s St. Danylo Bratkovsky would become a popular figure again thanks to the works of historian Valery Shevchuk. Many streets in Lutsk were renamed after St. Danylo after the fall of the Soviet Union.

On the feast day of St. Danylo on November 29<sup>th</sup> processions take place all across the city of Lutsk. At the Lutsk Exaltation of the Cross Monastery, a proto-icon of

St. Danylo Bratkovsky was placed in the Church. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century new editions of “the World divided into Parts” would be printed in modern Ukrainian and Russian.

The Church celebrates his memory on November 29<sup>th</sup>, the Troparion written to St. Danylo in the 20<sup>th</sup> century mentions his final words: “I command my sons and daughters to die for the Faith for which I am killed!”

### **---ST. VASYL THE PILGRIM---**

Vasyl Grigorovich-Barsky was born on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1701 being born very sickly and having been baptized the same day he was born, being given the name Vasyl after St. Basil the Great. The doctors and priests did not think he would survive infancy, but the Grace of God was with him and he developed. The Grigorovich-Barsky family was a merchant family originally from the suburb of Bar in Podolia, then moved to Litkovychi, and finally to Kyiv in the “Pechersk Sloboda” suburb, where Vasyl was born.

In 1712 his family would move once again to Podol. His father was successful from his merchant trade and served as the warden at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Pyrohoshchy. Originally Vasyl wanted to study the sciences – which his mother supported – but his father protested this. Eventually he would convince his father and receive his parents' blessing to enter into the Kyiv Theological Academy (that had been founded by St. Petro Mohilya) and studied there, being personally taught by Fr. (later Bishop) Feofan Prokofiev.

Shortly after beginning his studies in 1723 he would come down with an illness that threatened his life and would be forced to travel to Lviv to seek treatment. After recovering he wished to continue his studies, but the only school in Lviv was a college run by the Jesuits, he entered the school but did not pray with the Latins while carefully concealing his Orthodox Faith. It was during this time he would adopt the first of his many aliases that he would later write under. Of his various aliases, the most common he used were “Plaka” and “Albov”.

After studying for a year and learning Latin, he would eventually decide upon adopting the podvig of “strannichestvo” (wandering) like St. Simeon of Verkhoturys once did. He would set off on foot in 1724 and would wander for the rest of his life, never staying in one place for long. He would document his journeys in letters and in his journal, which would be collected and published after

his repose.

He would never ask for anything and survived off of what people gave him. He rarely spoke the common language of the places he visited, often bringing him contempt and distrust, which he always humbly accepted. He would fast rigorously, practice extreme asceticism, and go deprived of basic needs for long periods at a time.

At first he visited the West, travelling to Budapest to venerate the relics of St. Stephen of Hungary, then Bari, Italy to venerate the relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; then he would visit Rome, then Venice and Greece – arriving in Corfu and eventually on Mount Athos. When Vasyl arrived on Mount Athos, several clairvoyant elders would bow down before him and ask for his blessing.

He would leave Mount Athos shortly after arriving and travel to Cyprus to venerate the relics of St. Lazarus, from there he would leave for the Holy Land, arriving in Palestine by 1726. He would go to Jerusalem then Mount Sinai to visit the St. Catherine Monastery. From St. Catherine's, he went to Alexandria and would stop his ceaseless wandering for eight months.

He would be personally invited to live at the Patriarchal residence by the Pope of Alexandria Cosmas II. Upon seeing the necessity to learn the Greek language, he would receive a blessing to live in Tripoli staying there from 1729 until 1731. Having learned the Greek language fluently from his time in Tripoli, he set off on his journey again and in 1734 stopped in the city of Damascus. While there the Patriarch of Antioch Sylvester would tonsure Vasyl a rassaphore monk and ordain him as a Subdeacon.

After being ordained to the subdiaconate, Archbishop Philotheos of Cyprus sent a letter requesting Fr. Vasyl to be transferred to Cyprus. From October 1734 until April 1735 Fr. Vasyl would teach Latin at the Greek schools in Cyprus and lived in a hut – like St. Alexios the Man of God – in the courtyard of the Archbishop's residence.

Fr. Vasyl would travel to the island of Patmos in 1736 as to visit the cave of St. John the Theologian where he lived and wrote the Book of Revelation. While on Patmos he once again found employment teaching Latin while studying metaphysics, language and philosophy. He fell in love with the island of Patmos and contemplated staying there indefinitely; however in 1743 the Russian

ambassador to the Ottoman Empire A.A. Veshnyakov summoned him to the capital of Constantinople, so Fr. Vasyl could be ordained to the Priesthood and serve at the Russian Embassy chapel.

Fr. Vasyl refused the ordination as he claimed he was unworthy, Veshnyakov would dispatch men after him to forcibly bring him to Constantinople. Upon learning of this, Fr. Vasyl fled Patmos on a ship and intended to return to Kyiv and teach at the Kyiv Theological Academy. During the voyage, a storm would blow the ship off course, forcing the ship to harbour at Mount Athos. Fr. Vasyl recognized this as Divine Providence and decided to stay on Mount Athos.

He spent the next two years on Mount Athos, now with the understanding of the Greek language, he read many of the spiritual works from the libraries across the Monasteries on the Holy Mountain. Upon once again being praised for his ascetical labours and spiritual feats, he fled the praise of men and left Mount Athos, visiting Athens and later Crete.

After the repose of A.A. Veshnyakov, Fr. Vasyl would travel to Constantinople, wishing to see the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom in the city. The new Russian Ambassador A. I. Neplyuev did not like Fr. Vasyl would slander him, accusing him of being a “Hellenizer” and being a spy for the Austrian government. Being wanted by the Turkish government and being unable to disprove the slanders against him, Fr. Vasyl would travel to Bulgaria where he would fall seriously ill.

Despite his illness he would travel to Wallachia and finally Poland. After 24 years of wandering and in the 48<sup>th</sup> year of his earthly life, he would finally return home to Kyiv on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1747. He see his family, after spending time at home he would fall asleep in the Lord a month later on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1747 and be buried at the Epiphany Cathedral in the Kyiv-Bratsky Monastery. His brother I.G. Grigorovich would collect his letters and journals and publish them as “Travels to the Holy Places of the East 1723 to 1747”

I.G. Grigorovich would describe his appearance in the preface to the book: “There is no portrait of Father Vasyl, but his features are as follows: Tall, with black hair on his head and his beard, without any grey hairs, a dark face and a strong body, thick eyebrows, high, large, almost connected, with sharp, brown eyes and a short nose. In clothing, speaking and posture he resembled a Greek; his own mother couldn't recognize him when he had returned home and could only confirm it was him after an hour of conversation.”

He would also describe St. Vasyl in the following: “He had a cheerful and humorous character and was interested in all sorts of sciences and arts, especially painting and drawing. From childhood he had a desire to travel, faithfully fulfilling that deed.”

Fr. Vasyl wrote in his letters: “If it is so happens that I must return to my homeland, then I must have my notes completed.” Contemporaries of Fr. Vasyl such as Archimandrite Isaias of Mt. Athos called the work “...(beyond) all the previous histories (.) of the Christian East.” Hegumen Kirill said the “Travels” were “perfect... (Fr. Vasyl described) truly and invariably, like no one before.”

Empress of Russia Elisabeth Petrovna – who had initially heard of Fr. Vasyl's travels from A.A Veshnyakov – requested a copy of the work from I.G. Grigorovich. The manuscript of Fr. Vasyl's “Travels” was kept in the house of his mother Maria Grigorovich and compiled by his brother, which was copied by relatives and friends of his.

