

St. Lawrence of Chernigov: Some Prophecies and Statements on the Ukrainian Situation

Schema-Archimandrite Lawrence, in the world Luke Evseevich Proskura, was born in 1868 in the region of Chernigov. He reposed on the Feast of Theophany, 1950, and after his death his relics were found to be incorrupt. The Russian Orthodox Church canonized him as a saint in 1993 (commemorated on December 29/January 11 and January 6/19). Besides the gift of healing, St. Lawrence was known for his gift of prophecy, especially concerning events surrounding the end of the world and the coming of Antichrist. His words have striking significance for us today.

Chernigov is located in the northern Ukraine, a region that before the Bolshevik revolution and Lenin's redrawing of the map was more considered a part of Russia. St. Lawrence would have felt deeply for the fate of both peoples without preference, and his prophecies concerning the Ukraine have come down to us. Here are some of those prophecies, translated from the book: St Lawrence of Chernigov: Life and Service to the Saint [Russian] (Lestvitsa: Moscow 2003). They are also found in the book [Russian], St. Lawrence of Chernigov: Life, Teachings, Prophecies and Akathist (Holy Dormition-Pochaev Lavra, 2001).

“Defender and Protector of Holy Rus”

He was all things to all people (cf. 1 Cor. 9:2)

The spiritual people who had contact with Fr. Lawrence—Metropolitan Joseph (Chernov) of Alma-Atin and Kazakhstan (1839-1975); Archbishop Simon (Ivanovsky) of Vinnitsa and Bratslav (1888-1966); Archbishop Veniamin (Novitsky) of Irkutsk and Chitinsk (1900-1976); Archbishop Evmeny (Khorol'sky) of Zhitomir and Ovruch (1886-1967); Bishop Iakov

(Zaika) of Chernigov; Archimandrite Kronid, Vicar of the Kiev Caves Dormition Lavra; Schema-Archimandrite Prochor of Pochaev and St. Kuksha of Odessa were witnesses to Fr. Lawrence, that he was a great ascetic and Starets—like St. Ambrose of Optina and St. Varnava of Gethsemane Skete.

They all conversed with the holy Elder Lawrence, received consolation and help; and to each of them the clairvoyant elder partially revealed the future, which was fulfilled in reality.

The late Metropolitan of Kiev, John,¹ deeply revered Schema-Archimandrite Lawrence's memory and always mentioned him with reverence during conversations about him; he himself had the opportunity to become convinced of the Elder's clairvoyance, and would say, "Great and marvelous is this elder!"

According to accounts of Fr. Alexander (dean of the Transfiguration of the Savior Cathedral and secretary of the Diocesan administration), Hieromartyr Vasily (Bogoyavlensky), Archbishop of Chernigov used to say (in 1915 or 1916) that the Holy Spirit dwelt in Fr. Lawrence, and that he was like the ancient ascetics. And concerning the archbishop himself he added, "Oh! What a man Archbishop Vasily was! He was a real hierarch! And he won't say a single idle word—it was really so with him, that a hierarch's word is law, and holy."

Archbishops Simon and Andrei and Bishops Iakov and Nestor called Fr. Lawrence a great luminary and pillar of Orthodoxy.

Yes, he was indeed a light of the Orthodox Faith and its bulwark and



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champion, for he himself never wavered in the unity of the Church and did not associate with the Living Church-Renovationists or the Ukrainian nationalist-self-ordained groups.² He strengthened the faithful in Orthodoxy. He said that—according to St. Theodosius’ (of Chernigov’s) example—one must hold to unity and not split off. He was always faithful to the Moscow Patriarchate, and enjoined everyone to do the same.

Before the closing of the monastery in Chernigov, the servant of God M.M. travelled with a petition to the Moscow Patriarchate, where he was received first by Archbishop Cyprian, and then by Patriarch Alexei I. The conversation was long; the subject turned to the miracles of St. (Bishop) Theodosius [of Chernigov], and at this His Holiness began to talk about Schema-Archimandrite Lawrence, saying that Metropolitan Stephen of Kharkov had told him that Fr. Lawrence was holy. He added, crossing himself, “Holy Father Lawrence, pray unto God for us!”

*Long he burned, not burning up,
Enlightening hearts – so many!
Before him the gates of Paradise opened up
Because he loved aplenty.*

Monastics and laymen, not only of Chernigov but also throughout Rus’, who remembered and personally knew the Elder-ascetic and helper in all kinds of need, who turned to him or who heard or read about him, always believed that the soul of the righteous Elder had taken up its abode in the heavenly mansions, intercedes before the Throne of the Lord and Ruler of the Universe, and prays for our salvation. And the Lord did not put their faith to shame: Elder Lawrence was numbered among the choir of monastic saints in 1993.

The Psalm-Singer David—saint, king, and prophet—said: “*Wondrous is God in His saints!*”³... And we the faithful children of the Orthodox Church also say, wondrous is God in Fr. Lawrence.

