

Lost and Found

Andrej Strocaï

Крѣпостѣ раба Твоего
 Давида паче дукѣи, Господи,
 и нынѣ Селмеринаго раба
 Твоего прѣтѣея Сергѣя по-
 мѣни и оубо всако зело-
 го обстояніе исбави, въ
 зорави и долгоденствіи его со-
 храняю, помози ми, убогѣ
 и пощени.

Петра оубо убо и пощени
 исбави и невредна Церква Тво-
 ея предстанити, Христѣ, и нынѣ
 рабовъ Твоихъ: именъ Іоанна, Ми-
 шара, Николая, Матѣя, Іерея,
 Михаила, имени Бориса,
 Кирила въ убогѣ са вѣру
 Христову сира ведущи и
 рабовъ Бориса, Василия, Алек-
 сандра, Марію, Арапа, Сергѣя,
 Мелю, Анну, Іерея Викентіа,
 Леонартинъ, Марію, и пощени
 кнѣзя Георгія, Георгія, Ана-
 толія, Григорія, Сергѣя,
 Николая, въ убогѣ са вѣру

Оубо всако зело обстояніе
 исбави и оубо убогѣ са вѣру,
 Селери, Господи, убогѣ ми и
 пощени.

Всакъ дукѣи и пощени со-
 ущени ми въ серди со-
 крушенно мѣ къ Тебѣ при-
 падаю и стѣнѣи боимъ,
 и зѣли боимъ, убогѣ са вѣру
 страсти рабовъ Твоихъ: Петра,
 Петра, мѣ. Петра, Викентіа,
 Марію, Григорія, Михаила,
 Наміанъ, Наміанъ, Иванъ,
 Вѣро, Евгенъ, Евгенъ, Келіи,
 Юли, Николая, Алексія,
 Марію, Александра, Ва-
 силия, Антона, Бориса,
 Бориса и прѣсвиѣра мѣ
 вса ихъ сощени ми
 нас и невольна, ского
 въ зѣли оубо вѣра вѣро,
 мѣ ми ми, мѣ ми ми,
 вѣро, убогѣ ми и пощени

One of the key activities of the Russian Student Christian Movement in France is its summer camp for children, organized annually at La Servagère in the Vercors Mountains. This year's camp was marked by an unexpected discovery. On one of the last days, a small piece of paper was found in an old gospel book in the camp chapel. It is a note with prayers of intercession written in Slavonic on both sides. With the help of Hélène Klépinine-Arjakovsky, daughter of Saint Dimitri Klepinin, some of the names were identified. It turns out that the note was written in 1943 by someone close to Saint Mother Maria (Skobtsova) and her organization Orthodox Action.

It begins with a special prayer for the health of archpriest Sergius. This is Father Sergius Bulgakov, the legendary theologian, who co-founded the Russian Student Christian Movement and Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris. At the time the note was written, he had cancer. He died in July 1944.

There are also intercessions for the imprisoned, with the traditional formula: "You who freed Peter from bonds and returned him unharmed to your Church, O Christ, free now your ser-

vants. . . ." The note lists members of Orthodox Action who had been helping prisoners of war and Jews in occupied Paris and were arrested by the Gestapo when this activity was discovered. These names include Mother Maria, priest Dimitri Klepinin, subdeacon George Skobtsov (Mother Maria's son), and Ilya Fondaminsky. All of them eventually perished in the concentration camps and were canonized as the Martyrs of Paris in 2004. Among the other identifiable names are priest Michael Belski, Theodor Pinanov, George Kazatchkin, and Anatoly Viskovsky, all of whom took part in Orthodox Action.

The list of prayers concludes with intercessions for some other ill persons, none of whom has yet been identified. The author of the text, the context of its creation, and how it ended up in the gospel book at La Servagère are also unknown. But this discovery has already been identified by some as a sign. At a moment when the Archdiocese of Russian Orthodox Churches in Western Europe traverses one of the most serious crises in its history, a prayer for those who have become its beloved saints is found. And now it is not us who pray for them, but Saints Maria, Dimitri, George, and Ilya who pray for us all. ✱



Andrej Strocaŭ was born in Minsk, Belarus. He holds a bachelor's degree in cultural studies from the European Humanities University in Vilnius, Lithuania, and is currently completing his master's thesis in anthropology in the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris, on the relations between the Orthodox Christian communities in France and the post-Soviet countries in the 1990s.