In the “Travels”, Fr. Vasyl describes the work as “a report and history of various places” and himself as being a “simple writer (and) amateur historian”, he would accompany his writings with various drawings and diagrams of the places and things he was describing. His “Travels” would be used as educational material at the Kyiv Theological Academy, fulfilling one of his own wishes he envisioned for his work.

The first official printing and publication of the “Travels” came in 1770, when it was published by Vasyl Ruban in the journal “Parnassky Shchepetylnik”, the popularity of this printing led to Count Potemkin asking Vasyl Ruban to print it as a separate volume in 1778. For more than half a century Vasyl Ruban's 1778 edition was the most common, being reprinted several times. In 1885 Mykola Barsukov would reprint the book on behalf of the Imperial Palestine Society.

Fr. Vasyl's “Travels” would be translated and published in Greek in the 1980s and would receive new popularity in the post-Soviet period, finally being translated into modern Ukrainian from its original Old Slavonic in 2000. In 2019 a French translation would be published.

The popularity of the “Travels” gave rise to many books in Russia describing pilgrimages and the podvig of “strannichestvo”. At the Ayia Napa cathedral in

Limassol, Cyprus, a plaque commemorating St. Vasyl would be placed near the entrance. In Ukraine many streets are named after him, many icons of St. Vasyl can be found in churches throughout the country, depicting him similarly to how his brother described him. His commemoration is on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **---ST. PAVLO OF TOBOLSK---**

Petro Konyushkevich was born in 1705 in the village of Konyushky (now the village of Luky near Sambir) in Galicia within the Carpathian Mountains in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His family were burghers and merchants, thus they could afford to send him to the Sambir Brotherhood School. After receiving primary education in Sambir, he would enter the Kyiv Theological Academy, where he showed an inclination towards the monastic life and was described as having a gentle but firm character.

He would visit the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra regularly, attending Church services as often as could; he in particular loved Church singing and would pray the Hours as often as possible. He excelled in his studies and obtained a degree in rhetoric. In 1733 he would return to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and take monastic vows at age 28 being tonsured with the name Pavlo after St. Paul the Apostle.

Fr. Pavlo would be ordained a Hierodeacon the following year in 1734 by Abp. (St.) Rafael (Zaborovsky) of Kyiv. After ordination he would be invited to teach at the Kyiv Theological Academy, teaching rhetoric from 1738 until 1740. Upon his return to the Lavra he would be appointed the treasurer of the printing house, showing an aptitude for careful management of funds and being able to increase the output of works printed at the Lavra.

In 1735 he would be ordained a Hieromonk and accompanied the Archimandrite of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra Fr. Timofey (Shcherbatsky) to the capital of St. Petersburg, serving as a shafar (road steward), arranging lodging and meals for the Archimandrite. He was given an expense book – which is still preserved and can be found the Lavra's museum – and within it we find he noticeably gave much of his allotted budget to the poor of the city.

In 1741 he was invited to Moscow to teach at the famous Slavic-Greek Academy, a position he would hold from 1741 until 1743. On February 18<sup>th</sup> 1744 he would be elevated to the rank of Archimandrite and be appointed as Hegumen of the Yuriev Monastery in Veliky Novgorod that had been built by St. Yaroslav the



Wise. He would also be appointed as a Diocesan officer in the Novgorod diocese.

Over the next fifteen years he would oversee the Brotherhood of the Monastery and renovate the Monastery buildings and construct new ones. In 1745 he commissioned a new sacristy to be built, which still survives to this day. The Eastern portion of the Monastery walls that were constructed between 1752 and 1757 also survives, unfortunately the Southern and Western gates he commissioned did not survive to modern times.

Due to Fr. Pavlo's wisdom, skilled administration, practical and pastoral knowledge, he was recommended by the Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church to be consecrated to the Episcopacy and be appointed as the Metropolitan of Tobolsk and Siberia. On May 5<sup>th</sup> 1757 he would be consecrated as a Bishop in St. Petersburg, setting off for his diocese in June – he but wouldn't arrive until November 20<sup>th</sup> – during his journey he would donate much of his capital to newly built churches, as well as impoverished peoples and prisoners.

Upon arriving in Tobolsk he would spend his first night at the Znamensky Monastery and the following morning he would serve a Divine Liturgy in the Dormition Cathedral – only used during the summer – serving a Molieben outside the city gates in freezing temperatures. He would immediately begin serving his diocese, travelling across the immense landmass it covered. He was very generous to the poor, orphans and widows.

Vladyka Pavlo put special attention towards the Tobolsk Seminary, turning it into an esteemed educational center. He would also update the circulum of sciences taught, as he was very interested in the sciences himself; such was the case when a French astronomer visited Tobolsk, whom he greeted politely and asked how to teach the students astronomy to the standards being taught in Europe.

The main thing the Seminary was meant to taught – theology – was barely being taught in the Seminary. Vladyka Pavlo would invite three monks from Kyiv who had been teachers at the Kyiv Theological Academy to teach at the Tobolsk Seminary. Another issue Vladyka Pavlo would recognize was the lack of churches in the Tobolsk diocese, with the few churches around mostly being made of wood, which were often damaged in fires.

During his tenure as Metropolitan he would construct over 20 stone churches, including the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross in 1761 and Church of the

Nativity of the Virgin Mary with the adjacent Convent in 1762. He would also restore the Theophany Church that had burned down in October 1757 and the Zahariyev Church that was also damaged by fire. The same year the Tobolsk Convent was consecrated, he would commission the bell tower at the Annunciation Church.

Vladyka Pavlo would travel throughout the villages of the Tobolsk diocese, in particular he would organize missionary efforts to the Old Ritualists and pagans who lived in the Tobolsk diocese, converting many of them to Orthodoxy. He was very strict on himself, but did not turn a blind eye to evil or injustice: Metropolitan Pavlo would punish clergy who were found guilty of simony or moral infractions severely, removing them from the Church orders and have them sent to do menial labour.

In 1764 Metropolitan Pavlo would uncover the relics of St. Innokenty of Irkutsk (Martyred in 1734, commemorated on November 27<sup>th</sup>) while in Irkutsk, where St. Innokenty's relics were discovered to be incorrupt. The uncovering of St. Innokenty's relics was a joyous occasion, with this event being one of the last joys in Metropolitan Pavlo's ecclesiastical career.

Upon his return to Tobolsk he would commission a stone bell tower to be built by the Ukrainian architect Mykhailo Mytkevych which would be finished in 1767. Metropolitan Pavlo began speaking out against the secularization of Russia occurring under Empress Catherine II, particularly her policy of confiscating Church property and closing down Monasteries. He would write a harsh letter to the Most Holy Synod for supporting Catherine II's policies, as well as a defense of Metropolitan (St.) Arseniy (Matsievich) of Rostov – his predecessor to the Metropolis of Tobolsk – who was being persecuted by Catherine's government.

Empress Catherine II submitted a complaint to the Most Holy Synod about Metropolitan Pavlo, to which the president of the Synod Metropolitan Dimitri (Sechnov) would send officers to Tobolsk to investigate Vladyka Pavlo. Many of the defrocked clergy would submit complaints to the Synod and slander Vladyka Pavlo claiming he was abusive and cruel; after collecting the complaints Metropolitan Dimitri would summon Metropolitan Pavlo to Moscow.

The same night Metropolitan Dimitri ordered the summon to Moscow, Vladyka Pavlo would appear to Metropolitan Dimitri in a dream, where he spoke harshly to him in Latin: “ Once upon a time, our Fathers and Saints gave the Church various

earthly benefits and they would confirm the inviolability of those donations with curses or blessings. I, a sinful man, an unworthy Bishop of the Church of Christ; not with my own lips – but with the lips of the Fathers – place a curse on thee, for being a traitor to the Church and I predict a sudden death to come upon thee!”

