*Kontakion 1*

C

hosen by the Holy Spirit of God from thy swaddling clothes, blessed eldress Matrona, thou didst receive bodily infirmity and blindness from God for thy spiritual cleansing. Thou wast enriched with the gift of foresight and wonderworking, and hast been adorned with an incorruptible crown from the Lord. Wherefore in gratitude we on earth offer unto thee crowns wrought from praises, crying out:

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Ikos 1*

A

s an angel in the flesh didst thou appear on earth, blessed Matrona, fulfilling the will of God. Though born in bodily blindness, yet the Lord, Who maketh wise the blind and loveth the righteous, enlightened thy spiritual eyes, that thou mightest serve His people, and the works of God be made manifest through thee.  Wherefore with love we cry unto thee such things as these:

Rejoice, chosen by God from infancy;

Rejoice, thou that wast covered by the grace of the Holy Spirit from thy cradle;

Rejoice, thou that from childhood wast enriched with the gift of miracles;

Rejoice, thou that wast filled with wisdom from God on high;

Rejoice, thou that didst foresee the will of God through spiritual eyes;

Rejoice, thou that puttest to shame the wise of this age that are blinded in mind;

Rejoice, thou that leadest deluded souls unto God;

Rejoice, thou that relievest from grief and from sorrow;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 2*

W

hen thou wast baptised, blessed one, the people and the priest beheld a wonderful pillar like smoke above thy head, and smelled a strong fragrance. Astonished, they wondered what this maid was destined to be, whilst singing unto God: Alleluia.

*Ikos 2*

B

eing enlightened in mind, the priest of God Vasily, discerned her whom he baptised to be a vessel of the grace of God, and called thee, righteous Matrona, a holy maiden. In our zeal we bring praises such as these:

Rejoice, thou that wast made fragrant in the holy font by the grace of the Holy Spirit;

Rejoice, for the sign of the cross was imprinted on thy chest;

Rejoice, thou prayerful one given to the people by God;

Rejoice, ever-burning candle, shining before the Lord;

Rejoice, thou that by the gift of miracles from God wast famed upon earth;

Rejoice, thou that by thine unfading crown art crowned by the Lord in heaven;

Rejoice, herald to sinners of the mercies of God;

Rejoice, thou that from the source of living water dost refresh the thirsty;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 3*

T

hou didst feel the Power of God's grace whilst yet in infancy, blessed Matrona, stretching forth to the holy icons, and with a pure heart and infant lips proclaimed praise unto God: Alleluia.

 *Ikos 3*

H

aving from God the gift of foresight from infancy, blessed mother, thou knewest the most hidden things in the hearts of them coming to thee, telling the future like the present, and by this set many people on the path of righteousness. Whereby thou didst glorify God, making wise the blind, and we cry out to thee thus:

Rejoice, wondrous seer;

Rejoice, denouncer of hidden sins;
Rejoice, brightest teacher of darkened souls;

Rejoice, merciful guide of them that had gone astray;
Rejoice, star pointing the way to the faithful;

Rejoice, candle giving light in the darkness of this age;
Rejoice, thou that didst serve the one God;

Rejoice, for by the grace of the Holy Spirit thou didst trample down the wiles of the devil;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 4*

A

 storm of bewilderment and confusion in the people concerning thy miracles was dispelled, and them that were made wise by God, Who is wondrous in His saints, glorified and praised thee, and with thanksgiving sang unto God: Alleluia.

*Ikos 4*

H

earing how thou givest help in sicknesses of spirit and body, mother Matrona, people came to thee with hope, and, receiving favourable counsel and healing, gave thanks to God and sang unto thee:

Rejoice, for thou receivest them of a diseased and suffering soul;

Rejoice, for thou bestowest peace upon grieving souls;

Rejoice, enlightener of them that were in delusions;

Rejoice, teacher of piety;
Rejoice, reliever of our sorrows;

Rejoice, consoler in griefs;
Rejoice, blessed unmercenary;

Rejoice, benevolent healer of divers ailments;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 5*

A

s a divinely moving star, blessed mother Matrona, thou didst shine forth in evil times in the land of Russia as a new confessor, and didst bear the yoke of Christ boldly and fearlessly throughout thy life; and strengthened by the grace of God, thou gavest enlightenment to the bewildered, relief to the suffering, and healing to the sick, who thankfully cried unto God: Alleluia.

