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From the Personal Archive of Documents of Archimandrite Matthew (Vakarov)

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Із документів Особистого архіву архімандрита Матфея (Вакарова)

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Among the leaders of the Orthodox movement in the 1st half of the 20th century, Archimandrite Matthew (Vakarov) distinguished himself through his intense activities. Archimandrite Matthew (mudanely known as Vasily Stepanovich Vakarov) was born on January 23, 1888, into a peasant family. His father was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison and 300 korunas (krones) penalty for converting to Christianity during the Second Marmarosh-Sighet Trial.

He graduated from his village school in 1900. In 1911, he went to Yablochinsky monastery of Chelm, together with Vasily Kemin who lived in the same village. Here Vakarov was accepted to the brotherhood and appointed the psalm-reader at the pastoral school.

On July 21, 1912, Hegumenos (Abbot) Father Superior Archimandrite Seraphim (Ostroumov) tonsured him as a rassophore monk wearing a robe and a kamelaukion. On November 16, 1913, he was tonsured a monk wearing a pallium. The next day, November 17, in Chelm, he was ordained a Hierodeacon by Archbishop Evlogy. On March 29, 1914, the Metropolitan of Selefkia Germanos Strinopoulos, the Scholarch (Head) of the Holy Theological School of Halki, ordained Matthew a Hieromonk.

On April 27, 1914, the young missionaries arrived in the village of Iza from Halki via Italy (where they visited Rome and the Vatican city).

Six days after returning home, Father Matthew was arrested by Hungarian gendarmes for crossing the border illegally. From Iza Makarov was escorted to Marmarosh-Sighet. After 21 days of detention he was transferred to Košice. The garrison military tribunal sentenced the monk to three months in prison. After the outbreak of hostilities with Russia he was released from custody and sent as an ordinary soldier to an engineer regiment in the town of Komarovo. In the first half of August 1914 the regiment was sent to the Eastern front.

On October 28, 1914, Father Matthew was captured by Russians. He was in the POW camp at Novo-Nikolaevsk (then in Novosibirsk since 1925). By order of the Church authorities, he was sent to the parish in Galicia. However, with the onset of the Austro-German troops, he was transferred to the Russian Army for the position of a translator on the Romanian front. After hostilities Father Matthew lived for a while in the Giržavsky Ascension Monastery (The Giržava Ascension Monastery) in Bessarabia, and then in the Monastery in Feofania near Kiev. He held church services in the village of Khotov.

On March 28, 1919, he returned to his village. From March 30, 1919, to July 25, 1920, he held services in the parishes in the village of Horinchovo-Monastyrets of Khust district. He was rector of parishes in the villages of Nankovo and Nizhnee Selishe in the same district from July 25, 1920, to May 18, 1925. In 1919, St. Nicholas monastery was founded in the village of Iza. The monastic brotherhood was headed by hieromonk Alexy (Kabaliuk). Hieromonk Matthew, one of the brethren, took an active part in the development of the monastery. On April 18, 1925, the brotherhood of the monastery elected him as their Hegumenos. Due to the fact that the monastery was moved outside the village to Iza-Karputlash tract, the Hegumenos took up the construction of the church, residential, farm and maintenance buildings.

On May 17, 1925, Bishop Dositheus (Vasič) in Niš (Serbia) elevated Matthew to the rank of Hegumenos for services to the Orthodox Church. The next year (June 29) he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite and appointed as assistant to Bishop Dositheus in Subcarpathian Rus'. In 1926 Father Matthew was awarded the hypogonation and epigonation (ecclesiastical vestments). From May 20, 1925, to December 20, 1929, he served in the Orthodox parishes in the villages of Boronyavo and Kriva in Khust district. From December 21, 1929, to February 28, 1933, Archimandrite Matthew held services in the village of Nankovo. In 1929 – 1944, he was a member of the Diocesan Council

and the Ecclesiastical Consistory.

From 1933 to 1944, Father Matthew inspected religious instruction in town and village schools in Mukachevo and Priashev Diocese. At the same time, (from March 1, 1933, to October 26, 1944) he was Hegumenos in Gorinchovo village.

In 1945 he was appointed rural Dean of the Iza Diocese. From 1946 until his death, Father Matthew served as Dean of the Orthodox monasteries of the Transcarpathia region. On December 10, 1947, Bishop Nestor (Sidoruk) confirmed the appointment of Archimandrite Matthew the Father Superior of the St.Nicholas monastery.

In autumn 1953, the Archimandrite got ill, on September 30, he took the Great Schema vows and he died on October 1. He was buried in the monastery graveyard in Iza.

Keywords

Bishop, Matthew (Vakarov), Orthodox Church, Eastern Orthodox, the Holy Synod.