Metropolitan Dimitri would die soon after this vision and be replaced by a layperson named A. Melisino as the chief prosecutor of the Most Holy Synod. Vladyka Pavlo would not respond to the first or second summon to Moscow, instead remaining in Tobolsk to govern the Church there. Eventually an Imperial Charter would be issued to the governor of Tobolsk stating: “Expel His Eminence from Tobolsk, without any delay.”

On January 11<sup>th</sup> 1768 Metropolitan Pavlo would voluntarily leave for St. Petersburg, upon arriving on April 2<sup>nd</sup> he would ask the Most Holy Synod to retire him due to his ill health – caused by the harsh climate of Siberia – and be allowed to live at the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. This request was rejected to which he submitted another request asking to be relieved to the Lavra.

Several times Empress Catherine II requested to meet him in person to which he responded: “I will not go anywhere except the Synod, to which I must obey.” Eventually the Most Holy Synod would defrock Pavlo from the Episcopacy, but the Empress recognized his humility and refused to confirm the Synod's decision. Eventually the Bishops of the Synod would ask him to return to his diocese of Tobolsk to which Vladyka Pavlo responded: “I was deprived of the diocese by decision of the Synod, therefore I will not return. Let me go to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, where I wish to be in obedience to the Hegumen.”

He would be allowed to live in the Lavra by May 7<sup>th</sup> and would arrive there on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Before Vladyka Pavlo went to the Lavra the Empress wished to gift him ten thousand rubles, which he refused; the Empress would order the rubles to be placed in his cell. Vladyka Pavlo refused to even touch the money calling it “fire” and considering it improper for a defrocked Bishop to be allowed to handle any money.

A trusted individual would take the money and give it to the Hegumen Fr. Zosimas (Valkevich) and Metropolitan Pavlo would ask him: “What will thou arrange Father of this 'fire'?” To which Fr. Zosimas responded: “It will be used to gild the churches.” Metropolitan Pavlo respond simply with “Good.” Records show the money paid for the gilding of the Iconostasis in the main Church.

While in the Lavra Vladyka Pavlo often said he was only protected by the Mother of God and the Venerable Fathers of the Caves and not by his own powers. What money was sent to him by his spiritual children he would use for the needs of the Lavra. He lived in strict asceticism and prayer; when offered a cell for esteemed visitors, he refused and asked to be given the cell of a simple monk instead.

Despite his poor health, he would continue to serve – not as a Bishop, but as a priest – and continued to write letters condemning the confiscation of churches. He rarely left the Lavra, usually stating he needed to prepare for his “departure”, he only left the Lavra as to serve other churches in Kyiv. He considered it his “sentence” to stay in the Lavra at all times

He was often praised by the people of Kyiv and the other Fathers of the Monastery for his humility and strict asceticism; but Vladyka Pavlo would always flee from these praises or rebuke those who praised him. He distributed all the money he earned from his handiwork to the poor and widows of Kyiv.

Two years after he arrived at the Lavra on November 4<sup>th</sup> 1770 Metropolitan Pavlo would fall asleep in the Lord. He wrote in his will that everything that belonged to him should be distributed to the poor in: “...good memory and my own free will.” The Archimandrite of the Lavra reported his repose to the Most Holy Synod, stating he died: “...with all Christian order...”

Many of his slanderers and enemies – including in the Synod – would attend his funeral and ask for forgiveness before his coffin. St. Pavlo's coffin was placed in the Church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr for three days until the memorial service was held.

When the Fathers of the Monastery attempted to move it a crypt below the ground, an invisible force stopped them from doing so. Many of the Fathers recognized this as a miracle similar to one in the life of St. Theodore of Uglich, wonderworker of Chernihiv, where an invisible force stopped his relics from being interred below the earth. After this miracle his relics would be interred in an above ground mausoleum near the Dormition Cathedral.

As he requested in his will, no inscription was placed would be placed before his coffin. Only after a few years the people of Kyiv and the Fathers of the Lavra would forget about St. Pavlo's relics. Many years later Metropolitan Yevgeny of

Kyiv and Galicia in the 1820s would commission a new crypt be built at the Lavra. By June 12<sup>th</sup> 1827 the coffins in the mausoleum would be removed and inspected before being buried in this new crypt.

One of these coffins was the one containing the relics of St. Pavlo of Tobolsk, the workers who initially inspected it noticed it had a fragrant smell which they reported to Metropolitan Yevgeny, Vladyka Yevgeny said he would investigate the matter, but not on that day.

Later on that same night, when Vladyka Yevgeny was sleeping, a violent thunderstorm would suddenly shake the Bishop's residence, awaking him. Soon after he would hear footsteps through the halls coming towards his bedroom door, which would open by itself. Suddenly the darkness of the night was replaced by a shining radiant light and a figure dressed in a Metropolitan's mantiya and klobuk stood before him, with a majestic yet formidable countenance.

The figure tapped the floor with his crozier while approaching Vladyka Yevgeny. Metropolitan Yevgeny wished to bow down before the figure, but his fear overcame his knees and back, the unknown figure would then speak to him in a Ukrainian accent: "Will thou give me rest or not? If thou wish not, then neither will I give thee rest!" Having said this the unknown man would leave the bedroom.

Early the next morning Metropolitan Yevgeny immediately went to the mausoleum where the unusual coffin was found in order to inspect it. Upon opening the coffin he saw the same Metropolitan who had appeared to him the previous night; his relics were completely incorrupt, appearing as if he were asleep. Vladyka Yevgeny was in shock and immediately bowed down before the relics, kissing his hands and washing them with his tears. However it was still unknown which Saint whose relics were in the coffin.

Metropolitan Yevgeny immediately started looking for answers on whose relics were in the coffin, holding memorial services before them until an answer could be found. Eventually upon searching through the libraries and asking the Fathers of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra he learned the relics were of Metropolitan Pavlo of Tobolsk who had reposed 57 years earlier.

The Metropolitan ordered that St. Pavlo's relics stay in place, with the mausoleum being converted into a small chapel for his relics. Shortly thereafter numerous

miracles and healings would begin to occur at St. Pavlo's tomb.

The monk Fr. Pafeniy (Ageev) – who documented his pilgrimages across the world – would describe St. Pavlo's relics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: “Once in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra near the left altar we were shown the relics of Saint Pavlo, Metropolitan of Tobolsk and Siberia, who spent his later life in the Lavra and fell asleep there. He rests in a coffin, appearing as if he were asleep, being wholly incorrupt. There is also a pleasant fragrance coming from his relics, but to this day he is not yet numbered as a Saint, with only memorial services done before his tomb.”

In 1910 preparations were made to glorify St. Pavlo, but this would not be completed. In these preparations however St. Pavlo's relics would be placed in a new bronze coffin, which was detailed with icons depicting events from his life. In 1912 the relics would be moved to another chapel in the Lavra.

During the First World War once again the inquiry was raised to glorify St. Pavlo after many Russian soldiers reported numerous miracles occurring after calling upon St. Pavlo while fighting the Austrians. Eventually at the 1917-1918 All-Russian Church Council – the same that would elect St. Tikhon as Patriarch of Moscow – the inquiry was once again reviewed, with information being gathered about his life. No protocol was issued due to the Council being cut short by the Bolshevik revolution.