*Ikos 5*

S

eeing miracles and healings given by thee through the grace of God - the lame walking, the paralytic and bedridden healed, evil spirits cast out of the possessed - many Russian people rushed to thee, mother, as to a source inexhaustible and drank from it profusely, and with tender heart cried out to thee thus:

Rejoice, called to the right path from infancy;

Rejoice, righteous one, bestowed upon us by God;
Rejoice, healer of our ailments;

Rejoice, speedy helper in our needs;

Rejoice, thou that enlightenest us through thine inspired advice;

Rejoice, quick resolver of our bewilderment;

Rejoice, thou that drivest away unclean spirits from the people;

Rejoice, thou that protectest from every evil by thy prayer;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 6*

H

erald of the holiness and righteousness of thy life, blessed mother, the holy and righteous Father John of Kronstadt appeared to be when he saw thee in the church, and he called thee his heir and eighth pillar of Russia.  And all that heard this glorified the Lord, proclaiming to Him: Alleluia.

*Ikos 6*

T

hrough thy prayers, mother Matrona, the light of God's grace shone in hearts of them having no knowledge of God and burdened by many sins which angered Him. And seeing the miracles performedthee, they turned to the Lord, crying to thee in gratitude thus:

Rejoice, thou whose feats glorify God;

Rejoice, revealer to us of the glory of God;
Rejoice, guide of the faithless to the right path;

Rejoice, thou that cleansest by thy prayers those defiled by sins;

Rejoice, thou that callest us to repentance;

Rejoice, thou that dost admonish us to thank the Lord for all things;

Rejoice, thou who dost teach us to love the divine Church;

Rejoice, gatherer of the scattered sheep within the walls of the Church;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 7*

W

ishing worthily to glorify the Most Holy Lady Theotokos, mother Matrona, thou didst order the people to have her depicted in the most honourable icon called "Seeker of the Perishing" and place it in God’s church in thy village, that all who look upon the bright face of the most pure one, might tenderly praise her, and to the Lord also cry out: Alleluia!

*Ikos 7*

T

He Lord gave thee as a new protectress, prayerful mediator, and intercessor with God, to the Russian people in the hard times when many forsook the holy Church; and thou, mother, by word and deed, didst set on the right path the fainthearted and deceived, revealing the wonderful miracles of God. Wherefore we hymn thee thus:

Rejoice, thou that dost feel ceaseless compassion for the country of Russia;

Rejoice, intercessor for our salvation;

Rejoice, thou that movest to compassion God the righteous Judge;

Rejoice, protectress of the diseased and wronged;
Rejoice, helper of the weak and desperate;

Rejoice, ceaseless warrior against the spirits of malice;

Rejoice, for at thee the demon chiefs do tremble;

Rejoice, for at thee angels and people rejoice;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 8*

S

trange it was for the weak in faith and the unwise that, though born blind, thou couldest see and know not only the present, but also the future, for they knew not that the power of God is fulfilled in human weakness.  And we, blessed mother, seeing the wisdom of God manifested in thee, cry out to God: Alleluia.

*Ikos 8*

M

any vexations and offences, exiles and reproaches didst thou bear, blessed mother, not complaining of these, but in all things thanking God.  For these things and for teaching us each with patience to carry his cross, we praise thee thus:

Rejoice, thou that prayed without ceasing;

Rejoice, thou that drove away spiritual wickedness by fasting and prayer;

Rejoice, thou that hast gained graceful peace;

Rejoice, for by thy love many about thee were saved;

Rejoice, for thy life of service to many;

Rejoice, for after thy repose people are ever helped by thee;

Rejoice, for now thou fervently heedest our petitions;

Rejoice, thou that leavest not them that put their trust in thy care;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 9*

A

ll manner of sorrows and diseases thou didst bear, mother Matrona, ever leading the struggle with the forces of darkness, denouncing their machinations and guile, and expelling demons from the possessed; and up to the end of thy days thou didst help them in sufferings, illnesses and grievings, ever singing unto God: Alleluia.

