



Prayer to St. Mitrophan, first Bishop of Voronezh

O most praiseworthy hierarch of Christ and Wonderworker, Mitrophan!

Receive this humble prayer of us sinners, who take refuge in thee, and in thy loving intercession pray our Lord and God Jesus Christ, that, regarding us in His mercy, He may grant us pardon of our sins voluntary and involuntary, and in His loving kindness deliver us from the troubles, sorrows, and ills of soul and body that beset us; that He may grant us to complete this temporal life in repentance, and that He may vouchsafe unto us, sinful and unworthy though we be, His heavenly Kingdom: so that, with all the Saints, we may glorify His endless mercy, with His Unoriginate Father, and His Holy, and Life-creating Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Nov. 23



The Uncovering of the Relics of Sainted Mitrophan, Bishop of Voronezh (1832):

The memory of the deep piety and pastoral virtues of Saint Mitrophan (as schemamonk named Makarii) was revered as sacred at Voronezh, back from the time of his death (+ 23 November 1703). His successors, the Voronezh hierarchs, considered it their sacred duty to annually make remembrance of the first-hierarch of their flock, together with his parents, the priest Vasilii and Maria. The people of Voronezh and its surroundings came to the Annunciation cathedral, where at the place of his burial panikhida memorial services were made. Contributing to the intense remembrance of Saint Mitrophan was also his deathbed last-will bidding -- to make prayers for him. For this the saint even during his lifetime had built at the cathedral a chapel in honour of the holy Archangel Michael (the heavenly patron-saint of the saint's baptismal name), and in it a special priest made early votive liturgies. Although new generations afterwards did not know the saint, they likewise reverently venerated his memory. The veracity of the sainthood of the first hierarch of the Voronezh diocese was likewise confirmed by his incorrupt relics, witnessed during the repeated transfers of them from one temple to another. And thus in the year 1718, the Voronezh metropolitan Pakhomii, in setting about the construction of a new cathedral, gave orders to demolish the old Annunciation cathedral, during which time the body of Saint Mitrophan was temporarily transferred into the church of the Unburnt Bush [as seen by Moses]. In 1735 the body of Saint Mitrophan was transferred into the new cathedral, during which time the non-decay of his relics was again witnessed. At the place of the burial of the saint, panikhidas were customarily made for him.

With the year 1820 it was noticed, that the number of those venerating Saint Mitrophan and thronging to Voronezh, had extraordinarily increased. Graced signs also increased. The Voronezh archbishop Antonii II made repeated reports to the Holy Synod about miracles, and he petitioned for a resolution on the glorification to sainthood of the saint. The Holy Synod then prescribed watching for bestowals of grace, received at the grave of Saint Mitrophan. In the year 1831, after witnessing to the incorrupt body of the saint, archbishop Antonii together with commission members of the Holy Synod -- the Yaroslavl' archbishop Evgenii and archimandrite Germogen of the Moscow Saviour-Androniev monastery, became convinced in the miraculous intercession of Saint Mitrophan before the Throne of God. The Holy Synod then issued its resolution adding Sainted Mitrophan into the ranks of the Saints. Since then the Russian Church celebrates the memory of the saint twice during the year: 23 November -- on the day of repose, and on 7 August -- on the day of glorification.

Archbishop Antonii II (1827-1846) established in the Voronezh also the following

feastdays in honour of Sainted Mitrophan: 4 June, in memory of Sainted Mitrophanes, Patriarch of Tsar'grad-Constantinople, as a day of "tezoimenie" or name-in-common for Saint Mitrophan of Voronezh; 2 April -- the saint's day of ordination to bishop (in 1682); 11 December -- the day of confirmation of the relics of Saint Mitrophan (in 1831).

Saint Mitrophan left behind a spiritual last-testament. Its original is preserved in the State Historical Museum. Upon the testament is the unique handwritten authoritative undersigning by the saint: "This spiritual dictate is attested to by me... Bishop Mitrophan of Voronezh".

On the lower cover (inside) is a gloss inscription from the XVIII Century: "This is the book of testament or last-will of the Voronezh schema-monk Makarii, written in the God-saved city of Voronezh, in the house of His Grave the bishop and schema-monk Makarii, who reposed in the month of November on the 23rd day in the year 1703, and was buried on the 4th day of December".

On the day preceding the Uncovering of the Relics of Saint Mitrophan, the Voronezh archbishop Antonii set about going to church, so as to lay out the new archbishop vestments prepared for the relics. Suddenly he felt in himself such a weakness, that he was barely able to go about his cell. Troubled by this, he sat and pondered and then he heard a quiet voice: "Transgress not my legacy".

This he did not understand right away, and instead thinking about his own plans, he gathered up his strength and opened the closet wherein were the vestments, and there he caught sight of the schema-garb, brought shortly before this by some unknown monk, who had entrusted it to him and said, that it soon would be needed.

Seeing this schema-garb, the Vladyka then realised, that the words, "Transgress not my legacy", was actually the will of Saint Mitrophan, that they not place upon his relics the archbishop vestiture, but rather leave them in schema-garb, -- indicating by this and by his extreme humility the deep spiritual connection with his schema-monk patronal saint, the Monk Makarii of Unzhensk.

Source: <http://www.stlukeorthodox.com/html/saints/august/7th.cfm>