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EDITOR'S LETTER

SPACE AS HAPPINESS

On April 12, 1961, the Vostok satellite ship with a man on board was launched into outer space for the first time in the history of mankind

By KIRILL PRIVALOV



The neighbour Aunt Panya wearing galoshes on her bare feet and an old wadded jacket ran like crazy across the birch grove shouting: "The man has flown!"

– I didn't understand what she meant at first. I flew at that time too, on a swing though. But suddenly it hit me: "A man flew into space!" Having jumped off the swing, I rushed head over heels home: A human has travelled into space!

My grandmother was sitting next to the radio. She was completely petrified:

– That's Yura. He flew into space. Our Yura, a Gzhatsk pal from Klushino ... I remember his mother Anya, very well. She used to work on a dairy farm. Unbelievable, Yura Gagarin has gone to space! How will he breathe there?

My dear grandmother, Ksenia Ivanovna, a poor peasant woman and a

"graduate" of a parochial school unexpectedly turned out to originate from the same area as "cosmonaut number one". She remembered him as a mischievous boy with dimples on his cheeks. And suddenly he became the main national hero! Pride and fear competed in my grandmother's mind that suddenly discovered a near cosmic existence. Looking around timidly, she even crossed herself slightly, something she hasn't done since her early youth, when her headscarf got stolen from her during a Sunday service near Gzhatsk.

Pride definitely won over fear, and not only for my grandmother. Because April 12, 1961 became the happiest day in the life of Russians, who called themselves simply Soviet people. Proud people.

A day later, my mother and I went from Zagoryanka near Moscow to Moscow. We had a purpose. We knew

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Church of the Savior on Spilt Blood,
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that «our Yura» – this is how people began calling Gagarin, as if everyone in the USSR agreed – was supposed to fly to «a pre-planned place» in the capital after landing, as it was written in all the newspapers. The streets were overcrowded with triumphant people. No one was forced to this spontaneous manifestation (as some not very scrupulous Western media will claim subsequently). People voluntarily gathered there in order to meet and greet their leader. And how! To see Gagarin passing by in an open car, they climbed lampposts, trees, the roofs of buses...

We raised our heads to the sky. A helicopter patrolled there scattering small red flyers. These were greetings to Gagarin obviously printed in a rush. Each of them pictured a dull, black-and-white photograph of Gagarin not in a spacesuit and not even in a helmet but in a leather flight cap, for some reason. I caught one of the leaflets, as if it was a crimson leaf torn from a maple tree. And treasured it for a long time in the cherished chest until it became completely dilapidated and crumbled into dust.

Strange thing: I remember this day in detail. The guys are chanting: “We also want to go to space.” The poet (I think it was Semyon Kirsanov, so said my mother, a professional writer herself) is climbing onto some kind of pedestal, reading his newly written poems dedicated to Yura.

Then the long motorcades of Zils and Chaikas appeared on Leninsky Prospekt coming from Vnukovo Airport. We saw Gagarin only for a minute – no, only for ten seconds, but he waved his hand to us ... These moments were enough to experience limitless happiness. To connect with something glorious, inexpressibly beautiful – the Victory, our common Victory. One more...

An incredible fiesta of an incredible country after the most terrible of wars that paved human's way to space just twelve years later and sent the first

man to the stars sixteen years later. The people who built plants and cosmodromes on the ruins of bombed-out cities, in the bleak steppe and on wastelands, depriving themselves the most necessary things, who worked frantically, this people knew: the sky of their country needs reliable protection, and it can be created only by mastering the path to the stars.

It was only possible with joint efforts of the entire nation, which became united from the Baltic to Sakhalin after the Victory over fascism. And Yuri Gagarin appeared as the messiah of the new time becoming our pioneer of the universe, our symbol for centuries.

My professional life has developed in such a way that in Russia and France I was lucky to meet and sometimes be friends with many wonderful people who have devoted themselves to space exploration. These are rocket designers and scientific journalists, specialists in extreme medicine and, of course, conquerors of the universe: German Titov, Alexei Leonov, Valery Kubasov, Jean-Loup Cretin, Patrick Baudry... Amazing people, one of a kind!

“And Sergei Pavlovich Korolev himself once set the tone for the exceptional selection,” told me my old friend, a brilliant journalist, writer, and playwright Vladimir Gubarev. – The chief designer at first selected journalists that were to write about space. He selected five or six young reporters with a technical education and gave them – or rather, us – access to Baikonur. Korolev had a complex perception of space exploration, and Yura was his favourite.”

“Just like Gagarin we selflessly believed that the era of the conquest of space has begun and that nothing will prevent us from continuing our stellar campaign,” recalled Valery Kubasov in a conversation with me (the historical “handshake in space” of Soviet cosmonauts and American astronauts is associated with him

and Alexei Leonov: «Soyuz – Apollo»). – I was in the first group of engineers who joined the established squad of cosmonaut pilots, set up by Korolev.

Not long before he died Sergei Pavlovich gathered us at the base in Podlipki, near Moscow, and said: “We must prepare for a flight to Mars. Who's ready?” Immediately, all hands were thrown up at once. But Korolev was in no hurry: “I warn you, this can be a one way ticket only ... There may not be enough fuel for the return. So, there is still chance to recede.» Believe it or not, only one person has refused. He said that he had two children ... Everyone else were ready to fly even to Alpha Centauri, just to facilitate human knowledge of the cosmos.

“I know, ‘well-wishers’ claim I envied Gagarin for becoming the first human in space. Nonsense! Yes, I had healthy ambitions, like every strong and energetic young man” – German Titov once opened up to me. – “But Yura was my friend, although we competed during tests on simulators and in laboratories. And if it was Gagarin who had the honour of being the first in space, this means it was destined ...

That was his fate and he well deserved it. I remember that we were met in the Kremlin by Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, the head of the meetings and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He asked: «When will you fly to the moon?» We answered simultaneously: “Anytime, whenever it's required.”

Neither Gagarin nor Titov, fortunately, lived to see the time when businessmen would start selling off plots on the Moon to the rich and playboys! What can you do: “We are all weak, we are all human” – it is said in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Some conquer space, risking their lives, others speculate on it ... However, nothing can spoil our Cosmonautics Day.



HIGHLIGHTS

EASTER GREETINGS
OF THE CHAIRMAN
OF THE DEPARTMENT
FOR EXTERNAL CHURCH
RELATIONS OF THE MOSCOW
PATRIARCHATE METROPOLITAN
OF VOLOKOLAMSK ANTHONY
TO THE *RUSSIAN MIND* MAGAZINE
READERS



**Dear fathers,
brothers and sisters!
Dear friends!
CHRIST IS RISEN!**

Over almost two millennia this Good News of Easter has been flying to all corners of the earth, filling people's hearts with joy, comforting them in the most difficult moments of life and giving them hope.

The Resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of our faith, the triumph of the victory of good over evil and life over death. In Christ each one of us becomes a partaker in this victory – 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (Jn. 3:16).

The Resurrection of Christ underlies our personal spiritual transformation, the awakening of spiritual aspirations and moral perfection. Each one of us in the joy of a loving heart can together with the light of the Russian land, St Seraphim of Sarov, at any moment of life turn to his neighbour with the greeting, 'Christ is Risen, my joy!'. Recalling the main joy of all people, in which our sorrows dissolve, for sorrows are always temporary while Easter joy is eternal.

The Good News of Easter becomes even more significant in times of difficulties and trials. Last year went down in history of Russian and Russian-speaking diaspora worldwide as one of the hardest periods in its life. It became a test of our integrity, of our willingness

to defend our identity in the most complicated and sometimes openly hostile circumstances and defend the spiritual values, which are part of our people's tradition and were largely formed under the influence of Christianity.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Resurrected Saviour help us all 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph. 4:3), and may the news of the Lord's Resurrection on

these Easter days warms our hearts with joy and jubilation, for Christ is truly Risen!