*Ikos 9*

E

loquent orators are not able worthily to glorify thy holy life, nor the miracles wrought by thee through the power of God, most marvellous eldress.  And we, wishing by hymns to praise God in His saints, and with heartfelt love inspired, dare to sing to thee thus:

Rejoice, thou that didst choose the narrow path and strait gates;

Rejoice, thou that shone by many virtues;

Rejoice, thou that didst reject all in life that is passing;

Rejoice, thou adorned with the precious crown of humility;

Rejoice, thou bird of heaven, that didst live the Gospel on earth;

Rejoice, thou that followed the Son of God Who had not where to lay His head;

Rejoice, thou rejoicing now in the mansions of paradise;

Rejoice, thou whose mercy is never failing to us sinners who pray to thee;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 10*

W

ishing to save many people from bodily sufferings and spiritual sicknesses, thou didst stay all night in prayer, O righteous one of God, beseeching for them help and strengthening of our Lord Jesus Christ, singing to Him: Alleluia.

 *Ikos 10*

A

 rampart and protection wert thou in the days of thy life, blessed mother, to all who resorted to thee, and after death thou ceaselessly intercedest before God for the people who in faith run toward to thy tomb. Wherefore, hearken now unto us sinners, by sorrows, sickness and many griefs consumed, and hasten to help by thy prayers all that cry unto thee:

Rejoice, speedy intercessor for the distressed;

Rejoice, comforter of them bearing hardships;
Rejoice, guardian of worthy marriage;

Rejoice, pacifier of all that persist in strife;
Rejoice, defender of them brought unjustly to trial;

Rejoice, merciful advocate before God for those guilty before an earthly judgment;

Rejoice, refuge of them deprived of shelter;

Rejoice, protectress of all that call upon thee;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 11*

T

hou didst hear angelic singing, worthy mother Matrona, whilst yet living on earth. And teach us, the unworthy, how we should glorify God in the Trinity worshipping Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to Whom also the heavenly host unceasingly sing with a great voice: Alleluia.

*Ikos 11*

T

hy life shineth with luminous light, blessed Matrona, enlightening the darkness of this too-busy world, and thou dost draw unto thee our souls. Wherefore we, by the ray of the grace of God, will be enlightened, and our mournful way in this temporal life shall pass in a manner pleasing to God, and thus attain unto the kingdom of God, where thou, mother, now takest up thine abode, hearing our voice calling to thee:

Rejoice, ever-burning candle of God;

Rejoice, precious pearl, illuminating us by the light of thy holiness;

Rejoice, sweet-smelling flower that by the Holy Spirit coverest us with fragrance;

Rejoice, rock of faith, stablishing the fainthearted in piety;

Rejoice, brightest star pointing out to us the right way;

Rejoice, good warrior of Christ, by the sword of prayer frightening demonic hosts;

Rejoice, for throughout thy life thou wast holy and undefiled;

Rejoice, for thy death is precious in the sight of the Lord;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 12*

T

he grace of God, already richly perceived even from the cradle, O blessed mother, will be with thee all the days of thy life. We believe without doubt, that also after thy repose this grace is with thee abundantly. Wherefore, falling down before thee, we pray: deprive not us still wandering on earth of thy help and intercession, beseeching the Lord to have mercy on all who sing unto Him: Alleluia.

*Ikos 12*

S

inging of thy many and marvellous wonders, mother Matrona, we glorify God Who gave thee to the city of Moscow and to the Russian land in the days of atheism and persecution as a staunch pillar of piety and faith. Now, blessed mother, with grateful heart we hymn thee thus:

Rejoice, for thou hast attained the peace of Christ in thy soul;

Rejoice, for many people about thee thou didst lead to God;

Rejoice, for in thy feeble body, the power of God's grace was shown;

Rejoice, for in the finding of thine honourable relics, God’s mercy to us is revealed;

Rejoice, thou that dost bloom in the assembly of the saints of Moscow;

Rejoice, glorious adornment of the city of Moscow;

Rejoice, constant intercessor for the Russian land before God;

Rejoice, thou that callest all to repentance and prayer for the Russian land;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 13*

O

 blessed mother, hear now our hymns of praise which we sing to thee, and ask for us of the Lord Jesus Christ, the remission of sins, a Christian death, and peaceful repose, and a good answer at His dread judgment, and that we shall be blessed with thee in the dwellings of Paradise to glorify the Holy Trinity, crying: Alleluia. (*Thrice*)

