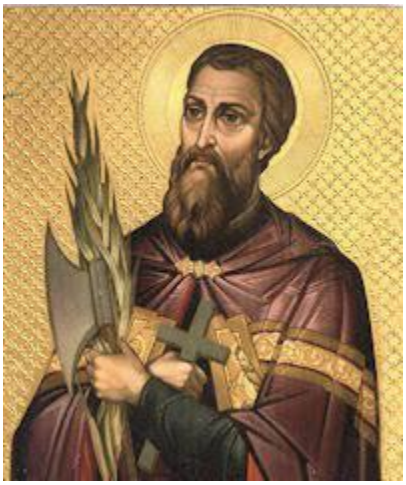


Saint Josaphat

Josaphat was born John Kuncevic in the Ukraine around 1580. He worked as a merchant until 1604, when he became a monk of the Ukrainian Order of Saint Basil and took the name Josaphat. Five years later, he was ordained a priest of the Byzantine Church. People came to him for spiritual advice. They were moved by his preaching and by his life, for he fasted often and was faithful to the prayers and customs of the people. In his thirties, he was made bishop and then later an archbishop of Polotsk.

He found this diocese in terrible condition, and he saw much unrest among the people. Josaphat had been raised in the Byzantine culture, and he was also faithful to the rule of the Church of Rome. There were strong groups, however, who opposed Rome and Latin rule. These people named their own bishop. Disturbances broke out as people took sides. Josaphat decided to go to Vitebsk, the centre of the disturbance. While Josaphat was there, a priest named Elias kept shouting insults at him. A deacon had the priest locked up. The mob rioted and demanded the release of Elias. He was released, but the angry mob broke through all barriers until they made their way to Bishop Josaphat. They beat him and then shot him to death on November 12, 1623. The man who had worked for unity all his life was killed by a violent mob. People were shocked, and much honour was paid to his memory.