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A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

"Church News" has received the schedule of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land sponsored by the Diocese of Syracuse and Trinity with the blessing of the Secretary to the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR Archbishop Laurus and the immediate direction of Archimandrite Peter (Loukianov), assistant to Archbishop Laurus. The pilgrims departed from New York on June 25th and were expected to return by the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, that means, on July 16th. This pilgrimage has two variants: one directly to Jerusalem and another with a visit to Cyprus. It is to be expected that Archbishop Laurus will participate in this pilgrimage.

The pilgrims' program is not devoid of a certain interest. On Tuesday morning, July 7th, the pilgrims will attend the Liturgy in Gethsemane Convent and at 2 PM a visit is scheduled to **Gorny convent, which now belongs to the MP**. This already by itself is unprecedented, in violation all former principles of the ROCOR.

But this is not all: for July 9th, after the Liturgy, at 2 PM a trip is scheduled to the **monastery in Hebron** (recently seized by the MP) **where a molieben will be served at Abraham's Oak!**

One should hope that among the several dozen pilgrims at least some will realize the impropriety of visiting sites seized by the Moscow Patriarchate from the ROCOR and that they would stay away. In any case, there is no doubt that this outrage is unknown to Archbishop Laurus, with whose blessing the pilgrimage was arranged and with whose blessing this program was set up.

At the same time, Archbishop Mark unexpectedly arrived in Jerusalem. As was reported to us directly from the Holy Land, Archbishop Mark came NOT as a pilgrim, but "on business" for just 5 days. From the same source we learn that Archbishop Mark met with Archbishop Laurus (which is normal) and ...at some place (Hebron or Gorny convent, both in the Moscow Patriarchate) also with the President of the Foreign Relations Department of the MP, Metropolitan Cyril Goundiayev. Jerusalem is a small place and news travel very quickly, as did this information we received.

A NEW BISHOP FOR THE ROCOR

According to a decision of the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR, assembled in New York at the beginning of May, Archimandrite Alexander (Mileant) was consecrated on May 27th as Bishop of Buenos Aires and South America.

His appointment was met with sadness on part of those clergy and lay people who are aware of his pro-Moscow, pro-Ecumenical and modernist tendencies. Metropolitan Vitaly was to "speak to him" before his elevation, but any possibility that he might change his views are less than slim. This is guaranteed by his participation in publications and administration as a rector of the Los Angeles parish, where he, being under direct jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly would disregard his orders and for no reason whatsoever has performed "general confessions."

It is quite certain that those in sympathy with Archbishop Mark's treacherous policies have obtained in his person a very convinced and active collaborator.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT "NON-EXISTENT" NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE ROCOR AND THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

The magazine "Vozvrashcheniye" ("Return"), published in St. Petersburg, in its issue # 11 published an excellently documented article entitled "Berlin Initiative" which is part of an interview given by telephone to the newspaper "Radonezh" by Archbishops Mark (ROCOR) and Theophan (MP).

Archbishop Theophan declared: "First of all, from the very start we agreed that we are one Church, and not two or even two confessions. This was Vladyka Mark's idea -- to speak of one Church and two dioceses, which, truly, are in a rather delicate situation... In general, I see no legal obstacles [i.e., collaboration, Ed.]. The only problem is **the manner of entrance of the Church Abroad into the Moscow Patriarchate, maybe some sort of reunion, I don't know what to call it. I am afraid to make definitions, which might frighten someone...** All of it might be decided in one day (Emphasis by "Ch. N."). After our dialogues, I do not see what can seriously separate us. Of course, one can invent anything, but there are no serious obstacles for reunion..."

Such is the authoritative opinion of a hierarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, who held negotiations with a representative of the ROCOR, Archbishop Mark.

Archbishop Mark, in turn, made the following statement: "In some questions we could rather quickly come to a common denominator, and in others problems arose, which we did not anticipate... **Therefore, we have to strive to transfer the discussion onto Russian soil.** [Emph. by "Ch. N."]. The idea of such discussions was born in our diocese, but **at some time we received a blessing from the Council of Bishops of our Church**" (Emph. by "Ch. N.").

The desire of Archbishop Mark to "transfer discussions onto Russian soil" most likely has the goal of keeping them as secret as possible from the large number of protesters within the Church Abroad. As in the past, communities

and parishes of Catacomb groups, as well as the numerous parishes of Archbishop Valentine are categorically excluded from these discussions. These certainly are not acknowledged to exist either by the Moscow Patriarchate, or by Archbishop Mark!

It is worthwhile to compare these two declarations with the last Epistle of the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR. If Archbishop Mark indeed led these "discussions" on his own initiative, then, why was he not publicly censured by the Council of Bishops, but remained a member of the Synod of Bishops and -- what is most frightening -- remained in charge of the affairs of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem?

At the same time, the Moscow Patriarch Ridiger/"Drozdo", it seems, has decided that the "fruit" (the ROCOR) is ripe and ready to fall into his basket. According to Moscow Interfax at the end of June, while answering reporters' questions he declared that "there are no more reasons for the separation of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church Abroad." In connection with that, the Patriarch reminded us all that the hierarchs who left Russia after 1917 "prayed for the persecuted Church." Then Ridiger declared that Metropolitan Anthony supposedly said that "when Russia will be liberated, we will offer the Patriarch a report of our activities." By the way, Metropolitan Anastassy spoke more about that than Metropolitan Anthony.

