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NUMBER XXVII

THE LIFE AND CONDUCT OF OUR
FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS

SAINT JOHN THE
WONDERWORKER

ARCHBISHOP OF SHANGHAI
AND SAN FRANCISCO

With a Prologue by
Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili
and an Epilogue by
Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna



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Translated from the original Greek text, 'Ο Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης (Μαξιμόβιτς)
'Αρχιεπίσκοπος Σαγγάης καὶ Σὰν Φραντσίσκο (1896-1966)
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THE RELICS OF SAINT JOHN THE WONDERWORKER
ARCHBISHOP OF SHANGHAI AND SAN FRANCISCO

*“This man, who appears weak, is in reality a miracle
of ascetic firmness and resolve in our days
of general spiritual debility.”*

—Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), †1936

*“If you want to see a living Saint,
go to Bitol, to Father John.”*

—Saint Nikolai (Velimirovitch), †1956

Apolytikion, Tone 3: "Of Divine Faith"

The Creator of all showed thee to be incorrupt among Hierarchs and a Wonderworker among the Saints, a peer of the choir of the Venerable and equal in honor to the Holy Fools, O John, thou boast of San Francisco; wherefore, having thee as a Divine intercessor, through thee we lovingly beseech great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 4: "Thou didst appear today"

O Lord, Who didst shed Grace upon John and preserve his Relics in incorruption, hearken unto him, O Master; and grant peace and mercy to the world.

Megalynarion

Let us honor piously our Father John, confessor of the true Faith and a Fool for the love of Christ, who shone as an ascetic; and therefore in the last times his wonderworking Relics were revealed as incorrupt.

Prologue

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (II Corinthians 9:15).

I consider myself especially favored by the love of our Lord, because very early on, I was vouchsafed to “make the acquaintance of” Saint John, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, the newly-revealed star of our Church.

About twenty-five years ago, that is, shortly after his holy repose (†1966), I heard about his wondrous life, and I revered him deeply as a contemporary Saint of our Faith.

In 1984, I had the great opportunity to venerate his miracle-gushing tomb in the crypt of the Cathedral of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, “Joy of All Who Sorrow,” in San Francisco, California.

Last year, the loving-kindness of our Savior granted me to attend the Glorification ceremonies at the official Proclamation of his sanctity by the Holy Synod of our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under Metropolitan Vitaly.

The culmination of these indescribable blessings was the gift to our Monastery of a small piece of the sacred Relics of this Grace-gushing Holy Hierarch, who is synonymous with Grace.

For all these saving gifts, we have dedicated at the Convent of the Holy Angels in Aphidnai, Attica, a Church in honor of the newly-revealed Saint, and now we are publishing his wondrous *Life* as a small token of gratitude to Christ, with the heartfelt prayer that the pious may derive benefit from it, that the Saint might be honored, and that the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit might be glorified. Amen!

*15 April 1995 (Old Style)
Feast of the Life-Giving Spring
†Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili*

Chronological Table of Saint John's Life

- 1896 (June 4) Born in Kharkov (present-day Ukraine). His parents, Boris and Glafyra, give him the name *Michael* at Holy Baptism.
- 1907–1914 Studies at the Military School of Poltava.
- 1914–1918 Studies at the Law School of Kharkov.
- 1921–1925 Studies at the Theological School of Belgrade.
- 1924 Tonsured a Reader by Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Galicia.
- 1925–1927 Teaches religion at a Serbian state high school.
- 1926 Tonsured a Monk at the Monastery of Milkovo and receives the name *John*. Ordained to the Priesthood.
- 1929–1934 Teaches at the Monastery Seminary of Bitol.
- 1934 (May 28) Consecrated Bishop by Metropolitan Antony of Kiev and Galicia.
(November 21) Arrives in Shanghai, China, where he stays until the end of World War II.
- 1946 Elevated to the rank of Archbishop of Shanghai.
- 1949 Travels to Washington, D.C., caring for his flock, which is temporarily accommodated in the Philippines, and succeeds in transferring them to the United States of America.
- 1951 Appointed Archbishop of Western Europe.
- 1962 (November 21) Arrives in San Francisco, after his appointment as Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America.
- 1966 (June 19) Reposes in Seattle, Washington.
- 1994 (June 19) Synodal Proclamation of his sanctity.

The Life and Conduct of Our Father Among the Saints, John the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco

*Whose memory the Holy Orthodox Church celebrates
on the Saturday nearest June 19 (Old Style)*

1. In Russia (1896–1921)

Saint John was born on June 4, 1896, in the country house of his parents, Boris Ivanovich and Glafyra Michailovna Maximovitch, who were descended from aristocracy, in the village of Adamovka in the county of Kharkov (in present-day Ukraine), and at Holy Baptism he received the name of the Archangel Michael.

His ancestors on his father's side were of Serbian descent. One of his forebears, Saint John, the Metropolitan of Tobolsk, led a lofty ascetic life and was a missionary and the author of spiritual works. He lived in the first half of the eighteenth century, and his Glorification was the last to take place during the reign of the Holy Tsar–Martyr Nicholas II (1868–1918).

Saint John was a quiet and obedient child. His sister remembers that his parents had no difficulty in raising him. In thinking about his future during his adolescence, he could not make a decision about his course, because he was not certain whether to dedicate himself to military or civil service. He felt only that his future life would be driven by a sublime desire for the Truth that was cultivated in him by his parents, who inspired him with examples of people who had sacrificed their lives for the Truth.

At the age of eleven, he began his education in the Military Academy of Poltava. He was an exemplary student, but he had an aversion to two subjects: gymnastics and dance. He was loved at the Academy, but he felt that he had to choose another path. This idea developed

from his contacts with two well-known professors of religious studies at the Academy, Protopresbyter Sergei Chetverikov, who wrote books about Saint Paissy (Velichkovsky) of Neamts and the Optina Elders, and the Rector of the local Seminary, Archimandrite Varlaam.

The day that Michael Maximovitch completed his studies, after seven years at the Military Academy, coincided with the Enthronement of Archbishop Antony (Khrapovitsky) at the Cathedral of Kharkov. This renowned Hierarch and theologian, who was the chief advocate of the restoration of the Patriarchate in Russia, later became Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia and later achieved distinction as First Hierarch and organizer of the Russian Church Abroad. This Hierarch constantly inspired the Church-loving students in all spiritual matters, thanks to his principal trait: his sincere love for them. Archbishop Antony heard of the young Michael Maximovitch, about whom many spoke in ecclesiastical circles, and Archbishop Antony wanted to meet him. So it was that in Kharkov Archbishop Antony became the spiritual guide of Saint John, and this relationship lasted until Archbishop Antony's death (†1936).

