

SELECTED DECISIONS FROM THE SESSIONS OF THE 1981 COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Concerning the names of the New Martyrs, the Council decided:

Having listened to the list of (the names of) the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, we reverence their common struggle with compunction. At this time the Council considers it necessary to entrust a special commission with the task of verifying and editing this list and presenting it for the approval of the Council at one of its future sessions.

We propose that in the final, edited list, (the names of) all the new martyrs and confessors who suffered prior to the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, dated 16/29 July, 1927, which gave rise to a schism which has lasted even up to the present time among believers, should be included.

We do homage before the struggle and sufferings of all who suffered even afterwards, but (in their cases) particular care must be taken in amplifying the list.

For those whose names are not included in the list, the offering up of prayers for their repose should, in the meanwhile, continue, and the Lord will further indicate times and seasons for the amplification of the lists.

The following bishops were selected for the Commission, which will function under the presidency of His Eminence, Metropolitan Philaret, the president of the Council: Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, Bishop Laurus, and Bishop Gregory.

Concerning the Catacomb Church in Russia, following a report by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, this resolution was adopted:

Considering the state of the Catacomb Church in Russia, the Council of Bishops calls down the blessing of God upon those catacomb pastors who continue their ministry in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions, impelled thereto by their faith and loyalty to the Holy Church and by a readiness to preserve the Faith even unto death. May the Lord help them to bear their cross to the end, without falling into compromises. Upon them and their labors, the Council invokes the blessing of God.

After a report by Bishop Gregory on ecumenism and the growth of anti-Christian principles in the world, the Council adopted the following resolution unanimously:

The Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, having heard and taken into consideration the material presented to it by the Synod of Bishops on the development of the ecumenical movement and the broad role played therein by the Moscow Patriarchate, which is wholly subservient to the atheistic, anti-Christian regime, as well as a report on the growth of anti-Christian principles in the world, has decided:

1. In accordance with the prophecies of the sacred Scriptures and the interpretations of the holy Fathers of the Church, it is without doubt that we are entering into one of the apocalyptic periods of the history of mankind. Therein the powers of evil threaten to seize the dominant position throughout the world. Only repentance and the rebirth of the Orthodox Church in Russia can stop this process. The true Church unquestionably finds itself in the minority, becoming the "little flock" foretold by the Savior. However, He has commanded Christians not to lose heart even when they live to the very last years of the world's existence.

2. Destructive forces in the world are striving to evoke universal chaos and, perhaps, a world war. If such were to transpire,

the Resolution of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Sacred Synod, dated 7/20 November, 1920, would come into force, with the commemoration of the name of our First Hierarch being uninterrupted.

3. Guarding the purity of Orthodoxy, we can have no communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, which finds itself completely subservient to the atheistic government, even if certain of its ministers think it possible to serve, simultaneously, not only Belial, but Christ as well, the Apostle Paul to the contrary notwithstanding. On the other hand, we note with alarm the growing ecumenical relations between representatives of a number of Orthodox Churches and the Vatican in the so-called dialogue. Setting as their goal the establishment of complete communion between them in the mysteries no matter what, participants in the negotiations have in fact already entered into communion in prayer one with another without an acceptance of Orthodox doctrine by the other side. This communion is set as a goal without regard to the absence of dogmatical unity of mind. Such an approach to the question is Protestant, not Orthodox, and therefore cannot be adopted by our Church.

4. If whereas they inform us that the Faith is awakening again in various strata of the Russian population, then, offering up prayers of the enlightenment and strengthening of those who are joining therein, we nevertheless do not have sufficient facts to form an opinion concerning those who are participating in this process. Nevertheless, we invoke the blessing of God upon those who, undaunted by the persecutions, withdraw from any compromise with the politics of atheism incarnate in the Moscow Patriarchate, which, with all of its acts, we hold to be uncanonical and null and void.

#### Concerning the question of the glorification of Paisius Velichkovsky

After a report by Bishop Laurus on the veneration of Paisius Velichkovsky, it was resolved on 15/28 October, to begin a study of the question of his glorification and, at the same time, to collect material thereon. It was further decided to permit his veneration locally at the Skete of St. Elias on Mount Athos.

#### Concerning the question of the 50th anniversary of Bishop Gregory's service in the Synod of Bishops:

It was resolved to elevate Bishop Gregory to the rank of reigning bishop, with the title "of Washington & Florida," and with his retention of his duties in the administration of the Diocese of Eastern America. Congratulating Bishop Gregory, the Council sang "Many Years" to him, and a special speech was read, the content of which was as follows:

In the course of fifty years you have zealously and diligently served for the good of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

You began your service in 1931, while yet a layman, when His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony called you to the post of manager of the Synod's Chancery. Heeding his call for the good of the Church, and parting with your family, you gave yourself wholly over to your service at the Synod of Bishops.

Your ministry was sacrificial, with full awareness of your duty and responsibility before God and His holy Church.

Guided by Metropolitan Anthony, the most remarkable hierarch of our century, you absorbed the spirit of that great Abba and ever followed his bidding, putting it into effect despite the upheavals of Church life abroad and the temptations associated with them.

