



CHURCH NEWS

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF ORTHODOX CHURCH OPINION

October, 2000
Vol. 12, No. 7 (89)

Supported by the voluntary contributions of its readers.
Republication permitted upon acknowledgment of source.

CONTENTS

REPOSE OF ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY OF SAN FRANCISCO AND WESTERN AMERICA
"MIRACLES" IN THE WEST-EUROPEAN DIOCESE
EPISTLE OF THE HIERARCHICAL SYNOD OF THE RUSSIAN (ROSSISKOI) ORTHODOX
CHURCH TO THE HIERARCHICAL COUNCIL OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
ABROAD
"AN APPEAL OF THE RUSSIAN CLERGY OF THE ROCOR TO THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE ROCOR" -- COMMENTARY
THE SERBIAN CHURCH AND CATHOLICS
DATA ON THE KGB ACTIVITIES OF ALEXIS RIDIGER
METROPOLITAN CYRILL OF SMOLENSK ABOUT "THE TURIN SHROUD"
AN AMAZING INTERVIEW
A NEWLY PROCLAIMED SAINT IN THE "ORTHODOX CHURCH"
"VERSENIEV PAGES"
THE JEWS REACH OUT TO CHRISTIANS
A SPIRITUAL BACCHANALIA IN KIEV
A CHANGE IN THE VATICAN'S POLITICS?

CHURCH NEWS
639 Center Street
Oradell, NJ, 07679-2003 USA
Tel: 201-967-7684

REPOSE OF ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY OF SAN FRANCISCO AND WESTERN AMERICA

On Saturday, August 10/23, after a serious illness one of the senior Bishops of the ROCOR, Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco and Western America, born Artemy Medvedev, reposed in a San Francisco hospital. Vladyka was born in 1908 in western Russia's, Vilno.

As a result of the Revolution he happened to be in Crimea where he enrolled in the Crimean cadets corps and with it evacuated to Yugoslavia where he completed his studies. Right after the graduation of the Crimean Corps in Yugoslavia, he walked to Milkovo Monastery, which was donated by the Serbian Church for Russian use. At that time the Abbot was Archimandrite Ambrose, who was one of the very last novices from the Optina Hermitage (prior to Communist destruction of it). In 1932 Archimandrite Ambrose tonsured him and gave him the name Anthony.

In 1938 Hierodeacon Anthony was ordained to the priesthood by a Serbian bishop and at the beginning of the Second World War was appointed chaplain to one of the regiments in the Russian Protective Corps, an anti-Communist unit in the German army. In this obedience, Fr. Anthony was very much loved and respected by his military flock for his outstanding bravery, love and willingness to go out of his way to help. While receiving an officer's salary and also an officer's rations, Fr. Anthony widely distributed the former among the cadets, specially by the never returned "loans", and the latter among the undernourished Russian people in Belgrade.

In 1956 Archimandrite Anthony, in spite of his tearful requests not to put on his shoulders the yoke of the episcopacy, nevertheless was consecrated and appointed to Australia, where he remained until 1967. In 1968 he was appointed to the San Francisco see and remained there until his repose.

Archbishop Anthony loved and knew the church services very well and was a very prayerful hierarch.

In 1992 Archbishop Anthony, together with Archbishop Laurus incognito, as plain monks, visited Russia. They went to the Kievo-Pecherskaya and Pochaev Lavras, also various other places of Ukraine, where they attended services and met with local clergy. Both archbishops liked very much Bishop Sergius of Tarnopol.

Archbishop Anthony, despite his grave illness (cancer) hoped to attend the present Episcopal Council and even purchased a plane ticket, but the Lord had other plans.

The funeral service (at his request in the monastic rite) and burial were performed in the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville on Thursday, September 15/28th with many of the clergy and his admirers present.

'MIRACLES" IN THE WEST-EUROPEAN DIOCESE

The West-European Diocese with its headquarters in Geneva, even under Metropolitan Philaret never failed to "divert" the Synod of Bishops administration with its independence and canonical violations, especially with unauthorized concelebrating and awards to clergy of this diocese unknown to the Supreme Church Authorities. Yet, when the news would reach Metropolitan Philaret about these violations, the ruling bishop would be questioned and requested to forward explanations of this or that fact and to submit an after-the-fact request for the presentation of an award. At one time this led to seriously strained relations between the First Hierarch, the Secretary of the Synod and the Ruling Archbishop of the West-European Diocese, Archbishop Anthony.

With the repose of Metropolitan Philaret, the willfulness of the West European diocese began to increasingly overstep the limits. At the present time the actual ruling Bishop of this diocese, Bishop Ambrose of Vevey, is a vicar-bishop of Archbishop Seraphim. For example, in the Geneva church the parishioners are admitted to Communion, even when they do not hide the fact that they already have had breakfast before the Liturgy! Nor does anyone stop women from wearing slacks in church.

According to recently received information from Switzerland, Bishop Ambrose announced a pilgrimage to Turin, where he planned to serve a moleben in front of the reputed Catholic forgery, the Shroud of Turin. Luckily this "pilgrimage" was canceled: at the last minute they learned that in order to see the "Shroud" the group has to have at least 50 participants. Bishop Ambrose could not gather that many people. At the same time it was learned that also a "pilgrimage" from Germany's diocese originated in Munich. On October 7th six monks from the Monastery of St. Job of Pochaev, headed by the Abbot Agapit showed up in the Geneva cathedral and three of them participated in the service. They made a stop on their way home from Turin as part of a group of 50 people, mainly from Hamburg, which had venerated the "Turin Shroud". Priest Peter Sturm of Switzerland also participated in this event.

At the same time, His Grace Bishop Ambrose lives by his own calendar "style". If the holy days (even the 12 Great Feasts) fall on weekdays, he simply transfers them to Sunday. This September, Bishop Ambrose transferred the feasts of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin and the Beheading of St. John the Baptist to Sunday!

The Serbian bishops repeatedly serve or concelebrate in the Geneva cathedral, in this way violating the rules of their own hierarchy as well as those of the First Hierarch of the ROCOR. One recently serving Serbian priest at the Great Entrance commemorated Serbian Patriarch Paul!

The First Hierarch of the ROCOR, Metropolitan Vitaly, has been informed of these outrageous violations.

