

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS
of the
SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

NEWSLETTER # 26

September-October, 1979

RETURN OF METROPOLITAN PHILARET

On 31 August/13 September, Metropolitan Philaret, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, arrived in New York from Europe on the ocean liner "Queen Elizabeth." His Eminence had spent the summer months in France residing at the Lesna Convent near Paris.

BISHOP GREGORY AT THE SAKHAROV HEARINGS

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord, Bishop Gregory was present at a liturgy in the Church of St. John the Baptist in Washington, D.C., partook of the Holy Mysteries and delivered a sermon there. Thereafter, he spent two days at the Sakharov Hearings in the Senate, meeting with many "dissidents." On the evening of September 28, Bishop Gregory, in the company of the renowned musician Mstislav Rostropovich, attended a dinner arranged for the Russian participants in the Hearings.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY OF GENEVA & FR. DIMITRY DUDKO

The September, 1979 issue of the Herald of the Western European Diocese contained the following:

"In recent months, an open letter from Fr. Dimitry Dudko to our First Hierarch, His Eminence, Metropolitan Philaret, has been published abroad. Therein, Fr. Dimitry expresses his distress that Metropolitan Philaret does not approve of Orthodox tourists from the West receiving Communion or making their confession in churches of the Patriarchate in the Soviet Union. At present, we are not aware of Metropolitan Philaret's reaction to Fr. Dimitry's letter, but we can publish the personal response of Archbishop Anthony of Geneva:

(COMMENT of the Department of Public & Foreign Relations: His Eminence, Metropolitan Philaret, learned of the existence of Fr. Dimitry's letter from a copy published in the Russian-language magazine Possev, which he received after much delay.)

"To Batiushka Fr. Dimitry, dear in the Lord! I write to you concerning your letter to Metropolitan Philaret. First of all, I hasten to assure you that the free portion of the Russian Church, which finds itself outside the boundaries of the homeland, has never considered the Moscow Patriarchate, which is officially recognized in the Soviet Union, as devoid of grace, an indubitable witness to which is the fact that our bishops have received and continue to receive clergymen of the Moscow Patriarchate in their rank. (COMMENT of the Dept. of Public & Foreign Relations: Clergymen of the Moscow Patriarchate are received by a bishop after the prayer of absolution has been read over them.) In our attitude toward the Moscow Patriarchate, we have in times past been guided by the opinion of the late Archbishop John (Maximovich), a hierarch highly esteemed and respected by all among us, who said that the official Church in the Soviet Union is, of course, grace-bearing, even though the hierarch that head it conduct themselves in an intolerable manner. (COMMENT of the Dept. of Public & Foreign Relations: The policies espoused by Archbishop John were based on the situation prevalent in Church life prior to his repose in 1966; since then, the Moscow Patriarchate has entered whole-heartedly into the ecumenical movement, has officially authorized the giving of Communion to Roman Catholics

and schismatics, and has caused a tremendous upheaval in the ecclesiastical life of the diaspora by granting "autocephaly" to the American Metropolia. These and other factors indicate that a change in attitude towards the Moscow Patriarchate is warranted, a change which we believe Archbishop John would have supported had he lived to see how the situation has been altered by these new developments.)

"It is precisely these hierarchs and those who serve with them abroad that we strive to avoid, trying to have no contact with them whatsoever.

"Your appeal to your flock and the warning you gave it, that the enemy without is not as fearsome as the enemy within, has confirmed our apprehensions. You call upon your flock to show as much diligence as possible. You know this enemy much better than we who live far from our homeland, of whose power we must be doubly vigilant. Our Metropolitan has been guided by just such considerations, exhibiting at times, we admit, an extreme caution. On the other hand, representatives of the Catacomb Church in Russia accuse us because we do not wish to declare the Moscow Patriarchate to be devoid of grace.

