

"To everything there is a season...A time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccl. 3:1-2)

On September 7, 2021, at the age of 95, he entered the Heavenly Kingdom.

Konstantin Davidovich Ponomar

04.29.1926 – 09.07.2021

Konstantin Davidovich was born in the family of David Filippovich and Sofia Erofeevna Ponomar, April 29, 1926, in the village of Novokievka, Tomakovsky district, Dnipropetrovsk region. He was the fourth child (the only long-awaited son) in a family of seven children.

His parents, David, and Sophia, married in 1918 and settled in the village of Novokievka. When the New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in the country, they received an allotment of land. It was a good opportunity for them, and with hard work investing in the land, they quickly increased their quality of living. They constructed new buildings, bred livestock (cows, horses, sheep) but soon, as the policy of collectivization was enforced, their livestock and any items of worth were taken away by the authorities for common use. In the disastrous year of 1933, many villagers died of starvation from a government induced famine. The Ponomar family had a difficult time enduring the famine of 1933. They did not even have a cow to provide them with milk. To survive, Kostya herded the neighbor's pigs at the edge of the village, for which he received half a liter of milk a day from the neighbors. Even for this small payment, the Ponomar family was grateful.

As a boy, he was a sickly child. At the age of 8 years old, the disease scrofula affected his eyesight. A cataract formed in both his eyes, obscuring his vision. His father took him to the eye doctor in Zaporozhiya and asked if Kostya could be admitted to the hospital since he himself could not stay with him at home because of his work. Many people were struggling with starvation at the time so many parents were leaving their children in the hospital since after treatment, children were sent to orphanages where children would be fed and saved from starvation. However, the doctor did not allow Kostya to stay because he believed the father had ulterior motives. The father begged the doctor in tears, proving to him that he had one son and that he cherished him very much. But the doctor did not believe him and only prescribed him some ointment and eye drops. The medicine brought Kostya a little relief, but his vision was being restored very slowly.

Kostya loved to learn. From the 4th grade to 7th grade, he was an honor student. He loved to read books and regularly borrowed them from the library and from his friends.

Kostya's parents were Orthodox. His father David participated in the Orthodox church choir until the church closed in 1933. His voice was loud, operatic, and had a beautiful timbre. When he sang, lamps dimmed in the room and the windows trembled. Physically, he was very strong, of medium height, and big boned. In his youth, he was offered to study at the conservatory to progress his talents, but he could not leave his relatives and the village. Kostya's grandmother was a deep believer all her life and lived virtuously. Every night she prayed to God, which her children witnessed, and it positively affected them. In school, children were taught that God does not exist, and that man is the highest authority in this world. Children believed what their teachers taught them because they trusted their teachers were knowledgeable since they were more literate, having studied at universities. At that time, the Soviet policy throughout the country was aimed at the complete destruction of faith in God in the

hearts of people. There were even posters saying: "Religion is opium for the people" and many other propaganda posters. But when grief comes, everyone seeks support from God.

Life was very difficult during the war. People worked very hard. The school was closed. The library was closed, and there was nothing to read.

During the war, evangelicals gathered in one of the school buildings. Kostya was interested in their ministry and curious about their gatherings, but he was embarrassed of this in front of his friends. So that his friends would not know he was visiting the Christian meetings, Kostya started to attend secretly. For the rest of his life, he remembered the song the congregation was learning that day, and he sang along with them: "Jesus, I love you, strongly I do. More precious than life you are to me...". But Kostya was singing empty words as he thought to himself "I should not be singing this because this is not true. Jesus is not more precious to me than my own life". But Kostya liked the words "You will help me if I stumble...". That suited him. In general, he really liked the meeting, and he began to regularly attend their choir, and eventually their gathering. Kostya was gifted a small Gospel with the pages torn out at the beginning and the end, which for him was an interesting read. But much of the Gospel was a mystery to him. It seemed that there were many contradictions, and he began to write down his questions. God sent Konstantin new friends with whom he enjoyed spending his time. When one of his former friends invited him to hang out and to party, he thought: "You cannot serve two masters" - his interests had already changed.

His father approved of his son's choice to attend the church gatherings and said that the Christians lived according to the gospel.

