

ANTIQUUE ICONS STOLEN BY NAZIS FINALLY RETURNED TO PSKOV CAVES MONASTERY



In Moscow, the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation handed over several early-18th-century icons to Metropolitan Tikhon of Pskov and Porkhov, the abbot of the Pskov Caves Monastery.

At the request of His Eminence Metropolitan Tikhon (Shevkunov) of Pskov and Porkhov, a search was undertaken for a number of unique icons that were taken to Germany from the Pskov Diocese during the Nazi occupation in WWII.

After an extensive search by the Russian Special Services together with their German counterparts, 12 icons were found in a private collection abroad. The icons are a Menaion series, depicting the most revered saints in the Russian Church from January to December, reports Russian Gazette.

According to Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, an examination showed that the icons were painted in Pskov Caves Monastery workshop in the first third of the 18th century. After their return to their homeland, new kiots were made for them from Karelian birch.

Met. Tikhon thanked the Security Council for its efforts to return the precious icons.

“Our heritage is, unfortunately, scattered all over the world. Not all of us will be able to return, although no one has even set such a goal, but even those precious grains that return, find their home, return to their people—it’s beautiful, touching, and very important,” His Eminence stressed, adding that the newly returned icons will hold a worthy place in the life of Orthodox Christians in Pskov.

According to the results of the examination, each icon is in good condition. They are distinguished by the extremely fine, scrupulously precise movements of the iconographer’s hand, as well as the precisely selected color scheme.

In general, experts rated the collection of 12 icons as an extremely interesting example of Russian iconography, and for the Orthodox faithful, the icons are priceless.

OrthoChristian has reported on the return of stolen or missing icons several times before. Most recently, it was reported that 3,000 icons of Russian origin confiscated by German customs authorities will be returned from Germany to Russia.

In September 2016, a 17th-century Paschal icon stolen from a church in Yaroslavl was returned to Russia; in June 2017, an icon of St. Nicholas was returned to St. Paraskeva’s Church in Krasnoyarsk after it was discovered in a local house, where it had been taken for protection from soviet pilfering; in January 2018, it was reported that icons captured by terrorists were being returned to Syria; in March 2019, 10 pre-revolutionary icons stored by a film studio were returned to the Church; and in October 2019, a miraculous 17th-century icon of Christ that was lost 90 years ago was finally returned to St. Basil’s Cathedral on Red Square.

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