In this city Michael studied law, received his diploma in 1918, and served for about three years in the law courts of Kharkov, in the days when Ukraine was governed by the Cossack Skoropatsky. But the heart of the future Hierarch was far away from this world. He spent all of his free time at the university, where he studied spiritual writings, and especially the Lives of the Saints. "When I was studying worldly knowledge," said the Saint at his election to the Episcopacy, "I delved all the more into the science of sciences, into the study of the spiritual life."

While visiting the monastery where Archbishop Antony resided, Michael had the opportunity to pray at the tomb of an ascetic of the early eighteenth century, Archbishop Melety (Leontevitch), a deeply revered, righteous man who had nonetheless not been Glorified. The soul of the young Saint was wounded by the thirst to accomplish the real journey and goal of the life in Christ.

Bishop Varnava, who later became Patriarch of Serbia, also made a profound impression on Michael during his visit to Kharkov. The young Serbian Bishop, who received a warm welcome from Archbishop Antony, recounted to him the afflictions of the Serbian people under the Turkish Yoke. This took place in January, 1917, before the Bolshevik Revolution, when the Serbs, who were fighting during World War I against Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria, no longer had any territories free from enemy occupation. Thanks to the inspiration of Archbishop Antony, the response of the Russian people in support of the Serbs was unanimous. By means of this example, Michael recognized the universal meaning of the Church and the duty of a Bishop to respond to the needs of all Orthodox peoples. In his turn Bishop Varnava, when he became Patriarch, was very hospitable and helpful to the Hierarchy of the beleaguered Russian Church Abroad.

2. In Yugoslavia (1921–1934)

The Russian Revolution forced the Maximovitch family to emigrate to Yugoslavia, in 1921, where Michael studied theology at the Academy of Saint Sava in Belgrade and received his diploma in 1925. In the final year of his studies, he was Tonsured a Reader in Belgrade by Metropolitan Antony, who afterwards, in 1926, Tonsured him a monk at the Holy Monastery of Milkovo with the name *John*, in honor of his distant relative, Saint John of Tobolsk, who at that time had recently been Glorified, and shortly thereafter Ordained him a Hierodeacon. On the Feast of the Entrance of the *Theotokos* that same year, the young monk was made a Hieromonk by Bishop Gabriel of Cheliabinsk. During these years, he was an instructor of religion at a Serbian high school, and in 1929, he was appointed to the Seminary of Saint John the Theologian in the city of Bitol, which belongs to the Diocese of Ochrid.

In Bitol, the Saint earned the love of his students, and it was here that his spiritual struggles became known. Saint John prayed unceasingly, celebrated Divine Liturgy daily, or attended and received the

Holy Mysteries, fasted strictly, and normally ate once a day, late in the evening. With paternal love the Saint implanted lofty spiritual ideals in his students, who were the first to discover his great spiritual feat: they observed that he never lay down to sleep! He was overcome by sleep after extreme fatigue and normally when he was kneeling in the corner of his cell before the Holy Icons.

The Bishop of that Diocese, Saint Nikolai (Velimirovitch), the contemporary “Serbian Chrysostomos,” as he was aptly called, who was renowned for his virtue and wisdom, esteemed and loved the young Hieromonk John. One day when he was leaving the Seminary after a visit, he turned to a group of students and said: “Lads, listen to Father John; he is an Angel of God in the form of a man.” The same students were convinced that Saint John lived an Angelic life. They likened his patience and humility to the patience and humility of the great ascetics and hermits. He was full of love for all, particularly for children, helpful, simple, cheerful, meek, likable, and merciful. No one ever saw him angry, he never judged anyone, and he never spoke about himself. He lived the events of the Holy Gospel as if he saw them in front of his eyes. He always knew the chapter of the Holy Gospel in which to find an event, and when he needed to, he could always refer to the verse.

He knew the character and the idiosyncrasies of each student, so that at any moment he could detect what the student knew or did not know. The Saint had a special gift from God: an exceptional memory. Consequently, he could grade his students without recourse to records and notes. Love bound Father John and his students to each other. For them, the Saint was the incarnation of all the Christian virtues. They did not observe any fault in him, not even in his speech (he had a slight speech impediment). There was no personal or mutual problem which he could not himself settle immediately. There was no question for which he could not find an answer that was always exact, clear, complete, and full, because he was a truly educated man. His education and his wisdom were based on the most steadfast foundation: the fear of the Lord. The Saint prayed fervently for his students. At nights he showed

loving care for each one: he would straighten the pillow of one, and the blanket of another. As he left the room, he would bless the sleeping students with the Sign of the Cross and depart without making a noise.

The first week of Great Lent, Saint John ate nothing, apart from a small *prosphoron* each day; he did the same thing during Great Week. On Great Saturday his body was completely exhausted. But on the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, he would be restored and would regain his powers. At Paschal *Orthros* he would exclaim, “Christ is risen!” as if Christ were risen precisely on that night. His face shone. The Paschal joy that radiated from the Saint was imparted to everyone in the Church. Whoever was in the Church with Saint John on Pascha experienced this.

During the same period, he began to write noteworthy spiritual texts, such as a study on the veneration of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, characterized by its maturity and precision. He continued this activity of his until the end of his life. Although he did not leave us systematic works, his constant articles in the ecclesiastical press of his day, and later his reports to the Synod, are clearly rooted in Orthodox Patristic theology and are distinguished for their deep spirituality, moderation, and sobriety, their simplicity and clarity, and their completeness and elegance. The pious reader can perceive that Saint John’s output as an author expresses his experiences in Christ, and for this reason his works make fragrant and captivate the soul.

Metropolitan Antony must probably have ascertained this special gift of Blessed John for theology early on, and for this reason, when he Consecrated him Bishop, he addressed the following characteristic exhortation to him, among other things: “Love theology and try to plumb its depths. Enlighten your soul and the souls of those around you with it, and with your learning give soul-saving nourishment to your mind.”

3. In China (1934–1949)

In 1934, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad resolved to elevate Saint John to the rank of Bishop and to assign him to the city of Shanghai, as an Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of China, where, during that period, there was a sizable presence of Russian emigrés, above all because of the Communist domination of their homeland.

For the Saint himself there was nothing more remote than this thought, as is apparent from the account of a woman who knew him in Serbia. She met him on a tram and asked him why he had come to Belgrade. He replied that he had come by mistake, because he had received a message for some other Hieromonk John, who was going to be made a Bishop. When she came across him the following day, he told her that the mistake was worse than what he had anticipated, because he had learned that it was he *himself* who was to be Consecrated a Bishop!

When he pleaded with the Synod that he had a speech impediment, he was told that the Prophet Moses had the same difficulty. The Consecration took place on May 28, 1934. Saint John was the last Bishop to be Consecrated by Metropolitan Antony. The new Bishop arrived in Shanghai from Serbia on November 21, 1934, the Feast of the Entry of the *Theotokos*. Many people had gathered at the harbor to welcome their new Hierarch, who wholeheartedly assumed his duties and very soon turned out to be an outstanding personality in Shanghai.