+ ANTHONY
CHAIRMAN OF THE
DEPARTMENT FOR
EXTERNAL CHURCH
RELATIONS OF THE
MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE
METROPOLITAN OF
VOLOKOLAMSK



Viktor Vasnetsov. *The Resurrection of Christ* ('The Descent into Hell'). 1905

ON BROTHERHOOD, THE SOUL AND THE GOSPEL OF THE FUTURE

Walter Schubart: 'It is the tragic fate of prophets to see the misfortune approaching without being able to prevent it, and it is the equally tragic destiny of the actors in the drama that they are unable to see the misfortunes they themselves are causing'

By KIRILL PRIVALOV



Walter Schubart, a German philosopher

No country in the centuries-old history of mankind has ever been subject to such a number of restrictive measures as modern Russia has. However, who wins and who loses from over 10,000 (!) Sanctions imposed against the Russians? The question is extremely relevant against the background of historical reminiscences, not least eighty-five years after Walter Schubart wrote the amazing book, *Europe and the Eastern Soul*.

I saw this book for the first time in the late 1930s and immediately got excited: I set about translating it,' VDP (this is how in the Russian diaspora they called Vladimir Dmitrievich Poremsky, a profound thinker and a man with a difficult destiny, who for many years headed the National Workers Union of Russian Solidarists, the most active organization of Russian emigres and their descendants) told me in Paris in the late 1980s.

'I was afraid to sign Schubart's translation with my last name and chose a pseudonym: V. Vasilyev,' Poremsky went on. 'The first two editions were printed by polycopy, not a single printing house in Europe occupied by the Nazis would have accepted *Europe and the Eastern Soul* for publication. Why? Because the author, a philosopher and a historian, a German from Riga married to a Russian

noblewoman, depicted such bold historical perspectives of Europe and Russia which did not suit the West. I must admit, it had bad consequences for both of us. Walter Schubart died in Kazakhstan's Gulag, and the Nazis sent me to Sachsenhausen.'

Yellow, faded paper, 125 pages of small print. Prophetic incunabula. In the preface to the first Russian edition Poremsky who introduced himself as V. Vostokov, wrote in 1943: 'Though this book was written by the author with the object of "European self-knowledge by the method of contrast," it is primarily interesting for us Russians - in it many will be able to draw spiritual strength (which is more important now than ever before). It allows us to find the firm position that it is hard to find in the storm of military events and the conflicting feelings, doubts and concerns we are experiencing. This firm position can only be found by moving away from the vanity of our days to the heights from which not problematic tasks for tomorrow, but broad historical perspectives open.'

So, what was explosive in this book? What does the 'Eastern soul' have to do with it?

'The problem of the East and West is primarily a spiritual problem,' Walter Schubart says. 'Russia did not crave to enrich herself by conquest... The Russian soul finds its greatest happiness in sacrifice.' Meanwhile, Europe did not 'claim to have a mission to fulfil towards Russia. At the most, she desired concessions or economic booty.'

'We are living in a period of transition, and this is the cause of unrest and conflict,' Schubart defines the historical framework of research. 'Our age, although a melancholy one, is nevertheless full of hope. A sense of doom but at the same time a feeling of promise characterise this epoch of ours. We are living through several decades of great upheaval between an age that is dying and one

that is coming to birth. For it is neither a race of men nor a culture that is dying before our eyes; it is an era.'

And further: 'Once more, Europe was possessed of two ideas only: Russia and the counter-revolution (of the Fascists). With the year 1914 we entered upon the century of wars between the East and the West. Since then, it has become increasingly evident that in the future all great crises will have their origin in the East and will occur in the East... It is the problem of the historical struggle for supremacy between that continent known as Europe, and Russia - between the Western and the Eurasian continents. For like India or China, Russia is a continent which today contains human beings of 169 different nationalities, with representatives of all the world religions... The Eastern frontiers of Europe are on the Weichsel, and not in the Ural Mountains; as in the Middle Ages, they come to an end there where the Germanic settlements made halt.

'That Russia has begun to feel herself to be a continent is shown clearly by her policy concerning nationalities; this policy does not discriminate among individual races, peoples or tribes... Thus, we see that two political tendencies have determined the course of modern history. The purpose of the one was to separate the West more and more from the East, that of the other to bring about... the downfall of a Europe which can no longer so easily survive the loss of blood occasioned by murderous wars and revolutions as the inexhaustibly fertile East. Whether we consider the development of culture or of politics, the same picture presents itself to our view: we see that the centre of gravity has moved in an easterly direction...

'The Messianic attitude of the Russians goes back as far as the sixteenth century. It made its first appearance in the writings of the religious author Filofei, who was the Staretz [a spiritual elder] of the Jelesar

Monastery [The Eleazar Monastery of the Saviour] in Pskov. He originated the doctrine that Moscow was the Third Rome whose mission it was to unite in itself the first and second (Byzantine) Rome. Here we are already face to face with the chief characteristic of the true Messianism, which at once proves that it is devoid of all imperialistic aims. Messianic man unites the divided, while the imperialist separates the united. Filofei did not suggest in his teaching that Moscow should either supersede, succeed or surpass Rome or Byzantium. He only proposed that it should absorb them in reconciliation with one another. Russian Messianism has always been accompanied by the desire for reconciliation.'

Walter Schubart contrasts two cultural archetypes, two different types of man - St John the Evangelist and Prometheus (these are Russia and the West respectively): The man of the John type makes a sharp distinction between good and evil; he vigilantly notices the imperfection of all actions, customs and institutions, never being satisfied with them and never ceasing to seek perfect goodness. He considers earthly values as relative and does not elevate them to the rank of "sacred" principles, and therefore he is able to quickly go from seemingly boundless humility to the most unbridled and infinite rebellion.

Promethean man is quite different. For him 'the world is chaos into which it is his mission to bring order and form.' Promethean man is full of thirst for power, he moves ever further away from the spirit and goes ever deeper into the realm of things. He strives to build those who are not like him in his own image and likeness... So, there is a confrontation of absolutely different virtues: tolerance and activity, harmony and sensation, thoughtfulness and work...

'Promethean culture is based on number. Galileo demanded that



Peter Paul Rubens. *Prometheus*. 1636

everything measurable should be measured and that the attempt should be made to render the rest measurable. To count is to divide. Statistics is a truly European science, which is ... foreign to the Russian. They do not count – they estimate the value of things. Promethean man is the man of parts; he is a specialist. He is a virtuoso within a narrow intellectual domain. In neighbouring territory he is an illiterate. With all his excellencies and deficiencies, the Russian is possessed of universal vision. He views the Whole, but in doing so overlooks much detail. The Russians cannot divide and cannot be satisfied

with a part. They want everything at once, and if it is impossible, they do nothing and have nothing...

Primal fear is the secret engine of Promethean activity, and primal trust is the prerequisite for Russian contemplation. The danger for Europeans is that they cannot wait, while the danger for Russians is that they wait too much. Primal fear makes you too hasty, and primal trust makes you too slow. Patience is lacking there, and determination is lacking here. The Russians and the Europeans have a completely different sense of time.

...‘The Russian does not live his life from the standpoint of “I” or “You” but from that of “We.” Personal contrasts are not of first importance to him: of primary importance to him is his relationship to an indivisible

Whole which he rediscovers in all human beings...’

The feeling of brotherhood makes life much easier and more bearable for the Russian than for the European with his instincts for struggle, plunder and competition... ‘How typical of this brotherly attitude is the custom in Russia of dispensing with title and honours, and calling people by their patronyms! It is the sign of a genuine democracy of the spirit...

‘I already hear an objection. Has not brotherliness existed in Europe as well? Was it not one of the ideals of the French Revolution? Yes, it was!

But it is the same with brotherliness or fraternity as it is with freedom, atheism, socialism or liberalism – these words have not the same meaning in both East and West. The fraternity of 1789 was not the expression of an organic feeling of brotherhood, but a formula for the equalizing of the external circumstances of political and social life. It was equality once more. And freedom was not the attempt to reach out beyond the confines of personality, but the desire to open up personal competition to all on equal terms. This was equality for the third time. All external barriers between human beings were to be levelled.’ Such was the general meaning of freedom, equality and brotherhood.

‘Since the time of Peter the Great, Russia – not entirely without fault on her side – has been involved in the process of European self-destruction. Russia seized avidly upon modern European ideas, and with the typical extravagance and excess of her national character carried these to their extreme consequences in the Soviet state where their inner impracticability was revealed and magnified a hundred times for all the world to see. In doing this, Russia succeeded in refuting these ideas, and now the second act of the drama begins. The way has been cleared for the awakening forces of the East.

