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Thousands gather at persecuted Pochaev Lavra to celebrate great local saint



Despite the pressure and persecution against the Holy Dormition-Pochaev Lavra, the brotherhood and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church continue to worship God and celebrate the Divine services.

Thousands of faithful gathered at the ancient monastery on December 31 and January 1 to prayerfully commemorate the great 20th-century saint Venerable St. Amphilochius of Pochaev, reports the Lavra's website.

The festive services began on December 31 with the All-Night Vigil, during which the Akathist to St. Amphilochius was read. Following the Akathist, the thousands gathered had the opportunity to venerate the saint's holy relics.

Two Divine Liturgies were held on the day of the feast itself—in the Transfiguration Cathedral at midnight and later in the same church at 9:00 AM. The later Liturgy was celebrated by His Eminence Mark of Khust and Vinogradov with the concelebration of 8 other hierarchs, including His Eminence Metropolitan Vladimir

of Pochaev, the abbot of the holy Lavra.

During the Liturgy, a special prayer for peace in Ukraine and the unity of the Orthodox Church was offered.

His Eminence Archbishop Clement of Nizhyn and Prilutsk addressed the faithful with a sermon before Communion in which he highlighted the spiritual feats of St. Amphilochius, urging all to follow his Christian way of life.

After the Liturgy, a crowded procession took place, during which the relics of St. Amphilochius were transferred to the cave church where they are permanently treasured. His relics had been transferred to the Transfiguration Cathedral in a procession held on December 30.

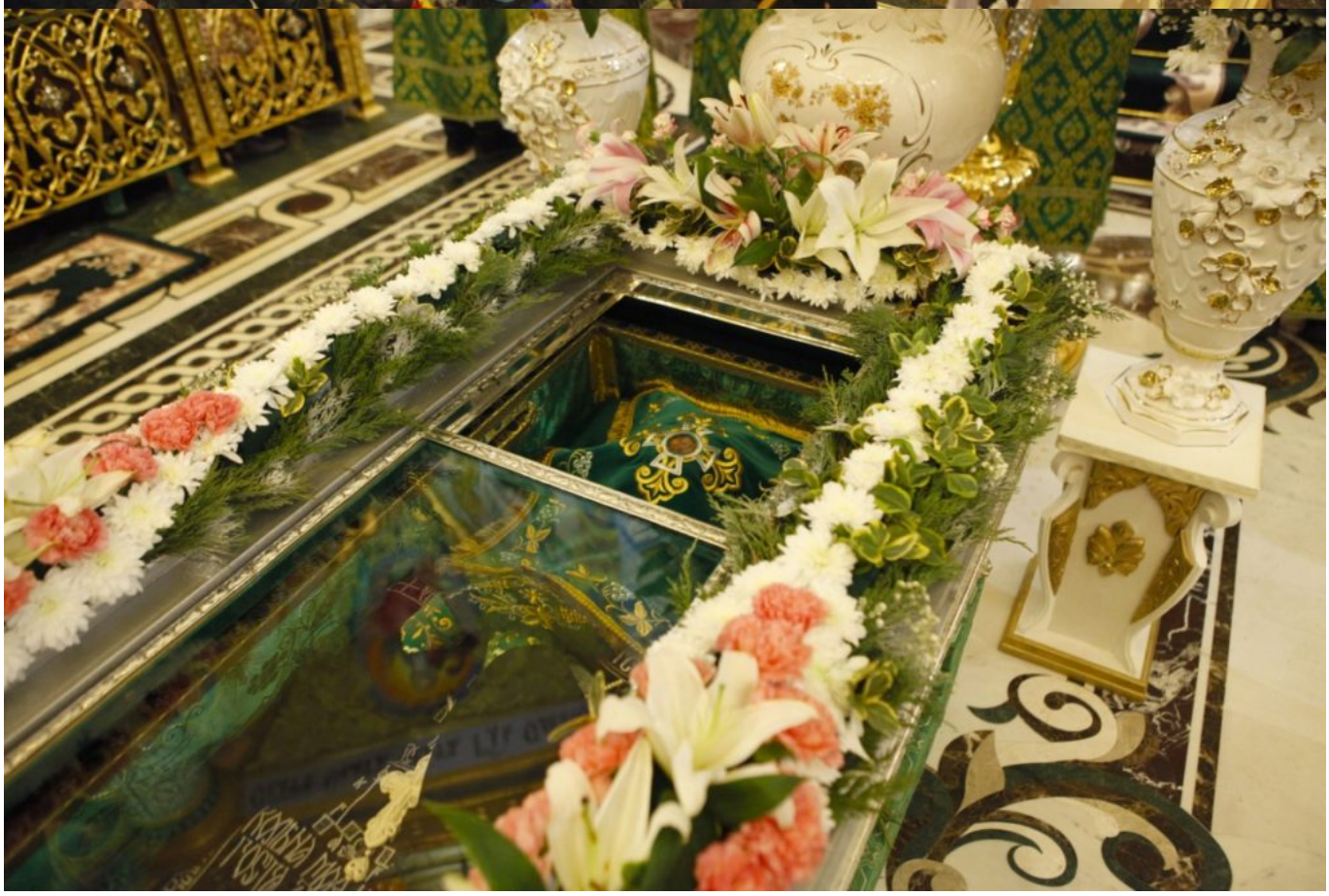
The abbot Met. Vladimir then addressed with a word of gratitude and congratulations on the feast of St. Amphilochius and the coming feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Amphilochius of Pochaev was a wonderworker and visionary of the Pochaev Lavra. He entered the monastery at the age of 31 and became a monk at the age of 38.

He had several duties at the monastery and received the sick as an osteopath and medical assistant. In 1962 he prevented the closure of the Lavra’s Holy Trinity Cathedral for which he was sent by the communist authorities to a mental hospital. After his release from the hospital, the holy elder returned to his native village of Malaya Ilovitsa in the Ternopil Province where he lived with his nephew, celebrated supplicatory prayer services, and healed the sick.

At the instigation of local functionaries St. Amphilochius was brutally beaten by one of his relatives; the dying elder was taken to the Lavra and immediately tonsured into the Great Schema, after which his health was miraculously restored. Then the saint returned home where he prayed fervently and received the sick for the rest of his life. St. Amphilochius reposed in the Lord on January 1, 1971, aged 76. This great ascetic was canonized in 2002 and approved for Church-wide veneration by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in February 2016.





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