"I ask you holy prayers. Your brother in Christ, Archbishop Anthony."
Geneva, May, 1979

Fr. Dimitry received this letter in short order and responded quickly to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, writing:

"Dear Vladyko,

"I read through your letter with love and trembling. I am in complete agreement with you that you be strict to those who come to you from here; actually, you have no other choice: the enemy has taught us to resort to bribery... It is very dangerous to be deceived by his wicked caresses. It is not this that worries me; I am worried that all communion with anyone be severed if he is under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. But as I see from your letter, I was not completely informed of this, or perhaps someone is attempting to cast some shadow (over the matter). Your letter has reassured me.

"As regards the glorification of the martyrs, I have sent you my new thoughts (on the matter).

"I am happy that you are praying for me and my relatives, and for all that comprise my circle: these prayers will save us. We also pray for you. If you see Metropolitan Philaret, bow down to the ground before him. Ask his blessing and prayers for me. As regards my letter for him, it is up to him to decide what best to do with it. I have had no other purpose.

"Accept my sincere respect and love for you. Bless me and pray for me. My love to you personally and to all that live in the diaspora.

18 May, 1979

Priest Dimitry Dudko"

FROM THE OCTOBER 1 ISSUE OF NEW RUSSIAN WORD: "DEMONSTRATION AGAINST BLASPHEMY"

On Sunday, September 16, a demonstration was held in the center of New York by a number of Christian and Jewish religious and social leaders, protesting the showing of the scandalously blasphemous film "The Life of Brian," shot in England by the "Monty Python" company.

When news became known of the showing of the film, which constitutes a malicious parody of Christ the Savior and the Theotokos, a group of Lutheran social and religious leaders quickly organized a movement which they called "Christians against Blasphemy."

The Lutherans were joined by Catholics and a group of Orthodox rabbis who saw the film as a mockery of the concept of the Messiah in the Holy Bible. Not long before the demonstration, an invitation to participate in the organized protest was received by Bishop Gregory of Manhattan, who responded warmly to it and attended the meeting which worked out the final plan of action.

The demonstrators accross from the Warner Brothers building (which subsidized the film) on 51st Street near 5th Avenue attracted five hundred participants and was opened with a short speech by Bishop Gregory who called upon those present to form a united front to advance against the waves of cynicism and blasphemy that are overwhelming us.

Abraham Gross, president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, Fr. Lawrence Smith, representative of the Catholic Diocese, Rodger Fulton, an Evangelical pastor, Dr. Ada Raion, head of the "Right to Life" movement and the head of the fireman's union spoke on the same theme.

After the speeches, all participants in the demonstration, led by Bishop Gregory and Attorney Mac Cauley, moved to Third Avenue to continue their protest at the cinema where the film was being shown. The move was accompanied by the singing of "God Bless America" and "Glory, Glory Hallelujah"

Many representatives of the press were present at the demonstration, and it was reported in several programs on television.

ECUMENISM OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

In late August, more than 350 representatives from forty-five Asian countries gathered at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey for the Third World Conference on Religion & Peace. The Conference concluded on August 30, with a solemn prayer service for peace in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Patrick in New York City. The Daily News reported in its August 31 issue that "Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jainists, Jews, Moslems, Shintoists, Sikhs, Zorastrains and others (including, one would surmize their Catholic hosts) gathered to pray for world peace".

Msgr. James Rigney, rector of the cathedral said: "We have had many ecumenical services - gatherings of various Christian denominations, but this is the first time we've ever had an interfaith service like this", The newspaer characterized this service as a "religious landmark".

The Department of Public & Foreign Relations became interested in the photograph accompanying the News' article, which showed Cardinal Cooke greeting an unidentified Orthodox Metropolitan. Neither the newspaper's editorial office nor its photography department were able to satisfy our curiosity as to the hierarch's identity.

After many phone calls to the offices of the Catholic Archdiocese and St. Patrick's Cathedral, we finally managed to discover the names of some of the participants in this enormous service of prayer for peace. The Orthodox groups were composed in part of Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev (of the Moscow Patriarchate's Exarchate for Central Europe), Archpriest Gennady Yablovsky, also of the Exarchate, Fr. Vasily Novinsky, rector of the Vilno cathedral, and Dr. Brievsky.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate was represented by Fr. Constatine Voliatis, chancellor of the diocese of Pittsburgh. We were assured by the Archdiocese in a telephone conversation that this priest represented not only his own diocese, but the Greek Exarchate in America as a whole at the Conference.

