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CHRIST IS RISEN!

THE EDITORS OF CHURCH NEWS WISH THAT ALL OUR DEAR READERS ON THE BRIGHT DAYS OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST MAY MEET THIS GREAT FEAST WITH SPIRITUAL JOY, GOOD HEALTH AND PROSPERITY.

WE ALSO WISH TO THANK OUR READERS FOR THE GREETINGS WE HAVE RECEIVED FOR THE FEAST OF FEASTS AND REPLY WITH A JOYOUS: TRULY CHRIST IS RISEN!

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FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS

CHURCH NEWS

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Paschal Epistle of
Valentine

Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir,
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church
To Our beloved Brother Archpastors, Reverend Priests and Monastics,
and to the entire God-loving flock of the Russian Orthodox Church
My dearly beloved Archpastors, Pastors, Brothers and Sisters,
Christ is Risen!

"Let us celebrate the demise of death..."
"...the never-ending beginning of another life..."
(from the Paschal Canon)

Tonight, my dearly beloved, on this most radiant of nights, we have come to the "fullness of time." The centuries pass by, one generation gives way to the next, the elements of the earth rage on in storm after storm, and historic earthquakes come and go, leaving death, destruction, and tears in their wake, but the bright feast of the Christ's Resurrection remains eternally alive. Almost two thousand years have passed since the moment that this central, key event in human history took place. The world has changed completely since that time, but evil and injustice have done nothing but increase. Only the Good News that our Lord has trampled down death and evil, has raised our forefather, Adam, and with him, our common ancestor and progenitor of the human race, gave eternal and blessed life to all of us. Only this Good News shall never grow old and cease to be current.

The carnal man is subject to suffering and death because his physical nature, the result of sin, has lost its life force. Even our very material nature itself, in its outward form, is a result of Adam's having fallen into sin. As it says in one of the prayers of the Lenten Triodion, "Sin has sewn me cloaks of skin." That which is the fruit of sin cannot have God as the source of its existence, and is therefore doomed to die. God is the only source of life, of being, and so all that is not connected with this Source is doomed to death and non-being. Everything that is outside of God will, sooner or later, cease its transparent, illusive existence. The Lord was speaking about this temporary and crude materialistic body of ours when He said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." (cf. Gen. 3:19).

It was not for this that God created man. As He Himself tells us in His Book of Revelation, the Lord created man in order for him to share in the joy and blessedness of His divine life. According to the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, "God became man, so that man might become God." The triumph of Pascha, the beginning of which is symbolized by the revesting of the church and of the clergy in bright vestments during Vespers on Holy Saturday, was anticipated by the Psalmist when he addressed the New Israel, the Church of Christ, saying, "I said: Ye are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High." (Ps.81:6). These are the very words that are read in church while it is being revested into paschal vestments.

Opening up the kingdom of God to us, making us participants in His divine life, in His unfathomable perfection and goodness, the Lord Himself experiences the most extreme measure of suffering that is possible upon the earth. Think about this a little bit, my dears; in order to reestablish our fallen and corrupted nature, which fell not by God's will, but by our own sinful self will, the Lord is crucified upon the cross and undergoes a shameful death. The way to blessedness, for all of us, consists in extreme suffering on the part of God. In order to open Paradise to those who have sinned, "This Man Who hath done nothing amiss" (Lk. 23:41) endures a most horrible punishment. Shouldn't this alone be enough to warm our stony hearts and fill us with feelings of fearful love and gratitude for our Creator and Redeemer?

In the magnificent prophecy of Ezekiel about the general resurrection from the dead (Ez. chap. 37), which is read at Vespers on Holy Saturday, it says that at the second coming of Christ, all of the dead will rise bodily in order to stand before the universal Last Judgment. Our bodies then will not be like our present crude materialistic bodies. After the resurrection, our bodies will have a fine, spiritualized quality, and will not be fettered by the physical laws of nature governing time and space. They will not hinder us from seeing God "face to face" as only great saints are worthy of doing while still on earth. They will truly be bodies of the "age to come;" glorified, incorrupt, and having a share in the divine existence. Let us suppress and limit our present earthly bodies, with their vain and temporal demands, in order that our souls might be better prepared for receiving such new and incorrupt bodies at the general resurrection of the dead. The bliss of that life in the age to come is given by the Lord without price, in accordance with His graciousness. The joy of Pascha is a prefiguration of this happiness, which the Lord also gives us freely on this radiant night. The more deeply and acutely we experience this joy, the longer it abides within us, the more prepared our souls are to meet God. The Psalmist and King David, in this grace-filled condition, cried out, "Ready is my heart, O God, ready is my heart," (Ps.56:8). This joy is a foretaste of future bliss and must be preserved carefully by guarding one's self from sin, doing deeds of righteousness, holding one's tongue from idle talking, and filling one's mind and heart with unceasing prayer.