The completion of an enormous Cathedral and the resolution of a lingering ecclesiastical problem awaited him. Saint John soon made the situation peaceful, and in time he restored relations with the Serbs, Greeks, and Ukrainians in his jurisdiction. Likewise, he completed the construction of the Cathedral, which was dedicated to the Icon of the Mother of God, “Surety of Sinners,” and of the three-story Church house, together with a bell tower. He was especially attentive to the spiritual formation of the youth. He himself taught religion to the high-

er grades of the Commercial School, and he was always present at the examinations in the classes on religion in all of the schools of Shanghai. He inspired and directed the construction of Churches, hospitals, asylums for the mentally ill, orphanages, old people's homes, community centers, and in short, all of the social activities of the Russians in Shanghai. The Saint, united with his flock, participated directly in all of the initiatives of the emigré organizations; yet, despite all of these varied pastoral preoccupations of his, he remained a stranger to the world.

This combination of an intense inner life and an attractive outward activity was the most characteristic trait of his personality throughout the duration of his turbulent pastoral career. He was a man of unceasing prayer centered on the Divine Eucharist and Divine worship; it was from this that he drew his strength and holiness.

A fellow-Bishop of his writes in this regard: "Like Saint John of Kronstadt, whose example *Vladyka* John followed, his Grace-filled energy derived first and foremost from his daily partaking of the Holy Mysteries. Later, he would consume the Holy Gifts unhurriedly, remaining for quite some time in the sanctuary, especially on those days when he celebrated the Divine Liturgy himself. His prayer and what he experienced at those moments are a mystery, about which we dare not and cannot speak. Beyond this, he was almost always simultaneously with the people—listening to them, helping them—and in spiritual communion with the Saints. When *Vladyka* John traveled, he took with him a full set of liturgical books...."

Thus, from the first day of his arrival in Shanghai, as before, he Liturgized daily. Wherever he was, he never omitted the Divine Services. One time, on account of his continual standing, his foot became very swollen, and a group of doctors who examined him were afraid that he had gangrene. They advised him to go to a hospital immediately. The Saint refused. Then the Russian doctors informed the Parish Council that they would not take responsibility for the health and life of this patient. The members of the Parish Council, after exhaustive admonitions—even threats—compelled the Saint to consent and sent him to a hospital. In

the afternoon, however, he slipped away from it on his own, and at 6:00 *p.m.* he presided at the All-Night Vigil for the Elevation of the Precious Cross, while the swelling had completely vanished!

The Saint celebrated the whole cycle of daily Services, with no abbreviation, and at Compline—as one who had exceeding love for the Saints—he would read up to five or more Canons in honor of the Saints who were being celebrated that day. He did not allow conversations in the Holy Altar without great necessity, and showed personal concern for the behavior of the Altar boys who served, and in particular he wrote a manual of behavior for them, with which he strictly, yet lovingly, forced them to comply. After the Divine Liturgy he would remain in the Altar for two or three hours in prayer and contemplation, and one time he said: “How difficult it is to tear oneself away from prayer and to return to the din of the world!” At night he would remain without sleep.

This ascetical behavior mirrored a profound inner life, rich in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which overflowed to the exterior, although the Saint tried to cover them with the veil of humility and folly for Christ’s sake. The Faithful confessed that many times they saw him in Uncreated Light, raised above the ground, sometimes inside the Holy Altar, and at other times while he was preaching! He never made “social calls,” but he did appear suddenly to those who were in need, unexpectedly, and any time, whatever the weather conditions might be, and at the most unusual hours. Every day he would visit the sick with Divine Communion. People regularly saw him in the evening hours, in bad weather, on the streets of Shanghai, with his Episcopal staff in his hand and his *rason* blowing in the wind. When asked where he was going at such a time, he would reply: “I must see such-and-such a person close by....” But when they accompanied him, this “close by” was often some kilometers!

“When you are concerned for the salvation of men’s souls,” the Saint used to say, “you should remember that they also have bodily needs, which acutely reveal their presence. You cannot proclaim the Gospel without showing love in deeds.” An expression of the Evangelical love of the Saint was his founding of the Orphanage of Saint Tikhon

of Zadonsk, for orphans and for children of poor parents. He assembled some women, and with their help he began with eight children. In time the orphanage made such progress that it accommodated hundreds of children over the fifteen years of its operation. *Vladyka* himself gathered sick and hungry children from the streets and dark alleys of Shanghai. One time he brought a little girl to the Orphanage whom he had “bought” from a Chinese man for a bottle of vodka!

The Faithful of the Diocese of Shanghai nourished deep feelings of love and respect for their Hierarch, as is clear from the following extracts from a letter of theirs to Metropolitan Melety of Harbin in 1943:

“We lay people cannot even approach his broad knowledge of theology, his erudition and his homilies, which are profoundly illumined by the Apostolic Faith, which are delivered almost daily and are published regularly. We, the people of Shanghai, will speak of what we see and feel in this multi-racial city of ours, since the day our Bishop arrived, of what we see with our sinful eyes, and of what we feel in our Christian hearts. From the day of his arrival, the grievous phenomenon of Churches in discord ceased; the Orphanage of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, which feeds, clothes, and educates two hundred children, was created out of nothing; the situation of the Almshouse of Saint Philaret the Merciful gradually improved; the poor in all of the hospitals of Shanghai are visited by Priests and are communed regularly, and in the event of death, even if they are homeless, a fitting funeral is performed; he himself personally visits all the mentally ill who live in a hospital far away from the city; those who are imprisoned have the opportunity to pray and commune at the Divine Liturgy which is celebrated monthly. He gives serious attention to the upbringing of the youth in a strict Orthodox and patriotic spirit. In many non-Russian schools, our children are now given religious instruction. In the difficult moments in the life of our community, we see how he guides us, defending us and our ancient Russian moral principles to the end. All of the heretical groups and heterodox confessions now understand that it is very difficult to fight against such a pillar of the Orthodox Faith. Our Bishop untiringly visits Churches, hospitals, schools, prisons, and civic

and military organizations, always bringing with him peace and faith. From the day of his arrival, not one sick person has remained without his blessing and personal visit. By the intercession of our enlightener many have received relief and health. He, like a beacon, enlightens our sinfulness, and like a *semantron* awakens our consciences and arouses our souls to the Christian struggle, and as a good shepherd he summons us to leave the earth and worldly corruption for a short time and raise our eyes up to Heaven, 'from whence cometh our help.' That is, he is an example, as the Apostle Paul writes, 'in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity' (1 Timothy 4:12)." The pious Russians were not mistaken in their estimation of the work of their pastor, who was ready "to sacrifice his life" for his flock.