‘Promethean man has begun to be aware of his coming downfall. He is trying to escape from reflection and from solitude. He is endeavouring to escape through narcotics into pleasure, work, or into the crowd. Only not to be free – only not to feel any responsibility! Rather obedience and slavery! He is not only a slave, but he desires to be one! He is grateful to Caesar for depriving him, with his freedom, of the torture of self-determination. He embraces the whip that flays him. That is the essential nature of contemporary collectivism...

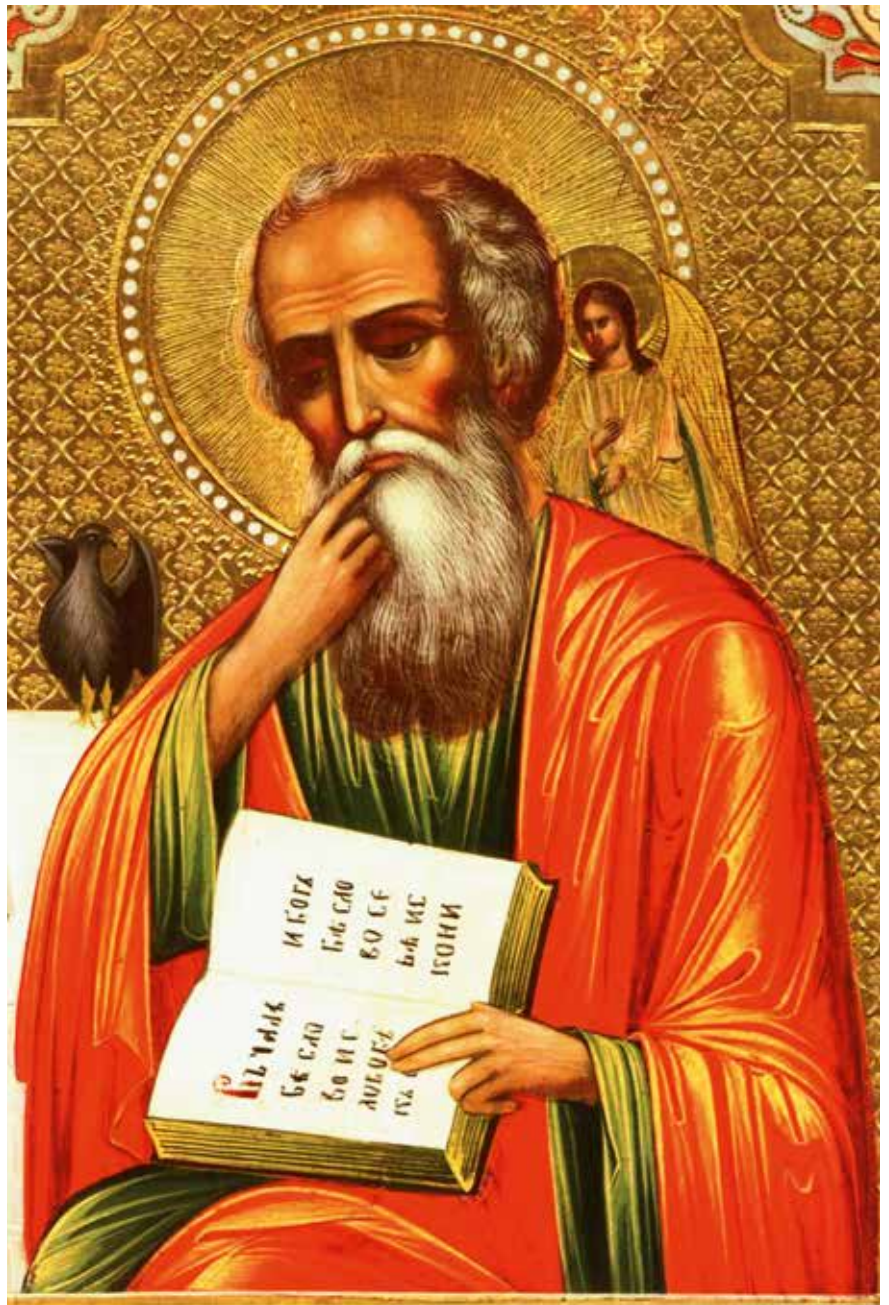
‘Thus – as so often before – it is once more the tragic fate of prophets to see the misfortune approaching without being able to prevent it, and it is the equally tragic destiny of the actors in the drama that they are unable to see the misfortunes they themselves are causing. Impotent seers – unsuspecting rulers! But there is a deeper meaning in all this. If the warning voices were not to fall on deaf ears, the ultimate collapse would not be so certain.

‘Russia – not the present but the future – is the refreshing wine capable of renewing the exhausted life of modern humanity; Europe is the durable vessel in which to preserve the wine. Without the solid form to keep it together the wine would be spilled over the country; without the wine that fills it the precious cup remains an empty and cold showpiece alienated from its purpose. Only when wine and cup meet can mankind most fully enjoy them.

‘Modern Europe is form without life; Russia is life without form...’

In the renewal of humanity, connected, or rather, coinciding with the task of Western-Eastern reconciliation, the emphasis should be laid on the Russian side, on the side of life, not form. ‘Not the European, but the Russian, possesses the fundamental attitude through which man will eventually discover the true purpose of his existence. The Russian mind is directed towards the Absolute – he has “universal” feeling and a Messianic soul. Hence, we repeat that in all essential questions of life, the European must accept the Russian as a model – and not the other way round. If he desires to find his way back to eternal values, the European must acknowledge the world outlook of the Russian. It was this that Dostoyevsky meant when he demanded that every single one of earth’s inhabitants should first of all be a Russian!

‘Let us remind ourselves once more that the Englishman desires the world as a factory, the Frenchman as



John the Evangelist in Silence. A Russian nineteenth-century icon

a salon, the German as an army barracks, the Russian as a church. The Englishman seeks gain, the Frenchman fame, the German power, and the Russian sacrifice. The Englishman desires to exploit his neighbour, the Frenchman to impress him, the German to command him – only the Russian desires nothing from him.

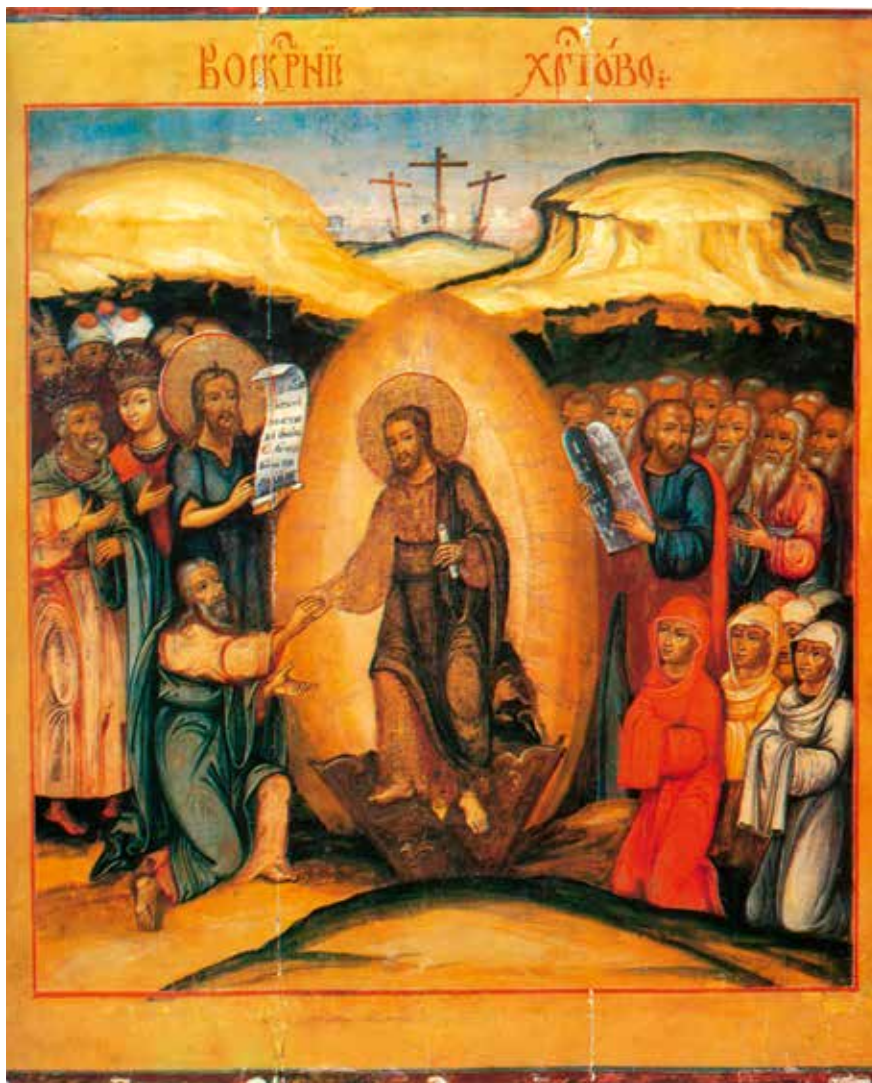
The Russian has no desire to use his fellow men as the means to an end. And this is the core of the idea of brotherhood... This is also the Gospel of the future.’