In the year 1943, together with many fellow villagers, Konstantin was included on the list of people that would be shipped to Germany to be used for slave labor. He asked the Christians, as a goodbye to him, to hold a service in his yard and say a prayer for his deliverance from this forced journey. Kostya's parents allowed them to gather, and they borrowed benches and chairs from neighbors since a lot of fellow villagers came. The Christians sang and preached the word. Near the end of the service, Kostya asked them to pray for him. They suggested that he himself turn to God in prayer with his need: "Pray for yourself, then we will all pray to the Savior." So, for the first time, publicly, aloud, his prayer to the Almighty sounded, in which he asked for forgiveness of his sins and deliverance from his upcoming journey to work as a slave laborer in Germany. Peace and joy filled his heart since He was now a child of God and under the care of the Almighty God. His shame and embarrassment of sharing the Gospel disappeared before his fellow villagers. Now he knew whether he lived or died - everything would happen under God's sovereignty. Then they sang a hymn with these meaningful words: Looking at Christ, give your life to Him, He calls sinners to himself, Paradise He gives...especially the last verse: There, in the Kingdom of Heaven, woe is forgotten, looking at Christ, you will be happy."

In the beginning of September, Kostya was tearfully accompanied to the train station to an unknown future, but he was not afraid of his future and comforted his sisters and relatives. Kostya said that he was no longer alone, his Heavenly Father was with him, and He would be able to protect and save him from trouble. His relatives loaded his suitcase with a lot of food and his clothes were packed in his backpack. He was brought to the station and people were loaded onto freight cars, 30-40 people per car. The train was guarded by the Germans. At night, the cars were locked so that the prisoners could not run away. Before his departure, his father cried a lot, since his only son was leaving, his last hope, and he did not know what fate awaited his son in a foreign land. When the train departed, someone

tore off the brake crane, causing the train to stop. His father was the first to run up to the freight car to see him again and wave goodbye. This memory remained with Kostya; he never saw him again. At each station, new freight cars were added with more slave labor. Some boys wanted to escape but Kostya relied on the Lord and remained calm. After passing through L'viv and arriving at the station of Przemyśl Główny (modern day Poland, on the border of Ukraine), all laborers were ushered from the cars and sent to walk 2.5 miles from the station to the entry checkpoint. The Germans needed healthy working hands. They were afraid of contracting tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. Kostya had a lot of baggage, and suddenly the handle ripped off the suitcase. The suitcase fell, broke, and spilled all the contents inside on the road. Kostya quickly rushed to pick up the food but since the Germans accompanied them with dogs and rushed them, Kostya was unable to pick up most of his food and left a lot behind. While he was gathering his things, he fell behind from the crowd of his fellow villagers and laborers. He rushed to catch up and finally when he found them, it was his turn to undergo the medical examination. Out of breath and tired, he ran up to the doctors with a pounding heart. The doctors checked him and determined he was unfit for labor. "Zurück" (back) they said – he was unsuitable for work. God saved him from being taken to Germany for forced labor.

After Kostya returned home, he had the chance to visit a pharmacy in Kam'yanets'-Podil's'kyi. He saw the pharmacist in a whitecoat, working intently. He studied the pharmacist and noticed how intently he completed his job, but most importantly, he brought practical benefits to people. What is more valuable than health in the world and what can be more noble than to return this precious gift to people? After this experience, Kostya was inspired and dreamed to work in medicine and help other people. However, it was difficult to get a doctorate, so he decided to become a pharmacist.

An opportunity soon was given to him in the Zaporozhe Pharmaceutical College which he was admitted to in 1944.

The scholarship he received was small. He received 400 grams of bread a day. Financially, it was difficult for him, but he trusted in the Lord and knew that he could overcome the difficulties. In the house where Kostya lived with a friend, heating was supplied through a furnace. There was not enough coal, so he and his friend went to the landfill and sifted through someone's burned out coal, using half-burned coal for heating. This used coal kept them warm through the cold winter. Often at school and at home, there was no light. They had to read and complete homework using a kerosene lamp for light.

Kostya visited the church in Zaporozhe in the southern village where he had many friends. At the end of the first year in 1945, on the Day of Pentecost, Kostya was baptized in the Gulf of the Dnieper. This was a joyous and important event in his life, and he was very glad that he was part of the church of Jesus Christ. He participated in the Lord's supper for the first time. In general, he rejoiced in his fellowship with the children of God. "I say of the holy people who are in the land, "They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight." (Ps. 16:3). The Word of God is beautiful in that, no matter how many times you read it, a new perspective can be gained from each time. The parable of the seed, planted into different soils, allowed him to think about his life: what is my soil? Is it good? It is necessary to diligently work on your soul to strengthen it, so that there would be good fruit; to be sanctified daily. His favorite hymn (К труду ведь я призван на землю) had these lyrics: "To work is why I am called to earth, To go to war with my flesh and evil, To fight everything that is sinful, And to live a life with love for my enemy...To fight every idol, Without looking at timid friends, Being a witness to the world, To not be afraid of the judgement of people. " In July 1947, he graduated from Pharmacy School, specializing as a

pharmaceutical assistant. He was sent to work in Dnepropetrovsk's pharmacy administration. From there, he was transferred to the village of Yur'ivka, where he worked as an assistant pharmacist, preparing, and processing the prescriptions. He lived in an apartment not far from the pharmacy, sharing the space with an elderly couple. The homeowner baked bread for the collective farm and her husband was a guard for the collective farm's melon patch, where watermelons were grown. After several years of famine and eating poorly, his appetite had grown and thanks to the hostess who fed him regularly, he gained strength and became a healthy weight.

At that time, the country had a policy of persecution of Christians – they were humiliated and ridiculed. When the head of the pharmacy found out that Konstantin was a believer, she began to treat him cautiously. She consistently tried, especially in front of outsiders, to humiliate him and emphasize how mentally impaired he was. The Lord gave him the strength to endure this humiliation. Some friends would ask where he got his patience and strength to endure the cruelty. Kostya joked that every morning and evening, he would go to the blacksmith (pray at home), where he would forge his strength and boldness.

In May 1950, the pharmacy department sent him to work as a pharmacy manager in the village of Alexandropol. There was a regional hospital where he worked late, sometimes into the night shift. Soon the village learned that he was a believer. They were shocked that such an educated man could also be a "bogomol" or Jesus Freak.

He wanted to find believers nearby, and so questioned his friends. He learned that 12 km away, there was a community in the village of Alexander-Sofiyivka, and an even larger group in the village of Krinichevatoe. On Sunday, he visited the church service, thankful to fellowship with friends and brothers in spirit.

As a knowledgeable pharmacist, many nurses came to him for advice. As a result of this cooperation, thanks to the wisdom given to him by God, many diseases were cured: eczema and others. Fellow villagers said: if you want to really heal, it is better to go to the pharmacist than to the doctor.

Konstantin married Olga Romanovna Polishchuk, as she exemplified what is written in Proverbs 31:30- "...a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." The wedding took place in the church at Lozova station on May 1, 1951. Immediately after the wedding, the newlyweds went to Alexandropol, where they lived in a government-controlled apartment. When friends came to visit them, they sang psalms, and the authorities evicted them from that apartment, under the pretext that they were violating the rules of the Soviet dormitory.

In 1952, the couple had their first child, Petya. Followed by Luba. In 1954, they bought an inexpensive house in the center of the village, in which Nadia, Vera, Tolya and Nina were born.

In 1953, 12 families of believers, immigrants from western Ukraine, came to their village. They had many close friends with whom they gathered for fellowship and prayer. The persecution of believers continued. Searches were carried out: Bibles, collections of spiritual songs and other spiritual literature were confiscated. All participants in the church service were written into a protocol, and blamed for the fact that believers, without the permission of those in power, gathered for prayer.

In 1961, the family moved to a new place of residence in the village of Novoaleksandrovka, near Dnepropetrovsk. There was a vacancy for a pharmacist position available, however, by the time the family moved, the position was filled.

Neighbors were not happy that there were “shtund”, derogatory term used for church doers, living nearby. As a result, they tried to harm the family in any way they could, including breaking their windows.

It was difficult, but they trusted in the Lord. It wasn't until much later that they finally understood why they only met with opposition in this village. God had other plans for them.

A new hospital, known as No. 16, was built in Dnepropetrovsk with a pharmacy, where Konstantin was hired. Learning that he was a believer, the employees were wary of him, especially the chief physician and hospital-placed leader of the Communist Party. But six months later, the chief physician was transferred to another hospital, and was replaced by the new chief, Dr. Nikolai Belov. When he learned that a “bogomol” or a Jesus Freak, was working in his pharmacy, each morning he would meet with him for five-minutes prior to work and made sure to greet him in front of everyone.

He would shake his hands and say, "This is Konstantin Davidovich! If everyone was like him, I would never lose my temper and curse. This is a real man." They knew each other from Alexandropol.

In Novoaleksandrovka, three more children were added to the family: Larisa, Lilya and David, who everyone called Dadik. Everyone would make fun of the family saying: where will they live, how will they feed everyone? They would respond with: "God will give a mouth, He will provide a piece (of food). The earth is big, there is enough space for everyone." Praise God, they were never hungry, and everyone grew up healthy. Everyone was busy with work, so no one had time to be bored.

After getting off the trolley, Konstantin Davidovich often walked home after a church service. One day, several people emerged from under a bridge to meet him, stood there and then walked away. Later they admitted to his son Peter, that they were instructed to kill Him, but since they were drunk, they did not recognize him. The Lord blinded their eyes and was his protector.

God also helped Konstantin in his illnesses. When he was in the hospital, there were not many people in the room with him. Some people joked; others laughed at him: “Why are you sick? You're a Christian. Why did your God allow such an injustice?” to which he said, "I don't ask God why, but for what reason? If I wasn't in the hospital, specifically with you, you wouldn't have heard about God. So that, when your time comes, you cannot deny knowing about God. I'm here to witness to you."

Konstantin Davidovich's family regularly attended services in the central church on No. 19 Dimitrov St. Since 1963, he preached in the church. In 1966, he was ordained as a deacon by Mikhail Leontievich lotko. In October 1966, the Christian community nominated him as a delegate to the congress of the Evangelical-Baptist Brotherhood, which was held in Moscow. Konstantin Davidovich was repeatedly approached by the KGB and asked to work with them to identify enemies among believers. He replied that it was not his calling and that he saw no enemies of state among the believers. After several refusals to cooperate, a KGB officer threatened him: “We will make sure that all the brothers in your church turn against you. We know how to do it; we don't have to be taught how." But Konstantin Davidovich replied to him: "The most important thing is that God does not turn away from me." He was very uncomfortable with these meetings.

Praise God, all his children were grown up, with their own families; but, most importantly everyone knew God.

At the end of 1987, Konstantin Davidovich retired from pharmacy.

In February 1990, the Lord called his wife, Olga Romanovna, home to himself. This was a difficult time for Konstantin Davidovich.

In April, they finished planting the garden. There was always a lot of housework in the village. One Sunday, as usual he went to the city for the church service. After the service, he went to visit his children at 66 Volodarsky Street, which is not far from church building. Suddenly, he felt ill and lost consciousness. He was taken to the hospital where they found a gastric bleeding from a stomach ulcer, but, by God's grace, the health of Konstantin Davidovich was restored.

"The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." (Pro. 16:9).

He asked the Lord to send him a helper to live out the rest of his day on earth. The Lord provided Ekaterina Petrovna Sinyakova. They were married on January 24, 1991. The Lord blessed them with 30 years of marriage.

On December 14, 1996, Konstantin arrived with Ekaterina Petrovna and the family of their grandson, Andrei, in the United States.

Upon arrival in Sacramento, they visited 2nd Slavic Church, then 3rd Slavic Church, which is closer to their home. They then moved to the Russian-Ukrainian church on Madison Street, which is closest to their home. This is a small church where everyone knows each other. The pastor was Khanzhiev David Petrovich, and now is Dmitry Kruts.

At the end of 1999, they moved into an apartment on Hemlock Street. They loved it there, as many of the occupants were Christians and knew each other. On Fridays, the tenants gathered in the office for prayer. On cool evenings, they gathered in the yard and would sing their favorite hymns, glorifying the Lord.

Since 2001, Konstantin Davidovich visited the Altamedix health center for the sick and elderly, where he gladly took part in Bible study and prayer.

Konstantin Davidovich said: "My future is you, my dear family. I love all of you. I pray for all of you, and I want you to be happy. But happiness only comes with God. Every ability and talent are from the Lord. He gives opportunities and resources if we desire to multiply our praise of Him (Ps. 71:14). For believers, the best is still ahead. »

He recalled the proverb, "If you want to be happy and calm, be always satisfied with what has happened." I learned to thank the Lord for everything, remembering Psalm 103: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," (v.2) And so on to the end. Learn Psalm 23 (in English translations) and let "... goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life..." (Psalm 23:6). Always be thankful to the Lord for everything. Look how many unfortunate people don't have what you have. Listen and meditate to God's Words and live according to His will. Fellowship with the people of God. "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight" (Psalm 16:3). "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." (Romans 12:11-12)

Konstantin Davidovich Ponomar left behind a blessed legacy: 9 children, 37 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren. EVERYONE loved him greatly. Dad, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather called everyone regularly, wanting to hear the voice of every loved one. He constantly prayed for each of them. The prayers of Konstantin, the son of David ended, but the baton has been picked up by his heirs.

He passed on into the Heavenly Kingdom, leaving a light on this earth in the hearts of many people: the light of kindness and joy. He was a cheerful person, who always appreciated a piece of God's light in

everyone with whom he had the chance to speak with. "Leaving and having left a light behind is greater than staying."

The memorial service to celebrate the life of Konstantin Ponomar, will be held on
September 13 (Monday) at 7:00 pm, at Grace Avenue Bible Church at
1425 Grace Avenue Sacramento, CA, 95838

The burial will take place September 15 (Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m. at Sylvan Cemetery,
7401 Auburn Blvd. Citrus Heights, CA, 95610