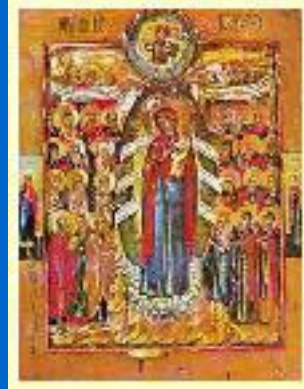


THE HARBIN ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD "JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW"



In the 1920's in the Far East, in the city of Harbin a young Bishop Nestor, through his labors and effort established the "House of Mercy," a charitable institution/hostel, both for the elderly and sick and for orphaned children. At this House of Mercy, Bishop Nestor set up and consecrated a church in honor of the Icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow." Learning of this, one of the Bishop's close assistants, a deeply-religious Russian woman, Ekaterina Ivanovna Kurmey, donated her own icon of this type. The ancient icon had already darkened so much from time that it was almost impossible to discern the faces of the saints, let alone reading the inscriptions.

One day, the rector of the church, now deceased, Fr. Julian Sumnevich (particularly revered by the Orthodox residents of Harbin for his spirituality and irreproachable life) noticed that the old icon began to lighten and renew itself...Not believing his eyes, he decided to wait some time; but the renewal was progressing quickly, and in a few hours the icon was so bright that the miracle was undoubtable and apparent to everyone who saw it and knew its previous condition. Within a day, the holy Icon was absolutely bright, the faces of the saints and the inscriptions were distinct and so clear that one could believe that the Icon had only just been painted.

This stupendous miracle of God's grace roused the entire city. Old residents of Harbin remember this event well. Believers from all over began coming to the new holy Icon to venerate it and pray--and the renewed Icon became one of the most important holy objects not only of the church, but of all of Orthodox Harbin.

When the last rector of the church of the House of Mercy, Archimandrite Philaret (later the third First-Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia), also left Harbin for Australia after great difficulty, and then on to the USA, the renewed Icon remained in this church, along with other holy objects. The church was closed after its rector had left, and its holy objects and items became the property of the Chinese government. After many strenuous and difficult efforts, the acting warden of the church of the previous several years, Z.L. Tauz-Zvereva managed to gain permission to export the holy Icon. Only in the fall of 1965, during Vladyka Metropolitan Philaret's trip to Europe, was the renewed Icon, after a lengthy stay in Hong Kong, sent to the USA to the Synodal Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, where it remains in the lower church of St. Sergius of Radonezh. The present clergy of the Synodal Cathedral bear witness to the fact that occasionally, myrrh appears on the surface of the Icon.