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THE ROCOR(L) SYNOD MEETING

The official Internet news site of the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR(L) has published a short summary of information about the Synod meeting, held on January 28th in New York. The participants were: President, Metropolitan Laurus, Archbishops Mark of Berlin and Germany, Hilarion of Sydney and Australia-New Zealand and Bishops Ambrose of Vevey and Western Europe and Gabriel of Manhattan, the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops. All the participants, except for Bishop Gabriel have long shown themselves to be enthusiastic collaborators in the matter of a rapprochement between the ROCOR and MP!

Metropolitan Laurus informed the members of the Synod about his visits to various parishes in South America during mid-December of last year, and has declared that in April he plans also to visit Venezuela. Certainly it is very doubtful, that in his information he mentioned that, according to the article by Mr. N. Kazantsev (the Editor) published in the newspaper "Nasha Strana" ("Our Country") # 2763, that his appearance in the South America was met (especially in Brazil) not at all warmly, if not to say with hostility. According to the article, "the clergy of the Brazilian Deanery on their part have informed Metropolitan Laurus of their negative feelings toward the projected unification with the MP. They have stressed that the enterprise to submit the Church Abroad to Alexis II, an unrepentant appointee of the Soviet bureaucracy, has already resulted in the loss of many parishioners in Diaspora: not only those who have left for good and joined various jurisdictions, but also those outraged by this capitulation – have stopped going to the churches".

In Chile, Archimandrite Benjamin (Vozniuk) for two hours tried to persuade Metropolitan Laurus to stop the rapprochement with the MP. Finally, he had the courage to let Metropolitan Laurus serve a moleben before the miraculous Kursk Icon of the Holy Virgin, but at the same time has suggested to him, not to serve the Liturgy in his church, because "if during the Liturgy you will be favorably preaching about the unification with the Patriarchate, I would be obliged to answer you publicly. Therefore, it is better you would not serve..." (Underlined by "Ch. N.").

Metropolitan Laurus accepted the suggestion of Archimandrite Benjamin and immediately changed his tickets for the flight to Buenos Aires, where he arrived two days ahead of schedule!

There, also a slight scandal occurred: a woman member of the Holy Trinity cathedral, just after the end of the Liturgy approached Metropolitan Laurus and told him: "Vladyka, you have betrayed us – you are a Judas"!

The very same newspaper # 2765 of February 19th reported that, "When Metropolitan Laurus recently served in the Buenos Aires' cathedral there were very few people, and after communion the church was nearly empty. Mostly the people lined up to venerate the Kursk Icon, but would not go to kiss the Cross".

Archpriests Vladimir Shlenev and Valentin Iwaszewicz as well as his son Priest Alexander have very bravely stepped forward to criticize to Metropolitan Laurus for his rapprochement with the MP.

Information from the Chancery of the Synod states that, "Hearing the report of the Secretary of the Committee on Discussions with the Moscow Patriarchate, Protopresbyter Alexander Lebedev, **the Synod of Bishops considered and approved the documents adopted during the 3rd joint meeting of the church committees in November of last year, and expressed the hope that in the near future, with the consent of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy and the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate, CERTAIN MATERIALS WILL BE PUBLISHED which have already been studied and APPROVED BY THE HIERARCHS OF BOTH BRANCHES OF THE Russian Church**".

From information from various sources as well as admissions from various participants in the treacherous Joint Committee for Rapprochement with the MP, Archbishop Mark especially, they long ago admitted that **they have jointly signed some documents**, but which and on what subjects remains a secret, which, they say, is of no concern to the faithful. However, Archbishop Mark, during an interview given by him in Moscow with cynical frankness admitted, that "the less the lay people in the Church know – the better"!

The newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in the January issue, # 1, 2005 in the article "About the Unification of the Russian Church" speaks about the Sergius' Declaration of 1927 and that Archbishop Mark has declared that "this matter was discussed on the third round of conversations in Moscow and **I believe that the document we have worked out will equally satisfy both parties**".

In very same newspaper the declaration of Archbishop Mark regarding the All Diaspora Council of clergy and laity was published in which he stated: "The Church Abroad, in order to thoroughly discuss all the matters connected with **the possibility of establishment of prayerful and administrative relations with the Moscow Patriarchate, needs to summon an All-Diaspora Council**".

The Chancery also reports that a 4th All-Diaspora Council with participation of clergy and laity is scheduled to meet in the first half of next year in San Francisco. Archbishop Hilarion was appointed to preside over the Preliminary Committee for the Council whose first meeting is scheduled for February 8th in the same city.

The next meeting of Metropolitan Laurus' Synod is scheduled to be held in Munich in May, and the autumn meeting in Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville!

It seems that there is a tendency (started by Metropolitan Vitaly) to hold the meetings of Synods and Councils in any place, but never the former center of the ROCOR, in New York!

Most of the time Metropolitan Vitaly remained in Canada, and Metropolitan Laurus in general lives in Jordanville and comes to New York just on exceptional occasions!

SECRETARY OF THE ROCOR(L) SYNOD GUEST OF THE GENERAL CONSUL OF RF IN N.Y.

The official Internet publication of the ROCOR(L) Chancery has reported that "On January 12th of this year, at the invitation of the General Consul of the Russian Federation, S. D. Garmonin in New York and **Mercury, Bishop of Zaraisk, the Manager of Patriarchal parishes in USA, Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan, accompanied by Protopriest Andrew Sommer, Priest Seraphim Gan and Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov (from Holy Trinity Seminary)** visited the General Consulate in New York, where there was held a Christmas evening, during which the choir of the St. Nicholas Cathedral performed. (Underlined by "Ch. N.")