True paschal joy cannot be diminished by any adversities arising from earthly circumstances. Nevertheless, we are obligated by love, as Christians, to remember at this triumphant moment, those of our brethren who are presently in need and are undergoing persecution for the name of Christ. Almost ninety years have passed since that terrible day when such horrible persecutions as had never before been seen in the history of Christianity were let loose against the Church of Russia by the godless atheists. Ever since that day, we have not ceased from praying "for all those who are persecuted or who are suffering for the holy Orthodox Faith," and the petition for the most holy Patriarch, whose cathedra has been

unoccupied since 1925, was replaced by commemorating "the Orthodox episcopate of the persecuted Russian Church." Such prayers are far from being outmoded even today. Persecutions and suffering for the holy Orthodox Faith are the reality of our times in Russia, and in several other countries. These persecutions continue in spite of the fact that the official authorities maintain that there is a "spiritual renaissance" taking place amongst the people, and in spite of the fact that they finance the building of churches and support in every possible way the so-called Moscow Patriarchate, which was established during the heyday of atheism in 1943. The more support that is shown to this organization, which grows ever closer and closer to the official authorities, but ever further and further away from true Orthodoxy, the less that there remains of true freedom of conscience and equality of the faithful before the law, the more our true Orthodox Church of Christ is oppressed.

Let us, my dearly beloved, pray doubly hard for our Archpastors, who are oppressed from all sides in their attempts to incorporate dioceses, which in turn means that monasteries and parishes cannot be incorporated either. Let us pray for the God-loving flock of our church's capital city, Suzdal, who for years have been denied the opportunity to legally affirm their rights to the recently built Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, and the chapel in Znamensky Cemetery. Let us pray for our great spiritual treasures: the Church of St. Stephen the First Martyr and Archdeacon which is in the ancient town of Kideksha, the Church of St. John the Baptist in the town of Pavlovsk, the Church of the holy equal-of-the-Apostles Olga in the town of Zheleznovodsk, and many others, which have all been either defiled by the heretics, or are in danger of soon being defiled by them. Tonight, let us remember in our prayers our grieving brethren in the regions of Orenburg, Cheliabinsk, Briansk, Tver, in Latvia, and those in those other regions where the persecution against true Orthodoxy continues.

Let us remember that upon us, as upon children of the true Church, upon this little flock which has not swerved from the truth, notwithstanding our almost complete physical destruction after eighty years of militant atheism, lies a special responsibility. By our virtuous life, by our zeal for steadfastly fulfilling the commandments of God, we are obliged show the world the beauty and truth of true Orthodoxy, so that men may see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven (cf. Matt. 5:16).

Dearly beloved in the risen Jesus Christ!

From the depths of my heart, I greet you all yet again on this radiant night of joy with the Resurrection of Christ! May the risen Lord bless all of us and grant "great joy" to each and every one of your families where the Resurrection is remembered and honored. It is my prayerful desire that the joy of Pascha might remain with you all all the days of your lives! Amen.

With an abundance of joy and love,
lowly
Valentine,
Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir
Pascha, 2005
Suzdal

SUZDAL'S 'DIOCESAN HERALD' SITE

The newly established Internet website of "Suzdal's Diocesan Herald", distribution # 4 of March 5th reports that on April 2nd the First Hierarchy of the Autonomous Russian Church, the Metropolitan Valentin ordained in Tsar-Constantine Cathedral Deacon George Marinoov. He is a Bulgarian, born in Sofia in 1982. Fr. George is an accomplished iconographer, specializing in the Byzantine and Russian icon painting. At present, he is about to complete his studies in the Sofia's Theological Faculty.

On the following day, April 3rd he was ordained a priest.

In 2005 Fr. George and Priests Radoslav Ivanov and Stephan Vasilyev refused to follow Bishop Gregory of Denver and remained faithful to the ROAC.

The newly ordained priest plans to establish a parish 15 km from Sofia in the town Yelin Pelin, where he has land. Meanwhile he is serving in the house of one of his parishioners.