The basis of the material being published here is the Elder's personal account and the memoirs of his spiritual children, nuns of the convent, who to the last day of his life were with him and near him. I am personally adding what has not been included in previous "Lives" of the Elder, but which has been preserved in various manuscripts. I knew personally and had conversations with all the people about whom I give account and whose accounts I cite.

Schema-Igumen Cherubim (Degtyar)

Chernigov

"St. Lawrence's Prophetic Words About Heresies and Schisms in the Ukrainian Church"⁴

Batiushka—such a loving man—told us: "When a little freedom appears, when the churches and monasteries are being opened and restored, then all false teaching will come out, and the demons and secret atheists (Catholics, Uniates, Ukrainian self-ordained, and others) and will fiercely take up arms against the Orthodox Russian Church, its unity and its conciliar nature.⁵ A godless authority will support these heretics, and therefore they will take churches away from the Orthodox and slaughter the faithful.

"Then the Metropolitan of Kiev (not worthy of the name) together with his like-minded hierarchs and priests will strongly shake the Russian Church. The whole world will be amazed at his lawlessness and will be frightened. He himself will go off into eternal perdition, like Judas.⁶

"But all these slanders of the evil one and false teachings will disappear in Russia, and there will be One Orthodox Russian Church."

Elder Lawrence's Words about Rus', about the Concept of "Russian," about Heresies and Schisms, and about Faithfulness to the Mother-Church⁷

St. Lawrence spoke emphatically and strictly, with warning, that the word for

our native land and people is Rus' and Russian.⁸ "And it's absolutely necessary to know, remember, and not forget that it was the Baptism of Rus' (Russia), and not the baptism of Ukraine. Kiev is a second Jerusalem and the mother of Russian cities. Kievan Rus' was together with Great Russia. Kiev without Great Russia and separate from Russia is completely unthinkable.

"There was a secret Jewish capital in Poland.⁹ The Jews forced the Poles to try to conquer Rus'. When the Poles conquered part of Rus' (Russia),¹⁰ they rented it to the Jews, including Orthodox monasteries, churches and priests. The priests and Orthodox people could not perform any rite whatsoever without their permission. They pressed and oppressed the Orthodox [Christians] from every side, protecting Poland, Catholicism, and the Unia.¹¹ It is not without reason that 'Golden Gritz'¹² of blessed memory—Fool-for-Christ Grigory—used to cry out at the bazaar when they would beat him: 'Oh! The Jewish fists hurt!'

"The Jews hated the words 'Rus' and 'Russian,' so at first they called the Russian lands conquered by the Poles and rented out to them 'Malorossia' (Little Russia). Then they realized that it contained the word 'Ros,' and they named it Okraina¹³. The word *okraina* is a disgraceful and humiliating word! What 'remote, outlying district'? What 'outback'? Why and for what is it 'okraina'?! You see, beyond this supposed Judeo-Polish 'outskirts' there lie other countries and states. And later, on their same orders, the Poles legitimatized the concepts of the Ukraine and Ukrainians to us, so that we would willingly forget our own name of 'Russian' forever, so that we would be torn away from Holy and Orthodox Rus' forever.

"St. Theodosius, Abbot of the Kiev Caves Lavra, wrote that we should never praise anyone else's religion and on no account should we unite with the Catholics or leave the Orthodox Faith. People close in spirit to him, the great Archbishop Lazarus Baranovich and St. Theodosius of Chernigov—whose relics are before us (saying this, Batiushka Lawrence did a prostration towards the Cathedral), and St. John, Metropolitan of Tobol'sk—all strove



St. Theodosius of Chernigov

together are Holy Rus'. Know, remember, and do not forget.

"There was never any Patriarch in the city of Kiev—the Patriarchs were in Moscow and lived in Moscow. Beware of Ukrainian *samosviatsky*¹⁵ groups (churches) and the Unia."

The Vicar of the Kiev Caves Lavra, Fr. Kronid, took objection to Batiushka's words, because the *samosviaty* and the Uniates had already vanished in the Ukraine. Batiushka answered mournfully and sadly, "A demon will enter them and they will take up arms with satanic malice against the Orthodox Faith and Church, but they will have a disgraceful end, while their followers will suffer heavenly retribution from the Lord, King of the Heavenly Hosts."

What precious words of Batiushka's—they are priceless! Batiushka foresaw everything and knew everything ahead of time. Now a Ukrainian *samosviat* self-ordained hierarch has appeared, calling himself the [head of] the Kiev

with all their strength according to the word of the Lord Jesus: *That they all may be one*, may be with Orthodox Russia, so as together to constitute Holy Rus'. And so to be freed once and for all from Polish domination and from the oppression of the Jews and their leasing,¹⁴ and be freed from soul-destroying Catholicism and the Unia, so foreign to us, which were introduced and planted by threats, torture, and death." And Batiushka used to say further: "As it is impossible to divide the Most Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, for it is One God, so also it is impossible to divide Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia, for these

Patriarchate—and where, no less? In America. He doesn't know and has forgotten that there has never been a Patriarch in Kiev... We, however, need to bring to everyone's attention: How could there be a Kiev Patriarch in America?! And some people cry out in their folly, to their eternal torment and to their shame: "Our Patriarch."