*Ikos 1*

A

s an angel in the flesh didst thou appear on earth, blessed Matrona, fulfilling the will of God. Though born in bodily blindness, yet the Lord, Who maketh wise the blind and loveth the righteous, enlightened thy spiritual eyes, that thou mightest serve His people, and the works of God be made manifest through thee.  Wherefore with love we cry unto thee such things as these:

Rejoice, chosen by God from infancy;

Rejoice, thou that wast covered by the grace of the Holy Spirit from thy cradle;

Rejoice, thou that from childhood wast enriched with the gift of miracles;

Rejoice, thou that wast filled with wisdom from God on high;

Rejoice, thou that didst foresee the will of God through spiritual eyes;

Rejoice, thou that puttest to shame the wise of this age that are blinded in mind;

Rejoice, thou that leadest deluded souls unto God;

Rejoice, thou that relievest from grief and from sorrow;

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Kontakion 1*

C

hosen by the Holy Spirit of God from thy swaddling clothes, blessed eldress Matrona, thou didst receive bodily infirmity and blindness from God for thy spiritual cleansing. Thou wast enriched with the gift of foresight and wonderworking, and hast been adorned with an incorruptible crown from the Lord. Wherefore in gratitude we on earth offer unto thee crowns wrought from praises, crying out:

Rejoice, righteous mother Matrona, fervent intercessor for us before God.

*Prayer*

B

lessed mother Matrona, thy soul in heaven standeth before the throne of God, thy body resteth upon earth, and thou bestowest divers miracles through grace given thee from on High.  Look down with thy merciful eye upon us sinners who pass our days in sorrows, sicknesses and sinful temptations. Console us who are in despair. Heal our grievous ailments which God allowed because of our sins. Deliver us from many misfortunes and attacks of evil spirits. Beseech our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us all our trespasses, transgressions and falls, and our sins committed from our youth up to the present day and hour. And by thy prayers obtain for us grace and great mercy, that we may glorify the Trinity, one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Troparion, Tone 2*

L

et us the faithful today praise blessed eldress Matrona made wise by God; flower of the land of Tula and glorious adornment of the city of Moscow, for whom daylight was unknown but who wast enlightened by the light of Christ and enriched by the gifts of insight and healing: Thou wast a sojourner and wanderer upon earth, but now in the heavenly chambers thou standest before the throne of God and intercedest for our souls.

*Kontakion, Tone 7*

T

hou wast chosen from thy mother’s womb for service to Christ, righteous Matrona, treading a path of sorrows and griefs, but showing firm faith and piety which were pleasing to God. Wherefore, we venerate thy memory, and we beseech thee, blessed eldress: help us to dwell in God’s love.

*Magnification*

W

e magnify thee, O holy righteous blessed Matrona, and honour thy holy memory, thou that dost pray for us to Christ our God.

LIFE OF ST MATRONA OF MOSCOW

Saint Matrona the Wonderworker of Moscow (Блаженная Матрона Московская) (1881 – 2 May 1952) was born Matrona Dmitrievna Nikonova to Dmitry and Natalia Nikonov in the village of Sebino in Tula Province, just over 300 kilometres south of Moscow. The family was a very poor peasant family. She was the fourth child.

The Nikonovs lived in such poverty that to feed and clothe a fourth child seemed impossible, and before the baby was born, Natalia decided to send it to an orphanage sponsored by Prince Golitsyn in the neighbouring village of Buchalki, where underprivileged and illegitimate children were brought up at the Prince’s expense. Shortly afterwards, however, her mother changed her mind after she had a prophetic dream. Her unborn daughter appeared to Natalia in the form of a white bird of holy beauty, with a human face and closed eyes, alighting on her arm. Accepting the dream as a sign, the God-fearing woman decided to keep the baby, who was indeed born totally blind, with firmly shut eyelids over empty eye sockets. The baby also had a raised birthmark in the form of a cross-shaped protrusion on her chest. Her mother took this as a sign from God.