**EPISTLE OF THE HIERARCHICAL SYNOD OF THE RUSSIAN (ROSSISKOI) ORTHODOX CHURCH
TO THE HIERARCHICAL COUNCIL OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD**

August 21/September 3rd, 2000 # 70

Your Eminences, honorable Archpastors – members of the Hierarchical Council, and also clergy and children of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad!

The Hierarchical Council of the Church Abroad opens at a time when, on the one hand the whole world is being shaken by events, each more terrible than the one before – catastrophes, elemental disasters, wars: on the other hand, the whole world is seized by a certain fever for unification. This is observable not only in the political life of the world, but also in its religious life. On the one hand, endless disputes, on the other – a haste to unify everyone and everything: states with states, churches with churches, and religions with religions.

The fever for unification that embraces the earthly globe manifests itself in various external forms – sometimes political, sometimes economic, and sometimes also in an ecclesiastical-ecumenical form – but its profound essence remains unchangingly the same. And in this the zealots of unification place definite hopes on the hierarchs of the ROCA.

But can the Orthodox Church surrender to this spirit of the times – that Church which is unshakably “built of the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2: 20)?

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved” says the holy Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor. 15: 1-2). In another Epistle, to the Galatians, he says: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1: 8). But to those who have preserved the holy Gospel there is the promise of being comforted: “by the mutual faith both of you and of me” (Rom. 1: 12).

If we open the Acts of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, we see that the holy builders of the Church struggled for nothing other than the preservation and support, in its unchanging form, of the faith of the fathers. “We pray you that you keep the faith of the fathers unchanged”. “We beseech you to investigate the novelty that has been introduced against the former faith” – this is how the zealots of the Orthodox Faith addressed the Holy Councils. And, having investigated the novelty, and rejected the innovations, and confirmed the Dogmas of Orthodoxy unshaken, the Holy Fathers exclaimed: “Yes, this is the faith of the fathers! This is how we all believe”!

If we open the works of the Russian teachers of the faith that are close to us, we see the same care first of all for keeping the patristic teaching unchanged. “Human teachings all strive for that which is new, they grow, they develop: Thus it has become a law: forward, forward! But in regard to our faith it was said from the high: stand, remain unmoved. All that remains for us to do is to be confirmed and confirm others,” appealed the noted holy hierarch of the Vladimir region, Theophan, the Vishensky Recluse. “We have to look over all that has passed in order to see whether the order of teaching that was outlined for us has in any way been disturbed”. (“On Orthodoxy with Warnings against Sinning against It”, Sermons of Bishop Theophan, Moscow, 1991, from “Sermons to the Flock of Tambov and Vladimir”).

In 1917 “he who restrains” was taken away – and this had fateful consequences not only for Russia, but also for the whole world. Within two years of the murder of the holy Martyr Tsar Nicholas II, in 1920, the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in the person of the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Dorotheos of Prussa, issued an encyclical which threatening the very foundation of Orthodoxy. Heretical communities that have been separated by the Orthodox Church from Her communion were declared to be “churches” having equal rights with her, and Orthodoxy was given the goal of the speediest possible unification with all the apostates.

In contrast to this treacherous document, which marked the beginning of the global apostasy of “World Orthodoxy”, in the same year of 1920 the holy Patriarch Tikhon together with the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council – that is, undoubtedly with the whole fullness of the central ecclesiastical authorities of the Russian Church – made a most important resolution, Ukaz # 362 of 7/20 November 1920, on the self-definition of dioceses in conditions of possible persecution. The other name for this ukaz – the ukaz on decentralization – underlines the fact that the aim of the resolution of the Russian Ecclesiastical Authorities was contradictory to the aim of the encyclical of the Ecumenical throne, which called for the centralization of all confessions of faith.

From then on, the broad path and all conditions for unification were created only for the unfaithful: but for those faithful to Christ a violent disunion lay in store: the two parts of the Russian Church were disunited: the one found itself exiled from its native land, while the other was driven into the catacombs by persecutions unprecedented in their ferocity. But in these terrible years the Church of Russia did not cease to constitute one spiritual whole.

The force enabling both parts of the Russian Church to hold out and preserve their unity in all temptations, especially in the approaching most terrible period – the epoch of the Sergianist schism – was their unanimous confession of the Faith of the Fathers.

“Schism is not antiquity, but novelty”, pointed out Theophan the Recluse. This remarkable definition has a universal character and allows one always to accurately establish who is truly guilty of schism.

By his treacherous Declaration of 1927 Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) opened wide the gates of the Church to Renovatism. It consisted in the undermining of the very meaning of the existence of the Church on earth – not as the pillar of the truth and of eternal authority, but as the weapon of earthly power.

Both parts of the Russian Church – the part in Russia, and the part Abroad – were completely unanimous in their attitude to the Declaration of 1927. The Episcopal Synod of the Church Abroad, headed by his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony, broke communion with the schismatic metropolitan and his synod. The bishops in the homeland that were faithful to the Russian Church did the same. The essence of the Sergianist schism was very accurately expressed by the New Martyr Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov), when he called Sergius an anti-ecclesiastical heretic. The faithful children of the Russian Church did not attend the Sergianist churches, they justly made no distinction between Sergianists and Renovationists. "We shall not go to Renovatism", said the Orthodox. Communications were lost with Metropolitan Peter (Polyansky), the lawful head of the Russian Church, who was in prison, and the treachery of his Deputy forced the Church, both in the homeland and abroad, to be ruled in its canonical existence by Ukaz 362 of Holy Patriarch Tikhon concerning the self-definition of dioceses. With the death of Metropolitan Peter (Polyansky), the Central Supreme Authority of the Russian Church ceased even in its nominal existence. Such an eventuality was foreseen by the Ukaz 362, which contained detailed recommendations for the ordering of the Church which would avoid schism in this event. But through the efforts of Metropolitan Sergius, a dual authority was introduced, and then a false patriarchate (a common phenomenon, alas, in Church history during the periods when heresy was dominant).

From now on the Russian Church trod its path under conditions of the absence of a Central (Supreme) Ecclesiastical Authority. When the last Orthodox Churches were closed in Russia in the 1930's, the Russian Church finally departed into the catacombs, preserving communion in prayer with her half that was abroad and commemorated her First Hierarchs Metropolitans Anthony, Anastassy and Philaret. Following the Spirit and aim of the Ukaz 362 of holy Patriarch Tikhon of 7/20 November, 1920, kept the Orthodox Church reliably free of false strivings for unification.

