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CORRECTIONS:

We apologize for several typos in the last issue... the date and issue numbers were incorrect and in the article on "Defense of Bishop Varnava" several typos occurred... It should have been designated: **March 2002, Vol. 13 # 2 (103)** and some proper names were incorrectly spelled due to too hasty use of the computer spell check feature. Veranda should read Varnava, Ridge should read Ridiger, Tsarina should read Starina, Lena should read Lesna. Also the previous issue should be designated **January-February 2002, Vol. 13 # 1 (102)**.

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THE NADIR OF BETRAYAL AND MEANNESS

The Synod of Bishops of ROCOR (Laurus) via the Internet has published one of its most disgraceful documents called:

"Agreement between the Synod of Bishops and Mrs. Ludmila Rosniansky"

March 1st, 2002

The Synod of Bishops:

Will waive the restraining orders against Mrs. Rosniansky in Canada and the US.

Will remove Mrs. Rosniansky as a co-defendant in the Canadian litigation concerning property registered in the name of Metropolitan Vitaly.

Will procure living arrangements for Metropolitan Vitaly suitable to his position and forward specifically to the person of Metropolitan Vitaly his personal property.

Will provide Mrs. Rosniansky with living quarters in proximity to Metropolitan Vitaly.

Will send Metropolitan Vitaly his automobile for his use.

Will provide health insurance coverage for Mrs. Rosniansky.

Will provide a secretary for the Metropolitan.

In return, Mrs. Rosniansky:

Will in good faith attempt to persuade Metropolitan Vitaly to move to Novo Diveevo.

Will be responsible for the daily care of Metropolitan Vitaly.

Will not involve herself in ecclesiastical affairs.

Will not remove Metropolitan Vitaly from Novo Diveevo without first providing simple notice to the Synod. The Synod reserves the right to appeal to Metropolitan Vitaly directly should it feel necessary.

Will not allow visitors to Metropolitan Vitaly who may be objectionable to the Synod for any reason.

Will not restrict access to the Metropolitan by members or representatives of the Synod.

Will not participate in any secretarial functions for Metropolitan Vitaly.

Will maintain a detailed accounting of Metropolitan Vitaly's expenditures and a detailed list of medications prescribed to Metropolitan Vitaly and provide both to the Synod upon request.

In addition:

Metropolitan Vitaly's primary physician will be the physician of the Novo Diveevo Old Age Home. No Metropolitan physicians may examine or prescribe medication to Metropolitan Vitaly without approval from his doctor.

Signed: + Metropolitan Laurus Date: March 2nd, 2002

Signed: L. Rosniansky Date: 3/05/2002

Also on the Internet (in English) the adherents of Metropolitan Vitaly, who did not sign their names to the published explanation, stated that so far the Synod of Bishops has already spent more than \$150,000 in the effort to make the aged Metropolitan Vitaly return to New York.

After not succeeding in attaining the results desired, nevertheless Metropolitan Laurus decided to get the necessary results by bribing the woman who had sworn her loyalty to Metropolitan Vitaly and who, according to the Synod of Bishops' opinion stated in court, was keeping him under the influence of drugs and was dangerous to his well being. As is clear from the published document, this treachery did indeed happen. Mr. Paganuzzi, who recently blocked the road in Mansonville to prevent the abduction of the Metropolitan, took upon himself the role of go-between. Rosniansky agreed to lure the Metropolitan into a trap and to become an actual house jailer under the supervision of Bishop Gabriel. According to the details of the agreement, Metropolitan Vitaly will never need to use his car and, even less – a secretary! Mrs. Rosniansky, for her betrayal would get free living quarters and medical insurance. Nothing is said about a salary, but it is a common knowledge, that one gets medical insurance in addition to a salary!

According to information from Canada, so far Metropolitan Vitaly flatly has refused to go to New York even despite permission of the court issued to Mrs. Rosniansky to visit him. She did show up to see the Metropolitan being escorted by two police officers! It seems Mrs. Rosniansky still hopes to lure the Metropolitan into the trap in the USA, despite the fact that some of the bishops in Mansonville told her that she is not welcome there.

From this agreement it is not clear what will happen to Mrs. Rosniansky nor whether she will succeed in her efforts "in good faith" to capture the aged Metropolitan!

THE LATEST DISHONESTY OF ARCHBISHOP MARK

It has been known for some time that the former Abbess Juliania of Mt. Olives Convent in Jerusalem, after being removed from the Holy City by the ROCOR Synod of Bishops because she so bravely defended the church property there from being seized by the MP is aware how much the whole course of the ROCOR has changed. The Council of Bishops of 2001 confirmed her apprehensions and when it became quite clear that a schism within the ROCOR had materialized, Abbess Juliania and her convent left the newly elected Metropolitan Laurus and joined the new jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly. The Abbess Juliania on several occasions publicly sharply criticized the new policy of the Church Abroad.

According to the agency Vetrograd.Razsylka # 233 of March 19th, an Internet publication, 'Thoughts about Russia' has published a denial, signed by the Abbess Juliania, of disinformation given by Archbishop Mark. In this refutation it is reported that the Archbishop refused to forward to Abbess Juliania a donation from the Fuener family, and without his memo, they cannot receive a "tax exemption." Trusting Archbishop Mark, Alexander and Kyra Fuener wished Mother Juliania find "spiritual and moral support" from the Moscow Patriarchate. The donation of this family is the main source of income for Abbess Juliania's convent and orphanage in Chile.

This is not the first time that the treacherous interference of Archbishop Mark has prevented a possible donation of funds to ecclesiastical institutions that do not accept the Moscow Patriarchate. Once he managed to stop an almost completed agreement with a German construction company that was ready, almost free of charge, to fix the roof of the St. Alexander Nevsky Church and the buildings in the "Russian Excavations" in Jerusalem, which belong to the Orthodox Palestine Society. He slanderously declared to the owner of this company that the Orthodox Palestine Society is illegal and its President, Bishop Anthony (Grabbe), is a more than dubious person. Due to this lie of Archbishop Mark, the agreement was not completed and, ever since, the roof of the Excavations has been in such poor condition that no pilgrims are allowed inside for fear that it might fall in.

PARISH IN RIAZAN LEAVES ROCOR AND JOINS METROPOLITAN VALENTIN

According to Vertograd.Razsylka # 233, at the end of Cheese Fare Week, Metropolitan Valentin, First Hierarch of the Russian Autonomous Church, visited a parish in the city of Riazan, which left the ROCOR and joined him about a year ago.

Metropolitan Valentin served in the Holy Epiphany Church with the rector Priest Serge Yevchik. After the service, Vladyka met with the parishioners whom he praised for standing firm in the truth and recommended they speed up the process of the new registration of the parish. This parish has left the Church Abroad, considering the decisions of the Council of Bishops of 2000 to be unacceptable.

Originally this church was built in 1673 and functioned normally until 1930, when the priest, Fr. John, was martyred. At the beginning of 1992 this church was handed over to the parish of St. Basil of Riazan by a decision of the Riazan local administration and until 2001 was in the jurisdiction of ROCOR.

THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE LATVIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN DEFENSE OF METROPOLITAN VALENTIN

According to the agency Vertograd.Razsylka # 231 of March 14th, the Diocesan Council of the Latvian Orthodox Church within the Russian Autonomous Church, on March 4th sent to the Prosecutor of the city of Vladimir the following letter:

Dear Mr. Prosecutor;

The Orthodox world diaspora is concerned by the prolonged litigation regarding the case of the Most Reverend Valentin (Rousantsov), Metropolitan on Suzdal and Vladimir, President of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church.

Some international agencies report what we believe to be a judicial farce, inspired by interested people under the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate. The said court litigation discredits the honor of the Orthodox diaspora in Latvia, which is under the spiritual omophorion of Metropolitan Valentin.

We believe that the accusations against Metropolitan Valentin, a steadfast preserver of the Orthodoxy and the follower of the last canonical Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia St. Tikhon, are a judicial absurdity.

The provocateurs of this enterprise are definitely non-believing people. A. Osetrov, H. Shipounova, D. Krasovsky and S. Morozova have even the physical symptoms of their sickness and utter moral downfall. The negative psychological influence upon their own children that was created by their perjury before court officials is an act of parenting that is criminal and, therefore, F. Osetrov and H. Shipounova should be deprived of parental rights.

People abroad are also greatly concerned by the health of the Metropolitan who was subjected to this slander.

We appeal to you, Mr. Prosecutor, to show human understanding and, considering the international response, to demand that this case against the First Hierarch of the ROAC Metropolitan Valentin be closed and accusations against him dropped.

With hope and with the blessing of His Eminence Victor, Archbishop of Daugavpils and Latvia, the member of the Synod of Bishops of the ROAC,

The Diocesan Council of the Autonomous True Orthodox Church in Latvia.

Despite great efforts on the part of 'former' Communist local authorities of the city of Vladimir to prevent the re-election of Metropolitan Valentin to the office of a deputy to the City Council of Suzdal, he was re-elected by the residents for a third term, in spite of the outrageous persecution of the First Hierarch of the ROAC by his personal enemies. It is obvious that nothing could shake the residents' respect and love for him.

Vertograd.Razsylka # 237 of March 26th published the results of the Suzdal elections compiled by Priest-monk Fr. Theophan (Areskin). Suzdal, in spite of its glorious historical past, is a small city with 12, 000 residents and therefore, everything happening in it soon becomes common knowledge.

As we have reported previously, the newspaper "Prizyv" which has published an outrageous "special edition" which slandered not only Metropolitan Valentin, but also Archbishop Theodore, a number of respected clergymen and the Mayor Illarionov and his assistants.

On March 15th one of the representatives of this newspaper not only denied authorship of this scandalous publication, but also even characterized it (and quite properly) as a "criminal act punishable by law", although in Suzdal no one had any doubts that this newspaper was guilty of a crime.

Three days before the election, the staff members of the prosecutor's office in Vladimir found and confiscated in the printing facilities a second edition of a similar dirty trick, but under another name, supposedly a newspaper called "Suzdals Nabat" ("Suzdal Alarm"), which does not exist. It was mostly about Mayor Illarionov and a little bit about the Metropolitan. Mayor Illarionov has friendly relations with Metropolitan Valentin and, probably, this is a reason why he came to be disliked by the major agitators in Vladimir.

People in Suzdal rather quickly found out whose work it was. There were 4 candidates for mayor and three of them in their televised campaign promised they would campaign with honest methods and only one of them did not make such a promise. But namely he will become the next mayor of Suzdal. In addition, the published information about a donation to the election fund showed that this money came not from Suzdal, nor even Vladimir, but... from Moscow and in particular from the "Electron-2000"!

There was another act by the enemies of Metropolitan Valentin. The defrocked Andrew Osetrov on March 17th (the election date) was arrested by the militia in the market place for distributing, with the assistance of another 6 persons, sordid leaflets which, in the form of "poetry" and caricatures, ridiculed the Metropolitan and Mayor Illarionov.

The militia interrogated those arrested and made an official report. From it we learn that these people belong to a Moscow organization "Our Cause". Osetrov admitted that he was hired by one of candidates for mayor in Suzdal. It is easy to guess who was it. At the same time, Fr. Theophan reports another important event: "The local law enforcement agencies received an order from Moscow to put a stop to the slanderers of Metropolitan Valentin, letting the case of slander of Mayor Illarionov go to trial." (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

Shortly before the election, a little known lady (a resident of Vladimir and from the MP) came to Suzdal to run against the Metropolitan for the post on the City Council. Her campaign met with no success: she visited a number of houses and people asked her not to come again. She then, through another person named Zolin, sued the Metropolitan for "bribing the voters" with humanitarian aid and for giving out his newly published book of sermons and articles. For some time the Metropolitan has been able to secure humanitarian aid in the form of dehydrated food and distribute it among the poor of Suzdal. Out of this aid he also feeds dozens of needy retired seniors free of charge. He distributed such assistance at the end of November of last year.

Despite all efforts, Anikina (who did not have any social agenda for the city) did not win election to the City Council. She received 91 votes. 35 of them came from the Protection convent of the MP and it is known that an additional 10 votes were registered illegally. In other words, half of the votes for this woman came from the MP. Metropolitan Valentin won the election with 95 votes.

It is quite obvious that the Moscow Patriarchate in this particular case used all available ammunition in the hope of getting rid of the First Hierarch of the ROAC, who is like a bone in its throat. And, thank God, the efforts failed. She succeeded only electing a mayor unfriendly toward Metropolitan Valentin, but it does not mean that the whole friendly City Council, with whom the new mayor has to work, has also changed.

Were it not that Metropolitan Valentin is a serious threat for the Moscow Patriarchate, it would never attempt this many efforts, using various methods, to get rid of him. After all, it never attacked the ROCOR in the persons of Archbishop Lazarus and Bishops Benjamin and Agathangel. They are inactive enough and have no personalities worth wasting time and money on!

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS (Letter to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of 4/17th, 1987)

Your Eminence, Dear Vladyko!

It has been more than a month since I have been [back] in America and I observe with the horror the decline in our church life during my absence. The very best priests are leaving us. One priest writes me: "What is happening to us now I believe is not leading to the salvation of our souls, but toward the destruction of the Church. Even in a plainly numerical sense: under you, until recently, the Synod accepted into its true Orthodox bosom more and more parishes from various Churches and jurisdictions. And by now in half a year something like thirty parishes have left. The canonical innovations, the total lack of communication with the flock (everything is kept from it as if it were an important secret), the replacement of local priests by the emissaries from USSR and other communist countries... Those who treasure the Russian Orthodox Church in particular feel themselves to be on a sinking vessel. They ask with anguish: what should we do now? Join another Church? In all this loss, due to some evil will, their souls do not find salvation, but miserably perish. People sin. They judge the legally ordained pastors and archpastors. They flee (not leave, but literally, flee) from their parishes. All this is a sin. But yet one cannot go against his own conscience."

During every war the most dangerous thing is spreading talk behind the backs of the commanders and creating distrust of them. This is what is happening now all around us. In this ferment, they begin to suspect this or that bishop of treason. Some are suspected of being ecumenists, others of Soviet plots to unite our Church with Moscow. Especially destructive

were the punishments without trial and proper investigation, totally ignoring persons' previous merits, but taking in consideration only the accusations, no matter what the source, without referring to canon law.

The inventions by Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles to lead the persecuted clergymen to total desperation in order to defrock them later for illegal exit, was extremely destructive, especially when the Metropolitan admitted to a group of clergy that this method was consciously applied in the cases of Archimandrites Panteleimon and Anthony. The accusations of lying and prejudice on part of hierarchs is especially wide spread (in particular of the Metropolitan and Bishop Hilarion). In some cases it might be rumors and slander, but unfortunately, I know of some other cases. In any event, this is an unhealthy atmosphere that is destructive. The official declarations of Bishop Hilarion that he is not an ecumenist and not pro-Soviet, didn't help much. At no time I have ever complained about the unfairness toward me and the strange overt hatred toward me by the Metropolitan, but it is being felt by the flock and gets explained by the idea that I have to be removed so that I not stand in the way of the destruction of our Church and of opening the road to pro-Soviet elements. Unfortunately, the Metropolitan is not careful enough in his conversations with the clergy about other hierarchs and thus gives cause for accusations of them and of himself.

What to do now? How to persuade our flock that the hierarchy has not abandoned the principle of love? You have done a lot, when the decision was made to be more tolerant to the fallen away. But we have to look for a way to recover and first of all, make people feel a change, stopping the vengeance. I rack my brains how to offer something realistic when you arrive. But to do this we have to meet, knowing ahead of time that this will be hindered, as the clergy that wished this were hindered so far.

The decision not to punish the departed, might help to pacify, but temporarily only; this has to be done in order to help some to return and not to deprive Grace of those who will remain with the Greeks. Probably, we will have to negotiate with them and establish some canonical relations. After all, we are responsible for those who through us have joined the Church, and now have been scandalized by us.

Among our hierarchy, you are at present the only hope, but I understand how difficult it is for you. May the Lord help you.

Asking for your holy prayers I remain your devoted brother in Christ + Bishop Gregory.

Letter to Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, dated July 14/27th, 1994

Your Eminence!

You have touched me by your telephone call and kind attention to my concern about the general situation of our Church. I was preparing to speak about these matters, but the inopportune cancer got in my way.

Unfortunately, I get no compassion from above. The Metropolitan once called Fr. Vladimir Shishkoff and asked him to tell me that I should ration my comments about the canons. He does not understand the prophetic directives given us in the last patriarchal Ukase # 362. I compare it with the particular phenomena of our times regarding the total ignorance of the stipulations of the statutes and the duty of the Metropolitan to see to it that all their paragraphs be followed. This was demonstrated by his protection of Bishop Barnabas.

Vladyka Valentin writes very humbly and meekly, trying to keep the road open for their legalization (the civil action is already done). But is it not absurd to do nothing to ecclesiastically legalize so many parishes, which have been gathered by the local bishops, even if one is to believe that they made some errors?

The Patriarchal Ukase gives a basis for it, and the Metropolitan incorrectly interprets it with the help of your neighbor. [Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, "Ch. N."] He sees in it only a basis for his personal power, while he ignores the Statute of the Church Abroad. Unwillingness to legalize more than a hundred parishes threatens to create great confusion. It is terrible that our Church has lost so much time just waiting, actually doing nothing and, yet, not supporting the work of our parishes in Russia. I wish the Council would correct this, even against the will of the Metropolitan, who is actually no longer capable of healthy activity.

May the Lord help you. Asking for your holy prayers, I remain your loving brother in Christ, + Bishop Gregory

ABOUT THE WESTERN EUROPE CLERGY

According to yet unofficial information from Europe, the Western Europe Bishop Ambrose, after a repeated operation on his legs due to diabetes, has requested of Metropolitan Laurus retirement from the Synod of Bishops.

It is presumed that he will be replaced by Bishop Michael, formerly of Toronto, but even the rumors of such an appointment have already created unrest and protest from the Western Europe clergy.

The clergy in France did not show much unity. Fathers Michelle and Quentin de Castebaljac – have left and returned to... Metropolitan Laurus! It seems the main reason for this is that Metropolitan Vitaly renounced his affiliation with the Cyprianites, while Metropolitan Laurus has not. Father M. de Castebaljac has a daughter who is a nun in a Cyprianite convent.

In connection with this, inevitably, there will be a schism in the parish in Lyons, where Fr. Quentin de Castebaljac is the rector, while the protodeacon of this parish, Fr. Herman Ivanov-Trinadzaty, remains in the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly/Bishop Barnabas!

The poor Russian Orthodox believers, whose heads are swimming due to the confusion created by their own hierarchy, the leadership of which was seized by the sympathizers with the Moscow Patriarchate!

"ASSISI" IN ATHENS

According to the newspaper "National Catholic Reporter" of March 22nd, on the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which is eager not to lag behind in anything popular in the West, on September 11th, 2002, in Athens there will be a prayerful gathering of participating "Christians", Muslims and Jews. This gathering has been organized on the pretext of demonstrating their protest against terrorism and the desire to mark the anniversary of last year's attack by Muslims on the World Trade Center in New York.

The head of the Vatican center for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Cardinal Walter Casper already agreed to send to Greece a "high level delegation", although at present it is not known who will be its members.

According to the newspaper, on March 11th a Greek delegation arrived at the Vatican, consisting of 2 archbishops, 2 bishops and 2 archimandrites that was received by the Pope and with whom the agreement was made on March 10th, this delegation prayed in St. Peter's.

The spokesman of this delegation Archimandrite Epifanios Ikonomou gave an interview to the newspaper and said that the summit "will be a step forward for all the monotheistic religions, where we will offer our words of peace."

One of the reasons for this delegation to Rome was also to establish a foundation that would support Catholics willing to study in Greece and Greeks willing to study in Rome. Of course, Greeks have no problem with studying in Rome's Catholic schools, but what the Catholics can learn in Greece is questionable, because the Ecumenical Patriarchate for decades unsuccessfully has tried to persuade Turks to open their theological school in Halki, which they closed.

The newspaper believes that the Pope's visit to Greece, where he apologized for the plundering of Constantinople by crusaders in 1204, did "break the ice". On his part, Archimandrite Ikonomou used the opportunity to soften the MP's displeasure with the expansion of Catholicism in Russia and said: "In Greece, Catholic dioceses exist without any difficulty. They don't engage in proselytism".

For good reason the newspaper asks: why such a shift in attitude? It turns out that "Europe has a Christian identity, and we don't want this to be lost. We have to act swiftly to promote collaboration on this issue." [!]

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW IN AMERICA

In the beginning of March, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew visited the USA in order to mark on March 11th the 6-month anniversary of the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York.

According the Greek Archdiocese's newspaper "Orthodox Observer" of February/March, Bartholomew visited the White House where he was received by President Bush and the Secretary of State, Collin Powell.

After the audience, at an interview given to reporters, Bartholomew (who was accompanied to the White House by several bishops and activists of the Greek dioceses in America) reported that he asked the President to secure "freedom of action, so that the Patriarchate can fulfill its spiritual, religious and cultural mission", and Powell to assist in getting the Turks to open again the theological school in Halki, which was closed in 1971.

The Patriarch and Archbishop Demetrios, the head of the Greek Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America, met with Catholic Cardinals Keeler and McCarric, Washington's Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, the Apostolic Nuncio and members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. All the bishops who went with Bartholomew to the White House participated in this meeting. During the meeting, which lasted for an hour, the role of clergy in matters of world peace was discussed.

Speaking about the dialogue of "Orthodox" with the heretic Catholics, Patriarch Bartholomew declared that: "We meet with you today with great willingness and joy, and we thank you for this opportunity to communicate with you spiritually. Your invitation demonstrates your sincere desire for the cultivation and development of inter-Christian dialogue. In our present day when so much effort is expended on inter-religious dialogues and the creation of a spirit of mutual understanding of one another and the peaceful co-existence among nations of religious persuasions that have little in common with Christianity, we, as Christians, are charged by God himself to restore our unity, so that the world would believe in the divine mission of the Church of Christ".

Then Bartholomew went to Boston, where he visited the Greek theological school. He also went to New York, where he served in the St. Demetrios Church in Astoria and then visited the World Trade Center site.

The same newspaper reports that just recently Patriarch Bartholomew visited some Muslim countries, Iran in particular, because he sponsored a conference in Brussels with a goal of rapprochement among Christians, Muslims and Jews!

A NEW VERSION OF THE PENTATEUCH (TORAH) FOR CONTEMPORARY JEWS

According to "The New York Times" of March 9th, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism in the USA, which represents some 1.5 million members, just recently published a new edition of the Pentateuch (Torah) with extensive commentaries. It is called "Etz Hayim" ("The Tree of Life") and supposedly presents the newest discoveries in archeology, philology and facts about the most ancient cultures.

The new "Torah" questions the entire Biblical history. For example, the President of the Jewish University in Los Angeles, Robert Wexler insists that for the sources of the Book of Exodus one has to look not to Palestine, but to the

Mesopotamian epics, and the history of Noah is based only upon Mesopotamian legend since the world-wide Flood never actually happened, but was just the overflow of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Another professor of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Lee Levine, states that "there is no reference in Egyptian sources for Israel's sojourn in that country, and the evidence that does exist is negligible and indirect," therefore, there was never a passing through the Red Sea.

The fall of the walls of Jericho, according to Levine, is also a fiction because excavations have not discovered any remnants of them and this area was generally uninhabited. He also states that there is "an almost total absence of archeological evidence" that Jerusalem was built by King David and his son Solomon. Also, both of them were just unimportant chieftains of a small tribe.

During the Jewish Passover of last year Rabbi Wolpe told his 2,200 congregation members that "virtually every modern archeologist agrees that the way the Bible describes the Exodus is not the way it happened, if it happened at all". He claimed that scientists have not found any traces of Israel's tribes on Mt. Sinai and also that the Prophet Moses himself was a mythical personage.

Jewish feminists participated in composing the new Torah. Their influence was noticed by observers in the history of the Three Travelers who prophesized to Sarah that she would bear a son in her old age. It turns out that she laughed not because she doubted the possibility of being pregnant in old age, but because she still could have intimate relations with Abraham! Everything that is said in Bible against the sins of Sodom is not only rejected, but the very opposite, is greatly encouraged.

Some conservative rabbis are concerned about the actual rejection of all the basics of their confession and defend themselves with the opposite arguments: "There is no evidence that it didn't happen. Most of the 'evidence' is the evidence from silence". However, so far no one has ever been persuaded to believe into anything by the "evidence of silence". It seems that Judaism is going through a deep crisis with the atheism evidently widely spread within it that is still veiled.

One hundred thousand copies of this book were published that were immediately sold out. It is expected that it will become a standard Bible for the 760 synagogues belonging to this group in America.

After several decades of implanting godlessness among the non-Jews, especially in Russia, they thought that they could destroy Christianity from within, without getting infected themselves. Now it is quite obvious that by working for the destruction of Christianity, they could not avoid being infected themselves and the new "Torah" is nothing but a total negation of the most basic elements of Judaism.

EXPLOSION WITHIN CATHOLICISM

Today many believe that Martin Luther, who was a Catholic monk and died in 1546, established his religion of Lutheranism only as a protest against the sale by the Vatican of indulgences, the dispensations given to the dead and even their heirs for money. The truth is that his rejection of indulgences was actually a by-product of his outrage against the unlimited debauchery of the Catholic clergy of that period.

The creation of Lutheran Protestantism forced the Catholic episcopate to take urgent measures. The debauchery continued to exist, but no longer so openly. A substantial number of Catholic priests (due to the celibacy obligatory upon them) resorted to the housekeepers in the parish houses. Over time and the degeneration of morals, these "housekeepers" (by the way, a very honorable position in parishes in Germany) were gradually replaced by young men (some times even children). So, everything followed its course until 1970, when in the USA, for the first time in centuries, the question of the immorality of the Catholic clergy was raised again. The Catholic hierarchy reacted to this in a new manner. Clergyman who were, without doubt, guilty of crimes were immediately transferred to other parishes. This was practiced for more than 20 years, until in 2001 an enormous scandal erupted in the Catholic Boston diocese, which has cost that church already about 50 million dollars.

On January 9th, 2002 the newspaper "The Boston Globe" published information about a priest, John Geoghan, who was accused of immorality by 80 young men. It became known that the Boston bishop had protected him for 30 years and he was transferred to 13 different parishes. At present this Catholic priest is in jail. Meanwhile, trying to hush up the scandal, the Boston diocese paid accusers enormous sums of money, up to \$400,000 in one case. A diocese in New York just recently paid to a middle-aged woman \$1,200,000 for being raped and forced to have an abortion.

The information about the Boston scandal created a chain reaction of similar cases in important Catholic dioceses: New York, Florida, California, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Main, Connecticut, Missouri and others. Everywhere the same accusations surfaced; the same transfers of guilty clerics to other parishes and monetary fines due to court orders or out of court settlements.

According to "Ecumenical News International" of March 20th, the Florida Bishop O'Connell voluntarily resigned and paid to only one of his accusers \$125,000. In 1999 he had replaced Bishop Joseph Simons who had to resign for the same reasons.

From the information published by "The New York Times" of March 12th, the Catholic Church already has paid out more than a million dollars due to legal demands. This resulted in bankruptcy to such a point that even the rich dioceses were forced to sell their schools and hospitals and on some occasions even parish church buildings were then closed under various pretexts.

Some Catholic bishops agreed to cooperate with the police, while some of them are accused of criminal protection of the guilty and of transfers to other parishes. A number of priests, under the pressure of indisputable evidence, publicly admitting their guilt, have voluntarily retired and there even have been a few cases when, expecting arrest, they turned themselves in to the police.

According to the important magazine "U. S. News & World Report" of April 1st, similar scandalous cases have also happened in other countries. This magazine calls it "the greatest crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in modern history". It is known that in Canada it is already estimated that more than a thousand cases will cost their dioceses several billion in Canadian dollars. Similar cases are known in France and Ireland.

A popular bishop of Belfast (Ireland) Brendan Komiskey, according to "The New York Times" of April 2nd, already has announced his retirement. The newspaper "Calvary Contender" of March 1st reported that the Irish Church in February agreed to pay 110 million dollars to the accusers, under the condition that there will be no more demands by the same people.

The Vatican staff hoped to keep from the ailing Pope that his compatriot, Bishop Juliusz Paetz of Posnan in Poland, is also resigning because of the similar accusations. When the information about Paetz's immorality reached the Vatican and nothing was done about it, the Polish clergy and laity made strong and loud protests, so that the newspaper "Rzecz Pospolita" in February had to print the story on its first page. According to "The New York Times" of March 29th it became impossible to keep this story from the Pope and a while ago he received Paetz's official resignation, although Vatican has given no explanation for this resignation. The newspaper "National Catholic Reporter" of March 29th reported that the Pope said in connection with these numerous scandals: "As priests we are personally and profoundly afflicted by the sins of some of our brothers who have betrayed the grace of ordination in succumbing even to the most grievous forms of mystery of evil at work in the world. As the Church shows her concern for the victims and strives to respond in truth and justice to each of these painful situations, all of us... are called to commit ourselves more fully to the search of holiness".

All this has created terrible confusion within the Catholic masses and makes them pressure the episcopate to insist more strongly that the obligatory celibacy rules for clergy be rescinded by the Vatican. At the same time, Catholics have to urgently reexamine the whole system of their seminary education, to the point where every future seminarian's background would be thoroughly checked before enrollment.

ABOUT THE "RELIGIOUS REVIVAL" IN RUSSIA

At the end of a rather long Internet article by Alexander Soldatov, entitled "Sacred 'capital' and its 'oligarchs'" (# 1) interesting information was published about contemporary Russian Orthodox, based upon a recently taken opinion poll. From it we learn that 54% of Russians consider themselves Orthodox, 5% Muslim. The amount of other various religions is less than 1%. 37% declared themselves to be atheists.

It is taken for granted that 49% of the people to some extent follow religious obligations: they go to church on Sundays and observe the major holy days. But here also, only 11% strictly follow church regulations, while 38% follow the regulations according their own choice.

Concerning Great Lent, in 2000 only 6% fasted, and again, according their own choice: they mainly abstained from alcohol and pastries. Those who abstained from dairy products were much more rare and only 1/3 of those "fasting" didn't eat fish during Great Lent!

After seeing such minimal results after the liberation from Communist oppression, can one seriously consider there to be a "religious revival" among our compatriots, about which so much is being said now by the adherents to the idea of uniting the Church Abroad with the Moscow Patriarchate?

PUTIN AND THE CHIEF RABBI IN RUSSIA

According to the Internet reports of Strana.Ru on February 7th, 2002, Putin received the chief rabbi of Russia, Lazar Berl. The audience with the President lasted about an hour. After the audience, the Rabbi gave an interview in which he declared that Putin was very much interested with the situation of Jews in Russia. This Rabbi noted that previously the Jews were sort of "ashamed" to admit their national affiliation but that now the situation has considerably changed for the better. According to him "people have begun to understand that we want to help the country we are living in. At the same time it is worth mentioning that the situation has changed on both sides, since not only has society became more loyal toward Jews, but also the Jews themselves see that to live secluded within their own community, without entrance into society is senseless". Rabbi Berl didn't utter a single word about how the Jews "helped" produce the Revolution in Russia and then the concentration camps throughout her huge expanse.

In the audience the Rabbi mentioned that between the "Russian Orthodox Church" and Muslims there now exists a totally genuine understanding as a result of inter-confessional councils and committees.

Putin was honored by the praise of the Rabbi when he said that "the President has a common sense understanding the future of Russia and of the place of religion in the society. There is an understanding that without spiritual values, human life has no meaning and that they give it the correct direction".

FEW WORDS ABOUT INN

In Russia, as well as in Ukraine, over the years there have been heated discussions regarding the introduction by the government of the so-called INN (Individual Taxpayer Identification), since originally it was to have a bar-line code which included also three 6's.

Many believers, (interestingly also many non-believers) believed this government measure to be the "seal of antichrist" and categorically refused to accept this number for paying taxes, while others saw no harm in it. The protesters against the INN began to organize large scale demonstrations, write letters to their hierarchs and also turned to the "startsy" (elders) flourishing at present in Russia.

The unrest about this matter reached such a degree that the MP was forced to contact the major representatives of the government and in March of 2000 the Synod officially declared that the authorities were required to respect the feelings of the faithful and "reject the sixes in those codes that are offensive to the faithful". The declaration stated that the use of these particular numbers was not unavoidable and could be technically different.

Among the "elders" who expressed his views the most prominent was Archimandrite John (Krestiankin) who shares the opinion of his Synod. He said: "At present, submitting such documents presents no danger. Our resistance to the coming fears lies only in our faith in God and life according to faith".

In February of last year, an extended Synod Theological Committee met in the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy, which studied this matter and came to the conclusion that the INN is a succession of 12 Arabic numbers, of which the first two are a regional code; the next 2 numerals represent the number of the local tax department; the next 6 are the number of the taxpayer and the 2 last figures are a number to check the correctness of an entry. The presence of three sixes can be only accidental.

If one is to trust the conclusions of Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy regarding this matter, at the present time, indeed one can call INN "the antichrist's seal" only by stretching the point. However, there is no doubt that this measure is one more step toward the unlimited control over the population which in the end will result in the conscious and willful acceptance of the true antichrist's seal.

According to the Internet Strana.Ru information of February 21st, 2002, the local court of the city of Priozersk (Leningrad Region) agreed to recognize the right of the citizens to pay taxes without using this INN number.

NEW TEACHING ON CHRISTOLOGY

A Catholic magazine "Commonweal" # 12 for March published an extended article by a professor of the Catholic University of Notre Dame, Robert A. Krieg, entitled: "Who do you say I am?"

On the very same subject there is an article by Terence Tilley, who chairs the Theology Department at the University of Dayton and is the author of the book "Inventing Catholic Tradition." The third article is by an Anglican "priest" of the Oxford diocese and Sarah Coakley, professor of Divinity at Hartford University and also the author of a theological work.

Robert Krieg starts with the information that the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith questioned the theological teachings of Roger Haight and Jaques Dupius that were very sharply criticized by the rather conservative Cardinal Ratzinger of the Vatican. In October 2001 Ratzinger presented to the Synod a memo in which it was stated that "The central problem of our time is the emptying out of the historical figure of Jesus. It begins with denying the virgin birth, then the Resurrection becomes a spiritual event, then Christ's awareness of being the Son of God is denied, leaving Him only the words of a rabbi. Then the Eucharist falls, and becomes just a farewell dinner."

The article states that now the definition of the Personality of Jesus Christ and the answer to the question: "Who do you say I am?" can be answered in various ways, for example: you are the crucified Messiah, the Christ of Cana, the Son of Man among the poor or something similar. The contemporary Catholic more and more often compares Christ with such personalities as Buddha, Confucius, Krishna, Mohamed and... Moses!

In order to clarify those questions there are proposals to convene a Third Vatican Council that would instruct the contemporary Catholic on how they are to believe in Christ the Savior!

The new "theologians" have discovered a new teaching about the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, as having two levels: "Christology from above" and "Christology from below", and even more bluntly: "low" Christology.

"Christology from above" is the elevated Orthodox teaching about the Savior, defined by the council in Chalcedon, but, it happened to be very "risky" one, because it insufficiently speaks of the human Nature of Christ and this can lead to other heresies.

The "Christology from below" treats almost exclusively the human nature of Christ.

A Jesuit Dupius came up with the idea that since Christ was a historical person who expressed His teaching under the influence of Galilean culture and Jewish traditions, while at the same time being the "universal Logos," thus the non-Christian faiths can also participate in the mediation role of Christ.

Sarah Coakley believes that the matter should be put in the three levels: the exclusivism of Christ, the relation of the Divinity and Humanity of Christ and authority.

She speaks comfortably about the necessity of Catholics to believe in the humanity and divinity of Christ and therefore states: "That this remains important for contemporary Roman Catholic affairs is demonstrated by the remarkable recent ecumenical agreements achieved by Rome with the non-Chalcedonian descendents of both Alexandria and Antioch –

with the Oriental Orthodox churches on the one hand (1971, 1984), and with the "Assyrian" Church of the East on the other (1994). The question thus arises: How can Rome simultaneously court two widely divergent Christological perspectives while simultaneously reining in its own theologians to a tight Chalcedonian standard that actually tilts toward only one side?"

While discussing the matter of authority, Coakley does not deny that in the matter of Christology the authority belongs to the ecclesiastical administration. However, "power is at the heart of this struggle over who decides what is Christologically legitimate – and thereby what is a 'correct' reading of immensely complex and somewhat fluid earlier views. The CDF might exercise its notable power with a closed eye to ecumenical relations already mandated by Rome could surely be only to its own advantage".

Terrence Tilley at the end of the article stated that: "We don't need to develop a theory to show how God works it out. We do not need to get our Christological stories straight when we respond to 'who do you say that I am?' We do need to show that we can talk without contradiction of God's universal salvific will and the scandalous particularity of the incarnate and risen Lord. These challenges make Christology interesting — and, necessary, now as ever".

All three articles demonstrate the terrible state of contemporary Western "Christianity".