Actually, the Moscow Patriarch is saying nothing that is new to any of us. The Ukaz of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7/20 1920 # 362 gives instructions how to proceed in the event that contact with the central Church authorities were disrupted and grants autonomy not only to different groups of bishops presided over by a senior hierarch, but even to single bishops, also lacking contact with the center. Paragraph 10 quite naturally ends with the advice: "All measures taken locally according to the above instructions, in case of the restoration of central ecclesiastical authority, have to be presented for approval by the latter". The question is only that of, does there now exist in Russia a legitimate central Church authority to which the ROCOR could be accountable, or is she being offered only entry into Communion with uncanonical usurpers and heretics: Sergianists and Ecumenists?

The Patriarch said: "**We will demand no account, but believe that there are no longer reasons for separation, even more now, since the Church in Russia is free today and many millions of our contemporaries find a way to the churches and are returning to the Church**".

When our late hierarchs spoke about the possibility of freedom for the Russian Orthodox Church, they inevitably stressed that before entering into Communion there should be convened an **absolutely free and independent Local Council and without fail all arrested hierarchs must be freed so that they could participate in the Council as well as the Catacomb Bishops**. As we know, the Moscow Patriarchate categorically refuses to recognize the existence of the numerous Catacomb Church. In that period (the 1940's) when there shone a ray of hope for the restoration of a free Russia, no one could imagine that a substantial portion of the hierarchy of the Russian Church could participate in the Cheka (Chrezvychainaya Komissiya -- the "Extraordinary Committee" i.e. the secret police, known for spreading terror in post-revolutionary Russia) as has happened subsequently; nor now, starting with the Patriarch himself, it would consist of KGB agents with agency code names: Drozdov, Adamant, Antonov, Pavel, Ostrovsky, Topaz, Mikhailov, Restorer and a multitude of similar "titles." In the 90's a very prominent journalist, Alexander Nezhny, stated that no less than 85% of the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate consists of KGB agents.

And as far as a declaration of freedom for the Russian Church at present -- this is actually not liberty, but comes as a result of the intimate collaboration of the government and the higher ranks of the hierarchy. With all the talk about the "return" to the Church of famous churches, monasteries and icons, the fact is totally hushed up that a number of churches with historical value are owned even now by the state, which, in return for the collaboration of the hierarchy, at certain times permits their use and, even so, to hold a service the hierarchy has to obtain consent from the museum involved, which may refuse a request on grounds of humidity: frescos might be damaged! In addition, the believers present in such historical churches may not light candles lest they damage icons, taken from believers, with soot. Also, icons are not to be kissed, so as not to damage the paint! Sarcophagi with sacred relics often are screened off and are out of reach. For example, one cannot venerate the relics of St. Metropolitan Philip: they are fenced off and even secured with a chain! The same happens in other places in Russia where believers are not allowed to venerate relics. If now, in a state of "freedom" these offenses are permitted by the non-godless usurpers of Russian sacred sites, then one has to believe that the "free" Moscow Patriarchate on her own does not permit the veneration of relics and lighting of candles in a number of churches which 80 years ago were converted by the atheists into museums?

While talking about unification with the ROCOR, the Moscow Patriarchate continues to persecute her and with the assistance of police to seize churches which were restored by her parishioners in Russia, threaten with executions the more active of her priests and some already have been killed at its request!

The Moscow Patriarchate also does not stop slandering the ROCOR, accusing it of collaboration with the Nazis, or, for example, of Metropolitan Anastassy's alleged desire to blow up Russia with an atom bomb!

Some incautious bishops who believed the propaganda of the Moscow hierarchs about freedom of the Church in USSR have returned to Russia (Metropolitan Nestor, Archbishop Victor, Metropolitan Seraphim of Western Europe and

Bishop Dimitry of Hailar) and were appointed by the Patriarchate to dioceses, but after two or three years all of them found themselves under house arrest and were forced to agree to all orders presented to them for signature by the diocesan secretaries.

Answering a question about the possibility of the restoration of monarchy in Russia, Ridiger quite correctly answered that "today the Russian People are not ready yet for the restoration of monarchy."

Indeed, unfortunately believers in Russia number even less than half of the population of Russia and the concept of the monarchist idea of a small number of the people is expressed by wearing mock uniforms and decorations which were never awarded to them. The Christian spiritual value of the monarchist idea is completely outside the scope of their vision!

ARCHBP. MARK EXPLAINS HIS ACTIONS TOWARDS THE UNIFICATION OF ROCOR & MP

In connection with the end of the May sessions of the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR, a representative of Newspaper "Radonezh" telephoned Archbishop Mark and then published the following conversation with him in the # 9 issue.

Vladyko, we have received information about events at the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR. In particular, there were deliberations about its relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate. The Council's Epistle states that "there never were any negotiations about unification with the Moscow Patriarchate, in other words, the 'self annihilation' of the ROCOR." Can you please clarify this point?

Regarding this formulation I can answer your question in this manner: indeed, we did not have any negotiations regarding 'self annihilation' nor anything of the sort. We spoke of the difficulties which lie between us. This was included in our program and was our intention. Certainly, such formulations do not correspond with the content of our negotiations. Apparently, they have in mind here some other negotiations.

Vladyka, if I understand correctly, this formulation does not relate to the negotiations you are holding in Germany with Archbishop Theophan?

You see, it has to do with those negotiations, but indirectly. Information about those negotiations (not always correctly presented some times) has provoked a very stormy reaction. **Now, for the time being one has to abstain in some manner and very carefully bring to common knowledge information about what is actually going on. The purpose of these negotiations was misunderstood and we can not pretend that there was no scandal within our flock, that there was no storm of public opinion:** there was and still goes on. At present, our first concern is to make people understand what was it all about. (Emph. throughout by "Ch. N")

Then, could you please exactly summarize the subject of your negotiations?