It seems to me that hardly anything essential can be added to this, which was written eight and a half decades ago.

THE MYSTERY OF EASTER TIME

The celebration of Easter takes place on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox

By AUGUSTINE SOKOLOVSKI,
Doctor of Theology, priest



Resurrection of Christ. 18th century icon

The arrival of spring this year marks the beginning of the blessed Great Lent. This 2023 Great Lent in the Orthodox Church begins

on February 27 and, according to the ancient tradition, lasts exactly 48 days, or 7 weeks, until the Easter holiday.

Recall that Great Lent consists of two separate parts. These include the holy forty days – days of repentance and prayer, and Holy Week – the memory of the Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to the decrees of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325, the celebration of Easter takes place on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. At the same time, it is important to remember that, according to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, Christian Easter is celebrated after the Jewish Passover.

In addition, and this is very important, it must be remembered that the Julian calendar, which all Orthodox Churches follow in calculating the Easter time, is 13 days late in relation to the modern Gregorian calendar. Therefore, the earliest possible date for celebrating Easter is not March 22, as in the Catholic and Protestant Churches, but April 4. In other words, if among the fourteen universally recognised Orthodox churches, some follow the modern Gregorian calendar, and others follow the ancient Julian, then in the calculation of the date of the celebration of Easter, all but the autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland, follow the Julian one calendar!

This year Easter in the Orthodox Church is celebrated on April 16. The Orthodox celebration of Easter almost always falls on late spring days. “Today, spring is fragrant,”

says one of the liturgical hymns of these days.

Among Orthodox believers, the Easter greeting ‘Christ is Risen’ replaces any other greeting. The Church, as a Society of Believers, proclaims these words with heart and mouth, each of which has a special weight and great gravity. For it carries the initial experience of this true metaphysical spring of the universe – the Event of the Resurrection of Christ.

The phrase ‘Christ is Risen’ is not just a message that Jesus is alive, but one of the original Articles of Faith. This early Christian exclamation confesses the belief that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the God-Anointed Saviour of the World, in whom, and only in Him, deliverance is given. “God raised Him from the dead, and He is a stone that has become the head of the corner, and there is salvation in no one else,” says the book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4:10–12).

The phrase ‘Christ is Risen’ is a confession of faith that the Lord Jesus is risen. He is risen from the dead, and death no longer has dominion over Him, “Death no longer possesses him,” as Scripture says. “Christ, having risen from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over Him” (Acts 6:9). Also, every believer who joins this witness of the life and death of Christ is withdrawn from the power of death by the power of Christ and God.

The phrase ‘Christ is Risen’ – this confession of the Lordship of Christ and His Victory over death – replaces any greeting and even many prayers on Easter days. It repeats over and over again. This happens, because the property of the Orthodox Christian faith is such that only transmitted, that is communicated to others, believers and non-believers; it comes to life in the heart of the very person who professes this faith and becomes their real property.

After all, faith is not the property and acquisition of a person, but God’s gift. It is unaccountable, sovereign, eternal, that is the Gift of God and the Father in Christ Jesus. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Faith is synonymous with grace, for grace is a gift given freely. “All my life I tried to reconcile grace and freedom, but grace won,” as St. Augustine (354–430) wrote about this in his last years.

The proclamation of the phrase ‘Christ is Risen’ joins the one who pronounces them, each person individually or the whole Church, as the Body of Christ, to the experience of the holiness of the saints. “After this, I looked, and behold, a great multitude of people, whom no one could number, from all nations and tribes and peoples and languages, stood before the throne and before the Lamb in white robes and with palm branches in their hands,” it is written in the book of Revelation (Apocalypse 7:9). Imagining this great multitude of saints serving God and helping people day and night, the Church awaits the fulfillment of times.

By proclaiming the Creed of the Easter days, ‘Christ is Risen’, the Church remembers the event of the Resurrection. She joyfully communicates, that is, she proclaims it to others, and, as a genuine unexpected joy from God, she receives from Him the ability to live the Resurrection of Christ, rushing into the future. For grace is communication.

Belief in the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead is the key, fundamental, most important dogma of Christianity.

Faith in the Resurrection of Christ is made up of consistent saving truths. One such truth is the belief of the Ancient Church that the Lord Jesus descended into hell. Ancient Creeds, among which is the Symbol

of the Apostles, profess faith “in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Lord, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried, and descended into hell.” The descent of the Lord Jesus into hell is a mandatory component of the New Testament understanding of the Resurrection. To understand the essence of the descent, one must understand the worldview of the Ancient Church, patristic theology, and dogmatics, one must be faithful to the letter and spirit of Holy Scripture.

In the likeness of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, biblical faith has always been built from three components: To trust God, to believe in God, to strive after God, that is, to go along with Him.

The Epistle of Peter says: “Christ, in order to bring us to God, suffered for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, having been put to death according to the flesh, by the spirit He descended and preached to the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3; 18–19).

“By the Spirit He preached to the spirits in prison” – this phrase is extremely important. In the ability of the Lord Jesus, after His bodily death, to preach to the spirits, with the spirit lies the necessary consequence of the authenticity of the humanity of Christ, and, at the same time, the sign of the raising victory over death, destruction and hell.

Hell is the ultimate degree of human dehumanisation. Hell does not involve communication. Christ, being visibly defeated and annihilated by death in His humanity and His Messiahship, according to the Apostle Peter, not only participated in this tragical mystery, but also overcame it. For he preached to those in hell, preached the gospel to the spirits of dead people, who were plunged into silence.

It turns out that the Lord’s rest of death on Holy Saturday was not the abolition of all life, but the time of



*The apostles write the Creed, inspired by the Holy Spirit.
Miniature from a 13th century manuscript*

His salvific action. “We proclaim Your death, O Lord, and confess Your resurrection,” proclaim the ancient Eucharistic prayers of the Church after the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and

Blood of Christ. Thus, the symbolic and realistic languages of the liturgy agree that in the descent of the Lord Jesus into hell there was a contact between the accomplished death of the Lord and the beginning of His resurrection from the dead.

Faith in the Resurrection of the Lord on the Third Day is inextricably linked with the conviction of the salvific significance of Christ’s Descent into Hell. The Gospel testifies to him, the Ancient Symbols speak of the Resurrection on the Third Day.

The third day, according to the Bible, is the day when all human hope is dead. This is the day when, contrary to all expectation, the Lord Himself begins to act. In this sense, time is not just chronology, but the biblical distance between man and God. Time is given to a person to learn to say goodbye. At the same time, time is given to man to return to God. The path of returning to God is a lifelong journey.

This theological understanding of time corresponds to the anthropological one. In the Gospel of John, Martha, the sister of the deceased Lazarus, says this about her brother: “Lord! already stinks; for four days he was in the tomb” (John 11:39). In accordance with the symbolic counting of time, in the time of the Lord Jesus, there was an experiential conviction among the people of the Bible that the deceased, if the first and second days after death had already passed, were finally and irrevocably dead. The third day, in the language of Varlam Shalamov (1907–1982), is the place of dehumanisation.

It is important to remember that in the biblical sense, death is both a category of knowledge and a category of experience. Only a dead person could be considered to have lived a human life completely, truly, finally and irrevocably, to prove by his very death that he lived. “Death

needs the living,” as Andrei Platonov (1899–1951) wrote. According to the Tradition of the Church, even the greatest ancient prophets, Enoch and Elijah, who, according to the Bible, did not see death, that is, they were taken to heaven alive, will have to return to earth in order to endure death, be killed, become dead (Rev. 11.12).