The gifts of the Saint for working wonders and foresight were very well known in Shanghai. One time during Bright Week, he went to the Jewish hospital, in order to visit the Orthodox patients there. When he passed one room, he stopped in front of a screen, behind which there was the bed of an elderly Jewish woman who was on the verge of death. Her family members were there, awaiting her demise. The Saint lifted his Cross over the screen and exclaimed loudly, "Christ is Risen!," and at the same moment—O, the wonder!—the woman, who was at death's door, came to and asked for water. The medical personnel remained astonished by the change in the woman, who had almost died a few moments previously. The woman recovered and left the hospital. Such incidents are innumerable.

One time the Saint was called to commune a man at the point of death in the hospital. He took the Holy Gifts and went with another clergyman. When they arrived at the hospital, they ran into a young man about twenty years old, who was playing a harmonica. He had already recovered and was preparing to leave the hospital shortly. The Saint summoned him and said, "I want to commune you right now." The young man immediately confessed and communed. In amazement, the clergyman asked the Saint why he had not gone to the man who was about to die, but had stopped at the young man whose health looked

fine. The Saint replied simply: “He will die this evening. The other, who is gravely ill, will live for many years hence.” And that is precisely how it turned out! The Lord manifested similar miracles through His Saint in Europe and America.

After the repose of Metropolitan Melety (†1946) and the end of the War, the Russian emigré clergy were under a great deal of pressure from the Moscow Patriarchate to submit to the new Patriarch of Moscow, Alexis I, successor of Patriarch Sergius, who in 1927 had pushed the Church into coöperation with the atheistic Soviet power by his well-known *Declaration*. In the Far East, almost all of the Hierarchs submitted to the new Patriarch. Saint John, who rejected such submission, was pressured and threatened by his superior, Archbishop Victor. The Saint’s reply to these threats was simple: “I am subject to the Synod of the Diaspora, and I will follow the path that it indicates to me.”

The threats advanced to actions. The official periodical of the Moscow Patriarchate characterized “the Assistant Bishop John Maximovitch” as “schismatic,” and Archbishop Victor of Peking suspended him. The Saint completely ignored these decisions and continued to Liturgize even outside of certain Churches of his that were now sealed, with the moving support of his rational flock.

After a great delay, on account of the difficult conditions, an order arrived from the Synod of Bishops Abroad, which raised Bishop John to Archbishop, directly under the Synod. The Nationalist Government of China and the authorities of Shanghai recognized Archbishop John as the sole leader of the Russian Orthodox Church in China.

4. In Western Europe (1951–1962)

At the end of the 1940s, when the Communists seized power in China, the Russians were compelled to emigrate once again, the majority to the Philippines. In 1949, about five thousand refugees from China were in the encampment of the International Refugee Organization on the island of Tubabao in the Philippines. They lived in tents under the

most primitive conditions. There they brought all the orphans, the elderly, and the sick. The unfortunate refugees lived under the continuous threat of violent typhoons, because the island lay directly in the path of these frightening and devastating tropical cyclones, which pass through that part of the Pacific Ocean. In a truly miraculous way, during the twenty–seven months that the Russian encampment existed, only one time was the island threatened by a typhoon, which changed its course and went around the island. Every night Saint John would go on foot around the camp and bless its four sides with the Cross. Later, when the people had departed for different countries and almost no one remained in the camp, a terrible hurricane passed over it and left nothing standing!

The Saint frequently met with the representatives of the civil authorities for the protection and needs of the Russian refugees. They recommended him to go in person to Washington, D.C., in order to ask that all the Russian refugees in the encampment be transferred to America. He flew to Washington, and despite the difficulties, succeeded in having the laws concerning the re–settlement of immigrants changed, and in this way the entry of his flock into America was accomplished with the help of our Lord.

In 1951, the Saint was appointed Archbishop of the Diocese of Western Europe. Initially, he had his See in Paris, and later in Brussels. He traveled constantly throughout Europe, Liturgizing in French and Dutch, and, as before, in Greek, Chinese, and subsequently, English. At that time, the following was written about the Saint: “He lives outside of our plane of existence. It is not accidental that a Catholic priest told the youth of his parish: ‘You seek proofs. You say that there are no longer miracles and Saints. But why do look for theoretical proofs, when a living Saint walks the streets of Paris, Saint John the Barefoot?’”

“The Barefoot”! This characterization encompasses a wondrous ascetical experience of the Saint in the world, which is described plainly and very graphically by a distinguished Russian intellectual as follows: “Bishop John lived the life of a strict ascetic: He refused food and sleep,

usually wore sandals without socks, even in the winter, and his *rason* was more like the garment of a beggar than that of a Hierarch. His behavior sometimes occasioned embarrassment, on account of his ‘folly...’”

In Europe, the Saint collected information about the pre-Schism Saints of the West, who are honored in the West, but had been forgotten in the East. On his recommendation, their veneration was restored and their names took their place once more in the Ecclesiastical Calendar.

His spirituality, his facility with languages, and above all the example of the Saint, attracted many Europeans to Orthodoxy. He was a genuine missionary and a true witness of Orthodoxy. His attempts in particular to create indigenous Orthodox nuclei in France and Holland with the appropriate use of liturgical forms, language, and native clergy are noteworthy.

He intervened miraculously to strengthen his mission, as is shown by the following incident: Bishop Jacob of The Hague, a Dutch convert to Orthodoxy, was sleepless one night from anxiety arising out of many serious problems. No one was aware of this, and Archbishop John was hundreds of kilometers away.... Suddenly, the telephone rang; it was Archbishop John! Without asking anything at all, he said to Bishop Jacob: “Do not worry; go to your bed and sleep. Everything will be sorted out!”

The passage of Saint John from Western Europe is literally a story in itself; the tracks of the ascetic and wonderworking Bishop were a radiant path that carved an indelible impression on the hearts of the pious. We can savor the atmosphere in which the Saint lived from the following characteristic testimony that a revered Abbess has preserved for us: “During the reading of the *Kathisma* of the Psalter (in the Monastery of Lesna in France), *Vladyka* always stood with his elbow resting on the *analogion*, giving the impression that he was dozing off. At the back of the Church, Sister Xenia whispered: ‘He didn’t sleep this evening; he is taking a nap now.’ *Vladyka* immediately turned around and looked at her. She was ready to fall to the ground from her astonishment. Whenever he visited England, he always stayed with us at the Convent of the Annunciation

in London. He never slept, but rather rested, sitting in an armchair in the office adjacent to the Church. At night we heard how often he went to the Church. A friend of our community, Paraskeve Demetriou, was lying sick in a coma. At our request, *Vladyka* John went to see her; he prayed and blessed her. The same day, she arose healthy and with tears recounted how she had felt the sickness suddenly leaving her! Others told me that whenever *Vladyka* placed his hands on someone's head, he himself felt the power of Grace, and the person perceived light in his soul. *Vladyka* fulfilled the commandments of the Lord with sacrificial love, and the Lord responded to his prayers....”

