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With this sixth issue (No. 62) of Volume 9 (which is the eighth issue in English) we repeat that we would not like to send anyone unwanted literature which might clutter up their mailbox. So we request that if you wish to continue receiving "Church News" in English please write to us in that regard, and please remember that both the Russian and English versions exist only on the basis of the voluntary support of our readers. We will gratefully accept any donations to cover the costs of publishing, mailing and maintaining subscriptions to our various sources.

**CHURCH NEWS**  
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## THE BEGINNING OF A SCHISM IN THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD

According to news received directly from Jerusalem, the Patriarch of Moscow Alexis II arrived on June 12th, 1997 at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv and was met there in the name of Patriarch of Jerusalem by his deputy, Metropolitan Vasilios, and his retinue.

From the airport, the Moscow Patriarch traveled by car to the Jaffa Gates. At 7:45 P.M., the Patriarch of Moscow was met, with the ringing of bells, by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and, escorted by representatives of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, his own retinue and Israeli police, approximately 60 people, went to venerate the Lord's Tomb where he was met by the Rector of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, Metropolitan Daniel, and, again accompanied by the ringing of bells, the guest of Patriarch Diodoros went to Patriarchate's headquarters building, to greet his host. The Patriarch of Jerusalem greeted him with a speech in which he stressed the good relationship between two Churches.

After concluding the official part of the reception, the Patriarch was driven to Small Galilee, into the residence of Patriarch Diodoros, where he stayed, along with several bishops who accompanied him. The Israeli and Arabic press devoted just a few lines to the arrival of the Moscow Patriarch in Jerusalem. Probably, with this information about arrival in the Holy Land of this widely known KGB agent "Drozdov", one could stop at this point. Unfortunately, however, his arrival was answered by the appearance of the start of a destructive schism within the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

Certainly, the Synod of Bishops was informed ahead of time that the Moscow Patriarch would visit the Holy Land and as a result discussed the question of how our monasteries should respond to this. This was discussed during the Synod's meeting, held right at the beginning of the week of the Myrrh Bearing Women. Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that Metropolitan Vitaly wrote to Archbishop Mark only half a year ago that "*My three predecessor Metropolitans of blessed memory, precisely and clearly indicated to us the right path. I only try to follow their directions and to continue on their uncompromising, right path.*" he clearly demonstrated that he is not a fighter for his principles. Under his chairmanship *the Synod of Bishops quite calmly departed from its former path and permitted the Moscow Patriarch entrance to our convents and even offered him refreshments!*

The Chief of the Mission was informed of this decision and through him the convents as well. It immediately created a double reaction: in accordance with new directions and in order to discuss a plan of action, a conference was called at the Mount of Olives Convent at which both abbesses participated, that of the Mt. of Olives and that of Gethsemane.

Abbess Juliana of the Mt. of Olives Convent immediately declared that under no conditions would she let the Moscow Patriarch into her convent. Her decision was very strongly and energetically supported by Bishop Barnabas, who happened to be in Jerusalem on other business. However, at the same time, Abbess Anna of Gethsemane, who according to an initial report supposedly refused to meet the Moscow Patriarch and was willing to open only her convent's gates, finally not only received him with honors by carrying an icon in front of him, but received him socially in her convent. The pretender to the Patriarchal throne presented the convent with an icon of the Theotokos of Vladimir!

This young Abbess of Gethsemane Convent was brought from Australia to the Holy Land during the tenure of Archimandrite Alexis (Rosentul) as Chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. It is timely to note that only a few years ago the Chief who succeeded him, Archm. Theodossy, was reprimanded by the Synod of Bishops Abroad for his excessively friendly relationship with members of Moscow Patriarchate. What has changed since then?

The late Archbishop Theodossy of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand, while attending the Council of Bishops in 1971 complained about the pro-Moscow sentiments of his flock and asked the Council to help him in his struggle against this movement. Quite a substantial part of his flock came to Australia from the Far East and was brought up under the communist regime.

Besides the abbess from Australia (sympathetic to the MP) in the Gethsemane Convent there is also a Nun Moiseya, former Novice Nonna. Some time ago she belonged to the Evlogian schism of the Paris Archdiocese. Due to her government job she frequently visited the USSR. After leaving France, she settled in Gethsemane. In former times, Archim. Anthony (Grabbe) was warned by the Israeli police that she was known to them as a Soviet agent. He informed the late Abbess Barbara of this who ignored this warning and without a blessing from the Chief of the Mission accepted her into the convent. After Archim. Anthony left the Mission, she was promoted in the convent rather hastily.

After arriving at Gethsemane Convent, the Moscow Patriarch, with an icon carried in front of him, escorted by his retinue and the hospitable hosts of Jerusalem Patriarchate went to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene. The Chancellor of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Metropolitan Timotheos, (who speaks fluent Russian) decided to let Alexis II into the sanctuary, but it was locked from inside, so, the "honorable guests" this time just looked at the church and departed.

During the visit of the Moscow Patriarch, according to a written order of the President of the Holy Land Section of the Orthodox Palestine Society, the building known as "The Excavations" which is the administrative center of this Society, was closed for repairs. However, one of the nuns from Gornensky Convent in Jerusalem (illegally given by the Israeli government to the former USSR) brought the whole group of "Moscow pilgrims" to this building, which they photographed and showed a special interest in the emblem of the Palestine Society on the outside.

The President of the Holy Land Section of Orthodox Palestine Society Bishop Anthony (Grabbe) offered to the abbesses, specially to Gethsemane's convent (as belonging to the OPS) as widely as possible to spread among the monastics and "pilgrims" from Moscow his following declaration, translated from the Russian:

*The Confessor Saint, His Holiness Patriarch of Russia, TIKHON, proclaimed an ANATHEMA upon the communists and their collaborators.*

*The Moscow Patriarchate, starting with Patriarch Sergius of sorry memory, and all its personnel, collaborated with the communists and with the KGB, falling under the anathema of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon. This anathema has not been lifted. Therefore, in accordance with the Apostolic Rule (10th Apostolic Canon) that one should not pray with them, one is forbidden even to take a blessing from them, that one may not fall under the holy Church's suspension.*

*On the conscience of the communists are the millions of martyrs and martyred clergy, from whom the Moscow Patriarchate should beg forgiveness and for whom it should bring forth repentance before the throne of God. Until this is done, there can be NO communication WHATSOEVER with those excommunicated from the Church communion.*

*June 7, 1997*

*Bishop Anthony*

At the same time, Bishop Barnabas, not trusting a local gate watchman, took his keys and for a long time himself watched the gate of Mt. of Olives Convent.