Pavel Ivanovich Prokhorov, a relative of the family who attended Matrona’s baptism, related that as the priest submerged her in the font, those present saw a column of light smoke above the infant and smelled a wonderful fragrance. Respected as a righteous man by his parishioners, the priest, Fr. Vasili, was amazed: “I’ve baptized many, but this I have never seen before. This child will be holy.” Fr. Vasili told Natalia, “If she asks for anything, you must come to me immediately and tell me what is needed.”

Whilst Matrona was still an infant, the mother complained, "What do I do? The girl does not take the breast on Wednesdays and Fridays, and on those days only sleeps.”



Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Sebino, Tula.

Below: the font in which St Matrona was baptised.



As she grew, village children often made fun of Matrona, mocking her with cruel games. They would hit her with stinging nettles, knowing that she couldn’t see, and once they put her into a pit, watching curiously as she felt her way out of it and shuffled home. Because of these “games”, Matrona stopped playing with other children and stayed at home.

The Nikonov home was situated near the beautiful church of the Dormition of the Mother of God, which served seven or eight surrounding villages. Matrona’s parents were known for their piety and, as they often attended Divine services together, Matrona “grew up” in church. When Natalia didn’t know where the young girl was, she often found her there, standing quietly in her usual place, behind the door near the west wall. She knew the church prayers and hymns and often sang along with the choir.

From the age of six or seven, she exhibited an extraordinary gift of insight, discerning sicknesses of soul and body in the many people who visited her, revealing to them their secret sins and their problems. Through her prayers, many people received healing from sickness and consolation in sorrow. They came from surrounding villages, and later even from other districts and regions on foot, by cart, and in wagons. Matrona often prayed for bedridden invalids, who would be raised to their feet, healed. Out of gratitude, they left food and gifts for her parents, so instead of being a burden, Matrona soon became the family’s main provider.

About the age of fourteen, she made a pilgrimage to the great holy places in Russia along with a devout benefactress, Lydia Yankova, daughter of the local landowner. They visited the Kiev-Pechersky Lavra, Holy Trinity St Sergius Lavra, St. Petersburg, and other cities and holy places of Russia. When they arrived at Kronstadt to receive the blessing of St. John, they became lost in the crowd. St. John suddenly cried out, “Matrona, come here! She will be my heir, and will become the eighth pillar of Russia.” At that time, no one understood the meaning of this prophecy.

When she turned seventeen, Matrona became paralyzed and was unable to walk from then on. Knowing that this was God’s will, she never complained but thanked the Lord. For the rest of her life – over fifty years – she lived in a room filled with icons, sitting cross legged on her bed. With a radiant face and a quiet voice, she received all who came to seek divine consolation through her presence. She foretold the great misfortunes that were to sweep down upon the country after the Bolshevik revolution, placing her gift of insight at the service of the people of God. One day when some visitors commiserated with her about her disablement, she replied: “A day came on which God opened my eyes, and I saw the light of the sun, the stars and all that exists in the world: the rivers, the forests, the sea and the whole of creation.”

Around this same time, Matrona, who was already known throughout the region and whose requests were taken as blessings, asked that a certain icon of the Mother of God be painted for the village Church of the Dormition. This came about one day when the blind girl asked her mother to tell the priest that on a certain shelf in his library lay a book with a picture of the icon, “In Search of the Lost.” The surprised priest found the picture of the icon just as she had described it. When she heard this, Matrona exclaimed, “Mama, I will have such an icon painted.” Her mother was pensive. How could they ever pay for this? Some time later, Matrona again said to her mother, “Mama, I’m dreaming and dreaming about this icon ‘In Search of the Lost.’ The Mother of God is asking to come to our church.” At Matrona’s request local village women began collecting money. Among those who contributed was one man who gave a ruble reluctantly and his brother who gave one small kopeck in fun. When they brought the money to Matrona, she spilled it out and, picking out the very same ruble and kopeck, told her mother, “Mama, give it back, it’s spoiling all the money for me…”

When the necessary amount had been collected, they ordered the icon from an artist from the village of Epiphania. Matrona asked if he was able to paint such an icon, and he replied that for him it was an ordinary commission. She then asked him to go to confession and receive Holy Communion. Later she asked again, “Do you know for sure that you will paint this icon?” The artist answered affirmatively and began his work. After some time, he told Matrona that nothing was coming of the painting. She replied: “Repent of your sins.” With her spiritual vision, she saw that there was one sin that he had not yet confessed. Astounded that she knew this, he returned to the priest, confessed, communed, and asked Matrona’s forgiveness. She replied, “Go. Now you will paint the icon of the Heavenly Queen.” The icon was painted about 1915 and, after the revolution, Matrona kept it with her throughout her life. It is now enshrined in Moscow at the Pokrovsky Monastery (Protection of the Mother of God) in Taganskaya, near Matrona’s relics.