Nor was the Orthodox Church in America excluded on this noteworthy occassion. It was represented by Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, pastor of Our Lady of Kazan parish in Sea Cliff, New York and assistant chancellor of the Metropolia, Archpriest

John Turkevich, son of the late Metropolitan Leonty, and Deacon Daniel Skvir.

Apparently, the Moscow Patriarchate has ceased to feel any inhibitions and already sees nothing unnatural in prayer in common not only with heretics but with non-Christians of various persuasions.

HOW FAR HAS THE UNION BETWEEN MOSCOW & ROME COME?

The April issue of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, which we have only just received, in a significant portion of its content dedicated to the late Metropolitan Nikodim, gives several particulars as to his death and cites the texts of speeches delivered over his coffin during the funeral service in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra.

Among the series of speeches, the sermon of Cardinal Willebrands is particularly significant. It is entitled, "His Eminence, John Cardinal Willebrands. The fact that representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate speak of the Catholics as "their Graces" and "their Eminence" calls attention to itself, for it is tremendous innovation.

Cardinal Willebrands related a detailed account to the Orthodox people of how their Metropolitan, in violation of all the canons of the Holy Apostles and of the Ecumenical Councils, "was in Rome (on August 9), praying before the body of the late pope, and on Thursday August 10, he celebrated a divine service for the departed pope in the Basilica of St. Peter. He was in the first row of delegates of the Churches who were present, on the evening of Saturday, August 10, at a liturgy served on St. Peter's Square.

"He felt fatigued, as the climate in Rome is very oppressive in the summertime, and for that reason he accepted the fraternal hospitality offered him by the Father General of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits - Editors note)....where the climate was more beneficial to his health...

"He wished to be present at the Mass of the Holy Spirit, which all the cardinals served on the day of the opening of the conclave.

"After the election of the new pope, John Paul I, he took part in the divine services marking the beginning of the new pontificate. On Sunday, September 3rd he was in the first rank of delegates of the Churches who arrived to attend that solemn liturgy".

Willebrands also describes in detail the moment of Metropolitan Nikodim's death in the papal reception room: "The physician entered; he administered a heart message and an injection. Then, the Pope, myself, Archimandrite Lev and the translator, Fr. Arrants, sank to our knees, and the Pope began the prayer for the absolution of sins....The physician, having finished the final massage, was able only to certify the death".

Thus Metropolitan Nikodim died as a Catholic, not as an Orthodox.

THE PROPERTY OF THE SERBIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA IS RETURNED

The Diocesan Observer, a Serbian newspaper of the group of Bishop Dionisije, who died not long ago, reports that after a sixteen year legal case, the court has determined that the monastery in Libertyville must be returned to the Serbian Church. At the same time, the court also decided that large properties in Shadeland, Pennsylvania and in California be returned to the Patriarchate of Serbia as well. Bishop Firmilian, head of the Serbian Church in America, has already transferred his residence to the monastery and in the near future the diocesan chancery will also be moved there.

Bishop Dionisiye, who formerly headed the Serbian Diocese, who on the basis of a number of charges of immorality summoned to appear at a trial at which he refused to appear. Not wishing to answer to the Council of Bishops, he began to assert that the fact that he was being tried could be explained by the captivity of the Serbian Church in Yugoslavia which, he alleged, was persecuting him because of his monarchistic convictions. He turned to all the Orthodox Churches seeking moral support. He also appealed in this instance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and...even to the Moscow Patriarchate.

As a result of his categorical refusal to appear before the court of the Serbian Church, he was deposed from his rank and monasticism, but, in violation of the canons did not submit to the council's resolution, continued to serve, and refused to surrender the property remaining in his hands as the former head of the diocese. With the help of a group of Ukrainians who consecrated Bishop Irenei for him, he formed a new independent Serbian group in America.