I can speak only for myself, although [what I have done is] based upon Council resolutions. We did have deliberations about the fate of Russian Church in the 20th century and questions which separate us. We tried to somehow come to an understanding of one another, but within our flock this was misunderstood. There appeared some apprehensions. And now, we must, first of all, take care to calm our flock and let it know what we intended and what is happening, what we wanted and what we feel is necessary to do. We have to take our flock into consideration. *Sobornost* is always in the first rank in the Orthodoxy. If through these emotions, which preceded the Council *sobornost* was violated, if people suspected that we negotiated behind their backs, this is intolerable. Therefore now, in our own circle, we have to discuss everything, so that we would clearly stand on the foundation of *sobornost* in our Church.

Vladyka, how do you evaluate the spirit of the Council itself, its mood?

In the way all the Councils proceed, where there are differences of opinions and a wide range of them. In the end, it becomes clear, what is common, conciliar, and what is individual.

Vladyka, and now a last question: have you remained a member of the Synod of Bishops?

I did not "remain," but **was re-elected a member of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR.**

From this interview it is quite obvious that Archbishop Mark felt he had revealed his hand too soon and on the way, he quickly changes his tactics. Now, for time being, one has to be restrained to some degree and very carefully bring to common knowledge the information about what is actually going on, we are told. True to his principle, accepted by him time ago, he very sparingly informed the public of his treacherous "negotiations" in his "Herald of the German Diocese." The first very short information about initiating them appeared in January of 1993 and right away, Bishop Gregory responded to it with an inquiry to the Synod of Bishops and the President of the Synod of Bishops. Talks about the misunderstood negotiations he led with the MP, and "not always properly presented information" -- have no ground. There were published two or three quite laconic announcements in the "Herald," but even those were sufficient to cause alarm. Only with the 9th meeting, signed by him and the Soviet hierarch (probably considered by both of them to be sort of final) was at last published in the German Herald and also in some Russian papers!

Archbishop Mark underestimated the apparent passivity of the Russian Orthodox people abroad and thought that his treason would not be noticed. Yet events proved that "there is still gun-powder in the powder-horn" (from Gogol's "Taras Bulba").

His **re-election** to membership of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR (after the vile role he played in Jerusalem after the seizure of Hebron by the Moscow Patriarchate) is a blatant insult from the Council of Bishops to the First Hierarch, who (although technically in violation of the ROCOR statutes) still correctly considered it to be improper to have as a member of the Synod of Bishops such an obvious collaborator with the Moscow Patriarchate.

THERE IS NO END TO HUMILIATIONS OF THE TSAR MARTYR

by Archpr. Michael Ardiv

On July 17th a period will be put to the long lasting dramatic story of the recovery and inspection of the remains of Tsar Nicholas II, his family and their loyal servants. But no! This period, unfortunately, will not be the last; arguments about Ekaterinburg's discovery will not stop... It is comforting to know, that the ordeal around the relics will cease, they will no longer be shuffled from one morgue to another, from one laboratory to other, they will finally find a "final resting place."

Among the multitude of questions connected with this prolonged case, the most vital is the following: do the skeletons, discovered by Riabov and Avdonin really belong to the Imperial Martyrs...? For me personally there is no problem. My way of thinking is simple. If one is to suppose that we are dealing with a falsification, then one can say it is the forgery of the century. Imagine, how much efforts it would take, and above all how much it would cost, to separate out bones according to age, sex, time of violent death. And at the same time, there exists indisputable evidence that the discovered bones belong to individuals who are genetically connected among themselves as well as with representatives of the House of Romanov: their authenticity is also proven by dental experts and so on... And now, the question arises: who would spend such enormous sums just to fabricate such a falsification and for what reason?

But for some reason, none of those who have doubts about the authenticity of the remains, have bothered to pose this simple question. Instead of the sound logic, we hear references to opinions that neither the Moscow Patriarchate nor the Church Abroad believes that the remains belong to the Imperial Martyrs.

One has to note here that neither the Synod of Bishops, nor the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR deliberated on this subject and no official statements were made. It is true that there appeared in the press an interview given by the First Hierarch of this Church, Metropolitan Vitaly, who categorically states that the remains found in Ekaterinburg are a forgery. But, this is his personal opinion which in no way may be considered an official position of the entire Church. We, for example, are acquainted with clergymen serving in his diocese, who not only do not share his opinion, but keep as a great sacred object particles of the relics found in Ekaterinburg. As our readers know, in the Russian Church Abroad the Royal Passion Bearers long ago were considered saints.

Now, about the position was taken by the Moscow Patriarchate in this case. For her bishops the recognition of authenticity of the relics undoubtedly is connected with a much more important matter: the glorification of Tsar Nicholas II. And here its Synod is under enormous pressure and from two sides. Many Russians now believe in the sainthood of the Imperial Martyrs, which the Church Abroad proclaimed in 1981. And now in Russia their glorification is demanded not only on part of many thousands of lay people and clerics, but even some hierarchs...

And on the other hand... Here we recall a significant phrase which was pronounced in 1994 in a private conversation, by one of the more influential Moscow hierarchs:

"All of us (including the Patriarch) recognize Tsar Nicholas to be a saint. But we can not canonize him, because for this the Communists as well as the democrats would be against us..."

A naive person might wonder: Communists -- this is understandable: they are direct heirs of the Tsar's murderers: Lenin, Sverdlov, Goloshchekin, Yurovsky... But what have the democrats to do with it? What kinds of old scores do they have to settle with the Imperial Family?