When explaining the reasons why he didn't follow Bishop Gregory of Denver, Fr. George said: "Bishop Gregory from very beginning acted rather strange. Thus, as soon as he came he started to preach against the icons painted in the Western style and also that 'St. Seraphim of Sarov worshipped according to the Papal paradigm.' We considered this to be strange. Then, Fr. Ludmil also behaved a bit strangely, serving not in Slavonic, but in Bulgarian. Then he concelebrated with Photios of Triada".

Asked how he became a member of the Genuine Orthodox Church, Fr. George related that when Jose Munoz brought the Myrrh-gushing icon of Iberia to Bulgaria, he happened to be in the church, got acquainted with some woman who instructed him in the Orthodox teachings. As the result he left the New Calendar Bulgarian Church and joined the AROC and was baptized by Fr. Ludmil Petrov.

There are many Old Calendar churches in Bulgaria, especially of the Greek Synod of "Opposition" of Metropolitan Cyprian. The Cyprianites confess a heretical crypto-ecumenical teaching. According to them, the ecumenist churches have grace. However, for those who understand it is a heresy and still remains that – it serves to their condemnation, but for those, who do not realize it is a heresy – it serves to their salvation, because of economy.

ABOUT "JUSTICE" IN THE CASE OF ST. OLGA CHURCH IN ZHELEZNOVODSK

The arbitration court of Stavropol Region handed down on April 6th a decision to hand over the St. Olga Church, belonging to the Autonomous Russian Church to the Stavropol Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate. This decision, as was reported by the "Vertograd" was a reversal of the decision of the very same court made on July 22nd 2004, when it recognized the ownership of the community of the church.

There are more than two thousand members in this parish, who come not only from Zheleznovodsk, but also from other regions of Caucasus, among others, from Piatigorsk and Yessentooki. The church was built in 1989 by the means of the community. Neither the Moscow Patriarchate, nor her Stavropol diocese, nor the regional administration of the city, contributed a penny for this construction, according to the rector of the community, Fr. Roman Novakovsky. Just a while ago, this church building was accepted by the state, after receiving registration, which was previously denied to the community. What is more, now the city administration tries continuously to disperse the community.

The mayor of Zheleznovodsk, Anatoly Zoobtsov in his order of October 3rd, 2003 # 891 denied the community ownership of the ground on which the church is built. This land was given to the parish in 1993. Then the Justice Department of the region attempted to deprive the parish of its already existing registration. These efforts had no success. Also, the arbitration court has acknowledged the right of the parish to own this church and has ordered the registry department to issue the ownership certificate for the church building and to accept the building.

This decision was not protested within the period prescribed by law and therefore legally came into force. But later it was annulled by the appellate court. Because of this, the Stavropol Diocese of the MP on November 17th 2004 filed two suits: claiming illegal ownership and for eviction of the parish from the building.

St Olga's AROC parish has on file the originals of all the financial and estimating documentation regarding the building, the agreements with workers and the work itself. The Stavropol Diocese has only the documents of the state agreement to accept the finished building, which was made on special order of the mayor of Zheleznovodsk, A. Zoobtsov on February 24th. He has ordered that the BTE and the Real Estate Committee of the city to officially register the ownership of the church building in the name of the diocese. The next day the MP diocese received the certificates for ownership of all the buildings, despite the fact that the ownership issue was at that time still being investigated by the court.

St. Olga's parish of the AROC, at present has filed a complaint to the appellate court department.

This is a case, when we see the results of the tight collaboration between the "church and state" !

AGREEMENT BETWEEN ARCHBISHOP MARK OF BERLIN AND ARCHBISHOP THEOPHAN OF STAVROPOL

In the official Internet report of the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops "Orthodox Church Abroad" (!)official materials were published that on March 10th "at 14 PM in the Patriarchal residence and in the presence of His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexis II an agreement was signed between His Eminence Mark, Archbishop of Berlin and Germany and His Eminence Theophan, Archbishop of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz (ROC MP), which will be basis for future collaboration of the two dioceses and, through them, also of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Church Abroad" (Underlined by "Ch. N.")

This official collaboration is to be manifested in mutual charity work and especially, by the common reconstruction of the Epiphany Convent in the Northern Osetia, which belongs to the diocese of Archbishop Theophan.

