

St. Luke, Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea

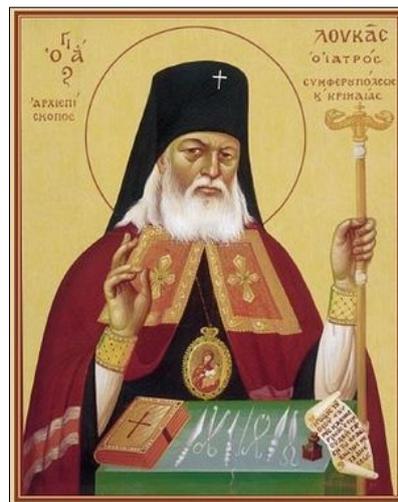
(†1961)

Scientist, *Surgeon*, Doctor of Medicine, Confessor of the Faith

Commemoration Days: March 18, May 29, June 11

Part I

The future Saint Luke, the Blessed *Surgeon*, was born on April 27th, 1877 to an *impoverished* family in eastern Crimea. The boy, *christened* Valentin, was the third of five children. His father Felix Voino-Yasenetsky, a *civil servant*, was a *devout* Polish Catholic. All the children were raised Orthodox *in accordance with* their mother's faith. As a child, Valentin did not receive an *extensive* religious training. But he was a thinking youth who tried to understand the world around him. The New Testament, given to Valentin as a gift at his school graduation, soon became his favourite book and *guidance* in life.



Learning wasn't difficult for Valentin. He had a great memory, analytical mind and ability to concentrate for hours. In his school and, later, at the University, Valentin was always the best student. A person of many talents, he could make excellent drawings of people. This talent he would use later in his study of anatomy.

In 1903 Valentin graduated from Kiev University Medical School *with highest honours*. Many opportunities lay in front of the young man, but he chose to be a village doctor to help the poor. His main professional interest was in ophthalmology – the study of the eye.

In 1904, during the Russo-Japanese war, Dr. Voino-Yasenetsky volunteered to serve in the Red Cross. He went to the Far East and, in the town of Chita, worked in a military hospital as head of the surgery department. There, he met *nurse* Anna Lansky who, for her kindness and high moral standards, the soldiers called “a holy nurse.” Valentin and Anna married.

After the war, Dr. Voino-Yasenetsky continued his work as a village doctor in Simbirsk, Saratov, Vladimir and Kursk regions. He performed hundreds of surgeries on the *brain*, heart, eye, *colon*, *kidneys* and *spine*. He developed many new *techniques*, completely

unknown for his time, including procedures for the treatment of serious eye conditions. Dr. Voino-Yasenetsky restored vision to a great number of people. His methods are still studied and used by eye doctors today.

Hospitals in the beginning of the 20th century only started to use *general anaesthesia*. It was often more dangerous than the operation itself. When Dr. Voino-Yasenetsky was only 29, he developed a new, much safer method – local anaesthesia of the *sciatic nerve*.

During World War I, seeing much *suffering* among his countrymen, Valentin started to attend church regularly. His Christian faith – which he so strongly experienced as a young man – now became *firm and unshakable*. In his operating room, Dr. Voino-Yasenetsky always kept an icon of the Holy Mother of God.

In 1917 Dr. Voino-Yasenetsky served as *head doctor* in a Tashkent hospital. Much loved by his patients and respected by other doctors, he continued to improve his surgical skills and taught at a local Medical school. He once said about the art of surgery: “A surgeon should have the eye of an eagle, the heart of a lion and the hand of a woman.”

In 1919 Valentin suffered a great personal loss. Anna, his beloved wife and mother of his four children, died of tuberculosis. Valentin didn't want to remarry and, following the calling of his heart – at a time when the strength of his Christian character was tested in blood – made the decision to step on the path of serving God.

Vocabulary

surgeon	['sə:dʒən]	хирург
impoverished	[ɪm'pə və rɪʃt]	обедневший
christened	['krɪsənd]	окрещён
civil servant	[sɪvɪl sə:rvənt]	государственный служащий
devout	[dɪ'vaut]	набожный
in accordance	[ɪn ə'kɔ:dəns]	в соответствии с
extensive	[ɪk'sten sɪv]	обширный, глубокий
guidance	['gaɪ dəns]	руководство
with highest honours	[wɪð haɪəst 'ɒnərz]	с отличием
nurse	['nɜ:rs]	сестра милосердия
brain	[breɪn]	мозг
colon	['kəʊlən]	кишечник

kidney	[kɪdni]	почка
spine	[spaɪn]	позвоночник
technique	[tek'nik]	техника
general anesthesia	['dʒe nə rəl ,ænəs'θi:zə]	общая анестезия
sciatic nerve	[saɪ'ætɪk nə:rv]	седалищный нерв
suffering	['sʌfərɪŋ]	страдание
firm and unshakable	[fə:m] [ʌn'ʃeɪ kə bəl]	твёрдый и непоколебимый
a head doctor		главный врач

Part II

In 1921 Valentin Voino-Yasenetsky was *ordained* a priest. Two years later, he became a monk and bishop, receiving the name of St. Luke the Evangelist, the Apostle who was a doctor, *scholar* and painter. Bishop Luke's first arrest came almost *immediately*. A supporter of Patriarch Tikhon, he was sent to prison in Tashkent. He *was accused of* "being a counter-revolutionary, an English spy," and, as a doctor, of "giving bad treatment to the soldiers of the Red Army."