Metropolitan Timotheos called the Mt. of Olives Convent and demanded that they open the gate for the Moscow Patriarch. In case of refusal, he threatened in name of Patriarch Diodoros that the convent will be forbidden to take communion at the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord. This is not the first time the Jerusalem Patriarchate has done this and always it is done for reasons of diplomacy and out of a desire not to let the representatives of Moscow Patriarchate within their walls.

In order to avoid any sort of conflicts, the Mt. of Olives Convent was closed for several days and no nuns were permitted to go into the city.

On the First Day of Pentecost, June 15th, there was a call from Jerusalem Patriarchate, and then came a messenger, a Father Theodosios, Arab by birth, who tried to persuade Bishop Barnabas, Chief of the Mission and Abbess Juliana to let the Moscow Patriarch inside the convent, explaining to them that time has come to turn the next page in history and all have to be united. Then Patriarch Diodoros called all of them to the Patriarchate and in presence of Metropolitan Timotheos and several Greek Bishops again insisted upon acceptance of Moscow Patriarch. Bishop Barnabas reminded him of an incident from earlier history, when the Jerusalem Patriarch Timotheos together with contemporary Moscow Patriarch came to Mt. Olives Convent: at that time, Patriarch Timotheos was received in the convent with due him honors and Moscow Patriarch was refused entrance.

With Abbess Juliana, who separately came to him with patriarchal messenger, Patriarch Diodoros was very friendly and told her that she should follow her conscience.

Some time later, Bishop Barnabas called Metropolitan Vasilios and tried to explain to him, why the Mt. of Olives Convent did not want to let in the Moscow Patriarch.

There are reasons to believe, that all telephones in Mt. of Olives Convent are tapped and therefore the members of the administration speak very carefully.

## A BREAK-IN INTO THE CHURCH OF THE FOREFATHERS IN HEBRON

Before leaving for the Holy Land, the Moscow Patriarch openly declared that the aim of his trip was to receive the properties of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem entrusted to the care of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

Not admitted to Mt. of Olives Convent thanks to the outstanding resolve and steadfastness of Abbess Juliana, the Moscow Patriarch went to the second point of his program, the Monastery at the Oak of Abraham in Hebron.

Realizing that Hebron would be in danger of an unwelcome visit on part of Moscow Patriarch, a prudent Mother Abbess Juliana took care that the keys from the Church of the Forefathers in Hebron be delivered to the Mt. of Olives Convent. At the same time she, with Bishop Barnabas, Chief of the Mission and three sisters of her convent hurried by car to Hebron. They parked the car next to the church, but Arab police lifted it by hand and carried it to the side.

"The cortege" of the Moscow Patriarch consisted of: 28 passenger cars, 3 buses, 5 jeeps, 50 military persons and more than 140 people who came with him.

The gates were illegally opened for the burglars by a certain "novice" Alexander who thus demonstrated himself to be a traitor.

The arrival of Alexis II was set for 3 P.M., but the Palestinian police were at the church already by 1:40 and demanded from the Abbess the keys to the church. Not believing that she did not have the keys, the police started to break the locks on the entrance door. The legal owners of the church could only helplessly watch as armed Muslims broke into an Orthodox church. After breaking down the first door, the police started to work on the second one, separating church from exonarthex. This very heavy door, covered with cast iron, took a long time to break down, so that

the arrival of Alexis Ridiger was postponed for 3/4 of an hour. Finally when both doors were broken through, this whole violent and armed horde burst into the desecrated church. Alexis II was met with a ringing of bells. The "bellringers" happened to be Muslims, who rang them so enthusiastically that they broke one of the bells. The bells rang also to accompany the departure of this guest of Jerusalem's Patriarch. At his side all the time were the Metropolitans: Timotheos, Chancellor to the Jerusalem Patriarchate and Patriarchal Deputy, Vasilios, who knows perfectly well that the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission refuses to let the Moscow Patriarch into Mt. of Olives as well as Hebron and yet, they were not ashamed to morally participate in a forced entry into others' Orthodox church.

After "praying" in the church which Muslims had desecrated on his behalf, Agent "Drozdov" calmly went to have dinner with Arafat.

After "these pious pilgrims" had left, Bishop Barnabas made sure that the new locks were installed and took the keys with him. Both Bishop Barnabas and Abbess Juliana stayed for several more days in Hebron since the Arab police for quite some time did not leave the scene of their crime.

The different cases of Gethsemane and the Mt. of Olives very obviously demonstrated the beginning of a schism that already was in existence. One abbess, very determinedly does not allow the Moscow Patriarch into her convent, in this way overruling the Synod's decision, while the other, in obedience to newest instructions of our Church authorities, not only receives a KGB agent, but even treats him to a meal.

Bishop Barnabas, who came to Jerusalem "in order to evaluate the cost of repairing a wall in the Mt. of Olives Convent" (Synod minutes, Jan. 1997) actually disobeyed a regulation of the Synod's meeting in which he participated and which he himself signed! Certainly, in this case he deserves only to be praised, but we have learned that the President of the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Vitaly, reprimanded him by telephone for disobeying the Synod's decision!

As far as the Moscow Patriarch is concerned, he could not help but know that he was forcibly breaking down (with the assistance of a Muslim police force) the doors of a church which does not belong to him and he heard loud protests from the legal custodians of the sacred Oak. But probably for him, with a career in the KGB, this is not the first time that he is witness to or a participant in such an event.

The energetic and zealous *Mother Abbess Juliana* already has made photographs of all the damage done to the church and *has lodged a legal complaint against Arafat's police and the Moscow Patriarch*. Certainly, for that she will need additional funds. Those willing to help her in defending our Holy Places from Moscow Patriarchate can send their donations to this address: The Russian Convent on the Mt. of Olives P.O. Box 19229; Jerusalem 91191, Israel.

Not only are two doors damaged in the Church of Holy Forefathers, but also a window is broken in the cupola and one of the bells is broken!

It would be very helpful if our senators and congressmen were to be informed about this incident. In connection with these events, the President of the Holy Land section of the Orthodox Palestine Society in the next few days is leaving for Washington D.C. to discuss this matter with politicians in the USA.

## THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM HEBRON

On July 5th, Hegumen Andronik from the Monastery of the Holy Forefathers in Hebron telephoned Abbess Juliana at Mt. of Olives Convent asking her to send help immediately since the Palestinians had increased their activity near the Monastery. After a short time he phoned again, upset that Abbess Juliana had not yet arrived in Hebron.

Abbess Juliana, immediately following the first call, drove to the Oak of Mamre together with the Chief of the Mission, Archm. Bartholomew, and two other nuns.

When they arrived at the Oak they saw those who were already there: the Consul of the Russian Federation, the Chief of the Moscow Patriarchate's Mission, Archm. Theodossy, along with a car full of nuns from Gornensky Monastery, a priest of the same Patriarchate, Gury, and a novice, Alexander, who is living in the monastery. Along with them were about fifty members of the Palestine police force.

The reverend Abbess attempted to explain to them that the church, living quarters and land belong to the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and not the Moscow Patriarchate, but no one would listen to her. She attempted to make a telephone call, but the lines were already cut. Then she went outside the walls of the Monastery and called from there. Two officials seemed sympathetic to her and let her call, but for this they were immediately relieved of duty and sent to Nablus. When she returned to the Oak all the doors of the living quarters were open and things were strewn about the floor, including icons and even the food stored there. Matushka transferred to her car the icons scattered on the floor. The Moscow archimandrite declared her personal icons located in the church to be his own.

The police demanded that all members of the Mission immediately vacate the Monastery without permitting even those who lived there to gather their personal belongings. Fr. Vladislav (a monk from Russia) refused to leave and held on to a column. The police began to beat his feet with a whip and then handcuffed him and forced him into a car. They deprived him of his passport and have not yet returned it. They also beat Fr. Nymphodist and in handcuffs shoved him into a car. Both were driven to the city and there released.

The Reverend Mother also refused to vacate the living quarters. Several female police officers seized her and grabbing her habit dragged her out of the building down some steps (hitting her head) and onto the street. Her entire back was bruised and she suffered concussions and her left hand was injured so that she had to be taken to the hospital. She can already move her hand, but she remains in the hospital for observation since not long ago she underwent a cranial operation. Sister Natalia was also assaulted when they hit her very hard in the stomach.

The Chief of the Mission, Archm. Bartholomew, went up to the Patriarchal priest and said to him: "If this is your kind of reconciliation, then we are better off without it." He repeated this phrase to the consul, but neither of them showed no reaction to his words. Since then, the Chief of the Moscow Mission, Archm. Theodosy, took over the management of the church and the nuns with him from Gornensky Monastery settled into the empty home belonging to the Russian Church Abroad Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem.

The Reverend Abbess told the sisters who came to visit her in the hospital that at present the Mission has no documents to prove their right of ownership to the Hebron properties. In 1985 the former Chief of the Mission, the then Archm. Anthony (Grabbe) transferred to a committee of the Synod Abroad by way of his lawyers 86 cases of Mission archives. It has now become evident that a whole series of these cases were empty for some 12 years! Thus the Mission has no documents about this property.

Evidently the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA was scarcely troubled about the position of Hebron despite the forced entry into the church on June 15, the Day of the Holy Spirit. Only after the events of July 5th did the telephones and faxes suddenly begin to work feverishly.

It was easy to let these holy places be taken over, but can the Synod ever get them back again? This is a serious question.

A delegation has been sent from the Synod of Bishops Abroad to Jerusalem to meet with Netanyahu and Arafat. The principal members are Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany, Bishop Cyril of Seattle, Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan, Fr. Victor Potapov of Washington, D.C., Archim. Theodosy Ciare, Archim. Alexis Rostentul, Fr. George Larin of Nyack, NY, Fr. Eugene Burbelo of NYC and others.

An article from the AP wires quotes Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) as calling on the Palestinian Authority (headed by Arafat) "to return the historic Abraham's Oak Monastery in Hebron to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and to release any church officials being held against their will. The use of force and the taking of hostages to settle disputes have no place in a civilized society. The Palestine Authority should act swiftly to bring this painful incident to an appropriate and lawful conclusion."

Archbishop Laurus of Trinity and Syracuse, Secretary of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA, stated: "This action is in flagrant violation of international law. We urgently appeal to our United States officials, both at home and in Israel, to take whatever legal steps necessary to redress this moral outrage and return our property in Hebron to our legal monastic residents."

## A SERB ABOUT THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In April of 1997 an interesting letter by Fr. Sava of Dechani Monastery (one of the most famous in Serbia) came over the Internet in which he characterizes the Serbian Episcopate. We quote verbatim from the English language as received.

He tells of an excellent report opposing ecumenism which was presented by the truly Orthodox Bishop Artemije of Rashka and Prizrento, who suggested that the Serbian Orthodox Church leave the WCC. His report was heard, but, as Fr. Sava writes, "Unfortunately his report did not have a positive response from our Synod. Basically, no one openly opposed, but also no one seriously supported the initiative of the Bishop against the participation of SOC in WCC."

As is the case with all Orthodox Churches which happened to be within the "Communist Bloc", the Serbian Church (one must admit under pressure) -- as per the clever phrase of Bishop Artemije -- "by the back door" joined the Ecumenical Movement. Unofficially and without signing any agreement, she sent her delegates (3 bishops) to an ecumenical gathering in 1961 and beginning in 1965 started very actively to participate in all ecumenical gatherings, resolutions and common prayers with heretics.

Then he says that the episcopate of the Serbian Church should be divided into four basic groups. The first one - is made up of those openly ecumenist, in the second are those who do not openly declare themselves to be ecumenists but approve of membership in the WCC for missionary purposes or for economic reasons. A third group consists of bishops who are indifferent toward this problem and who often change their position toward ecumenism and finally, a fourth which considers ecumenism to be a heresy and fight against it. This group is very small and Bishop Artemije belongs to it.

"The most [sic] of the Bishops in our Synod belong to the second and third group[s]. So, generally speaking, the traditional-minded ones are outnumbered by the 'modernists,' although we do not have such ultra-modernists like [sic] in some of the other Orthodox Churches."

In early spring, while visiting the USA, the editor of the international section of the newspaper "Pravoslavlje", Mr. Zh. Tucich in a telephone conversation with the editors of "Church News" acknowledged that unfortunately Bishop Artemije is in the minority and when asked if there is a chance that the SOC might leave the WCC answered that this is highly doubtful.