5. In Western America (1962–1966)

In the autumn of 1962, Saint John arrived in his final Diocese, San Francisco. It happened to be the Feast of the Entrance of the *Theotokos*. On the same Feast, almost thirty years previously, he had arrived in Shanghai, his first Diocese. In the beginning, he helped the elderly and ailing Archbishop Tikhon, upon whose death (17 March 1963), the Saint became Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America.

Here, the untiring and hardworking servant of God encountered a half-completed Cathedral, dedicated to the Most Holy *Theotokos*; here also, as in China, the Church was rent by discord. The first concern of the Saint was the completion of the Cathedral of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, “Joy of All Who Sorrow,” work on which had stopped because of a lack of resources and strong disagreements over the finances, which had paralyzed the Church community. Our Lord, in His mercy, helped His Saint, who suffered greatly from the disagreement, to the point that he was dragged into the civil courts; but he continued the construction with prayer and unsleeping supervision, inspiring all to sacrifices and labors by his example.

The final years of the Saint's life were full of bitterness, slanders, and persecution. At times, people envied and condemned the Saint when

he dealt harshly with them in accordance with the sacred Canons of the Church. When asked who was responsible for the disputes in the Church, the Saint replied bluntly: “The devil.”

In 1964, the construction of the largest Church of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in America, with five gold domes, was essentially completed. The placing of the magnificent Crosses on the domes, which can be seen from ships approaching San Francisco, began with a great procession in which a large number of the Faithful took part. In spite of the risk that the procession would be postponed on account of rainfall, the Saint, without any hesitation, led it with hymns on the damp streets of the city. As soon as the procession started, the rain ceased. The Crosses were blessed in front of the Cathedral, and when the central Cross was raised up, the sun suddenly appeared, and a dove lighted on the gleaming symbol of Christ! This visible triumph of the elevation of the symbols of Christ, which shone on the hills of a contemporary Babylon, where Satanism is practiced openly, was the victory that crowned the Saint’s earthly life.

In 1966, the Saint foresaw his repose several months beforehand, telling a pious woman: “I shall die very soon, at the end of June, not in San Francisco, but in Seattle.” In this final period of his earthly life, he had attained to heights of sanctity that are hard to conceive: One would feel fear before him, one would have the feeling that he was seeing an Angel, and be overcome by “trembling and ecstasy.”

Accompanying the wonderworking Kursk–Root Icon of the Most Holy *Theotokos* to Seattle, Saint John, after Liturgizing in the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas, remained in the Holy Altar for three hours in prayer. It was June 19 by the Church Calendar. Then, after he had visited some of his spiritual children who lived near the Church and several sick people, in order to bless them with the wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, he went to the room in the Church residence in which he was staying. Suddenly, the companions of the Blessed Hierarch heard the sound of someone falling to the floor. As soon as they had ascended the staircase, they found him on the ground and already departing this

life. They sat him up on the armchair in front of the wonderworking Icon, and the Saint peacefully reposed in the Lord before the Most Holy *Theotokos*, for whom he nurtured feelings of exceeding love and reverence throughout his life.

At that moment, there ended the exceptionally difficult *podvig* of voluntary deprivation of rest and sleep which the Saint had imposed upon himself: They laid him on a bed that was in the room, and thus they gave him rest and sleep after forty years of superhuman asceticism! “Rest now in peace!” exclaimed Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery, who loved him very much. At the end of his Funeral homily, he said: “Rest in peace, dear *Vladyka!* Rest from your righteous deeds and struggles! Rest in peace until the General Resurrection!”

The official funeral of Saint John took place on June 24, 1966 (Old Style) in the Cathedral of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, “Joy of All Who Sorrow,” in San Francisco. The Service began at 6:00 *a.m.* and lasted seven hours, because of the great multitude that came to bid farewell to their beloved reposed Hierarch. Metropolitan Philaret presided, Liturgizing with Archbishops Leonty (Filippovitch) of Chile and Peru and Averky of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery, and Bishops Savva of Edmonton and Nektary of Seattle, as well as with many clergy.

The atmosphere at the funeral was intensely compunctionate and prayerful; no one then present will forget it. Despite the profound grief of the countless admirers of Saint John, a special joy predominated, which inundated all the Faithful. The much-suffering body of the Saint remained exposed in the coffin for six days, and despite the heat of the summer season, it did not show the slightest sign of decay or hardening: his hands were soft and supple, although nothing had been done to the blessed body during the preparation for the Funeral. The coffin with the priceless treasure was transferred to be buried in the crypt below the Cathedral, borne on the shoulders of the orphans of Shanghai, who—now grown up—expressed their deepest respect and love for their Father and protector.

But assuredly, “the Righteous live for ever” (Wisdom 5:16). Before even forty days had passed, the Saint appeared to many in a Heavenly Light, announcing, “Tell the people that although I have departed this life, I am not dead, but alive!” And, indeed, this is verified by his countless miracles and by his sepulchre, which has proven to be a life-bearing spring that gushes forth rivers of Grace and streams of healings.

6. The Translation of His Relics and Glorification (1994)

In the autumn of 1993, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia instructed Archbishop Antony of San Francisco and Western America, along with two other Hierarchs, to investigate the Relics of Saint John.

On the evening of September 28, 1993 (Old Style), after a *Pannychida* had been served at his tomb by the members of the Commission, Archbishop Antony urged those participating in this sacred task to forgive each other, and he himself asked forgiveness of all, and then gave a blessing for the tomb to be opened. They removed the covering of the already oxidized metal coffin, and opened it with fear of God and prayer. The face of the Saint was veiled, and all immediately noticed his white and incorrupt hands. After praying, Archbishop Antony removed the veil and revealed the incorrupt face of the Saint Glorified by God!

At the following session of the Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Antony reported that the sacred Relics of Saint John had been examined by the Synodal Commission, which was composed of himself, Archbishop Lavros of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery, Bishop Kyril of Seattle, and twelve other persons. After hearing the report of Archbishop Antony and the statement of the Commission, the Synod of Bishops blessed the continuation and completion of the preparation for the Glorification of Saint John, which took place on June 19, 1994 (Old Style), the day of his blessed repose, in the Cathedral of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, “Joy of All Who Sorrow,” in San Francisco.

7. “Ye are the light of the world”

The Saints of Orthodoxy have entered “through the narrow gate” (St. Matthew 7:14) into the Light of Grace; they have all become Light and are, indeed, “the light of the world” (St. Matthew 5:14). They enlighten us, they guide us on our journey towards the Light, and they welcome us into the Kingdom of the Light, to the eternal glory of our Christ! This was the path trodden by the newly-revealed Saint John the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco: the path of joyful sorrow (*charmolyte*), the Cross-and-Resurrectional path of fidelity to the treasure of our Faith and to the Fathers and Teachers of Orthodoxy.