After the destruction of the the Dormition Cathedral at the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, St. Pavlo's relics would remain buried under its ruins, unaccounted for almost 60 years. In the early 1990s while a survey was being conducted to rebuild the Cathedral, a Ukrainian archaeologist by the name of Gleb Ivakin would be hired to investigate the ruins and salvage whatever he could. At first several 15<sup>th</sup> century tombs were discovered, but finally they found the relics of St. Pavlo of Tobolsk and St. Vladimir of Kyiv, the Protomartyr killed by the Bolsheviks in 1917.

The relics of St. Pavlo and St. Vladimir would be solemnly transferred to the Annunciation Church in the Far Caves of the Lavra in 1994. A portion of his relics would also be transferred to the city of Sambir – where St. Pavlo had grown up – later that year.

In 1994 a Church would be constructed in Sambir dedicated to St. Pavlo of Tobolsk, and in 1999 a Canon would be written to St. Pavlo. Over 50 documented

miracles have happened at his tomb, and several times St. Pavlo has appeared to people in dreams, sometimes alongside St. Philotheos of Tobolsk. He has on many occasions prophesied future events for people, such as predicting when people will enter the priesthood.

In particular of his many miracles St. Pavlo has appeared many times to soldiers in his homeland. During the Russo-Ukrainian War, there have been many reports of soldiers claiming to have been saved by great danger and death by St. Pavlo of Tobolsk. In icons St. Pavlo is depicted as a Metropolitan, with a blue mantiya and a white klobuk, holding a crozier and overlooking the city of Tobolsk or the Lavra. His memory is celebrated on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **---THE NEW MARTYR DANYLO OF MILYEV---**

Danylo Kushnir was born in the village of Milyev in the Horodyschenskyi district, Cherkasy region, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (now Ukraine). He lived in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when much of Ukraine was still part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and was still attempting to force the Ukrainian Orthodox people to convert to Papism.

By 1766 Danylo Kushnir was living in the village of Vishan and served as the warden for the Dormition Church in that village. There were two Orthodox churches in Vishan: The Dormition Church and the Holy Trinity Church, with the priests at these churches being Vasyl and Feodor Hdyshytsky, who were both sons of the Archpriest Afansiy.

In 1766 the Polish Army would arrive in the city along with a Uniate commission and begin to fiercely persecute Orthodoxy, several people would be tortured or even killed for refusing to convert to Papism and the two churches would be forcibly given over the Uniates. Afansiy, Vasyl and Feodor Hdyshytsky would all apostatize and join the Uniate church.

The decision of the Hdyshytsky family to convert to Papism would not be accepted by the people of the village, eventually the starost (village elder) would convene a meeting and Deacon Grigori Shylenko would be elected as the rector of the Holy Trinity Church and Grigori Khomynsky for the Dormition Church. The traitorous Hdyshytsky family would not accept this and with an army retinue they attempted to seize the church buildings, leading to a brawl in the town.

Fearing the churches may be seized by the Uniates, Danylo Kushnir would take the Church utensils and tabernacle from the two Orthodox churches and hide them, so they could not be seized by the Uniates. Danylo Kushnir was well respected by the village and his decision was trusted by the Orthodox people of the village.

Upon the Hdyshytskys learning about this, they accused Danylo Kushnir of thievery and a blasphemer, who had defiled Holy Things, they would send a complaint to the governor of Smilya, a man named Venti. Venti would order Kushnir to be arrested and thrown in the dungeon of the Smilya castle. The Orthodox population of Vishan offered to pay for the release of Danylo, and even personally offered money to Afansiy Hdyshytsky as to replace the utensils and tabernacle.

Eventually the ransom was turned down by both the governor and the Hdyshytsky family, who both declared the only way for Danylo Kushnir to be spared was if he converted to Catholicism. Kushnir steadfastly rejected this even after they attempted to bribe him. The governor would even resort to trying to send unclean women to defile him, but Danylo would overcome all temptations with prayer.

Seeing that Danylo Kushnir would not convert, the Hdyshytsky family would convince the governor to have Danylo executed for treason. He would be brought before the public outside of the Smilya castle, whereupon learning of the execution order he would immediately tell the Orthodox among the crowd to defend and keep the Orthodox Faith they had received from their ancestors.

Wanting to make an example out of him they resolved to make his execution a public spectacle, trying to intimidate the Orthodox into converting to Papism. By Saturday June 29<sup>th</sup> 1766 Danylo Kushnir would be brought by a Polish cavalry convoy to the village of Vishan, where the Poles would round up villagers from surrounding villages to witness the execution.

Afansiy Hdyshytsky attempted to give last rites to Danylo Kushnir, though the Holy Martyr spit on his hands rather than kiss them. Afansiy Hdyshytsky ordered Danylo's hands to be cut off as a result. After his hands had been cut off, Kushnir would be tied to a pole with hemp rope that had been soaked in oil.

During the preperation Danylo would continue speaking to the crowd exhorting them to keep the Orthodox Faith, despite many attempts to quiet him he could not be silenced. After he said the Hdyshytsky family were apostates and traitors to



God, Vasyl Hdyshytsky would grab an officer's sword and behead Danylo Kushnir, thus ending his earthly life and interring him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Subsequently the Poles would burn the Martyr's relics, with only St. Danylo's head being saved after it was impaled on a stake outside of Vishan to terrorize the Orthodox populace. Uniates would collect his ashes and throw them in a drainage ditch as to prevent the Orthodox from collecting them. Guards were set to watch St. Danylo's head.

One night in September, an unknown Orthodox Christian would collect the head of St. Danylo and bring it to Pereyaslav and gave it to the Hegumen of the Holy Ascension Monastery, where it was placed in the Cathedral Church as a Holy Relic. Later at an unknown date the Holy Relic of St. Danylo would be buried, and after the Monastery was destroyed by the Bolsheviks it went missing.

The Hdyshytsky family would all have horrible deaths not long after the Martyrdom of St. Danylo of Milyev. Vasyl would be impaled by a sword, Afansiy would have a stroke that made it impossible for him to move or use his hands and would eventually die after much suffering, and Feodor would drown in a drainage ditch.

19<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian folklorist, ethnographer and poet Taras Grigorovich Shevchenko would write about St. Danylo of Milyev in his epic “Haydamaki” (pub. 1841): “I can tell you about what happened in Ukraine in the summer of 1766 as we have heard from our elders... I have not read anything that can suggest the account is anything but non-fiction... The Milyevsky Saint is real as there are people still alive who knew him... There is only conflict about whether or not the Poles tortured him in the summer or winter.”

Taras Shevchenko grew up close to the village of Vishan and was very familiar with St. Danylo. In 1886 Feodor Loboda would record a folk song in Platon Lukashevich's “Old Kyiv” newspaper, which had been written in either 1767 or 1768: “Yea did the Poles vainglory in Vishan, yea they didst behead Danylo Milyevsky, and ordered his body burned and his head nailed to a stake.”

Some residents of Vishan would take earth from the spot where he was Martyred and bring it to his hometown of Milyev. Near the Church of the Holy Trinity – close to where the Deacon's residence – a shrine would be built for St. Danylo in Milyev, with a large wooden Cross being placed in a brick foundation. This shrine

stood until the 1930s when it was destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

The people of Milyev would hire poets and writers from Kyiv to write a small booklet about St. Danylo of Milyev, simply titled “Danylo Kushnir” which would be published in 1864. An Iconographer was also commissioned that same year to write the proto-icon of St. Danylo which was placed in the Holy Trinity Church. Both the Church and the Icon were destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

In 1921 the Sich Riflemen would arrive in the village of Milyev during their retreat from the Red Army. One of the chaplain priests would serve a Molieben before St. Danylo's shrine and bless the troops with some of the same earth that had been brought from Vishan where the Martyr was killed. Despite being completely surrounded, the Sich Riflemen would be able to miraculously escape the Bolsheviks that night.