The agreement describes this collaboration in three chapters:

1. "Activity of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz Diocese of MP at present".
2. "Activity of German Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad at present" and
3. "Future common activity"

The last section has 8 paragraphs and in it are foreseen:

1. Permanent support of the building of Epiphany Convent in Northern Osetia. (The appeal for donations is already published.)
 2. Support of monastics in need (over a 3 year period).
 3. The handing over to the Epiphany Convent of the Saintly New Martyrs of Elisabeth and Barbara (their relics rest in the Holy Land in the Convent of Gethsemane of the Church Abroad).
 4. Total financing of the building of a baptistery of Prophet John the Baptist at the Epiphany Convent.
 5. Assistance to trauma-therapeutic center at the convent, which already has a therapy center in collaboration with the foundation "Assistance for children in need in FRG (Kindernothilfe).
 6. Combined search for future material assistance (donations).
 7. Assistance in purchasing a bus for pilgrimages around Russia.
 8. Combined ecclesiastical measures and seminars involving both collaborating dioceses.
- City of Moscow at the Patriarchal residence, March 10th, 2005.

With the blessing and in the presence of His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexis II this agreement is signed by

- + Mark, Archbishop of Berlin and Germany (Russian Church Abroad)
- + Theophan, Archbishop of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz (Moscow Patriarchate)

In our February issue we predicted that the "offensive" words of Patriarch Ridiger about the official finalizing of the seizure of property from the ROCOR in Hebron by Palestinians under pressure from the MP that in the opinion of Archbishop Mark might ruin the negotiations about unification with MP – will have no effect. The announcement by Patriarch Ridiger was made in the beginning of February, and the above published agreement was signed between dioceses of ROCOR and MP on March 10th!

MORE ABOUT ARCHBISHOP MARK

A Russian newspaper "Nasha Strana" ("Our Country") published in Argentina in issue # 2768 has reported a short notice entitled "Archbishop Mark subjects clergy to coercion" that:

"According to information received by the Memorial Society of Metropolitan Anthony, Archbishop Mark of Berlin **already** forces the clergy of the Church Abroad in the Holy Land to take Communion from the Moscow Patriarchate. And those, who refuse he threatens with extradition.

When complaints about this were voiced to Metropolitan Laurus, the ambiguous answer was: "This is sad, but one is to obey one's Hierarchy".

In a private conversation with one of the members of this Society we have learned that due to an agreement made by Archbishop Mark, in the building called "Excavations" (belonging to the Orthodox Palestine Society) in the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky by the "Judgment Gate" services now are conducted for 2 weeks by the ROCOR clergy and for 2 by the MP!

CLERGY RESOLUTION OF CHICAGO AND DETROIT DIOCESE

The Internet publication of the "Orthodox Church Abroad" (this is the second time the word "Russian" for some reason has been omitted) on March 28th published the resolution of clergy of Chicago and Detroit diocese, signed by Archbishop Alipy, Bishop Peter and 20 clergymen of this diocese.

Among the decisions was a request for prayers for gravely ill clergyman of the diocese and at the same time the important role of wives of the clergy was pointed out. The members of the conference declared:

"We support the former and present acts of our administrators for peace within the Russian Church. We are inspired by the faith and zeal demonstrated by God's people during stay of the holy relics of Saintly Martyrs Elisabeth and Barbara in Russia. During this short period in Russia, millions of Orthodox were able to venerate these sacred objects. We are happy about such brotherly collaboration of two parts of the Russian Church (among other places, the collaboration in Beslan) and we hope that the zeal of the believers in Russia will also move our flock to acts of mercy".

As is lately accepted, traitors against the ecclesiastical matters in Russia, speak only about "the two parts" of the Russian Church, thus totally ignoring the existence of the Catacomb Church with which the Church Abroad always maintained the spiritual connections!

A bit further it says: "We appeal to the children of our diocese to make pilgrimages to Russia, visit holy places, which are connected with life and sufferings of the New Martyrs, such as Boutovo, Yekaterinburg and Solovki. We would welcome, Lord willing, a return visit to the Russian sacred objects of our diocese. We hope that misunderstandings arising in process of rapprochement be resolved in a straightforward manner, to not undermine the long awaited and already reached important agreements".

EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEW OF ARCHBISHOP MARK WITH "NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA"

The internet publication of the Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Gazette) published on March 14, 2005 # 48 (3444) an interview with Archbishop Mark by journalist Gleb Kapoustin.

After informing the readers about the steps taken for rapprochement of the ROCOR and the Moscow Patriarchate the journalist asked Archbishop Mark (whom he calls Fr. Mark) to tell how the dialogue between the two churches is developing and what is the reason for his visit to Moscow.