Fr. Sava explains such a decline of the spirit of Serbian Church as due to "some economic and practical gains": Catholics and Protestants let Serbians use their churches; some priests and missions materially depend on the ecumenists. The WCC substantially helped to build the Theological School in Belgrade and so forth. In return, the ecumenists "do not ask for anything" (except for the main thing:) "only tolerance and silence about the Orthodox Church as the only True Church of Christ"!

In November of 1994, Bishop Artemije presented to the Council of Bishops of the SOC a brilliantly written report about the heresy of ecumenism. He began with the details of how the Serbian Church got involved in this organization and listed the material support received from the WCC, but, as he said: "For these crumbs of help we have lost, in the spiritual plane, the purity of the Faith, the canonical heritage of the Church, and faithfulness to the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Faith. The presence of representatives of Orthodox Churches at various ecumenist gatherings has no canonical justification whatsoever. We do not go there in order to confess boldly and unwaveringly the eternal and unchangeable Truth of the Orthodox Church, but in order to make compromises and more or less to agree to all the decisions and formulations that the non-Orthodox offer us. It was through such actions that we arrived at Balamand, at Chambesy, and at Assisi, all of which together constitute infidelity and a betrayal of Holy Orthodox Faith." (all emphasis by "Ch. N.")

Among other things he said: "The only good thing that can be found in this whole affair is that our official representatives and participants in various ecumenists gatherings, when they return home, *do not write anything about them and do not reveal to the Church press things that could poison the Orthodox people. Frequently, even we Bishops, gathered in council, leave without being informed by our own Bishops, who represent us, of these things -- something that I consider altogether unacceptable.*"

In concluding his report, which is inspired by the spirit of Holy Fathers, Bishop Artemije of Rashka and Prizren insists that the SOC must leave the WCC for the following reasons

"1. In obedience to Saint Paul, who counsels and commands: after a first and second exhortation, turn away from a heretic.

"2. These things are not consistent with the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church, against which we have grievously sinned.

"3. There is not a single one of the Holy Fathers of the Church who would have justified our joining and remaining in the non-ecclesiastical organization of the WCC and others like it.

"4. For the salvation of our souls, of those of the flock entrusted to us, which we have severely scandalized and harmed by remaining in ecumenism, and also for the salvation of those who are still outside the Ark of Salvation, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Orthodox Church, whom our decisive and clear action can assist in their search for salvation and the Truth -- something not occasioned in the toady [sic] and godless company of ecumenism."

After receiving the report of Bishop Artemije, the Council appointed a special Committee which was to "investigate" actions of the SOC within the body of the WCC. This Committee *over the course of two years* has not come to any conclusions!

In view of this, 280 clergy and monastics of the Serbian Orthodox Church from various parts of country delivered to the Council, held from May 23 to June 4, a demand for departure from the WCC. For those who know the Serbian monasteries -- this is an exceptionally significant number of Orthodox. Usually, a Serbian monastery has just a few monks, who are mainly caretakers of Church property. The convents have a few more nuns in them.

The Appeal from these clerics and monastics begins with the words: "We, the hieromonks, monks and priests who have subscribed to this appeal are not only worried, but are also frightened, seeing what kind of satanic plans are conceived by [the] WCC for the One and Holy, Catholic Orthodox Church.

We all have to be fully aware that Ecumenism is a pan-heresy according to the Biblical teaching of blessed Fr. Justin Popovich of Chelie in his essay "The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism" he writes: "Ecumenism is the common name for the pseudo-Christianity and the pseudo-Churches of Western Europe. It completely embodies European humanism with Papism in its vanguard. All these pseudo-Christianities, all of these pseudo-Churches are nothing more than heresy. Their common name is Pan-heresy. Today in this time of the hasty preparation for the kingdom of Antichrist the Ecumenical Movement has also gathered within the WCC many pagan religions and sects which practice demonic rituals and rites... It is well known that the Most Blessed Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem has declared a cessation of all ecumenical contacts."

Unfortunately, this is not quite correct. Patriarch Diodoros indeed several years ago stepped forward very strongly against Ecumenism, but under a general pressure, especially from the Greek government, he signed all the demands and resolutions of the ecumenists, bending to the demand of the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew.

The Serbian Orthodox clerics and monastics also cite the resolution of the ROCA that anathematizes Ecumenism.

"In our time we are witnesses of the most incredible things. We can find... shocking information about the heretical behavior of some Orthodox hierarchs. How is it possible to understand that Orthodox hierarchs can be present at services served by women priests and peacefully, and without a word of protest can watch them communing the people. How is it possible to accept the fact that Orthodoxy is still present within an organization which affirms the rights of homosexual priests, allows them to serve Church services for the members of sexual minority groups, blesses the Church weddings of persons belonging to the same sex and even allows them to adopt children."

"We are asking -- HOW LONG is our Serbian Orthodox Church going to take part in [the] work of such an infamous satanic organization? Fr. Justin calls participation of the Orthodox Church in this heresy 'an incredible betrayal' and 'awful humiliation'... We ask ourselves how long will our Holy Synod of Bishops be silent while facing the fact that one Bishop of the SOC (Bishop Irinej Bulovic of Bachka) organized a reception of the Cardinal of Vienna in 1966 in his cathedral church as if someone more important than the Serbian Patriarch was coming. He took the Cardinal into the Holy Sanctuary and allowed him to kiss the Holy Table. During the liturgy he also exchanged the kiss of peace with the same Cardinal. One other Bishop (Lavrentiye of Shabac) has often taken part in common prayers with ecumenists, pseudo-Christians, pagans and sectarians."

Then the Serbian zealots discuss the question of what is unquestionably the approach of the era of antichrist and say: "The time in which we live is obviously the time of great suffering of those who seek the heavenly kingdom crucifying themselves in Christ the Saviour to be able to live with Him in eternity. Who does not want to be with Antichrist will soon have to go to catacombs, caves and deserts... So we make an appeal to the SOC and its hierarchs to reach a unanimous decision at their regular Synodal conference to leave the WCC and to stop all contact with this organization. We also expect an official statement about this issue... In case... nothing is decided on this point we, monks and priests who have subscribed this declaration, will be forced to find [a] solution according to the canons of the Holy Fathers in order to stay together with our Lord to whom we have given our oath [vows] for the salvation of our souls as well as of souls of those who follow us. Only in that way we can all be saved by Christ from the eternal perdition."