Apparently, the group that had siezed the church property had long been uncertain as to whether they would succeed in keeping it in their hands, and thus, all the buildings were found to be in a very ruinous state and require extensive restoration.

"TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE"

Such is the title of a lengthy article printed under the signature of Arthur Jones in the October 12 issue of National Catholic Reporter

The correspondent reports that, taking advantage of closer relations with the Soviet Union due to the upcoming Olympics in Moscow, Catholic priests are inundating it with smuggled copies of the Catholic Catechism compiled in Holland in the late 1960's and which was acknowledged by the Vatican as extremely liberal and unacceptable for use, so that they avoided placing it in the hands of Catholic bishops.

Despite strict border controls, more than half of the copies find their way into the U.S.S.R. One Catholic priest drives there in his automobile and boasts: "I've invented more places to hade the New Catechism in a Volkswagon than a secret agent could".

In Moscow, the Catechism attracted a student of unbelieving Jewish descent, who became so interested that he took upon himself the task of translating it from French to Russian. Within a year, he had selected several others to help him. Laboring over the translation for three years, this group even hired typists who made twenty-five copies of the translation; these copies, in turn, one being copied. Delighted with this completely unexpected success, the Catholics have hastened to print this work, so detrimental to Orthodoxy here in the West, and now they are conveying it to the Sovient Union by whatever means possible.

Catholic propaganda would enjoy no success in Russia, were it not for the total lack of Church literature, Orthodox Catechisms, etc. After sixty years of eradication of all religion in Russia, and the present, gradual return of interest therein, it has become considerably easier for all heretics and sectarians to sow their poisonous seed. Doubtless, the arrival of the Pope of Rome, who possesses diplomatic immunity, his huge entourage, and the interest which will be evoked by this among the public, to a significant degree, will further Catholic propaganda in general and the delivery of a large amount of religious material inimicable to us.

Television networks have already mentioned the Pope of Rome's future journey to **Moscow**.

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS & THE POPE OF ROME

Pope John Paul II of Rome recently spent an entire week in America. The schedule of his stay in this country was especially hectic and, of course, required considerable physical exertion on the part of the pope, so that a special sanitary automobile was always present in the papal cortege, equipped with all necessary medical apparatus, should anything unexpected occur. The pope was also accompanied by his two physicians: one from Poland and another, an official doctor from the Vatican. His visit elicited a tremendous response which might be characterized more precisely as mass enthusiasm. The pope beautifully managed his role as a figure upon whom the whole world gazes.

All his speeches were of a humanitarian character and may be reduced to discussions of captialism, materialism, peace, disarmament as a means of preserving peace on earth, justice, the desire for universal equality of the material conditions of life, and appeals for the preservation of Christian ideals and traditions. He made frequent use of the favorite expression of Soviet political and religious representatives: "people of godd will."

In several places in America, the pope served mass in large, open-air stadiums, and in Washington, D.C., there was yet another ecumenical service. Our Metropolitan Philaret and Bishop Laurus received invitations to attend, but immediately declined, for to take part in such a service is totally unacceptable for us.

The Greek newspaper Hellenic Chronicle reported this ecumenical service well in advance. It took place in Notre Dame Chapel on the campus of Trinity College, a Catholic women's educational institution in north-east Washington. The newspaper emphasized that this ecumenical service could well be "the most important (event) on the Pope's itinerary."

The service lasted nealy an hour, and its program, planned by the National Council of Catholic Bishops, allowed for the broad participation of the public therein. Regarding the texts of the service, "many Christian traditions (were) highlighted," including a number of ektenias (litanies) from the Orthodox liturgy and the Lord's Prayer. The organizers of the service chose a small church "because it is small and intimate, and more conducive to prayer." It has occurred to us that the real purpose for this was to avoid advertising this service. The church could hold no more than six hundred people. The service was set for Sunday, some time between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The following prelates and religious leaders took part in it: Archbishop Iakovos, head of the Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America, the Armenian Bishop Papken Varjabedian, the Episcopalian Bishop John Burt, Dr. Paul Wee of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop James Matthews of the United Methodist Church, Dr. James McCord of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Dr. Paul Stauffer of the Disciples of Christ, and Dr. Porter Routh of the Southern Baptist Convention, as well as a variety of Orthodox prelates as yet unidentified by name. All of these representatives of their respective religions sat with the pope is a semi-circle around the Catholic altar.