The memory of St. Danylo of Milyev is celebrated on June 29<sup>th</sup> by the Holy Church. In Icons he is depicted with rope tied around his wrists, holding a Cross and holding a scroll that has his final words: “My God! Accept my spirit!” or his words to the executioners: “God is with us! Do not be afraid, do what thou was told!”

### **---ST. DANYLO OF ACHINSK---**

Danylo Kornilievych Deliye was born on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1784 in the village of Novy Sanzhary, Novosenzhariv region, Kobelyatsky district near Poltava. He would be baptized the following day on December 11<sup>th</sup> in the Dormition Church and named after St. Daniel the Stylite. His family was of Cossack origin, his father Kornily Deliye had gone mad due to a fever and suffered for 20 years before he reposed in good standing with the Church during Holy Week having taken Holy Communion and Last Rites before his repose.

His mother Gafia Deliya was a pious housewife and well respected as a honest woman. Danylo from a young age showed exceptional piety and humility, avoiding the usual games and attitudes other children showed. At the age of fifteen Danylo would become very ill with a fever. His mother worried he would suffer the same fate as his father; but after Danylo prayed consistently to the Mother of God, he would recover completely within two months.

After his recovery he wished to serve the Church and began to study chanting and

music. He was an octavist and studied Church music with friends, attending Church as often as possible and singing in the choir was something he enjoyed very much. He wished to become a Cantor, but at the request of his mother and his grandfather, he would leave the choir and become a farmer, emulating his father's occupation.

In 1807 he would be conscripted into the Russian Army; after completing training he would be assigned to an Artillery Battalion in 1809. While in Artillery Battery School he would learn how to read and write. When the French under Napoleon would invade Russia in 1812 Danylo Deliyev would be sent with his unit to fight the French. At the battle of Borodino he would be severely injured, but made a full recovery.

He would be present with Russian soldiers as they entered the city of Paris at the end of the Franco-Russian War. Of the eight soldiers in his unit only him and another soldier survived, which he ascribed to the Providence of God. Danylo sent letters and money transfers to his family and the Archpriest Fr. Pyotr Bazlyevich throughout the war. After the war his Battalion would be stationed in Lebedyn.

In August 1820 he would take vacation leave to visit his mother in Novy Sanzhary, where he wished to receive her blessing to enter the Monastic life and distributed his salary from the Army to his family members. He would visit the forests around Novy Sanzhary while on vacation, where he began to practice asceticism such as living in a cave. He would visit the miracle-working Icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker at the Nikolsky Church in Dikanka during his vacation as well.

Danylo would spend the rest of his salary on spiritual books and a prayer book. When his vacation time was up, he left the cave-dwelling podvig and gave his last 25 rubles to his brother Ivan with the request for him to purchase rizas for the Holy Icons. At his departure he would tell his family: "Farewell. I will not be coming home anymore..."

Upon his return to the military he was made a non-commissioned officer with the rank of Captain, offered to him personally by the Battalion Commander. He would sleep in the punishment cells and read Holy Scripture, the Lives of Saints and spiritual works for many hours a time in between his duties. Danylo Deliyev would contemplate God constantly and resolved within himself to imitate the Saints, wishing to withdraw from the military and world and to become a monastic.

By 1823 after 17 years of military service he would ask for an early retirement from the military so he could enter a Monastery. He would be put on trial on June 9<sup>th</sup> for: “Insubordination, for the intention to retire for monasticism... with confirmation from the commander-in-chief of the 1<sup>st</sup> Southern Army, where he showed his stubbornness in his opinion and unwillingness to serve.”

At this trial Danylo would say: “It would be better for me to die than abandon my intention to become a monk.” He would be stripped of all military honors and sentenced to exile to Nerchinsk, deep within Siberia, and soon after he would be marched to the colony in Siberia in a chain-gang. In 1824 the Tobolsk governance would re-sentence Danylo Deliye to hard labour at the Bogotol Distillery.

While at the Distillery Danylo humbly took on the hardest jobs during the day and spent his nights in prayer, only sleeping a few hours each day before returning to harsh labour. He would endure abuse from the local Balilff E. P. Afanasyev, who hated Danylo and assigned him to the harshest punishments.

Once during a frigid night in the harsh Siberian winter; Afanasyev in a frenzy would order Danylo Deliye to be stripped naked and thrown outside during a blizzard and ordered guards to throw water on the ascetic, the whole time shouting from the roof: “Save thyself! Aren't thou a Saint?”

It wouldn't be Danylo that would fall ill, but Afanasyev. He became deathly ill and realized he had sinned before God, he confessed and repented of all of dishonest deeds and crimes, but did not recover. Afanasyev would eventually ask for forgiveness from Danylo and asked him to pray for him, within the week he would make a full recovery. Upon his health returning he would once again visit Danylo and beg for his forgiveness, to which Danylo responded: “God will forgive thee... For I deserve punishment, because I am a liar...”

The Balilff immediately submitted a report to the governor of Tobolsk claiming Danylo Deliye was incapable of hard labour and should be released from the Distillery. Having obtained freedom Danylo would settle in the village of Achinsk where a local merchant named A. Khvorostov would allow him to settle in a small hut on his property.

Not long after Danylo would move to the village of Zertsaly fifteen versts (around 19 kilometers) away from Achinsk, there he would live in a cell that resembled a coffin with a window that was the size of a copper kopek coin. He would spend

weeks in this coffin-like dwelling standing at prayer, rarely leaving and not speaking to anyone. He called this cell his “prison” and wore a belt made out of the bark from a birch tree, which miraculously continued to grow, and near the end of his life would even grow into his body.

He wore iron chains underneath his clothing which weighed several kilograms, weakening his flesh. He did knitting and other needlework, selling his wares near the village hall but he refusing any payment with money for his work, instead trading only for rye bread, potatoes and water. At night he would secretly work the fields and gardens of local peasants, mowing, reaping and doing other hard labours for which he never took credit.

People began to visit Danylo seeking his advice or ask for his prayers; many people said just looking at him granted them a spiritual warmth. Oftentimes hardened sinners and apostates would weep upon looking at him and publicly confess their sins. Everyone knew that he had the Grace of God with him, at one point the Archbishop of Irkutsk Mikhail (Burdukov) visited him, which he later recounted had a deep impact on him.

Many people, including priests and Bishops would start to visit Danylo. People began to call him Starets or Father which Danylo was upset by, telling people that he was not a monk or a priest, thus having no right to be called Father or Elder and insisted people only call him Brother Danylo. He began to speak in parable – where only those who he was directly addressing could understand what he was saying – and showed the gift of clairvoyance.

Brother Danylo would prophesy people's futures and would show up at the homes of the sick to pray for them before they could call for anyone or tell anyone that they were sick. Many came to Achinsk solely to speak to Danylo, who often met those wishing to see him on the road, before he could possibly know people were arriving to speak with him.

Love filled his heart; he treated everyone with the greatest respect and familial care. He poured out tears unceasingly and spoke only when spoken to, once when asked about almsgiving he said: “Even the poor can give alms... Help the poor, work for them, comfort them, pray to God for them and most of all love them as neighbours...”

Danylo approached Holy Communion frequently and exhorted others to do the

same. His body was completely weakened from austere fasting and asceticism, despite the weariness of his flesh he always had a cheerful countenance and pleasant disposition. From constant kneeling large scabs had formed on his knees – from which worms began to eat his flesh – but he endured these torments with a good disposition, often joking about them and treating them as nothing.