Archbishop Mark replied:

"There were several reasons. First of all, and with this the visit started, we were present at the opening of the World Wide National Russian Council, which was headed by His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia".

Why this council is called "World Wide", while not even all the Russian regions participate in it, and not even the Russian ecclesiastical establishments, such as, let's say, the Evlogians or "The Orthodox Church in America" – is a puzzle.

Then Archbishop Mark explains: "I was invited there in order to make a short speech. I believe, this is a very important step toward the path of unification. The Council is dedicated to theme of unification of mankind in the victory over Fascism and terrorism and how else, if not in this, must both Churches be united?"

Archbishop Mark ignores a sad fact that the victory over "Fascism" (and why not National Socialism?— After all, Fascism was an Italian political party) – happened to be a big victory for **communism!**

"The second – was to meet with Metropolitan Kirill, the Head of the [MP] Foreign Relations Department, on current matters. You probably know that during the last week, in Paris there was a fourth joint meeting of the committees for

dialogue between the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR. And finally the signing with blessing and in presence of His Holiness the Patriarch of an agreement between dioceses of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz, headed by Bishop Theophan and the German Russian Church Abroad". (Underlined by "Ch. N".).

The text of this agreement is published above.

Gleb Kapoustin has asked Archbishop Mark also regarding the matter of the seizure of ROCOR's property in Hebron. To this Archbishop Mark replied:

"...The matter about the property was not raised; at any rate not in a manner that can be imagined by people ignorant of church life. You understand that the question of property in the matter of unification of the Churches cannot be a top priority, this is for us a secondary problem. In the first place was a concern for the spiritual and active union of the two parts of the Russian Church, which were split for a long time by historical events, but which are basically united..."

The journalist also inquired of Archbishop Mark for details of his conversations with the Moscow Patriarch. Archbishop Mark replied:

"It is self-evident that it is not customary to reveal the concrete themes of such a conversation without the agreement of other party. But I would like to stress that our conversation was totally sincere and friendly. We did have a chance to lay out our problems and His Holiness Patriarch reacted to this with a lot of attention. He has also sincerely revealed his own views. We are very grateful for this meeting. It is a very joyful feeling to now have the possibility for such open communication and exchanges of views, since this is a solid basis for future creative interaction".

RENOVATIONIST FERMENTATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

By G. M. Soldatow

Not a single Russian hierarch has caused as much damage to believers as did Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky). His destructive influence, it seems, will impact upon church life for a long time. More attention is usually paid to his "Declaration", published in 1927. This "Declaration" made a concordat with the atheist government about the actual submission of the Church's hierarchy to the Soviet government. Usually, this is where it stops when Metropolitan Sergius is mentioned, forgetting that he has permitted a number of serious innovations, changes and violations of the canons. These canonical violations deserve no less attention than the evil "Declaration".

The first Soviet "Patriarch" Sergius – Ivan Nikolayevich Stragorodsky was born January 11th 1867 in the family of a priest. He graduated from Arsamas Ecclesiastical School, Ecclesiastical Seminary in Nizhni Novgorod and the St. Petersburg Ecclesiastical Academy (1890). While dean of the St. Petersburg Academy, Bishop Sergius displayed his anti-government attitudes. He frequently expressed the "need for the separation of Church and state" and appealed for "the renovation of [church] life". In 1905 he criticized the Imperial Government. After the February Revolution in 1917, when all the members of Synod resigned as a protest over Ober-Procurator Lvov, he alone with Lvov participated in the organizing the new Synod.

When the Soviet government began to remove church valuables, Metropolitan Sergius opposed Patriarch Tikhon who wanted to save the sacred vessels and the sacred objects. When he (Sergius) started to say that power in the Church should be given to the Renovationist Movement, created with participation of the government, on June 16th, 1922 he also joined them. Together with two other Renovationists he published the following appeal:

"We, Sergius, Metropolitan of Vladimir and Shuya, Yevdokim, Archbishop of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas and Seraphim, Archbishop of Kostroma and Galich, after studying the platform of the Temporary Church Administration and the canonical legality of the administration, do declare that we do fully approve the measures taken by the administration, consider it to be the only lawful canonical supreme Power and all the orders made by them we consider to be lawful and obligatory. We appeal to all the pastors and the faithful sons of the Church in our own dioceses entrusted to us and those in other dioceses as well, to follow our example".

Because of his high ecclesiastical status, Metropolitan Sergius misled a major part of clergy into an error and because of his appeal many clergy joined the Renovationists.

