



CHURCH NEWS

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FROM THE LIFE OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN CHURCH

In our last issue of "Church News" for August-September, # 8(132) we published a refutation of the slander spread on the Internet against Metropolitan Valentin, the First Hierarchy of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church, on the part of the immediate collaborators with Archbishop Gregory of Denver and Colorado, especially Priest Claypool.

Initially he alleged that the Metropolitan upon his departure from the USA was on July 3rd arrested at the airport by American authorities, that he was searched and that \$100,000 was taken from him that he had failed to declare to Customs.

While asserting this slander, Claypool stated that supposedly he found out about it from Archpriest Dionysi McGowen. This Archpriest has sent us his denial, which we publish below.

Then, also on the Internet, a reader under Archbishop Gregory, Alajaji Jerjis, informed his readers that Metropolitan Valentin is in prison and therefore there is no way one can get in touch with him, and "Sadly, I assume at this very moment the ROAC Synod is making its decision on what to do about the Metropolitan". The fantasy of Priest Claypool and Co. went so far as to state on the Internet that supposedly, "the Russian Government has put up a two and a half million dollar bond to the US government, and after Russia had done with him, he'd be returned to the US" in order to appear before a judge on December 8th! For what, I don't know, but I will find out," he said in this outrageous lie.

The Metropolitan, of course, was not arrested and after returning home visited his parishes in Russia, Ukraine and Caucasus.

On September 28th he visited Switzerland. At the same time Archpriest Michael Ardiv came from Russia and Protopresbyter Vladimir Shishkoff from the USA. On Saturday and Sunday of October 2nd and 3rd they concelebrated with the Metropolitan in the home-church of Mrs. Tatiana Beltchev. Present were about 30 people who came from various European countries, mainly from France. Since the hostess could not accommodate that many people in her home, one family from France put up a few tents in her garden.

On October 5th, the Metropolitan left for Russia.

The church schism created by Bishop Barnabas in Europe and Russia, and who used for it the name of the 95 year old Metropolitan Vitaly, forced some people to be interested in Metropolitan Valentin, who in no way changes his principles.

According to information from "Portal Credo.Ru" of October 1st Mr. Joseph Suaiden (living in the USA) established contact with representatives of the Mission of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church in Argentina and has opened a new "website" in the Spanish language.

The Argentinian Mission of the AROC, since the beginning of September has been headed by Siluan Dignak in Buenos Aires. The Internet address is: <http://www.aloofhostin.com/jesuaiden/aroc/esp/>

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN HAITI

According to the Internet site "Vertograd" #489 of September 23rd, the community headed by Archimandrite Michael (Graves) in Haiti – recently accepted into the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church to be under the direct administration of the Synod of Bishops – has declared that it has no connection with Archbishop Gregory of Denver and Colorado.

According to "Vertograd", the community has made alterations to the school building and even was able to make a baptistery in the St. Nectarios Chapel. "The drainage located around it allowed us to create a real pool in order to baptize by full emersion". There is no free education in Haiti and each student has to pay (according to his age and class) – from \$6 to \$35 a year. It seems that this tiny income has permitted the community to make some improvements.

The terrible hurricanes that recently hit Haiti were especially tragic. We have received a bulletin from Archimandrite Michael "Au Courant" #18 of October in which he writes:

"The situation in Gonaives, Haiti is almost impossible to describe. Tony Cortesi, the Director of our orphanage, went in a truck-caravan to Gonaives last week to carry food and prepare meals for those that are starving. He returned after three days, and thank God he was not harmed, but his experiences were heart rendering. One could not find the roads; they were covered with either water or mud. Dead animals were everywhere and bodies of many persons were piled high in certain areas; the stench was unbearable and despite that sadness, there were thieves who threatened the caravan and even stole much of the food, which was being transported for them. Other rowdy persons broke into many warehouses and made off with whatever they could carry. When people are starving they resort to the basest of incorrect actions".

It seems that robbery and abductions of some rich people have reached such proportions that the "New York Times" of October 15th reported that the USA government has warned its citizens not to go to Haiti at present.

"We sent a number of sacks of rice and beans and whatever we could spare with the caravan, believing that our possibilities of getting more food were better than the possibilities of those in Gonaives, but now we are hungry! Our main source of food (Food for the Poor) also sent what they could to Gonaives, and when we went to get our bi-monthly dole on Tuesday, we discovered they also have nothing. They said they will have things in two weeks", Fr. Michael reports.

He explains that so far he was helping others by using his friends and connections, but at present the situation is such that without immediate help there is no way to survive. His Orthodox community has more than 300 members and is also in dire need.

"We feed lots of folks here through our schools and clinics and orphanages and feeding programs... and now the ones whom we normally minister to are suffering as a result of scarcity of food in Haiti".

The entire population of Haiti, as well as the members of Fr. Michael's community, are nearly destitute and are badly in need above all of food, baptismal crosses, paper icons, and then such items as ball point pens and notebooks.

Those who would like to help this community of our Church can send their contribution to this address:

Fr. Michael Graves
c/o Lynx Air Haiti, Box 407139
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33340

Checks and other contributions should be sent to Wachovia Bank, 11075 North Namiami Trail, Naples, FL, 34108-4325. (Or deposited directly in any branch of Wachovia Bank) The Community's account # is 200 401 377 5698 and the name of the account is "Orthodox Church in the Caribbean". Another account, specifically for the school's tuition program is handled by: Susanne Johnson at 953 Fetherstone Way, Felton, CA, 95018. Checks for the school fund should be sent to Sue. Tax receipts are available for both accounts.

