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Cave of St. John the Long-Suffering opened during restorations at Kiev Caves Lavra

The Orthodox faithful now have a rare opportunity to see the place of the ascetic labors of one of the many great saints of the Kiev Caves Lavra.

During the restoration work that is currently taking place in the Near Caves of the Holy Dormition-Kiev Caves Lavra, the place of asceticism of the 12th-century monk Venerable John the Long-Suffering, which is usually covered, has been opened, reports the Lavra's press service.

St. John's main podvig was performed in a pit in which he buried himself up to the waist, waging battle against the passion of lust. Thus he spent the entirety of Great Lent, and the Lord sent him mercy, delivering him from the passion.

Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, abbot of the Kiev Caves Lavra, noted: “We often walk through the caves, but we don’t see what is next to us, under brickwork or under boards. Today we cleared the place of the ascetic feat of the our venerable father St. John the Long-Suffering, and we are thinking about how to make this place visible for all people, so the parishioners and pilgrims of the Lavra could venerate this holy place.”

“We know about many shrines connected with the life of this or that saint, but here we see a place where man struggled with himself, with his passions and vices,” Met. Pavel added.

Following the completion of the restoration work, everyone will be able to see the place of St. John’s ascetic struggle.

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St. John the Long-Suffering pursued asceticism at the Kiev Caves Lavra, accepting many sorrows for the sake of virginity.

The ascetic recalled that from the time of his youth he had suffered much, tormented by fleshly lust, and nothing could deliver him from it, neither hunger nor thirst nor heavy chains. He then went into the cave where the relics of St. Anthony rested, and he fervently prayed to the holy Abba. After a day and a night the much-suffering John heard a voice: “John! It is necessary for you to become a recluse, in order to weaken the vexation by silence and seclusion, and the Lord shall help you by the prayers of His monastic saints.” The saint settled into the cave from that time, and only after thirty years did he conquer the fleshly passions.

Tense and fierce was the struggle upon the thorny way on which the monk went to victory. Sometimes the desire took hold of him to forsake his seclusion, but then he resolved on still greater effort. The holy warrior of Christ dug out a pit and with the onset of Great Lent he climbed into it, and he covered himself up to the shoulders with ground. He spent the whole of Lent in such a position, but the burning of his former passions did not leave him. The enemy of salvation brought terror upon the ascetic, wishing to expel him from the cave: a fearsome serpent, breathing fire and sparks, tried to swallow the saint. For several days these evil doings continued.

On the night of the Resurrection of Christ the serpent seized the head of the monk in its jaws. Then Saint John cried out from the depths of his heart: “O Lord my God and my Savior! Why have You forsaken me? Have mercy upon me, only Lover of Mankind; deliver me from my foul iniquity, so that I am not trapped in the snares of

the Evil one. Deliver me from the mouth of my enemy: send down a flash of lightning and drive it away.” Suddenly a bolt of lightning flashed, and the serpent vanished. A Divine light shone upon the ascetic, and a Voice was heard: “John! Here is help for you. Be attentive from now on, that nothing worse happen to you, and that you do not suffer in the age to come.”

The saint prostrated himself and said: “Lord! Why did You leave me for so long in torment?” “I tried you according to the power of your endurance,” was the answer. “I brought upon you temptation, so that you might be purified like gold. It is to the strong and powerful servants that a master assigns the heavy work, and the easy tasks to the infirm and to the weak. Therefore pray to the one buried here (Moses the Hungarian), he can help you in this struggle, for he did greater deeds than Joseph the Fair” (March 31). The monk died in the year 1160, having acquired grace against profligate passions. His holy relics rest in the Caves of St Anthony.

We pray to St. John for deliverance from sexual impurity.

— Source: orthochristian.com