However, the overwhelming number of the faithful didn't fall for the temptation and continued to support the clergy, which remained faithful to Patriarch Tikhon. When Patriarch Tikhon was released from jail, and it became obvious how little the Renovationists were respected by the faithful, Metropolitan Sergius changed his opinions, executed an about face and on August 15/28th 1923 in the cathedral of Donskoi Monastery offered public repentance for his error of falling away from the Patriarch, after which he was accepted in his former rank.

In this manner Metropolitan Sergius was responsible before the Church for introducing a scandal within the clergy and lay people. While in a position responsibility, he by his own decision led the Church against the Patriarch. And the faithful realized that the Renovationist clergy were not worthy of trust, among which there were many twice-married, drunkards, careerists and adventurers who wanted to introduce uncanonical reforms into the Church. His return to the Patriarchal Church shattered the Renovationist movement, and despite the fact that the official existence of Renovationists in the USSR was extinguished after Sergius became "Patriarch" it has left deep roots within the Moscow Patriarchate and its views.

On the night of September 4th, 1943, in the Kremlin a famous meeting of Stalin with Metropolitans Sergius, Alexis and Nicholas happened, at which the government decided to permit the "election" of a patriarch and the creation of the ROC.

Besides, Stalin informed the metropolitans, that the government would create its special apparatus --- "the Council for Matters of the ROC", presided over by Comrade Karpov.

Essentially, after the ukase of Stalin, the militant atheistic government no longer needed to support the Renovationist Movement, which had no support among the faithful and also the Local Orthodox Churches. Just 4 days after the important meeting of the three metropolitans with Stalin, in Moscow, in violation of the worked out regulations for the "election" of the patriarch, the Vice Deputy of the Patriarchal see, Metropolitan Sergius was hurriedly "elected" patriarch. At that time he was already 76 years old. At the so-called "Council" to elect the patriarch there were 19 hierarchs present. The "Council" was held in the building of the "Patriarchate" in house # 5 on Chisty (Clean) Lane, which was given by Stalin to the Church and which, until the war, had been the residence of Count Schulenburg, the German ambassador.

September 12th in the Epiphany Cathedral in Yelokhovo the enthronization of "Patriarch" Sergius was performed and on October 8th the "Council" for Church Matters was established under the leadership of Comrade Karpov. Already October 12th Karpov made a written report to Stalin in which he reported that in connection with the election of Sergius, the Renovationist clergy felt very confused and they were offered to join the "Sergius Church". Since Karpov and his "council" were in USSR to administrate the MP and the Renovationists, in order to simplify this task it was decided to unify them. The government treated the Renovationists as one part of the MP. In his report to Stalin, Karpov informed him about his conversation with the "Patriarch" who had made the following conditions for return of the Renovationists into the patriarchal Church: 1) the married metropolitans and bishops, without being defrocked, would be removed from ecclesiastical activity, just being retired. 2) The monks (and widowed) metropolitans and bishops were to be admitted into the patriarchal church. However, with the exception that they were to be degraded from their former rank, but would be permitted, considering their virtues, to be promoted in the future. In this manner, the Renovationist metropolitans became archbishops, archbishops bishops, and bishops became archimandrites and abbots.

On this report Stalin in his own hand wrote: "To Comrade Karpov. Agree with you. Stalin". In three days after this resolution, corresponding instructions were sent to the sovnikoms (Soviet National Commissars) about the transfer of Renovationist clergy and lay people to the patriarchal church.

On November 25th there was another meeting of Karpov with the "Patriarch". When the matter of going over of Renovationist episcopate was discussed, the matter of married episcopate was also discussed. Sergius expressed the opinion that he himself personally was ready to revise this situation. In another words, let the married bishops be accepted, but he was aware of the negative reaction by the laity without a decision about it at an eighth 'ecumenical council'. The Renovationists were striving to have an "eighth ecumenical council" already from the beginning of the 1920's, proposing to make several reforms and canonical changes. As is known, the Soviet government was also interested calling the "council" to further their political goals. The date of convocation was changed several times and finally was abandoned.