**LETTER OF ARCHPRIEST DIONYSI McGOWEN TO "CHURCH NEWS"
(Rector of St. Basil of Kineshma Russian Orthodox Church) of September 23rd, 2004**

Dear in Christ Matushka Anastasia;

I am writing in response of the letter that John Claypool, a priest attached to Dormition Skete, wrote in regards to our Metropolitan and his fictitious arrest.

On July 3rd 2004, after hearing that the Metropolitan was detained (not arrested) at the airport and that he was questioned in such a way that it appeared someone was trying to hassle or cause him grief, I decided to call Fr. John to let him know of the situation.

It was already thought by some that Fr. John was using his friendship with me to obtain information on the Metropolitan so that the Skete could cause problems. We found out later by his own posts on a public forum and posts by others attached to the Skete that he "feigned" his loyalty to the Synod just for this reason. I however trusted him, and thought he should know of the situation at the airport. The first remark that Fr. John made was that it (the detainment) sounded like the fruition of Dormition Skete's works. I told him that he was questioned in regards to medical bills and that he had some rubles on him, but was not sure if they were taken from him or not.

Fr. John had said that it sounded like it was "a set up" and that "how could anyone except the Skete know of the medical bills". He said that he thought this was very low and to keep him informed of anything else that occurs. It was only a short time later that I found out that he was not really with the Synod but still with our former bishop.

About a week or so later, Fr. John and the Skete et al started to post information and documents accusing Metropolitan of being arrested for smuggling. The scenario resembled the current CBS/Dan Rather scandal where papers were forged and sources were made up. Others in AROC, some outside our jurisdiction, and I checked on the documents and sources and nothing was ever corroborated. In fact, the Office of Customs, the U.S. Attorney, and U. S. Court Clerk not only denied that there were such charges against our Metropolitan, but they even stated that it sounds like a forgery. But these facts were still not enough to stop Fr. John et al from trying to dirty the Metropolitan's name.

As for the medical bills that Fr. John keeps talking about, he himself stated that what the hospital does not take care of, he would. These words were as empty as his accusation, and neither has come to any fruition.

My purpose of this letter is to separate my name from Fr. John's dishonest diatribe that I told him that the Metropolitan was arrested.

I pray that Fr. John will conform his conscience to the truth, and will at very least, go on with his own life and leave our dear Metropolitan out of it.

In Christ, Archpriest Dionysi

THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

The chancery of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR(L) published on its Internet site on September 9th the following information:

**A Joint Meeting of the Committees of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
and the Moscow Patriarchate is Scheduled for Mid-September**

On August 31, the Secretary of the Committee on discussions with the corresponding Committee of the Moscow Patriarchate, Protopriest Alexander Lebedeff, met with His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus to discuss matters connected with the forthcoming meetings with the Moscow Patriarchate's Committee on discussions with the Russian Church Abroad, and received instructions from His Eminence.

The President of the Committee, His Eminence Archbishop Mark, scheduled a meeting of the Committee of the Russian Church Abroad and its advisors for September 13, while the joint meeting of the two Committees will be held at St Job of Pochaev Monastery in Munich. The results of the joint meetings will be reported on by His Eminence Archbishop Mark and Protopriest Alexander Lebedeff to the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia during its autumn session in the second half of October.

It is interesting that this meeting is scheduled by Archbishop Mark to be in Munich and not in New York in the Synod's building! Is not it intentional that the details of this meeting will be known only from reports by convinced supporters of the unification of ROCOR(L) with the Moscow Patriarchate: Archbishop Mark himself and Archpriest Alexander Lebedev?

The Three Saints parish of the MP church in Garfield, NJ in its Internet newsletter reports that indeed in Munich there was a second working session of the committees from ROCOR(L) and the MP on September 14th to 16th.

According to this information, "As was the case during the first meeting in Moscow, when the participants in the committee's work felt great joy that during the meetings they were able to pray before the miracle-working Tikhvin icon upon its return to the homeland, it was an unexpected [?!] joy for all the members of the Committees that the Miracle-working Kursk-Root icon of Mother of God arrived at the Munich cathedral. The participants of the talks prayed together during a moleben and akathist before the holy icon".

"Portal Credo.Ru" of October 15th reports that "Some disagreements were disclosed during the negotiations of the ROCOR(L) and the ROC MP held in Munich".

According to this report, "At the meetings between both committees for unification, held from September 14th to September 16th, the delegation from the MP flatly refused to discuss the activity of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), the founder of 'Sergianism'. The efforts on the part of representatives of the ROCOR(L) to put this matter on the agenda, did not meet with any understanding on part of the hierarchs of the MP present. They declared: "This is our saintly hierarch and he is to be out of any discussions". (Underlined by "Ch. N.")

Archbishops Innocent of Irkutsk and Eugene of Vereya flatly refused to concelebrate with ROCOR(L)'s Archbishop Mark. They even rejected his offer to serve at alternate services. During the Divine Liturgies Archbishop Mark, nevertheless commemorated the hierarchs of the MP during the 'Great Entrance'.

The newspaper "Nasha Strana" ("Our Country") questions the future fate of the members of negotiations on side of ROCOR(L). "Since they are treated so unceremoniously now regarding matters of principle, what will happen to them when the ROC MP gets all is seeking?"

