

Saint Vasily Kineshensky

A brief note with regard to this document which is intended to present some brief information about a recently canonized saint in the Russian Orthodox Church. That is to say, St. Vasily Kineshensky, information of which can be obtained directly from two sources at the end of this document. The first is a website on St. Vasily and the second is about a museum in his honor.

Also several texts are presented from his book entitled **Conversation on the Gospel of Mark**. As of now, certain parts are available only in English. We are awaiting further material from translators in Russia. Therefore please forgive the paucity of information as it stands now. In the near future this hopefully will be remedied which will enable his message to reach a broader audience.

Included is a Wikipedia article on St. Vasily as well as several photos.

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“The Lord God is my strength, and I am calm. I know that there is no other power in the world greater than this, and nothing can disrupt His plans. At the same time I know that the plans His blessings, for the Lord wants all mankind to “be saved and come into the understanding of truth,” and I am calm. I know that the Lord leads me His way, that His Almighty hand is always on me and controls my life, that His All-Seeing Eye looks at all the little things, encountered on my way, and no matter what - joy or sorrow, success or misfortune, success or persecution, sorrow or pleasure, pleasant or bitter - all this is the same determined by the will of the Creator and sent to me for testing, for admonition, for encouragement, for strengthening. I know that I need all this, and I am calm.”

Devoted minister of the Russian Orthodox Church, ardent preacher and confessor of the faith Christ, an adherent of the Orthodox faith during the tragic years of persecution of the Church, a kind and wise shepherd, a talented religious writer and educator. All these hypostases of the spiritual services equally relate to Saint Basil, Bishop of Kineshma.

Veniamin Sergeevich Preobrazhensky (this is the worldly name of the Saint) was born in the city Kineshma, Kostroma province, January 7(20), 1876 in the family of the dean of the Church of the Ascension, Archpriest Sergius and Mother Pavla.

The first steps in the biography of Veniamin Preobrazhensky are common for a hereditary representative of the clergy of the late 19th century. After graduating from the Kineshma Theological School, and then from the Kostroma Theological Seminary, he entered the Kyiv Theological Academy, which he graduated in 1901 with a degree candidate of theology.

A young academician received a position as a teacher at the Voronezh Theological seminary, one of the oldest and most respected in Russia. At the same time he studied at St. Petersburg Imperial Archaeological Institute.

After his graduation in 1902, Veniamin Preobrazhensky became a member of the Voronezh provincial scientific archival commission and became a member of the Church Historical Archaeological Committee. He served in Voronezh up to 1910. Here he was awarded the degree of Master of Theology for his brilliant study "On the Slavic-Russian Skete Patericon".

Over the years of study, Veniamin Sergeevich perfectly mastered many languages, both ancient and modern European ones. The hierarchy sent him to London for thorough study, where he stayed for two years. After returning to Russia, Veniamin Preobrazhensky began teaching languages and world history at the city's male gymnasium of Mirgorod in Ukraine. In 1914 he moved to Moscow, receiving a position as a Latin teacher in the first private gymnasium at the Lutheran Church of Peter and Paul. The same year he entered a pedagogical institute which was established by a manufacturer and philanthropist P. G. Shelaputin. After the trip to England in 1914, where Veniamin Preobrazhensky studied in detail the scouting method of Robert Baden Powell, his two books "Boy Scouts" were published.

First Congress Scouts of Russia, which was held in 1915, decided to distribute the books of V. S. Preobrazhensky in all schools, gymnasiums and lyceums of the country. In a book published separately in 1917, V.S. Preobrazhensky adapted the “scouting” system for Orthodox Russia. The revolutionary turmoil in Russia in 1917 could not help but touch the sensitive and responsive soul of the future Saint.

This is what the rector of the Holy Trinity Church in the city of Windsor (Canada), Archpriest Sergei Shchukin, a former active participant in the Moscow branch of the Russian Student Christian Movement, said about this in his memoirs: “Pictures of fratricidal struggle on the Moscow streets shook his soul to such an extent that he could no longer stay in Moscow and live his normal life. He was haunted by the question: how could the Russian people reach such a state? In the end, he came to the conclusion that he himself was to blame for what had happened. For him, as a devoted Christian and educator, it became clear that the main cause of the revolution was the wrong education of Russian people, which the government, the Church and Society didn’t take a sufficient care.

At the same time, Veniamin Sergeevich realized his own mistake and perceived it as his sin before the nation. He realized that his duty, as a graduate of theological school, was to become a priest and take care of the spiritual enlightenment of the people. But since he himself, like many other seminarians, avoided this responsibility and chose a different path, then he bore his part of the responsibility. Having come to this conclusion, Veniamin Sergeevich not only repented, but also decided to do everything possible to rectify his sin. He immediately announced his resignation as a teacher and without saying goodbye went to his homeland in the city of Kineshma, Kostroma province.” So the recent brilliant teacher of the capital’s gymnasium turned out to be a simple psalm-reader.

