



THE TIKHVIN DORMITION MONASTERY





Troparion

Tone 4

Today, like the lucid sun, your fair icon shines for us in the firmament, O Theotokos, with rays of mercy enlightening the world. And Great Russia, with reverence embracing it like a heavenly bestowal, glorifies you, the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, and gladly dignifies Christ our Lord who was born of you. Pray to Him, O Queen and sovereign Virgin, that He keep all Christian cities and lands safe from all the enemy wiles and that He grant salvation to those who kneel faithfully to His divine and Your most holy image, O unwedded Bride.







In the likeness of Great Monasteries...

In 1560 on the banks of the Tikhvinka River a holy monastery was founded in honour of the Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God, the palladium of the Russian land and the guide of all the Orthodox Christians.

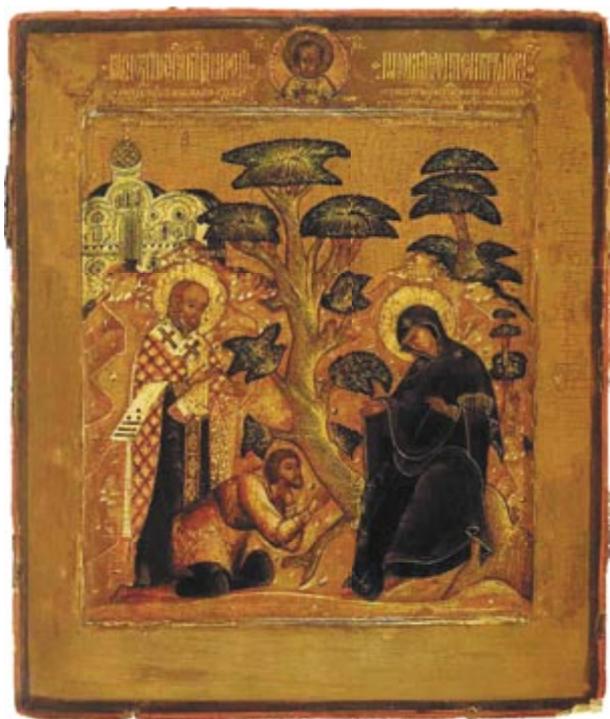
Divine liturgies to celebrate the event were held at the principal churches of the state—Moscow’s Cathedral of the Dormition and Hagia Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod the Great. The service was attended by the royal family. In the spring and summer of the same year the monastery was put up. The buildings were wooden at first but sturdy and capacious, “in the likeness of great monasteries.”

The monastery would become the home of the greatest Orthodox sacrament, live through the times of both glory and disarray, be the frontier of defence from foreign intruders, while always remaining the beacon of pure spiritual light and a place of prayer that attracted pilgrims from all over Orthodox Russia.

...And by the Will of Our Heavenly Queen

The prehistory and history of the monastery as well as its future is associated inseparably with the wonder-working Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God, *Theotokos Hodegetria*, which in Greek means “the guide” or “showing the way.” The Holy Tradition connects this image with an icon painted by St. LUKE, the apostle and evangelist, during the earthly life of Virgin Mary. He sent the icon along with the text of his Gospel and the Book of Acts of the Apostles to THEOPHILUS, the ruler of Antioch. Later, in V century the icon came to Constantinople where it was placed in the famous Blachernae Church that served as a sanctuary of the whole Byzantium, the first Orthodox Empire.

But in 1383, seventy years prior to the fall of Constantinople “this Hodegetria icon was taken from that city by the divine intervention and transferred to Russia” as documented by the Russian chronicles. The icon of the Mother of God miraculously, “over the air” left Constantinople and appeared in radiant light to fishermen on Lake Ladoga near the ancient



Russian capital, the City of Staraya Ladoga. The patriarch of Constantinople, having listened to several traders from Novgorod who gave evidence of the apparition, confirmed that the icon which appeared in Russia was that same image which left Byzantium “because of the pride, hatred toward brothers and deceitfulness” of the people of the empire.

The icon came to Russia soon after the victorious Kulikovo battle of the united Russian forces under the leadership of prince DIMITRY DONSKOY against the hordes of khan MAMAI—the beginning of the end of Mongol yoke. The chronicle says that “in the year 6891 on the 26th day of June [July 9, 1383 in the modern Gregorian calendar] the Most Pure Hodegetria image appeared within the area of Great Novgorod called Tikhvin.” Priests and people gathered there, and during a devoted prayer the icon descended into their hands. Construction of a church got underway at the place immediately: that same day timber was cut, several levels of logs gave a start to the church walls, whereafter guards were appointed to the site and the people, praising Lord for the miracle, went away to their homes until tomorrow. However, at night the tired guards fell asleep. When they awoke they found neither the icon nor the started walls—not even the chips from the wood-working labours of the previous day.