During the tenure of Metropolitan Anastasy as well as that of his successor, our First Hierarch Metropolitan Philaret, you have steadfastly defended and continue to defend the correctness of our

Church's path from the attacks to which we are subjected for our fidelity to Holy Orthodoxy.

Especially clear is your defense of our Church in your printed works, in which you have denounced all apostasies and deviations from the Truth.

For this you have naturally been subjected to manifold personal attacks on more than one occasion, in which the hostility directed against our Church was poured forth upon you. But amid these temptations you remained strong of spirit and faithful to your ministry.

Taking into account all of the above, the Council of Bishops expresses sincere and fraternal gratitude to you and wishes you health and the strength to continue your service to the Holy Church for many years to come.

20 October/2 November, 1981

(There follow the signatures of the Metropolitan and the Bishops of the Council)

On the form for the commemoration of the New Martyrs at Molebens and at Litia:

It was resolved that at Molebens, the refrain shall be: "O holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia, pray to God for us!" And at Litia, after the mention of Sts. Boris and Gleb, "...and the holy and pious passion-bearers, the martyred Tsar Nicholas, the martyred Tsarina Alexandra, the Tsarevich Alexis, the Tsarevna Olga, Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia, the holy venerable-martyrs Princess Elizabeth, the nun Barbara, and all the new martyrs of Russia..."; and in the proper place, after the names of the holy hierarchs of Russia, "...and our fathers among the saints Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, the confessor, the Metropolitans Vladimir of Kiev, Benjamin of Petrograd, Peter of Krutitsa, Cyril of Kazan, Joseph of Petrograd, Agathangelus of Yaroslavl, Andronicus of Perm, Hermogenes of Tobolsk, the priest John, the priest John and all the hieromartyrs of Russia..."

The question of whether the Gospel for martyrs or monastics should be read was examined, and it was resolved to read pericope 52 of the Gospel of John at the Liturgy, and pericope 56 of the Gospel of Matthew at Matins.

On the mention of the name of the British Queen during the divine Services

After a report by Archbishop Paul to the effect that in Australia there is a disparity of thought on the mention of the name of the British Queen at the divine services, it was decided that, since the Apostle Paul commanded (the Christians of his time) to pray even for Nero, all the more so should the Queen of England be prayed for at the divine services.

On the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem

After reports on various aspects of the life of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, the following decision was made:

1. To give a blessing to Archimandrite Anthony, the head of the Mission, and to all the abbesses, priestly ministers and sisters, with the issuing of a gramota.

2. To thank Archimandrite Anthony, the head of the Mission, for his labors in the uncovering of the relics of the holy martyrs Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna and the nun Barbara and the conveying of portions thereof to New York, as well as for his labors in the defense of the rights of the Mission, blessing him with an icon of the martyr Elizabeth.

3. The sojourn of the Mission's head in America, which is necessitated for the defense of the Mission's interests, cannot but have an effect on the life of the monasteries, and at the same time, the conditions of life are becoming increasingly complicated; therefore, an intensification of spiritual vigilance and prayerful zeal, with the strict observance of the principles of monastic obedience, are required both of the head of the Mission and his co-workers and (the monasteries') inhabitants.

Text of the Gramata of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia:

To the Chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Anthony, and to the brethren and sisters of the Mission's monasteries in the Holy Land.

Having acquainted itself with reports on various aspects of the life of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, the Council of Bishops expresses its gratitude for the labors which you have undertaken in difficult circumstances, as have the reverent Abbesses and the brethren and sisters of its monasteries.

Not only from the official reports, but also from reports of bishops and pilgrims who have visited the Holy City in recent years, have we come to know of those trying circumstances wherein passes the life of our Mission's residents, under the conditions of the rapid rise in prices, constant alarms and the necessity ever to be on guard for the defense of the Mission against attempts of diverse types on its life. The defense requires the frequent absence of the chief of the Mission, and calls forth new difficulties for the monastics and clergy, requiring on their part special spiritual vigilance and prayerful diligence in the strict observance of monastic obedience.

Beseeking God that in all of this the Lord send down upon you His gracious aid, the Council of Bishops invokes the blessing of God upon you, as the head of the Mission, and upon the abbessesm clergy and all the monastics of the holy monasteries, entrusting you all to the prayers of the holy new martyrs, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna and the nun Barbara, who in their holy relics repose in Gethsemane.

In witness thereof this gramata is given under our signatures and confirmed by the seal of the Synod, in the city of New York, which is being saved by God, in the year from the Nativity of Christ 1981, on the 14th day of November. #267

(There follow the signatures of the President and Secretary of the Council and Synod, and the Synod's official seal)

#### Awards

By resolution of the Council, their Graces Paul of Australia & New Zealand, Laurus of Syracuse & Trinity, and Nathanail of Vienna & Austria, were elevated to the rank of archbishop.

The right to wear a cross on their klobuks was awarded to their Graces Anthony of San Francisco & Western America and Anthony of Geneva & Western Europe.

Archpriest Ilia Wen, a cleric of the Diocese of Western America, has, at the suggestion of His Grace, Archbishop Anthony, been elevated to the rank of protopresbyter, in view of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination to the diaconate.