A committee of several bishops, chaired by Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro got busy discussing the relationship of the SOC with the WCC and discussed the appeal of these clergy and monastics (at that time there were already 300 signatures) and made a decision (still a better one than the one which we publish below, made by the Georgian Church) *declaring the necessity for the SOC to leave the WCC*. After 10 quite Orthodox paragraphs of reasons why the SOC should leave the WCC, the Committee in the end recommended accepting a casuistic decision, which differs very little from the one made by the Moscow Patriarchate.

*"As this decision does not affect only the inner life and mission of the SOC but all other Orthodox Churches and their mission in the world, the Commission is of the opinion that this problem cannot be resolved on [the] local level only. That is why the Commission proposes that the SOC before its final resignation from membership in the WCC should inform His All Holiness Patriarch of Constantinople and other leaders of the local Orthodox Churches about this attitude and opinion with a request that [a] Pan Orthodox Conference should be convened to discuss the further membership of the Orthodox Churches in WCC. Only after this consultation would our Church make its final decision on this question and publicly inform its faithful with the above mentioned decision."*

The officially accepted resolution of the SOC is almost the same as the recommendation of Council's Committee. This is especially sad, because Metropolitan Amfilohije used to be a disciple of Fr. Justin (Popovich)!

One thing is becoming clear, this is already the beginning of the separation on this earth of the sheep from the goats. Indeed, the Orthodox clergy and people begin to understand all the dangers of the ecumenical poison.

Unfortunately, being content with unconfirmed information about the possibility of the Serbian Church leaving the WCC, Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco on Holy Spirit Day (June 16th) hastily concelebrated with the Serbian Bishop John of Los Angeles and Western America!

The faithful were informed about the forthcoming concelebration ahead of time with the announcement that the SOC has left the WCC, although neither the Serbian religious press nor the secular gave any such information.

During the lifetime of Metropolitan Philaret, the Council of Bishops of the ROCA made a decision not to concelebrate with the Serbian hierarchs and this decision was never revoked. Even if one would presume that the Serbian Church had indeed left the WCC (which is very doubtful anyway), then still Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco had no right to concelebrate with a Serbian Bishop. He has been a bishop and a senior member of the Synod of Bishops long enough to know the basics of the canonical and administrative alphabet: no one of the bishops may concelebrate with representatives of another hierarchy who belong to a Church with which there is no Eucharistic Communion. It is not the first time that Archbishop Anthony has violated the basic Church principles for the sake of his unbounded love for the Serbian Orthodox Church.

All this information about the Serbian Church and her Council was sent over the Internet from the very prominent Dechani Monastery by Fr. Sava. As a rule, the Serbian Church almost never officially publishes any information regarding her Council's decisions.



## A STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP EULOGY (OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE) TO THE CITIZENS OF SUZDAL

The original Russian of this statement is awkward in places and we have left that as is.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

As a member of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, convened in Moscow from February 18-23 of the current year and as bishop of the Vladimir and Suzdal Diocese, I am obliged by my service to the Church of Christ to inform the Tsar Constantine Parish in Suzdal and its clergy, which some time ago departed from the Russian Mother Church into schism -- into the Russian Church Abroad (in 1989) -- and now calls itself a parish of the "Russian Orthodox Free Church," and which [parish] is considered to be its center, that the former cleric, Archimandrite Valentine (Rousantsov) for his stubbornness and unwillingness to repent of his unchurchly actions and canonical violations, has defrocked by the Council of Bishops and warns him that, in the event of his nonrepentance, he will be totally excommunicated.

However, after seven years without acknowledging their error, the other clergy also of this parish: Abbot Theodore (Gineyevsky), Priestmonk Irinarkh (Nonchin) and Hierodeacon John (Krotevitch) and also the very parishioners, who know well about our Orthodox communities of the Moscow Patriarchate in Suzdal, then this [sic] impels me to express [sic] upon all who adhere to the schism an ecclesiastical injunction: the Abbott Theodore (Gineyevsky), Priestmonk Irinarkh (Nonchin) and Deacon John (Krotevitch) are suspended, with the warning that in case of their nonrepentance they will be defrocked; also the parishioners for disobedience to their bishop are excommunicated from the Church communion.

The present Great Lent is a very appropriate time for all of you to turn to Mother Church with repentance and thus to terminate the schism which is causing scandal to "the least of these." If you do not repent, and stubbornly stay in schism, then at the end of this Lent our ecclesiastical injunction will enter into full canonical force.

Your ruling Bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal, Archbishop Eulogy

March 10, 1997

The very same statement of Archbishop Eulogy was published in the newspaper "Prizyv" of the Vladimir Region on March 27, 1997 with the personal comments about this matter by Andrew Sidorov.

He starts with the information for gullible readers about the defrocking of "him who earlier left to go under the omophorion of the ROCA, and then *established his own confession within the canonical territory of the Vladimir and Suzdal Diocese,*" the Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir, Valentine. At the end, he asks the question: "What will be the answer to this appeal of His Eminence Eulogy of Vladimir and Suzdal by the clergymen and parishioners of this ancient Russian city?"

Both the clergy and the parishioners of Suzdal and Vladimir Diocese reacted to this in two ways: one, a resolution of the general meeting, and the other, a letter to the editors of the newspaper "Prizyv." We publish both of these responses below

RESOLUTION of a general parish meeting of the faithful of the Tsar Constantine Church in the city of Suzdal, March 30, 1997.

We, the participants of a general meeting of the faithful of the Tsar Constantine Church in the city of Suzdal, upon acquainting ourselves with the publications by the regional media concerning the Council of Bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate and with the "epistle" of Archbishop of Vladimir Eulogy to parishioners of Tsar Constantine Church in the city of Suzdal do declare:

1. The departure of the clergy and parishioners of the Tsar Constantine Parish from the body of the Moscow Patriarchate has canonical foundation and cannot be considered by any as invalid.

2. The Tsar Constantine Church was handed down to a community which did not change its denominational adherence, but separated itself from communion with those who, according to the canons, cannot be considered Orthodox. We are the lawful successors of our Orthodox forefathers and will not give up our church to anyone. The Moscow Patriarchate has no right to the Tsar Constantine Church.

