

## The life of the Confessor Job Boretskyi

Compiled and translated by Sava Beljovich

Job Boretskyi (1560 - March 2nd, 1631)

### EARLY LIFE

Ivan Boretskyi was born in the town of Bircha (now a village) in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (now Ukraine) to the family of Matyvi Boretskyi, a minor nobleman of Ukrainian descent. He was named after St. John the Forerunner so it is believed he was born within eight days of one of the many feasts of St. John.

He received his primary education at the Lviv Fraternal School, and later studied at the Ostrog Academy, founded by Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski, where he studied the Latin language -- his skill in Latin in particular was considered "brilliant" by his peers. He would later study at the University of Krakow. Some time during his studies, he would marry Nikifora Fedorivna Chekhovychevna, who is believed by historians to have been a Russian woman.

By 1604, he returned to the Lviv Fraternal School and became a teacher of Latin and Koine Greek. Shortly after his arrival, he became the Dean of the school and was written in the following: "...to whom the brothers submitted to in the school, as well as the school rules". He was also recognized for his brilliance in poetry and writing around this time as well.

In 1606, while at the Ostrog Academy he wrote a work titled "Dialogue about the Orthodox Faith", where he defended the faith from the Uniates and Jesuits. Around this time, either in 1605 or 1606, he wrote a work titled "Caution", which was an apologetic work directed at the Jesuits and Uniates, as well as recounting the events of the 1590s showing the deceit and crimes committed by the perpetrators of the Unia. Ivan Boretskyi outlined his reasons that led to "such destruction" in the Russian lands as being the lack of common schools, as well as "...from all the misfortunes, pagan rudeness, lack of unanimity, the spread of someone else's faith, and betrayal". Ivan called for unity and defense of the Orthodox Church.

In 1609, Ivan Boretskyi wrote a work, "On the education of Children", which he

had to publish anonymously. In his work, Ivan placed much focus on the Law of God: "...from it, as from a spring, everything good comes, and through it a man finds himself a man." He believed that education should be accessible to all.

## ORDAINATION AND ECCLESICAL CAREER

In 1610, Ivan Boretskyi was ordained a priest by Metropolitan Jeremiah of Kyiv and Galicia, who was the only Bishop in Ukraine after the Union of Brest-Livotsk in 1596. He was assigned to the Church of the Resurrection in Kyiv, located within the suburb of Podil. He founded a parish school and turned his own property into a skete (now Spaska street in Kyiv). He was also a close friend and associate of the Archimandrite of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Fr. Elisey Pletenetskyi – the founder of the first printing house in Ukraine -- and helped with printing of apologetic works against the Uniates.

In 1615, Fr. Ivan Boretskyi would become the founder of the Kyiv Brotherhood and the Kyiv Fraternal School, where he would teach as its first Dean. He taught the Greek and Latin languages, philosophy and taught theology as well. Fr. Ivan showed particular care for the school and its students: he provided everything necessary for education, including paying for student's textbooks at his own expense, and built a library. He used the donations collected from the churches around Kyiv very carefully. He would give many alms to the poor, orphans and widows. The people of Kyiv respected Fr. Ivan so much, he was called "the second St. John the Merciful".

Another contribution Fr. Ivan made to the Church was focusing on reforming and teaching the singing and chanting in the church. He declared it to be an "...important part of aesthetical education". He made many efforts to teach students and laymen the correct church singing, and to eradicate the Western influenced "harmony" -- the deliberate stretching of words, as a result of adding vowels to them, much to the detriment of the melody.

In December of 1619, Fr. Ivan and his wife, Matushka Nikifora, both agreed to take monastic vows. He was tonsured with the name Job and became the Hegumen of the St. Michael of the Golden Domes monastery, his wife would become the Abbess of the Convent of the Holy Fathers in Kyiv. Shortly after his appointment to the monastery, he became increasingly vocal about restoring the Orthodox Hierarchy -- as by this time, Metropolitan Jeremiah was in exile. He was supported by such figures as the Zaporozhian Cossack Chieftain, Petro Sahaidachny.

Fr. Job supported the efforts of the Kyiv-Pechersk printing house, he would financially support the printers T. Verbytskyi and S. Sobol. He would also help in translating the Horologian and Anthologian from Greek to Church Slavonic. His work in education led to him writing a broad charter to be adopted by different schools in Ukraine, the first school of which being the Lutsk Fraternal School. One of Fr. Job's beliefs about education was highlighted in said charter as: "...the rich should not be higher than poor in education..."

In 1620, it was decided -- at the request of Petro Sahaidachny and Fr. Job -- by Patriarch Timothy of Constantinople, Patriarch Theophan III of Jerusalem, and Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (the writer of the "Longer Catechism") that new Bishops were to be made in Ukraine. After the repose of Bishop Gideon and Bishop Mikhail of Peremyshl and the exile of Metropolitan Jeremiah, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had made attempts to ban the entry of Orthodox clergy into Ukraine. Metropolitan Jeremiah was relocated to Lviv and placed under house arrest unless he would accept the Unia.

