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EDITOR'S EXPLANATION REGARDING THIS ISSUE'S TIMING

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Editor in Chief scheduled to undergo an unexpected operation had to suddenly cancel a trip to Russia.
If, by the mercy of the Lord it is successful,
the next issue will come out after the usual interval.

ERROR CORRECTION

Unfortunately, due to an oversight, in the commentary on Metropolitan Laurus's interview in the preceding issue of April (# 4, 128) (on p. 5 in bold print) we mistakenly wrote the name "Kharchev." It should read "Touchkov." We apologize for this error.

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VICTORY FOR THE TRUTH

A short while before the departure of the First Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church, Metropolitan Valentin to USA it was learned that despite the fact that the Russian Federation government has reversed the convictions against him resulting from outrageously unjust and slanderous accusations and issued a certificate of non-conviction, at the request of some enemies of the Church, another effort was made to annul the lifting of the conviction and to start a new trial.

The court date was set for May 11th in Suzdal.

According to information just received from the Suzdal-Vladimir diocesan office, the hearing indeed took place at the appointed time, but the court has refused to reinstate the status of conviction against His Eminence, Metropolitan Valentin.

The Metropolitan has been discharged from the hospital and is resting in the private quarters of Fr. Dionissy McGowen, (a clergyman of the Denver-Colorado Diocese), where he is recuperating after a serious heart operation and is regaining his strength.

TWO CLERGYMEN JOIN (AUTONOMOUS) RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

By order of the First Hierarchy of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Valentin, Archpriest Vladimir Shishkoff on April 23rd/May 6th accepted the oath of two clergymen: Archpriest Spyridon Schneider – the rector and founder of St. John the Russian church in Ipswich, MA and a second priest of the same parish, Fr. Christopher Johnson.

Fr. Spyridon, who graduated several theological and secular universities and schools, was ordained deacon and priest by St. Metropolitan Philaret.

Fr. Christopher, a former Roman Catholic, was baptized by Archpriest Alexander Lebedeff (of the Los Angeles diocese) in the era of Archbishop Anthony (of LA), but was ordained by the Greek Metropolitan Niphon.

Both clergymen daily conduct the evening and morning services.

In the near future it is expected that six more clergymen will join the (Autonomous) Russian Orthodox Church, since they have already sent in their personal questionnaires.

INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE

From the Suzdal diocese we have received a copy of a letter of the MP to the clergyman of the AROC and his answer to the first letter. Considering this correspondence to be of interest, we print below the material received:

Just before Pascha, a clergyman of the MP, Archpriest Victor Raish, dean of the Otradny region of the Yekaterinodar diocese of the MP, sent a letter to Archpriest Nicholas Hearn, dean of the Krasnodar region of the Suzdal diocese, the rector of the Kazan Church of the Theotokos in the stanitsa Otradnaya (a large Cossak village) proposing that he return to the MP.

Very Reverend Father Nicholas! [In Russian he is addressed incorrectly as a monk-priest -- "Ch. N"]

On the advice and blessing of the Metropolitan Isidore of Yekaterinodar and Kuban, I prayerfully appeal to you concerning a possible change of relations between you and Yekaterinodar and Kuban diocese.

There is outstanding a concrete offer that since you obtained by the will of God the grace of the priesthood from the hands of Vladyka Isidore, that you offer your repentance to Vladyka Isidore for the situation of schism and leave the jurisdiction of a Russian Orthodox Church outside the borders of the Mother Church.

Vladyka is ready to hear your sincere and bold repentance, to accept you under his omophorion on the condition that you will remove the registration of the schismatic parish and register it in the fold of the Russian Orthodox Church. You will remain in your present rank as well as remain the rector of the parish you have founded, which will continue as a full parish in the Otradny's regional deanery.

The merciful Lord, Who is at present suffering on the Cross, is calling you through the God-inspired wise Mother Church in the person of Metropolitan Isidore to the establishment of spiritual justice so that the matter of the Kuban schism would be exhausted and the unity in Christ Jesus, our Lord would reign.

Fr. Nicholas, while in the service of the Autonomous Russian Church has received quite a few, almost annually, similar letters. He never ceases to wonder at the patience and impudence of the authors, who continue to never give up the hope of ripping him from the Church into their heretical organization. But such is the lot of the Orthodox Christian: we are supposed to struggle against the deceptive temptations of the devil and reject them with Christ's grace. This letter would remain unanswered, as with previous ones, were it not for the outrageous incident that happened on Bright Week in the local cemetery when a priest of the MP attacked and tried to beat the white-bearded Archpriest Nicholas, threatening him with violence and cursing the Russian Church. As a result, Father Nicholas wrote in answer:

"Venerable Fr. Victor;

Your clergyman Andrew Smochuk served on April 19th in the cemetery and when he encountered me and my parishioners, he came toward us and started to curse the Church and the Diocesan Administration in which I now serve. He expressed himself in a rude manner, saying that I will not serve on the cemetery. It was embarrassing to listen to his bad language in the presence of the parishioners. He did not react to my polite attempts at admonition.

Rather, in a fury, he grabbed me by my cassock and cross, and began twisting my arm. He attacked me with threats and offensive words.

At that time, my novice Serge Melnikov, Priest Fr. Alexis Gorin and parishioners ran toward me. However, in malevolence your cleric continued to threaten me with further violence!

I ask you to have a talk with your cleric Andrew Smochuk in regard to a reconciliation. Also, explain to him how an Orthodox clergyman should behave!

Also, explain to him that a cemetery is a sacred place, where every citizen should behave properly. And a clergyman should be especially attentive toward everything and everyone! Since in a cemetery there rest bodies of persons of various religions and confessions, not only Orthodox priests, but clergymen of other religions have the right to be in the cemetery and conduct services, to whom we *may not* give any orders. Your cleric had no right to forbid me to conduct a service just because I am a priest of another jurisdiction. At the same time, the governor of the region A. Tkachev has declared a day off for all citizens of Kuban on the day of commemoration of the dead. And due to individual requests of my parishioners I was obliged to serve in the cemetery.

Venerable Fr. Victor; I have received your invitation letter, in which you propose I return to the bosom of your Russian Orthodox Church. Thank you for the invitation! But the recent incident with your clergyman has left a strong impression on me! My return to the bosom of your Church will never happen! April 22nd, 2004.

According to information from Vertograd # 460 of May 19th, the public prosecutor of Krasnodar Region, G. P. Yermakov, responding to Fr. Nicholas's report about the attack on him by Priest Andrew Smolchuk wrote: "Since the acts of Andrew Smolchuk are a visible insult against you, you have to address the court with a request to sue him for the said violation according to part 2, #20 UPK RF and bring criminal actions, foreseen in paragraph 130 UK RA. Such insults are classified as criminal acts of personal accusation and can be processed in no other way, but by a request of the victim".

Fr. Nicholas Hearnly at present has not initiated a court case, waiting for a response from his First Hierarch, Metropolitan Valentin.

ABOUT THE MEETING OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF ROCOR (L)

According to information from the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops a ROCOR Synod meeting was held on April 14/27th.

Participating were: Metropolitan Laurus, Archbishop Mark, Archbishop Kyrill and Bishops Ambrose, Gabriel and Michael.