3. Any statements of the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate that the clergy of Suzdal are "defrocked" and the parishioners are "excommunicated from the Church" and also possible future similar "injunctions and suspensions" will not be recognized and not followed, as they issue from an unorthodox, schismatic group.

4. In response to the insulting public statements in the local media, aimed at Archbishop Valentine, at the clergy and faithful of Suzdal, we demand the publication of our material concerning these events. In case of repetitions of insulting public statements, we reserve for ourselves the right to protest.



This resolution is signed by Archbishop Valentine, Bishop Theodore, 13 priests, 3 deacons and 138 parishioners.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX FREE CHURCH -- THE OFFICE OF SUZDAL DIOCESE # 69

April 20, 1997

Esteemed Editors:

In fulfillment of the legislation of the R[ussian] F[ederation] concerning publications, we earnestly request that you publish our material enclosed below as a response to the article published in your paper "Prizyv" on March 3, 1997 entitled "Archimandrite Valentine is defrocked."

*Archbishop Valentine, now Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir, as a layman, A. P. Rousantsov, was born in 1939. He graduated from the Moscow Ecclesiastical School, a State University, an Ecclesiastical Academy, and has a candidate degree in theology (award on dissertation).*

*He served in the Moscow Patriarchate for nearly 30 years, was awarded decorations and medals by the MP, and also 4 medals by the Peace Committee.*

*In 1989 he left the Moscow Patriarchate because of the most blatant violations by its hierarchs of the Apostolic Canons, the Decrees of Ecumenical and local Councils and the rules of the Holy Fathers and entered the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. In 1990, according to a decision of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA he was consecrated in the city of Brussels (Belgium) the bishop of Suzdal and Vladimir. Recently, because the ROCA linked herself with the fascist organization "Pamyat", and also because the hierarchs of the ROCA refused to return to Russia for the sake of the rebirth of Russia and Orthodoxy, by a decision of the Temporary Church Administration of the ROFC, the latter separated administratively from the ROCA.*

*At the present time, Archbishop Valentine is the President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Free Church, ruling the affairs of the ROFC on the territory of the RF and C[onfederation of] I[ndependent] S[ates].*

In 1989, the clergy and believers of Suzdal sensed hostility on part of the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate. The church authorities, supported by the local clergy, decided to remove from the Tsar Constantine Parish of Suzdal Archimandrite Valentine a laborer of many years, who enormously contributed to the city itself as well as to Vladimir Diocese. The reason given was a refusal to give information about foreign visitors to Suzdal. The aim was to separate the pastor from the believers, to destroy the unity of a parish which had been achieved over the course of many years. The believers, seeing the rightfulness of their spiritual father, stepped up to his defense and the defense of Orthodox doctrine. However, the Patriarchate authorities, totally dependent upon theomachistic forces, who were accustomed to considering the clergy and flock their lifelong property, decided to remove Archimandrite Valentine by any means and offered him episcopal rank in exchange for betrayal. The members of the Synod demanded (among them the present Patriarch Alexis II) that he, in written form, denounce his parishioners and call them hooligans, in order to administer justice according to particular paragraphs of the criminal law. Archimandrite Valentine did not accept the role of Judas and left the Moscow Patriarchate.

There followed, immediately, accusations from the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vladimir Diocese of "schismatics", "catholics" and so on. But, in speaking of schismatics the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate had better be quiet, because their own founders created a schism by betraying the martyred Church of St. Patriarch Tikhon, the Catacomb (underground) Church and the part of Russian Church which happened to be outside the Motherland.

Those clergy and faithful who left the Moscow Patriarchate were helped by the reforms which had just begun to happen in the life of society and the RF law of 1990 concerning "the freedom of religion." We have left the false pastors, who were offering a deal instead of repentance. From those who today, instead of Orthodox doctrine, offer to the citizens wine/tobacco trade, financial speculations, export from Russia of diamonds and oil. Our path has not been an easy one. Because we stepped onto path of liberty, they spat upon us; we were dishonored and they tried to enslave us again. But in the Holy Scripture it says, "and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free". We remain true to the teachings of the Holy Fathers and the canons of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. When a tendency to force us to live not according to Christ became evident in the Church Abroad, but according to will of church superiors, we preferred to remain faithful to the ideals of the Church of God.

We send up our prayers that God would give repentance to those, who are ailing with a love of power and a thirst for revenge. This hostility which has been kindled in the Vladimir-Suzdal Region by the Administrator of the Moscow Patriarchate, Eulogy Smirnov, contradicts the principles of the Gospels. His actions contradict the Constitution of the RF and the law of "religious freedom." And he who sows the wind, will reap the whirlwind!

Bishop Theodore

## HOW THE GEORGIAN CHURCH "EXITED" THE WCC

On April 14/27, 1997, there was published an "Open Letter to Patriarch Ilia II of Georgia from the Brotherhood of the Monastery of St. Shio of Mghvime" in which these monks very fervently and precisely in 16 points with references to canons of the Church and Holy Fathers prove the heresy of ecumenical movement. This letter is signed by the Abbot of the Monastery Archimandrite George, Archimandrite John, Hieromonk Nicholas, Monk Kyrion and 2 novices: Bessarion and Guram.

The very first point of this letter states: "Ecumenism is heresy! That is quite clear. Moreover, it is the heresy of heresies."

Point 2 says: "Of all the errors which so-called "Ecumenism" comprises, the most fundamental and profound is its error concerning the very nature of the Church itself. This is an ecclesiological heresy. It is contrary to the Nicean-Constantinopolitan confession of faith, for it asserts that there is no "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

Point 3: "The so-called 'World Council of Churches' already in its very name contains this contradiction of the Orthodox Christian doctrine concerning the Church and in its 'Branch Theory' it totally rejects this dogma. And the 'Council' endeavors to accomplish this fundamental rejection by its militant practice of 'religious pluralism.'

Point 6 states: "The Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) has been an active member of the WCC for a considerable time (since 1962). This lively participation, manifested in the activities of her senior hierarch, is the path of falling away into heresy, or rather, it is essentially already heresy."

These fathers in point 8 explain very clearly, "When the Church begins in any degree to accept heretical teachings, then saving grace wanes from her. Once the Church as a whole accepts heresy, then saving grace departs from this community, since the salvation for its members has become impossible, even if they were to lay down their lives for their convictions."