A correspondent of the New York Times noted that, "while the pope states a sincere desire for church unity, some leaders say, he has implicitly discouraged them from thinking that progress would come soon. The expectation seems to be in his (hopes) for reunion with Eastern Orthodoxy," for he has singled out the ecumenical labors of Archbishop Iakovos for special recognition.

Observers also noted that, in his speech, the pope did not touch upon theological questions, but principally called upon all to find unity on such issues as "joint witness," "esteem for the sacredness of marriage," and also "support of a healthy family life." He also appealed to all the assembled representatives of the various denominations, saying: "In this context, recognition must be given to the deep division which still exists over moral and ethical matters." The pope also said: "Much has been accomplished, but there is still much to be done," although, as he puts it, "even the very desire for the complete unity in the faith—which is lacking between us, and which must be achieved before we can celebrate the Eucharist together in truth—is itself a gift of the Holy Spirit, for which we offer humble praise to God... Conversations are in progress with our brothers from the East, the Orthodox. Here I wish to note that this relationship has been strong in the United States and that soon a theological dialogue will begin on a worldwide basis in an attempt to resolve those difficulties which hinder full unity." (Emphasis ours.)

The press has reported that next year the pope of Rome intends to journey to the Soviet Union, the reason given being his interest in sports, in view of the fact that the Olympic games are to be held there.

CONSTANTINOPLE ENTERS INTO DIALOGUE WITH REFORMED PROTESTANTS

In its September 12 issue, The Orthodox Observer, official mouthpiece of Constantinople's Exarchate in America, reports, on the basis of a Religious News Service release, that, for the first time since the seventeenth century, a delegation of Reformed Protestants (Calvinists) has arrived in Istanbul to conduct ecumenical dialogues with the Patriarchate. The head of the seven-member delegation, which arrived in Turkey in June, is Dr. James McCord.

Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople received the Protestants warmly and said: "You have come here with the sacred and concrete purpose to make the official proposal for the opening of the theological dialogue with Orthodoxy. We shall study favorably this proposal and we shall properly forward it to all the other Orthodox Churches in the spirit of our service to the great cause of unity." For their part, the Protestants responded to the patriarch, saying: "We think of you as the Church of the Holy Spirit, and John Calvin, one of our ancestors, has been called the theologian of the Holy Spirit."

The Protestants presented Patriarch Demetrios with a photocopy of the confession of faith of his predecessor Patriarch Cyril Lukaris, who has been accused of making tremendous concessions to Protestant theological influence. The patriarch presented each member of the delegation with personal gifts.

The Orthodox delegation was presided over by Metropolitan Chrysostom of Myra, who stated that the preliminary discussions would be conducted in "a spirit of mutual frankness and mutual understanding." The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was chosen as the theme of the initial dialogues, as it "has proved to be of extreme importance, both for the Orthodox and for the Reformed Churches. We are hopeful of further developments in our relationships, especially as these two traditions both emphasize the unity of the Church grounded on the apostolic faith (!)"

THE DALAI LAMA & THE CATHOLICS

Both the secular and the Catholic press devoted a great deal of attention to the 44-year old Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, who arrived in America from Switzerland in early September.

Catholic newspapers reported his arrival in this country beforehand and published a detailed schedule of his 49-day stay in the United States.

It was repeatedly emphasized that the Dalai Lama came here in his capacity of spiritual leader of the Mahayana Buddhists, for a significant number of whom he is the incarnation of the divinity of compassion. In connection with his visit, a detailed plan for an ecumenical service was worked out beforehand in the Catholic Cathedral of St. Patrick. And several days prior to this, this same Catholic cathedral was the site of the first public concelebration between Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, Jews, and representatives of all possible shades of Eastern religious philosophies. However, the prayer service with the Dalai Lama surpassed all the dreams of the ecumenists.