The Renovationist Metropolitan Vitaly (Vvedensky) on March 3rd, 1944, was received in the rank of bishop. He received his own cathedral, promoted to archbishop and became the president of the Missionary Committee in the "Holy Synod". He became known when he signed the act of "defrocking and deprivation of monasticism" of St. Patriarch Tikhon. The Renovationist married Metropolitan Vassily Kozhin, whose diocese was a stronghold of Renovationism, was received as an archpriest, tonsured a monk and in the beginning of 1964 consecrated bishop and became the Dean of the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy. By 1948 he was made an archbishop and included in the political activity. He was sent to Palestine, USA and other countries. In 1954 he was elevated to the rank of metropolitan and appointed to head the Alaskan North American Exarchate.

Many other Renovationist clergy have joined the Patriarchal "church" without ever renouncing their former radical views and strove to make ecclesiastical reforms. After occupying responsible positions in ecclesiastical schools and MP administration, they continued to lead the state policy of hatred and slander, directed against the Russian Church Abroad, the former Russian government and, at the same time, appealing to Russian émigrés to be loyal and support the Soviet government. In this manner, by receiving the Renovationists into the Church, without renouncing apostasy, was a next step in the evils permitted by the "Patriarch" Sergius, who earlier had already stained his reputation with treason against the saintly Patriarch, by publication of his damaging "Declaration" and false statements that religion in the USSR was not persecuted.

This is a short review of the pernicious activity of Metropolitan "Patriarch" Sergius in the Russian Orthodox Church.

It is also no wonder that the clergy, after arriving in the West from the former USSR, while preserving their former sergianist ferment, try to influence the faithful of the Church Abroad. So, for example, a renown Minsk's cathedral archpriest in his sermon on day of the Three Hierarchs said that at the Eighth Ecumenical Council there must be finished what was not done at the previous Councils, and namely add the Creed in accord with St. Gregory the Theologian. The father archpriest has not forgotten to mention that for nearly 1000 years bishops were married. How well this opinion harmonizes with the propositions of the Renovationists of the present Russian Federation.

The ROCOR, under the leadership of Metropolitans Anthony, Anastassy, Philaret and Vitaly immaculately preserved the Holy Faith the way it was in Holy Russia, not permitting any changes in the teachings and canons. Therefore we consider it impossible that she would agree to a rapprochement and the agreements and fall under the evil influence of the MP. The time for "union" with the MP is not yet. One must keep our de facto total independence until the MP returns to the Orthodox teaching, traditions and habits of the Holy Orthodox Church.

G. M. Soldatow

The author of this article is also the President of the newly established Memorial Society of Metropolitan Anthony, (Khrapovitzky) founded on his initiative.

Metropolitan Anthony loved very much his talented disciple – Sergius Stragorodsky. However, when he published his treacherous “Declaration” of 1927 – the same Metropolitan Anthony wrote him an admonition, asking him to renounce it: “Because, if you will be worthy of a martyr’s crown, the Earthly Church and the Heavenly Church will unite in glorifying your courage and the Lord, Who has strengthened you, but if you remain on this broad path, leading to perdition (Mt. 7:13), upon which you now stand, it will undoubtedly lead you to the depths of hell and the Church will not forget your treachery until the end of her existence in the world. (Underlined by “Ch. N.”)

According to the book of 1007 pages “The Keeper of God’s House – Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Sergius Stragorodsky” – published by Sergius Fomin with a foreword by Patriarch Alexis Ridiger, who praises the treacherous activity of his unlawful predecessor – in the Moscow Patriarchate there is talk of the need to canonize Sergius Stragorodsky.

SITUATION AT MT. ATHOS MONASTERY OF ESPHIGMENOU

The Internet agency “Vertograd” # 512 of March 30th has reported the latest about the problem of the expulsion from the Holy Mountain of Athos of Abbot Methodios (Monastery of Esphigmenou) which has taken a turn for the worse.

This is the only monastery in Mt. Athos, which has categorically refused to commemorate Patriarch Bartholomeos for his heretical declarations and acceptance of the New Calendar. Being upset about it, Bartholomew demanded that the respected Abbot and his collaborating monks be expelled from the Holy Mountain.

Abbot Methodios appealed to the court, protesting the decision of Bartholomeos in the State Council of Greece, which is the supreme judicial instance in the country.

The State Council supported the heretical Patriarch, under the pretext that its decision upon the constitution, which recognizes Patriarch to be the spiritual head of Mt. Athos and therefore, his inter-ecclesiastical acts cannot be controlled by the civil judicial government.

Bartholomeos has demanded that the Orthodox monks be expelled from this monastery earlier in December, 2002 !