If the life of the Lord Jesus ended on the Cross, it would be the greatest victory for the forces of evil in history. The slandered, crucified, and murdered Messiah would be the greatest defeat of God and His Covenant with the People. Therefore, God and the Father prepared His own, and what is very important, unexpected, paradoxical, unaccountable and, at the same time, sovereign response. The name of this answer is Resurrection. Third day... It is very important that the Lord Jesus’ rest in death was not long.

The appearances of the Lord Jesus after the Resurrection were evidence of the coming Majesty of the Messiah, the revelation of that divine answer, which was His raising from the dead. Heavenly Father clothed His Messiah with visible divine glory.

The time from Easter to Pentecost is the Easter period of the church year. An important celebration of this Easter time is Mid-Pentecost. The day of the Mid-Pentecost itself means the passage of exactly half of the period that separates Easter from the Celebration of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. As the most important among twelve feasts of the orthodox liturgical tradition, the Mid-Pentecost, in the image of the blessed eternity of the City of God, is celebrated by the Church for eight days. It is very significant that in this year 2023 the Feast falls on May 10th.

It is important to understand that both events – Easter Day and Pentecost, as well as the time between them – represent the true revelation

of the Paschal Mystery of the Resurrection of Christ.

To understand the essence of the celebration of Mid-Pentecost, let us recall the mystery of the Paschal Dogma. The resurrected Lord Jesus appeared to the Apostles for the required number of days. The resurrected Lord Jesus spoke to the disciples about the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

It was in the light of these appearances of the Saviour that the Apostles wrote the New Testament texts which were included in the canon of the Holy Books of Scripture under the name of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. These New Testament texts are an example and a model, a normative norm, of all the proclamation and teaching of the Church for all time. They are the Paschal reading of all “that the Lord Jesus did and taught from the beginning” (Acts 1:1).

On Mid-Pentecost, during the divine service, an excerpt from the Gospel of John is read, in which the Lord Jesus, in the face of those who accuse Him in the Jerusalem Temple, proclaims His Messiahship. “But in the middle of the feast Jesus entered the temple and taught,” say the initial words of this gospel reading (John 7:14–30).

This reading allows us to come close to understanding how the Apostolic Community, in the light of the Resurrection, remembered the words of the Lord Jesus as the Messianic manifestation of the Spirit that had already taken place. The Mystery of the Resurrection gave a new and complete understanding of what He had previously said in earthly life. On the Day of Mid-Pentecost, the Church, as a Society of Believers, partakes in the mystery of connecting the Paschal perspective with the events of the Earthly Life of the Lord.

Finally, Mid-Pentecost is also a reminder of how each day brings the Church and the Universe closer to

the Eschatological Meeting with the Lord. The Second Coming is the Faith of the Church, part of the Paschal Dogma. The Feast of Mid-Pentecost symbolises half of the life path of every person and the whole human history that has already been passed.

The resurrection is not a return and therefore the corporeality of the Lord Jesus acquiring all those perfections that the divine nature possesses. The Lord Jesus could appear sovereignly when He Himself desired it. The repeated suddenness of His Paschal appearances became the moment of contact of the Paschal Presence with the beginning of the Second – Final and Irrevocable – Coming of the Lord.

Belief in the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead gives Christianity a salutary incompleteness, makes it thirsty looking into the future. After all, the belief in the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is closely connected with the expectation of a general resurrection of the dead at the end of history. “I believe in the resurrection of the flesh,” says the Apostolic Creed.

So, what God accomplished in the Resurrection of Christ, the Messiah hastens to become the heritage of everyone, to fill the bones sleeping in the earth with life (Ezek. 37:3), to become the property of all.

In the language of the Bible and Theology, Easter, by the gift of faith in Christ Jesus, acquires a future, eschatological dimension. “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me. And the Spirit and the bride say: Come! And let him who hears say: Come! Amen. Her, come, Lord Jesus,” says the Book of the Apocalypse (Apocalypse 22;12,17–20). The Church, as the Society of Believers and the Bride of Christ, together with the saints of the Living God, is already here and now waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus from Heaven. This expectation must be fulfilled soon.

TO OUR COMPATRIOTS

AUGUST ARTIST

The daughter of the crowned imperial couple of Alexander III and Maria Feodorovna simply signed her paintings – “Olga”

By NADIA KNUDSEN,
journalist, International Press Centre, Copenhagen



Portrait of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna by V. K. Stember. 1908

Olga Alexandrovna Romanova, the younger sister of the last Russian Tsar Nicholas II, was a renowned artist whose talent shone with love for Russia, where she lived half her life in the status of a princess.

The daughter of the crowned imperial couple of Alexander III and Maria Feodorovna simply signed her paintings – “Olga”. And now, for almost a century, her works, intense but subtle in the manner of execution, have been decorating the palaces and castles of the royal families of Europe in Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

The gift of drawing was discovered in Princess Olga in early childhood by one of the private tutors, the Englishman Charles Heath, who drew attention to the little girl’s passion for watercolour drawing, the art of which he himself was excellent at.

Such famous artists as Vladimir Makovsky and Sergei Vinogradov were invited to the country palace from the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg to teach her painting, and the courtier master of painting Stanislav Zhukovsky, known for his magnificent portraits, palace interiors and marvelous beauty landscapes, taught the very basics to young Olga.

Later, in her diary entries, Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna recalled: “I did not part with a pencil for a minute, I remember that I always had it in my hand, but it was like that for everyone in our family, almost everyone had a talent for drawing. My younger brother Misha was distinguished by this,

he drew very well, and with his left hand, my sister Xenia also could draw. And we had someone to inherit it from: our mother, Empress Maria Feodorovna, in the first years of her marriage in 1866, painted a lot – both paintings and watercolours, but later the children more than filled this niche.”

So, the artistic talent did not come to her from strangers. Moreover, in the very family of her mother, nee Princess Dagmar of Denmark, there was someone to learn this skill from. The wife of her younger brother Prince Valdemar, the Frenchwoman Marie of Orléans, was also a recognised artist. The family of Emperor Alexander III liked to visit their palace, coming to Denmark for a couple of months to visit the relatives of Empress Maria Feodorovna. It was kind of a tradition.

After the death of Alexander III in 1894, Maria Feodorovna with her children Olga and Mikhail spent summer vacations at the Bernstorff Palace, the residence of the royal couple of Christian IX and Louise on the seashore, eight kilometers from Copenhagen. And Olga loved to visit her uncle Prince Valdemar in a cosy cottage Bernstorff Slot every day, just half a mile away. Here is how she wrote about it in her diaries: “I always got inspiration there: dear Aunt Marie, a Frenchwoman, often sat in the garden drawing room at the easel and painted. Usually artists don’t like having someone stand behind them when they are working, but for one reason or another, I was allowed to, and I learned a lot from her during those sessions. Aunt Marie loved to paint still lifes, and for their motifs we collected whole baskets of mushrooms, wild berries and flowers, setting off together in the early morning to the closest forest on a donkey cart, and then after the lunch we arranged the composition. And first of all, we picked all



Home. Photo © Bruun Rasmussen

the best from our baskets, not allowing to carry our baskets directly to the kitchen.”

The passion for drawing did not leave the Grand Duchess even during the First World War, when she worked as a nurse in a field hospital.

In 1901, Olga married Duke Peter of Oldenburg, but the marriage was unhappy and ended in divorce in 1916. And soon Olga Alexandrovna married the love of her youth,

Nikolai Kulikovsky, captain of the Blue Cuirassier Guards.

After the revolution and the escape from the Crimea, where the Romanov family members and the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna were held under house arrest, the young Kulikovsky couple with their one-year-old son Tikhon managed to move to the Kuban, to the quiet village of Novominskaya, where their second son Guri was soon



The Russian tea table at Knudsminde. Photo © Bruun Rasmussen

born, and it would seem that happiness settled with them forever. But the fire of the Civil War was getting closer and closer, the Kulikovsky family managed to escape to Novorossiysk and later in April 1920, with the support of the Danish consul Thomas Schütte, they reached Denmark, where the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna had emigrated a year earlier.

And it was there, in the calm Kingdom of Denmark, that seven years later the first solo exhibition of paintings by Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna took place.