Batiushka forewarned us to be faithful to the Moscow Patriarchate and under no circumstances to enter any schism. He warned that the hierarchs and priests who have led the faithful into a revolt have done great harm to themselves and have brought a multitude of Orthodox souls to perdition.

"Be cautious of the so-called Church Abroad, and know that it is not in the Diptych of the Orthodox Churches.¹⁶ It is not a church, but part of the Russian Church.¹⁷ Our much-suffering Church held its own in the godless state. To her [the Church] be honor and glory and eternal praise! Our country is not abroad, and our Church is not abroad! Our country has never ceased to exist! We do not have any "abroad" churches.

"The 'Free Church' is a heretical name.¹⁸ All our churches and monasteries are Orthodox, even the closed ones and the desecrated ones.

"The only ones who go into schism and heresy are those unworthy of God's mercy, and are great sinners, who do not want to know: "*I believe in One Holy Catholic ("conciliar") and Apostolic Church!*" Nor do they wish to know that the Orthodox Church is the Body of Christ (can it be possible to divide the Body of Christ?), and finally, that the Church is the seamless robe of the Lord (which, although Arius tried, one must not divide).

"And they do not remember, that there is One God, one Faith and Baptism.¹⁹

"The Lord Jesus Christ created one Church (and not churches), over which even the gates of hell cannot prevail. There is only one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The others, which call themselves churches, are not churches, but tares of the devil among the wheat, and an assembly of the

devil."

At these words, Batiushka said a prayer for all who have gone astray from or renounced Orthodoxy; he began to cry and said, "No, the Lord will not call them to repentance, they will not be saved, for they are unworthy of God's mercy. This was revealed to me by the Queen of Heaven and my holy Guardian Angel." Batiushka testified: "The Queen of Heaven has appeared to me several times, has visited me both by Herself, and with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel." "In those who have gone astray from and have renounced the True Faith²⁰ there is no salvation or receiving of the Kingdom of Heaven. We, the Orthodox, do not need anything—only the Orthodox Faith, the salvation of our souls, and to receive the Kingdom of Heaven. And we have all this in our Mother, the Russian Orthodox Church. Thanks be to God! But to break off from it and leave it is the greatest sin, which is unforgivable both in this life and in the life to come—it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit."

And at this Batiushka lit up with a light not of this world, finishing his conversation with the words, "Hear thou and see!" as the Holy Evangelist says, and added: "They will be deaf and blind!"²¹

Schema-Archimandrites Theophan, Nikifor and Varlaam

Prophecy of the Holy Spirit-Bearing Elder Lawrence about Russia

Schema-Archimandrite Theophan also related that St. Lawrence used to say with a smile, joyfully: "The Russian people will repent of their deadly sins—that they allowed the Jewish impiety²² in Russia, that they did not defend the Tsar anointed of God, the Orthodox churches or monasteries, the choir of the holy Martyrs and Confessors and all that was holy in Russia. They disdained piety and loved demonic impiety. And [they will repent of the fact] that for many years they lauded and glorified, and went a-worshipping the destroyer of the country—the soviet-atheist idol, and also the graven image, Stalin, venerating his name as immortal."

Batiushka said that when the demons threw Lenin into hell, there was great rejoicing among the demons—a celebration in hell. And he added, that when Stalin arrives in hell, the same thing will happen. Their memory will perish with a resounding noise.²³

Russia, together with all the Slavic nations and lands, will constitute a mighty Tsardom (kingdom). At its helm will be an Orthodox Tsar, Anointed of God. The Tsar will be from God. All schisms and heresies will vanish in Russia. There will not be any persecution of the Orthodox Church. The Lord will have mercy on Holy Rus', because in her there had been the horrible, terrible time preceding the antichrist. The great regiment of the Martyrs and Confessors has shown forth, beginning with the highest spiritual and civil ranks. Metropolitan and Tsar, priest and monk, children and even nursing infants, ending with laypeople. All these will beseech the Lord God the King of Hosts, the King of Kings, glorified in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

One must firmly understand that Russia is one of the portions²⁴ of the Queen of Heaven, and She cares for and intercedes for it especially. The whole choir of Russian Saints, together with the Mother of God, begs [the Lord] to spare and have mercy on Russia.

There will be a flowering of the Orthodox Faith and the former rejoicing will return—only for a short time. For the Dread Judge will come to judge the living and the dead.

The Russian Orthodox Tsar will be feared even by the antichrist himself.

During the times of the antichrist, Russia will be the most powerful Kingdom in the world. But the other countries—except for Russia and the Slavic lands—will be under the power of the antichrist and will experience all the horrors and torments described in Holy Scripture. Russia, repent! Glorify God with rejoicing, and sing to Him: Alleluia.

Schema-Archimandrite Theophan, Schema-Nun Alexandra and Nun

Olympiada