

Lost Chapter from Blessed John the Wonderworker

This was included in the first edition of *Blessed John the Wonderworker** published while Fr. Seraphim was still alive. Chapter 2.

"The "Discovery" of Metropolitan Anthony

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD of Archbishop John, and his deep contact with the living sources of Holy Russia, were the foundation of the sanctity of his mature years. But there was one man who guided, who inspired, and pushed him in the particular direction of serving the Church of Christ as monk, priest, bishop and theologian. This was the great hierarch of the first part of this century, leading candidate to become Patriarch in 1918, and first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia: Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky.



Young Michael Maximovitch came to Kharkov to attend Law School at the age of 18 in the very year (1914) when Metropolitan (the Archbishop) Anthony was assigned to be ruling bishop of this important city. In the brief three years which Metropolitan Anthony spent at this post he so gained the heart and trust of the young student, and so inspired him with the ideals of service to the Church and to Russia, that one may well say that it was he who formed the future hierarch. Later, in the years of banishment in Serbia, it was MA who tonsured him a monk and called him to be priest and then bishop, and who so grew to love him that he sent him to be bishop in Shanghai in 1934 "as my own soul, as my own heart."

The way in which MA inspired and influenced Archbishop John is best

told in the latter's own words, in his article based on personal experience, describing Metropolitan Anthon's years in Kharkov:

(Translated from *Orthodox Way* Jordanville 1950, pp. 6–9.)

"A special love and concern was evoked in Archbishop Anthony by young people. The students of the Theological Academies who passed through Kharkov made use of the Bishop's House as their own...

Vladiika received them all with great cordiality, furnished them room and board and even money for innocent amusements. And in the evenings, having finished his diocesan business, he would call to his quarters all the guests and would spend time with them in instructive conversation until late at night.

"The seeds sown by Vladika fell deeply into the young souls. After leaving the hospitable Kharkov Bishop's House, they often remembered it later, many entered into correspondence with Vladika, told their friends about him, and they likewise strove to enter into personal or written contact with Vladijka.

" Vladika strove to influence the working out of an Orthodox Christian world outlook in the students of secular institutions of learning also, and in every way possible he aided their moral education. When visiting the house churches of the educational institutions and celebrating Divine services there, he would always deliver profoundly instructive sermons directed to the mind and heart of teachers and students. Even young people who were far from the Church felt the spiritual gaze of Vladika directed upon them. This is why, when in 1914 the threatening events moving against Russia and the Slavic peoples evoked a patriotic enthusiasm among the youth, the student demonstration was directed precisely to the Bishop's House. Coming out onto the balcony of the second floor, in which the Bishop's Quarters were located, Archbishop Anthony addressed the students with a profound talk in which he expressed his view of Russian young people and his faith that in the depth of their soul they were always grateful and patriotic, while the contrary currents among them were only an imported

temporary phenomenon."

Above all young Michael was influenced and inspired by Archbishop Anthony's religious enthusiasm and loving pastoral care for young people. He continues his account (speaking of himself, although in the third person):

"Being concerned for the raising of the general moral level of young people, Vladika did not leave without attention each separate young person whom he happened to see; he would speak warmly with such a one. And if he happened to discover that anyone was so inclined that he might receive special benefit from himself, Vladika strove to seek out and see this person.



†July 28/August 10, 1936

"Once Archbishop Anthony was informed that one of the leading representatives of the gentry of Kharkov province had as eldest son, a student, who was very interested in spiritual questions. Vladika did not delay in asking the father to bring the son to him. This was an unheard-of thing in Kharkov at the time, for not just anyone even among those of public position would dare to go to the Archbishop himself, who always had a number of visitors on

business... Some months passed. The Archbishop's invitation was forgotten. Archbishop Anthony was invited to serve a moleben at one gathering in which the above-mentioned representative of the gentry participated. At the end of the moleben he went to receive the Archbishop's blessing. 'Why are you hiding your son from me?' Vladika asked. 'Are you afraid I will make him a monk?' Thunderstruck that the Archbishop should remember his son, the father affirmed that he was not hiding him, but that he had not considered it possible or convenient to bring a young person to an Archbishop so overburdened by important business. 'No, you must absolutely bring him; only then will I believe you,' Vladika said. Returning home from the gathering, the father told this news, which astonished everyone...