This was not the case with the Sergianist church – it grew strongly into what is now commonly called "official world Orthodoxy". The latter was also ruled by a document of 1920, but the document of an opposite tendency – the ecumenical encyclical of the Locum Tenens of the Ecumenical Throne, Dorotheos. "World Orthodoxy" became an inalienable part of the Ecumenical Movement and dragged the Sergianist church into the abyss. Through the gates opened by Metropolitan Sergius there now poured without the slightest resistance the false teachings by which the enemy of the human salvation has, in the course of the whole of his struggle with the Church, and especially in the 20th century, undermined the teaching of Christ.

The Sergianist church accepted all the most destructive innovations of the 20th century – both Communism, and Ecumenism, by which it clearly marked its complete attachment to the most terrible schism that ever tormented the Universal Church.

If Metropolitan Sergius, as the holy new martyrs pointed out, had "distorted the dogmatic face of the Church", then under his successors we must speak no longer of distortion, but of a complete overthrow of the Holy Dogmas, and first of all – the Dogma of the Church as being one and only one. In consequence of this trampling on the Holy Dogmas there appeared lamentable violations of the Holy Canons – for example, the categorical ban on joint prayers with the heterodox under threat of being deprived of one's rank and expelled from the Church.

Is it necessary to cite examples of the excesses of the Ecumenists, which are the more blasphemous in that they have been committed in the name of Christ?

In 1983 those abroad had the opportunity of seeing on television the raising of a pagan idol by delegates of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, among whom were representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate, while in Russia in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" in its account of this Ecumenical Assembly was not ashamed to mention this hideous act in the most positive terms.

After the ecumenical assembly in Vancouver the Russian Church Abroad, headed by the holy Hierarch Metropolitan Philaret, in its Council in Mansonville in 1983 delivered Ecumenism to anathema.

With the fall of the "Iron Curtain", there finally appeared the opportunity for the forcibly divided parts of the Russian Orthodox Church to unite. But it turned out that in the years that had passed since the death of the holy Hierarch Philaret (1985), too much had changed in the Church Abroad – and a significant part of it was under threat of falling under its own anathema.

The concelebrating of clergy and even bishops of the Church Abroad with the clergy and episcopate of the ecumenist Orthodox Churches – which was to have ceased after the Mansonville council of 1983 – again became a commonplace phenomenon. The concelebrating of the majority of the hierarchs of the Church Abroad, not to speak of the other clergy, with the ecumenical Serbian patriarchate became a real scourge. And these concelebrations took place in spite of the fact that this Patriarchate almost exceeded the Soviet Sergianists in ecumenist enthusiasm, while her relationship with her local Communists was just as submissive as was that of her Soviet "sister". These concelebrations have not ceased even now, after the recent epistle of the Serbian Patriarch to his Muscovite brother, in which he affirms that his patriarchate no longer has communion in prayer with the ROCA.

It was also with a heavy feelings of perplexity that we observe the hasty proclamation at the episcopal council of the ROCA that took place in 1994, that the ecclesiology of Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili and Oropo was identical to the ecclesiology of the Church Abroad. We cannot accept as Orthodox the basic position of this ecclesiology – that the saving grace of the sacraments can supposedly be guaranteed to abide in heretical communities, albeit only up to their conciliar condemnation. This Greek metropolitan with his followers calls the hierarchs of "World Orthodoxy" the "sick"

members of the same body of Christ -- His True Church. One branch is healthy, the other sick. We understand that the ecclesiastical resolution of the Council of 1994 is a natural step further downwards after the Nativity Epistle of 1986, which was distributed under the signature of Metropolitan Vitaly, in which the meaning of the anathema against ecumenism accepted in 1983 was restricted, against all logic, to "members of our Church" (that is the Church Abroad) -- as if an anathema applies, not to a heretic, but to jurisdiction! But we also saw, and we see to the present day, that there are enough people in the Church Abroad who understand the whole destructiveness of the resolutions, and that these people are trying to correct the mistake of the Hierarchical Council of 1994.

But of course we perceive with the greatest heaviness the ever-increasing tendency of the Church Abroad towards union with the Moscow Patriarchate. It is worthy of note that the very possibility of negotiations with her was sanctioned in principle by the same council of the ROCA in 1994 which recognized the crypto-Ecumenist ecclesiology of Metropolitan Cyprian.

At the time when Moscow Patriarchate was preoccupied with unity with the Catholics (cf. the Balamandunia of 1993 -- this document has not been disavowed: on the contrary, certain of its positions have been widely realized in life) and with the Monophysites (the Chambesy union of 1990; within the bounds of the program in it the Moscow Patriarchate is now getting very close to the Armenian Monophysite church), certain hierarchs of the Church Abroad have been insistently seeking to get closer to the Moscow Patriarchate -- even in spite of the fact that the Patriarchate takes less and less account of the existence of the Church Abroad, expropriating her property now not only in Russia, but also abroad. This has delivered a huge blow to the dignity of the Church Abroad and her hierarchy even in the eyes of "outsiders". But still sadder is the fact that this witnesses to the apostasy of part of hierarchs of the ROCA from the path bequeathed to her by the first-hierarchs Metropolitans Anthony, Anastassy and Philaret -- that is, to their apostasy from Orthodoxy.

If the other healthy part of the ROCA does not find within itself the strength to halt the efforts of the apostates, then the final degeneration of the ROCA into a false ecclesiastical organization and Her subsequent dissolution in the ecumenist "great and spacious sea" (Ps. 103: 27) of "world Orthodoxy" will become a burning question in the nearest future.

In Russia the stand-off between the Church Abroad and "world Orthodoxy" in the person of MP has taken a particularly acute form, and therefore the Russian parishes of the ROCA did not have the possibility of waiting many years until the hierarchs abroad re-establish Church discipline and were again established on the path of the holy Hierarch Philaret. This was the cause of the break in eucharistic communion between the Russian (Rossiskoi) Orthodox Church and the Episcopal Synod of the ROCA which took place in the 1995. Unfortunately, our actions at that time did not meet with understanding on the part of the clergy leadership of the ROCA, which, contrary to the spirit and the letter of Ukaz # 362 and its own evident inability to restrain the tendencies toward apostasy from the faith in the dioceses Abroad, began to insist on its own full right to realize supreme ecclesiastical authority in Russia.

The five years that have passed since then have shown whether or not we were right in our fears.

Our position remains: faithfulness to the dogmas and holy canons of the Orthodox Church and, moreover, the preservation of the Orthodox Faith without contamination from the ecumenical filth of "world Orthodoxy" and the organic part of it -- the Moscow Patriarchate. It was this path that her ever-memorable First-Hierarch, the holy Philaret, left the Russian Church Abroad to us, his successors, and this position of ours is similar to that of the majority of Old Calendarist Greek hierarchs and their flock. We have no "separate" claims in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate: it is no more than a part of the global and now already Ecumenist Sergianism, which with the same zeal that Metropolitan Sergius once served Stalin now serves the New World Order and the coming unification of everyone and everything. It is in no way worse or better than some Serbian or Constantinopolitan patriarchate. The Russian Orthodox Church under the holy Hierarch Philaret broke canonical communion with all these Ecumenist jurisdictions.

If you, your Graces, honorable Archpastors, clergy and laymen, choose to return to the faith of the fathers -- the holy fathers of Universal Orthodoxy and the fathers of our Church Abroad -- then we shall be together again. Unity of canonical communion will be quickly restored between us, as soon as unity of faith is restored.

But if it is not -- if within the Church Abroad there is not found the strength to stop Her slide into the quagmire of "world Orthodoxy", then the end is inevitable: the Moscow Patriarchate will suck up into itself her remains scattered around the world, and the muddy waters of Ecumenism will close above Her head forever.

May this not be!

The means of salvation are the same for all the times: to hear and to carry out, amidst the Wavering, unstable elements of the world, the everlasting voice of the true Mother Church uttered from on high: As you have believed -- "in that stand and be saved" (I Cor. 15, 1).

+ VALENTINE, Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir, President of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian (Rossiskoi) Church.

+Theodore, Bishop of Borisovskoye and Sanino,

+ Seraphim, Bishop of Sukhumi and Abkhazia

+ Victor, Bishop of Daugavpils and Latvija

+ Hilarion, Bishop of Sukhodolsk

+ Anthony, Bishop of Yaransk

Protopriest Andrew Osetrov, Secretary to the Hierarchical Synod

"AN APPEAL OF THE RUSSIAN CLERGY OF THE ROCOR TO THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE ROCOR" -- COMMENTARY

Under such a headline the Internet publication of "Pravoslavije 2000" ("Orthodoxy 2000") in Russian language information was printed that a group of anonymous clergymen on a web-site of the magazine "Vestnik I.P.C." ("The Herald of the True Orthodox Church") edited by Agathangel, Bishop of Simferopol and Crimea, has made an appeal to the Hierarchy of the ROCA.

Unfortunately, "Orthodoxy 2000" published very fragmentary quotations from this collective composition which, it seems, is written in a rather belligerent tone, if one is to judge from the quotations. Therefore, it is rather hard to make a judgment on this appeal. The commentaries alone take two and a half pages. It says that "the main purpose of the 'Appeal of the clergy to the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR' is quite obvious – by means of truth and untruth not to prevent the long matured feelings for the unification of the artificially separated Russian Church. Church oriented people long ago impatiently waited for this reunion". Since there were never any relations between the ROCOR and the MP, is there any point to speak of a "reunion"?

The authors of the commentary, quite justly say that "In general it is not customary to comment on anonymous writings", but they are making an exception due to the importance of the content.

In one of the quotations from this "Appeal" to the Bishops' Council it is stated that the writers of this anonymous composition "are ready for a new persecution, since they know the predatory and implacable character of the persecutors".

The fact that some clergy of Bishop Agathangel collectively decided not to sign a document addressed to their own episcopate on such an important matter of principles and under the conditions of possibility of persecution in the future not only does not testify to their conviction of being right, and even more, of a lack of moral strength to lead their flock!

If this "Appeal" was meant for the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR, then why was it published via the Internet in Russia? But if it was meant for the Russian people in Russia (and the Bishop's Council was only an excuse for the publication of this "Appeal") then, in an effort to convince someone of the correctness of their principles, they should not have written it in a rude manner, which is useless and does not correspond with pastoral principles.

THE SERBIAN CHURCH AND CATHOLICS

The newspaper "Pravoslavije", the official publication of the Serbian Patriarchate, on September 1st reported that in answer to an invitation from the Serbian Church, a delegation of the Roman Catholic Bishops arrived in Belgrade as representatives of the Episcopal Conference of the European Union. The Catholics were in Belgrade and Novi Sad from July 13th to 17th.

In addition to a number of joint meetings, the Serbian bishops showed to Catholics the churches, refugees camps and bridges and buildings destroyed by the NATO bombing. At the end of the visit, the Serbs and Catholics issued an official joint communiqué, entitled "Three days of hope" – with the subtitle a meeting of the Catholic Bishops of Western Europe and Serbian Orthodox Bishops. We offer a translation of this statement from Serbian.

"Jesus Christ through Himself killed the enmity (Eph. 2: 16) (This text is rather different from the Apostle's literal words, "Ch. N.").

We, the Bishops, members of a delegation of a Serbian Orthodox Church and a delegation of the Committee of Bishops Conferences of European Concord met for a three days long stay in Belgrade. In the joint prayer and brotherly dialogue, with a feeling of prayerful respect and admiration before sacred objects of the Orthodox Church, we have drowned even more to each other. (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

The fact that we have kept our contact even during this millennium, and which was never interrupted, is an source of a great joy for us. The days we have spent together awakened in us the purpose of our Christian encounter. Our meeting was characterized by three aspects.

1. We are bound together in the hope that, with the continuation of theological dialogues and the pastoral needs of our times, we will labor for the benefit of all the people of Europe and the whole universe. Through ecumenical deliberations about our theological and pastoral heritage, we want to make our own contribution to the unity of our Churches. We have decided to continue the negotiations in the future years. In the future we want to discuss what we expect from Europe and for Europe.

2. We jointly hope that the process of europeanization of the European Union will continue in the future and Europe will be able to breathe with her two lungs. By her history, her tradition and her culture, Yugoslavia belongs to Europe. All the more do we feel the current temptations and crises, although it is not always that we are of the same opinion about their origin. Meanwhile, we unanimously wish all the Serbian refugees from Kosovo a somewhat quicker return to their homes. In this respect we appeal to all responsible people that they would make this possible and let everyone live in peace.

In soul and body, above all the poorest people of Yugoslavia are suffering, among whom are a multitude of refugees. They are suffering especially as a result of economic sanctions imposed by the Western governments. Therefore we agree that it is absolutely necessary to have these sanctions lifted and therefore we are turning to the particular governments. The economic sanctions are one of the main obstacles to the common cooperation of Serbia and Yugoslavia with their neighboring countries. We are seeking regional cooperation, because it is a condition for a lasting peace in the much-suffering part of our continent. Yet for our own part we agreed to continue the cooperation between our charitable establishments and the establishments for support of those who are in danger.

3. And finally, first of all, we put our hope and confidence upon the younger generation. Many young people are resisting the temptations of practical material society. They seek a purpose in life and spiritual renewal. Here we feel the representatives of the Church (underlined "Ch. N.") are called to reply to those questions in accord with the times. As bishops we want to build the spiritual bridges between the young people of Europe. Therefore we plan next summer to organize in Serbia a meeting of young people from different countries. We believe that they, with the help of some concrete project, might offer a sign of peace and reconciliation.

Our meeting was a fruitful event and a new inspiration. Both our Churches carry the joint responsibility for the future. Serbia and Yugoslavia have their place in Europe. We want to support youth, so they will live in truth and love. For three days we prayed together, spoke and listened to one another. On our pilgrimage path we re-discovered a lot in common. Verily, these were "three days of hope". (underlined "Ch. N.")

This was signed on part of the Catholics by Bishops Dr. Joseph Hoymeier (Germany), Luke de Hover (Belgium), Joseph Dafi (Iran) and John Moyn (Scotland); on part of the Serbian Church this outrageous document was signed by Bishops Dr. Sava of Shumadija (at one time he used to be a reasonably good hierarch), Lawrence of Shabac-Valjevo, Constantine of Mid-Europe, Dr. Ignatius of Branichev and Irineus of Bachka.

DATA ON THE KGB ACTIVITIES OF ALEXIS RIDIGER

Information that Alexis Ridiger was an KGB agent and had in this God-forsaken and treacherous organization the code name "Drozdov" was published long ago. From the fall of the Communist regime this information was made public about Ridiger himself and also about a whole number of individuals (no less than 10), in majority the present members of the Synod, including their names, titles, and agent code names. This was published by Mr. Yakunin, who managed to get this information just before Yeltsin's government hurriedly closed the KGB files.

Yet, in spite of absolutely indisputable data, the spokesman for the MP, Priest Vsevolod Chaplin categorically denied this utterly manifest fact on the grounds that so far no one has seen any KGB documents signed by Ridiger.

It seems this matter was of special interest to some Western journalists who found their way to Estonian KGB archives. Probably due to someone's oversight, when the Soviets removed their troops from Estonia in 1994, the archives were neither taken with them nor destroyed.

Now, the Anglican agency Keston Institute centered in Oxford (England) on September 23 published some information taken from the Estonian archives. The very same information was published in the newspaper "Irish Times." In this information it is stated that Ridiger was "an agent of the KGB of many years' standing and even was awarded a 'Certificate of Honor' ". Similar information was also published by "The Washington Post" on September 29th.

"Agent 'Drozdov' while already being a priest was recruited on February 28, 1958. It is also reported, that The Russian Church in person of Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky "became an active ally of the Soviet Government".

Speaking about Ridiger, the newspaper reports that the documents regarding him are signed by the KGB president Colonel I. P. Karpov. He writes that "Drozdov" (Ridiger) "presented valuable material for the case underway against the Priest Povedsky" and adds: "after being strengthened with agent experience in practical work with the organs of state security, we plan to use him for our interests by sending him to capitalistic countries, as a member of a member of an ecclesiastical delegation".

The "Irish Times" of September 23 defines it more precisely using the documentation on Ridiger from State Archives in Tallin (group 131, file 393, p. 125-126).

It is reported there that Ridiger "during the secret meetings was punctual, energetic and happy. He is well oriented in theoretical matters of theology and the international situation. He is eager to accomplish our tasks and he already presented material worthy of attention on documentation about the criminal activity of a leading member of the Orthodox Church of Johvi".

It is reported (in the Moscow archives) that "Drozdov" in 1969 was sent to England as a member of a church delegation and also in March 1985, he was sent to Portugal.

While presiding over the Moscow Patriarchate's affairs, Ridiger particularly persecuted one of the best hierarchs of Moscow Patriarchate, Bishop Hermogen (Golubov).

It seems that the material presented by Keston Institute should be sufficient enough to end any doubts about the agent talents of Ridiger, yet nevertheless, the Moscow Patriarchate continues to lie to its flock and the outside world, insisting the opposite!

METROPOLITAN CYRIL OF SMOLENSK ABOUT "THE TURIN SHROUD"

According to the Vatican News Service on the Internet of September 26, Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk (in the KGB "Mikhailov") arrived in Turin on September 25th as an envoy of Patriarch Alexis Ridiger in order to venerate the so-called "Turin Shroud" in connection with its exhibition in honor of the "Jubilee Year".

Gundiayev declared that it was an emotional moment for him and "I really think it is a very important event. Above all, because the holy shroud of Turin is venerated in Russia. The absolute majority of the people believe it is the authentic shroud. They regard it as something truly sacred."

On Sunday Gundiayev attended a vespers service in the Turin cathedral, which was served "according to the Orthodox rite" (one thinks by Uniate clergy). Metropolitan Cyril was accompanied by a Catholic Archbishop Severino Poletto.

He said that "Yesterday's liturgy of vespers was a very positive sign of the will to continue the dialogue, of keeping ourselves open to meetings with one another so that the two Christian communities, the Catholic and Orthodox, will be reunited in keeping with the Lord Jesus' plan and prayer".

For the Moscow Patriarchate, which is altogether established upon lies, is not possible to side with the truth. Under pressure of her more intelligent flock, from time to time "it throws them a bone" by insisting that it no longer is part of the Ecumenical Movement, but that it only participated as a member of a pan-Orthodox commission, which will work for a three year period in order to decide if the Orthodox Church should remain in the WCC or leave it. At the same time, the Patriarchate is not hiding a fact that she will continue her Ecumenist "dialogues" with heretics and does not plan to interrupt its prayerful connections with them.

AN AMAZING INTERVIEW

The bulletin Vertograd-Info in issue 7-8 for July-August published an interview which was given by Priest-monk of Valaam Monastery Isidor in connection with the recent consecration of the Armenian monotheist church in St. Petersburg. On the feast day of the Apostles Peter and Paul in order to be present for a heretical service, with great solemnity Alexis Ridiger entered a Monophysite church accompanied by St. Petersburg's Metropolitan Vladimir, the Bishop of Tikhvin, Constantine, and a number of clergy and monks. A Lutheran bishop attended this heretical service also and a Catholic deacon.

The interview published by the Vertograd-Info is of such significance that we re-publish it for our readers abroad, who do not get this bulletin. The Valaam Monastery for a rather long time has been known for its conservatism, rare for the MP. The head of the monastery is Archimandrite Pankraty. Therefore, the interview given by Hieromonk Isidor seems especially outrageous.

Question: Fr. Isidor, the Valaam Monastery, whose clergyman you are, is known for its zeal for Orthodoxy. The leaders of your monastery repeatedly came forward against the ecumenical and modernist church leadership. Why did you attend the Armenian service and prayed with the heterodox catholicos?

Answer: And so what? I see nothing wrong with that.

Question: As is known, the regulations of the Orthodox Church and Holy Fathers sternly forbid Orthodox to enter heretical temples and even more to attend their "services" And Armenians are heretics.

Answer: Which rules? Which holy Fathers? You'd better look at yourselves! You are filled with pride, but I believe in Love. The main thing is Love.

For me the living bishops are much more important than the dead letters of your rules, understand? Even much so more since His Holiness the Patriarch was there, therefore no one may accuse me of anything. My conscience does not reproach me for anything; I can serve a Liturgy with clear conscience and my parishioners will say nothing to me and would receive communion from me.

Question: The so-called Armenian Apostolic Church denies the dogmas of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, is under its anathema and was always considered by Holy Fathers as heretical...

Answer: And who are those Holy Fathers? They lived long ago, and we have to listen now to the living ones and not dead ones, to His Holiness the Patriarch. Just the opposite, one should be rejoicing that a church is being opened and people can go to the church.

Question: But excuse me, this church after all is a heretical one...

Answer: Well, and so what? The Armenians have an apostolic succession, a succession of priesthood... Only such fools as you can not be happy that there is a consecration of the church, all people are happy. A Liturgy was served, the Body and Blood of Christ were brought forth...

Question: Do you believe that the Armenian Monophysites have the same Body and Blood of Christ as the Orthodox Church?

Answer: Yes, I believe so. I repeat once more: only such fools as you are do not understand that the Armenians have preserved the apostolic succession.

Question: In this case, why did neither you nor your Patriarch take communion during the Armenian liturgy?

Answer: This happened due to historical events, that there is no communion. His Holiness Patriarch did not serve, but was present only.

Question: In the future life, can we be together with the Holy Fathers, who cursed heretics, and with the heretics, who cursed Holy Fathers? According to our views, those who pray with the heretics, are outside of the Church...

Answer: Well, it is better to be with the heretics, than to be with such fools as you are. And the Church for me – is His Holiness Patriarch and Metropolitan Vladimir, and not such fools as you... His Holiness Patriarch is the angel of the Russian Church...."

The answers of the Valaam Monastery hieromonk surprise one with their blatant rudeness toward the journalists of Vertograd-Info and are typical of the confidence of the members of Moscow Patriarchate that they themselves are not responsible for anything, but only in their "elders" and administration.

The very same bulletin also reports the negotiations of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Monophysite heretics. These are not only a multitude of "dialogues", but also theological conferences and exchanges of delegations and literature. This treacherous action is headed by Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk.

In connection with the Monophysites, now so-popular among the "Orthodox", it is worthwhile to be reminded of a sad case which happened in the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville in 1970. At that time, with the blessing of the late Archbishop Averky, in the lower monastery church a Monophysite service was permitted.

Upon finding out about it, Metropolitan Philaret wrote an official letter to Archbishop Averky in which it was said: "in order to avoid a possible temptation, I am asking you to make the following order:

1. To sprinkle the lower church with holy water and to read the prayer for a church desecrated by heretics (Great Prayer Book, chapter 40, or 41).
2. Before the above instruction in the above mentioned paragraph 1 is fulfilled, immediately to stop any services".

At the same time, Metropolitan Philaret sent to Archbishop Averky a detailed letter of a more personal character in which he wrote: "...What does a Coptic 'liturgy,' represent of itself but senseless nonsense, having no realistic content and meaning? You know the 'object' of the Eucharist sacrament is the most holy Body and Blood of Christ, Which suffered for us and shed Blood for us. But this belongs to the human nature of the Savior. The Divinity cannot suffer nor die. And Monophysites completely deny the human nature of the Savior – so what kind of 'liturgy' is possible for them? Verily, their 'Eucharist' belongs to that number, which, to speak plainly, was called by the holy Fathers 'f o o d o f t h e d e m o n s'. If you please, Vladika, under no conditions would I permit this blasphemous nonsense not only in the church, but also in any other room!...."

A NEWLY PROCLAIMED SAINT IN THE "ORTHODOX CHURCH"

The bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of September 6th reported that in connection with the celebration of the millennium of the canonization of the Hungarian King Stephen there were a number of patriotic festivities in Budapest. Ten million inhabitants live in Hungary of which 67% are Catholics, about 25% Protestants, and there are also some small groups of Orthodox, Jews and Muslims.

King Stephan (975-1038) spread Christianity in his country, which without doubt he received from Byzantium. However, King Stephen was crowned by the Roman Pope Sylvester and was canonized by the Catholics in 1083.

In the Hungarian festivities from August 19 to 21 Patriarch Bartholomew also participated with the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano and a number from Protestant denominations.

One of the Lutheran bishops noted that "St. Stephen provided an "ideal ecumenical symbol", because up to 12th century "western Hungary was under the strong influence of eastern Byzantium".

During the Catholic mass held in the capital's basilica, the Greek Exarch of Ecumenical Patriarch in Vienna, Archbishop Michael Staikos, made a solemn announcement that King Stephen and the first Hungarian Bishop from Byzantium, Herodius, are now recognized as saints of the Orthodox Church!

During the three days of festivities in Budapest in which more than 100 thousand people participated, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew performed an ecumenical prayer service with the Abbot Asztrik Varzeghi in his ancient monastery of Pannonhalma (10th century).

To those present Bartholomew said that Hungary has a special calling to be a "bridge between East and West". And at the same time this "leader of Orthodoxy" declared that he supports an "open peaceful and intensive dialogue between the Christian Churches" and at the same time added, that "he could not exclude other unexpected ecumenical steps" by Orthodox leaders.

“VERSENEV PAGES”

This is the title of a leaflet published by the Holy Trinity – St. Nicholas parish in Moscow. By accident we received the # 11 (36) issue for the current year. This leaflet gives an interesting account on church life in the Moscow Patriarchate.

In particular, it reports that the rector of this parish, Abbott Cyril "participated in the common meeting of clergy and lay people of the ROC regarding problems of the development of Russian society". The meetings were held in the National Institute for Development of the Economy of the Russian Academy of Science and the main subject for discussions was the position of the ROC on social issues.

A member of the Institute for Economic Development, Kudriavtsev, reported that those Russians who are "votserkovlenniye" (getting more involved with the church matters) are no more than 2-5% and this figure is not increasing". This report caused a very lively discussion. The dean of St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, Archpriest Vladimir Vorobiev, confirmed these figures and noted that there was always a shortage of active church people even before the Revolution. But at present "the main problem is the clergy: the majority are lower than any level possible. Among them there is a huge amount of those who should not be ordained to the ranks of the clergy because of canonical obstacles and lack of education. There are many who became priests because of opportunities. If there were normal priests, there also would be more who want to be baptized". In one case known to this priest, for a funeral service 1 million rubles was paid; in another – 700 thousand rubles was paid for a wedding service! According to Russian standards this is an astronomical sum. As per the report of the same Fr. Vladimir, the situation of theological education is acute. It comes out that the St. Tikhon Theological Institute gets no financial support from the Patriarchate! He believes that theological institutions should be opened in every diocese and, in general, in a country as huge as Russia, there need to be at least 100 and even 150 of them! St. Tikhon's Institute has only 14 branches, and this is a drop in a bucket." All the graduates are immediately snatched up. In spite of strong opposition on part of those knowledgeable in religious matters, we managed to get a permit to lecture in some universities. But unfortunately, within the Church itself, there is insufficient understanding of the importance of this matter... Very significant are the missionary pilgrimages, but many bishops refuse to give a blessing for them".

The Russian wisdom is quite correct, which states: the parish is as good as its priest.

While shamelessly trading oil, alcohol, tobacco, diamonds, gold and making billions of rubles, the Moscow Patriarchate constantly laments its supposed poverty, while the building of Cathedral of Christ the Savior cost more than 500 million dollars. At Alexis Ridiger's demand, the Valaam monastery had to restore a huge "bishop's palace" for his residence for which the Moscow Patriarchate gave not a penny. The greed of the Moscow Patriarchate has no limits and has become a matter of conversation not only in Russia, but also abroad.

THE JEWS REACH OUT TO CHRISTIANS

On September of 9, 10 and 23, one of the most influential American newspapers, "The New York Times," published several articles on Judaism and its relationship toward Christianity.

On September 9th an extended article by Laurie Goldstein was published stating that the time is ripe for Jews to re-evaluate their relationship toward Christianity. The author related that in the next Sunday issue of the newspaper there would be published an official Jewish statement on Christianity. Indeed, such a declaration (occupying a full page of the newspaper) was published as a advertisement, under the title "Dabru Emet", which means, to speak the truth to one another. The margins were surrounded with 150 names and titles of the authors of this declaration.

The declaration came as a result of meetings of Jewish rabbis over several years and was published with the consent of more than 150 rabbis, representing 4 Jewish factions: reformed, conservative, orthodox and reconstructed.

The foreword of this declaration was its printed in bold-face and in total had 8 separate paragraphs, which are signed by three doctors of various USA universities and one Canadian. One presumes that each signature presents its own faction.

This rather extended foreword stated:

"In recent years, there has been a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations. Throughout the nearly two millennia of Jewish exile, Christians have tended to characterize Judaism as a failed religion or, at least, as a religion that prepared the way for, and is completed in, Christianity. In the decades since the Holocaust, however, Christianity has changed dramatically. An increasing number of official Church bodies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have made public statements of their remorse about Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism. These statements have declared, furthermore, that Christian teaching and preaching can and must be reformed so that they acknowledge God's enduring covenant with Jewish people and celebrated the contribution of Judaism to world civilization and to Christian faith itself.

We believe these changes merit a thoughtful Jewish response. Speaking only for ourselves – an inter-denominational group of Jewish scholars – we believe it is time for Jews to learn about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism. We believe it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity. As a first step, we offer eight brief statements about how Jews and Christians may relate to one another".

In the first paragraph it is stated that "Jews and Christians worship the same God" and that "as Jewish theologians" Jews "rejoice that through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel".

The second paragraph notes that both Jews and Christians find authority in the Bible, but that the Jews and Christians interpret the Bible differently, however, those differences should be always respected.

The next paragraph states that Christians can respect the claim of Jewish people to the land of Israel, which after the Holocaust became a Jewish state in the Promised Land. "As members of a Biblically-based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised and given to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God". To verify this there are statements of support on the part of various Protestant groups.

Then these Jews say that Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.

The fifth paragraph asserts that "Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon", but "without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out. Too many Christians participated in, or were sympathetic to, Nazi atrocities against Jews. Other Christians did not protest sufficiently against these atrocities. But Nazism was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity..."

The sixth paragraph says that "The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture. Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know to serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition. The difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other. Jews can respect Christian faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation..."

In the two further paragraphs Jews are told not to fear that their relationship with Christians might lead to loss of Jewish way of life or assimilation.

From a report in the paper dated September 23rd it is clear that even such a diplomatic declaration, which took Jews several years to develop, was published after a number of very stormy meetings, in which the participants yelled at each other or left the meeting in disgust and then returned back to continue.

One of the cosigners of this document, David Sandmel said: "In history and in contemporary times there are reasons for Jews to be very wary of Christians. But the Christian world today is very different than it was 50 or 100 or 500 years ago". What a splendid characterization by Jews of contemporary "Christianity"!

This declaration was simultaneously published in the newspaper "The Sun" of Baltimore by an independent inter-religious organization, the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies.

It is interesting to note that this declaration was not published in the newspaper "The Jewish Press," nor in the NY Russian language newspaper "Novoye Russkoye Slovo."

A SPIRITUAL BACCHANALIA IN KIEV

According to reports by newspapers and the Internet on September 14th in Kiev a "local council of the Kievan Patriarchate" was held chaired by the "patriarchal Locum Tenens Metropolitan Methodius". According to this declaration (in the Ukrainian dialect) which was signed by the "Docent (sr. university lecturer) Archpriest V. Zayev, an observer at the council with the blessing of his Beatitude, Sept. 15th, 2000." This gathering was attended by 720 delegates and besides "Metropolitan" Methodius, similar "Metropolitan" Andrew, then 3 self-appointed "archbishops" and 2 more "bishops". This group gathered in order to elect a "first hierarch" of the "autocephalous Ukrainian Church" and to regularize the problem of their "canonical status."

The same priest Zayev published an article in Russian on the historical theme of "Orthodoxy in Ukraine, yesterday and today".

This gathering was attended also by a representative of the "Ukrainian autocephalous church of the Kievan Patriarchate" (also Philaret's group), a certain "Bishop" Dmytro Roudiuk from the USA and Canada. He called upon the two autocephalous groups to unite and to elect a "first hierarch" who later will become a "patriarch" when the Ecumenical Patriarchate will grant to them legal autocephality.

Meanwhile, the Ecumenical Patriarch has played both sides. First he promised to grant autocephality to these self-consecratees. Then, it seems due to strong pressure from the Moscow Patriarchate which sent Bartholomew a strong protest, Bartholomew officially renounced this plan in an official declaration published through the Internet by the Orthodox Christian News Service on August 8th.

"Due to a recent false report published on the Internet stating that the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople allegedly pronounced on July 27, 2000, that the Ukraine is canonically under its jurisdiction; the Holy and sacred Synod announces that this decision was never made and that this report is completely erroneous. Consequently, the corresponding publication "Ukrainska Slovo" (July 27, 2000) and Kiril Florov's article in "Pravoslavia," July 27, are based on incorrect information.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate expresses both its sorrow and regret because of the circulation of this inaccurate news, which not only causes division but also conflict between Christians, and misrepresents and distorts the virtuous

intentions of those who have labored for the restoration of unity of Christendom by the removal of all causes that might hinder the attainment of prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ for those who believe in Him "to be one".

At the Patriarchate, August 8, 2000

From the Office of the Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod"

Despite this categorical announcement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the September group resolved to "offer to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch wholehearted repentance for the self-willed departure of the Kievan Metropolia from the Constantinople Mother Church during the rule of Hetman Ivan Samoilovich which was accepted by the elected Council in 1685 and without the patriarchal blessing to sent Gideon Sviatopolk-Chetverinskyto Moscow for ordination." This gathering also resolved "To request that Patriarch Bartholomew, as the head of the Constantinople Mother Church, preside over the process of the consolidation of the Ukrainian Church into the fullness of a Local Church with the prospect of receiving autocephality from the patriarchal administration".

One must admit that these self-appointedees had good reason to offer Bartholomew, shortly after his official denial, repentance and a request to grant autocephality!

A CHANGE IN THE VATICAN'S POLITICS?

Approximately a month ago, the international press widely commented on the declaration signed by the very conservative Catholic Cardinal Ratzinger, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine and Faith, titled "Dominus Iesus".

The document of four pages with a covering letter by Ratzinger states that "The one, holy Catholic and apostolic universal church is not a sister, but 'mother' of all the particular churches. This is not merely a question of terminology, but above all of respecting a basic truth of the Catholic faith: that of the unicity of the church of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is but a single church, and therefore the plural term churches can only refer to particular churches... Consequently, one should avoid, as a source of misunderstanding and theological confusion, the use of formulations such as 'our two churches', because it might seem to imply that there is more than one church of Christ".

However, the document made an exception for the Orthodox Church which still remains a "sister".

In the covering letter it was stated that the Pope approved this document on June 9th and that therefore "it should be held as authoritative and binding".

In it is said that salvation is not possible outside salvific Roman-Catholicism and that all existing religions literally cannot be called Christ's churches.

This document created an uproar in contemporary Ecumenist "Christianity", although the conservative Catholics never held any other teaching. Anglicans (Episcopalians) who always insist upon the validity of their apostolic succession, as well as some Protestant groups were especially insulted, because they were called "extremely defective" and an "obstacle for salvation".

Document "Dominus Iesus" created also a lot of confusion among Catholics themselves. Thus, Cardinal Cassini, the head of Pontifical Committee for Christian Unity on August 24th refused in any manner to comment on this document.

"The New York Times" of October 7th reported that "Many Christian leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressed their distress at what seemed a sharp change of climate in the Vatican. Italian Jewish leaders withdrew their participation from a Vatican-sponsored Day of Jewish Christian Dialogue, and the event had to be canceled. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches similarly scheduled to participate in an official dialogue with Catholics in Rome, considered calling off the session as well", but it was continued after expressions of very great displeasure.

Cardinal Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles said that "The tone of 'Dominus Iesus' may not fully reflect the deeper understanding that has been achieved through ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues over these last 30 years".

Archbishop Alexander Brunett reviewing his own ecumenical activity with various religious groups said that "This declaration does not add much to the process; nor does it further the cause of mutual understanding and respect".

A newspaper published in Switzerland, "The International Herald Tribune" of October 3rd reported that "The Pope Clarifies Primacy Paper". The document, supposedly, was misunderstood and that Catholics have not been arrogant and that everywhere there are some precious elements for salvation and "non-Christians were not denied salvation".