This twofold fidelity should be given special emphasis, because our Saint, this new ascetic Bishop, is for us not only an unerring guide to the spiritual life, but is also a genuine paragon of zealous adherence to the purity of our Faith. Moreover, these two things are inseparable in our Patristic Tradition: the manifestation of the holy Orthodox ethos derives from the continuous living-out of Orthodox doctrine. Thus, the Blessed John took a steadfastly negative stand against Sergianism, that is, against the coöperation of the Church with, and Her enslavement to, the Godless and anti-Christian régime of the former Soviet Union. Likewise, he stated with boldness and vigor his opposition to the calendar innovation of 1924 and also to the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism.

In his written and oral sermons, he lauded the innumerable New Martyrs of the Russian Church, whose Martyrdom constitutes the most astonishing spiritual event of the twentieth century. He also praised and expressed his sympathy and support for all those Orthodox, especially in Greece, who for their adherence to the Patristic Church Calendar have suffered hell on earth from innovators and ecumenists.

Finally, Saint John, as a true bearer and exponent of the Orthodox Faith and life, intensely experienced the feeling of the culminating apostasy, of the confusion of the last times, and for this reason he

urged his spiritual children to be constantly vigilant and to struggle uncompromisingly in witnessing to the Truth and the uniqueness of the Orthodox Church.

In truth, then, there could be no greater gift of our Lord to the people of our tragic era than the contemporary Saints and their incorrupt Relics! Blessed be the Name of our Christ and Savior, which is “above every name” (Philippians 2:9), for thus it makes the very distinct demand on us that we live, struggle, and journey “with all the Saints” (Ephesians 3:18).

8. Miracles

“Wondrous is God in His Saints” (Psalm 67:36)! In the thirty years since his departure to the Heavenly mansions, Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco has consistently manifested his Grace-filled powers to those suffering from bodily and spiritual afflictions, thus rightly earning him the title *Wonderworker*. Included here is a small but representative sampling of his numerous miracles, which demonstrate his wonderworking love for his fellow man, both during his life on earth as well as after his repose in the Lord.

1. The power of his prayer. Valentine Kollenka Stadnitsky graduated from the military school of Poltava, where he was acquainted with the then Michael Maximovitch. After World War II, Mr. Stadnitsky relocated from Yugoslavia to Brussels, where he lived with his sister.

One day in 1959, when he was between sixty-five and sixty-six years of age, while he was washing the windows of the apartment where he lived, Mr. Stadnitsky fell from the second story to the street. His bones were so fractured that the doctors had no hope of saving him.

Vladyka John arrived at the hospital with a Priest and began to pray at the pillow of the dying man. The Priest who was with him later recounted that for the first time he heard how the Saint conversed with God in prayer. The following morning the doctors could not believe that the injured man had not yet died! Not only that, but he quickly began to

recover. In a short time, he left the hospital completely healthy, and he lived for several years afterwards.

2. *“How is your hand doing?”* Anna Chodireva from Sacramento, California, relates that for a long time her sister’s hand was in constant pain. She went to doctors and used medicines, but she could not find any relief. Finally, she decided to have recourse to *Vladyka* John, and she wrote a letter to him in San Francisco, where he was then Archbishop, from Los Angeles, where she resided. After a short time, the pain in her hand disappeared to such an extent that she completely forgot this ordeal of hers.

One time she went to San Francisco and attended the Divine Liturgy, which *Vladyka* was celebrating. At the end, when she was venerating the Cross in his hands, the Saint, who had never seen her before, asked her: “How is your hand doing?”

3. *“He has been dead for twenty years....”* The Reverend Hieromonk Benedict, spiritual Father and Elder of the Holy Monastery of Christ the Savior in Blanco, Texas, recounted the following astounding miracle in June, 1994, in Etna, California:

“In October, 1986, because of a general malfunction in my large intestine, the intestine was ruptured to the point that it was merging with the small intestine. The doctor made an incorrect diagnosis and tried various remedies for an ulcer. Thus, peritonitis developed, for which there was no cure—at least at that time—, given the extent to which it had advanced. After three days, the pain was so great that they took me by ambulance to the hospital.

“The doctor who misdiagnosed me was so embarrassed that he himself came with me and called the best doctor in the city (San Antonio, Texas), who was Jewish, by the name of [*deleted*]. Dr. [*deleted*] came to the intensive care unit where I was and told me: ‘You are dying.... We will perform surgery, however, because we should at least give it a try...’

“I saw that such a thing was pointless. At that moment, one of my monks informed me that my father according to the flesh had

arrived. I had already prepared myself for what was going to happen. I had confessed and communed, and an Anointing Service had been held for my recovery. I was ready now to die.... Certainly, we do not know the judgments of God, but we take all of the measures that we can in such instances.

“At that time, however, I could not face the person of my father. It was something difficult for me. He has since died, but at that moment he was the one who knew that *I* was dying. I asked him, ‘What do you want me to do? I see no reason to submit to an operation.’ He urged me to undergo surgery, and for his sake, after I reflected that it was not right for me to die in front of him, I agreed to the operation. I grieved him no more.

“Already in our Monastery we had great reverence for *Vladyka* John, and so we especially invoked his protection in this case. My first recollection, after they had given me the initial anesthetic, was a sea of light. I thought that I had died, because I saw Archbishop John approaching me. He blessed me, touched me on the foot, and said to me, ‘Your time is not yet come, you still have work to do....’ I fell once again into unconsciousness.

“When I came to after a few days and recalled the event, I thought that *Vladyka* John had appeared to me in a dream. That was already enough of a miracle for me. I was alive, when I should have been dead.

“They kept me for a long time in intensive care, because they could not believe that the peritonitis had gone. Besides, I was in a bad state: I was green. The symptoms required time to disappear. Finally, after two weeks, they put me in a kind of chamber, where they brought me Icons, among which was a photograph of Saint John, and a *lampada*. At least I had a place to pray.

“On the following day, the surgeon entered the chamber. He saw the photograph of Saint John and said to me, ‘Why can’t you control your monks?’ It was true: they were uneasy. They stayed night and day in the hospital, weeping, *etc.* There were monks everywhere. The sur-

geon continued, pointing to the photograph of the Saint: ‘And this dirty monk with the filthy cassock and no shoes, who came right into the operating room...!’

“I interrupted him: ‘One moment, please! Are you talking about the man in the photograph? This is the twentieth year (1986) since he died. What kind of joke are you telling me now?’

“He is not dead at all!’ exclaimed the surgeon. ‘I have a roomful of people who can prove it! We summoned not only nurses, but also security guards, who grabbed him by both hands to remove him. They locked him up in the restroom, but he never left the place. He probably escaped through the window...’

“I said to him, ‘Listen, he has been dead for twenty years; he is a Saint, a Wonderworker...’

“‘No!’ shouted the surgeon. ‘I did the miracle; I operated on you.’

“I persisted, telling the medical personnel that this man had been dead for twenty years now, and that he was a Saint in Heaven. I felt fear and joy, and I repeatedly prayed the Jesus Prayer. I telephoned our monastery and informed the Fathers about what I had heard. I summoned the nurse who was on duty on the day of the surgery, and she confirmed that everything the surgeon asserted was true! She is now a catechumen in the Orthodox Church, after the present miracle.