With Matrona’s blessing, another collection of money was made in the villages and another icon “In Search of the Lost” was ordered for the village of Bogoroditske. This icon is now in Holy Dormition Monastery in the village of Novo-Moskovsk, in the province of Tula.

When the icon was ready, it was carried in procession with crosses and banners from Bogoroditske to their own church in Sebino. Matrona went four kilometres out of the village to meet it, others leading her by the hands. (This was before she lost the use of her legs.) Suddenly she announced, “Don’t go any further, now very soon they will come, they’re already close.” Blind from birth, she spoke like one with sight, “They will be here in half an hour with the icon.” And indeed, after thirty minutes the procession came in sight. A moleben was served and the procession continued to Sebino, Matrona carrying the icon for much of the way. This icon of the Mother of God became the main object of local veneration and was glorified with many miracles. When there was a drought, they would bring the icon to a meadow near the village and serve a moleben; rarely were the villagers able to return home before it began to rain.

In 1925, Matrona left her village to settle in Moscow and, after her mother’s death in 1945, she moved frequently, welcomed secretly into the houses of the faithful. This was because the Communists, fearing her influence among the people, wanted to arrest her. But, every time, she had advance knowledge, and when the police arrived they learned that she had moved an hour or two earlier. One day, when a policeman arrived to arrest her, she advised him to return home as quickly as possible, promising him that she would not escape. When the man arrived home, he discovered that his wife was on fire, and was just in time to take her to the hospital.

St. Matrona led an ascetic life on her bed of pain. She fasted constantly, slept little, her head resting on her chest, and her forehead was dented by the innumerable signs of the Cross that she made. Not only Muscovites but also people from afar, of all ages and conditions, thronged around her to ask her advice and her prayers. In this way she truly became the support of afflicted people, especially during World War II. When people came to ask her for news of their relatives in battle, she reassured some and counselled others to hold memorial services. She spoke to some directly, and to others in parables, having in view their spiritual edification and recommending them to keep the Church’s laws, to marry in the Church and to regularly attend Confession and take Communion. When the sick and possessed were brought to her, she placed her hands on their heads, saying several prayers or driving the demons out with authority, always insisting that she was doing nothing of herself but that God was healing by her mediation. When asked why the Church was undergoing such great persecutions, she replied that it was because of the sins of the Christians and their lack of faith. “All the peoples who have turned away from God have disappeared from off the face of the earth,” she affirmed. “Difficult times are our lot, but we Christians must choose the Cross. Christ has placed us on His sleigh, and he will take us where He will.”

Zenaida Zhdanova recalled an even more remarkable example of Matrona’s clairvoyance: “Matushka was completely unlearned, but at the same time knew everything. In 1946, I was to defend my thesis project on an architectural design for the Ministry of the Navy (I was then studying at an architectural institute in Moscow). I did not understand why, but my thesis advisor had taken a dislike to me and my project. For five months he would not consult with me once, and he had already decided to fail my project. Two weeks before the defense he informed me, “The commission will arrive tomorrow and declare the worthlessness of your work! You won’t even defend it.”

I returned home in tears – father was in prison, there was no one to help, mama depended on me. Our only hope was that I would successfully complete my university education and get a job.

That afternoon Matrona listened to me attentively and said, “Don’t worry, don’t worry, you will pass your exam! Tonight, we’ll have tea and talk about it.” I could hardly wait for evening to come and when I joined her, she said, “I will go with you to Italy, to Florence, to Rome and we will see the works of the great masters.” Then she began to enumerate the streets, the buildings! She paused at one point: “Behold, the Plazzio Pitti… and here’s another palace with archways, similar to the one in your work – a building with three lower levels of massive stonework and two arched entryways.” She spoke in detail about the architectural elements of the building, and I was shocked at her knowledge of the subject. In the morning I ran to the institute, put tracing paper over my project and using brown ink I made corrections based on what she had said. The commission came at ten o’clock. They looked over my project and said, “And so, your project came out well, it looks excellent – go ahead and defend it!”...