While in prison, the Blessed Surgeon didn't stop working. He wrote an article about *purulent* surgery, which later became "the gold standard" for doctors. (In 1936 Bishop Luke received the title of Doctor of Medical Science for this work.)

After his Tashkent arrest, Vladyka was sent to Butyrka, the worst prison in Moscow. He was interrogated for hours with a bright lamp shining in his eyes. In the small cell where the *torturers* threw him, there were 30 to 40 other prisoners. With the windows always closed and electric light on, people could not tell the difference between day and night. Sleep deprivation was a common method of torture. It was in Butyrka when the saint first noticed his heart was not working well. This condition got only worse in *exile*.

Bishop Luke was sent to Siberia, the town of Yeniseisk. The train journey, in the middle of winter, with only bread and water for food, took one month. The house in Yeniseisk, where he was allowed to stay, the saint turned into a church for the faithful and office for his patients. The bishop-doctor gave spiritual advice and continued his medical practice.

The local doctors were very pleased to have such a well-known colleague. One day, they received a dying man whose kidneys had stopped working. There, in a small Siberian hospital, with primitive instruments, the Blessed Surgeon performed a successful operation, the first in the world, of transplanting a kidney from a cow to a human. He also operated on cataracts, saving his patients' vision. Sometimes, the only way to disinfect the instruments was to boil them in a samovar.

The *authorities* did not allow Bishop Luke to work at one place. They sent him further and further north, where the conditions were *unbearable*. Vladyka continued to serve the Liturgy, and other priests – often from hundreds of miles away – came to see him and receive his blessing.

Then Bishop Luke was sent to Tashkent, where he again *took up* his episcopal *duties*. Unable to get a job at a hospital, he treated his patients at home. More accusations, arrests and exile followed. The saint spent years in Krasnoyarsk, then Arkhangelsk.

In 1934 Bishop Luke was allowed to return to Tashkent. He had a few relatively peaceful years there, spending time with his children, whom he missed so much. As a doctor and scientist, he was allowed to teach students, give lectures and publish articles. But this time brought a *devastating* health problem: the loss of vision in one eye, which meant the end of his career as a surgeon.

In 1937 a new arrest came. In prison he was humiliated and physically tortured. Once, Bishop Luke was deprived of sleep for 13 days while the authorities interrogated him non-stop. His whole body was covered with *wounds* from the blows of his *tormentors*. They wanted him to sign a criminal confession. The saint refused and went on an 18-day-long hunger strike. After the arrest he was sent into exile, again to Krasnoyarsk. When the Great Patriotic War came, Vladyka worked at the military hospital helping to treat wounded soldiers.

In 1942 Bishop Luke was appointed Archbishop of Krasnoyarsk, and, after the local authorities allowed a small church to open, he celebrated there the first Divine Liturgy. In 1946 St. Luke became Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea. He published three more medical articles. After that, his vision became progressively worse until he was completely *blind*.

The Archbishop continued serving and was able to move around his church without help. His *sermons* were filled with love and *compassion*. As a doctor, he gave advice to his colleagues without ever making a diagnostic mistake.

St. Luke fell asleep in the Lord on June 11, 1961. At his funeral, hundreds and hundreds of people gathered in the streets to honour their beloved pastor. They all *chanted* “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us” – and the authorities, no matter how they tried, couldn’t make them stop.

St. Luke, the Blessed Surgeon and Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea, was glorified by the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000.

Vocabulary

ordain	[ɔr'dem]	рукополагать
scholar	['skɒlə]	учёный
immediately	[ɪ'midiətli]	немедленно
to be accused of	[ə'kjuzd]	обвинять в
purulent surgery	['pjʊ ru lənt 'sə: dʒə ri]	гнойная хирургия
torturer	['tɔr tʃə rə]	истязатель, мучитель
exile	['ek,saɪl]	ссылка
authorities	[ɔ'θɔ rə tɪz]	власти, начальство
unbearable	[ʌn'be rə bəl]	невыносимый
take up		приступать
duty	['dʒuti]	обязанность
devastating	['de və,steɪ tɪŋ]	непоправимый, безнадежный (в данном тексте; общее значение – «подавляющий, разрушительный»)