"Somewhat upset by the situation, the father now decided to bring the son to the Archbishop, but it was literally as if something were hindering this. First the son became ill, then the father had to go away from Kharkov on business. And the visit to the Archbishop was put off to some indefinite time.

"Once Archbishop Anthony was giving a lecture in the Landowners' Hall. Among the listeners was that same student. During the intermission, he went to receive Vladika's blessing. Those standing around Vladika indicated that this was the one about whom Vladika had spoken with his father. 'So it's you whom your parents are hiding from

me!" Vladika cried out, embracing him. The latter replied that they were not hiding him at all, a proof of which was his very presence at the lecture. "Then tell your father that he must absolutely come to me with you."

"After this nothing was left for the father but to go to the Archbishop with his son. Archbishop Anthony was not long in returning the visit and, not finding the parents home, but discovering that the children were home, he entered the house all the same, blessing the children and conversing with them,

"From that time on this whole family began to be in close contact with Vladika, coming to love their Archpastor warmly, and for all the years that followed they were spiritually guided by him. The young man whom Vladika had 'discovered,' having been spiritually educated under his guidance and direction, is now a bishop of the Russian Church Outside of Russia."

Archbishop Nikon of Washington and Florida, another spiritual son of Metropolitan Anthony, in his memoirs of Archbishop John (in the *Chronicle* of Bishop Savva, ch. 29), notes that the younger hierarch put into practice the pedagogical method which he learned from Metropolitan Anthony: "The essence of this pedagogical method consists in a personal concern, and education filled with care for each student, and the uncovering of spiritual life in his soul. The young Hieromonk John assimilated this method completely and joined it to a limitless labor of prayer..." And indeed, religiously-inclined young people who knew Vladika John can testify to the great interest and care he took in inspiring them with Orthodox fervor and drawing them into the service of the Church, igniting in them the flame which had been kindled in his own soul by the warm heart of Metropolitan Anthony.



*The first edition of *Blessed John the Wonderworker*, printed while Fr. Seraphim was still alive, contained the chapter, "*The Discovery of Metropolitan Anthony*," concerning Metropolitan Anthony's great influence on Vladyka John. This was omitted in later editions. Another chapter, "*Fearless Champion of True Orthodoxy*," containing Vladyka John's defense of the Russian Church Abroad, was also omitted in subsequent editions.

Related post:

<http://remnantrocor.blogspot.com/2012/11/fr-seraphim-st-john.html>

Posted by Joanna at 2/12/2013

Labels: Fr. Seraphim Censored

1 comment:



Joanna said...

Why was this chapter omitted after Fr. Seraphim's death?

I think it is safe to guess that defrocked abbot Herman didn't like seeing either Fr. Seraphim or St. John associated with Rocor, or that either of them had any special love for Rocor.

But notice in the last sentence of St. John's words where he is speaking of himself in the 3rd person:

"....The young man whom Vladika had 'discovered,' having been spiritually educated under his guidance and direction, is now a bishop of the Russian Church Outside of Russia."

Notice that St. John said: "Russian Church Outside of Russia". He

did not say simply "the Church" or the Orthodox Church". He said with deep love and loyalty, even reverence: "RUSSIAN CHURCH OUTSIDE of RUSSIA".

Nobody can say that either Fr. Seraphim or St. John were nationalists, but they were members of the Rocol. And it is time for Platina to give us back their writings that have been wrongfully withheld from us and future generations – their writings which teach us about Antichrist, renovationism and apostasy; and which show the deep respect they had for the real Rocol which Platina now calls a schism; and which show that neither of them would have left Rocol to join the RocolMP.

2/12/2013