Point 9 states, "There are only two routes of escape from this situation which has arisen in the GOC: either the Church renounces its error, or else those seeking salvation quit the assembly of unfaithful."

It seems that when Archimandrite George of St. Shio of Mghvime Monastery did not receive any answer to his April letter he was joined by some other monasteries. So the Abbot of Monastery of Zarmza, Archimandrite George on 2/15 of May briefly states that he: "severs eucharistic communion with Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia and Bishop Sergius of Akhaisikhe on account of their having fallen into heresy of Ecumenism."

"The Abbot of the Lavra of the Righteous David of Gredzhe, Archimandrite Gregory, severs eucharistic communion with Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II because of his heresy of Ecumenism, and resigns from the office of abbot, April 17/30, 1997."

"Betania Monastery severs liturgical communion with Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II because of his heresy of Ecumenism. Abbot of the Monastery Hieromonk Haggai, Monk Eutyches, Monk Gabriel, April 18/May 1, 1997."

Then this Orthodox movement was joined by two more monasteries and three parishes. This is obvious from their letter to Catholicos-Patriarch and the Synod of Bishops dated 6/19 of May:

"Your Holiness: Most Reverend Bishops:

"We humbly wish to inform you that with the blessing of the ruling bishops of the Shemokmedi Diocese, Kyr Joseph, a meeting of the clergy of Guria region was held on May 6/19 of this year.

At this meeting we considered the situation which has arisen in the bosom of the Mother Church, in particular, the declarations of the brotherhood of the St. Shio of Mghvime, Betania, and St. David of Garedzhe Monasteries.

We humbly beg you not to rend the robe of the Church of Christ by schism. For love's sake, resolve to leave the World Council of Churches. Otherwise we shall subscribe to the decision of the afore-mentioned brotherhoods and shall sever eucharistic communion with you.

1. Abbot of the Shemokmedi Monastery of St. Nicholas, Archimandrite Nicholas
2. Spiritual Father of the Dzikhethi Convent, Archimandrite Andrew
3. Rector of the Shemokmedi Cathedral, Protopriest Basil
4. Rector of the Church of SS. Julitta and Cyricus
5. Rector of the Church of St. George in Dvabchu, Priest Constantine
6. Deacon of the Shemokmedi Cathedral, Fr. Cyricus."

We received a translation of the Council of Bishop's minutes, translated from Georgian into Russian and English languages of the meeting of the GOC which took place on May 20, 1997 in Tblisi.

NOTE: The translation was not made by a Russian and uses the term "Synod" according to Greek conventions. The minutes are signed by Catholicos-Patriarch and 23 participating Bishops, therefore in Russian terms it should be considered a Council of Bishops.

The bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of June 11 reported that this Council was convened in emergency and in an urgent manner due to pressure from monastics and believers. The very same bulletin states that Ilia II met with the representatives of the protesting clergy, but it failed to reach any results.

#### Agenda for the Council of the Georgian Orthodox Church

1. How expedient is the continued involvement of the Georgian Orthodox Church in the World Council of Churches?

2. An examination of the *anti-ecclesiastical and anti-national* activities of those clergymen who severed eucharistic communion with the Georgian and other Orthodox Churches. (All emphasis by "Ch. N.")

1) The Holy Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church held deliberations concerning the Ecumenical Movement. It was noted that since the founding of the World Council of Churches, the Orthodox Churches became members of it. In 1962 the Georgian Orthodox Church became a member of the World Council of Churches and of the Conference of European Churches.

We consider that of late attempts are being made on the part of the World Council of Churches to give an ecclesiological character to the World Council of Churches itself, which contradicts the teaching of the Orthodox Church. Within this Ecumenical organization the interests of the Orthodox Church are not much taken into consideration, therefore the thought of withdrawing from this organization has developed within the Orthodox Churches.

In September of 1995, at the Council of the Georgian Orthodox Church the thought was expressed concerning the possible withdrawal of the Georgian Orthodox Church from the Ecumenical movement, and it was stated that, if the need should arise, the Holy Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church would make the appropriate decision concerning this matter.

*The Holy Synod took all of the aforesaid into account and in the interest of the Georgian Orthodox Church,*  
RESOLVED

1. The Georgian Orthodox Church ceases its participation in the Ecumenical movement and withdraws from the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches.

2. The Holy Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church discussed the matter of those clergy and laymen who have severed eucharistic communion with the Georgian and other Orthodox Churches on the pretext of their being members of the World Council of Churches: *thereby they have sought to introduce division into the Church. The introduction of division into the Church is called schism, which is so great a sin that, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, it cannot be washed away even by the blood of martyrdom. The Holy Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church*.

The RESOLUTION of the Georgian Church is highly controversial, because *all the clergy who signed the Orthodox confession of faith (they are 12, all named) are suspended, removed from their posts and the monks and lay people, who followed them are excommunicated!*

This resolution ends with the words: "The Holy Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church calls upon the foregoing people to repent. In the event of their not repenting, the punishment appointed by the ecclesiastical law will be laid upon them."

This outrageous resolution is signed by Catholicos Ilia II and 23 Bishops.

The whole text of the "Resolution" is worthy of attention. Not once does it mention that Ecumenism is a "heresy of all the heresies," as it is quite rightfully termed in the letter of Archimandrite George. The resolution says that there are *recent attempts* on part of the WCC to "give an ecclesiological character to the WCC itself, which contradicts the teaching of the Orthodox Church." The WCC never, from the very first days of its establishment, hid that it has in view the creation of some sort of its "super-church." The motivation for exiting from the heretical organization of the WCC in no way shows a zeal for the Church of Truth, but mainly came about because *"within this Ecumenical organization the interests of the Orthodox Church are not much taken into consideration, therefore [supposedly] the thought of withdrawing from this organization has developed within the Orthodox Churches"!*

In another words, we have before us a repulsive craftiness by the hierarchy of the Georgian Orthodox Church. If it has truly withdrawn from the Ecumenical Movement for dogmatic reasons, then it should, as per 15th Canon of the Double Council held in Constantinople in 861, deem these zealots for Orthodoxy "worthy of all honor," yet it is persecuting them for a supposed attempt to create a schism! It is very likely that a large role was played by materialistic considerations. Departure from the GOC of a number of very prominent monasteries and parishes not only affects its prestige, but (and what is important to the Georgian Church) also the "pocket." At the same time, it is very likely, that the WCC "did not take much into consideration" the interests of Georgians and was not as generous with its grants as, for example, it was toward the Serbian Church.