“Later, I had the opportunity to verify the truth of the incident with people from security who were on duty and who had intervened at that time. They did not want to believe that it had been someone dead, because they had even grabbed him by the hands!”

4. His consolation of the suffering. Mrs. Maria Markou published the following open letter to make known the wonderful miracle which God in His Providence granted to her: the appearance of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco:

“Beginning in July, 1995, I experienced serious health problems (weight loss, high temperature, swelling of the liver and spleen, *etc.*). Finally, after blood tests, I was admitted on an emergency basis to the

‘Helena Venizelos’ Hospital in Athens, on October 18, 1995, with a diagnosis of blood cell depletion (with leukocytes at a level of only 1,500) and a fifty–fifty chance of having leukemia. Leaving home, I took with me, among my other personal articles, a small paper Icon of Saint John, to whom I am particularly devoted.

“On the evening of October 18–19, heavily burdened mentally, tired in soul and body, frail in the face of the possibility of a horrible illness, I fervently prayed to Saint John. With simplicity, I reminded him that, when he was alive, as well as after his repose, he had made many ‘trips,’ from Shanghai to San Francisco and all over the world, giving aid to any who had need of it. I asked him to come to Greece, as well, not for me, a sinner, but for my seven–year–old daughter, who, with tears in her eyes, asked me, as I left for the hospital, ‘Mama, are you coming back?’

“‘Saint of God,’ I said in my prayer, ‘you loved children. In China, you protected thousands of orphans. In America, you went to the poorest of neighborhoods to relieve their pains, and when you had nothing else to give them, you distributed *prosphora* from the Divine Liturgy. I implore you; you would not wish the eyes of my Evangelia to flow with tears. Tomorrow they are going to make an incision in my chest, in order to diagnose my disease. I am going to place your Icon on the place of the incision, and I believe that you will come to my aid.’

“With that prayer, and absolutely trusting in Saint John’s help, I went to sleep. The next day, October 19, 1995, around six o’clock in the morning, having awakened and waiting to be taken to the laboratory, I felt a caress on my forehead. Moving my head up, I saw the venerable face of Saint John, shrouded in an exceedingly bright light. He was ascetic in appearance, and his whitish gray hair fell freely over his face. He smiled and, stooping, kissed me on the forehead. Afterwards, everything left me and I was left with a feeling of euphoria and security. Though until then, and for some time, I had not been able to walk without the assistance of another person, that morning I went by foot to the laboratory room, in another building of the hospital, underwent the incision undisturbed, and again returned on foot to my room.

“The afternoon of the same day, the examination of my bone marrow ruled out the presence of leukemia. Indeed, I was diagnosed with a different illness, though not an immediately ‘life-threatening’ one, for which I have been treated to this day at the ‘Annunciation’ Hospital in Athens.

“With regard to the eventual course of my disease, which I do not know at this time, the appearance of Saint John was an event of particular significance, for which I thank our merciful God. It is a living proof of the presence of God in my life. The Saint appeared perhaps not to heal me, but to strengthen me in the great and sudden change in my health and, without doubt, in order to assure me in a practical way of the reality of eternal life and to awaken me spiritually, occasioning thus my preparation for that ‘true life.’ I thank God, imploring Him, if it be His will, that, through the intercessions of Saint John, He leave me with my family and, in any case, that He not allow me to depart this vain world without having been reconciled to Him and without repentance and the fruits thereof. Amen.”

Epilogue

Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco: A Contemporary Fool for Christ, a Firm Supporter of the Greek Old Calendarists, and a Sign to Those Who Persist in Ecumenical Apostasy

A Personal Testimony
by Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna

On the soil of modern America, in the city of San Francisco, the incorrupt relics of an Orthodox Saint spread heretofore unknown Grace to a people not only immersed in the spiritual darkness of materialism and hedonism, but distinguished by an Orthodox population well known for its betrayal of the God-given, inspired precepts of our Faith. When, in the autumn of 1993, the tomb of Archbishop John of Shanghai and San Francisco was opened, his unembalmed body, surrounded by a rusted and deteriorating casket, proved incorrupt, free of decomposition, and preserved by the deifying, transforming union of this contemporary Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad with His Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. The Glorification of Saint John, or the public Proclamation of his sanctity, was but a further revelation of the triumph of True Orthodoxy and of men of true Orthodox life over the ecumenical compromises and modernism of those who revile the traditions of the Fathers and the customs of our Faith—a victory which reaches even beyond the would-be corruption of the grave.

Spiritual Forbearance. Archbishop John lived out his life under the heavy spiritual yoke of foolishness for Christ's sake. He was not a handsome or attractive man. He had a speech impediment. He was disliked by many for his strictness. Indeed, a New Calendarist Greek Bishop, threatened by the authentic Orthodoxy of Archbishop John (who was never seen without his monastic garb and who was a severe ascetic), once described him to my grandfather as "a dirty, little man." And as

Archbishop John and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad began to decry the modernism of the New Calendarist, modernist Churches, he and his fellow Bishops were frequently condemned as “sectarians,” “schismatics,” and “outside the Church,” on account of their loyalty to Orthodoxy. Throughout all of this, Archbishop John remained stern, firm in his commitment, and ostensibly unmoved by the epithets hurled at him. He gained a reputation, indeed, for foolish indifference to those who assailed him.

The Greek Old Calendarists. Archbishop John was not an opponent only in theory of the modern betrayal of Orthodoxy by the calendar change and its inspiration, political ecumenism. He understood these forces as attempts to destroy the primacy of Orthodoxy and to substitute for the absolute truth of our Christian Faith a relativistic “new” Christianity of compromise. Thus, he actively opposed Orthodox innovators. He was a staunch supporter of Archbishop Leonty of Chile, who undertook, along with two other Bishops, to provide a Hierarchy for the Greek Old Calendarists, following the repose of the Blessed Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina. Saint John is, indeed, openly venerated in Greece, and there is a new Chapel dedicated to his memory at one of our Synod’s monastic communities, the Convent of the Holy Angels in Aphidnai, outside Athens.

A Personal Testimony. Some years ago, I wrote in *Orthodox Tradition* that, “I cannot judge who is and is not a Saint, since I am not the Church.” I expressed strong opinions about those, on the fringes of canonical Orthodoxy, who have for years exploited the memory of Saint John and made him something that he was not. And I spoke about the personal experiences of one of our Bishops which, nonetheless, had convinced me of Archbishop John’s sanctity. Now that the Church and his incorrupt relics have spoken, I feel that I must add my testimony to those who have affirmed Saint John’s holiness. With the blessing of my spiritual Father, Metropolitan Cyprian, I will also speak freely as the Bishop to whom I referred anonymously, in my comments some years ago, and whose words I confessed, at the time, “to believe in full.”

a) At a certain crucial turning-point in my life, having experienced a tremendous personal tragedy and having come under the intellectual and spiritual influence of both liberals and several very zealous fanatics, I succumbed to terrible confusion and a chaotic state of mind. Despite the fact that I immersed myself in my scholarly career—primarily, I now understand, as a kind of mental diversion—, questions of a spiritual kind constantly preoccupied me. In the liberal atmosphere of the Ivy League, I was tempted by spiritual relativism and the “easy” path of ecumenical thinking. But Princeton’s most famous ecumenist, Father Georges Florovsky, convinced me that even the “founders” of Orthodox ecumenism had come to doubt its integrity. I was plagued by something within me that called me to abandon the world and to serve the Orthodox Church as the only “pearl” of any worth in human pursuits.

In the midst of this dilemma, I saw Archbishop John in a dream. I seldom remember dreams, so this dream had a particular impact on me, especially since it lingered in my mind for days. Saint John appeared to me in white Episcopal vestments, exactly as he appeared to the late Hieromonk Seraphim of Platina. He was holding a Cross in his right hand. Next to him stood another Bishop with a long beard, dressed in blue and white Episcopal vestments, staring straight ahead with a very serious but peaceful expression on his face. I recognized that I was the second Bishop. I discussed this dream immediately with a Greek Old Calendar Bishop in New York, whose Church I attended while studying at Princeton. The first thing he asked me was, “Did a Cross appear in the dream?” When I told him that Archbishop John was holding a Cross, he commented that this was significant, as a Cross never appears in a demonic dream.

This dream continued to haunt me. I did not, however, feel that I was justified in giving it unqualified supernatural significance. Nonetheless, a few years later, after having finished my doctorate and having found a very desirable professorial appointment, I suddenly resigned my position and became a monk. I also dedicated myself to the traditionalist Orthodox movement, knowing what this would cost me, and set out on a

very difficult road. It was not until many years after I was Tonsured that, having in fact been elevated to the rank of Bishop, I saw the astonishing accuracy of my dream. While visiting the home of the married Deacon who serves our monastery, I happened to be looking at a photograph of my Consecration. Something struck me that I had never before even thought about: I was dressed in the very vestments which I was wearing while standing next to Saint John in my dream.

b) I dreamed of Archbishop John a second time at the beginning of 1979. I was then Abbot of the Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery and our brotherhood was part of the jurisdiction of the True Orthodox Church of Greece, then united under the presidency of Archbishop Auxentios of Athens. I and other moderates were deeply distressed by the unending vagaries of the extremist Old Calendarists. Some Bishops followed an ecclesiology of resistance, believing that the New Calendarists were in error but still possessed of Grace, while others believed that the New Calendarists were no longer Orthodox. Yet others adjusted their ecclesiology to fit the moment. Candidates of questionable reputation were put forth for the Episcopacy. Church administration was virtually non-existent. Phyletism was rampant. And so chaotic had things become, that the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad had virtually cut off relations with our Church. In such circumstances, I confess that I even considered petitioning the Œcumenical Patriarch for acceptance, so as to retreat to his jurisdiction, as had Father Georges Florovsky after the breakdown of his good relations with the old Russian Metropolia (now the Orthodox Church in America). I had determined to let the others in our monastery either follow me or go elsewhere.

During this terrible crisis of conscience, I heard that new Bishops had been Consecrated in Greece, including the famous Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina, Archimandrite Cyprian, a spiritual son of the Blessed Father Philotheos (Zervakos). I knew of the new Bishop by reputation and had read of him in *The Orthodox Word*. I was thus inclined to contact him for advice. It was at this time that Saint John appeared to me in a second dream, again leaving me

with a lingering impression of his presence, even after my dream. I did not write down his exact words, and the intervening years have taken their toll on my memory. But with absolute surety I remember the content of what he said to me, appearing again in white Episcopal vestments and holding an ornate Blessing Cross. He spoke to me of the holiness of Metropolitan Cyprian and told me that I must follow him, since he was correct in his views. This was told to me in a very serious tone and as a directive. I heeded this dream, flew to Greece to meet with Metropolitan Cyprian, and placed myself and the monastery under his guidance. Both remain happily there to this day.

c) The third time that I saw Archbishop John in a dream, with the same vividness that I had seen him before, was in the spring of 1993. Metropolitan Cyprian had directed a letter to the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, asking that they consider the re-establishment of full communion with our Church, something which was ruptured when, after 1979, the Greek Old Calendarists broke into a number of factions. His Eminence pointed out that, since we have the same ecclesiology as the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, have always honored its Hierarchy, and have always coöperated with its clergy and its policies, such union was essential—not only because of the growing apostasy of Orthodox modernists, but because it might serve to bring some of the extremist traditionalists in Greece to their senses. Metropolitan Cyprian also noted that the Romanian Old Calendarists, who had just opened communion with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, maintain communion only with our Synod of Bishops, from amongst all of the Old Calendar groups in Greece.

In all honesty, I must say that I had certain misgivings about Metropolitan Cyprian's proposal to the Russian Church Abroad. I was not convinced that such a union was necessary or beneficial to either Church. I discussed the matter with my assistant Bishop, with the Abbot of our monastery, and with various friends in the Church Abroad. While I was resolved, of course, to show absolute obedience to the Metropolitan, my mind was still unsettled. Then one night, after falling asleep while

pondering this matter, I awakened with a start from a dream. Saint John, dressed in a black cassock and wearing a Cross and *Enkolpion*, had appeared to me and said, rather sternly, "I wish this to be." Nothing else at all was said and I immediately awoke. It is perhaps not insignificant that the union of our Church with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad occurred while the Russian Bishops were meeting in San Francisco on the occasion of Saint John's Glorification.

Except for a handful of very close spiritual children, two laymen, the Greek Bishop whom I visited while at Princeton, and my spiritual Father, I never discussed these dreams with anyone, until the uncovering of the relics of Archbishop John. Whether my dreams are true or not, I cannot prove. But there is proof that Archbishop John is a Saint of God, and I therefore believe that my dreams represent his holy intercession, being prophetic and didactic in nature. The prophetic aspect of these dreams is obvious. Their didactic aspect is not perhaps so clear. But to anyone with a clean conscience and purity of heart, it is easy to discern, after some reflection, that Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco calls all of us, as he did me, into unselfish and total service to the Church; into a traditional, unified witness of resistance to the apostasy of ecumenism and modernism; and into the counsel of holy men who, though they may be reviled and assailed by betrayers and the unwisely zealous alike, keep alive today the presence of Hierarchs like Saint John, who now looks down upon us from the Throne of God and the Heavenly Church.

As a deeply private man, it has been difficult for me to write these words. The blessing of my spiritual Father and my debt to Saint John have, however, made me bold in fulfilling what I believe to be my spiritual duty in honoring our Church and its Saints.