The Internet publication "Information Inquiries to Portal Religion" of October 5th, based upon an article in the newspaper "Commersant" by Paul Korobov writes: "In August of the current year the ROC MP made a decision to discontinue the court cases and stop all existing court proceedings."

Further we find out from the same source that "The delegation of the ROCOR(L) was chaired by Archbishop Mark of Germany, the first Locum Tenens of the President of the Synod of Bishops, and actually, number two man in the Church Abroad... The result of this meeting is the agreement of Eucharistic union of the ROCOR and the ROC MP as well as concrete measures to avoid the duplicating of parishes of both Churches in Europe and the USA!"

The official newspaper of the Serbian Orthodox Church "Pravoslavie" of September 1st reported that two weeks after the meeting of the committees there will be held in Moscow the Bishops' Council of Moscow Patriarchate and "its main topic will be the establishment of Eucharistic communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Church Abroad". At the same time it is reported that at the beginning of next year there also "will be held the Bishops' Council at which there will be discussed the matter of unification with the Church in the Homeland".

BISHOPS' COUNCIL OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

The Internet publication of the **Chancery of the Synod of Bishops** of the ROCOR(L), dated October 8th, in the section entitled **News from the Dioceses** [?!] there is a ten page long report about the meetings of the **Council of Bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate**.

The Council was opened on October 3rd by Patriarch Alexis ("Drozdov" in the KGB) and closed on October 6th, 2004.

In his report about the period before last Council, the Patriarch noted that "A special topic to be reviewed by the Council was the significant shift in the relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and documents prepared by the church Committees on Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate, which were established last December."

On the following day the report of the President of Department of Foreign Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Kyrill (in the KGB "Mikhailov") was heard who said in particular: "We shall try to briefly describe the differences which were viewed in the early 1990's as primary obstacles towards the reestablishment of relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Mainly, these problems were caused by the prior political situation which unfolded in Russia and determined its attitude towards those countries where the Russian Church Outside of Russia performed its work".

As is known, the Church Abroad believed that the negotiations with the MP could begin after the latter denounces the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius (1927), leaves the WCC and glorifies the New Martyrs.

From the very limited information about two working sessions of the committees of the ROCOR(L) and the MP held in Munich it is obvious that the participants in meetings (as well as the decision of the Council of ROCOR Bishops in 2002) came to the conclusion that the resolution of the MP Council about the "Basics of the Social Conception of the Russian Church", supposedly shows a change in Sergius Stragorodsky's policies, and is even a denial of it, while the glorification of new Martyrs eliminates one more obstacle for union with the MP!

Regarding the matter of Ecumenism, Metropolitan Kirill said that, "the representatives of our Church who participate in dialogue with Christians of other faiths were never guided by the intention of creating a syncretistic religion and never viewed inter-Christian organizations as a sort of super-Church. They never accepted the so-called 'branch theory'. Our contacts in the inter-Christian area had as their primary goal the witness to Orthodoxy".

Here Metropolitan Kirill impudently lies. Indeed, the MP indeed didn't plan to create some sort of the "super-church", but when she year after year participated in the prayers about peace in Assisi initiated by the Pope, in which not only all existing heretics participated, but even Muslims, Jews and pagans, then the matter of witnessing Orthodoxy is out of the question. Here one can say only that the Moscow Patriarchate, together with all the Eastern "Orthodox" heretics falls under the 10th Apostolic Canon: "If any one shall pray, even in a private house with an excommunicated person, let him also be excommunicated".

Metropolitan Kirill, as well as the members of the dialogue committee, have also "forgotten" the union signed in 1992 by the Moscow Patriarchate in Balamand!

Then there follows a rather extensive review of the historical church events: starting with the shameful "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius and up to the invitation to Metropolitan Laurus by President Putin in the name of Patriarch Alexis in 2003.

As is stated in this report, "The idea of Metropolitan Laurus' trip in principle was decided in November of last year, during the visit of the first official delegation of the Church Abroad, headed by Archbishop Mark. The visit proved very fruitful. From the start, a trusting respectful tone was established for our talks. **Forgiveness was asked by both sides for the exaggerations which occurred in the years of division, and also the desire was expressed that the 'movement for unity no longer meet with new obstacles through statements or actions which could hinder the process of mutual rapprochement'**. In conversations with our brother bishops we came to an agreement on that which is most important – the basic principles of the effort to overcome the division. **First of all, it was decided to reject the repetition of the polemics of past decades. Of course, this did not mean that the process of analyzing the path traveled by the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century has ended. Personalities and events can and must be studied by historians**".

This means, in another words, that the present committee of the Church Abroad and her "brother bishops", quietly, behind the backs of their flock, without making a sound, have signed an agreement with the Moscow Patriarchate about the denial of all the positions of principle of all our former hierarchs, starting with Metropolitan Anthony and finishing with Metropolitan Philaret!

Despite the mutual resolution to avoid any actions "which could hinder the process of mutual rapprochement", The Moscow Patriarchate, true to her policies of blackmail and intimidation, as reported on the Internet by the protodeacon of Australian diocese Basil Yakimov on October 14th that "Yesterday the Moscow Patriarchate started a court proceeding in order to take away our Holy Trinity Church on Brasil Street in Buenos Aires. They didn't even wait for the conclusion of union to take away our property".