Dear reader, do not jump to conclusions. First of all, these democrats did not descend to us out of the blue. Only yesterday they were party functionaries, officials of state security, professors of "ideological disciplines", so to say, the very same Communists, who have managed to "rearrange" the image of themselves in the nick of time.

The facts obviously testify that the contemporary rulers of Russia intend to have as little as possible of any reminders of the Romanov rule. As is known, on the banks of the Moscow River, in front of Christ the Saviour Cathedral there was a monument to Alexander III, the Tsar who completed the building of this cathedral and attended its consecration. When the talks began of "restoring" Moscow's sacred places, many words were said about "repentance," but none of the new builders uttered a word about the restoring this monument to the Tsar Peacemaker.

In St. Petersburg the Communists removed a monument to this Emperor from the Znamenskaya Place. But, luckily, the sculpture itself has been preserved; it was placed in the backyard of the Russian Museum... And now, instead of returning this monument to its proper place, it stands in a little garden near the Marble Palace...

And the tragic fate of the monument to Nicholas II? Its sculptor Viacheslav Klykov had to erect it at his own expense... No place was found in all of Moscow for this sculpture, so that it was placed in Taininsk, behind the ring way. And finally, the monument was blown up... Well, what are monuments!

Two or three years ago the builders, who were arranging the Kremlin for its hosts, accidentally found the remains of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich (brother to Tsar Alexander III) -- the Governor of Moscow. In 1905 he was brutally murdered by a terrorist, Kaliaev. It must be mentioned, that this grave had been already plundered and desecrated by the Bolsheviks. You would think that the contemporary caretakers of "Russia's glory" would put this grave in order? Or, maybe the cross made by Vasnetsov would be restored, which stood at the place of the slaughter of the Grand Duke? Nothing of the sort... They ordered the remains transferred to Novospassky Monastery under the pretext that supposedly Romanov boyars used to be buried here. And alas, the most active participant in this disgraceful act was the Moscow Patriarchate...

In this manner, we are made to think that no Imperial Russia, nor great country with her glorious history supposedly ever existed. There is and will last for ever only the "new," "democratic" Russia, the very same "federation" which disgracefully fights with Chechnya and like a pauper is chasing after foreign loans...

Naive commentators and journalists of all sorts repeat: "If the Patriarch will not come to Petersburg for the burial of Tsar, it is not proper for the President to come either..."

Come on, gentlemen! Do you seriously believe in this political spectacle? Do not put the carriage before the horse!

The intrigue here is quite simple. A full state funeral with the participation of royalty and high ranking clergy necessarily would become a step towards the canonization of the Tsar Martyr and this, we remember, both Communists and "democrats" are trying to avoid. And therefore, with rather reasonable probability, the "competent people" suggested to the Patriarch that he decline to participate in the funeral. And the easiest way to do that is to pretend that you have doubts about the authenticity of the relics...

Well, since there will be no Patriarch and no President, it is no sin to make everything cheap and simple: instead of invitations, one can send "announcements;" one can propose that the Romanovs who will come from abroad pay for their stay in hotels; it is possible to put plywood covered with paper, instead of marble under the coffins... In a word, there is no end to the humiliations to which ungrateful Russia submits her last Tsar...

Archpriest Michael Ardov,

Rector of the Church of St. Tsar Martyr Nicholas II in the Golovin Cemetery in Moscow

The question of burying the Imperial "remains" has occupied the attention of the Russian and foreign press for about 20 years and this year became especially persistent when the government of Russia decided in any case to bury the "remains" of St. Royal Martyrs and fixed the funeral on July 17th. There is little logic. Because, if the "remains" do not belong to the Royal Family, what difference does it make where and at what time will be buried the bones of unknown people? Yet, the State Investigative Committee insists (and one must believe, quite correctly) that the "remains" found in Ekaterinburg indeed belong to the Royal Family. Therefore, the government does not change its plans for the funeral, but shortens the whole procedure to a minimum, while the Moscow Patriarchate uneasily rumples about a question if there will be a funeral service and who will preside at least at some service. In any case, according to report by the newspaper "Novoye Russkoye Slovo" of June 27-28, Bishop Nikon of Ekaterinburg was restricted by patriarchal order to participate in any way at services during translation of relics. Nevertheless, in Ekaterinburg itself, during days of 15 through 17 of July, there will be forbidden any "amusement and entertainment programs in all amusement places and mass media."

"Novoye Rysskoye Slovo" of June 25th informs us that at present restoration is underway. The Imperial coffins will lie in state in the Peter and Paul Cathedral. But the "remains" will not be buried with the other Tsars, but in the St. Catherine Chapel in the Cathedral, which is hurriedly being restored. In it is the coffin of Tsaritsa Martha, wife of Tsar Theodore Alexievich (grandson of first tsar of the Romanov Dynasty Michael). Reporters say that the "builders already prepared a vault for a double grave, which will be separated by a screen into two rooms. On a upper level there will be little caskets with remains of the Emperor and his Family, and on a lower one -- the remains of his servants. A stone, which will cover the vault, sarcophagoi and canopy will be temporary ones, but later will be replaced with marble... Since the Catherine Chapel was a winter church and served actually as the sanctuary, **entrance to it will be closed**, as per guardian of Peter and Paul Cathedral, Irina Bobrova. **Yet, the doors will always stay open, so that the visitors of Peter and Paul Cathedral could see through them the double grave. But inside there will be let only those, who would want to place flowers on burial.**" There is no doubt, that the willing ones will be in such numbers, that "guardian

of the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral" Ms. Bobrova will have to start a flower shop! Although, maybe such a practical idea might have come to head of "guardian" of the museum church? After all, why not to make some money using affection and respect of numerous admirers of Tsar Martyr and his Family?