As we learn from "Ecumenical News International," Catholicos Ilia II was a president of the WCC from 1979 to 1983.

Nevertheless, this resolution was a great shock not only to the ecumenists. Archimandrite John Sheklashvili (himself a supporter of withdrawal) said: "We expected a long struggle and thought that the Synod would create a special

commission which would slowly consider this issue. The Synod's decision was absolutely unexpected for us and we do not think this is the best decision in current situation" (ENI Bulletin, June 11, 1997).

As per the same bulletin the representative of the Conference of European Churches said that the declaration of withdrawal of the GOC from the WCC was received but, "because of seriousness of the situation," the general secretary of the organization cannot make any comments on this matter until it is reported to the officers of the WCC Central Committee at their next meeting, which is expected to be some time in the beginning of June.

## AGAIN THE NLU !

A newspaper "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" ("Independent Newspaper") published in Moscow during month of May published a long article by a sub-deacon of the German Diocese of the ROCA, Gleb Rahr, entitled "Bright Spirit and Sober Heart" with the subtitle "Once more concerning the glorification of the Royal Family." In the beginning of the third sickening article Rahr says: "Now, before an Orthodox pastor as well as before a Russian scientist-historian stands a problem: to understand and accept the truth as it really is. Only based upon irreproachable historical truth, ("bright spirit") and our conscience (a "sober heart") can we find help to define our attitude finally to the question of the glorification of the Royal Family."

But, the "bright spirit" and also "sober heart" did not prevent this inveterate member of the provocative organization the National Labor Union [a pseudo ultra-right wing organization infiltrated by the KGB!] from slandering the Imperial Family and the majority of Russian officers by accusing the Tsar of no more and no less than desertion!

Rahr shamelessly declares that "the historians of our time and that to come, inevitably will take care to make sure that *the question of the responsibility of Emperor Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna for Bloody Sunday, for Tshushima, for Rasputin and his ilk, for an irresponsible abdication, would not be lifted, colored or forgotten nor in some other way forced out from our consciousness.*" (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

Rahr writes: "I do not know how big it is -- whether it is an absolute majority of our officers -- but in any case, quite a substantial one, perceived the abdication of the Emperor as a step which is politically, legally and *morally unacceptable, a military crime, a desertion.*" Then Rahr, without checking upon "scientist-historians" or even simply the multitude of articles, compositions and memoirs published abroad, explains the phenomenon of indecisiveness of the so-called "White Movement" as nothing more than a result of the Tsar Martyr's abdication.

By now it is already common knowledge (of course, only for those who want to know) that even the Commander in Chief, the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich together with the Chief of the General Staff General Alexeyev discussed the dethronement of the Emperor, the arrest of the Empress and her imprisonment in a convent. All the leaders of the so-called "White Movement", without any exceptions, turned out to be traitors to their oath and to a greater or lesser degree revolutionaries. It is not in vain that the Tsar in his diary on March 2, 1917 sadly remarks: "All around is treason, and cowardice and deception." The lower ranks of officers and especially the junkers and cadets, who demonstrated miracles of bravery remained faithful to the Tsar.

NLU member Gleb Rahr, together with his diocesan Bishop, Archbishop Mark, who was also a very active member of this ignoble organization, now zealously work to create a schism in the ROCA over the Moscow Patriarchate. A characteristic of this organization is to infiltrate into any living church or national body by the method of schism. Its political program is socialist (if not communist). Luckily, it seems that the members on NLU do not enjoy any success in Russia. And many people abroad got to the core of it.

## A MEETING OF THREE "BROTHERS" IS CANCELED

In # 5(61) of "Church News," we reported of the possibility of a meeting in Vienna of the Roman Pope, Patriarchs Bartholomew and Alexis II. Only now, at the last minute does it became known that this meeting was canceled.

The Moscow Patriarch Alexis II came to Jerusalem in connection with 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. There he verified that the expected meeting with the Pope of Rome in Vienna will not take place due to insufficient preparations for it. This is not the first time that a meeting of Alexis II with Pope has been canceled. Catholics began to seize Orthodox churches and, according to the Russian daily "Novoye Russkoye Slovo" of June 14, the Patriarchate was pressured to hand over to Catholics its church in Ivanovo-Frankovsk.

At the same time, another "brother" of the Roman Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew canceled the meeting for other reasons that are unclear.

According to the official publication of the Ecumenical Exarchate in America "The Orthodox Observer" the Patriarch made on May 5th in Phanar (Istanbul, Turkey). The Patriarch declared that: "to demonstrate good will toward such reconciliation, it was expected that those involved in assembly [in Graz] would avoid any unilateral action which might be interpreted as an attempt to exploit it for their benefit... In view of the importance of the assembly, participation should be in a spirit of self-criticism and repentance for errors inherited from the past, and in view of removing any impediment to our reconciliation in Christ, our God. Unfortunately, recent developments have revealed a tendency to

superiority on the part of some which are not compatible with the spirit of reconciliation. In addition, some news items have been published which are detrimental to the very spirit of assembly... His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch does not wish to be part of a tug-of-war over superiority... For the benefit of all, therefore, His All Holiness has deemed it necessary to cancel his participation in the Second European Ecumenical Assembly."

This declaration for those "uninitiated" into the secrets of Byzantine versatility poses a riddle, for it is unclear what is meant by "superiority": does this refer to the pretensions of the Pope, of Alexis II or the hurt pride of Bartholomew, whose supremacy in a Roman Catholic sense is not recognized by Alexis.

The General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches sadly blamed "the irresponsible speculations reported by the media about church leaders' summit prior to EE2, which led to this outcome."

#### THE CHURCH OF LUZHKOV-THE BUILDER

On May 23, as initiated by the Mayor of Moscow Luzhkov in the, as yet unfinished, Church of Christ the Saviour, in which several services had already been held, there was a symphony concert given in honor of musician Rostropovich's 70th birthday, who has made a substantial donation to this church. The Moscow Patriarch did not react to this outrage in any way, although many very strongly criticized this event.

One can only wonder what kinds of other concerts can be held in this restored "nation-wide" monument to Holy Russia? Were there no halls available in the whole of Moscow and was it necessary to desecrate a church?

This is not a first instance in Moscow of such a desecration of a church by a secular concert after the announcement of freedom for the Church.