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VALENTIN FELIKSOVICH VOYNO-YASENETSKY – THE GREAT SURGEON AND THE ORTHODOX SAINT

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Abstract

Valentin Feliksovich Voyno-Yasenetsky – is the name which means a lot to Russian surgeons. He was a man, who devoted himself selflessly to the two great and difficult fields – priesthood and surgery. Voyno-Yasenetsky was the worthiest example of a healer, who treated as body as soul. He was the great surgeon, professor of medicine, Stalin Prize Laureate, and at the same time he was also the Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, ecclesiastical writer and canonized saint. He was a victim of political repression and spent 11 years in exile. His biography is truly amazing and his life is an example of piety.

Keywords: Voyno-Yasenetsky, Russian Orthodox Church, *Patriarch of Moscow Alexy II*

Valentin Feliksovich Voyno-Yasenetsky (1877 – 1961) was a man, who devoted himself selflessly to the two great and difficult fields – priesthood and surgery. This professions seems to be far from each other, but there is something common for them – it is a colossal humanity. Not only the body but whole human nature suffers from the disease. Clergyman Voyno-Yasenetsky was the worthiest example of a healer, who treated as body as soul. He was the great surgeon, professor of medicine, Stalin Prize Laureate, and at the same time he was also the priest, named the spiritual name Luca, the Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, ecclesiastical writer; Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea since April, 1946. Saint Luca was canonized as a local saint by decree of Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 1995. He also was canonized as a local saint by Krasnoyarsk diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church canonized him as Confessor (saint) in the assembly of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in 2000.

The young doctor having graduated from the Medical Faculty of Kyiv University name St. Prince Vladimir served in the medical detachment of the Red Cross. During the Russian-Japanese war, he became the head of the surgical department while remaining an operating surgeon. Afterwards the talented surgeon worked in hospitals in many small towns. Valentin Feliksovich applied his talents in all areas of medicine: he splendidly operated the joints, spine and brain, kidney and biliary tract, carried out ophthalmologic and gynecological operations, but he had a special love for contaminated surgery. He was a ready to large and objective researches and analysis scientist.

Voyno-Yasenetsky made a great contribution to anesthesiology. He published his first monograph "Regional anesthesia " in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) in 1915. In 1916 he defended successfully his doctoral dissertation "On regional anesthesia of the second branch of the trigeminal nerve." His monograph "Essays on contaminated surgery" (1936) became a classic of the medical literature, a handbook for medical practitioners immediately. Before the era of antibiotics, when there was no other way to fight the purulent process except surgical methods, any young surgeon could carry out operations in the harsh conditions of the provincial hospital with this book. Even without knowing that the book was written by Bishop it must be noted that it written by a man who relates to patients with a great love. It has the following lines: "A surgeon getting to the operation

must be borne in mind not only the abdominal cavity but all the sick person, which doctors, unfortunately, so often called "case". In 1946 Voyno-Yasenetsky received for his "Essays" the Stalin Prize of 1 degree.

After the revolution he became the organizer of the University of Turkestan where he has served as professor on the Faculty of Medicine, the Head of Department of topographic anatomy. In addition, he attends church fellowship meetings, speaks at debates defending the purity of Orthodoxy against the ideas of the new authorities. The archbishop said to Valentin Voyno-Yasenetsky at the end of one of the debates: "Doctor, you have to be a priest." And it happened soon. The adoption of holy order by a surgeon caused a sensation in Tashkent. Only the highest talent of the surgeon and professionalism protects him from reprisals for a long time. Combining the job of a doctor, a scientist and a pastor he lectures on anatomy in a cassock with a cross, does not start operation without praying. Padre Valentin Voyno-Yasenetsky becomes Bishop Luca. Soon there was the first arrest, searches, basement of the State Political Administration.

Becoming a victim of political repression Voyno-Yasenetsky spent in the exile in a total of 11 years. At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War the people and the authorities needs a unique surgical talent of the priest. He heads a large hospital, consults, operates saving the soldiers and at the same time involves in the work of the Holy Synod. During the war Professor Voyno-Yasenetsky teaches the first students of Krasnoyarsk State Medical University, which bears his name now.

Dealing with issues of philosophy and theology in parallel he preaches on the theme "The Science and Religion", referring to Copernicus, Pasteur, Pavlov and others religious scientists. He writes a two-volume treatise in which he tried to prove the unity of science and religion. "Science without religion – Voyno-Yasenetsky notes – is the sky without the sun. A science clothed in light – is inspired thought, bright light penetrating the darkness of this world." Also he is the author of the treatise "Spirit, soul and body."

Archbishop's Luca last fifteen years (1946 – 1961) were held in Simferopol where taking the episcopal see he did not leave the scientific and practical activities of the doctor.

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