Victor Aksiuchitz, a consultant to Vice Premier B. Nemtsov told journalists of ITAR-TASS that "the Church no where and by none of her decisions expressed doubts of remnants belonging to the Emperor and his Family. The leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate is cautious about participating in the burial because of quite different church problems. If the leadership of the Patriarchate would take a more definite position, some parishes might come over to the jurisdiction of the ROCOR, which categorically does not recognize the authenticity of these remains" (?!).

An interesting declaration was made by the former mayor of St. Petersburg, A. Sobchak, who made known his letter to Vice Premier Nemtsov in which he expresses his views about the Tsar Martyr's funeral.

He believes that the remains of the Royal Family should be translated to St. Petersburg following the same route by which they were taken into exile and in addition to "schedule stops. with **moliebens**, minutes of silence, ringing of the bells and whistle of commercial places". As reported by "Novoye Russkaya Slovo" on June 30th, Sobchak believes, that "the ceremony, honoring the last Russian Emperor and members of His Family, should be worked out in accordance with laws of Imperial Russia." He also stated that he was a deputy of the president of the Government Committee established to investigate the authenticity of the skeletons found in Ekaterinburg. He has access to the source of these investigations and knows "all the details of work done by the General Prosecutor of Russia and our Committee for identification of the remains of the Family of Nicholas II found in Ekaterinburg in 1990. **I, as well as other members of the Committee do not have and did not have any doubts regarding the authenticity of the remains. Opposition by the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate to this funeral, with which we were confronted even in 1995 during the operation of the commission, can be explained in my opinion not by actual doubts in the authenticity of the remains, but by considerations within the church.**"

It seems, that former mayor of St. Petersburg better than the others involved realized the significance of the burial ceremony of the relics of the Imperial Family and it is to be regretted that Nemtsov did not accept his recommendations. In Sobchak's recommendations is interesting to note his intention to have moliebens served on the way to St. Petersburg.

All the guests (as predicted in the article by Fr. Michael Ardov) will have to pay all expenses in connection with travel to and stay in Russia, and "the inscription plaques are ready, and all are inscribed as should be. For the time being they are temporary and indeed wooden. Such is tradition" (!) we are assured by the journalists.

The Vice Governor of St. Petersburg, B. Yakovlev, declared that the final changes in the ceremony are already made and that 54 members of the House of Romanov confirmed that they will participate in the funeral. Also 23 official foreign representatives of ambassadorial rank will come.

An advisor to Nemtsov, Aksiuchitz, held a press conference at which he declared that the difficulty with the ceremony on July 17th is that "a democratic state is burying a monarch with a state funeral. Forget about the wooden inscriptions which outraged so many of the public. That is temporary. They will be replaced with Italian marble." It became also known that the number of journalists in the cathedral will be strictly limited, but the whole ceremony will be broadcast on TV.

So far, from the press it is known that some kind of a memorial service will be conducted by a priest, appointed by the MP, but even so, NO names of the Imperial Family and their faithful servants will be mentioned. A peculiar memorial service!

One should think that the majority of Russians will give a sigh of relief when this unworthy and blasphemous political spectacle will come to an end and the names of the Imperial Passion-bearers will be no longer dragged through the Russian and foreign (mainly Jewish) press. Fr. Michael is quite right when he said that "there is no end to the humiliations to which ungrateful Russia submitted her Tsar." His canonization, performed by such kind of political intriguers as the Moscow Patriarchate, would be another insult to his sacred memory.

FROM LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A trip of a Sunday school to Germany

The newspaper "Suzdal's Virgin Soil" of June 10th published an informative letter from the students of their trip to Germany on the 10th anniversary of "brotherhood" between two ancient cities" Suzdal (more than 900 years old) and medieval Rothenburg.

During Paschal vacations, in answer to an invitation from the city of Rothenburg, Archbishop Valentin brought to Germany 24 students of various ages in the school he established. The article is signed "A Student of the Sunday School" and says after a molieben in the Synod House in Suzdal, the Archbishop and children went in a bus to Germany. The trip lasted two days and two nights. Archbishop Valentin took care that children had enough soft drinks and sweets.

"On the way," the letter says, "during stops, he regularly fed us with delicious warm food, prepared by his own hands. We also amused ourselves with different games."

After arrival in Rothenburg, the hosts settled all of them in a hotel and after a short rest they were invited to the official dinner which was attended by prominent guests, representatives of the Russian consulate and also the mayors of cities in Italy, France, Czech Republic and Russia with which Rothenburg has friendly relations. The school students gave to the founder of this partnership between the two cities, Mr. Schubert, a photo album. All the children, accompanied by Archbishop Valentin visited not only the tourist attractions in Rothenburg, but also Ansbach, Nürnberg and several nearby villages. They were especially pleased by a huge swimming pool which had also slides into the water and in Nürnberg they visited the zoo with dolphins and seals.

On April 28th children returned home. Their peers in Rothenburg are expected soon in Suzdal on a return visit.

The same newspaper, of May 20th, published a thank-you letter to Archbishop Valentin from the parents for organizing this trip abroad for their children which they would not be able to afford, and also for his constant work with the Sunday school and his interest in children's performances on Christmas and Pascha.