One should remember that at the end of 1960's, when the former American Metropolia started negotiations with the MP about unification and soon after received even "autocephaly" (which was not recognized by any Local Churches) – during these negotiations the MP pursued several court cases against the OCA and since has retained all her parishes in USA!

Besides the detailed review of the relationship between the ROCOR(L) and the MP – the Moscow Council categorically refused to canonize Tsar Ivan the Terrible and Rasputin. As amazing as it is, these canonizations are supported by the editor of the newspaper "Rus Pravoslavnyaya" ("Orthodox Russia") C. Doushenov. Despite the historical facts that Ivan the Terrible was married 7 times, in a fit of anger killed his son, sent Maluta Scouratov to kill St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow and his special troops, the Oprichina, killed tens of thousands of people – the newspaper continues to insist that these facts are a slander against the righteous tsar! Regarding Rasputin, the president of the canonization committee, Metropolitan Yuvenaly, quite correctly stated that "he was a theological ignoramus who was prone to spiritual moods typical of sectarians".

However, the Council has canonized 14 new saints, among them 5 nuns of Diveyevo (out of 9 already canonized several years ago by the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church).

After the conclusion of the Council, all members were received by President Putin in the Alexander Hall in the Kremlin. He discussed with them the results of the Council's resolutions.

Patriarch of Alexandria Peter VII Killed

"The New York Times" of September 13th reported that on Saturday, September 11th in a helicopter accident the Patriarch of Alexandria Peter VII died at the age of 55, while traveling to Mi Athos. The catastrophe happened just a few minutes before the helicopter was to land in Greece.

The cause of this accident is not yet known. Local fishermen managed to pull out of the sea the bodies of the Patriarch and 6 other persons of his entourage. All together 16 persons died in the helicopter.

The Patriarchate of Alexandria is considered to be the poorest of all Orthodox Patriarchates. In Egypt there are only 1,650 Greeks and the Patriarch started intense missionary activity among the Africans. However, there was a serious difficulty because of shortage of missionaries of clergy rank. Peter VII became Alexandria's Patriarch in 1997.

NEW PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

A Greek newspaper in English "The National Herald" of October 16th reported that after the death of Alexandria's Patriarch Peter VII in the helicopter accident, his successor was elected: Metropolitan Theodore of Zimbabwe. He was elected by the 27 bishops of the Alexandria Church. First, 3 candidates were nominated and then a secret election was held by 13 members of the Synod. They put their votes in a chalice that was standing on the altar of St. Sava's church. Locum Tenens of the Patriarch, Metropolitan Peter, (who himself was one of the 3 candidates for the post of Patriarch) announced the final result. The church, full to capacity, unanimously exclaimed "Axios"

The newly elected Patriarch thanked the brethren for their trust in him and the honor and declared that, "no one will go away bitterly."

He is 50 years old and born in Crete. He is a graduate of Thessalonica Theological University. In 1990 he was consecrated a bishop. From 1985 to 1990 he was a representative of his Patriarch in Odessa, Russia.

The newspaper believes that the new Patriarch does not plan to make any changes in his predecessor's general policies.

NEW CANONICAL CHAOS USING THE NAME OF METROPOLITAN VITALY

We have received the published declaration of ROCOR (L) Bishop Alexander of Buenos Aires and South America in which he reports that the group of "TRCA" (True Russian Church Abroad) under Metropolitan Vitaly has "recently" consecrated a new Bishop Anthony for South America, the former clergyman of the Los Angeles diocese Nikita Orlov.

However, according to information very "recently" published by the "Russian Orthodox Church in Exile", created by Metropolitan Vitaly, "During the 24 June/ 7 July 2004 of the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Vitaly, the First Hierarch of ROCA, addressed all their Eminences as follows:

Your Eminences!

I am bringing to your attention the fact that two years ago, due to the difficult circumstances being experienced by our Church, Fr. Nikita Orlov was secretly elevated to the episcopacy" (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

Not wanting to deprive the Church of a faithful servant in the episcopacy as well, I request that your Eminences accept Bishop Antony (Orlov) as our new brother within episcopacy of our Church.

I ask that all the Hierarchs confirm the new eparchy of Los Angeles, with His Grace, Antony, being appointed to govern it.

Signed: + Metropolitan Vitaly

The members of this Synod of Bishops who expressed agreement and sealed it with their signatures were:

+ Bishop Sergii, + Bishop Vladimir, + Bishop Varfolomey.

The same text was subsequently signed by Bishops Antony (Rudei) and Viktor (Pivivarov)"

Bishop Anastasii has expressed his agreement in a separate letter.

This was followed by Decree # 42/04/M, dated 8/21 August, 2004 of the ROCA Synod of Bishops:

In accordance with the expressed opinion of their Eminences in response to request #30/04/M of His Eminence, Metropolitan Vitaly, dated 24 June/ 7 July 2004, the Synod of Bishops establishes the Eparchy of Los Angeles and South America, the governance of which is entrusted to Bishop Antony (Orlov).

Vladyka Antony recently visited the convent and parish in Chile, where he officiated at services and spoke with the parishioners in Santiago, for which they expressed their profound gratitude to him for enlightening them about the situation in the Church Abroad".

Since Metropolitan Vitaly suspended Bishop Barnabas in early spring of 2003 – one suspects that this **secret consecration of N. Orlov** must have happened with Bishop Barnabas' (a creator of disorders) involvement also in this story!