The Holy Ascetic avoided all forms of vainglory and idle talk. One time a peasant woman from Tomsk named Maria Ikonnivka – who was carelessly wandering about Holy places across Russia – came to visit Danylo Deliye. He would sharply rebuke her saying: “Why hast thou come to bother me, false pilgrim? Why dost thou wander around the world and deceive God and people? Thou go to Kyiv and ask for money for candles and prayers, then spend it on pleasures!”

Despite Danylo's sharp rebukes, Ikonnivka would set off for another “pilgrimage” travelling to the Sarov Hermitage. While there, she would meet St. Seraphim of Sarov who also rebuked her: “Why have thou come here at all? Brother Danylo told thee thou shouldn't wander. Go back to thine home with thy relatives.”

On another occasion, a local man who was curious about what Brother Danylo did after he retired to his cell would creep up to the kopek-sized window in his coffin-like cell; upon doing so, a flame would burst out of the window and scorch him. The man's cries alerted Danylo who would address him saying: “God will forgive thee, but do not test Him anymore.” The curious man would dedicate himself to living uprightly and exhorted others to follow the will of God after his encounter.

By January 1843 Danylo left Zertsaly for Yeniseisk, where Mother Eugnia (Starikova, whom he previously had counselled years prior to become a nun) was the Abbess of the Holy Nativity Convent (now Iversky Convent). Mother Eugnia offered to build a cell for Danylo in a garden near the convent, but Danylo refused and wrote in a letter: “Thou will live above ground, but soon I will live below it. When I arrive, thou will bury me.”

Sensing his bodily repose was imminent, he would take off the heavy chains he wore beneath his clothing. To those who knew about them he would explain: “My body is used to them and does not feel any hardship from them. Only then is a labour useful to the body. It is better for people to say 'Danylo has become lazy' or not know about them, and it will be better for me than any praises.”

On Bright Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 1843 Brother Danylo would confess and take Holy

Communion for the last time. Later that afternoon he would say the prayers before sleep while kneeling, and while in prayer and kneeling would fall asleep at the ninth hour (around three in the afternoon) at the age of 95 years old.

On his face was a joyful smile and a peaceful look. Three days prior he had asked forgiveness from all the Mothers from the Nativity Sisterhood and told them he was departing soon. The priest who gave him his last Communion, Fr. Vasily Kasyanov – the convent priest – would record his life. Fr. Parfeniy (Ageev) – who had met St. Danylo – would also record many details in his work “Travels throughout Moldovia, Russia, Mt. Athos and the Holy Land.”

Many people from Yeniseisk would show up at his funeral, with Mother Eugenia writing “(practicaly) the whole town” was present. Even those who disregarded or hated him in life would show up and ask for forgiveness before his coffin. Many who hadn't had the chance to meet him were weeping lamenting they couldn't meet the man of God. A Heavenly fragrance filled the Church during his funeral and his relics shone with light.

The former Abbess of the Convent, Mother Devora – who had gone blind – could see the light shining from St. Danylo's relics. St. Danylo would be buried at the Convent close to the Nativity Church. Many miracles began to occur at the grave of St. Danylo and a chapel dedicated to his namesake, St. Daniel the Stylite, would be built in 1860 over his grave. His relics would be placed in a reliquary above ground around this time as well.

Regular memorial services, moliebens and healings occurred in this chapel until the time of the Bolshevik revolution. On May 1<sup>st</sup> 1920 the Presidium of the Yenisei Provincial Committe of the Russian Communist Party would order the chapel that housed St. Danylo's relics to be destroyed. What happened to St. Danylo's relics – whether they were reburied or destroyed – is unknown.

In 2012 several Russian historians believe the Bolsheviks may have reburied the relics of St. Danylo, but each search for them has found anything. In the year 2000 a cast-iron plaque that was on his reliquary was found in an warehouse and would be transferred to the Dormition Cathedral in Yeniseisk. the proto-icon of St. Danylo can also be found at this cathedral.

In 2001 a Canon for St. Danylo would be written and the same year a church dedicated to him would be built in Achnisk. In 2011 a church named after St.

Danylo of Achnisk would be built in Krasnoyarsk. The Troparion in Tone III is as follows:

“Angelic on the earth and now with the angelic hosts in Heaven, / thou rejoicest now with the shining Saints, / illumining the lands of Siberia, / let us sing thy praises; / Rejoice O Righteous Danylo, / who came to Siberia by Divine Providence, / and blesses us with miracles, // pray to God for our souls!”

In 2012 the chapel in Novy Sanzhary where St. Danylo was baptized was uncovered, with a new chapel being built in that site. Most of the population of Novy Sanzhary has fled since the Russo-Ukrainian war as the village is close to the frontlines, it is unknown if this chapel is still standing as of 2025.

St. Danylo of Achnisk is commemorated on April 15<sup>th</sup> and on June 10<sup>th</sup> with the Synaxis of All Saints of Siberia.

### **---ST. BONIFACE OF FEOFANIYA---**

Damian Fedorovich Vinogradsky was born in 1785 in the village of Mykhailivka, Kirovograd region, in Kropyvnytskyi district which had been recently annexed into the Russian Empire after the Partition of Poland. His parents were Feodor and Evdokia Vinogradsky and from a young age Damian showed a love for visiting churches and an incredible desire for learning.

He would complete his primary schooling in Mykhailivka, when classes would finish for the day he avoided the games and idle talk of children, and would return home quickly to diligently do chores and prayer. He was very obedient to his parents and at his mother's request he would marry at the age of 20 even though he wished for the monastic life.

Not long after his marriage he would be conscripted into the Russian Army, being assigned to the Malo-Russkiye' regiment. Damian would participate in the Franco-Russian war of 1812 against the forces of Napoleon where he fought in dangerous battles but by the Grace of God, he was never injured.

Upon his return to civilian life in 1818 – having been given an early leave from the compulsory 25 year service – he would at first take up farming, but him and his wife both had the desire to join monasteries. They agreed to separate and become monastics, with Damian giving much of his inheritance to his wife for her travels.



The rest of his pension and inheritance he distributed to the poor and needy.

With one set of clothing and an old Bible he set off on foot to Kyiv, wishing to visit the Monasteries in that city. On the way to Kyiv he would briefly stop at the Vinograd Monastery and the Yavotinsky Monastery. When he first arrived in Kyiv he was a complete stranger and often had to sleep out in the open, drink water from rain puddles and gather food from wastebins.

He eventually found work making and selling candles at the Holy Trinity Church in the Old City and became a friend with the Holy Fool Ivan Bosoy – who was well known in Kyiv at that time – with Ivan advising Damian to give and serve to the poor and pilgrims who came through the city. Damian would move into the Kyiv-Andreevskaya Church where a guesthouse was and began to serve the pilgrims by cooking meals and washing laundry for them.

In 1850 Metropolitan (St.) Filaret (Amfiteatrov) would appoint Damian as the warden of the Rzhyschchensky Monastery (now a Convent) but only after a few months with the blessing of the Hegumen he would return to Kyiv and continue to serve pilgrims at Kyiv-Andreevskaya. On October 15<sup>th</sup> 1851 Bishop Apollinariy of Chigrin would invite Damian to the Kyiv-Mikhailovsky Monastery, where he fell in love with the Monastery and decided to become a monk there. In 1854 he would be tonsured a monk with the name Boniface after St. Boniface of Mainz, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlightener of Germany.