A Generous Donation

The same paper "Suzdal's Virgin Soil" published another thank-you letter to Archbishop Valentin in which "the administration of Suzdal, and city's department of Social Services thanked the Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir for the help received from him for humanitarian aid. received by Russian Orthodox Church which he donated to help orphans and their foster parents and to those who are most in need of it. Their words of gratitude and profound thanks are addressed by the staff of Childrens' Home # 3 to Archbishop Valentin for his great gift on day of defense of children, which was received by their guardians. The grocery shelves were substantially stocked with vegetable oil, butter, flour, rice, beans and dehydrated milk. And the teacher at Children's House who suffers with a spinal injury got a four months' supply of diapers, without which she cannot survive a single day." This letter was signed by more than 10 signatures.

A CRAFTY EPISTLE FROM THE MOSCOW PATRIARCH

As July 4/17 approached the Moscow Patriarchate published an epistle, signed by Alexis Ridiger and 12 members of his Synod, which tries to explain their refusal to participate in the funeral for the holy relics of the Tsar Martyr and his Family. This year is marked the 80th anniversary of the murder of the Imperial Family and their faithful servants.

Half of this composition is devoted to the theme of "repentance." The hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate call upon the Russian people to fervently repent of the sin of the Tsar's murder and even with fasting and abstinence "regardless of their ethnic background or religious affiliation, regardless of their attitude toward the idea of monarchy or to the personality of the last Russian Emperor... so that the Lord may hear our prayers and bless our Fatherland with peace and prosperity."

The epistle calls upon the pastors and archpastors of the Moscow Patriarchate to serve on this day panikhidas for the Tsar Martyr and his Family and "all those killed and slain during the time of fierce persecution for the faith of Christ, whose names are known to the Lord."

It is worth noting the outrageous call of the Patriarchate to pray for "all killed and slain during the time of fierce persecution for the faith of Christ" is for undoubted holy martyrs!

Otherwise, one would think this a quite proper, but unfortunately belated call! Yet, there follows something quite different: it turns out, that the Moscow Patriarchate "profoundly regrets that the sad anniversary of the murder of the Emperor and his Family has been darkened by harsh arguments about the remains found near Ekaterinburg."

Then it is reported that the "remains" will be buried in the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg, but not together with all the other imperial sarcophagoi, but in the St. Catherine Chapel and that the State Committee recognized them as belonging to the Imperial Family, but, since not all are in agreement with the Committee's resolutions "In this situation, the Supreme Church Government, whose duty is to take care of the unity of the Church and to promote civic peace and concord, is called by the very logic of the conflict to restrain from supporting a particular point of view." In this deceitful declaration it is stressed that the requiem services which will be held in Peter and Paul Cathedral and other churches of Patriarchate "will not be an act of recognition or non-recognition of the scientific conclusions with regard to the 'Ekaterinburg remains,' but rather is a fulfillment of Christian duty, the Church's response to the requests for conducting a service for the repose of the souls during the burial of the remains."

SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS

published in Russia more and more often print mass and well motivated protests against the participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Ecumenical movement.

Thus, the newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("The Russian Herald") # 14-15 published a full page appeal to the Moscow Patriarch from the Abbot of the Christ-Transfiguration stavropigial Monastery of Valaam, dated the Feast of Orthodoxy and entitled "What Fellowship Hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14) which was signed by the Abbot, Archimandrite Pankraty, and all senior and regular monks, totaling 150 signatures.

This appeal is written with outstanding ecclesiastical erudition and with a very well documented critique of the WCC and of participation in it by the Moscow Patriarchate with repeated requests to depart from this heretical organization.

In the same paper, # 16-17, there is again a full page protest against Ecumenism from Dormition Monastery on the Holy Mountain, Athos. This appeal ends with the words: "Let us finally call things by their proper names, as was done by the Holy [Church] Fathers: let us call heresy a heresy and not 'another confession' -- a lie -- a lie and not 'another point of view'!" In the same paper is published a letter supportive of Valaam, by Abbot Cyril and a group of parishioners of Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas church with 20 signatures. This appeal ends with a call to all monasteries and parishes to step forward with similar protests.

"Russkii Vestnik" in issue 14-15 also published an "Appeal from the Union of Russian People" which states that "there is only one power in the world, capable of stopping the father of the lies: the Orthodox Church."

"Russian people, unite the patriotic forces within parishes. Create local chapters of the Union of the Russian People. Steadfastly defend the purity of Orthodoxy; especially protect it from those who are cunningly Judaized."

The restored Union of Russian People gives its telephone number as: 477-37-93.

Alongside these encouraging signs on the part of church-loving grass roots people, one sees frequent appeals to Alexis Ridiger, pleading with him to save them from heretical and degenerate diocesan bishops.

Of heretical bishops we hear much that is well documented from Constantine Dushenov especially, a theologically highly educated editor in chief of "Rus Pravoslavnaya." Therein Dushenov frequently and quite successfully debates with the prominent Moscow hierarchs, accusing them of treason against Orthodoxy and the violation of elementary moral and other canonical requirements of a bishop.

"Rus Pravoslavnaya" in issue # 4 on the last page published an appeal to the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Church of the MP to Metropolitan Vladimir, asking him to investigate the terrible situation in which the Bishop of Ivano Frankovsk and Koloma, Nicholas Groh, teaches his flock that "all Christians, Orthodox as well as Greek-Catholics [Uniates] **reciprocally recognize the validity of [each others'] Holy Sacraments without any restrictions.** Today there are no serious obstacles for Orthodox and Greek-Catholics to take turns praying in the same church," says this betrayer of Orthodoxy.

The newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" # 16-17 published an appeal to Alexis Ridiger complaining about Archbishop Lazarus, diocesan bishop of Crimea. A group of parishioners and Crimean Cossacks informs him that a central thrust of their bishop is constantly directed against monasteries. White clergy forbid their parishioners to visit monasteries and help them. "Vladyka Lazarus personally led a campaign for the destruction of a single convent, Topolovo in Crimea in 1955. Now, the Monastery of St. Kosmas and Damian has been practically destroyed. The Dormition Monastery is under constant pressure"... "The basic signs of the degeneration of the clergy and Orthodoxy in Crimea are: love of money, conversion of pastorship into the performing of occasional services, acquisitiveness, moral decline, nepotism, commercial enterprises of the Archbishop, the diocese and the priests, connections with criminal elements, Ecumenist activities, absence of pastoral care." This wolf in sheep's clothing even sells the parish properties for private profit and cynically admits he knows this will be his last diocese!

The unfortunate flock pleads with Patriarch Ridiger to replace Lazarus with a pious and wise bishop and also to get rid of number of criminal deans. These people already directed an appeal about their problem to Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, but he refused to see them. This appeal was signed by 156 representatives of the laity.

BURNING OF HERETICAL BOOKS IN EKATERINBURG

"Nezavisimaya Gazeta" ("Independent Gazette") of May 29th reports with great indignation the burning of a number of books which were on the shelves of the local seminary library by order of Bishop Nikon of Ekaterinburg and Verkhoturk. The same information comes also from the newspaper "The Daily Telegraph," published in England on June 4th.

The burnt books were authored by the clergymen Alexander Schmemann, John Meyendorf and Alexander Men. The books were burned in the seminary's yard in the presence of some seminarians and teachers.

It is quite certain that the burnt books belong to a group of extremely harmful ones for Orthodox readers: Meyendorf and Schmemann were modernists, while Men (a baptized Jew) was dreaming about a Hebrew-Christian Church and even with an Jewish Patriarch, besides, he was known to be a convinced Ecumenist. Therefore, the order of Bishop Nikon has to be congratulated, but with reservations. Taking into consideration the popularity of those authors in

wide circles it would be wiser not to destroy the books, but to instruct seminarians how to refute such teachings, giving necessary information to future pastors for a proper evaluation of Ecumenism and not to deprive them of information vital for future discussions on this subject with their flock.

DEPARTURE OF THE BULGARIAN CHURCH FROM WCC

The headquarters in Sofia of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church announced on May 27th that the church is leaving membership in the World Council of Churches. This official announcement of the central office of the Synod of Bishops of the Bulgarian Church was published on the Internet in English translation by a Bulgarian named Petko.

The Bulgarian Church declared that a century of Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical Movement and fifty years of membership in the WCC has resulted in "unsatisfactory progress" and instead of the expected union among Christians, on the contrary, there developed a rift not only among the Protestant groups, but even among the Orthodox.

Therefore, "With respect to the above stated, the Holy Synod of the BOC, in a plenary session on April 9th, 1998, (new style), made the decision to quit its membership in the WCC, having taken in consideration the deviations of the WCC, as well as the fact that the BOC, having frozen its membership in the WCC, has not deposited its fee intentionally in the last few years and has not participated in the conferences called by the WCC..." "The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church declares that it will consider whether it should send its representative to Harare, Zimbabwe, for the General Assembly of the WCC in December 1998, or we should announce in written form to the WCC that we have already discontinued our membership."

ABOUT THE RUMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND HER RELATIONSHIP TO ECUMENISM

The official newspaper of the Serbian Patriarchate "Pravoslavlje" ("Orthodoxy") on June 1st published an interview, which was given to an Orthodox priest Athenagoras (Peckstad) by Daniel, the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina, who is 47 years old.

He graduated from a theological school in Rumania, then studied in Strasbourg (France) and in Freiburg (Germany). From 1980 he taught in the Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland. The interview by Fr. Athenagoras was broadcast on radio.

After the first question, Metropolitan Daniel said that due to the revolution which occurred in Rumania in 1989, the population was drawn to Church and the urgent restoration of desecrated and destroyed churches began. Very important was the permission to restore the teaching of religion in the public schools, but the same rights are also enjoyed by other minorities: 13 different Western Christian denominations, Muslims and Jews. During the Communist regime, the Church had only 2 high level theological schools and 5 seminaries. Now there are 14 high level theological schools and 36 seminaries.

With this new freedom of religion in the Rumanian church new problems developed connected with the appearance of numerous sects who constantly and shamelessly proselytize among the Orthodox.

Answering a question about the organization of Rumanian Church and popular participation in it, the Metropolitan said that out of a population of 23 million, some 20 million are Orthodox. The Church has 20 dioceses, more than ten thousand parishes and 350 monasteries. There is a shortage of clergy and therefore some new theological schools were opened. At the same time, there is a rapid growth of brotherhoods in Rumania, societies of Orthodox women, Orthodox medical doctors... There are societies which minister to broken families.

In Rumania, especially in Moldavia, there is a multitude of monasteries and their importance increases constantly. In Yassy Diocese there are 85 monasteries and the whole metropolia has 150. Monasticism traditionally enjoys love and respect of the population, who visit them often, spend extended periods of time in them and leave behind their commemoration lists and donations. Fr. Kleopa, the confessor in the monastery of Sikhastria is especially renown. Metropolitan Daniel himself was tonsured in this monastery. He stressed that the monastery has a contemplative tradition, but now has become more open. Each week it is visited by some 500 to 700 pilgrims. At present, it combines a pastoral ministry with social concern.

