

## Synaxarion

### The Feast of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God

#### **[The] Commemoration of the Miraculous Appearance of the Mother of God at Pochaev, which saved the Monastery from the assault of the Tatars and Turks.**

The Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God is among the most revered sacred objects of the Orthodox Church. Located in the Dormition Cathedral at Pochaev, Ukraine, the Icon is reknowned throughout the entire Slavic world, and is venerated in Russia, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and in other places. Christians of other confessions also venerate the Pochaev Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. The wonderworking Icon has been treasured at the Pochaev Lavra for over 400 years.

Numerous miracles have taken place before the holy Icon, and these are recorded in special books at the monastery. The books contain the personal testimonies of people who prayed before the Pochaev Icon and were healed of their illnesses, delivered from unclean spirits, or freed from captivity. Many sinners were also brought to repentance.

Today's Feast Day in honor of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God was appointed to commemorate the deliverance of the Dormition Lavra from a siege by the Turks on July 20-23, 1675.

In the summer of 1675 during the Zbarazhsk War with the Turks, in the reign of the Polish King Jan Sobesski (1674-1696), regiments composed of Tatars under the command of Khan Nurredin via Vishnevets fell upon the Pochaev monastery, surrounding it on three sides. The weak monastery walls and its stone buildings did not offer much protection against a siege. Igoumen Joseph Dobromirsky urged the brethren and laypeople to pray to their heavenly intercessors, the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Job of Pochaev (October 28).

The monks and the people prayed fervently, prostrating themselves before the wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God, and the reliquary containing the relics of Saint Job. At sunrise on the morning of July 23, as the Tatars prepared to attack the monastery, the Igoumen ordered an Akathist to the Theotokos to be sung. At the opening words, "O Queen of the Heavenly Hosts," the Mother of God suddenly appeared over the church, in "an unfurled radiant white omaphorion," with angels holding unsheathed swords. Saint Job stood beside the Mother of God, bowing to her and beseeching her to defend the monastery.

The Tatars believed that the heavenly army was a vision, and in their confusion they started shooting arrows at the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Job, but the

arrows turned backwards and wounded those who shot them. The enemy, gripped by terror, fled in panic, trampling upon and killing each other. The defenders of the monastery pursued them and took many prisoners. Later, some of the prisoners converted to the Orthodox Faith and remained at the monastery thereafter.

In the year 1721, Pochaev was occupied by the Uniates. Even during this difficult time for the Lavra, the monastery Chronicle lists 539 miracles of the Pochaev Icon. In the second half of the eighteenth century, a Uniate nobleman, Count Nicholas Pototski, became a benefactor of the Pochaev Lavra through the following miraculous circumstance. After accusing his coachman of overturning the carriage with runaway horses, the Count took out a pistol to shoot him. The coachman, turning towards the mountain of Pochaev, stretched out his hands and cried: "Mother of God, depicted in the Pochaev Icon, save me!"

Several times Pototski tried to shoot the pistol, which had never failed him, but the weapon misfired and the coachman remained alive. Pototski went at once to the wonderworking Icon and resolved to devote himself and all his property to building up the monastery. With the money he contributed, the Dormition cathedral was built, as well as other buildings for the brethren.

The return of the Pochaev Monastery to the Orthodox Church in 1832 was marked by the miraculous healing of the blind maiden Anna Akimchukova, who had come on pilgrimage to the holy shrine along with her seventy-year-old grandmother from Kremenets-Podolsk, 200 versts away. In memory of this event, the Archbishop of Volhynia and Archimandrite Innocent of the Lavra (1832-1840) appointed that an Akathist be read on Saturdays before the wonderworking Icon. During the time of Archimandrite Agathangelus, Archbishop of Volhynia (1866-1876), a separate chapel was built in the galleries of the Holy Trinity church, which was dedicated on July 23, 1875 in memory of the victory over the Tatars.

The wonderworking Pochaev Icon is also commemorated on Friday of Bright Week, and on September 8.

*Source: <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2015/07/23/102074-icon-of-the-mother-of-god-of-pochaev>*