



“A Painful Remembrance”

1924-2004: The Eightieth Anniversary of the Calendar Reform

A Miracle Which Confirms the Traditional Church Calendar*

A Miracle of St. John (Maximovitch)
Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco
(1896-1966)



Archbishop John was a contemporary Saint,¹ an exceptional spiritual personality of the twentieth century, a veritable gift of Grace in a drought-stricken era, at a time when, although so much is being spoken and written about Orthodox spiritual life, the Orthodox Faith, sanctity, etc., there is a tragic dearth of individuals who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, embody these matters in word and deed.

The Blessed *Vladika* John, endowed by our Lord with exceptional talents, made himself a treasury of the Christian virtues: his guilelessness and his voluntary folly for Christ's sake showed him to be a precious diamond of Christ's Church, a Spirit-bearing prophet, a strict ascetic, an indefatigable practitioner of prayer, an indomitable striver after the Kingdom of Heaven, an uncompromising guardian of Holy Tradition, and a militant champion of the true Orthodox Faith.

He excelled in these endeavors and became beloved by the rational sheep of the People of God as a peacemaker, a minister of reconciliation, merciful, righteous, meek, quiet, patient, persevering, a teacher, a good shepherd, a steward of Grace and a bestower thereof to his brethren, both those nearby and those far away; for before him he beheld only brothers, although many of them schemed against him, slandered him, and persecuted him.

He was truly a living and inexhaustible well-spring of holiness, and for this reason, even after his death, his healings, his cures, and his diverse and innumerable miraculous interventions continue to attest to his sanctity, the authenticity of his witness, his God-sent presence, and his action in these last times of apostasy and falling away from the true standard and criterion of the Orthodox Faith and the Orthodox way of life.

A very impressive document published on the twentieth anniversary of his repose urged, as did many other such testimonies, that the sanctity of this holy man be officially proclaimed. It said, among other things:

Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch (1896-1966) was regarded as a Saint during his own lifetime. Manifesting many forms of Orthodox sanctity, he was at once a God-inspired theologian and a fool-for-Christ, a zealous missionary hierarch and a feeder of the poor, a severe ascetic and a loving father to orphans. Like Moses, he delivered his flock out of oppression, bringing them from Communist China to the free world; like the first apostles, he was a wonderworker who performed countless miracles and healings. A man of intense and ceaseless prayer, he was acknowledged by many to be a genuine Holy Elder in the tradition of the great Russian startsi. Possessing the gift of clairvoyance, he would respond to people's thoughts before they had expressed them, and would mystically hear and answer their prayers across great distances. It was not, however, his amazing acts of clairvoyance and healing which first of all drew people to him; instead, it was the abundant Christ-like love that flowed from him. He has not ceased to give this love, and it is still being reciprocated today, even by those who never knew him during his life.²

The following Grace-filled and miraculous incident, which occurred four years after his blessed repose, emphasizes and attests to his scrupulous adherence, throughout his earthly life, to the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Tradition has been dreadfully assailed by the ecumenical movement, which had its inception at the beginning of the twentieth century, with all of its disagreeable concomitants (innovations, modernism, the introduction of the New Calendar, the recognition of heretics, joint prayer and liturgical communion with them, etc.), and we are witnesses on a daily basis to the tragic consequences of this panheretical policy.

The Holy Archbishop John expressed his opposition to the panheresy of ecumenism, condemning the spirit of innovationism as this was displayed in the Orthodox world after 1920 by the Œcumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the ringleader in pro-heretical activities.