The main topic was the trip to Moscow of Metropolitan Laurus and his delegation.

Archbishop Mark reported that after the visit of Metropolitan Laurus and his delegation, there will be meeting of the two committees "to begin discussion of the questions and problems that divide the two parts of the Russian Church" as well as about problems in Jerusalem.

"Archbishop Kyrill reported on the settlement reached in the matter of the convent near San Francisco. According to the settlement, a part of the property will return to our Church after period of time, including the main property of the convent in Moss Beach".

Bishop Ambrose of Vevey reported on the life of West-European diocese. In particular he reported the sudden death in Bari of Priest Andrew Trufanoff, who was survived by his matushka and 4 children.

Bishop Michael reported on his trip to Russia and meeting with the representatives of the St. Andrew the First Called, a society which wishes to establish and international program in Moscow in honor of New Martyr Elisabeth Fedorovna and the Martho-Maria Convent, which just marked its 95th anniversary. Bishop Michael has relayed to them "**the blessing of the Synod of Bishops to send them on temporary basis a reliquary containing a part of the relics of SS Elisabeth and Barbara**" (Singled out by Ch. N.)

According to "RIA News", the President to this Foundation, Alexander Melnik, told journalists that the relics of both saints will be taken from the St. Mary Magdalene Church in Gethsemane at the end of July, and "during the stay here of Metropolitan Laurus, we will discuss the details of delivering the relics to Russia".

The relics are to be displayed for veneration in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow and Martho-Maria Convent. Then, in a special van they will travel to various places in Russia.

If one is to trust the promises of the President of this Foundation --- but most probably of the Moscow Patriarchate --- the relics are to be returned to Gethsemane after 6 months "After approximately half a year (by March) Russia is to return the relics to the ROCOR's convent in Jerusalem" this information said.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE TRIP OF METR. LAURUS TO MOSCOW

newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in issue # 10 (638) published on its first page the following note, with the title: "Metropolitan Laurus hopes that the opponents of the rapprochement with the Moscow Patriarchate will be convinced they are wrong". Below is the complete text of this note.

"The First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, Metropolitan Laurus hopes that the opponents of her rapprochement with the Moscow Patriarchate will be convinced they are wrong. 'We have raised the fourth generation of clergy, but there still remain people, who remember the persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR, who have personally experienced and have witnessed the persecution of the Church and for whom it is difficult to realize the essence of the coming changes in Russia,' said Vladyka Laurus in his interview given to Interfax on the eve of his trip to Russia.

According to the Metropolitan the clergy of the Church Abroad does not forbid their flock from expressing their opinion regarding the present events. **However, we hope that, in time, they will be persuaded of the fundamental changes and will recall that repentance is able to heal former wounds'**, the First Hierarch of the Church Abroad added. (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

The Metropolitan pointed out that during his visit to Russia, which started on May 14th, he plans to meet with Patriarch Alexis II and the members of Sacred Synod, as well as get acquainted personally with the ecclesiastical situation in Russia".

COMBINED PRESS CONFERENCE OF REPS OF MP AND ROCOR

After the end of official negotiations of Patriarch Alexis and the ROCOR delegation, the Internet publication "Portal Credo.Ru" in the section DOCUMENTS on May 19th published the text of the Press-Conference of the President of the Foreign Relations Department of the MP, Metropolitan Kyrill of Smolensk and Archbishop Mark of Berlin. Since the press conference goes on for seven long pages, unfortunately our publication is not able to print it all, but we will quote from it the most important statements of both parties, while omitting the parts which relate to the matter of the Western heretics.

Metropolitan Kyrill told the journalists:

"Prior to your questions, I would like to say that **the Moscow Patriarchate is satisfied with the first official visit of the Primate of the Russian Church Abroad and the persons accompanying him to Moscow and with the negotiations which took place**. From the press conferences you are familiar with the itinerary of the stay of the ROCOR delegation and the pilgrimage group, which came to Russia, escorting the delegation.(Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

I will not refer to the program points, although almost all of them have much importance, since they are connected with the visit to our homeland. It seems that not only the negotiations, but also contact with the shrines of the Russian land, the attendance at services, participation in prayers – all of this has added quite a special meaning to the visit and the negotiations and has provided it with spiritual support.

To talk about the negotiations: the problem is resolved. Those goals which we formulated for ourselves regarding its first steps, are achieved. Our committees have received concrete advice about in which direction to proceed, which problems to solve, and in this manner, the official negotiations have opened the door toward the continuation of the negotiating process, which should lead toward the expected reunification. Thank you for your attention."

Archbishop Mark declared: "As is known, our delegation was here in November of the past year on a small scale. At that time we visited His Holiness the Patriarch, we communicated with members of the Synod and **departed with the feeling that the external obstacles that have existed between the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church are now part of the past**". Stressing the point that the separation between the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR occurred as a result of the Revolution in 1917 [for Archbishop Mark the Catacomb Church is still "non-existent"], he said that "We consider it to be a providential event that we have arrived on the eve of **the services in Boutovo and we could in some manner to participate in them**, where there perished an uncounted number of Russian people, the martyrs. **Also, that we could participate in the laying of the foundation stone of the New Martyrs church**".

Among the numerous photographs of Metropolitan Laurus and his delegation, published from Boutovo on the Internet, there is one depicting the Moscow Patriarch and Metropolitan Laurus, both standing opposite one another near some square building structure and Metropolitan Laurus is holding some tool in his hand.

Further, Archbishop Mark reported that **"Our meetings over these days closed with the acceptance of a common statement, which we are holding in our hands, and we hope that now, in the nearest future, our confessions [?!] will be able to begin the real work, of developing in detail the positions which will become the basis for our ecclesiastical relations"**.

Asked by the reporters: "Can an approximate time for the completion of the Church unification process be fixed? – Archbishop Mark said he believes, **"this process will pass very quickly"** but he hesitates to pinpoint a date. However, he said that the MP will have a Bishops' Council at the end of this year, and the Council of the Church Abroad is planned for 2005. **"Therefore, this is the framework that is more or less predetermined"**.

The question: In the final analysis, how will the ordinary layman regard the general future structure of the Eucharistic life after the union of the Churches, was answered by Metropolitan Kyrill. He talked at length about the necessity of "healing" after the consequences of the Revolution and stated that these wounds are already healing in Russia and that there is a process of the consolidation of society in the fields of politics and economics". After pointing out that such wounds are "not easily overcome", Metropolitan Kyrill said: **"Certainly, this presupposes Eucharistic union, and presupposes the acquisition of a unified canonical space. Reunion entails interaction, collaboration. But, nevertheless, I have to state that today, within the bosom of the Russian Church there exist various levels of administrative independence. . ."**

To the question: What kind of experience of the Church Abroad could be useful for the Moscow Patriarchate – Archbishop Marks answered: "...Regarding the testimonies of the two parts of our Church, it will, by all means come from one mouth and it will be much more efficient, than it has been until now. **The opposition that existed has resulted in great harm to Orthodoxy in the heterodox world.** Therefore, we have to testify in the future, that here in particular, we can heal much of what was damaged, but we can bring a lot of benefits, working together for witnessing for the Orthodox Church. I believe, no other Orthodox Local Church has such experience working abroad in the heterodox world, as has collected the Russian Church in whatever direction".

Archbishop Mark has also responded to the journalist's question: what will be the fate of the ROCOR parishes located in Russian territory by saying: "This is a matter which we will work on in the discussions of our committees. ...Very often these parishes were accepted (into the bosom of ROCOR) as a result of the conditions of Soviet life at that time. They have changed, and therefore, quite naturally, we have to investigate the matter how much the conditions have changed at present and how we can motivate these parishes toward the new structure, new conditions of life."

It is quite natural to expect that the MP will in no way tolerate on her territory the parishes that have left her for matters of principle, and the ROCOR administration will have to choose either to renounce them, or to leave them to the "mercy" of the conquerors! It seems, that Bishop Eutikhy with his loyalty to the MP has gained tolerance, while Bishop Agathangel even now accepts new parishes from the Moscow Patriarchate who, according to rumor, do not want to return to her.

Then the journalists offered to Archbishop Mark a "tricky" question: In the Statutes of the Church Abroad it is stated that her independent administration is to last until the abolishment of the godless powers in Russia. Do you believe that this power in Russia is already abolished? (Underlined in the original, "Ch. N.")

The Archbishop answered: "I believe that at any case, all of us recognize that at the present moment there is no direct interference of the State in Church matters, therefore we have entered into this path and seriously moving on it. **We can and we must overcome the obstacles which were created during those years**".

The next question was quite interesting: Is this a diplomatic formulation in order to avoid a straight answer?

Here, Metropolitan Kyrill rushed to assist his colleague. He said: "No, this is not a diplomatic formulation, but **the establishment of what is a joyful fact for us.** The task was not to unite and overcome the separation during this visit... The task was to give an impulse to dual negotiations, to give a clear mandate and theme for the working groups, to coordinate the approach to those themes which we consider to be important..."

Metropolitan Kyrill was also asked: What forms of the administrative union are proposed?

To that he replied: "Your question sounds interesting in view of the reduction of the government's ministers. Today I spoke to one of the Deputy Ministers who said: "I am no longer a Deputy Minister". You know, I do not believe that there should be a certain reduction of Bishops. The matter is **how to agree upon the most important -- the restoration of Eucharistic and canonical communication. And as regards the administrative changes that from a certain perspective also should be realized, at present this is not a priority for us**".

Metropolitan Kyrill was also asked: Do you expect there to be some territorial shifts among the hierarchs?

He answered: "We did not discuss these matters. The discussion will show how should we go on the path of the administrative migration. . . But I believe that hierarchical collaboration, interactions, certainly should be realized. At present I express my personal point of view, not coordinated with my brethren. It was discussed during the negotiations, but I believe that **it would be very nice that this experience, which all of us have lived through during the days of common participation in the church celebrations, would continue, so that we would have the possibility of communicating with the brother bishops from the Church Abroad during the holidays. As much as in Russia, so also in Abroad. So that we would meet more often and pray together more often. This, definitely would deepen the human relations... The most important thing is to restore unity, while the resolution of administrative matters is not a condition for the restoration of unity**".

Both committees for unification of ROCOR and the MP will begin their work at the end of June.

According to information from the ROCOR Chancery, on May 15th, Metropolitan Laurus and several members of his delegation met with the teachers and students of the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy, where they responded to numerous questions. Some of them were interesting, and we hope to return to them in our next issue.

This interview and some declarations of Metropolitan Laurus have clearly proved and no longer hide the fact that the leadership of ROCOR now considers the policies of the former Primates to be not only "mistaken", but according to Archbishop Mark even **"harmful for Orthodoxy in the heterodox world"**! It seems, that this is what explains the efforts to "heal" (or more correctly: to sell out) all the principles of the former ROCOR.

The traveling plans of Metropolitan Laurus to Russia include, among other important places, a visit to Yekaterinburg and Kursk. Will they not persuade Metropolitan Laurus to bring "only for a while" the miracle working Kursk icon? It is clear that the Icon would never be returned.

However, there might be a convenient "way out" from the difficult situation.

In the mid 1940's Metropolitan Anastassy managed to get permission to go to Switzerland (the purpose of his visit to Switzerland was to inform the Church Abroad that he is alive and the Synod is functioning – the MP was spreading lies that Metropolitan Anastassy was not to be found and the Synod did not exist) since at that time the "Pochayev Brotherhood" from Ladomirovo which had escaped the Communists was there. Among the members of this brotherhood was Archimandrite Cyprian (Pyzhov) – the famous icon painter. Metropolitan Anastassy took with him the Kursk Icon.

Fr. Cyprian asked the Metropolitan's permission to make a copy of the miraculous icon, but the Metropolitan refused this request. Using occasions when the Metropolitan was absent, Fr. Cyprian secretly made an exact copy of the Kursk miraculous icon. When the copy was ready, he placed both icons side by side and invited the Metropolitan to see them. The copy was so exact that the Metropolitan became worried that he could not see the difference. Then Fr. Cyprian showed him the back of the miraculous icon, where there was clearly visible the trace of the place when the icon was cut in two by a Tartar during the Mongol yoke, when the missing part was found after long time and put together, it miraculously joined the first part. The Metropolitan, relieved that there is no doubt which was the original icon, said to Fr. Cyprian: "Sometimes disobedience might be beneficial".

Which icon will Metropolitan Laurus, who is now in a trap, bring to Kursk? After all, will the Russian people inviting the Miraculous Icon to the parish demand that the rector take off the "risa" to make sure this is the original? Under present circumstances, it would be worthwhile to check!

INTERVIEW OF ARCHPRIEST MICHAEL ARDOV, DEAN OF MOSCOW REGION OF SUZDAL DIOCESE

The following interview was published by the Internet agency Vertograd/Razsylka # 462 on May 24, 2004:

Fr. Michael. The visit of Metropolitan Laurs and the ROCOR(L) delegation is on-going. Last week the newspaper "Kommersant" unexpectedly announced that the visit is overshadowed by some espionage scandal, which has appeared in the press, and in particular in our Portal with the hypothesis that Archbishop of Berlin Mark, the main ideologist of the rapprochement and one of the leading members of the delegation, might have been a member of the Soviet special services. This has caused a storm of indignation in the ROC MP. Our Portal has even had to pay with a cancellation of accreditation to the press-conference of Archbishop Mark. How do you evaluate this scandal? How many similar hypotheses might be discovered and do you agree that it is unethical to express them on the eve of such a visit?

Archpriest Michael Ardov: I have mixed emotions about this scandal. On the one hand, certainly in our post-Soviet, as well as in Soviet Russia, very often the smear of being a "stool pigeon" was used by unscrupulous people in order to discredit someone. I know of many such cases, mainly from Soviet times. That the hierarchy and the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate were considered KGB agents – is an undisputable fact.

Regarding Archbishop Mark: I communicated rather closely with him in 1991 and personally this man makes a very sincere impression – he is indeed a faster and a prayerful person. But if one looks over the whole history of the communication of the MP with the remnants of the ROCOR, all of this, taken together and especially this visit and the pitiful situation in which Metropolitan Laurus has landed and those with him -- **one cannot call it anything but the final victory of the KGB over its long time enemy – the Church Abroad.** (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

But regarding your publications in the Portal and elsewhere of this material -- I understand what it is about. I believe that for the media, with slight reservations – there is nothing wrong. Publicity is publicity and in this case I see nothing wrong with this.

Why do you believe that this final victory of the KGB – this is what you call the reunion of the ROC MP with the Church Abroad – could not happen were it not for direct activity of KGB agents within the Church Abroad. Maybe there are such trusting hierarchs that there was no need to directly infiltrate them?

You have to understand the essence here. Let us look at the whole history of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. The Soviet government, alias the KGB, did not have a more important and more consistent enemy than the Russian Church Abroad. She for decades exposed Communism and its collaborators and all the liberals, disregarding what the politicians did. Be it the "peaceful coexistence" of Nikita Khrushchev, or the "lessening of tension" of Leonid Brezhnev. ROCOR always, beginning with the 20's, at the Genoa Conference, but even against the other back ground initiatives of the Kremlin, called the Soviet government a gangster and exposed its bloody crimes.

Knowing how the KGB struggled not with actual enemies, but with some possible future hypothetical foes, it is easy to imagine how many efforts were made in order to bring down and obtain victory over the Church Abroad. It is enough to recall what the government of some countries did to the ROCOR right after the end of the Second World War, when all the property in the Holy Land was taken from it, when the cathedral built by clergy Abroad in Berlin was taken away. All these excesses continued even to the end of the 20th century, when the monastery in Hebron, in Jericho and other churches were taken from the Church Abroad.

It was a struggle not for life, but for death. And after all this -- **all these embraces, kisses, common prayers -- are nothing but defeat.** And since we know that the KGB fights with various methods, and one of the most important is recruiting and sending agents – the conclusions are absolutely the same.

Fr. Michael, we well remember that the very first condition for beginning negotiations with the MP by the Church Abroad was repentance of Sergianism. But, obviously, there was no such repentance...

I believe that they simply been spat in their face! While the ROCOR(L) delegation was here, the Patriarch served a memorial service at the grave of Metropolitan Sergius, made a complimentary speech about him and **spoke about the Sergianists in the most flattering manner, comparing them with the New Martyrs**, whom they had denounced in the preceding decades as political criminals, all those who lay in this Boutovo. The hierarchs from Abroad have, so to say, just danced to their tune.

Besides, I believe that the picture of how they were seated in the Danilov Monastery during the negotiations was extremely humiliating for the Church Abroad. The Patriarch was sitting in the presiding officer's chair, Metropolitan Laurus on his right hand, while on the left were hierarchs of the ROC MP. It means that he spoke not on equal terms, but as a sort of petitioner, in the position of a subordinate. Glory be to God, that my benefactor, a person whom I value so much and for whom I pray so much, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) didn't live long enough to see this disgrace!

Do you agree that after the famous speech of Patriarch at the military NKVD (later KGB, Ch. N.) firing range in Boutovo, where he actually compared the New Martyrs with those who recognized Metropolitan Sergius and those who did not – Metropolitan Laurus can not but realize that the unification with the ROC MP is happening only through, so to say, acceptance of the "Sergianist tradition", the Sergianist ecclesiastical administration? Do you think he consciously felt the demand to be grafted to the tree of "Sergianism"?

I do not know how conscious it is. Maybe Metropolitan Laurus was forced into a corner. After all, this is not a finale, but an epilogue. Somewhere everything was secretly already decided several years ago. We are just seeing the outcome. **They were slowly preparing their flock and their clergy for this disgraceful end. And therefore – whether he realizes it or not – he already is a hostage to this entire situation. He has no way out – he can do absolutely nothing.** Maybe he was made First Hierarch under those very same conditions. One has to soberly evaluate things and not be distracted by the spectacle: who is in the white klobuk and who in kukol. We are experienced people and know how such things are done. [The white klobuks indicates the rank of metropolitan, and the kukol the rank of patriarch.]

And how do you explain that there was no concelebration of Patriarch and Metropolitan Laurus?

I believe that a detailed enough scenario was prepared in order not to push away the people again, not to scandalize some by an unnecessary temptation. They will reach that when all the original demands of the ROCOR are pushed aside. They will also have two Councils – here and there – **and will start to concelebrate. This is, as the chess players say in such cases, a matter of technique.**

How do you explain the rumors that the ROC MP changed the key figure of the main architect of the unification process, that is, Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkounov) was removed from this position and Metropolitan Kyrill got the final leading role?

I do not know the details. I cannot see the signs of it – I have not carefully followed the visit. It is very painful and sad to follow. It is quite possible that there was worked out a little scenario. As far as I know from the explanations of Fr. Victor Potapov, who is a supporter of unification, Metropolitan Kyrill does not have a very good reputation among the remnant of the Church Abroad. And so, temporarily Shevkounov was put in this role, in order not to scare them off. And now that the mousetrap is sprung, it is possible to remove Shevkounov and there appeared on the stage the main producer of this process.

Can you give a prognosis of how long this unification process will take and how long this mixed committee will work?

It is hard to make a prognosis, because as far as I know, there still remain healthy powers in the Church Abroad, **and I put much hope in this case not in the Russian Émigrés, but in those who joined the Church Aboard seeking true Orthodoxy. For them it is a real tragedy to be in the embrace of the Moscow Patriarchate, in other words "global Orthodoxy". I presume that in the connection with these outrageous pictures local scandals will burst out.** Maybe that will slightly slow the process. But, maybe over there too, as they say today, "everything is caught" – then the matter will go more speedily. But this, as in a chess game, is a matter of the technique".

UNANIMOUS STATEMENT BY CLERGY CONFERENCE OF CHICAGO-DETROIT DIOCESE

(Published on the author's site by V. G. Cherkasov-Georgievsky)

Below we publish only the most important part of the communiqué of the clergy Conference of the Chicago-Detroit Diocese of March 5/18, 2004, signed by the Archbishop Alipy and 17 clergymen of this diocese.

"...This year was a beneficial year. As we have noted in the resolution of October 2003, **we are comforted by the possibility of reconciliation of the two parts of the one Russian Church.** (all emphasis by "Ch. N."). **The fulfillment of this possibility has favorably affected our parishes. From the time of the October Conference one can note the success of the trip of delegation of our Church to Russia, the extended pastoral Conference in the city of Nyack, the warm response of our Council of Bishops to the Epistle of His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II as well as the projected official visit of our First Hierarch Metropolitan Laurus in May of this year.**

Recently, some of the faithful have expressed perplexity or apprehension regarding the ecclesiastical rapprochement. However, when it is explained to them that there is in mind not a merging or submission, but only a reconciliation and mutual recognition, and Eucharistic concelebration, then apprehension changes to calm.

We recognize the Church Abroad as well as the Patriarchate as heirs of the historical Russian Church.

The events of the past year give us hope that complete reconciliation between the Abroad and the Patriarchal Churches is possible in the near future, as well as total Eucharistic relations on all levels of ecclesiastical life. The relations between lay people have existed de facto for a long time, and now there is a hope for the similar relationship among the clergy.

We acknowledge that there still remain **some obstacles, however at the same time, many of the presented arguments against rapprochement seem to be only emotional reactions, emanating from misunderstanding and lack of knowledge of the history and purpose of our Church.**

We pray the Lord, that the appointed Committees of both parts work sincerely and open-mindedly in good time to resolve the remaining issues. We have complete and firm trust in our First Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, who is leading our Church in the spirit of her former founders [?!] on the true path....

From this communiqué it is quite obvious that the Chicago-Detroit diocese **has already beforehand preordained her path of betrayal of all the positions of principle of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.**

The clergy traitors of this diocese present the matter of the rapprochement with the MP as **"emotional reactions emanating from misunderstanding and [even] lack of knowledge of the history and purpose of our Church"**!

For them the ANATHEMA, **laid down by Patriarch Tikhon against the Bolsheviks and all those who collaborate with them is non-existent!** Also, **non-existent is the double anathema, laid upon them by the hierarchy of the Catacomb Church. These anathemas were never lifted and still weigh upon the MP!**

The 30th Apostolic Canon states: "If any bishop obtain possession of a church by the aid of the temporal powers, let him be deposed and excommunicated, and all who communicate with him".

No one doubts the historical fact that the founder of the Moscow Patriarchate – Metropolitan Sergy (Stragorodsky) **was appointed to the patriarchal see by the most cruel persecutor not only the Orthodox Church, but the religion in general – by the atheist Stalin!**

According to the 10th Apostolic Canon: "If any one shall pray, even in a private house with an excommunicated person, let him also be excommunicated".

In another words – according to the Apostolic Canons – the whole Chicago-Detroit diocese **has excommunicated itself from the Orthodox Church!**

On May 6th, the Chancery of the ROCOR published a list of the delegation members going to Russia with Metropolitan Laurus. On the list are: Archbishop Cyril of San Francisco and Western America with 13 clergymen, 1 sub-deacon and 2 readers.

From Europe and other countries, headed by Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany, and Great Britain there are 5 clerics. Altogether 21 persons, not counting the two hierarchs.

All listed participants of this delegation have long ago proved to be supporters of unification with the Moscow Patriarchate.

MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE AND METR. SERGIUS (STRAGORODSKY)

The supporters of unification with the Moscow Patriarchate have tried to attract to their side insufficiently knowledgeable Russian people (even as early as the Council of Bishops of the MP in 2000) by insisting that the Church has the right to disobey the government in so far as the MP Council had adopted the so-called "Basic Social Concept" (which recognizes that if the government demands from the Church something that is contradictory to the latter's teachings the latter may disobey the government).

At the Council of Bishops of the Church Abroad in the same year, Bishop of Ishima and Siberia based his report extensively on the MP's "Social Concept" (which, by the way, was borrowed from the Roman Catholics) and on this ground, the supporters of unification even insisted that with this decree "the Moscow Patriarchate has condemned Sergianism"!

According to Internet information supplied by the Moscow Patriarchate "Church News" (the official web-site of the MP), May 15 was the 60th anniversary of the repose of "His Holiness Patriarch Sergius [Stragorodsky] of Moscow and All Russia". Patriarch Alexis served a commemorative Liturgy in the Theophany Cathedral and then held a Memorial Service at his graveside. At this ceremony, in the presence of Metr. Laurus and his delegation, the Patriarch gave a sermon completely defending Metr. Sergius' betrayal of the liberty of the Church in publishing his "Declaration" of 1927. He finished with the words: "We pray that the Lord may forgive his sins, voluntary and involuntary. **At the same time, we pay homage to and gratefully keep the memory of His Holiness Patriarch Sergius for steering the ship of the church in the most difficult situation in the life of the Church during the 30's of the 20th century thus managing to reserve the Russian Church amidst troubled and stormy waters**". (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

How well Metr. Sergius "preserved" the Russian Church is well known. When Stalin appointed him to the post of Patriarch there were open at that time in the entirety of Russia less than a thousand churches and only three bishops who had not been arrested!

Metr. Anthony (Khrapovitsky) who loved Metr. Sergius not only for being a former disciple, but also as a personal friend, in his letter of May 1933 wrote to him after he published his traitorous "Declaration": "....For you the path of bearing one's

Cross now seems to be madness, as it was for the Greeks in the times of the Apostles (I Cor. 23). You apply all your powers toward peaceful coexistence with those who abuse Christ and with the persecutors of His Church in the world. You even aid them, insisting that we issue a declaration of loyalty and putting the label of counter-revolutionaries upon those who are in no way guilty of anything against the Soviet government, except for their steadfastness in the faith.

"I plead with you as my former disciple and friend: get rid of this temptation, renounce for everyone to hear all these lies, which were put into your mouth by Touchkov and other enemies of the Church. If you prove worthy of a martyr's crown, the earthly and the Heavenly Church will unite in praising your courage and the Lord Who has strengthened you. But if you remain on this broad path of perdition (Matt. 7:13) in which you now stand, then this will bring you to the depths of hell – and the Church, to the end of her earthly existence will never forget your betrayal."

For those who were not lucky enough to know this outstanding hierarch of the Russian Church of the 19th and 20th centuries – who was distinguished by the outstanding truthfulness of his character – his appeal to his former disciple and friend are not empty words. Metr. Anthony, at that time Metr. of Kiev and Galicia, was saved from the hands of the Bolsheviks only by the intelligence and cleverness of his cell attendant Archimandrite Theodossy (Melnik), who on realizing the danger that the Metropolitan might fall into the hands of the Communists, made an agreement with the captain of a Greek vessel to ask the Metropolitan to serve a thanksgiving service, supposedly, for Greek independence. During the thanksgiving service, the vessel left Russian waters.

The persecuted true Russian Church indeed has not forgotten the betrayal of Metr. Sergius, while the successors of his policies cannot stop praising him!

PUZZLING STORY

Our editorial office has received a short article signed by Alexander S. from the Chicago–Detroit diocese, entitled "Paschal Joy", which we have translated from the original Russian.

"The Russian Orthodox residents of Minneapolis have been made happy by a holiday paschal gift.

On behalf of His Holiness the Jerusalem Patriarch, before the Paschal feast his representative visited the Russian Skete of Christ's Resurrection. Commissioned by the Patriarch, the Metropolitan accepted Abbot John Magramm into the Holy Sepulcher Brotherhood in Jerusalem and elevated him to the rank of Archimandrite.

During the Bright Week divine services, the faithful enjoyed the attention paid to the long time clergyman Fr. John and the parish on part of His Holiness the Patriarch of the city from whence missionary activity to the whole world began.

During the services, Fr. John wearing the beautiful miter he received, commemorated in his prayers "His Holiness Patriarch of Jerusalem Irineas, Orthodox hierarchs and the Metropolitan of the Russian Church Abroad Laurus" [?!] Fr. John in the past has served in the Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and is well acquainted with the East.

The parishioners were happy that in the sermons of Fr. John nothing was said about President V. Putin and the MP, where, according to rectors of other parishes, everything is so wonderful.

Our very best wishes to Archimandrite John and his collaborators in the missionary work. Many years, dear Fr. John".

In this story everything is in direct violation of the statutes of the Jerusalem Patriarchate as well as the generally recognized canons of the Ecumenical and Local Councils!

To begin with, according to the customs of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, only members, residing in Jerusalem and preferably Greek, of the Jerusalem Patriarchate can be members of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood.

Regarding the elevation of Abbot John Magramm to the rank of archimandrite – here the Jerusalem Patriarchate has grossly violated a number of canons which protect the rights of episcopal authority from encroachments by a foreign diocese, in this case – the autonomous Russian Church Abroad!

The 91st canon of the Council of Carthage {in Russian editions and 88th in the English Rudder (Pedalion)} states: "It has pleased the Council to decree that if anyone admits or offers reception to anyone from a strange monastery, and should wish to induct him into the clergy, or should appoint anyone an abbot [in Greek: hegumen] of his own monastery. Let the bishop who does so and thereby separates himself from communion with the rest, content himself with only communion of the laity, and let that person no longer be a cleric or a hegumen [abbot]" (Underlined by "Ch. N.").

The commemoration by Abbot John of the Jerusalem Patriarch during the divine services testifies that he is actually now in this jurisdiction, but then, why at the same time commemorate Metropolitan Laurus? At present, at least officially, it is not known that Fr. Magramm has left the jurisdiction of ROCOR.

This is a case in which the Synod of the ROCOR Bishops should lodge a protest with the Jerusalem Patriarchate over this violation of canons, which guard the rights of not just a diocese, but an autonomous Church! And, according to the canons, Abbot John should be immediately suspended!

By the way, Fr. John Magramm was in Jerusalem a very short time and had no special obedience under his superiors!

"CANONIZATION" OF NUN MARIA SKOBTSOVA AND HER LIKE-MINDED PEERS

Nun Maria Skobtsova, an extremely liberal woman and for well known to be of very leftist political views, always was very controversial personality. She left this world with this controversy, and her unexpected "canonization" has become an occasion for ecclesiastical-political rivalry between the Moscow and the Ecumenical Patriarchates. The so-called Sourouz

Diocese of the MP in Western Europe was for several decades headed by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom and consisted of Russians living abroad and later grew when many came from the former USSR: in other words, people although Russian by faith and nationality, yet with a different historical past. The Internet agency "Portal CREDO.RU" has published interesting information about this ecclesiastical-political story.

A considerable number of Russians became involved in the so-called "Evlogian schism" that split off from the ROCOR in which after several changes of its "administration" (including even the MP) finally joined the Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Nun Maria Skobtsova happened to belong to this particular Paris group. She was tonsured by Metropolitan Evlogy himself who gave her characteristics published in the newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") # 10 (638).

"Mother Maria," it says, "became a nun in order to limitlessly devote herself to social service. Unusually energetic, broad-minded and freedom loving, having the gift of initiative and authoritativeness – such are the characteristics of her nature. In the monastic life she has not abandoned her left political sympathies, nor a demagogic inclination to influence people. Meetings, disputes, wide communication with the crowds – is the element to which she feels necessary to be even from time to time, in order not to wilt spiritually in this worldly and responsible administrative work... In Mother Maria, who was an active member of the party of social-revolutionaries, there are still fermenting the old party yeasts". (Underlined by us, "Ch. N.") It was common knowledge that Nun Skobtsova would smoke in public.

Further, it is reported: "Neither observing monastic cell rules, regular prayers at the church services, observing fasts – there was nothing of that sort in the monasticism of Mother Maria. At the puzzled questions by some, she boldly responded: at the Last Judgment I will not be asked if I have successfully fulfilled the ascetic exercises and how many prostrations did I made. I will be asked if I have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, have visited the sick or the imprisoned."

All of this Christian activity is, certainly praise worthy, but why was it necessary to give monastic vows?

However, the Constantinople Patriarchate, which never hid her aggressive methods, has urgently decided to agree to the initiative of Archbishop Gabriel, who heads the Russian parishes in Western Europe to canonize Nun Maria Skobtsova and her collaborators. The appeal was presented by Archbishop Gabriel in September of 2003. The canonization of Maria Skobtsova was also supported by quite a few members of the Surozh Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate, but the diocese itself did not agree to it.

As is stated in this report, "The canonization of Mother Maria will permit to establish a cult by which the believers of the Constantinople exarchate and of "Sourozh" will unite with each other, but be separate from Moscow. This is the condition of every successful ecclesiastical-political action. That is why we have called the canonization of Mother Maria to be a strong hit on target."

According to the Internet publication NG Religii # 5 (135) of March 17, 2004, Nun Maria Skobtsova "was a person of her own time". She was born in Riga in 1891 and a number of books have already been published about her.

She opened several free soup kitchens for the homeless and the aged. During the war and the occupation of France by the German army, she would hide war prisoners and Jews. In the end, she perished in the camp of Ravensbrück.

In a short article about her by B. Berdiayev it is reported, that Nun Maria was an active participant of the Christian Students Movement, "but she left it, when very rightist tendencies became evident."

There is no definite information about her death. According to one version – she took the place of one woman who was to be shot by the Nazis, according to another – she replaced someone sent to the gas chamber in the concentration camp. But there are no witnesses to all this, except statements that from approximately 500 women arrested by Nazis there were selected 260 and they were taken away in special trucks. In one of them was Mother Maria.

Along with her there were "canonized" the following persons: Archpriest Alexis Medvedkoff. He was a priest before the Revolution. In 1918 he was arrested by the Communists, but escaped a death sentence by shooting, left for Estonia. In 1930 he moved to France and was accepted into the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Evlogy. He died of cancer in 1934. "In connection with reorganization of the cemetery in 1956, his grave was opened. His body was found to be incorrupt, as well as his vestments".

A second person "canonized" is Archpriest Dimitry Klepnin. He served in Paris since 1939. Was the active assistant to Nun Maria. He was arrested by the Nazis in 1943 and died in a concentration camp of pneumonia.

Then follows the son of Nun Maria, George. He was a member of the French "Resistance", was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943 and sent to Camp Dora, where he died of starvation.

But the most "saintly" of all is Elias Fondominsky. According to the newspaper, he "originally belonged to the SR (Social Revolutionary) Party and participated in terrorist acts. (underlining by "Ch. N."). He studied in Berlin and lived in France between 1900 and 1907. He returned to Russia in 1917, but after the Revolution again emigrated to France. There, the editor of the magazine "Contemporary Notes". Close collaborator and assistant to Mother Maria in the organization Orthodox Work. Arrested by the Nazis in 1941 and sent to the concentration camp in Compagne. Shortly before his death he became a Christian. He perished in the Osvensim Camp in 1942.

According to the above mentioned newspaper, Russkii Vestnik, Fondominsky was arrested as a sympathizer of the USSR, but at the same time he was not only a Mason, but also a Jew. About his "baptism" the Short Jewish Encyclopedia (Val.9, p. 255) has written that "according to some information... he was baptized".

The resolution of the Constantinople Patriarchate about this canonization states: "Let Fr. Dimitry Klepnin, Nun Maria Skobtsova, her son George and Elias Fondaminsky, who ended their lives in sainthood and became worthy of martyrs' crowns, be revered among the hosts of blessed Martyrs and Saints of the Church, revered by believers and that their praises be sung and chanted each year on July 20th".

According to the Internet magazine of Priest-monk Gregory (Lurie) of May 3rd: "in the connection with this, the absence of Bishop Innocent of Korsun, who suddenly left for Moscow on the eve of the celebrations, as well as absence of some rectors and priests of Parish churches who belong to the Moscow Patriarchate, has made an pitiful impression". Further, it is said that "the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate takes this as an act of hostility toward herself".

The Internet information of "Mir Religij/Sobytiya/ ("The World of Religions/Events") mentions that Archbishop Gabriel (de Vilder), the head of the Western-Europe Russian parishes in his short sermon has declared that those who were just canonized, "present an example that gives us a reason to think about our present life in Christ". After congratulating the present participants of this feast, Archbishop Gabriel gave them "icons" of these persons. The icon of Nun Maria, as everything that is connected with her personality, is also interesting. In her right hand she is depicted with a high flame in center of which there is a six-pointed "Ben David" star and in her left hand a loaf of bread. Besides (quite correctly) on this icon the traditional halo is missing!

This ecclesiastical-political event has found ample support in "global Orthodoxy". Representatives of the following Local Churches participated In the glorification service: the Russian, Romanian, Serbian and the OCA. At the Liturgy of May 2nd there were present the Catholic Archbishop of Paris Lustige, several Catholic monks and also a veteran of the escadrille "Normandia-Nieman", who came to the church in a military uniform and carrying a French flag.

RELIGION OR POLITICS?

In connection with the forthcoming November presidential election in the USA, there were raised also purely principal questions. The candidate for presidential post of the Democratic party, John Kerry, (a Roman Catholic), opposing the teaching of his Church, openly supports abortions, the use the human embryos for "cures," euthanasia, and same sex marriages.

A whole number of politicians of various confessions have expressed themselves in support of violations of the basic principles of Christianity.

Some Catholic bishops have already declared that they consider it is impossible to give Communion to such Catholics.

"The New York Times" of May 15th published an article by L. Goldstein in which it is reported that a Catholic bishop of Colorado, Michael Sheridan has went so far as to extend the prohibition to receive Communion also to voters who vote for such candidates.

In a telephone conversation Bishop Sheridan said: "I am not making a political statement; I am making a statement about Church teaching".

These problems have already resulted in disagreements within the Catholic hierarchy because various bishops started giving controversial advice.

Several cardinals and bishops have already declared that they prefer to persuade candidates, rebellious toward religion, in the private conversations and not use public sanctions.

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick said: "I do not favor a confrontation at the altar rail with the sacred Body of the Lord Jesus in my hand".

The newspaper has stressed that, "There's probably a rather small number of bishops who are strongly in favor of denying communion. Probably a somewhat larger, but not overwhelming, number rather strongly oppose doing that. And the third and by far the largest group are those who just wish the whole issue would go away."

Bishop Sheridan said that he is against such Catholics who believe that the dogmas can be chosen as in a cafeteria. "On the basic moral teachings of the Church there is no 'wiggle room'."

The theology professor of Georgetown university, Chester Gillis, when commenting on statements of Bishop Sheridan said: "It might backfire, because Catholics may resent what some may consider the intrusion of the Church into politics."

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS: A letter to Archbishop Mark of August 7/20th 1992

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko;

Thank you very much for the letter of August 1/14th with the interesting attachment.

I would be willing to sign on to all the statements of principle in this letter. To be frank, since 1917 I have been troubled by the declaration of the Synod regarding the Revolution, but I didn't have its text. Now, I will be looking for it in the local libraries even more energetically. It definitely can be examined as the "beginning of illnesses" in the sense of the spiritual acceptance of denials of the principle of an Orthodox state. I believe that Metropolitan Sergius has also in this case participated in this sin.

The question of the sin of the Revolution was raised on the first Karlovtsy Council, but the members of the Council were not unanimous. There was an opposition, which feared "politics", and in Russia there was the habit not to getting into arguments with the state, although all the Synod Metropolitans disagreed with the Revolution.

The Declaration of 1927, by replacing the more definite positions of Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitans Peter and Kyrill, was a new phase of the very same national spiritual sickness.

To be frank, at present I do not see any powers able to turn this tendency around, but maybe the authors of the letter are right, that to properly preach the truth, it would be useful to make clear where the sickness began. The fact that the most senior member of the dynasty after the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich (the Tsar's brother, "Ch. N.") participated in this made him and his heirs unfit for the throne and death has taken them. At present I do not see any practical possibility for any heir to ascend the throne for over a year. Many years will be needed for the re-education of the nation by the Church, that Orthodox monarchy can exist. At present this is a phase of the pre-antichrist period. But for the "little flock" it might be useful to realize what in fact was lost.

I would be willing to raise this matter with an article, but I do not know what would be better: this or deliberations about it in the Synod. In any case, we should have a copy of Synod's resolution regarding the abdication.

While we consider this, your correspondents should be informed of our writings against Sergianism and I would like to send them my books. I will be grateful if you would send me their names and the addresses.

Asking for your holy prayers, I remain your loving brother in Christ, + Bishop Gregory

Letter to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of February 24th/March 9th 1975

Your Eminence, Dear Most Holy Vladyko!

Once more I thank you for your frankness; only a direct statement of our opinions can lead to something positive.

Your logic is quite clear: Fr. George follows a position of principal with which I do not agree and, therefore, he has to be removed. However, should not, with such points of views, other sides of this be considered and the various possible consequences of it? There arise these problems:

1. Is our disagreement in principle as deep as you seemingly believe?
2. Do I indeed support "unhealthy attitudes"?

I have learned from Metropolitans Anthony and Anastassy to approach all problems objectively, and not through the prism of the subjective. In any case I know that I cannot take any offense at those who criticize me and I am always glad when such errors in my actions, which I can correct or at least not repeat them, are pointed out to me. One such error was maybe my hasty reaction (which may have looked rather harsh), my retort to your report. However, I would like to introduce a certain correction to what you write.

If you will look at the minutes of the meeting, after hearing your report, you will see that I reacted not "before the Metropolitan and their Eminences" but eighth, that means after the Metropolitan, Archbishops Anthony, Vitaly and Averky. My haste was not in regard to the essence of your report, but later, regarding its publication together with my report. About your report I have pointed out its positive side, but the matter of the Church's policies I have offered to leave it up to the Council of Bishops. But regarding the publication, I need not wait for the reaction of the bishops, since it related to me personally, but my stern opposition might have been understood as enmity toward yourself, and that seemingly has offended you and you do not forgive me for that. But I jumped up with my opposition not out of enmity towards you, but because I believed that readers would be puzzled by having two reports printed together, seemingly of different views. It was not included in the minutes, but I do remember that I presented just this argument. The disagreement with a certain part of your report was expressed by the Council of Bishops (without my participation in this discussion).

It is self-evident, that in what you write I have not seen, nor do I see, anything but your conviction that you are acting in the interests of the Church. I would hope that you too would regard me in the same manner.

I understand your concern regarding our "isolation", which in the Ecumenical world center might be felt more than by us; Geneva is small, but New York is big. But, if we in the center have to understand this and take it into consideration, then is it proper to consider it by apriority as not worth of any attention of Metropolitan's opinion, other Hierarch and our zealots, who in no way are limited to Greeks of Fr. Panteleimon; there are plenty of our Russians, and I say: thank God. The fact alone that I have congratulated Mr. P. Anderson on his 80th birthday [an active member of the WCC, "Ch. N."] has created displeasure and even complaints to the Metropolitan. The same happened with the creation by Fr. A[lexander]. Kisselev of a committee for the defense of persecuted Christians in USSR with participation of the Metropolia [OCA] – has evoked unexpected accusations that I am compromising, although I do not participate in this committee. The initiative was not mine, but I agreed with its benefit and have supported it. The mood here is not the same as in Geneva, and the church authorities have to take into consideration the flock here and there as well. The frequent policy of neglect of the most zealous (they will stay with us regardless of everything) in the name of attention toward outsiders, in my opinion is wrong and unjust.

Fr. Panteleimon does not have the ethnic bias customary among Greeks. He understands economia, and his brotherhood mostly consists of converted Americans and not Greeks. None of us practices as a wide a missionary work as he. And regarding my views, they were instilled in me in large part by Metr. Anthony and Archbishop Gabriel, who due to my age and work I knew more intimately than you. My first essays on the unity of the Church and the Anglicans, which reflect my present views, were published with Metr. Anthony's approval. Metr. Anthony supported the Old Calendarists in Bessarabia and sent Metr. Seraphim (Lade) there, who against Romanian Church has baptized several hundreds people. My views about the baptism of heretics were taught me by Khomiakov, Metropolitan Anthony and works of his disciple, Archbishop Hilarion. Archbishop Gabriel has supported them. In what I write over past years, I have merely formulated

those principles already accepted by our Councils. I am not the inventor of our church policies, but only one of the tools of their implementation. But, being an active participant from 1931, I certainly could more clearly feel that despite the confession of the very same dogmatic principles, you would like to turn the external policy of our Church several degrees around. The very same feelings as mine were felt by the bishops who offered to refer the resolution about your report to the Council of Bishops in order to avoid arguments in the presence of clergy and laity.

I readily understand your concern about "isolation". However, although you live in the center of Ecumenism, I believe I may know more about the horrors of Modernism and Ecumenism, because I receive a large number of publications in various languages. [49 subscriptions to periodicals, "Ch. N."]. I am afraid that this, plus the Moscow Patriarchate, makes this isolation inevitable if we do not want to enter into compromises of our principles. Losing them we would lose all that we liked in your report.

I am as unsatisfied as you are and feel sorry that there was not a definite epistle from our Council to the flock. I had hoped that the Council would give a new impetus to our internal ecclesiology, toward which my report was directed and the reports of Vladyka Vitaly and Fr. V. Shishkoff. My report, although it concerned those outside, was aimed at giving the dogmatic basis for the establishment of precisely our internal ecclesiology. However, due to shortages of our internal (spiritual and not administrative) life, its zeal was directed toward external actors in the world, such as schismatics and the Old Believers. At the same time, your efforts to turn our helm with the support of more liberal and less informed members of the Council, also had no chance to prevail, not having the support of the other hierarchs, especially the Metropolitan. Thus a sort of mutual cancellation of direction happened. In part, the Metropolitan didn't write an epistle because he was in disagreement with your (general) mood. Besides, it is in general difficult for him to write during an ongoing meeting. But definitely, he has signed the address to Metropolitan Iriney [OCA, "Ch. N."] and Archb. George [of Western Europe, the Evlogians] very unwillingly. With the Metropolia [OCA] we happen to be in an unfavorable situation.

To speak frankly, I believe that the business minded presentation of your report about church policies to the Council of Bishops, and not to the All-Abroad Council, which is subject to more emotionalism, would be more profitable for your wishes and would bring more practical results, than that which now does not satisfy either you or the Synod. In ecclesiastical life a change of practice in general is a difficult problem, but it is more secure to revise the methods of working from above, starting with the agreement of hierarchs, than from the bottom beginning with the clergy and laity. One of the Council members has told me that he got the impression that you didn't expect unanimous agreement with you by the hierarchs and have attempted to move them by the votes of lay people. Certainly, this is a subjective impression of one person, which is not true (in the sense that probably you didn't have such a deliberate plan). You simply wanted to express injured feelings and thoughts filtered through them, but you didn't consider the Council of Bishops separately from the All-Abroad Council. Actually, a similar effort was made by collaborators with Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, who tried to present to the All-Abroad Council a report which was prepared for the Council of Bishops.

However, despite my already prolonged letter, permit me, on the basis of my experience of many years to express to you some of my apprehensions. If the matter just concerned me, it would be easy. But I am the spokesperson for the convictions of the First Hierarchs, and what is more, shared by members of the Synod. These convictions were expressed by a number of Councils, several of which you have participated in. They have lain at the foundation of our ecclesiastical policy from the days of Metropolitan Anthony. They were accepted by our present First Hierarch from the very first days of chairmanship in the Synod. When the First Hierarch met with our opposition (Metr. Eulogy, Metr. Platon and with Archbishops John and Leonty who were more in good faith) – then all the instances had factually disregarded the 34th Apostolic Canon. This canon is not an administrative formality, but shapes the internal relations between the members of a hierarchy and in this manner promotes unity. Sometimes it requires self-denial and I have seen a number of cases when bishops would abstain from raising this or that matter, upon finding out that the First Hierarch disagreed with it. It seems to me that you have also acted in this manner. It is possible that with a very good idea one can get the majority of votes in the Synod or the Council, but it will contribute not benefit, but harm, if the First Hierarch disagrees with it, since this creates separations. Sometimes it is better to suffer an error, than to separate over the correct decision. But the most dangerous is to insist upon one's own [opinion] that contradicts that of the First Hierarch and a majority of the bishops. When younger I approached this matter differently and nearly left, when Metr. Anastassy and the Council decided on a rapprochement with Metr. Eulogy and to lift his suspension without his repentance. To be sure, with me the matter is simple, since I am not a bishop. I write this because I see a certain divergence in views between you and the First Hierarch.

I understand very well that it would be difficult for you to apply *akrivia* [strictness] after so many years of *economia* [accommodation]. In your situation pastoral *economia* is more necessary, than with us. But in order to establish its wide limits, no major change is necessary and it is sufficient just to discuss all the problems of the case in a businesslike way, and that can be done now, during the summer Council. I was seeking just such discussions in particular, when I recalled during the Council the old guiding directives. It might be that they would need some supplementing, which would consider various conditions. But the Council became busy with the Platonites [the OCA, "Ch. N."], the Evlogians and the Old Believers, while on these practical matters it did not linger over confirming the old resolutions. No one introduced a proposal to necessarily discuss some new regulations, and in addition, there remained little time. Unfortunately, it quite often happens that the most important decisions are made at the end and in a hurry.

You consider me your "enemy" quite wrongly; I never was and do not plan to become one. Maybe, I understand your situation better than some others.

This letter will reach you on the eve of Lent. Therefore I beg your pardon for all the grief I might have cause you as well as for this long letter. Asking for your holy prayers and blessing, I remain your devoted servant,

+ Protopresbyter George Grabbe