Early next morning the people drew together. Everyone cried bitterly over the loss and then began looking for the icon. And—O, Holy Lord!—the icon was discovered on the opposite side of the river along with the unfinished church building and the prepared logs. And although the place was “swampy and uneven,” it was pointed to by the Mother of God. Therefore, the first church of the Dormition had to be erected nowhere else, which was done without further delay by the local congregation and with all the generosity of benefactors.

After the completion of the building, a church reader named GEORGY, a man of known piety, was sent to notify the neighbourhood of the blessing service to be held at the newly erected church. In the vicinity of the church Virgin Mary with ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER appeared to Georgy and commanded to put on the top of the temple a wooden cross—rather than a metal one—because it was a wooden cross on which Jesus was crucified. A chapel was built at the place of the conversation between Georgy



and St. Nicholas and later in XVI century a men's monastery was established. This occasion also gave grounds to paint what became known as the Conversational icon of the Mother of God. The contemporaries, however, did not at first believe the story told by Georgy and resolved to install an iron cross onto the head of the church. But during the installation the labourer who performed the operation was taken from the building along with the iron cross by invisible force and placed safely on the ground. From then on all the crosses on the Cathedral of the Dormition have been made of wood.

The first church stood for seven years and was then destroyed by fire “from a candle at night,” while the miracle-working icon survived intact: it turned up in a juniper bush nearby. Three times the church was consumed in fires, and all the three times the icon survived miraculously and safely without damage. The fame of the icon's miracles spread far beyond the local area and in 1507 by a decree of tsar VASILY III construction of a stone Cathedral of the Dormition was started. The new church was magnificent: five-domed and “wonderfully visible from everywhere to everyone.” It was in those days that the icon began to be called the Tikhvin icon.

The Symbol of the Rising Christian Nation

he stone Cathedral of the Dormition, which decorates the monastery to this very day and is the main landmark of the city, deserves special mention. The church was modelled after the principal temple of the Russian state—Cathedral of the Dormition in Moscow's Kremlin—which meant a lot in the spiritual tradition. The construction of the cathedral in Tikhvin, a grandiose edifice for such a far-off area close to the border, was a matter of national importance and prestige. The temple was a sign of the special attention the country leaders paid to the sacred object whose origin and acquirement linked Russia to the history of the Christian world.

IVAN IV VASILYEVICH, who venerated the Tikhvin icon with notable devoutness, visited the Cathedral in 1547 with MACARY, then Metropolitan of all Russia. The young Great Prince would soon become the first Russian monarch to be anointed and crowned, and the visit was part of the program



of celebrations devised by Metropolitan Macary. The prayers of Ivan IV in front of the Tikhvin icon were to obtain the heavenly approval of the crowning. It was through the anointing and crowning of her tsars that Russia conclusively took over the status of the true Orthodox Empire from Byzantium. The new Christian nation emerged and rose high, and this new kingdom was founded on the firm belief and God's commandments.

The stories of the miracle-working icon are told in the *Story of the Apparition and Miracles of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God*, the most complete, "official" version of which was prepared in XVII century during the reign of ALEXEY MIKHAILOVICH. The Story was written and compiled from the earlier sources by an icon painter at the Tikhvin monastery RODION SERGEYEV. The tsar assigned editorial responsibilities to SIMEON POLOTSKY—the famous "labourer of the word," spiritual writer, bishop and poet. This assignment indicated that the Story was a matter of state-level significance. The author, Sergeyev, was invited to the capital to finalize the document.

With such an attention of both the state powers and common people to the monastery—the home of the Mother of God—it never experienced lack of supporters. For instance, in 1584 tsar FYODOR IOANNOVICH donated a large, 12,000 pound, festive polyeleos bell. After the devastating fire of 1623 there was a call to donate icons for the burnt iconostasis of the Cathedral—people of all social standing, affluent citizens and common folk of Tikhvin and Novgorod alike extended their helping hand. In 1630 MIKHAIL FYODOROVICH, the first of the Romanov dynasty, gave from his personal resources 3,000 sheets of "white iron" to cover the domes of the Cathedral. Prince DMITRY POZHARSKY, the leader of the popular armed forces who liberated the country from the Polish-Lithuanian invasion, sent stonemasons to rebuild the bell-tower after a gunpowder store combustion there.