Fr. Boniface would be ordained a Hierodeacon in 1856 and a Hieromonk in 1860. In 1861 some of Fr. Boniface's kinsmen would visit him at the Kyiv-Mikhailovsky Monastery while on pilgrimage and urged him to return to the Kirovograd region to establish a Monastery there. Fr. Boniface would ask for a blessing from the Hegumen of the Mikhailovsky Monastery, the Archpriest Fr. Viktor Serafim, to establish this Monastery; but upon asking for the blessing Fr. Viktor would hand him an icon of the Archangel Michael and say: “Here is my blessing from God and from the Archangel Michael. Ask the Great Martyr Barbara to guide thee to the farmstead in Feofaniya, establish a skete there and serve it.”

Taking two hieromonks, two hierodeacons and three novices with him Fr. Boniface would set off for Feofaniya – a village he never stepped foot in. Following Fr. Viktor's advice he would ask the Great Martyr Barbara to guide him and when he arrived in Feofaniya he would be greeted by a pious widow named Barbara, who mentioned she had several dilapidated buildings on her property the

monks could stay in. Recognizing God's will, the monks settled at the farmstead.

The newly established Brotherhood of St. Michael would restore the buildings on the property and build a Bishop's residence. One of the buildings was converted into a Church dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel and decorated with a beautiful iconostasis and icons. Fr. Boniface instituted that every cell's lampadas and the Church's lampadas be kept lit at all times, daily services were strict and followed the pattern and rule established by the Desert Fathers of Egypt. With the blessing of Bishop Serafim (Aretinsky) of Chyhyryn the Brotherhood began to practice an unceasing watch in the Church that would read the entire Psalter daily.

Every Sunday after Liturgy an Akathist to St. Michael would be served. By the end of 1861 a wooden bell-tower would be built near the Skete; the newly established Feofaniya Monastery would not escape the notice of Christ-loving people and by 1864 the Brotherhood had increased to 30 monks. Fr. Boniface would construct a guesthouse for the poor and needy of Feofaniya, which following the Athonite tradition would not turn anyone away.

Despite the immense cost Fr. Boniface made sure every visitor was guaranteed a bed, warm food and shelter from the elements. Many visitors were in poor health and decided to live in the Monastery, around 50 men in total would move into the Monastery, raising the numbers of the Brotherhood to over 80. Many of the wanderers would have perished had Fr. Boniface not taken them in due to climate and famine.

The St. Michael Brotherhood was very impoverished, however any time the Monastery was about to run out of funds and would need to limit the hospitality they showed, donations would arrive unexpectedly. On one occasion Fr. Boniface had run the Monastery's treasury completely empty, there was no money left to buy bread for the monks let alone the pilgrims. Despite the fears of his brother-monks, Fr. Boniface placed all of his hope in God and within a few days an anonymous letter containing a letter of credit with a substantial sum would arrive at the Brotherhood.

Several times the Kyiv-Mikhailovsky Monastery offered to send assistance, but Fr. Boniface refused assistance each time, claiming that he had entrusted the Will of God completely and wished for the Monastery to subsist entirely on the alms of the faithful. In 1865 Fr. Boniface would commission the construction of a summer residence for esteemed clergy – primarily the Hegumen of the Kyiv-Mikhailovsky

Monastery. By 1867 Bishop Porfiry (Upsensky) would bless the foundation of the new Church on the Monastery grounds dedicated to All Saints.

After the construction of the new Church Fr. Boniface was worried about the supply of clean drinking water for the Monastery, he began to dig a small well near the kitchen. While praying to the Mother of God a spring would gush forth clean water on the spot where he was digging; Bishop Innokenty – who was visiting the Monastery – went to the spring and said it was a miraculous spring and not a natural one. A chapel would be built over the spring and adorned with icons with many healings and miracles occurring from the Holy Water that came from the spring.

Most everyone saw Fr. Boniface as an excellent spiritual father, who was fully devoted to serving God and His Church; his cell attendant Hieromonk Leonid described Fr. Boniface's life as being in constant prayer. His prayer rule was very strict, reading the Akathist to the Mother of God and the Saviour every day, standing at vigil for several hours in the morning and evening, and reading two entire Gospels every week.

By December 1870 Fr. Boniface began to fall ill with fatigue and exhaustion, with his strength having weakened to where he could no longer leave his cell. His cell was very close to Church, so Fr. Boniface would ask his cell attendant to leave his window open so he could listen to the Church services and chant with them. Soon enough he couldn't stand for prayer, and instead would say his usual rule while wearing his mantiya seated. He would kneel often and still received visitors even during his illness.

In November 1871 his weakness would develop to where he was bedridden. On December 27<sup>th</sup> 1871 Fr. Boniface would fall asleep in the Lord in the 85<sup>th</sup> year of his life shortly after the third hour (9 o'clock), a year after his illness began. He would be buried behind the Church of All Saints close to where the altartable is.

His life would be recorded by Hieromonk Evstratiy (Golovansky), who years prior had been one of the many pilgrims St. Boniface had given shelter to. His cell attendant Fr. Leonid described how he saw his illness as being a blessing that would purge his sins. From Fr. Leonid and Fr. Evstratiy's accounts is recorded an event that happened three days before St. Boniface reposed:

“...Father called us saying 'Hurry, have conversation with me! The wicked beast

that I am. Hurry, hurry soon! For at the ninth hour on December 27<sup>th</sup> I will die!' We spoke with him and gave him Confession, Communion and Last Rites as he instructed us to do... So it was that he did in fact repose on the ninth hour of December 27<sup>th</sup> peacefully giving his soul to God after 85 years of charity.”

Fr. Evstraity recorded the following: “His body was held in wake for two days in the Church of St. Michael, which during the two days had shown no sign of corruption, on the third day his coffin was transferred to the Church of All Saints for the funeral service. Many came from Kyiv, Goloseevskaya, Kitayev and other villages to pay their respects to Fr. Boniface.

Tears, sobbing and loud crying accompanied our Elder to his grave, which was placed behind the Altar of the Church of All Saints. Father did not want to be buried there but Vladyka Porfiry (Upsensky) ordered it be done, as he said Fr. Boniface was near the Saints and had every right to be buried so close...

People shouted during the funeral 'Take us with thee Father!', 'Thou breadwinner, who will feed us now?', 'Go before our Righteous Judge and pray for us!', “Do not forget about us and remember us and our children and our children's children in thy prayers Holy Father!" among other things.

His gravestone was marked with words from Sirach: 'Their bodies are buried in the world, their names live in childbearing, nations will declare their wisdom and the Church will sing their praise' (Sir. 44: 1-3, 13-44)”

The life written by Fr. Evstratiy concludes with: “Thanks be to the Lord God that Holy Men who are eminent by their force do not impoverish us in our land, but that the Lord revealed many glorious things through them... through their rational advice, through their prophecies, we give thanks. Amen.”

In the years following the repose of St. Boniface of Feofaniya, the Brotherhood in Feofaniya would be renamed after St. Panteleimon the Unmercenary in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Monastery would be closed during the Bolshevik revolution but unlike many shrines, it would not be damaged or destroyed by them in the decades that followed.

On icons St. Boniface of Feofaniya is depicted as a Hieromonk holding a Hegumen's crozier in his right hand and the Feofaniya Monastery in his left hand. The Church celebrates the Holy Memory of St. Boniface on the day he reposed,

December 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **---ST. FILARET OF KYIV---**

Feodor Grigorovich Amfiteatrov was born on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1779 in the village of Vyeskoye, Kromsky district, Oryol province in the Russian Empire (now Trosnyansky district) to the family of the priest Fr. Georgiy Nikitych Amfiteatrov and mother Anastasia. The Amfiteatrov family was well esteemed in the Russian Lands; Feodor had three siblings, including the famous poet Semyon Egorovich Amfiteatrov – better known by the pseudonym S. E. Raich – another brother named Gavril, who became a priest, and a sister named Maria who would marry a priest.