In the first part of the concert, church hymns were performed, while in the second part Russian national songs. Afterwards in the halls of the Consulate there was offered a lavish buffet where the guests were greeted in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Thus, His Grace the Secretary of the Synod of Metropolitan Laurus, disregarding his own convictions and the opinions of his optimistic friends that he is a strong opponent of the unification of Church Abroad with the MP, does not see any major disagreement between his own position and a reception at the invitation of the representatives of the MP and state administration in Russia!

A BIT ABOUT THE PRESIDENT OF ROCOR(L)'S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH MP COMMITTEE – ARCHBISHOP MARK

A journal of the German ROCOR(L) Diocese "Vestnik" # 6 for 2004 published some brief and vague information about the trip of Archbishop Mark to Moscow on November 2/15th to participate in the third meeting of the joint rapprochement committee of the ROCOR(L) and MP.

According to the journal, Archbishop Mark has "Already on Monday evening [the day of his arrival in Moscow, "Ch. N.], led a short conference with some members of the committee". (With which of them? Ch. N.)

Then there is a report about the meeting of Archbishop Mark with Serbian Patriarch Paul in Moscow and Bishop Amfilohije, who was accompanying him, and also about some public appearances of members of the Church Abroad committee.

There is also the information that "on Tuesday, in the second part of the day, the committee started work on deepening the offers worked out in New York for deliberation at the forthcoming round of negotiations with the committee of Moscow Patriarchate. The members of the committee, who came from abroad, were also joined by Priest Nicholas Savchenko from St. Petersburg. The conference lasted until late into the night.

On Wednesday our committee held one more meeting, before 9.30 PM when it met with the committee of the MP".

At noon, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, head of the Foreign Department Relations of the MP – who has the KGB code name of "Mikhailov" – invited the members of both committees for lunch, in order "to be able to give his own opinion of the present state of the discussions. **There he expressed various wishes regarding further actions... On Thursday evening there were already accepted and prepared many important documents, regarding the Declaration of Loyalty of 1927 and other mutually important matters, however, THE FINAL ACCEPTANCE OF THESE DOCUMENTS HAPPENED only on Friday morning**". (Underlined by "Ch. N.").

Following his own theory not to inform the faithful of the Church Abroad about the actual stages of his treachery, Archbishop Mark mentioned only the Sergianist matter in general, and "other mutually important matters", as to which ones – the faithful will have to guess for themselves!

On Friday morning all the members of the committee were present during the Liturgy in the Danilov Monastery, for the 15th anniversary of Metropolitan Kirill – "Mikhailov" – as head of the Department for Foreign Relations of the MP.

"**Archbishop Mark congratulated Metropolitan Kirill in the name of the members of his committee and thanked him for his lively interest in the work of committees and his support of their work.** During the reception, Metropolitan Kirill met with once more briefly with **members of our committee in the hall next to the one where the reception was taking place**, in order to receive information about the present state of discussions...". And most probably, to give them his very final instructions!

However, a minor disappointment regardless has reached Archbishop Mark!

According to official Internet information from the "Press Service of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church" of Metropolitan Laurus, in the section "News" of February 1st of this year, it was reported that "Various official websites in Russia, Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas while on a trip to Russia on Monday visited Danilov Monastery [the MP's administrative center, "Ch. N."] where he met with Patriarch Alexis II ["Drozdov" in the KGB, "Ch. N."]

According to this information, "**Over the course of their conversation, His Holiness the Patriarch expressed gratitude to the leadership of the Palestinian Authority for transferring to the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission of the Moscow Patriarchate, church property in Hebron and Jericho, which had been preserved and protected for many years by the Russian Church Abroad. In 1997, representatives of the Palestinian Authority forcibly ejected the monks and nuns belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia from the Holy Trinity Monastery in Hebron (who had been collecting fruit there that day) and turned it over to the Moscow Patriarchate**".

Patriarch Ridiger declared to the Palestinian representative: "**I presume that the time has come when it is legally necessary to secure this property in the name of the Mission** [of the ROC/MP – ed.]

The members of the negotiation committee have naively (?!) hoped that as a sign of reconciliation, the Moscow Patriarchate would return to the Church Abroad at least a part of the latter's property!

In his declaration, made to Paul Korobov, a correspondent of the newspaper "Commerzant" Archbishop Mark said: "I am very disappointed. For at the beginning of the process a declaration was made that we must refrain from any actions and statements that could insult the other side. And this is precisely such an action. We cannot remain silent before such a statement – this will turn our entire flock against the talks. But if this is a misunderstanding, a corresponding statement should be issued".

The editors of "Church News" see no "misunderstanding" in this case. Rather it is the final demonstration to the representatives of Metropolitan Laurus by the MP that the Moscow Patriarchate has won a victory in the negotiations, which are almost finished. The only thing is, as it often happens in such situations, the Moscow Patriarchate announced it a bit too prematurely!

However, according to Internet information from the agency NEWSru.com to the newspaper "Commerzant," the Archpriest of the MP, Nicholas Balashov (secretary of "Inter-religious Relations of the MP") has made a declaration regarding this matter: it happens that the mutual agreement to "refrain from any actions and statements that could insult another side" was made in August of 2004, by which time the property of the Church Abroad was already in MP hands. Therefore, according to Balashov, "We believe it necessary to avoid all new property disputes and to maintain the position attained at the beginning of the discussions, otherwise there will be no end to possible claims. Therefore, the present discussion with the Palestinian authorities on matters of legal documentation for the real estate presently being used by the Moscow Patriarchate, it seems, does not in any way threaten the negotiation process with the Church Abroad!"

"ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME"

According to an Internet report from the ROCOR(L) Chancery on February 8th the first meeting was held in San Francisco of the Preliminary to the Council Committee, chaired by Archbishop Hilarion of Sydney and Australia-New Zealand. Present were: Archbishop Kirill of San Francisco, the Secretary to the Synod of Bishops Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan, the rector of Washington parish, Archpriest Victor Potapov, the Secretary of the San Francisco Diocese, Archpriest Peter Perekrestov, the deputy principle of St. Cyril and Methodius High School Archpriest Yaroslav Belikov, Synod cathedral Priest Seraphim Gan and the conductor of San Francisco's cathedral choir V. V. Krassovsky..

Before start of the meeting Priest S. Gan served a moleben in the St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Church after which the meeting was opened in the diocesan library by Archbishop Hilarion. Archbishop Hilarion announced "some directions" of Metropolitan Laurus. He also appointed as a Secretary to this Pre-Conciliar Committee Archpriest Peter Perekrestov and offered to make a list of possible additional members from the laity, "will be presented for examination by the Synod of Bishops, which is scheduled for May in Munich". (All underlined by "Ch. N.").

"The main theme for the forthcoming Pan-Diaspora Council in San Francisco during the first half of the next year – is the matter of the possibility of establishing Eucharistic communion with the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and matters of inter-church life..."

The San Francisco meeting established two sub-committees: 1) regarding practical matters of organizing the 4-th Pan-Diaspora Council chaired by Archbishop Kirill and 2) for composing documents, based on former Councils and on the agenda for the forthcoming Council. The last sub-committee started its work the very next day.

All the mentioned participants in this meeting (except Bishop Gabriel) are convinced adherents of unification of the former Church Abroad with the Moscow Patriarchate.

ABOUT CONTEMPORARY "PROPHECIES"

It has been known for quite some time (especially after the Revolution in Russia) that there are persons who support their own fantasies – in order to give them the necessary credibility – with "prophecies" of renowned Church Saints.

Thus, we know of the widely published "prophecy of St. Seraphim of Sarov" in which, before the end of the world, the Angels will take down the bells from the St. John Bell Tower in Moscow and will deliver them to Sarov! Question: to what purpose?

Especially numerous are the "prophecies" about the future of Russia ascribed to St. John of Kronstadt.

And now, there appears a supposed "prophecy" about the future of the Church Abroad in name of St. Philaret Metr. of N.Y, the New Confessor, published on the Internet by Mr. Cherkassov-Georgiyevsky in Moscow.

In it is reported that "Metropolitan Philaret uttered this **two weeks before his repose** [emphasis in the original, "Ch. N."] in English [?!] slightly slurred in style because of illness, but clear in its sense. In this letter the English text is given, and also the translation into Russian, made by the person who sent it. We publish the translation into Russian of this prophesy.

"After my death, our beloved Church Abroad will split into three paths... First, the Greeks will leave us, because they never were the members of our Church... Then those who do live for this world and its glory, will depart for Moscow... Those who will remain, will be those whose souls will be faithful to Christ and his Church".

Then Mr. Cherkassov interprets the "prophecy" as referring to "those whose souls will be faithful" as the adherents of Metropolitan Vitaly.

This fantastic "prophecy" puts on guard those who were fortunate to know Metropolitan Philaret closely. First of all, he communicated in English with great difficulty, and besides he loved the Greeks very much and, especially the Boston Monastery. Under no conditions would St. Philaret ever say that "the Greeks... never were part of our Church". It would be interesting to know who needs to spread such lies about St. Philaret and for what purpose?

BISHOP BARNABAS DOES NOT CALM DOWN

The main violator of the canons and the basic reason for schisms abroad as well as in Russia, Bishop Barnabas has again come forward publicly, by publishing on the Internet site of "Portal Credo.ru" his "Sorrowful Declaration" of February 11th.

Attacking the actions of the "Mansonville Synod's chancery," Bishop Barnabas laments that "Fr. Victor Pivovarov, who makes his signature as a hierarch, in his never ending works reaches the conclusion that 'our clergy offer the devil's table, and not the communion and the sacraments'... In developing this 'dogmatic statement', the sick Synodal intriguers totally seriously have decided to appoint someone like this to minister to our cathedral uninvited!"

"Therefore," writes Bishop Barnabas, "for our flock, as well as for those people who have remained sensible, who take pains over ecclesiastical truth, we feel it necessary once more to declare the following:

We consider Vladyka Metropolitan VITALY to be our First Hierarch under whose spiritual and fraternal omophorion we remain with affection.

We appeal to all to treat any documents which supposedly come in the name of the Metropolitan with extreme caution".

Then he quotes a paragraph from Nativity Epistle of Metropolitan Vitaly from 2002, in which he warns that he might be abducted (and who needs him now?)

After this there is the information that "the so-called Mansonville Synod, which has demonstrated its complete lack of grounds and its extremely uncanonical conduct of affairs, we do not acknowledge in any way and whose decisions we do not recognize. With disgust we read various publications of those who pretend to be followers of "Vitaly" and who in this way harm the good name of the Metropolitan and who disgrace the name of our Church and our emigration".

This declaration is signed: "Archbishop Barnabas, January 27th/February 9th, 2005. St. John Chrysostom". Source: Western-European Herald

The reference to the epistle of Metropolitan Vitaly is interesting: in the beginning of the 90's some persuaded Metropolitan Vitaly to visit Russia, but his irreplaceable secretary L. D. Rosniansky insistently told him that he would be murdered or poisoned, even on the airplane; this was the reason why the Metropolitan began to refuse invitations to eat with even his own clergy well know to him.

The indignation of Bishop Barnabas against Fr. Victor Pivovarov also is interesting, since according to material published in the Internet by Cherkassov-Georgievsky of February 11th 2005, Bishop Barnabas gave him a splendid recommendation as a candidate for episcopal consecration in his letter to Metropolitan Vitaly of April 1/14th 2003, and on May 3/16th of the same year, at the meeting of the "Bishops' Council" of Metropolitan Vitaly, the very same Bishop Barnabas has reported that he himself consecrated Pivovarov and again, highly praised him!

But the Synod of Metropolitan Vitaly, on numerous occasions had published on the Internet documents (with his signature) first that he has suspended Bishop Barnabas, and then defrocked him!

This in no way prevents Bishop Barnabas from considering the signatures of Metropolitan Vitaly to be fraudulent! However, if Bishop Barnabas were to recognize his being defrocked by the Metropolitan – his whole affair would collapse. And this person has the courage, not to use a bit stronger expression – to speak about the canons, which he has violated from the moment he became a bishop!

GLOBALIST MASONIC ECUMENISM OF SERBIAN CHURCH

The official publication of the Serbian Church, the magazine "Pravoslavlje" ("Orthodoxy") published on December 15th 2004 information, signed by Bishop Irenej of Bachka entitled: "Appeal for Brotherly Collaboration" about the conference that took place in Bechej, and in which the Roman Catholic, Reformed Christian and Slovak churches participated.

The Conference was held from November 22nd to 24th of last year. Bishop Irinej, who has signed this report "in the name of the participants of the Conference" – quotes 8 jointly accepted points.

Point 1 states that 'Christian Churches which have gathered for this conference call for the brotherly fruitful dialogue and brotherly cooperation, which they themselves traditionally observe; all their personnel and establishments which feel the need and have possibilities to make a contribution to the confessional, cultural and international collaboration among peoples and nations. At the same time, the participants of the conference challenge all bearers of various duties within the Church as well as all their faithful to be faithful to their Christian obedience and to encourage mutual dialogue and collaboration in the spheres of their associations". (Underlined by "Ch. N.")

Point 2 confirms that, "Having in view the fact that the process of integration of the European nations is basically developing by means of economic and political presuppositions, we remind all of the historical and spiritual truth that Christianity is the source and inspiration of unity of Europe. Following this, the Christian Churches of the East and West are the witnesses and carriers of basics of European Nations. Without the genuine spiritual revival of Christian values, the agreement and unity of various nations, traditions and costumes of Europe cannot be established. The distinguishing

characteristic of the European essence is a triptych – Jerusalem – Athens – Rome, in another words the Christian faith, Greek model of culture and Roman sense of right and truth. We share the confidence that Europe consists not only of the nations of the European Union of Western and Middle Europe, but that Europe is a great open continent and a spiritual concept”.

Point 3 states that “In the unity of religion, nation and culture of Serbia, above all in the region of Vojvodina, we see the unity of Europe in microcosm and our responsibility for the process of integration”.

Point 4 says that “We declare that those who believe that their own nationality, religion and culture can develop in isolation are wrong, as well as those who believe that to adhere to the family of democratic nations of Europe one must renounce one’s own identity and heritage”.

The 5th point says that the conference, “Being conscious that the Church and ecclesiastical life are based upon love toward God and neighbor, we call upon all the Christians and all people of good will to reexamine own consciences and responsibility for actual love for their neighbor, which is superior to ordinary tolerance. A Christian lives not next to others, or by himself, but for other human beings, because in each man, regardless of the skin color and the social position, he sees the image of God and in it he loves his god-like brother or sister. From such positions we condemn all kinds of violence and extremism, such as: anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and others”.

The 6th point states that “We remain truthful to the values of which contemporary Europe is proud like the movements which represent the dignity of persons, peace and common justice”.

The 7th point declares that “We are conscious that we remain truthful to the precious values of the centuries-old Church art, which have found their expression at this conference and we are ready to offer to society support and help in resolving the concrete problems, such as the rights of minorities, bioethics, economic and social divisions and threats to active cooperation and the like”.

The 8th and last point declares that “The Gospel principals and the expectations of the faithful people of God, give us the right to expect and demand the possibility of an open and effective inclusion of Christians in the process of the decisions of the society in which we live. We Christians believe that we have the right and the obligation, similar to other citizens, to make use of the mechanisms of public action, to be able to utilize them in the general welfare. And we declare that we consider it necessary to give the Churches the opportunity to witness to themselves and their missions through the media in the contemporary world”.

As a reader might have noticed, the Serbian “Orthodox” bishop, as an important representative at the heretical gathering – has not a single word in mention of Orthodoxy! Instead, all the time he talks about the “United Europe,” which for more than 3 years cannot include in its constitution a paragraph that Europe has Christian roots. It would be interesting to find out, what Masonic degree and to which lodge does Bishop Irinej belong, because the whole conference is saturated with typically Masonic principles!

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE AND THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT

“Ecumenical News International” reports in its #1 issue that the Turkish court has acquitted the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I in the complaint filed by the local Bulgarian parish in Istanbul (Constantinople).

The Bulgarian parish claimed that on December 20, 2004, the Patriarch and 11 members of his Synod dismissed Priest Konstantin Kostov, for his refusal to commemorate him during the services and also to serve in Greek. As is well known, the Ecumenical Patriarchate pretends to be the only spiritual power in Turkey, and where possible, even much farther.

The Bulgarian priest insisted that his parish is in direct obedience to the Bulgarian Patriarch Maxim because that Church split from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1840.

In addition to the correct decision of the court, the Orthodox have very valid reasons to complain. For example, the newspaper of the Serbian Patriarchate “Pravoslavlje” of January 1st & 15th, wrote that “the Turkish authorities continue to act against the Constantinople Patriarchate”.

For 22 years in a row, either the Patriarch himself or the hierarch designated by him, on the day of commemoration of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (December 6th) went to the city Kochadarm, former Myra-Lycea in order to serve the Divine Liturgy in the St. Nicholas basilica where the relics of the Saint had been, which in 1087 were brought to Bari.

This year, the governor of the Anatolia region, without any explanation, has forbidden the Patriarch to come. According to Patriarchate, at the present time in this area there live no Christians or Jews, but it is a small tourist location.

When challenged, the governor replied that the reason for the denial was that no application for it was filed for a permit to serve there, but if he received one, certainly the permit would be granted. Previously, no permit was necessary.

HEAD OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH CHRISTODULOS DOESN'T GO TO ROME

According to the official publication of the Serbian Orthodox Church “Pravoslavlje” for January 1 and 15th, in Athens, in the beginning of October, 2004, there was the Bishops’ Council presided over by Archbishop Christodulos. At the meeting there was also discussed the invitation of the Archbishop by the Lateran University in Rome to come and receive an honorary doctorate.

At the meeting Metropolitan Kalinikos of Pireya stood up and said that the Greek Church in no way needs something like that, and it is impossible "to put on the peoples' shoulders one more problem". Then Archbishop Christodulos asked the brethren to think over whether they want to have a left-behind and marginalized Church or a lively one, contributing to contemporary issues?"

After the secret vote regarding the Vatican matter, out of 62 bishops present, 42 were against, 14 agreed and 6 abstained.

The editors of "Pravoslavlje" came to the conclusion that the Greek Church does not trust Vatican because of the open propaganda of Catholicism, proselytism and Uniates in the Eastern Europe and Middle East, as well as the Vatican's policy of confrontation in the Balkans. According to this information, when the Greek Church in May of 2001 refused to invite the Pope, this was done by the government, which treated the Pope only as the head of the sovereign "state" of Vatican.

ABOUT OLD AND NEW CALENDAR GREEK GROUPS

A Greek newspaper published in English "The National Herald" of February 12th has published some details of Metropolitan Paisios' story, which became a sensation in the end of 1990's when he, being officially an Old Calendar bishop has unexpectedly "repented" together with his associate bishop Vikentios and joined the New Calendarist Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew II. At that time the "Genuine Orthodox Christian Church" had about 20 bishops in USA. Its center was the monastery of St. Irene Chrysovalantou in Astoria, NY

A reporter was interested: how does Metropolitan Paisios feel after he has joined the New Calendarists. He declared: "These have been seven blessed years, filled with heavenly blessings. We have been blessed by the Lord to belong to the Mother Church, to serve it and to be its humble hierarchs".

When he was asked how could he be for so many years a member of the Greek "Genuine Orthodox Christian Church", Paisios replied that he himself cannot understand it. "We were part of endless ecclesiological and ecclesiastical positions". Metropolitans Paisios and Vikentios have said that they were forced to join the New Calendarists, when they got tired of endless squabbles and discords in the Old Calendarist groups. He also said that the Old Calendarist movement in the beginning was a pious movement, but has gradually lost these qualities and became the groups of opportunists.

Paisios believes that at present there are at least 13 Greek groups of "Genuine Orthodox Christians".

At the same time he noticed that the Bulgarians, Russians and Mt. Athos monks do not split and "have always maintained their communion with the Mother Church".

The New Calendarists have persuaded Paisios and Vikentios that the Old Calendarists have no apostolic succession and had them re-tensured and re-ordained!

JEWES AND THE POPE

The newspaper "The Jewish Press" of January 14th reports that a delegation of 150 rabbis and cantors went to the Vatican to personally thank the Pope for his good relations toward the Jews.

Just recently, the Vatican agreed to loan to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem a number of rare documents for the 40th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Gary Krupp, a founder of the "Pave the Way Foundation" said that this is a "gesture of goodwill that will go a long way". In his opinion, the Vatican has "the largest repository of Jewish writings in the world".

The negotiations about the loan to the Israel Museum have been underway for more than two years. Among the valuable documents there is a manuscript of the Torah, from the year 1293, as well as the work of a very famous rabbi Maimonides the Mishneh Torah, dated from 1400.

One of the important members of the Foundation, Rabbi Benjamin Belch has suggested that the Museum might ask the Pope for return of the menorah, which is believed to have belonged to the Second Temple (from the times of Christ the Savior), but then he reconsidered. "We were advised that to bring up the menorah to them -- brings all conversation to a close", said Rabbi Belch. Vatican has always denied they have this menorah.

Rabbi Krupp said that the delegation will warmly thank the Pope for his close relations with the Jews. Besides, "the Pope has visited the camp of Auschwitz, and also has lifted the long standing restrictions for Catholics to visit the synagogues.

The Jewish historians and social leaders never mention that among the numerous victims of Nazis in this camp -- there were not only the Jews, but majority of them were Russian, Ukrainians, Gypsies and even Poles!

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS:

Announcement of the President of the ROCOR Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Philaret of May 29th/June 11th 1979 # 11/35/170

The nomination of Archimandrite Gregory to be Bishop of Manhattan was held on Friday, April 28th/May 11th 1979 in the Synod Cathedral of the Holy Virgin of the Sign, and the consecration performed on the following day. The planned celebration was announced on the previous meeting of the Synod and this information was sent to all the hierarchs on March 21st/April 3rd, more than a month ahead.

Before the Synod Meeting, on April 27th/May 10th Archimandrite Gregory (Grabbe), now bishop, presented to me the anonymous letter, as well as letters by Misters Vysokovsky and Voytzechovsky and a letter by Archpriest Znosko (addressed to Fr. Gregory) expressing their protests against his consecration. Mr. Vysokovsky everywhere creates complications and is unwanted in the parishes in which he used to attend, therefore his declaration (the more so for being anonymous) cannot be taken into consideration.

More important were the verbal declarations of Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco and the letter by Bishop Laurus in the name of Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago. On the last day a telegram from Archbishops Anthony of Los Angeles and Anthony of San Francisco, as well as from Bishops Nectary, Laurus and Constantine was received.

The letter of Bishop Laurus expressed the thought that the nomination of Fr. Gregory, supposedly, according to a referendum among all the hierarchs, violated the principle of collegiality and our act was considered by him as equal to the non-conciliar action of Moscow's Metropolitan Sergius.

Regarding the last argument, I can say that, as should be known to any person with a theological education, namely: a written opinion poll among all the hierarchs has power equal to a Council. This was NOT done by Metropolitan Sergius. It also has to be kept in mind, that the councilor resolution, made in the autumn has only postponed the matter of consecration of Fr. Gregory, but not rejected it. The opinion poll among the hierarchs was made in accord with members of the Synod, and there was only one objection against this method in general. But now, some hierarchs have expressed their objections at the last minute, under the influence of propaganda, and at it – clearly of a slanderous character, based upon the false witness of the Pretender, and in no way takes into account the refutations made long ago by His Grace Bishop Gregory. However, it has to be taken into consideration that all these accusations were presented to Bishop Gregory 14 years ago and at that time he made his explanations to the Synod and the Council. Also, he has made numerous refutations in the press. And in regards to the public, these matters were forgotten long ago by all, except a few of his enemies. One can see how the opinion of the public has changed about Bishop Gregory from the fact that at a meeting on Palm Sunday, various organizations under the presidency of the Ataman of the Don, Fedorov, unanimously elected Fr. George Grabbe (at that time a protopresbyter) who, by the way, was not even present at this meeting, to be a honorary president over a number of organizations united in order to protest the dismembering of Russia.

On other had, at the meeting of the Synod 14 priests of our diocese as well as numerous representatives of various organizations came in support of our election of Bp Gregory to episcopal rank, when they heard that there is some opposition to it. They warned us against giving in to non-church elements and assured us that the consecration will happen quite peacefully.

I, as the First Hierarch was faced with a dilemma: should I follow the belated objections of a few bishops, or follow the previously made decision? The protests came in so late, that the consecration was already reported to the media, all was ready including the trapeza, the clergy expected it and had planned to come from far away parishes. One of the hierarchs, who wrote an objection, in a letter to Archimandrite Gregory wrote that it was probably already too late.

Fr. Gregory humbly has placed himself under my obedience. However, knowing the local situation, I could not but feel apprehension that the revocation of his consecration only two days or even less before the fixed time would create misunderstandings, scandal and the loss of my authority as First Hierarch, while the life of the Synod Cathedral and House would come to a total catastrophe. The clergymen and employees of the Chancery, being offended for him, would leave, and probably, we would remain with no daily services and with no office. From my conversations with some of employees, I became convinced that this is not an empty threat. Sharing my apprehensions, Fr. Gregory, however has readily offered to do whatever he was advised to do and has handed to me a written declaration with a request to postpone the consecration in case I felt it necessary. One cannot but notice that at present moment it would be especially inconvenient. If this had been done at the time, when I informed the hierarchs about the decision of performing the consecration, then it might have created some inconvenience, but not as serious as at this moment. All of this was not known or not taken into the consideration on part of the protesting hierarchs, who as it seems, were basing their opinions upon false information about the supposed outrage. Of course, the matter would not be so complicated as now, were it not for the important position of Bishop Gregory in the Church. In is common knowledge that the attacks of the Soviets in the media upon our Church Aborad are upon him as the main enemy. His name is widely known in Orthodox and heterodox church world as that of our theoretician, not to mention his many years of service to the three Metropolitans: that alone puts him in quite special situation. The revocation of his consecration therefore, would be an act of tremendous importance and could be accepted by outsiders as a denial of the position of our Church and an intention to revise it.

There is also another sad side to the matter, which, probably was not taken into consideration by those members of the Synod who refused to come to the meeting. No matter how they might vote, their not arriving is hard to reconcile with the canonical obligation to participate in the Synod meetings (which are a small Council) at the summons of the Metropolitan, which each of us had to swear to do, when we took the Episcopal oath (Canon 40 of Laodicia Council, 19 of IV Ecumenical Council and 8 of the VI Ecumenical Council).

Recently we did hear the warnings about the possibility of a supposed schism, that I consider to be a blasphemy against our episcopate and a wish on part the enemies of our Church to sow seeds of dissension.

Even if the above-mentioned hierarchs, members of the Synod, disagreed with the election of Fr. Gregory to bishop, nevertheless, they were obliged to come, participate in the Synod meeting and depart before the consecration, if the election of the named person was not to their taste. In this manner, the strike was made not so much against Fr. Gregory, but at me, as President of the Synod, and thus also against the entire Church. And I cannot but notice that the hierarchs

mainly referred to a possible disapproval by the people, while they themselves have presented no accusations of Fr. Gregory and just recently have unanimously elected him Secretary of the Synod.

Alas, there was no objective basis to deny the consecration, but there was intimidation with the possibility of scandal and this cannot be a canonical reason for any decision in Church life. The most important and sad thing is that the reason for the concern of the hierarchs were mainly based on anonymous accusations, or slanders, which were voiced by such strange people in the Church as the Pretender and his collaborators.

Mr. Vysokovsky was not ashamed to include to his protest a rude and slanderous comment against me personally, as the President of the Synod, from a little known publication of the Pretender. This shows by itself, what kind of people have turned against Bishop Gregory. In general, I have to note with sadness, that I never expected such a reaction to the consecration of such deserving and long standing servant of the Church on part of our episcopate. What happened to our unity and defense of each other from the enemies of the Church?

Nevertheless, I have reported all of this in detail to the members of the Synod. Upon studying the actual situation, and especially after listening to representatives of the clergy and public organizations, they agreed with me about the impossibility of not holding the consecration. As was said above, the lateness of protests written to His Grace Bishop Gregory by His Eminence Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, when he greeted him at the consecration, although he admitted that he voted against his election.

As acknowledgment of the correctness of our decision was the presence of many people at the rite of the nomination of Bishop Gregory and a packed church on his consecration, despite it being a work day, for which 22 priests and 6 deacons came, some of them from far away. I do not know if there were that many priests at any other consecration. We did not hear a single protesting voice, despite the threats.

Nevertheless, I felt it necessary to send detailed information to all the Hierarchs, so that no one would fall victim to disinformation. + Metropolitan Philaret

ENCLOSURES: Copy of resolution of the Synod of Bishops of April 27th/May 10th, 1979

Copy of declaration of Archimandrite Gregory and copy of declarations of the clergy.

Addition by the Editors of "Church News": On the day of consecration of Bishop Gregory, one hour before the start of Liturgy **Archbishop Vitaly of Canada** showed up in his apartment with the demand that the consecration be stopped, in view of the scandal which might happen. He was shown an issue of the newspaper "Novoye Russkoye Slovo" ("New Russian Word") in which on the first page was information about the consecration and photograph of Archimandrite Gregory. Archbishop Vitaly expressed his concern and regret that the newspaper rushed ahead with this information, but decided that it is too late to do something. On the same day, this particular issue was delivered to the Synod of Bishops and on the photograph of Bishop Gregory there were horns painted in red ink!

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, of May 4/17 1979

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko!

I believe that by now you already know that you were troubled for no reason by warnings of possible disorders during my consecration. We here understood that you were troubled by such information, although the fact of anonymity by itself pointed to weakness of its authors. The participation in this of Vysokovsky, for our public here was proof not only of weakness, but also of corruption, for such is his reputation.

I also hope that the information has reached Your Eminence that when the Metropolitan decided not to postpone the consecration, he had in view the fact that the local diocesan clergy and a more wide public definitely disagreed with the trouble-makers, who having no other means, hoped to intimidate the hierarchs. It seems, that the church circles and our society have in no way participated in this action. Just the opposite; they were with me. For example, on Palm Sunday there was a meeting to organize a demonstration against efforts to dismember Russia, and I was in absentia unanimously elected honorary President.

However, only the one sided agitation was reaching you and I understand that you were worried, especially when receiving the warnings from the Synod building. [*Explanation by the Editors of "Ch. N.":* The cell attendant of Metropolitan Philaret, Protodeacon Nikita Chakirov, developed a extensive activities against the consecration of Bishop Gregory, whom he hated for exposing him at the Synod and Council meetings as a crook]. I do not know if you were informed that as soon as it became known that you were striving to stop my consecration, 14 priests gathered in a hurry who came to the Synod and asked not be complied with. 21 priests came to the consecration, in other words, more than to any other previous consecration. Among the 14 priests there were all the members of the diocesan Council and a majority of senior clergy.

This is something not visible from San Francisco, and I am partly ready to understand that the propaganda against me provoked your disquiet.

Vladyka Metropolitan has told me that he will write a detailed statement to all the hierarchs. I certainly new that people from circles of bad quality wanted to foil the ordination, and probably Soviet agents. However, after the conversation with you, and wishing to give the Metropolitan a free choice in making this or that decision, I have written him a declaration that I will accept it, no matter what it might be and will support it. Practically, I had in mind, that due to the short time, in case

the consecration were rescinded, still there might be many people and then I would try to calm them and as much as possible support the decision of Vladyka.

I realize that my consecration has caused you a lot of worries. I very much regret it and ask your pardon and at the same time, that you treat me with the same love, which I feel towards you, being always ready to accept your suggestions and advice from a senior in the hierarchy.

I very well understand, that votes might be pro or con any candidate. Therefore I have no grudge against any one who voted against my candidacy, but I sincerely hope that it all meant something only before the consecration, even much so, since I know that the motive to vote against me came from the threat of a "scandal". I such hope I am strengthened by the brotherly letter of Vladyka Anthony of Los Angeles, who didn't hide from me that he voted against me, but now, since it is already late to make any changes, he has greeted me as a friend.

I am enclosing a copy of my nomination speech and diligently ask for your love and holy prayers and remain truly yours in Christ + Bishop Gregory

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Mark of April 29th/ May 11th, 1994

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko!

Unfortunately, you are right in the matter of some non-conciliar decisions. But I would consider it to be a mistake, to acknowledge the act of reception of Bishop Valentine and his parishes as not valid, because it would be a great scandal for the faithful and would be a strong blow against the return to the faith in Russia.

I have to admit that it was just recently, that I have paid attention to the Council's decree of long standing, which does restrict our activity to Abroad only. Strictly speaking, in order to regulate this situation, there should be made some changes in the paragraphs of the Statutes of the ROCOR. But sometimes some acts permitted until reviewed, which it is no longer possible to revoke or change, without afflicting the faithful and creating more scandal. My at times indulgence of the Russian hierarchs relates more to understanding the whole situation in the face of the godless [threat].

The Patriarchal Decree of November 7/20, 1920, tried to foresee all possible cases that could be imagined, in case of stopping the persecutions, even up to an outside bishop taking power in order to restore ecclesiastical body destroyed by the persecution.

Bishop Valentin has tried to adhere to the Patriarchal decree of 1920 only when our Synod, in forgetting about this ukase for many months (up to two years), was not able to make a certain decision and simply didn't reply to questions and appeals of the Russian hierarchs.

I saw that in Russia there are needed bishops from the local places, who know better than we from abroad do, their people and the situation in general.

Willy-nilly Bishops Lazarus and Valetin were forced to rely upon the Patriarchal decree of 1920.

Certainly, it would be better if they would wait a bit in order to coordinate their action with the Synod, but the work was growing, while the uncertainty was more hard to bear. Their attractiveness is growing and even involved clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Right now one should think not about formalities, but about the people who have left the Patriarchate. And, on our part, I see no concern about them. The document of 1920 gave an answer to a critical question: what to do? While the growing parishes began to experience impatience.

I am surprised that the Metropolitan does not value them, while dreaming, under the influence of Bishop Barnabas, about the liquidation of Bishop Valentin. I know you also do not like him. But for us it is not so much his personality that is important, but the clergy and people who **through him** came to our Church. I am surprised by the total indifference toward them. And at the same time there is good information from Bishops Laurus and Daniel, who have seen them.

Here I have seen quite a bit a one of the most valuable of the Moscow archpriests – Michael Ardiv. He is not old, educated, talented writer and has a parish in Moscow.

In opposition to him, our Synod has sent Archpriest Theodore Fedorov as his representative. He is a good man and believing, but suffers from hard drinking, with untidy appearance and, in addition to the task of organizing the Synodal representation in Moscow, has a commercial business selling church equipment!

So what is expedient for us to do?

Turn away more than a hundred parishes with not so old but devoted clergy? Create a new schismatical clergy? Who will benefit by this?

We didn't know how to accommodate this flock new for us; so is it healthy now to push them into schism?

We are afraid to loose control over the Russian flock, but it is time we get used to the thought that we are not able to rule the Russian parishes and to let them go into a special autonomous district. We can influence the Russian District, but not rule over it, just as Russians could not rule over the Church Abroad. A certain control meanwhile might be practiced by common Councils. At present, the difference between us is big, but with time, due to mutual communication, it would change.

Speaking about... indulgence and "the advantages of Russians".

Tell me, Vladyko, do you know of such one on the level with example of Bishop Barnabas?

Bishop Valentin was by us, one can say, persecuted, although he has never committed any crimes against us, while Bishop Barnabas was sent to Jerusalem for three months, despite numerous canonical crimes, which call for defrocking

him. To that was added his communication with the Ukrainian self-ordained person in the name of our Synod of Bishops. For some reason he enjoys the protection of the First Hierarch who, according to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is **obliged** to watch over the adherence to the canons. Read the 24th paragraph of this Statute. Was this observed?

The infractions similar to those of Bishop Barnabas are not even mentioned as possible by Bishop Valentin, who has gathered a whole diocese from clergy who turned away from the Moscow Patriarchate.

Until the very recent times, that is until the putting into practice the Patriarchal Decree, Bishop Valentin was scrupulously obedient to the Metropolitan, who visibly offended him at the suggestion of Bishop Barnabas.

I have raised a matter of suing Bishop Barnabas for committing the canonical transgressions which he himself has admitted. But, instead of suing him, he got three months vacation in the Holy Land, truly with no right to serve. Any one of his transgressions by themselves, calls for his defrocking.

So, where is the justice and in what do you see indulgence regarding the Russian Hierarchs?

Believe me, Vladyko, I have thought much about our problems and from various sides and I am afraid that we are going toward a wrong course, which might lead toward more confusions and schism.

That is what now I see, dear Vladyko, on a level with many transgressions of the Metropolitan himself, but of which you are informed from the copy of my letter to him.

How to fix it? I believe not by the vindictive methods of Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles at any rate, but by the opposite, by love, and understanding the problem.

I would be grateful to receive your opinion.

I would be also very glad to meet with you before the Council. Maybe, on your way to California you could stop to meet with me. I live a half hour ride from New York.

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

P. S. It would not be difficult for us to meet you and escort you and have you stay overnight.

Letter by Bishop Gregory to Leonid Yuryevich (last name unknown) from 1991

Truly Christ is Risen,

Dear Leonid Yuryevich;

Pardon me for answering your Paschal greeting to me with such delay. Several times I have attempted to write to you, but always something got in the way of my intentions. Besides, sometimes I am overcome by the slowness of old age. However, more than once I prayerfully remembered you and wished you a joyous Pascha. Certainly, the well-being of the present moment does not mean all this will last for years. The events around us are very troubling, especially in Russia itself. Our children there live through many difficulties and overt persecutions. However, during this period, one of our parishes was violently closed in Moscow, while another, meanwhile exists. Officially, according to law, there is freedom of religion in Russia, but in practice the registration of the parishes is made extremely difficult and we have to scream for help. But the free world believes in the official version about the freedom of religion. But I would not be surprised when this present "free" world will begin to persecute. More and more we read about the arrival of the "new world" in which, in addition to the unity of humanity will also come the unity of religion.

For us the nearest upcoming danger is the approaching Catholicism. The Pope has some sort of agreement with Gorbachev. At present the Pope installs new bishops for various parts of Russia, predominately the Western. After this there is planned a visit by him to Russian regions. But most certainly, the main danger is in the establishment of the "new world" of which our president speaks more and more. According to Jewish and Catholic information, something decisive is to happen next year.

But certainly, these threats for the future do not have fixed and known exact times. Therefore we have to labor independently of them. I was glad to make a trip to Brussels for the consecration of the Suzdal bishop Valentin, a daring and enterprising man. There were a lot of obstacles to his consecration, which very much troubled the Patriarchate. The KGB agents even came to our Synod. Some, at the beginning had reason to hope for success. Two or three have tried to become bishops.

At the same time with the propaganda of the "new world", there grows also the opposite literature. One day I received from the author one such reference book, about which I will add information on its publication. This two-volumed reference book is very interesting.

May the Lord's blessing be with you

+ Bishop Gregory