In his extensive letter (of five pages) with 3 pages of enclosures, Bishop Alexander quite properly opposes this consecration, but already in the middle of the second page he appeals to his flock not to oppose... the proposed communion of the Church Abroad under Metropolitan Laurus with the Moscow Patriarchate!

Bishop Alexander (Mileant) declares that, "The spiritual renewal of Russia is the result of God's mercy. Unfortunately not all among us see it. Let it not happen the same way as it happened with the Jewish people, when the promised Messiah came and many didn't recognize him...!"

It seems that Bishop Alexander, who regrets that his flock is not sufficiently informed in the church matters, has nowhere read that out of all the "renewed" formerly Orthodox in Russia, according to the newspaper "Moscow News" only 22% keep Great Lent, while 76% admit they are not observing and do not plan to observe it! And in Moscow, with 8 to 9 million residents, no more that 150,000 go to church on Pascha! Can this be called a renewal?

Certainly, the matters of Sergianism and Ecumenism, which are totally ignored by the representatives of the Church Abroad in negotiating the communion with the MP, are totally ignored by Bishop Alexander.

THE "RUSSIAN MUSLIMS"

Several Internet sites in Russia have noticed that the Muslim religion is becoming more and more popular in Russia, as well as in Western Europe.

Thus, "Information Inquiries Portal SME" reports that, "In Moscow alone for the period from January to October 2004 approximately 20 thousand people have converted to Islam in the mosques of this city. This is a bit higher than the previous year: in 2003 there were 15,300 new Muslims.

The source SMR RF added that about 60% of the converts to Islam are women Russian by nationality and out of them 75% happen to be young women in age from 17 to 21!

This terrible fact is explained by saying that supposedly Muslims are persecuted and oppressed and this is a sign of sympathy for them.

It is estimated that in the Russian Federation there are at present 23 million Muslims and some 2 million live in Moscow.

The same "Inquiries Portal" of October 5th reports "the paradoxical fact that the number of ethnic Russians converting to Islam has remained unnoticed. The seemingly Orthodox cathedral of Christ the Savior is known from posters. But if we look closely we will immediately notice a dirty trick: instead of an Orthodox cross, the cupola is crowned by the Muslim crescent moon; in the background of the picture, one can read in red-green letters the word 'Russian Jihad'. This peculiar collage we have discovered on one of numerous Internet sites that specialize in the "Islamation" of ethnic Russians.

These sites explain that the "Russian nation is in the state of degradation... Alcoholism, suicides and mortality of the core Russian people have long ago exceeded the defensive barrier of the nation... No other religious system or Soviet ideology but Islam can fill up our country with vital energy... We, the Russians, must raise up the sign of the Prophet (peace be with him) and only in that is the salvation of Russia and all the nations which have bound their future to hers"!

It is interesting that according to information from the "Islamic Committee of Russia" the number of Europeans who have converted to Islam is much higher than the number of converts in Russia. Beginning in 1945 nearly a million Europeans have converted. In England there have been some 100 thousand, about the same in France. In Germany and Italy there might be a few less, but they are very visible in these countries. It is not an accident that there was built in Rome the largest mosque in all of Europe!

Only the deliberately blind leaders of the Church Abroad may seriously speak about a fundamental spiritual renewal in Russia.

PERSECUTION OF RUSSIANS ON ATHOS

As reported by the Internet agency "Vremia Novostei" ("News Time") of October 5th #181 the Moscow Council of bishops was informed that the Ecumenical Patriarch has started again to put obstacles in the way of Russians entering St. Panteleimon Monastery on Mt. Athos.

With the fall of Russian Orthodox tsardom, without which the Greeks could consider it, there started a systematic oppression of all Slavic monasteries on Mt. Athos. As a matter of policy, members of the Slavic Churches who sought salvation in their monasteries on Mt. Athos, were not admitted in. This in particular directed against St. Panteleimon Monastery. For a Russian by nationality up to the Second World War it was almost impossible to settle on Mt. Athos.

Now "Constantinople Patriarch Bartholomew has demanded from Moscow Patriarch Alexis II immediate severance of all contacts with St. Panteleimon Monastery on Mt. Athos, including even correspondence. The head of the Ecumenical Patriarchate promises to hinder the entry of monks from Russia, and in the future to remove the word 'Russian' from the name and statutes of the monastery!"

Quite naturally this provoked the outrage of members of the Patriarchal Council. It is said in the report that "This Holy dwelling for decades can not solve the problem of increasing the brotherhood because of artificial obstacles for move of the non Greeks to Mt. Athos. From the 9 candidates presented by the Russian Church to be accepted into the Panteleimon Monastery, 7 were refused and regarding the 2 remaining there is still no decision, despite numerous reminders."

According to Metropolitan Kirill, President of the Foreign Relations Department of the MP: "The problem already is being handled by the Foreign Relations Ministry of Russia as well as some other agencies. A number of letters were sent to Patriarch Batholomew, which prove the legality of the Russian presence on Mt. Athos".

Russian monasteries in Mt. Athos have always been extremely rich and have faced obstacles to increasing the brotherhoods, for example in Elias Skete it got to the point that when the last two monks died, all the Skete property was immediately seized by the administration of Mt. Athos.