Feodor had been born blind and would be raised in the home of his grandfather. At the age of six he regained his sight whereupon his grandfather would teach him how to read and write. In 1789 he would be enrolled as a second grade student at the Oryol Brotherhood school. In 1795 he would enter the Seva Theological Academy where he would graduate in 1797. On November 1<sup>st</sup> 1798 he was tonsured a monk with the name Filaret after St. Filaret the Merciful.

On November 8<sup>th</sup> he would be ordained a Hierodeacon and on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1799 a Hieromonk. After being ordained to the priesthood he would be transferred to Moscow and serve as a priest at the Donskoy Monastery. He continued to teach philosophy, rhetoric and poetry at the Oryol Seminary (in March 1799, 1801-1802) on various occasions and in 1802 Fr. Filaret would be appointed the dean of the Donskoy Brotherhood school.

Later in 1802 he would be transferred to the Svensky Monastery in Bryansk and appointed as Hegumen. In October 1804 he would be requested by Bishop Dosifey (Ilyin) of Oryol to relocate to Ufa and become the Archimandrite of the Holy Dormition Monastery in Ufa. He also became the dean of the Orenburg Theological Academy during this time.

By 1810 at the request of his nephew, the Archpriest Fr. Pyotr Turchaninov (the son of his sister Maria), Fr. Filaret would be appointed the rector of the Tobolsk Theological Academy. Eventually after all the positive reviews that came from his teaching, he would be summoned to the capital of St. Petersburg during a clergy synaxis and while there he would be appointed the rector of the St. Joseph of Volokolamsk Monastery.

At the recommendation of the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Fr. (later Metropolitan and Saint) Filaret (Drozdov), Fr. Filaret (Amfiteatrov) would be appointed the dean of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1814. By August of that year Fr. Filaret would be given a doctorate from the Academy, not for scientific work but rather for his "...commitment to his post and upstanding lifestyle."

Him and Fr. Filaret Drozdov would be transferred to Moscow to teach at the Moscow Theological Academy in March 1816. Fr. Filaret would be appointed the dean of the Theological Academy and Fr. Filaret Drozdov was consecrated a Bishop in 1817. At the Moscow Academy Fr. Filaret would teach hermeneutics and the catechism written by Abp. Feofan (Prokofievich). Fr. Filaret taught very carefully; avoiding using texts or ideas that were created by Latins or Protestants.

Fr. Filaret and Vladyka Filaret would teach controversial issues without any confusion, avoiding any interpretations of their own but instead being totally reliant on the Fathers of the Orthodox Church. When Vladyka Filaret wished to write a catechism for the Russian Church, Fr. Filaret offered his help. This Catechism (often called the "Longer Catechism" of St. Filaret) later became the standard catechism of the Russian Church and remained so until the Revolution.

In March 1817 Fr. Filaret would ask to be transferred to the "New Jerusalem" Monastery in Moscow so he could retire, but soon afterwards he would be elected as the Archimandrite of the Monastery. On June 13<sup>th</sup> 1819 the Most Holy Synod would consecrate Filaret to the Episcopacy and enthroned him as the Bishop of Kaluga and Borovsky.

When Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) wished to translate the Holy Scriptures into modern Russian, Vladyka Filaret opposed this action and wrote a letter: "The modern Russian dialect cannot convey the Holy Scriptures in all its subtlety and meanings... It differs much from Church Slavonic where all the concepts and meanings to edify and guide the faithful to their salvation is accessible... There is no need to translate the Bible into Russian, but rather to teach and diligently study Slavonic in all our spiritual and secular schools and have readings in Slavonic incorporated into daily readings..."

Vladyka Filaret's view did not coincide with the opinion of the Most Holy Synod, who agreed with Metropolitan Filaret that the Scriptures should be translated into

modern Russian and authorized the work to be published. Vladyka Filaret and Metropolitan Filaret disagreed about the translation until the end of their earthly lives, but remained close friends regardless.

On January 12<sup>th</sup> 1825 he would be transferred to the Diocese of Ryazan. By August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1826 he would be elevated to Archbishop and placed in charge of the commission of all spiritual schools in the Russian lands. By February 25<sup>th</sup> 1828 he would be appointed Archbishop of Kazan; while in Kazan he would help convert over 5,000 Mohammedians to the Orthodox Faith. Between 1836-1837 he would be the Archbishop of Yaroslavl-Rostov.

On August 13<sup>th</sup> 1837 Vladyka Filaret would be elevated as the Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia. He helped restore several churches, established new monasteries and converted many Uniates to the Orthodox Faith. He also had a special attention of converting Old Ritualists to the Orthodox Faith.

Metropolitan Filaret was beloved by the people of Kyiv, he was very generous, giving alms and often paid for the release of hostages and prisoners using his own funds. The Church administration in Ukraine at the time was very unstable with many people being discontent with the Russian Church administration, Metropolitan Filaret helped establish trust for many people in Ukraine during this time by his spiritual living and competent administration.

For his excellent service, Metropolitan Filaret would be awarded the Order of St. Andrew the First-Called in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree on March 26<sup>th</sup> 1839. He was given several doctorates from Theological Academies in Moscow, Kyiv, St. Petersburg and Kazan. He also had an interest in history and would become a member of the prestigious Moscow Society of Russian History and Antiquities.

Despite his service being appreciated by the people and the Church, Vladyka Filaret longed for solitude and a return to the quietness of monastery life. He asked the Most Holy Synod for canonical retirement several times, which was rejected. Metropolitan Filaret began the practice of the Kyiv-Pechersk Fathers and prayed for illness.

Soon enough he would fall ill and would secretly take tonsure into the Greater Schema with the name Theodosius after St. Theodosius of the Caves. He would be allowed to excise his post and temporary Diocesan administrators would be appointed. Metropolitan Filaret spent the rest of his years in quiet solitude and

prayer, disregarding all worldly things. The struggles and feats Vladyka Filaret reached are unknown, as he rarely spoke to anyone after his tonsure to the Greater Schema.

He still visited with people who wished to speak to him and his spiritual children, he wrote documents and letters for anyone who asked and was described by contemporaries as being pleasant to be around. He was well regarded as a Holy Man, but he shunned any and all praise that came his way.

On August 26<sup>th</sup> 1856 Emperor Alexander II would be coronated, Metropolitan Filaret would travel to St. Petersburg to attend the coronation and pray for the new Tsar. Emperor Alexander II would award Metropolitan Filaret the right to wear diamonds with the Order of St. Andrew the First-Called. This would be Metropolitan Filaret's final public appearance.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> 1857 Metropolitan Filaret would fall asleep in the Lord at the age of 78. Among his belongings were many letters and a handful of kopeks that he had not given to the poor. Metropolitan Filaret would be buried in St. Sofia's cathedral in Kyiv and at his request, as a simple monk, and not as a Bishop.

Nikolai Leskov – a contemporary of Metropolitan Filaret – would write about him in two short stories: “Little things in the Bishop's life” and “the Lord's court”, where he described St. Filaret of Kyiv as being “...one of the most competent hierarchs in Russian Church history...”

The Church celebrates the memory of St. Filaret of Kyiv on December 21<sup>st</sup> – the day of his bodily repose – as well as on May 23<sup>rd</sup> (Synaxis of All Saints of Yaroslavl-Rostov), June 10<sup>th</sup> (Synaxis of All Saints of Siberia and Ryazan) and on August 28<sup>th</sup> (Synaxis of All Saints of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra).