



# CHURCH NEWS

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CHRIST IS RISEN!

THE EDITORS OF CHURCH NEWS GREET ALL OF OUR READERS  
ON THE BRIGHT DAYS OF HOLY PASCHA  
AND WISH THAT THEY ALL MEET THE FEAST OF FEASTS AND TRIUMPH OF TRIUMPHS  
WITH SPIRITUAL JOY AND GOOD HEALTH.

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**THE PASCHAL EPISTLE**  
**Of His Eminence VALENTIN, Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir**  
**To God pleasing flock of the Russian Orthodox Church**  
**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

The Day of Resurrection!  
 Let us be illuminated with the solemn Feast!  
 Let us embrace one another

Beloved Brethren, Archpastors and Pastors,  
 God loving brothers and sisters!

At these minutes, the most happy ones in the life of a Christian – we do not simply remind ourselves of a historical event of Christ's resurrection, which happened in Palestine and became a central event in the whole human's history. Thanks to the Christ's Church, which has existed without interruption since the earthly life of the Savior even to this day, we become witnesses to Christ's resurrection. We imitate the Apostles, the heralds of the world wide joy of Holy Pascha.

By partaking in the Paschal Lamb of the New Testament, we join the resurrected Savior himself – His divine Body, entering His sacramental Divine life in the same manner as He enters the life of every one of us and enlightens it with the "Divine radiance of Resurrection". There from comes this unusual joy, which can never be comprehended nor attained and understood by the godless world around us.

At the Paschal night, which, as the ancient Christians said is brighter than the brightest day, we receive the pledge of the future resurrection of every one of us. In re-living the experience of the event of Resurrection of Christ, in renewing the joy in the resurrected Lord, the Giver of Life, we sense that if we will live truly with Christ here, on earth, than we will be resurrected with Him there, in the Heavenly Kingdom.

Christ arose not because God is able to die and be born again, but because it was the only way to redeem the fallen human nature from the curse of the sin and death, only in this way could man be grant the eternal life.

Our Lord rose by the power of His Divinity, but since He is not only True God, but also true Man, in Him also rose the human nature, the bearer of which He became when He became incarnate from All Holy Virgin Mary. If prior to resurrection of Christ, the Old Testament humanity had a very obscure hope for the eternal life and was aware of all the horror of death, from which there was no escape, then after the Resurrection every man received a possibility of eternal life.

The Lord has done everything needed so that we inherit it – He came down to earth, incarnate, suffered the persecutions and profanations, was crucified on the Cross, arose and ascended to the invisible Divine world of His Father. Now it is up to us: we have to follow Christ, fulfill His commandments, live according to the Gospels, through the mysteries of the Church, be united with God. And when we and the Christ will become one, than we will raise with Christ into the eternal life. But if we do not unite with Christ, all our faith will have been in vain and, terrifying to think, the glorious Resurrection of Christ itself might be to no purpose for us.

In order that this does not happen, the Holy Church of Christ shows us the spiritual path, directed toward the union with Christ, our Savior. The every day's basic task of the spiritual life – is the struggle with the sin, with our sinful habits and inclinations, with all that attracts us to the world and distance us from God. The main tools in this struggle, as the Savior Himself said in the Gospels – is prayers and fasting.

The Church lives and breathes with the prayer "seven times a day" performs magnificent services and, for those services in-between, calls us to unceasing prayer to God with words of the Jesus prayer. But in order to strengthen the prayer, fasting is necessary, --- the acquiring of the habit of abstinence.

How wisely it is arranged by the holy fathers, that prior to the worldwide festivity, there be a 7 weeks long strict Great Lent! Those of us, who have observed this lent according to all the church regulations, or at least have sincerely strived to do so, have received from the Lord visible spiritual gifts: internal peace of mind, meekness, humility, abstinence, love, charity..

Christ's Pascha – is a universal holiday: in it participate not only our heart, our mind, but all our essence and, wider – all the world "Heaven and the earth and the underworld", as it is sung in the canon of Pascha.

At this day, as we all see, the whole nature (speaking figuratively) is renovated – the trees become green, birds sing, the brooks, freed from the ice joyfully murmur. Our pious ancestors have established a multitude of paschal customs, which penetrate the nations way of life.

One of the most ancient customs is the preparation of special paschal food, colored eggs, Easter cakes, cheese "paschas". The most ancient and having a deep meaning is coloring of eggs in red, the color of blood shed by Christ on the Cross. This custom is connected with the Equal to Apostles, Mary Magdalene, who, according to the tradition came to the Roman emperor Tiberius and handed him an egg with the words: "Christ is Risen". The emperor doubted that the mortal could raise from the dead. "It is as difficult to believe in this as to believe that a white egg might become red!" and the white egg immediately ( a symbol of the starting life) became red. In such a way, the customs carefully handed down to us by our fathers and grandfathers do connect us with the most ancient times of existence of the Christ's Church.

Now, when we rejoice in this beautiful church and with the joyful hymns meet "Christ the life giver, coming out of the three days tomb" the world surrounding us is emerged in the darkness of lack of knowledge, it does not know the True

God and True Church and can not participate in our joy. When the Lord rose, His enemies. Scribes Pharisees, torturers and crucifiers have no longer seen Him. Their spiritual ancestors—false priests and the mistaken souls that follow them – also have not seen the risen Christ. Also many of our unfortunate contemporaries do not see Him, not only those who in their insanity call themselves “unbelievers”, but also those who formally declare themselves to be Orthodox, while they do not know what the True Orthodoxy is.

Unfortunately, during last years in our country is wide spread understanding of Orthodoxy as of a national culture, folk customs, ancient traditions. Certainly, the Orthodoxy penetrates our whole national culture, but it is not restricted with it. The Orthodoxy, which is not linked with the rejection of the world, with the meek following of Christ and the fulfillment of His commandments – is a lie, it only comforts the feebleness and supports the sinful inclinations of man. Many people, as the Savior Himself has warned, confess Him with the mouth, but their hearts are distant from Him. Let us not be like them!

Among the unfortunate people, who now do not celebrate Christ's resurrection with the Church, the enemy of human race creates his kingdom of anger, hatred, lies and revenge. But we believe, that the ray of glory of the resurrected Christ will penetrate even this kingdom of the dead.

Since time immemorial the powers of Hell can not reconcile with the news of resurrection of Christ, they lead the irreconcilable war against it. They imagined, that when they killed the confessors of Christ's Resurrection, they can annihilate the preaching itself. But this preaching is impossible to suppress! It is said, not in vain, that the blood of martyrs – is a seed of the Church. Every new martyr – is not a defeat, but a victory of the Church, it is a proof that the faith in Resurrection is stronger than life and for this sake it is worth to die in order to eternally live with the Lord. The example of such death has given the Lord Himself! Therefore, let us be ready for persecutions for the faith of Christ and the God's truth and let us accept it with joy and gratitude, because Christ from Golgotha extends to us the uncorrupting crown.

Beloved in Lord fellows in prayer and in podvig on the Christ's field!

From the bottom of my heart I congratulate you on occasion of bright and joyful feast of Holy Pascha! I pray to the resurrected Christ the Giver of Life, that He would grant to every Orthodox Christian, every suffering family, any weeping one the comfort of peace and rest!

The sorrow will disappear, wars will stop, blood will discontinue to flow, injustice will perish, the slandered ones will be justified, the offended ones will forgive and all will be happy. This is a way in which the life will be arraigned on the “new world” and under the “new heaven” –in the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Kingdom of God. It will be so arraigned, because Christ has risen and there is no more death: just a little longer and there will be no evil and injustice – the insignificant fruits of the death. Let us suffer a bit more, let us preserve the faithfulness to Christ even until death and we will eternally be with Him!

After returning home from this feast to this complicated life, let us, beloved ones, bring over a particle of the inaccessible light of Christy's Resurrection! Let us be living witnesses that Christ has risen, let all people know about it – the close ones and distant! Let the people know of the endless happiness, which the Lord has granted us so that they would thank their Creator and Redeemer!

**Verily Christ is Risen!**

**May the Lord's blessing remain with all of us!**

The President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church

VALENTIN, Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir

Christ's Pascha 2003,

God preserved city of Suzdal

## **A BLATANT LIE NEVER STOPS**

The Internet bulletin Vertograd (#358 of April 21) has published a short article by Igor Fersov entitled “Latest News from the Suzdal Region, on the Anti-church Front”.

It reports that the schismatic and betrayer A. Osetrov on February 17<sup>th</sup> gave an interview to a TV Ts channel in which he related something from his own biography, which he managed to keep secret for several years.

According to his own revelations for more than three years he collected material in the hope of compromising his own First Hierarchy.

In May 2002 this shameless individual gave an interview to the scandal sheet “Prizyv” in which he related that “the thought of abandoning the ROAC began long ago”.

The author of this article believes that “the work of this former priest compels one to believe that he engaged in this not solely on his own initiative....”

In the TV interview Osetrov declared that from the moment the Metropolitan was “convicted” by the civil court “parishes began to leave the ROAC and the Metropolitan himself was not allowed to enter the church in Riazan”, while the truth is that during this “hearing” and afterwards “not a single parish has left ROAC, despite a copy of the “sentence” being widely circulated by the MP and Osetrov's group... Just the opposite, rather, during this time several parishes joined ROAC in Kuban: in Amavir and Belorechensk and as far as Riazan in concerned, Metropolitan Valentin visited the Epiphany parish a year ago, was warmly greeted by the parishioners and has served in their parish!

It is worth noticing that the campaign started against the ROAC begun by Osetrov and continued by Ter-Gregorian who joined him (excommunicated by the Metropolitan Valentin) is based on the claim that they received a blessing for this

activity from Bishop Anthony of Yaransk, who for the first time has now publicly declared that he "never gave any blessings for such activities".

## **A DUBIOUS STORY**

The newspaper "Haarez," published in Israel, in the April 6<sup>th</sup> issue reported that a resident of the town of Beit Jala, a Palestinian named Yusef Almufdi, agreed to arrange the murder of the Jerusalem Patriarch Irenaios.

According to this report, the murder of the Patriarch was ordered by the Secretary of the Synod of quite some duration and an assistant to two former Patriarchs, who himself was hoping to become one too – Metropolitan Timotheos (Margariti).

Almufdi, arrested by the Palestinian police, said that he had received \$500,000 from Metropolitan Timotheos. Reports about this were wide spread on Palestinian TV. Other than noting this arrest and also informing the Israeli police, the Palestinian authorities gave no details about it. So far nothing has been reported about the possibility of Metropolitan Timotheos being arrested.

However, at the same time, according to news published on April 9<sup>th</sup> by the Three Saints parish in Garfield, NJ, an unnamed spokesman for the Jerusalem Patriarchate has denied this report.

Also, the representative of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in Athens said that, "His Holiness was never aware of any suspicious actions against him". Also Bishop Timotheos of Vostra gave an interview to a Greek TV station in which he stated that he has nothing against Patriarch Irenaios.

A declaration issued by the Patriarchate points out that the suspect is still being questioned by the authorities and the Patriarch is following developments closely with total confidence in the Palestinian and Israeli authorities.

The Israeli government still does not officially recognize the election of the Jerusalem Patriarch, accusing him of close ties with Arafat.

In this area it is considered extremely important who is a Patriarch of Jerusalem, especially since the Patriarchate owns real estate valued at tens of billions of dollars.

It seems that no other Orthodox Church can match the Jerusalem Patriarchate in wealth!

## **SOME CLERGY UNDER METROPOLITAN VITALY HAVE LEFT FOR KALLINICITE GREEKS**

According to the information in the Internet bulletin Vertograd # 357 of April 18, 2003, 5 clergymen who were in jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly in Russia unexpectedly have left him and joined the Greek Bishop Makarios of Petra, belonging to the group of "Kallinicitis" who have their center in Greece. While in Russia this hierarch, at the beginning of April, also ordained a Hieromonk Cyprian!

Ten other Russian clergy also belong to this Greek Synod, functioning in the territory of the Russian Autocephalous Church and on top of that, there are also functioning several communities "ministered" to by Victor Melekhov, who quite recently has for the second time left the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly, after a 15 year stay with the Old Calendar Greeks.

It seems that there are no limits to the canonical chaos within the Churches that at one time or another have been truly Orthodox....

## **RETURN OF THE MIRACLE WORKING TIKHVIN ICON OF THE THEOTOKOS TO RUSSIA**

The Internet publication of the MP parish of the Three Saints in Garfield, NJ in the April 19<sup>th</sup> issue reported that from May 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> the miraculous Tikhvin icon of the Holy Virgin will visit St. Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania, which later will be returned to Russia.

The icon became the property of Archbishop John (Garklavs) during the Second World War when the city of Pskov it became possible to establish missionary parishes in territory occupied by the German army.

During the military actions the icon happened to be in Smolensk and one of the German soldiers rescued the icon from the burning cathedral and gave it to the Pskov mission.

In the forties, Archbishop John brought the icon to the ROCOR Synod of Bishops center in Munich and at that time, all those who met the miraculous icon were shocked to see that the icon was packed in a large unfinished wooden case tied to the roof of a car! While still outside in the courtyard, the icon was taken out and brought into the church, where Metropolitan Anastassy served a moleben.

Probably this is the only case in history when both the miraculous icons of Kursk and Tikhvin were displayed together in a church!

Shortly afterwards, Bishop John went to America and there joined the, at that time, Metropolia" and became Archbishop of Chicago. After his death (1980), the icon was in possession of his adopted son, V. Rev. Sergius Garklavs, who, according to Internet information "that it be returned to the Monastery of Tikhvin after the demise of the Soviet regime"... Now Priest Alexander Garklavs (the grandson of Archbishop John) has declared, "It is our humble sense of the divine providence that we now feel that the time has come for the icon to be returned to the Tikhvin Monastery, where it had been for over five centuries".

Priest Garclavs informed the members of the OCA Synod at their spring session, about plans for the return of the icon to Tikhvin and that the handing over is scheduled for June of 2004, so that believers in the USA might venerate it while the icon stays in St. Tikhon's Monastery in America.

## EPISTLE OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCH TO SOME MP BISHOPS IN EUROPE AND AMBROSE, ARCHBISHOP OF WESTERN EUROPEAN DIOCESE OF THE ROCOR

In his Epistle of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 # 1378 (published in Russian and English, 3 pages long) and addressed by name to: Metropolitan Anthony Bloom of Surozh, Archbishop Simon of Brussels and Belgium, Archbishop Innocent of Korsun, the temporary administrator of Russian Orthodox Churches in Western Europe, Bishop Ambrose of Geneva (**ROCOR-L**) as well as to "all Orthodox parishes of the Russian tradition in Western Europe", Ridiger says that "During the forty days of Holy Lent we think constantly about the future of the heritage of the Russian Church which follows the traditions of Russian Orthodoxy in the countries of the West".

On a second page, Ridiger informs the Orthodox that "Both Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky, Ed.] and Metropolitan Evlogii **made it clear that their move away from full unity with the Mother Church in our country was motivated only by political and no other reasons**" (Emphasis by "Ch. N.").

In this case "His Holiness" undoubtedly considers that the lack of information on church matters in the majority of Russian people is safe ground for conscious lies!

On May 6/19<sup>th</sup>, 1933, Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky sent a letter to Metropolitan Sergius, which was widely published abroad. It is not possible that this letter never reached the KGB archives and that Ridiger is unaware of it! In it Metropolitan Anthony wrote: "In your regard, what separates us is that you have tried to unite light with darkness, in your desire to assure the safe existence of the ecclesiastical center. You have fallen into the temptation whose essence is revealed in the Holy Gospels. Once, the spirit of evil tried to attract even Son of God Himself with the image of easy success, on the condition He would worship him, the son of perdition. You have not taken the example of Christ, the holy martyrs and confessors, who have rejected such a compromise, but have worshiped the primordial enemy of our salvation for the sake of illusory success, for the security of the outward organization, and have declared that the joys of the godless government are your joys and her enemies are your enemies. You have even attempted to uncrown the martyrs and confessors of recent years (among them also yourself because it is known to me that at one time you showed firmness and were jailed) by insisting that, supposedly, they suffer imprisonment, exile and tortures not the sake of Christ's name, but for being counter-revolutionaries. In so doing you have mocked them".

Pleading that he return to the path of the confessors, Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky admonished his former disciple and friend: "reject, in the hearing of all, these lies which were put into your mouth by Tuchkov and other enemies of the Church, do not stop in the face of possible martyrdom. If you will be worthy of a martyr's crown, then the earthly and heavenly Church will unite in glorifying your courage and the Lord Who has strengthened you, but if you remain on this broad path which leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13) on which you are proceeding at present, then it will infamously lead you to the bottom of hell and the Church, to the end of her worldly existence, will not forget your betrayal".

Metropolitan Sergius made no response to this outstanding letter of Metropolitan Anthony!

All the epistles of the ROCOR Councils of Bishops, the Synods and some prominent hierarchs were written in the very same spirit, up to the repose of Metropolitan Philaret when the matter of the Moscow Patriarchate was being evaluated. Beginning in 1961, on orders from the KGB, the Moscow Patriarchate joined the World Council of Churches and became an active member. In 1983 the Council of Bishops anathematized Ecumenism as a heresy against the doctrine of the uniqueness and unity of the Church. Where is there in this even a hint of any sort of "political reasons"?

Then Alexis II explains: "Apart from those reasons, that have their roots in human sinfulness, there are other, more blessed causes of this. The grandchildren and great grandchildren of the first generation emigres feel that they have in every sense put down roots in the countries where they now live and where they play an active part in the social and cultural life there... Therefore, to have a guarantee for the preservation of a familiar order some of our compatriots living in the Western countries – and some of the local Orthodox who form part of communities living according to the Russian tradition – structure their Church life according to their own statutes *which guarantee internal self-government and the election of their own ruling bishop, on condition that the bishop so elected is subsequently confirmed by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church*". (Emphasis by "Ch. N.").

Further on, the dreams of Ridiger carry him away completely. He offers to create a unified European metropolitan region, consisting of several dioceses and "embracing all the Orthodox parishes, monasteries and communities of Russian origin and Russian spiritual tradition who would wish to be part of such a Metropolitanate. In addition to this it is envisaged that such a Metropolitanate would be granted the right of self-government, including the election of its ruling bishop by a Council of the Metropolitanate, consisting of bishops, presbyters and laity on the basis of statutes to be worked out with the participation of all groups in the Orthodox Russian Diaspora in the countries of Western Europe".

There can be no doubt that in his epistle Ridiger sees the primary significance of his bait in the promise of **self-government**. Otherwise, he would not mention it twice (on the second and third pages).

For a start, Alexis II proposes that "we consider it right to entrust the care of the newly constituted Metropolitanate" to Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) the founder and administrator for many years of the MP diocese in England, but who is very

advanced in age. The Patriarchate has appointed a vicar bishop to him, who was expected to be his successor, but from the very beginning was disliked by Anthony himself as well as his flock.

The Moscow Patriarch is already distributing the dioceses in Western Europe and offers to retain all the bishops for the time being and that they become "close collaborators and assistants" with Metropolitan Bloom!

According to Ridiger's plan (in which he distinguishes between Western Europe and Central Europe), he feels that the invitation includes the ROCOR bishops from Western Europe – Ambrose of Geneva and Central Europe – Mark of Berlin, "so that the restoration of Church unity in the Russian Diaspora can be extended to the countries of Central Europe as well".

By the way, the Moscow Patriarchate repeats over and over again the words of the "reunion and reestablishment" of the unity with the Church Abroad, which was never the case since the year 1927!

It is worth noticing that during the entire history of the ROCOR, until the repose of Metropolitan Philaret, the MP never attempted to directly approach her. The agents of KGB of that time knew perfectly well that there would be no response to them.

Interestingly, the Moscow Patriarch has selected the time of Great Lent for the publication of his "epistle", addressed mainly to the ROCOR parishes. Is not this in the hope of confusing the "little ones" and increasing the possibility of schism and the falling apart of this ROCOR they hate?!

### A WELL FOUNDED ALARM

The newspaper "Rus Pravoslavnaya" ("Orthodox Russia") in issue #1-2 has published on the front page the appeal of residents of Sergiev Posad entitled "Let us not permit the completion of the sacrilege!".

It is reported that the newspaper "Izvestia" ("News") has published an interview with the "president of the Muslim community in the Sergiev Posad, Arslan Sadriev", who has admitted that within in the grounds of St. Sergius of Radonezh Monastery the construction of a mosque is being planned! According to the statement of this Muslim, "we have already made an agreement with the local administration about giving us land to build a prayer house and there exists no inter-confessional disagreement in the region. *We are closely collaborating with the Orthodox monastery as well as with the clergy who treat us with understanding*" (Emphasis by "Ch. N.").

It is interesting to note that instead of the term "mosque", the sectarian term "prayer house" is used, probably with the aim of not scaring the Orthodox too much!

The appeal stresses, not without reason, that "10 thousand Muslims live in the vicinity of Sergiev Posad. If the mosque will be built, it will become a magnet, attracting to our land some further tens of thousands of Muslims and, in a few years the Orthodox will have no room in the walls of the monastery of St. Sergius".

Realizing that the building of a mosque at such monastery as Lavra of St. Sergius cannot happen without the justifiable uproar on part of Orthodox people, "Izvestia" has reported that **the local administration keeps this fact strictly secret**. According to this information, "As we happened to find out, the land for the Muslim prayer house in the Sergiev Posad is already set aside, although the local authorities deny this fact... At present there cannot be even talk about a possibility of a Muslim center in Sergiev Posad", Vasily Goncharov told the newspaper, who is the regional administrator of Sergiev Posad.

The appeal is directed to this Vasily Goncharov, to the Governor of Moscow region, Boris Gromov, Patriarch Alexis and President Putin. It was signed by more than 2, 600 "Orthodox residents of Sergiev Posad".

The editors of "Rus Pravoslavnaya" commented on this appeal and stated that, "During the past year in the Samara region alone *at the same time* there were *more than 150 non-Orthodox missionaries*. These figures were given the mass media attached to the public relations department of the governor.

The statistics show that: "during the past year, at the invitation of the religious organizations, 'there were present 165 persons to work as professionals in the religious field'. This amount is divided according to confession into: the Church of Jesus Christ of the Later Day Saints – 48 (Mormons, who have asked recently to be no longer called such and have taken this confusing name); Roman Catholics – 36; Lutherans – 13; the Church of the Word of Life [?!] – 14; Muslims – 10; Jehovah's Witnesses – 11; Baptists – 19; Jews – 3; Hassidic Jews – 5; New Apostolic Church – 6".

The very same "Orthodox Russia" has published an extensive full-page article by Michael Nazarov (a secretary in the Writer's Union) with a title "President Putin and Jewish Extremism".

According to this article, although in Russia retains a rather small number of Jews, yet it seems that President Putin very much patronizes them – and the Jews cannot praise him enough.

So, the Chief Rabbi in Russia, Berl Lazar has declared: "since the time Putin came to power the punishments for anti-Semitic expressions have multiplied... In the greeting sent by the President Putin in September for Rosh-ha-Shana, he has promised to totally eradicate anti-Semitism... President Putin feels responsible for the well being of Judaism and for the struggle against the anti-Semitism in all its varieties and for the possibility for the Jews in Russia to freely move and to have dual citizenship" ("Hebrew Word" #47, 21-27. 11, 2001).

By the way, the privilege of having the dual citizenship, as is know, belongs only to Jews in Russia and the USA!

In the same issue it is reported that, "the President of the Russian Federation celebrated Hanukah in the Jewish civil center and participated in the Jewish ritual of lighting the Hanukah candles together with Rabbi Lazar. Over there, Putin has received a gift of a menorah and he said that, "the light and goodness which come forth from the Hanukah menorah

will be lighting the Kremlin"! In the very same Kremlin, "the Orthodox and believer" President Putin stands with candle in hand at the Paschal services.

From the same article it is obvious that the president of Israel, while on a visit in Moscow on 2001, also praised Putin and called him a "wonderful friend of the Jewish people". The Israeli President was extremely touched by fact that "for the first time in history, there was kosher food, all the food was kosher... for the first time within the walls of the Kremlin a Jew put on the tfilin and said a prayer" (from newspaper "Lekhaim" February 2001)

It is not surprising that there are rumors circulating that the present President of Russia is of Jewish origin.

## **THE SARS EPIDEMIC AND RELIGION IN CANADA**

"The New York Times" of April 21<sup>st</sup> reported that in connection with the growth of the SARS epidemic, which was brought to Canada from China, the ritual of the Catholic mass was substantially changed.

The parishioners in Toronto who came for the Easter mass, were handed a pamphlet in which it was explained that in view of the epidemic, they are not to kiss the Cross and, receive their communion from the chalice. Usually, at the mass the Catholics receive the communion in the form of wafers, while the wine is drunk by the clergy. However, with the renovations by the Vatican II Council (1962-64), special permits are given to some parishes where Catholics may receive their communion under two species. But at present, even the wafers will not be put on the tongue, but be given in the hand. Also, it is not permitted to use the confessionals. Instead of the "salutation of peace" which was performed by shaking the hands of those sitting in the pews, the Catholics are just to bow to each other.

According to the newspaper the communion rules were worked out by Ontario health and church officials.

An Episcopalian pastor of Toronto, during the mass prayed "for the containment of this disease". He alone drank the wine from the chalice, for everyone, while the members of the congregation nodded and smiled as he explained the new communion rule in the Episcopalian ritual.

One thing is absolutely clear: those in the West do not believe that they receive the true Body and true Blood of Christ!

## **A DAY DREAM OF THE ROMAN POPE**

The magazine "30 Days", a Roman Catholic publication has published an extensive article about the present situation of the Serbian monasteries and their properties (metohija) in Kosovo. In connection with this there was also published an article in which is printed an interview with Artemije, Bishop of Rashka and Prizren.

A journalist asked him about the situation of the Serbian Church and her flock over the last three years, because there are persons who insist that under the UN protection the circumstances have significantly improved.

Bishop Artemije answered that, "those who say so say only half of the truth. Of this is true only that so far there have returned to their homes 700 thousand Albanians, who have the guarantee that they will have a job and assistance in rebuilding their homes and mosques. Meanwhile, under the protection of UN army, the Albanians have driven from Kosovo 250 thousand of Serbs (1/3 of the population which lived there before the war) as well as 30 thousand residents of Kosovo, not of Serbian nationality. Eighty thousand Serbian homes were destroyed by the Albanians, more that 110 Serbian churches (some built in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) were also destroyed. All the Serbian cemeteries were desecrated and "All of this took place under the eyes of the international community, in a country which had been placed under UN governance, and without any of those responsible for these terrible acts ever being identified or arrested. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that the 130 thousand Serbs who remain, continue to live shut up in small and large enclaves, deprived of all human rights, such as freedom of movement, the right to work... Also of 250 thousand refugees who could returned home, only a couple of hundred have returned".

Along with everything else, the journalist said that there are persistent rumors that when visiting Catholic Croatia, the Pope hopes to make a stop at Belgrade.

To this Bishop Artemije replied: "We have not yet received any official or unofficial information on this possibility. So I don't want to speculate on it. And, if such a possibility were to be realized, a stance on behalf of the whole Orthodox church would be taken not only by Pavle, our Patriarch, by the entire Council of Bishops. At the same time we believe that the archbishops will take into account the inner conviction of the Church, that is, of the believing faithful, on the matter. As for the benefit the Serbian Orthodox Church might receive from such a hypothetical visit, I don't find myself in a position to make out what it might be. On the contrary, we fear that we could receive further harm from it in terms of the faith and spiritual issues, because such a visit could provoke new divisions and splits in the Serbian Church. I am convinced, however, that such a visit will not take place, despite the gossip".

Most certainly, rumors about a possible visit of the Pope to Belgrade did not spring up by themselves and there must be good enough reasons for an Italian journalist to feel out the ground with an Orthodox Bishop.

The main dream of the Pope is to visit Moscow. For a number of years the Vatican has been working hard on the project of obtaining an invitation for the Pope to visit Russia. According to information of the Three Saints Parish in Garfield, NJ of April 15<sup>th</sup>, which was based upon a Vatican news report, the Pope plans to visit in August... Mongolia! And then, if possible, to stop in Kazan under the pretext of the "return" of the Kazan icon, which as we have already reported previously is not a genuine miraculous icon.

The very same issue of February 19<sup>th</sup> reported that behind the back of the MP, the Tatarstan's President Mintimer Shaimiev took upon himself the role of negotiator between the Catholics and the Patriarchate and is secretly negotiating about the arrival of the Pope in Russia and believes that this could serve the establishment of friendly relations between the Catholics and the Patriarchate and "might resolve the problems between the two Churches". However, the spokesman for the MP said that, "such acts can ruin the relationship for the future. We hope that the Catholic party will collaborate and will not act in the way she was in the Ukraine"

The Vatican's spokesman Navarro-Wells said that the Pope wants to hand over this icon as a gift to the Russian people and the Moscow Patriarchate and, that this will happen at the "appropriate occasion as the way of delivering it will be evaluated at the appropriate time".

Catholics insist that they have the moral right to act in Russia, because before the Revolution there used to be groups of Poles and Germans of the Catholic religion!

The magazine "30 Days" in another extensive article, mainly devoted to the fate of the Monastery of Dechani, entitled "After the Bombs, Chaos" verifies the data given by Bishop Amfilohije about the destroyed churches and reports that at present time the monastery is guarded by Italian troupes, but that very soon they will be transferred to city of Pech and this threatens Dechani Monastery. From other sources it is known that the UN, which supposedly protects the Orthodox sanctuaries in Kosovo, plans to take serious measures for their protection only in 2004. And meanwhile, the Albanians will be able to destroy even these remnants of the world's art treasures, not to speak of its spiritual ones!

#### **FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS (A Letter to Archpriest Igor Troyanoff of August 18/31, 1960)**

Dear Father Igor!

Thank you for your interesting letter of August 13/26<sup>th</sup>.

I was struck by the emptiness of the Ecumenists already by the time of the Evanston Conference. I was also surprised at the fruitlessness and total lack of interest about dogmatic matters, of the supposed "flourishing" of Protestant theological science. One feels that the organizers keep those who attend the conference "busy", while they have the secret intent of creating an inter-confessional church and directing it on very left wing rails. I do not quite understand what you want to say with the words "to fight only by rejection is not proper".

The case of Osipov is not a new phenomenon. Such things also happened previously with secret agents. The moment when to declare their atheism was chosen. The permission to declare their excommunication to me seems to be a smart maneuver to show how free the Church is.

On the other hand, the removal of Krutitsky, in my opinion shows the control over the (Church's) Foreign Relations Department. After all, his replacement is also a well-known agent. I believe that Krutitsky was removed in connection with cleaning out Karpov, maybe because they considered him to be not energetic enough in the struggle against religion and, possibly, because he permitted the publication of the excommunication. Certainly, this is a murky field and all this is just speculation. But among those clergymen who are sent abroad, there might be persons of two minds. They go with the approval of the atheists and under the control of a "minder", but inwardly they are troubled and would like to be in our shoes. It is good when they find out about our existence, but I would not like to have our representatives at the Ecumenist conferences. We cannot go other than with the status of observers, in order to avoid scandal.

In regard to our ecclesiastical press, we have to avoid one sidedness in our opinions. I myself often complain about "Pravoslavnaya Rus." Since childhood I cannot stand the sweet doggerel in our ecclesiastical press. But there are not a few people who find spiritual food in them and one should not deprive them and the direction of "Pravoslavnaya Rus" would be acceptable but for their arrogance toward those who are not satisfied with their food and have need to be addressed in another language. Vladyka Vitaly is trying to do this. He understands what kind of problems are disturbing the youth, but he is not careful enough in editing the magazine and therefore permits some blunders, like the article by Vladyka Seraphim and sometimes Vladyka Nathaniel with the conclusion of his article about the possibility of international Government from the point of view of Orthodoxy. At present it is impossible to feed the flock with Philaret's sermons, but also with new problems one has to be careful not to over-season them and thus scandalize someone. I do not know if I achieve this, but I made it a rule for myself when I write an article to imagine my readers before me in order not to scandalize anyone with too daring an opinion. We deal with two generations and both of them have to be approached by the method of Metropolitan Anthony.

The shortcoming of the other method, in my opinion, is evident in regard to the Orthodox French. Fr. A. Troubnikoff and Fr. Chertkoff have concentrated their efforts on finding their sins and exposing them instead of seeing if they have something good among them that might be cultivated and in this way to help them to get rid of former errors. They get carried away with such an attitude and start unacceptable demonstrations against their hierarch, like, for example, the retirement of Fr. Chertkoff. Is not something present here of the attitude of the elder brother of the prodigal son?

With much interest I have read your objective opinions about the French in your letters to Vladyka Metropolitan.

I believe that this is not a simple matter and in resolving it there might be various dangers, but we must decide either to refuse to resolve it or to resolve it in the spirit of Metropolitan Anthony by trying to find what good they have in them and to fan the flames of the embers so they would burn up all the evil and lies.

Your opinion about Moltalo Dora is very interesting. Catholicism might look very attractive but inside it there are many elements of disintegration. Toward them it is also possible to apply the above principle.



I am surprised that the village has turned to Antioch and not to Constantinople? How do you explain it?  
 Soon our young Schishkovs will be with you, and I hope they will find you in Lausanne. They are now in Paris.  
 Asking you for your holy prayers, I remain yours in Christ,

Archpriest George Grabbe

**A Letter to Nicholas Churilov of April 23<sup>rd</sup>/May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1992**

Truly His is Risen! Dear Nikolai Pavlovich!

Thank you for your Paschal greeting, which I reciprocate, although my letter probably will be late, but still, will arrive before the Ascension.

I understand how sad you were to be without church services. At your son's home it will be much easier.

I am glad that you write about such an important theme. Relatively few correctly understand this matter. That we live in pre-antichrist times some in Russia understand, but here, just a few among the clergy.

I have attended one of the lectures by Yakunin, and I didn't like him. He is primarily a politician. In some cases his lectures might be of some use, but I find it unacceptable that he criticized the Moscow Patriarchate and still remains her clergyman.

Regarding the KGB bishops, in the majority of cases and by and large – unfortunately, it is correct. At the last Council this matter was raised by the most conscientious of the Moscow hierarchs, Archbishop Chrysostom. He created a storm when he announced that he acted against his conscience but has never betrayed any one. His only achievement is that the Kievan Metropolitan has agreed to retire. He is known to have almost openly a wife (it seems there is a civil registration of a marriage). The Patriarch managed to stop this flood of exposes, but quite a bit still reached the press and private hands. After your departure, all has changed even more. Sergius capitulated in 1927. For me he stopped being an authority when he was a whole year a Renovationist (Obnovlenets) and appealed to others to join him. But I have never had a personal hatred neither toward him nor any other schismatic. I was sorry for him and I still am. We deal in Moscow not with a schism, but a heresy, regarding which Alexis tries to respond with silence. The council's epistle after Constantinople presents participation in the World Council of Churches as it used to be long before, but not as it is at present. In general, it is full of lack of agreement, and the Patriarch strictly adheres to the ecclesiological heresy introduced at the orders of KGB in 1961.

I believe that not being familiar with my character you have rushed to conclusions when you wrote that I am "carried away by my hatred toward Metropolitan Sergius to the point of passion, which can bring me to delusion". Nothing of that sort ever existed in me. Once I regarded Metropolitan Sergius very highly: at the time of his dissertation about the dogma of the Church that was published before he became a clergyman. On several occasions I have met with bishops, his former friends. But I believe that the higher the talent and the experience of a bishop, the more responsibility rests upon him for joining a heresy and appealing to others to join him. What might be excusable in a person of a lower level, was unacceptable for me in a person of such a high level and I was surprised that the Patriarch has put his name out as a candidate for Patriarchal Deputy. Trust has changed into the guarded mistrust. I can remember the opinions of those who knew him and who considered him to be a careerist and the complaints of hierarchs that he promised to retire with other members of the Synod in protest against Lvov, then he changed his mind and became a head of the Synod. Administration demands carefulness and not guidance by personal good relationships.

Jordanville has informed me by telephone that the printing of my third volume and a response to Pospelovsky's attack on our Church is ready.

Only next week will I find out from the doctor if he agrees to my flying to Europe. For the aged it is not always harmless to fly and I am already 90 years old.

I will be glad to see you here. The Lord's blessing be with you.

+ Bishop Gregory