As the Catholic newspapers report, as well as the New York Times (in its September 6 issue) and the noted Time Magazine (in its September 17 issue), this prayer service has in general no precedent in the practice of common prayer.

The huge cathedral of St. Patrick was filled to overflowing at the beginning of the prayer service by more than five thousand visitors of all nationalities and religions. The host, Cardinal Cooke, greeted his guest, and the Dalai Lama, surrounded by groups of clergymen of the Armenian, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Buddhist persuasions, entered the apse-sanctuary and took a place near the altar. Those present greeted the Dalai Lama with a long standing ovation. Cardinal Cooke sat next to his guest. It fell to the Dalai Lama to open the prayer service with a speech, and, standing by the Catholic altar, he stated that "all the world's major religions are basically the same," but that "through compassion, through love, it is possible to become a true human family. Through love we can solve many human problems, we can have true happiness, real disarmament."

Thereafter began what Time Magazine referred to as "an extraordinary interreligious festival." During the service, Buddhist monks blew ritual trumpets, burned oriental incense and tossed rice into the air. As Cardinal Cooke seemed mystified when Buddhist monks passed around rice during their portion of the service, the Dalai Lama showed him how to toss the rice into the air as part of the Buddhist ritual of blessing. Afterwards, Rabbi Arthur Schneier and Pastor Carl Flemister, a black Baptist minister, read selections from the Holy Scriptures. When Dr. Flemister began his reading of a section of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians on love, he asked everybody in the cathedral to touch somebody else, and Cardinal Cooke and the Dalai Lama linked their right hands and remained thus, in full view of the congregation, throughout the reading. Mayor Koch was present in the cathedral as an honored guest.

Apparently, Cardinal Cooke felt somewhat awkward himself during the service and considered it necessary in his concluding speech to address "anyone who is puzzled or even fearful about what we are doing here together tonight. There are some good religious people for whom an interfaith prayer service seems to pose a threat to basic, personal religious conviction. Indifferentism and syncretism are terms that may come to their minds. They may feel that the presence of all of us here expresses and agreement that differences in services is a 'dramatic movement of the Spirit' in our time... We who pray together here tonight do not for a moment think of ourselves as members of some one, new, universal religion." The service concluded with "spiritual choral singing and chanting by Buddhist monks.

Insofar as the Dalai Lama is the incarnation of a deity for a significant number of Buddhists, the display of honor shown him in a Christian church and the ritual offering of rice (to whom?) by a Catholic cardinal should without doubt be viewed as an open betrayal of Christianity, and it is not surprising that Cardinal Cooke himself considered it essential to offer an explanation to his perplexed flock.

ECUMENISM IN POLAND

As the Catholic News reports in its August 23 issue, prior to the Second Vatican Council, there were few in Poland who were interested in ecumenism. From time immemorial, the Orthodox have been slighted there as schismatics, the Protestants as heretics, and the Old Catholics as sectarians. Such was the situation until quite recently. However, in the '60s, especially after Vatican II, this position began gradually to change. Religious minorities, in self-defense, formed the Polish Ecumenical Council, which is comprised of eight religious groups: the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Poland, the Polish Catholic Church, the Mariavites, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutherans), the Reformed Church, the Methodist Church, the Polish Baptists and the United Evangelical Church. Cooperation between the members of this disparate minority has vacillated considerably. Those groups that had broken away from Catholicism, as well as the Orthodox, categorically refused to cooperate with the dominant Catholic Church in Poland. Many Orthodox could not forget the Catholics' desecration and destruction of hundreds of Orthodox churches in the 1930s (more than four hundred in the province of Kholm alone!), and the Polish sectarians could not forget the oppression they experienced at the hands of their fellow countrymen. Cooperation was limited exclusively to private and unofficial meetings by groups representing individual churches.