A casing, also called *oklad* or *riza*, for the icon made in 1718 of silver and gold with numerous precious stones was donated to the miracle-working image from 67 "best traders of the City of Tikhvin": the eminent citizens asked the archimandrite of the monastery RUVIM to represent their case with Emperor PETER THE GREAT. All extant descriptions of the monastery contain detailed, endless enumerations of the precious stones decorating the icon and its riza. The best of them were donations by Russian empresses.



Defending Holy Russia



Soon after its foundation and especially during the Livonian campaign of Ivan IV the Terrible the Tikhvin Monastery of the Dormition was involved not only in the mission of spiritual enlightenment but also served as a patrol and communication base. This involvement was due to its location close to the north-western border of the country.

By the end of XVI century the relations between Russia and Sweden became increasingly aggravated. On top of that, in the beginning of XVII c. the entire country was thrown into the distress of what would later be termed *Smuta*—the time of internal disturbance, confusion and upheaval exacerbated by a series of foreign invasions. In those tragic days, one of the Orthodox bishops in the city of Pskov “died of grief,” having received the news of the surrender of Moscow and the siege of Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra. Such were the years. The Tikhvin monastery was not the only place then that was besieged and went through other terrible calamities; nevertheless, it had more than its share of the wretchedness. The chronicler of the day saw the roots of the misfortunes in “self-reliance and sinful impurities.”

Thus in 1610 came the “Lithuanian devastation”: the cloister is robbed by the Lithuanian and Polish troops. From 1608 to 1613—battles with the Swedish forces led by JACOB PONTUS DE LA GARDI who, for the alleged reason of providing help to the interim Russian government of VASILY SHUISKY, occupied the monastery and converted it into their barracks. Unable to suffer the shame, the people of Tikhvin attacked the Swedes and pushed them out of the cloister. The enemy came back reinforced and de la Gardi commanded that the monastery be demolished for the unheard-of defiance.

The end of summer 1613 was the time of heroic defence of the besieged monastery by a small Russian military squad and the armed residents of Tikhvin. In the most desperate hour, when the enemy was close to taking over, Heavenly Queen showed the strength of Her protection. On September 15, 1613 the monastery forces gained the final victory over the invaders: the decisive moment came when the besieged defenders came out on the cloister walls with the holy icon. The Tikhvin image of All-Holy Virgin Mary performed a miracle: according to the Swedish soldiers later taken captive,



Видъ ТИХВИНСКАГО первокласснаго большаго Богородицкаго Монастыря
при Настоятель Архимандритѣ Никанорѣ 1880 года.

the entire Swedish squad saw countless numbers of Russian troops, a massive army surrounding them from all sides. In awe they wavered and, driven by an unknown horror, fled in a state of complete disarray.

Thus devastated by the invaders, distressed by Smuta and betrayals, without a lawful monarch, without a regular army Russia—Holy Russia—was saved. And the rescue to our Fatherland came from no-one else but Heavenly Queen, the gracious force of Her image and the people's belief in Her intercession for Russia.

The popular renown and veneration as a palladium of all Russia, the safeguard of Russian borders, came to the Tikhvin icon after the signing of the “eternal peace” treaty with Sweden in 1617 in the village of Stolbovo near Tikhvin. The papers were signed in the presence of a copy of the icon specially made for the peace negotiations. Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich did ask that the icon be brought over but “the priests could not get it loose from the pedestal”: the wonder-working image did not leave its home.

The intercession of the Mother of God and the miracles God showed through its holy Tikhvin icon never ceased on the Russian soil. In June 1812, archimandrite of the monastery Samuel blessed the Tikhvin territorial forces who, carrying a copy of the miracle-working icon, joined the Russian army during the Patriotic War with NAPOLEON. The copy accompanied the squad in many a victorious battle and later received the name the “Tikhvin *Opolchennaya* (“of popular armed force”) icon of the Mother of God.”

In XIX century hieromonks of the Tikhvin monastery served to provide for the spiritual needs of the Russian Navy. In 1855 during a fight for the Sveaba fortress, hieromonk CYRILL kept on with a praying service on the ship *Ezekiel* even amid the most vehement bombardment, inspiring the sailors.