Priest Athenagoras was also interested in the Ecumenical question in Rumania. Metropolitan answered that he was a member of the committee which was preparing for the meeting between the Pope and Alexis Ridiger in Gratz, he was also a Vice-President of the Assembly of European Churches which was held shortly after the meeting in Gratz. He noted that the activity of the WCC has noticeably slowed, but did he not mention a word about ever growing protests of Orthodox against Ecumenism and just said this was due to "cultural and political changes" and the emergence of new religious groups. "Today there is a noticeable rise of sectarians who oppose the aspiration toward Christian unity for the sake of acquiring their own ethnic and religious identity. As in the West, the establishment in the East of ethnic identity is connected with a religious, so that Ecumenism is often seen as a representative of a sort of relativity in doctrine and Christian morality".

Then this Ecumenist Metropolitan said that "one has to distinguish the positive sides of the Ecumenical Movement from those which might be dangerous. One has to proceed with discernment... In my opinion spiritual [?] Ecumenism contains a source of hope..."

ONE MORE SHAMEFUL ACT OF CONTRITION

At the time when Bishops Paisios and Vikentios were still Orthodox, in some cases they made some unflattering remarks about the Jews in their newspaper "The Voice of Orthodoxy." This was pointed out to them not only by Jews, but apparently also by the Ecumenical Patriarch and therefore, on May 21 Bishop Vikentios published the following "press release":

"We are saddened and deeply ashamed by these past statements regarding Jews. In the past our publications did indeed reflect an unenlightened attitude toward Jews, perpetuating some anti-Semitic myths whose origin extended back into Medieval times. We categorically deny these lies, and genuinely seek forgiveness for having communicated such un-Christian sentiments. We categorically reject all forms of anti-Semitism." Then Vikentios continued: "The words of the Ecumenical Patriarch at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum continue to guide and inspire our views, and we look forward to the growth of our relationship with Jews and with the diverse peoples of the United States... The Greek Orthodox Church of America gives thanks to God for the honest and loving rapprochement between the formerly independent Old Calendarist Churches who have not only joined the Great Church of Christ, but have repudiated any and all forms of anti-Semitism. We were privileged to bring together the Hierarchs of the Stavropigial Churches and our friend, the Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee Rabbi, A. James Rudin, at a gathering in honor of the Patriarch and Catholicos of All Georgia, His Holiness and Beatitude Ilia II. Meeting together in a spirit of fellowship and mutual respect, the seeds of Christ's commandment to love one another grew and blossomed with rapidity that could only be of our Lord's making..."

Rabbi Rudin immediately reacted to the declaration of Paisios and Vikentios with his own press release. Not a bit touched by their repentance, the rabbi said: "The expression of regret on the part of Metropolitan Paisios and Bishop Vikentios represents **a necessary first step** [emphasis by "Ch. N."] in purging their group of the ugly pathology of religious anti-Semitism. What is needed now, after public repentance, is to translate the message of these statements into the daily spiritual life of the Old-Calendarist Church and all its members. This is especially true in areas of preaching and teaching on the local level. Such statements issued by the church leaders, welcome as they are, must always be followed by concrete actions and full implementation in all aspects of life... The American Jewish Committee recalls with deep appreciation the powerful words spoken last October at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, when he repudiated anti-Semitism and called the Holocaust an 'icon of evil'."

Can these "bishops," after be re-tonsured and re-consecrated, fall any deeper?

A TRIUMPH OF THE SODOMITES

The New York Times of June 22 reported that in the town of Fair Lawn, N.J. in an Episcopal church there was performed a "wedding" on "Fathers Day" for two men, one of whom legally changed his name and added to his last name the name of his cohabitant. This outrageous ceremony was attended by relatives of both "spouses." The "wedding" was performed in the Newark Diocese of Episcopalian Bishop Spong, who is known as a protector of perverts. Newspaper published a photograph of those two sodomites while holding hands with a three year old boy. Both perverts draped themselves with yellow-lowered leis, which they also handed to their clergyman, relatives and friends. The leis were gifts from two homosexuals in Hawaii. The poor boy was legally adopted with a lot of difficulties at the age of 3 months by the "couple."

This case is considered to be a precedent for other states in the USA and a very important judicial victory for sodomites and lesbians.

WRESTLING WITH "THE FISH"

The New York Times on June 23 reported that little town of Republic, MO decided to have its own logo. This town has some 8,000 inhabitants and of course, of different religions. A contest with a \$100 prize to design a logo was won by a woman who separated an oval into 4 sections and in one of them, as a religious symbol, instead of the Cross, she placed an image of a fish, so as not to anger the Jews. As is known, this symbol was used by the Christians of the first centuries since the first letters in Greek of the phrase "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour" spells "fish."

Someone informed the American Civil Liberties Union that a fish is a religious symbol and as such in no way may appear on a town's logo and as it said in the protest, "We believe the city's seal violates the First Amendment's

prohibition against the establishment of religion" and demanded the fish symbol be removed from the seal. The citizens already have collected \$10,000 for the forthcoming court trial, although the costs are expected to exceed \$100,000. Nevertheless, these citizens decided to fight "for the fish" to the very end.

AN EXCELLENT BOOK AGAINST ECUMENISM

A few months ago in St. Petersburg (Russia) there was published another excellent book by the Dr. of Philosophy, Ludmilla Perepiolkina, who already published several outstanding books on theme of critique of ecumenism.

This latest book "Ecumenism -- Path Leading to Perdition" as well as her other books is distinguished by the strictness of Orthodox views and is very rich with documentation. The book has more than 400 pages and bibliography alone has 14 pages. This publication of L. Perepiolkina has already been translated into English and hopefully we will soon see also the English edition.

Unfortunately, no where is the price of this book mentioned nor where and how one can purchase it!