The Grand Duchess, with her two sons and her husband Nikolai Kulikovsky, lived in *Hvidøre* Palace on the seaside under the caring wing of her mother, the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna. And from the very first days of her life in Denmark, Olga Alexandrovna renewed her contacts and acquaintances with recognised masters of painting. One of them was the famous artist Peder Mønsted (1859–1941), who back in the day painted a portrait of her father, Emperor Alexander III.

According to experts, Mønsted's influence is seen in many paintings

of Olga Alexandrovna, especially in her favourite motifs of the Danish province with straw-covered peasant houses. She valued his advice and often went out with him to paint nature, since the neighbourhoods around the palace were incredibly picturesque. At first she painted a lot of watercolours, later she began to paint in oils.

In her letter to Madame Brizak sent to Paris on February 2/15, 1928, she wrote: "Now I am again enthusiastically working on my watercolours – I am painting Crimean things! I have a few sketches here, and I combine

them, arrange them, and I find it so interesting that the days are too short for me... At 8½ I can start, but at 4 P.M. I can no longer work – I have a lot of other duties to perform... *My heart is with you. Olga.*"

The first successful exhibition of the Grand Duchess' work in January 1927, held at the Free Artists Gallery in the center of Copenhagen, was followed by the second successful exhibition in 1929, where most of her artworks were sold out in the first days.

In her essays, the Grand Duchess called life at the Knudsminde estate, bought by inheritance after her mother Maria Feodorovna who passed away in the fall of 1928, "the happiest and most fateful period that lasted eighteen years". It must be noted, that it was, perhaps, the most productive period in her creative life. It was here, among the picturesque meadows, fields, forest lakes, beech groves and murmuring streams, where she went in the morning, taking with her an easel and her little granddaughter Xenia, daughter of her youngest son Guri. She painted a lot, being fascinated by nature, which gave her endless inspiration.

After all, her sons grew up, and the Knudsminde estate itself, where cows, horses, piglets, chickens, ducks and geese were kept on farms, and the fields were sown with wheat, rye and sugar beet, was run by the Cossack Shisko, the main housekeeper and household retainer Gelevka and, of course, Nikolai Kulikovsky, who descended from the Don Cossacks and bred riding horses on the estate, because he knew a lot about it.

And the dear princess, as her Danish acquaintances affectionately called her, could now devote all of herself to creativity. The Grand Duchess also showed a talent for painting on porcelain, and she was invited to the Royal Danish Porcelain Factory. Later she painted her favourite motif – aconites, snowdrops and

anemones, those early spring flowers of the Danish copses – on a tea set of wondrous beauty for *Thomas Bavaria*. And for a decent reward.

Olga Alexandrovna also gave porcelain painting lessons at courses in the city of Ballerup, which generated her income. And she was very proud that she could contribute to the family budget.

In the meantime, Olga Alexandrovna's paintings were successfully exhibited and were in great demand at exhibitions and sales. The Grand Duchess developed a particularly good relationship with Richard Petersen, the owner of the gallery at Gammel Strand 46. Even after emigrating to Canada in 1948, she continued to use his services. Olga Alexandrovna's works were exhibited in 1953, 1956, 1958 and 1959 in the halls of the gallery, which was located at that time opposite the parliament building in the center of Copenhagen.

And the biggest success was at a major charity exhibition organised in 1936 in London in favour of Russian refugees. Then all 50 paintings of the august artist were sold out in two days. The buyers of her paintings included Queen Mary of Teck, the wife of King George V, Queen Maud of Norway, Baron Rothschild, Cecil Beaton and the Churchill family.

By the way, in addition to ten major exhibitions of her paintings in the galleries and halls of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna always participated in charitable Christmas markets held in the luxurious halls of the Odd Fellow Palace, where the royal couple of the Danish ruling monarchs certainly visited. This good tradition was established during the lifetime of the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna: Christmas markets were held in Copenhagen under the auspices of the Russian Charitable Committee, becoming the event of the year. The proceeds

went to support Russian refugees and needy emigrants.

Looking at the works of Olga Alexandrovna, whether they are radiant bright watercolours with an Easter Russian festive table or winter landscapes with birch trees near a rural church, you are immediately imbued with the quivering love of the artist that shines in them. And you wonder, where the Tsar's daughter, who grew up in the elegance and luxury of the magnificent imperial palaces of St. Petersburg, has it from? I find the answer in her diaries published in Denmark:

"In my first marriage, when I was married not for love to the Prince of Oldenburg at the age of 19 and a half, I was satisfied that the 33-year-old prince was not foreign, and I did not have to leave my homeland. Although, having lived together for many years, never once we were husband and wife, it was not easy to get a divorce. And therefore, from the very beginning, I tried to spend a lot of time on his family estate, the Ramon estate, which is 40 km from Voronezh. Surrounded by forests and villages, it was incredibly beautiful, I often went for a walk, immediately made friends with the family of a local village doctor, of my age, who gave me the opportunity to learn the basics of medicine and later become a nurse in a Red Cross hospital.

In the villages nearby, I saw simple Russian peasants, who lived in such need and poverty that I could not even imagine. But at the same time, they had so much kindness, greatness of soul and unshakable faith in God, which helped them to fight difficulties and enjoy the simple joys of rural life! In my eyes, they were very poor people, but incredibly rich spiritually, next to them I discovered real values in myself, too."

All this and love for Russia helped Olga Alexandrovna overcome many difficulties that befell to her lot.



Winter Day in a Russian village with a woman in a colourful dress. Photo © Bruun Rasmussen

The fate of the Grand Duchess was such that she and her husband Nikolai Kulikovsky had to emigrate to Toronto, Canada, after living 28 years in Denmark. And not alone, but with the families of their then adult sons, with Danish daughters-in-law Agnetta and Ruth, with grandchildren Xenia and Leonid. Having first settled down as a large family in a house on the shores of Lake Ontario, the Grand Duchess, to whom the nature of Canada was very reminiscent of Russia, still had her art brushes in her hand at 66 years old.

In 1955, she entered a competition to design new postage stamps, and her design of soft blue anemones was selected for the 10-cent stamp.

Olga Alexandrovna was very fond of giving to friends and acquaintances, especially for Christmas, her small watercolours designed as postcards at a printing house.

In her letter to Danish friend Wilhelmina Christensen sent to Denmark on February 2, 1959, Olga Alexandrovna wrote: "I have just returned from the forest, where I was sitting the day before – right on the snow, in the middle of the forest edge, – it is so wonderful to draw these blue shadows from the trees, I didn't feel the cold at all!"

Iconography was also one of the passions of the Grand Duchess, but she never sold her icons, but only gave them away. In 1920, she created her first icon with the face of St. George the Victorious, who on a white horse pierces a dragon with a spear, and presented such icon to the priest A. Chepurdyaev, the then rector of the Orthodox Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Copenhagen (now it is kept in one of the Danish museums).

Being a deeply religious person, like everyone else in the Romanov imperial family, immediately after moving to Canada on May 21, 1948, Olga Alexandrovna became a parishioner of the Russian Orthodox Christ the

Saviour Cathedral in Toronto, where she subsequently painted part of the iconostasis (the second row with the prophets), and created the icon of the Mother of God as a gift to the cathedral. All these are preserved in the temple to this day. Later, the Russian school at this church was named *Grand Duchess Olga Aleksandrovna Parish Russian School* – in honour of the Grand Duchess.

But the years took their toll... In a letter to same Wilhelmina dated October 17, 1957, the Grand Duchess wrote: "I still draw a lot, but like everything that I do now, it goes slowly."

Olga Alexandrovna passed away on November 24, 1960, two years after the death of her husband Nikolai Kulikovsky, with whom they lived together for 42 years in love and happiness.

And her paintings, more than 300 of which are now kept in private and museum collections, and about 1000 watercolours spread over the world, which are so simple and at the same time marvelous, imbued with kindness and tranquility, – preserve her love for Russia, which did not leave Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna until the very last minute of her life. As the historian Yevgeny Pletnev noted in his study: "What attracts in the creative manner of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna is the naturalness of nature in all its simplicity, behind which one can easily guess the inner grace and aristocracy and spiritual wealth, which, however, was characteristic of the most august artist from the Imperial House of Romanov. Lovely rural landscapes, flowers and animals, sketches of home interiors and Christmas trees on the estate, churches in the Russian outback, simple genre scenes of rural life, winter festivities and faces of pre-revolutionary Rus' – the very world of her creativity, where everything is filled with kindness, tranquility and spirituality. And it is no coincidence that

the last picture of the Grand Duchess, who was a deeply Orthodox person and believer, was a watercolour with an Easter festive table – as a symbol of her faith in resurrection, in eternal life."