According to the Orthodox Church calendar, a celebration service in honour of the Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God is held yearly on the day of its acquirement; the special order of the service was compiled back in 1658. The veneration local to the Tikhvin area of the icon “Warrantress of Peace” is established in the fifth week of the Great Lent.

The Tikhvin icon has had and continues to have such a reputation that its copies spread all over Russia in countless number. Few churches of the country do not have this image of the Mother of God.



Turmoil of XX Century

After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, in the lawlessness of mid-1920s, the Tikhvin Monastery was ravaged and closed by the apostate God-hating powers. Later in 1960s, there were attempts to renovate some of the buildings. And in the 70s the bell-tower was restored and got the original appearance of 1600 when, during the reign of BORIS GODUNOV, it was erected. Some of the monastery buildings were given to a local historical museum which to this day preserves important materials on the past of the city and the monastery and performs research and educational work.

During the Great Patriotic War, World War II, the city of Tikhvin was a stage of fierce battles with the Fascist aggressors who sought to surround Leningrad in the second circle of blockade. Having occupied Tikhvin in November 1941, the Hitler army seized all the old icons from the monastery including the Tikhvin Mother of God. The icon was then transferred to Pskov, which too was under German control, and later in 1944 to Riga, Latvia, which became a Soviet territory shortly before WWII. The invaders wished to gain support of the Orthodox believers by “lending” the holy icon for the services in churches on the occupied land. But during the rushed withdrawal the Fascist troops did not manage to take the miracle-working image with them.

So it came to pass that the icon was taken possession of by vладыka IOANN, who would later become Archbishop John of Chicago & Minneapolis († 1982). From Riga, where vладыka John was then bishop, the icon was conveyed via Liepaja, then Danzig, Coblenz and Prague, whence it was taken into the American-occupied zone. Through the hardships of several refugee camps and the risks both for his own life and the safety of the holy icon, His Eminence finally brought the image to the U.S. During all the years of his forced exile Archbishop John hoped for the return of the icon back home as soon as the country would be freed of the persecutors of the Christian faith; indeed, that was what he instructed in his will.

The current safekeeper of the icon, Archpriest SERGEI GARKLAVS, has for 60 years now been the most careful guardian of this revered sacrament. Adopted son of Archbishop John, father Sergei was a young man during



the wartime and he carried the icon himself literally through the fire on his shoulders. Very Rev. Garklavs has already decided to return the icon to its home, the Tikhvin Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God.

The Time of Revival is Now

n April 21, 1995 residents of the city of Tikhvin wrote and signed a petition to Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia ALEXY II, requesting his blessing of the reopening of the Tikhvin Dormition Monastery—the monastery that gave birth to the city itself.

So in May 1995, with the blessing of ever remembered Metropolitan IOANN, the Tikhvin Men's Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God was registered. That same year the monastery received its first dwellers, who, along with a few pilgrims, started the much needed repair works. Before long, the first monastic vows were taken at the place. A year later, a service in honour of the Tikhvin icon was held at the Cathedral of the Dormition. The first Episcopal Celebration of the Divine Liturgy occurred in the monastery's Cathedral on July 9, 1997; the service was headed by His Eminence VLADIMIR, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and the Ladoga Region.

While the brotherhood of the monastery is still not large in number, great is their dedication to the holy place. "God permit," says hegumen EUPHIMY, the current Father Superior of the monastery, "we will soon be able to express our gratitude in front of the holy miracle-working image of the Mother of God for Her gracious intercession and protection of our Fatherland."



Return of Hodegetria

In spring 2003, the final agreement on the return of the Tikhvin icon to its home tenement was reached. In accord with the wish of Fr. Sergei Garklavs, the guardian of the icon, the first stopover on the return route from America will be Riga, Latvia; then Moscow, St. Petersburg and, finally, the Tikhvin Dormition Monastery. This itinerary has been approved and affirmed by His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Alexy, under whose blessing and chairmanship a working committee in charge of the return has also been established.

For the brotherhood of the Tikhvin Dormition Monastery, for our parishioners and for many Russian Orthodox Christians this year is special and long-awaited, a blessed year, a year of responsibility to generations yet unborn. A lot is still to be done to receive the sacrament honourably, as well as to re-establish the life of the monastery. But we are already inspired and feel the favour and help of the Mother of God.