FIGHT IN THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN JERUSALEM

The Associated Press of September 28th has reported on the Internet that during the service on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a fight erupted between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Franciscan clergy as a result of an argument whether the door of the latter's chapel should be closed or opened during the procession.

The church of the Holy Sepulchre belongs to the Orthodox, but some parts of it are used by Catholics and Monophysites. Every step within it is closely watched by all the participants and the slightest violation of the traditions is liable to create a precedent for the future.

There were several hundred of participants in the Orthodox procession, which was passing by a Catholic section. The clergy on both sides started an argument about the doors and then it turned into a real fight. The Israeli police were called to restore order.

Several dozens members of the procession and some police were slightly injured.

During last year's Paschal celebration, the police threatened to limit the number of people in the church if the religions who use the facilities in this church would not beforehand agree on the order. At that time, under the watch of the police, an agreement was made and the service was performed peacefully.

NEW ARREST OF SERBIAN BISHOP IN MACEDONIA

At the beginning of the year we reported in #1(125) the arrest of Serbian Archbishop Jovan and 30 other people by the Macedonian authorities, at the demand of the "Macedonian Orthodox Church". This ecclesiastical group (not recognized by any other Orthodox Church) – similarly to the Moscow Patriarchate – considers itself to be the only legal church in the country.

During this period Bishop Jovan, who became the Metropolitan-Exarch in the Serbian Church, is constantly persecuted by the Macedonian authorities under the pretext of practicing "national, racial or religious hatred".

Now, according to information from the Serbian diocesan newspaper "Path of Orthodoxy" for September, the Macedonian court has sentenced Metropolitan Jovan to 18 months in prison and has had him "defrocked".

The organization "Amnesty International" has declared Metropolitan Jovan to be "a prisoner of the conscience".

Patriarch Paul of Serbia has written a strong protest to Macedonian President Branko Crvenkovsky in which he stated that "It is a common knowledge at home and abroad that the Metropolitan was judged exclusively because he was serving the Divine Liturgy, which the court has proclaimed to be 'an incitation of national and religious hatred, division and intolerance'. This decision represents an attack not only on the Archdiocese of Ohrid and the Serbian Orthodox Church, but on the Orthodox Church as a whole and [intends] its humiliation, considering that Metropolitan Jovan, together with the two bishops of the Archdiocese of Ohrid, is the only Metropolitan in Macedonia recognized by the entire Orthodox world.

We protest against this senseless act, urging you, Mr. President, to use all your authority and powers to stop this trampling on basic human and religious rights in Macedonia and enable freedom of religious service and activities of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Ohrid guaranteed by both international legislation as well as by God's and human justice".

Metropolitan Jovan has complained to "Forum 18" that "They do not let us perform services, they harass me with these trials, and they do not let foreign Orthodox priests enter or travel through Macedonia".

According to information on the Forum 18 of September 24th, an interior ministry blacklist reportedly lists more than 20 Serbian Orthodox bishops banned from entering Macedonia.

CATHOLICISM AND SPANISH GOVERNMENT COLLIDE

"The New York Times" of October 4th published a three-column article about the collision of interests between the state of Spain and Roman Catholicism in that country.

The socialist Prime Minister of Spain, Jose Rodriguez Zapatero, has declared that Spaniards need more liberty, less dogmas and more separation of Church and state. "Spaniards need more sport and less religion," said the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, the Spanish government has legalized same-sex marriages, permission for these cohabitants to adopt children and also to use human embryos in the treatment of Alzheimers and Parkinsons diseases.

At the same time a new law was adopted by which the teaching of the religion in the schools is no longer an obligatory subject. Previously, the government paid the teachers of religion. In addition, the government paid the salaries of the clergy, and this is now "a big question mark".

All this has provoked a reaction from the Vatican, which previously supported the Spanish government, and now is in strong opposition to it. This is also supported by the conservative Catholics, who support the Catholic episcopate in Spain.

The Vatican representative Antonio Martinez declared that the recognition of the same-sex marriages is "like imposing a virus on society".

A proposal has been made to simplify the divorce laws.

At present, the same sex marriages have become legal in Holland, Belgium, almost all of Canada and now in Spain.

CATHOLICS HAND OVER COPY OF KAZAN ICON TO MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

For a very long time it was common knowledge that the Pope has a dreamt of visiting Russia. A lot has been written about it and behind the scenes there have been many negotiations with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate, which lasted for several years.

President Putin has even personally invited the head Roman-Catholic to visit Russia, but had to admit this cannot take place without the consent of the Patriarch, who has not supported this idea. Then the Pope invented a move, which appeared to him to be fruitful: he will personally hand over the copy of the Kazan icon to the Moscow Patriarch, which at the beginning the Catholics said was the miracle-working original. But this Catholic plan didn't work out. The Patriarchate has declared that since the icon is just one of several copies, there is no need for Pope to come to Russia.

A newspaper "The Catholic Reporter" of September 17th has devoted full 3 pages to this subject.

Finally, the Catholic delegation headed by Cardinal Kasper and some 10 members of his entourage personally handed the icon to Patriarch Ridiger "Drozdov". After handing it over, Cardinal Kasper declared the meeting was "very friendly, very positive and the climate was much improved over the last time" he was in Moscow in February.

The Vatican representative Fr. John Lapidus said, "We would like this gift to symbolize the beginning of new policy of the Vatican towards Russia".