Only in 1974 did the Polish Ecumenical Council and the Commission of the Episcopate for Ecumenical Work begin to conduct official dialogues. However, this has spread only to the major cities, such as Warsaw, Lodz, Krakow; but, for example, in the Bialystock area, where many Orthodox live, or in Teschen, where there is a large Protestant population, all remains as in times past and follows the old order. The Orthodox complain that they are discriminated against, especially after a Catholic ecclesiastical court declared that a marriage performed in the Orthodox Church is invalid. Outside of Poland, Catholics have always stressed that all Orthodox Mysteries are acceptable, and the Second Vatican Council made a special elucidation on this subject.

BLASPHEMOUS "INTERVIEW" BY THE VATICAN RADIO

A wave of blasphemy is sweeping over the world and one's gaze is barely able to take in all the new means of offending the Christians' sensibilities. Usually this sort of thing originates with the declared enemies of our Savior, yet lately there has been openly manifested in Catholic newspapers and magazines such a tendency, if not of pure blasphemy, then of the vulgarization and degradation of that which is holy.

In its October 7 issue, the Catholic newspaper Twin Circle informs its readers that the Vatican Radion Station, run by members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), conducted a mock "Interview with Jesus" last May. This program so pleased the audience that it was re-broadcast in England on the B.B.C. station, in America on several stations, and in Spanish in the Dominican Republic. In view of the success this broadcast enjoyed, the Jesuits decided to continue the program, adding a second "interview" to the series, "A Meeting with Mary of Nazareth," which was

aired over Vatican Radio on September 22. Paolo Scappucci, director of the program, said that, though conducted in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek manner, the program provided an opportunity for "useful spiritual reflection."

In his "interview," Scappucci put the following question to the All-holy Virgin: "How shall I begin? The angel's greeting, reiterated time and again in the Ave Maria, would perhaps be obligatory at the opening of such an interview. But I prefer to dispense with all ceremony. I don't, after all, wish to embarrass you as Gabriel once did. That prompts me to ask you, Mary, what memories do you have of that day, so decisive for your life and, we may safely say, for the destiny of mankind as a whole?" "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior," replies the Jesuit in the name of the Theotokos. "Mary, you know how the world is going today: we are scared--the threat of nuclear war, the pollution of the environment, the exhaustion of energy resources, terrorism, delinquency, corruption, torture... Do you think the Lord will still have patience with the poor world gone astray?" "His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation."

We find it difficult to quote any more excerpts from the scandalous "interview." All the questions put to the "All-holy Virgin" were asked in a disrespectful manner. But one step is lacking before the Vatican Radio can be accused of cooperating with blasphemers.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ANGLICANS & THE ORTHODOX

As reported in the August 29 issue of The Orthodox Observer, official mouthpiece of the Greek Archdiocese in America, the dialogue of the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission, which met in London, has reached an impasse. The Commission has not made a detailed enumeration of the differences between the two confessions, but suspects that the principal stumbling block regards the question of the ordination of women.

Dialogues were conducted long ago, before World War II. Side by side with the Lambeth Conference of 1978, representatives of the Orthodox stated quite definitely that they would under no circumstances accept the ordination of women, and for that reason the question of union with the Anglicans has not been quickly resolved. In reply to this, the General Synod of the Church of England has refused to agree to the ordination of women, and even decided to forbid them to serve in England, should they arrive there after receiving ordination in other countries.

Both sides have labored over a joint statement in which it is emphasized that, "while the ultimate aim (of the dialogue) remains the unity of the Churches, the method may need to change in order to emphasize the pastoral and practical dimensions of the subjects of theological discussions... Our conversations are concerned with the search for unity in faith. They are not negotiations for immediate full communion. When this is understood, the discovery of differences on various matters, though distressing, will be seen as a necessary step on the long road towards that unity which God wills."

One may but rejoice that the "priesthood" of women serves as an impediment to the dialogue between Orthodox and heretics.

ECUMENICAL ELECTION OF A BISHOP IN ENGLAND

According to a report in the September 9 issue of the Episcopalian magazine Living Church, a unique ecumenical experiment is to be conducted.