Last year, on the eve of the celebration of Dormition, the original and thought to be lost icon casement doors returned to Tikhvin. And more recently, another “small miracle” occurred: in March this year, during the celebration of a Service of Intercessory Prayer before the Tikhvin icon in St. Nicholas Cathedral, New York City, for the first time the clergy of Russian Orthodox Church Abroad co-served a Divine Liturgy with the priesthood of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

In summer of the year 2004 of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God in the image of the holy Tikhvin icon is coming back to Russia, to the home tenement...

The Tikhvin Men's Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God

29 April 2004



Return Route of the Miracle-Working Tikhvin Icon of Virgin Mary

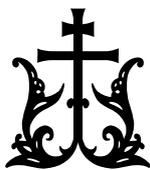
Chicago – Riga – Moscow – St. Petersburg – Tikhvin
12 June – 8 July 2004

- 17 June, Thursday – Arrival of the Russian delegation headed by Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg and the Ladoga Region to Chicago
- 18 June, Friday – All-Night Vigil Service with Akathist before the Tikhvin icon at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago
- 19 June, Saturday – Divine Liturgy and Prayer Service before the Tikhvin icon at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago
- 20 June, Sunday – Departure of the plane with the icon to Riga, Latvia
- 21 June, Monday – Arrival to Riga; celebration and veneration services at the Cathedral of the Nativity
- 23 June, Wednesday – Departure to Moscow; arrival at 16:00; veneration at Christ the Saviour Cathedral
- 27 June, Sunday – Divine Liturgy at Christ the Saviour Cathedral and procession to the Kremlin; departure to St. Petersburg in the evening
- 28 June, Monday – Arrival to St. Petersburg; celebration and veneration services at Holy Trinity Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky Lavra
- 4 July, Sunday – Transfer of the icon to Kazansky Cathedral
- 8 July, Thursday – Departure to Tikhvin at 8:00 from Moskovsky Railway Station; procession to the cloister; evening services at the Tikhvin Dormition Monastery

Schedule of Services and Celebrations at the Tikhvin Dormition Monastery. 6–12 July 2004

Date	Time	Location	Event
6 July, Tuesday	18:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	All-Night Vigil to Venerable Anthony Dymsky
7 July, Wednesday	10:00	St. Anthony Dymsky Cloister	Divine Liturgy
	11:30	St. Anthony Dymsky Cloister	Procession to Lake Dymskoye; the Blessing of waters; swim to the Cross in the lake
8 July, Thursday	08:00	St. Petersburg, Moskovsky Station	Departure of the train with the miracle-working icon to Tikhvin
	13:00	Tikhvin Railway Station	Celebration meeting; procession to the Cathedral square;
	13:30	Tikhvin Cathedral square	Moleben; procession to the monastery
	15:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	Vespers with Akathist to the Mother of God in honour of the Tikhvin icon
	18:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	All-Night Vigil by the Episcopal Order; confession; night-long prayer chants; round-the-clock access to the icon for veneration
9 July, Friday	10:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Meeting of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy; open-air Divine Liturgy in front of the Cathedral
	12:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Celebratory bell-ringing
	13:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Concert of chant and spiritual choir music
	18:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	All-Night Vigil by the Episcopal Order; confession; night-long prayer chants; round-the-clock access to the icon for veneration
10 July, Saturday	10:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Open-air Episcopal Celebration of Divine Liturgy in front of Dormition Cathedral
	12:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Celebratory bell-ringing
	13:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Concert of chant and spiritual choir music
	18:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	All-Night Vigil by the Episcopal Order; confession; night-long prayer chants; round-the-clock access to the icon for veneration
11 July, Sunday	10:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Open-air Episcopal Celebration of Divine Liturgy in front of Dormition Cathedral
	12:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Celebratory bell-ringing
	13:00	The Tikhvin Monastery	Concert of chant and spiritual choir music
	18:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	All-Night Vigil to Supreme Apostles Peter and Paul
12 July, Monday	10:00	Dormition Cathedral of the Tikhvin Monastery	Divine Liturgy





To the glory of Holy,
Consubstantial, life-giving
and Indivisible Trinity
of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
by the favour of the All-Holy our Queen
the Mother of God and with Her help,
in the time of His Holiness Alexy,
Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia,
by the blessing of Metropolitan Vladimir
and through the diligence
of hegumen Euphimy with the brotherhood
the creation of this book was undertaken
in the city of Tikhvin,
in the Dormition Monastery
in the year 2005 after Nativity in the flesh
of God the Word.



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