The place of his ministry was the same Ascension Church in Kineshma, the rectors of which were his grandfather Priest Kapiton of Kherson and great-grandfather Priest Vasily Perebaskin. Here Archpriest Sergius, his own father, continued the service. Having received the blessing of the church authorities,

the psalmist Benjamin Preobrazhensky began to preach sermons in various Orthodox churches in the city of Kineshma from October 1918.

Soon the fame of the talented preacher of the Word of the Lord spread throughout Kineshma district. During these troubled, anxious years, another missionary side of his talent was revealed. Veniamin Preobrazhensky organized numerous church groups. During the classes they read the Gospel, and then interpreted the Holy Scripture, and Benjamin himself gave examples of interpretation. Participants in those circles sang church hymns and spiritual poems beloved by the people. That way, the people who were seeking spiritual salvation were raised in such faithfulness and love for Christ that no subsequent adversity could shake them.

In July 1920 Veniamin Sergeevich Preobrazhensky was ordained to the priesthood by the celibate Metropolitan of Kostroma and Galich Seraphim (Meshcheryakov). Deciding to completely devote his entire life to serving the Lord, Priest Benjamin took monastic vows with the name Vasily - in honour of St. Basil the Great. In 1921, Hieromonk Vasily entered the highest level of the priesthood - he was consecrated Bishop of Kineshma, vicar of the Kostroma diocese. Acceptance of the priesthood, and even more so the hierarchical rank, in the 20s of the 20th century inevitably meant entering the way of the cross of persecution.

Bishop Vasily lived very modestly, one might say ascetically. He settled in a small hut on the outskirts of the city, where he slept on the bare floor, putting a log under his head. Hiding his asceticism, he received visitors in the office, not far from the Church of the Ascension.

In the summer of 1922, the bishop blessed the priests whose churches were captured by the Renovationists not to abandon their flock and to celebrate the Liturgy in rural squares. He set an example of such services, and thousands of believers came to the services. In the same year, bishop Vasily set up a shelter in the house of his parishioner for girls whose parents died from the famine that broke out in the Lower Volga region.

Such ascetic spiritual service of Bishop Vasily could not help but irritate representatives of the atheistic authorities. A continuous series of persecutions started. In May 1923, Bishop Vasily was already arrested and sent into two-year exile in the remote polar village of Ust-Kulum, Zyryansky region. In May 1925 he returned to Kineshma, but not for long. His subsequent life became a continuous series of arrests, prisons, exiles, and relocations. And in each new community the saint strove to continue his pastoral ministry in an accessible form, which is why the persecution from the atheists did not subside. Most often at night, as befits servants of darkness, security officers appeared, the prison cell door slammed shut, then savage interrogations, trials, imprisonment, camps, exiles.

That was the case in 1928 and 1933 and happened again in 1943 and 1944. Near Yekaterinburg and near Murmansk, in the 'Volgolag' near Rybinsk, in the Yaroslavl prison and in the Moscow Butyrka. In the remote Siberian village of Birilyussy, Krasnoyarsk Territory, the martyrdom of Bishop Vasily ended. He reposed in the Lord on August 13, 1945, just short of his 70th birthday. In August 2000, at the Jubilee Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, Saint Basil was glorified as the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church.

The most important and extensive of the works of St. Basil of Kineshma is "Conversations on the Gospel of Mark." This book is a kind of textbook on spiritual life of Christians. The saint bases it on the sacred text of the Gospel of Mark. But often he goes far beyond the events outlined by the evangelist and also connects them with the circle of everyday concerns of the reader, mainly a layman. And the fact that the Gospel of Mark was chosen as the subject of his reflections seems by no means accidental: after all, according to the unanimous judgment of theologians and historians of the Church, it was addressed to the pagan Romans. Bishop Vasily wrote his work at the very time when the Russian people, through the efforts of a godless government, were sliding into the abyss of a new (and worse) paganism.

There is one more feature of the "Conversations" of St. Basil, which allows us to consider them an indispensable guide for every Orthodox reader of the

present days. The work of Bishop Vasily, while remaining at an extremely high level of comprehension and understanding of the spiritual Truth contained in the Gospel of Mark, is connected in thousands of threads with the conditions and circumstances of the life of an Orthodox Christian in these last and closing days.

The very sound of Bishop Vasily's "Conversations" - how close it is to us living today! It doesn't have not a shadow of that, most often deliberate, archaic structure of speech, which was often characteristic of spiritual writers even of recent times, contemporaries of the Lord of Kineshma. His language, rich and expressive, is surprisingly expressive and euphonious. Without losing a single grain of spiritual richness and depth, Bishop Vasily puts his teaching and narration in the guise of impeccable artistic prose. This is a book with which its reader will have a pleasant acquaintance.

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URL for website on St Vassily. Please note: both are in Russian but easily accessible in English.

[https://ru.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%92%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9_\(%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9,%D0%92%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD_%D0%A1%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B3%D0%B5%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%87\)](https://ru.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%92%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9_(%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9,%D0%92%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD_%D0%A1%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B3%D0%B5%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%87))

URL for website regarding museum about St Vassily run by Svetlana

<https://www.xn--80akahgvf5ajn1b2c.xn--p1ai/en/about/project-geography/ivanovo-region/house-museum-in-the-memory-of-st-basil-bishop-of-kineshma/>