When she was quite young, Matrona foretold the 1917 Russian Revolution. “There will be pillaging, destruction of churches, and everyone will be persecuted.” She graphically described how the land would be divided up and how parcels of land would be grabbed by people intent on getting something for themselves. “Then, they will throw away the land and run off in every direction. In the end, the land will be useless for anyone.” Thus, Matrona saw beforehand the revolutionary programme of land redistribution, which dispossessed even the poor. Militant atheism, the growth of estrangement and malice, the rejection of traditional faith by millions of people, and life without repentance would lead to heavy spiritual consequences. Matrona felt and understood this well. On the days when political demonstrations were held, Matrona urged everyone not to go outside, but to close their windows and doors. Hordes of demons, she said, occupied the entire area, filling the air and troubling people. Perhaps, here, Blessed Matrona, who often spoke allegorically, wanted to remind those around her of the need to guard the ‘windows of the soul’ – as the Holy Fathers sometimes call the senses, from evil spirits.

Thinking of the years after the revolution, Zenaida Zhdanova once asked Matushka, “How can God allow so many churches to be closed and destroyed?” Matushka replied, “It is the will of God to reduce the number of churches because there will be few believers and no one to serve.” Later, she said, “The people are under hypnosis, they are not themselves, a terrible power has come into being…This power exists in the air and penetrates everything. In earlier times, swamps and impenetrable forests were the habitations of these forces because people were going to churches, they wore crosses and their homes were defended by icons, lampadas and blessings. Before, demons could only fly near these houses, but now they inhabit both houses and people because of unbelief and apostasy from God.”

Before the revolution, Matrona advised Yankov, the landowner of their village of Sebino, to sell everything and go abroad. If he had listened to her, he would not have had to witness the plundering of his estate, he would have avoided his own untimely death, and he would have spared his daughter Lydia a life of homeless wandering.

A fellow villager of Matrona, Evgenia Ivanovna Kalashnikova, related that before the revolution a baroness bought a house in Sebino and told Matrona, “I want to build a bell tower.” “What you plan to do will not come to pass,” Matrona answered. The baroness was surprised: “Why won’t it come true, when I have both money and materials?” But it was so – nothing ever came of her plans; the revolution disrupted everything...

In her memoirs, Zenaida Zhdanova writes: “Who was Matrona, exactly? Matushka was an angel incarnate – a warrior, doing battle with evil powers as if she held a flaming sword in her hands. She healed by her prayers, with holy water [… ] She was small, like a child, and often lay on her side, on her clenched fist. She also slept this way, never really lying down completely. When she received people, she sat cross-legged, her legs beneath her. She would put her hands on the head of the person kneeling in front of her, make the sign of the Cross over them, pray, and then say whatever was needful for their soul. It seems that Matushka knew everything that was going to happen ahead of time. Every day of her life there was a stream of grief and sorrow from those who came to her. She would hold the head of a weeping person in both hands, suffering with them, warming them with her holiness. The person would leave as if on wings, and many healings occurred as a result of her prayers. Matrona herself was often exhausted; she sighed heavily and prayed all night long. She had a small depression on her forehead from her fingers because she had crossed herself so very often. She crossed herself slowly, carefully, her fingers searching for this place on her forehead.”

Having foretold the day of her death, the saint gave instructions for her funeral. Before falling asleep in peace on 19 April/2 May, 1952, she cried out, “Come close, all of you, and tell me of your troubles as though I were alive! I’ll see you, I’ll hear you, and I’ll come to your aid.” Miracles were multiplied at her tomb and, ever since her translation to the women’s monastery of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (March 13, 1998), the faithful who, in their thousands, line up to venerate Moscow’s new protectress, turn to her icon and bring her their various problems as though St. Matrona were alive in front of them."

Blessed Matrona was glorified as a saint of the Orthodox Church on 2 May 1999 by His Holiness Patriarch Alexey II. Her relics are enshrined in the Pokrov (Protection) Monastery in Taganskaya Street, Moscow.



Canonisation of St Matrona



Pokrov Monastery, Moscow.