The newspaper reported that the reaction to this event by the Moscow Patriarchate was less positive. Her representative (not identified in the article) has declared that "With this step, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church will take more concrete, real steps for resolving all the problems that exist between us". To a considerable degree these consist of Catholic propaganda among the Orthodox. The very same Catholic representative in Russia Lapidus had to acknowledge that in Novosibirsk lectures about God and Christianity were advertised without mentioning that the lecturer was a Catholic priest. Spanish nuns teach Russian children the Spanish language and at the same time preach the Roman Catholic religion, while the Catholic orphanages for Russian children bring them up as Catholics.

The official representatives of the Vatican in Russia state that there are only 600 thousand Catholics in Russia (in Stalin's time there were 300 thousand), while the Catholic Archbishop in Russia Kondrusewicz speaks of one and a half million!

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS:

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of February 8/21 1998

Your Eminence, Dear Vladyko!

I am sending you a copy of an extremely important article from a local newspaper. It is to a degree in harmony with the content of my article regarding supplying Russia with our literature. Even more so, in the light of such data I was shocked by the note of a "lay person" about the proposed agreement with the Moscow Patriarchate, which was sent to me. I believe you will get a copy of this note before the next Synod meeting, **but I was stunned that the Metropolitan in his accompanying letter expresses sympathy with the idea of some kind of agreement with the Moscow Patriarchate** (underlined in the original, "Ch. N."]. The copy of the article I am sending you very clearly shows that as of now we have nothing in common with the Moscow Patriarchate. Please, read it carefully and re-read in this light my article about supplying the faithful in Russia with spiritual literature.

I ask for your holy prayers and remain your devoted brother in Christ + Bishop Gregory

Letter to N.P. Churilov of June 27th/July 10th 1990

Dear Nikolai Pavlovich;

I hope that when you receive this letter you will have gotten my answer to the previous one, which was delayed due to my slowing down in old age. I received it just at a time when I was very busy and put off an answer to it for a while, but got into a rut about various new matters and I got bogged down. Sorry. Do not get depressed. I will try to improve.

Regarding your notes, at present I can add nothing. When I receive a copy from you then I will be able to think of something and will write to you.

What is now called "Sergianism" long ago passed the borders of 1927 and that later existed during the life of Metropolitan Sergius. In developing the principle of compromise for the sake of preserving the ecclesiastical administration, his successors, specially Pimen and his hierarchs created quite a new direction. These are already people who have went through a special treatment of "education" at regular educational meetings with the church KGB people. Furov in his report states this, as do his successors. The present Patriarch Alexis II has gone through this kind of training. The first Alexis at times would somewhat flounder and tried to complain about the persecution of the Church but then easily gave in his positions. By the time of Pimen he wouldn't argue. Alexis, like his predecessor, who was incarcerated for a time being in order to retrain him, already accepted all the demands of the atheists without such measures... There is no independent policy at present and the main principle is "do as ordered". The present Alexis has specially distinguished himself in this. I have just received a new issue of the "Herald" of the Russian Christian Movement in which are used materials of the Council for Religious Affairs from the era of Patriarch Alexis.... "the party and the state care for the upbringing of a person of the new society, free from ideologies, including religious prejudices".

Somehow in this magazine confidential Soviet materials are published.

I know Mother Gabriela and I believe she has not left... Sometimes another nun, Mother Raphaela, writes to me. Here is her address. Write to her and mention you do so at my suggestion. She is on the Mt. Olives but has her own private address. In general, there are at present disturbances in the Mission. There are many complaints about the Chief of the Mission and a Bishop is going there for an investigation.

I understand that you are depressed with your illness and feel sorry for you. May the Lord help you not to be depressed.

The Lord's blessing be with you, + Bishop Gregory

**Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva.
Started November 7/20 – finished December 1/14, 1992**

Your eminence, dear Vladyko;

Fr. Vladimir Shishkoff has related to me his conversation with you. I understand the discord regarding "Pamyat" [the right wing organization "Memory," "Ch. N."]. It does not disturb me as much as these incomprehensible acts.

1. During last year's Council there was a deliberation about the trip of Znosko to Russia as a guest of the Patriarch. Before that, in the previous year, he was nominated as a candidate for bishop, but refused it. It would seem this trip to the Patriarch has disqualified him. But all of a sudden it was announced that he is elected and may be consecrated without a new nomination. My protest, supported by several Hierarchs, was not heard, although it was quite clear that there should be after all that had happened. No attention was paid also to pointing out that he has violated the 55th Apostolic Canon, because he has sent me a very rude letter. It seems that our M[etropolitan] went to him and with difficulty persuaded him to agree to the consecration, and that he was promised that there will be no demand to seek pardon from me. Vladyka Laurus wrote to the Metropolitan about the necessity of this. I have received no response from the Metropolitan. This creates a precedent: a priest violates the 55th Apostolic Canon but there are no consequences, even to saying, "beg pardon". Definitely there was a reason behind all this, but it was not revealed to me. In any case, here is a spiritual anomaly and sullyng of our episcopate. I tried in the beginning to defend the normal procedure, but being afraid to harm our case in Russia – I have swallowed it all. At the meeting Bishop Mitrophan conducted himself well.
2. There was an order from the Metropolitan regarding procedures with matters in Russia. After two months – a different one was issued. Then the first was suddenly remembered and things returned to it. The most terrible thing is that it used to be possible to ask the secretaries, but maybe action was taken avoiding the Chancery, this seems not to be very rare.
3. During the deliberations on matters in Russia, the Metropolitan suddenly became a defender of Bishop Barnabas, but found no support, except from Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, who defended "Pamyat". The testimony of Bishop Hilarion and Fr. Potapov, who went to Russia at the request of the Metropolitan, he has opposed with a fault finding interrogation, making use of the zeal of Potapov, until he has left off without finishing his argumentation. In fact, Archbishop Anthony for political reasons, defended the actions of two suspended priests.

Unfortunately, some hierarchs are under the impression that the Presiding Bishop is mentally ailing. I am afraid, they might rush ahead in this regard. But, in any case, we have to strengthen our hierarchy in Russia. We cannot have only Bishop Valentin for the whole of Russia. Of the others over there – one stays in the catacombs, while the other is afraid to return to the Homeland.

4. I don't know how familiar you are with the Romanian old calendarists [Bishop Vlasy, "Ch. N."], whom we admitted too quickly in my opinion, although I am inclined to sympathize with them. I believe that Vladyka Mark rushed to concelebrate with them, without a previous decision of the Synod. One more precedent of a hasty personal decision instead of a conciliar one.

Some had a tendency to delay the date of the Council, and I am glad that this didn't succeed. I am concerned about our tardiness in the matter of replenishing the hierarchy in Russia, and in Russia there is only one hierarch and yet, some of our own would not mind devouring him.

The time chosen for the Synod sessions was not quite convenient. It was necessary to rush, and at my age this is rather difficult. On the very last day of the sessions there were three meetings. My report was the last, already nearly at midnight.

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

FROM THE EDITOR:

Since some continue to be scandalized by the matter of the wedding of the imposter Goleniewski performed 40 years ago by (at that time) Protopresbyter George Grabbe, we have decided to publish something on this subject from the archives that remained after the repose of Bishop Gregory.

At that time, Fr. George announced from the ambo that he never recognized Goleniewski as the heir to the throne Alexis Nikolayevich. Simultaneously, after the end of the Divine Liturgy all the present in the cathedral were given a copy of a letter sent by him to the Russian diaspora press, which we publish below.

Copy of a letter sent to editors of the Russian newspapers on December 4th, 1964

Sir;

Please be kind to publish in your paper the following announcement.

Persons, unknown to me widely distribute a page from a Hartford newspaper with information that supposedly I have recognized a person, who fleeing from Poland to the West, under the last name of Goleniewski and then registered himself by the civil authorities with the name of Romanov, as if he were the heir to the throne Alexis Nikolayevich, and I was persuaded by him to be married under that name.

I immediately sent to the "Hartford Times" a strong protest against this false report, with the explanation that I have never recognized Mr. Goleniewski-Romanov to be the heir to the throne, and I could not, because there is absolutely no basis for this.

A priest is required to serve requested religious rites for all, sometimes even for criminals, and in the wedding rite there is recorded only the first name and the last name, based upon the marriage license presented. In the pre-wedding questionnaire of our Church there is mentioned only the patronymic of those to be wed, without detailed information about the parents. In this particular case, coincidentally the name of the heir to the throne in the document of the city administration, there was no indication that the parents of the groom are the Emperor and Empress of Russia. There are in Russia as many Romanovs as in the USA there are persons with the last name Smith. Even in the Manhattan telephone book there are more than 30 Romanovs.

In this entire case and the sensation created by circles unknown to me, one can see nothing but a provocation against which the appropriate measures have been taken.

Respectfully, Protopresbyter George Grabbe

EXPLANATION ABOUT THE IMPOSTER

After reading in "Novoye Russkoye Slovo" ("New Russian Word") of January 2nd an extended declaration by Alexis Nikolayevich Romanov (Goleniewski) full of lies, I categorically declare:

1. Mr. Goleniewski is an unquestionable imposter, who has misappropriated the name of the murdered heir to the throne Alexis Nikolayevich. Also false are the pretensions of several women, about whom it is written that they are supposedly the Grand Duchesses, the daughters of the murdered Emperor and Empress.
2. I have never recognized the pretensions of Mr. Goleniewski nor of these women and will always and under all conditions testify to their being imposters, especially if their pretensions develop further.
3. No one among my relatives has ever recognized the pretensions of these persons and statements to the contrary are nothing but lies. The same pertains to declarations of supposed knowledge of our family that the Royal Family was saved and is in the West.
4. I have never spoken to Mr. Goleniewski, nor to persons close to him, in the capacity of a representative of the Synod of Bishops.
5. The documents presented to me by Mr. Goleniewski, as he writes "under confidentiality of confession," were mainly copies of his own declarations and not definitive.
6. I visited Mr. Goleniewski only for the purpose of teaching his civil wife the basics of holy Orthodoxy in order to be able to fulfill his request, as private person, to marry them because they were expecting a baby.
7. I very much regret that I trusted these people and after meeting their request regarding their personal life, which was, I believed, sincerely religiously motivated, and after performing their wedding, I became involved in widely published advertisements about these imposters. I see that I have made a mistake in trusting them and I do very much regret it.
8. This matter, with my report, was discussed by the Synod of Bishops. The civil authorities were informed and the corresponding corrections were made in the metrical books [official church records]. A detailed report was sent to the Metropolitan in Australia, and his decision is expected to be received soon, to be immediately and exactly carried out.

December 20th/January 2nd 1964/5

Protopresbyter George Grabbe