Thus, in his report on all the Autocephalous Churches, which was read at the Second *Sobor* of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Sremski Karlovci, Yugoslavia, in 1938, and which took as its principal subject “The Decline of the Patriarchate of Constantinople,” the Saint said, *inter alia*:

The moral prestige of the Patriarchs of Constantinople has, likewise, fallen very low in view of their extreme instability when it comes to Church affairs. Thus, Patriarch Meletios IV (Metaxakis) convened a ‘Pan-Orthodox Synod,’ with representatives from different Churches, which decided upon the introduction of the New Calendar. This decision brought about a terrible schism among Orthodox Christians.... Having lost its significance as a pillar of truth, and having become a source of division by its own doing, and being possessed, at the same time, by an inordinate love of power, [the Œcumenical Patriarchate] presents a pitiful spectacle, which reminds one of the worst periods in the history of the throne of Constantinople.³

The following incident was taken from the collection of St. John's miracles published in a special edition of the American periodical *The Orthodox Word*⁴ on the twentieth anniversary of his repose. This miracle, like two others that come after it, was sent for publication on 2/15 April 1986 by the one who witnessed it, and who signed her name as "Sinful Nun Nadezhda, Seattle, Washington." It occurred at the beginning of 1970. It was also printed in a book put out by the same publishers under the title *Blessed John the Wonder-Worker* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1987, pp. 296-297) as miracle no. 36 in a series numbering altogether a hundred miracles. It is entitled "Protection of Three Orthodox Boys, I. Adam Russell"

I was a newly baptized Orthodox Christian, pregnant with my first child. I was twenty-three years old. Like many converts who never knew Vladika John, after reading his Life—the healings he worked while alive, the orphans he saved, the troubled people he helped, the Orthodox communities he started single-handedly among the French, Dutch, Chinese, Irish, Phillipinos [*sic*], Japanese, etc.—I developed an immense love and devotion towards him. So, when I prayed to God, His Mother and the Saints for direction, I always included Blessed John in my prayers.

Living across the street from the St. Nicholas church rectory in Seattle where Blessed John died, I felt honored to know a "modern saint" and privileged to participate in the Panikhida for him every Thursday in the little room where he died. With reverence I kissed the chair in which he died, his kamilavka, episcopal robes and chotki. One of his spiritual children, George Kalfov, was usually there, singing with the old priest Andrew.

As a convert, I believed in the Orthodox Church but didn't understand the importance of the Old Calendar. So, while pregnant, knowing my child would be born around Christmas, I prayed to God's Mother and St. John for my child to be born on the 'True Christmas.' December 25th [according to the New Calendar] came and went, and January 7th [Christmas according to the Old Calendar] approached. I was getting excited but never dreamed I would experience the things that were ahead of me!

I could no longer walk up the rectory stairs because it was my last month before delivery, so I prayed even more fervently to Vladika. A few days before January 7th I awoke to a strange phenomenon. (My husband Melchisedek was sleeping beside me.) My room was completely engulfed in beautiful, unusual white light. I thought I was awake and yet I felt

so strange, as if I was [*sic*] in Paradise. A nun in white knelt before my bed, next to the baby bassinette—I couldn't see her face because she was prostrating. And then I saw him—Vladika—all in his glowing white robes, standing in my doorway. I knew it was him [*sic*] because I thought of him. He was short; his face was brilliant although he hid it by the hallway partition, and with his right hand he blessed me. This vision lasted only an instant. I believe that the nun in white was St. Elizabeth Feodorovna [the Grand Duchess and New Martyr] because I thought of her, too.

At 3 a.m. on January 7th, 1970 [Christmas according to the Orthodox Calendar], my labor pains started, and to my joy by 4 p.m. our son Adam was born. I glorified God, the Theotokos and of course Saints John and Elizabeth!

I will try to remain faithful to the Old Calendar, and to me it is no question!

Notes

* Cf. Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία, Nos. 22-23 (January-June 1991), pp. 286-290.

1. See the short biography in Ἅγιος Κυπριανός, Nos. 209-211 (May-July 1986), pp. 39-40, and also: [Saint John the Wonderworker](#).

2. *Orthodox News*, No. 11 (July 1986), p. 1.

3. *The Orthodox Word*, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (45) (July-August 1972), p. 177.

4. *The Orthodox Word*, Vol. XXII, No. 2 (127) (March-April 1986), pp. 75-76. It should be noted that in the year before his repose, St. John gave his blessing for the publication of the first issue of the periodical in question.