It is not surprising, that interest in the paintings of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna continues to grow. Over the past three decades, their geographical range has also expanded from the USA to Sweden and Finland, and in Russia – from Moscow to Yekaterinburg.

In Russia, where interest in the work of the august artist has especially increased, major exhibitions of her works were held in 2007 and 2013. The 2013 exhibition was dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the Imperial House of Romanov. It also took place in the UK, France, Germany, and Canada.

And in Denmark, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the largest Danish auction house, *Bruun Rasmussen*, the jubilee *Russian auctions* were organised on November 30, 2018, which became a real firework of the Russian creative heritage – from the works of Carl Faberge and the sapphire diadem donated in 1898 by the Russian Tsar Nicholas II for the wedding of the Crown Prince Christian (X) of Denmark with Crown Princess Alexandrine, to the paintings of K. Korovin, I. Repin, A. Makovsky, P. Vereshchagin, V. Polenov...

It is worth noting that these *Russian auctions* opened with three works by Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna: *Home, Winter Day in a Russian village with a woman in a colourful dress* and *The Russian tea table at Knudsminde*. On them are village festivities and girls with faces reddened from frost, and a plot from life on the Knudsminde estate dear to the artist's heart: a tea table with a pot-bellied samovar, which, with its brilliance, could compete with the imperial diadem and Faberge jewelry.

“BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN TO EXPRESS YOURSELF WEAKLY”

170th anniversary of Vincent van Gogh's birth: 5 masterpieces of the great master

By OKSANA KOPENKINA,
art analyst and founder of the Arts Diary website



Vincent van Gogh searched for his destination for a long time. He started painting at the age of 27. And with all his passion he devoted himself to art. 10 years working

at the limit. He was torn, shaking his physical and mental health. But in this fire of self-immolation, he created one masterpiece after another. “Better to do nothing than

to express yourself weakly,” Van Gogh believed.

True, no one seriously took his efforts. Many of his paintings were destroyed by those to whom he gifted them. Even his own mother, when moving to another city, left dozens of her son's paintings abandoned. All of them disappeared without a trace.

And Van Gogh himself often sold them for a penny to a junk man, who resold them for reuse to other artists.

Despite all these losses, 3000 of his works reached us. Among them – 800 oil paintings!

Here are just five of his masterpieces.

Sunflowers (August 1888)

August 1888... For several months, Van Gogh has been living in the south of France. In the city of Arles. He came here to find bright colours. Here he created a series of paintings with “Sunflowers”.

The London version is one of the most circulated. We meet her on bags, postcards, or phone cases.

It is surprising that ordinary flowers have become almost a symbol of all world painting. What is so unusual about them?

The pot and background are drawn very schematically. It is not clear whether this is a table, or a distant horizon and sand.

Flowers are not beautiful. Some of them are with ragged petals. And the majority are mutating at all.



Please note that they are more like asters than sunflowers. Such flowers are infertile and occasionally appear among healthy ones.

Maybe that's why "Sunflowers" often cause conflicting feelings? On the one hand, Van Gogh wanted to show the beauty of our world. He liked the sunflowers, because they benefit the person. But on the other hand, inadvertently chooses infertile flowers.

This is very similar to the tragedy of the artist himself. He longed to be of service to others. But the reactions of people to his paintings each time showed only one thing: his efforts were fruitless.

He did not dare to dream that his paintings would please millions of people.

Cafe Terrace at Night (September 1888)

Those who have been to Arles will immediately notice how the city in the paintings of Van Gogh differs from the real city.

It was an industrial, dirty town. But with an ancient history. The Roman amphitheatre, which resembles the Colosseum, has been preserved in the city centre.

This is strange, but you will not find this amphitheatre in any Van Gogh painting. Although he captured almost every corner of Arles. But the main attraction of the city passed by!

This is very characteristic of Van Gogh. He looked past everyday things. He saw the most unusual. He saw the soul of flowers and stones, but ignored the obvious.

He wrote a cafe for three nights in a row. Right in the open air under the night sky. Have you ever seen an art painting at night?

But this is again the unusualness of Van Gogh.

He believed that night is richer in colours than day. And he was able to prove this "ridiculous" statement with his "Cafe Terrace".

There is not a single drop of black paint in the picture. Thickly applied strokes make yellow and blue even



brighter. Violet and orange reflections on the pavement accompany these colours.

This is one of the most striking and positive works of Van Gogh.

Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe (January 1889)

The Self-Portrait with Pipe was written at Arles Hospital. The artist got there after his story about a cut off ear.

It all started with the arrival of Gauguin. Van Gogh wanted to create a workshop school, seeing Gauguin as its leader. They began to live and work under one roof.

Van Gogh was very impractical in everyday life. The neat and collected Gauguin was annoying. Van Gogh was too emotional, argued to the point of exhaustion. Gauguin was self-confident and could not stand it when anyone doubted his opinion. Can you imagine what it was like to live for such people together?



When Van Gogh realized that he and Gauguin could not get along together, he had a nervous breakdown. He pounced on a friend with a razor (according to Gauguin). He stopped Vincent with his menacing look.

Then Van Gogh directed aggression on himself, cutting off his earlobe. Such a gesture may seem very strange. If you do not know one feature of Arles.

In the already mentioned amphitheatre there was a bullfight. But it was more humane than in Spain. The defeated bull had its ear cut off. Van Gogh cut off his ear, considering himself a loser.

This story was only the last straw. Van Gogh's nervous system by that time was greatly shaken by the frantic pace of work and constant malnutrition.

Once he worked four days without sleep, having drunk 23 cups of coffee during this time!

And after the first nervous attack, Van Gogh creates his strange self-portrait.

It is written in complementary colours. These are colours that reinforce

each other. Red becomes even more red if it is next to green. But this colour enhancement is painful for eyes. Colours become too flashy. They convey cacophony in the soul of the artist.

Starry Night (June 1889)

The story with a cut off ear really scared Van Gogh's neighbors. They wrote a petition demanding the expulsion of the "madman" from Arles. He obeyed. And he voluntarily left for a mental hospital in the small town of Saint-Remy.

Here was written one of his most famous masterpieces, *The Starry Night*.

This is one of the few works that he wrote not from nature. Van Gogh was not allowed to leave the hospital at night. Only during the day, accompanied by a paramedic.

Therefore, *The Starry Night* was created using imagination. Only from the window of his chamber did Van Gogh see a piece of sky and star. The brightest star in the sky of Vincent is Venus, which that month was visible to the naked eye.

Van Gogh believed that everything in our world has a soul. Both a flower and a stone. Even space breathes. This he conveyed in his *Starry Night*. He achieved this with an unusual arrangement of strokes around moon and each star. The twists helped make the sky "alive."

Nerve attacks receded. Van Gogh found hope that the disease was released. Soon he will leave the medical institution and move to another town of Over.

Almond Blossoms (January 1890)

Van Gogh painted the picture as a gift to his brother, whose son was born. He was named after his uncle, Vincent.

Van Gogh wanted young parents to hang a picture above the bed. Flowering almonds mean the beginning of a new life.

The picture is very unusual. The artist chose the angle, as if lying under a tree and looking at branches against the sky.

The picture is decorative. After all, Van Gogh created them to decorate the housing of ordinary people with modest means. It was unlikely that he imagined that his paintings would be accessible only to the very rich.

Six months after writing *The Almond Blossoms*, Van Gogh will die. According to the official version, it was suicide.

The version of suicide is rarely disputed. After all, it made the legend of Van Gogh more dramatic. This only fuelled interest in artist, and at the same time increased the value of his paintings...

But here is the strange thing. In the last months of his life, his work was one more positive than the other. Is "*Almond Blossoms*" looks like the work of a man thinking of suicide?

Moreover, in Auvers, where he moved, his loneliness receded. Here



"In my opinion, I am often rich as Croesus, not in money, but (though it doesn't happen every day) rich, because I have found in my work something to which I can devote myself heart and soul, and which gives inspiration and significance to life. Of course, my moods vary, but there is an average of serenity. I have a sure faith in art, a sure confidence that it is a powerful stream, which hears a man to harbour, though he himself must do his bit too; and at all events I think it such a great blessing, when a man has found his work, that I cannot count myself among the unfortunate."