On March 25th, 1620, Patriarch Theophan III along with an Exarch Bishop, Arsenios, arrived in Kyiv after traveling through Moldova with the protection of the Zaporozhian Cossacks led by Petro Sahaidachny. They would stay at the monastery attached to the Cathedral of the Epiphany. The Poles, after learning of this, attempted to enter Kyiv wanting to arrest the Patriarch, claiming he was a "Turkish spy". The Metropolitan of Sofia, Neofit, and the Bishop of Stagon, Abraham, arrived in Ukraine shortly thereafter. The Bishops decided after a short deliberation and the proclamation of the people that Fr. Job should be the next Metropolitan of Kyiv. Fr. Job initially refused stating he was unworthy to be made a Bishop.

Eventually, Fr. Job would agree and would be consecrated as the Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia. At first the Polish authorities wished to arrest Metropolitan Job, but could not due to the political influence of the Cossacks and the recent alliance with the Russian Tsar. Metropolitan Job would spend the next few months rallying the secular and religious authorities of Kyiv to resist the efforts of the Polish and Jesuits. Due to his presence at many Cossack diets, he was nicknamed "the Cossack Metropolitan". He wrote letters to magnates and apologetic works. He wrote in opposition to the efforts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to control Ukraine stating: "We are citizens of our land, we were born well and honestly in the houses of nobles, we have our settlements and homes therein... and

we only took what our ancestors bequeathed to us".

In 1621 he wrote the famous "Protestation", with help from Fr. (later Bishop) Yosif Kurtsevich and Archbishop Isaias Kopynskyi, in his work, he defended the alliance with the Kingdom of Muscovy and the Tsar, he defended the Orthodox Faith, and said they were "heirs of Old Rus". He also wrote the Cossacks were "knights of Christ", and that their faith in Orthodoxy were the cause of their victories.

In 1622 he wrote another seminal work defending the Orthodox Faith, "the Justification". In 1624, he appealed to the Kingdom of Muscovy, wishing for Ukraine to join the Kingdom. Around this time, Metropolitan Job would ordain priests in Belarus, which had also been effected much by the Unia. He continued to serve as the Dean of the Kyiv Fraternal School. By 1629, the Kyiv Brotherhood was finally recognized and approved by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with the decree stating: "...whatever they build with their own effort, it will be (theirs) forever...". A contemporary of Metropolitan Job, Fr. Stefan Kosiv (who was later tonsured with the name Sylvester and became the first Bishop of Belarus after the Unia) wrote: "Job Boretskyi, the Metropolitan of Kyiv, was also the guardian of the fraternal schools and personally taught theology in them".

## COUNCIL OF KYIV AND REPOSE

In 1628, during the Sixth Week of Great Lent, he would be present at the Horodotsk Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Kyiv-on-Volyn, and would convene a local council of the Orthodox Church (which would later be transferred to the Cathedral of the Dormition in Kyiv-Pechersk). One of the Bishops of the Orthodox Church, Meletiy Smotrytskyi, had secretly made a deal with the Uniates and apostatized to Papism. Metropolitan Job would write a work with the help of Fr. Lavrentiy and Fr. Andrei, "the Apollia (Destruction) of the Apology of Meletiy Smotrytskyi". This council also strongly opposed any attempt to compromise to the Uniates, anathematized the Uniate work "Apology of the Journey to the Eastern Regions" as heretical and contrary to Orthodox Dogma. Along with this, the council had condemned the teaching of the "Filioque" by the Latins, purgatory, the "complete bliss of the righteous" after the separation of the soul from the body, the primacy of the Pope, the practice of unleavened bread, and the common Latin practice of not using both bread and wine for the Eucharist. An Archimandrite, Fr. Petro Mohyla -- who himself later became the Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia -- was present at the Council.

Sometime in 1628 after the Council of Kyiv, he wrote the work "Limonary (Flower Gardener)", a compilation and translation of the Sinai Patericon. In 1629, at the request of King Sigismund III Vaza of the Commonwealth of Nations, he attended a congress to try to create a compromise between the Orthodox and the Uniates, which led nowhere as the Uniates were not willing to renounce their heresies. Around this time, he also wrote the work "Complaints about Piety", wherein he taught the Orthodox how to behave during persecutions.

In late 1629, Metropolitan Job would fall ill. He would transfer the guardianship of education affairs to Fr. Petro Mohyla, but warned that all the schools should be founded within the Kyiv Brotherhood, and not elsewhere. On the night of March 2nd or the morning of March 3rd, 1631, Metropolitan Job fell asleep in the Lord. And according to his will, he was buried at the church of St Michael of the Golden Domes, which had been the Metropolitan's residence for many years. He would be succeeded by Isaias Kopynskyi as the Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia.

Bishop Sylvester Kosiv wrote that he was "... (a) well-educated person, in liberal sciences, in knowledge of Greek, Latin and Slavic languages... he hardly had equals". According to St. Dmitri of Rostov he was "...beyond wise in the Divine Scriptures, (and) well versed in Greek and Latin...", according to the Historian Viktor Serhiychuk he was "... (a calculated man), he would often remind the Tsar about his rights to Kyiv".

His relics would begin working miracles shortly after his repose, and they would be parted and sent across the Russian Lands, many would visit his grave at the St. Michael of the Golden Domes monastery and today there is an icon of him in the Church.

He is remembered well for his efforts in defending the Orthodox Faith and restoring the Church and its buildings. He is commemorated on March 2nd, the typically assumed date of his repose.