Six different religious groups: Anglicans, Baptists, Moravians, Methodists, United Reformed and Church of Christ, have held a meeting for the joint election of one bishop to govern them all. Insofar as Anglicans have taken part in this group, it is proposed that confirmation of the election of such a bishop should come from the British Queen.

The concluded agreement in its entirety should be presented for approval in late October and, in the opinion of the magazine's editorial staff, there is no foundation for the supposition that anything will hinder it. Those who are participating in this experiment thus hope to have their first bishop by Easter of 1980.

According to the plans which have become known, the newly-elected bishop should be the "focus for unity; the experiment will consist of those congregations, regardless of denomination, which gather round the bishop, and which cooperate together under his oversight."

The immediate task of the experimental bishop will be to preside at the liturgy, during which full eucharistic unity will be established among the parishes which have entered into this agreement. Furthermore, not one of these denominations need alter its liturgical customs or peculiarities. If ordination or induction become necessary, it is expected that all these functions will be carried out by the bishop of the group. But..., "because there is such diversity in theological outlook, it is not possible for one man to hold all the differing views...we therefore propose that our basis of faith shall be the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed."

The experiment is to be conducted for a period of six years. One wonders: to which of the six "churches" will the bishop belong after his elevation?

WOMEN "PRIESTS" ENJOY LITTLE SUCCESS

In its September 21 issue, the New York Times reports that the introduction of the female priesthood among the Anglicans continues to meet with many objections. In 1970, a resolution was put into effect, though not without determined opposition, concerning the permissibility of women in America assuming the rank of deacon; in 1976, a similar resolution was adopted for their priesthood. However, as has been made clear at the 66th General Convention this year, this question continues to be the cause of division.

Although women are now officially admitted to priestly service, they were permitted to serve the eucharist at the Convention only after they had launched a series of protests. Their participation in the services in general was not envisaged in the original schedule.

It has become obvious that the ordinations of new women candidates, despite their brilliant successes in seminary, often encounter difficulties, for many bishops have begun to make use of a resolution of last year's Convention, which adopted a clause, according to which a bishop, on the basis of the conviction of his own conscience, may refuse to ordain women. And even before this, ordained women have had difficulties in obtaining positions in parishes.

"Priest" Judith Upham complains that no matter where she sent her applications, they sent back a standard reply: "We aren't hiring women at this time," or "You don't have enough experience." Mrs. Upham maintains: "My experience included seventeen years of work with youths, four years of teaching at college level and ten years of counseling." She now has to work at two part-time jobs to support herself.

One can but rejoice that the question of female priesthood has shown

how far Anglicanism is disconsonant with Orthodoxy.

SCHISM AMONG PENTECOSTAL SECTARIANS IN THE SOVIET UNION

As the New York Times reports in its September 6 issue, the number of members of the Pentecostal sects in the U.S.S.R. has nearly reached 500,000. The communist government is persecuting the Pentecostals, employing their usual means for persecuting any religion; however, because of the Pentecostals' particular fanaticism, they have managed to acquire a good deal of notoriety in the free world. A portion of the Pentecostals has received some sort of legalization from the government in exchange for unquestioning obedience to the regime (following the example of the Moscow Patriarchate).

However, a significant portion of the Pentecostals, in the words of Boris Perchatkin, has refused to follow the line of the official recognition of the sect. They have even managed to organize a secret meeting of sectarians for the establishment of their own underground organization. Perchatkin, mentioned above, is one of the prominent delegates to the meeting. According to him, about 30,000 sectarians hope to emigrate from the Soviet Union, as the Jews have done. For the time being, they have, in accordance with a secret plan, organized their own Council, which convenes in a forest near Moscow. Delegates arrived there from Little Russia, Byelorussia, central Russia and Siberia. However, the delegates from the Caucasus were unable to come. Apparently, something completely unforeseen ruined their plans. It is thought that there are about 200,000 evangelical Christians and Baptists who also sympathize with the groups of sectarians who do not wish to remain under the present government.

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