Vincent Van Gogh. Letter to his brother, Theo. 11 March 1883

he found many friends. His paintings interested others. Enthusiastic reviews began to appear in the press.

Now the version of the killing by negligence is being considered. It was put forward in 2011 by writers Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith.

When Van Gogh returned wounded to his room, there was no gun with him. His easel and paints, with which

he worked that day, were also not found. At the same time, one of the residents urgently left the city, taking with him two teenage brothers.

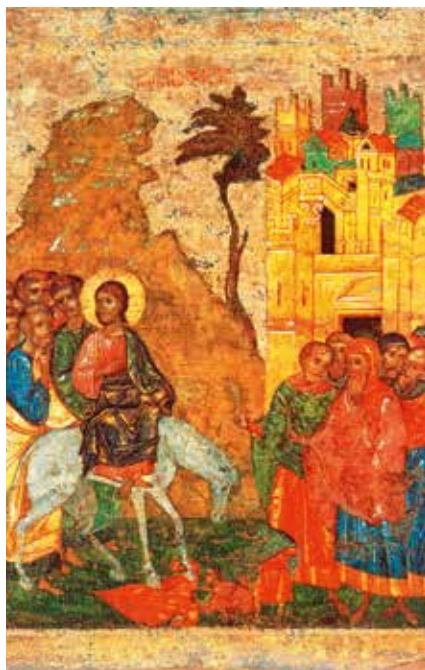
The father of these guys just kept a gun in the house.

Van Gogh reluctantly answered questions from the police about what had happened. He claimed that he did it himself. It looked like Van

Gogh decided to take all the blame so that the teenager would not go to jail. Such a sacrifice was completely in his spirit. He did this once, being an assistant pastor. He

Van Gogh passed away at the age of geniuses. At 37 years old. Short life. The creative path is even shorter, only 10 years. But during this time, he managed to change the vector of development of all art! Without it, there would be no expressionism or even abstractionism.

No one before him so zealously expressed himself on canvas. His paintings are his emotions. From deafening happiness to deep despair. Poor, lonely and strange. He left his name for centuries.



*Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem.
16th century Russian icon*

GREAT LENT AND CHURCH HOLIDAYS

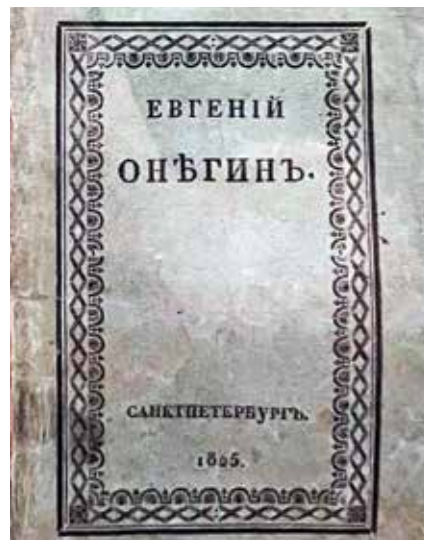
Great Lent, which precedes the feast of Easter, began this year on February 27 and will last until April 15. It is aimed at spiritual self-perfecting and preparation of believers for the Bright Sunday. The Church encourages believers to spend these days in prayers for absolution, as well as to adhere to certain restrictions, including in food.

On April 7, Orthodox Christians celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation, that is one of the 12 Great (the Twelve) Feasts in the Orthodox calendar. On this day, the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and announced to Her the coming birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Depending on the day of Easter, the date of the celebration of Palm Sunday also varies. In 2023, it occurs on April 9.

190th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST EDITION OF EUGENE ONEGIN

On April 2, 1833, the printing house of A. F. Smirdin printed the first complete edition of the novel Eugene Onegin, on which A. S. Pushkin had worked for more than seven years. 5,000 copies were completely sold out within a week. Prior to this, the novel was published in separate issues, each of which contained one chapter. The novel was a huge success among the poet's contemporaries and to this day it remains an unsurpassed masterpiece of Russian literature.



WORLD HEALTH DAY

World Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated every year on 7 April, under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as other related organizations.





WHO, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, held the First World Health Assembly in 1948. The Assembly decided to celebrate 7 April of each year, with effect from 1950, as the World Health Day.

The World Health Day is held to mark WHO's founding and is seen as an opportunity by the organization to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year. The WHO organizes international, regional and local events on the Day related to a particular theme. This year's theme is *Health for All*.

WORLD DAY OF CULTURE

April 15 is the Universal (or World) Day of Culture. The date of this holiday is associated with the adoption of the Roerich Pact, the first international act on the protection of cultural property, which became the basis of many existing

agreements on the preservation of cultural heritage.

Back in 1929, Roerich addressed the governments and peoples of different countries with a well-elaborated international treaty draft, which established the priority of preserving cultural heritage over military necessity. He was supported by many famous figures of culture and science of those times: Albert Einstein, Bernard Shaw, Herbert Wells, Thomas Mann and others.

In 1931, during the First International Conference of the Roerich Pact in Bruges (Belgium), Roerich proposed to establish a Universal Day of Culture, the symbol of which was to be the Banner of Peace. The artist explained its symbolism in this way: the "...banner is the symbol of whole world, not a country, but the whole civilised world. The Banner proposed has on the white background three united amaranth

spheres as a symbol of Eternity and Unity."

The Roerich Pact was signed on April 15, 1935 in Washington, in the office of President Franklin Roosevelt.

Subsequently, this document was taken as the basis for many acts and recommendations for the protection of the history and culture by UNESCO, as well as for the 1954 Hague Convention.

WIMBLEDON 2023

The organisers of Wimbledon championship, which will be held this year from July 3 to 16, have decided to allow Russian tennis players to compete under certain conditions, Ino-SMI reports with reference to Daily Mail. Previous bans were lifted in the face of pressure from the tennis associations.

Players from Russia and Belarus, including former men's world No. 1 Daniil Medvedev and Australian Open women's champion Aryna Sabalenka, were banned last summer when the conflict began in Ukraine. They will now return, but they will have to compete under a neutral flag.



OSCARS 2023

The 95th Academy Awards was a ceremony held by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) on March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. It honoured films released in 2022. The event was televised in the U.S. by ABC. Comedian and late-night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel hosted the show for the third time, after emceeing the 89th and 90th editions of the ceremony in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

Everything Everywhere All at Once (directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert) led the ceremony with eleven nominations and seven wins, including Best Picture. Other winners included *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Directed by Edward Berger) with four awards and *The Whale* (Directed by Darren Aronofsky) with two. *Avatar* (the sequel to *Avatar* (2009) and the second instalment in the *Avatar* film series) directed by James Cameron was among five films with one award each.

Michelle Yeoh has won Best Actress for her role in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, becoming the first woman of Asian descent to win the Academy Award. Brendan Fraser wins Best Actor for his role in the film *The Whale*.

The nominations were announced by actors Riz Ahmed and Allison Williams on January 24, 2023.

It was the first time the Best Picture category featured two sequels, *Avatar: The Way of Water* and *Top Gun: Maverick*,



as well as the first time two films grossing over \$1 billion worldwide were nominated for Best Picture in the same year. *All Quiet on the Western Front*'s nine nominations trailed only *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and *Roma* (2018) for the most nominations by a film not in the English language. *The Quiet Girl* was the first submission from Ireland to receive a nomination for Best International Feature Film.

Judd Hirsch, nominated for Best Supporting Actor for his role in *The Fabelmans*. At age 90, John Williams is the oldest competitive nominee in Oscar history; this was his 53rd nomination, breaking his own record as the most Oscar-nominated living person, and the second-most nominated person of all time behind Walt Disney.

Everything Everywhere All at Once became the first film since 2013's *Gravity* to win seven Academy Awards, and the most awarded Best Picture winner since 2008's *Slumdog Millionaire*. It is the third film in history to win in three acting categories, following *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *Network* (1976).

A24 won nine awards, more than any other studio or distributor; with *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and *The Whale*, the studio was the first to win seven of the eight top awards – Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and the four acting awards, missing only Best Adapted Screenplay.



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