“ORTHODOX” PATRIARCHS LAMENT DEATH OF HERETIC, POPE JOHN PAUL II

The dream of Pope John Paul II never materialized: he died on April 1st, 2005. In connection with his death many expressions of sympathy for the Vatican came from Moscow Patriarch Alexis II, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos, the President of the Department for Foreign Connections of the MP, Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk, the Antioch Patriarch, Serbian Patriarch Paul, Metropolitan Herman of the “Orthodox Church in America” and Metropolitan Sava of Warsaw (Poland).

The letter of Patriarch Alexis addressed to Cardinal Ratzinger was published by the “Site of the Service of the Communication of the OVCC (MP) on April 3rd. The outrageous letter of the “Orthodox” Patriarch on the death of the malicious enemy of Orthodoxy and, of course, the Russian people, must cheer every patriotic Pole, says:

“Permit me to express to you and in your person the fullness of the Roman Catholic Church my deep sympathy in connection with the repose of His Holiness Roman Pope John Paul II. Together with you we grieve about the loss which befell the Roman Catholic Church.

The reposed Primate of the ancient Roman cathedra has distinguished himself by his devotion to the path he has selected in his young years, his fervent will to serve the Christian ministry. Despite his most severe illness, he remained truthful to his duty, ministering his flock to the very last days. His uncomplaining suffering, accompanied by the prayer and hope upon the All Merciful Lord has inspired the people as an example.

The Pontificate of His Holiness John Paul II became a whole epoch in the life of the Roman Catholic Church and in the whole contemporary history. The personality of the Pope, his labors and ideas have exercised an important indulgence upon the world’s events.

I do hope that the forthcoming new period in the life of Roman Catholic Church will help to renew among our Churches the relations of mutual respect and Christian brotherly love. (Underlined by “Ch. N.”).

I lift up a prayer to the Victor of death and the Lord of Life Jesus Christ for the rest of the soul of His Holiness Pope John Paul in the dwelling of the righteous. Eternal memory for him!

+ Alexis. Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia”

An Internet agency Portal CReDO.RU also has published the abridged expression of deep sorrow in connection with the death of the Pope expressed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. In this document it is said that the death of the Pope “is a loss not for his own church only, but for the whole Christianity, for the international society, which is striving for peace and justice”... “John Paul II dreamed of a restoration of unity in Christianity and labored for this cause. He didn’t spare any labor, any sacrifice in order to preach the Gospel around the world and for the establishment of peace”... “We

grieve with our brethren Roman Catholics around the whole world" it is stated in the Patriarchal declaration (Underlined by "Ch. N.").

The very same agency has published a completely sympathetic letter to Cardinal Ratzinger in the name of Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk, who in every way praises the Roman Pope and at the end of his letter expresses the hope that "in the future, the memory of the late Pope would serve to establish a good relationship between our two Churches and will become a pledge for overcoming the existing difficulties. I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will lay to rest the soul of His Holiness Pope John Paul II".

According to information received from the Deputy President of the Department for External relations of the MP, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, the "APN" (Agency for Political News) on April 4th reported that 'two metropolitans will represent Russia at the funeral of the Pope'. For this purpose Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk and another unnamed Metropolitan will travel to the Vatican.

Undoubtedly, these "Orthodox" Patriarchs, Metropolitan Cyril and others never heard that outside of the one and unique True Orthodox Church there can be no salvation, as well, that heretics excommunicated by the Church, were never in a brotherly relation with the Holy Church!

The Internet agency Portal CReDO.RU of April 7th reported that MP Vienna Bishop Hilarion (Alfeyev) declared that "doubtlessly the Pope has to be beautified as soon as possible (the first step for Catholics before canonization) and be canonized by the Church to which he has devoted all his life"!

On April 19th a conservative German, Cardinal Ratzinger, 78 years old was elected Pope with the Benedict XVI.

SCANDAL IN ATHENS CHURCH GROWS BIGGER, IN JERUSALEM IT JUST STARTED

In our last issue we reported about the great scandal which has developed in the Church of Athens in connection with court litigations started against several bishops by the government accusing them of connections with the criminal world, immorality and even drug trafficking.

At the beginning, it seemed that the Primate of the Greek Church of Athens Christodulos would be able to avoid participation in the litigations of his Church, despite the strong demands of the media for his resignation. However, according to the Internet newspaper "Nezavisimaya Gazeta Religii" (Independent Newspaper of Religions) of March 2nd, Archbishop Christodulos received by his Synod "vote of confidence" to cleanse the Church of criminal elements. But then, according to the Internet "Orthodox Christianity" of March 21st Archbishop Christodulos had to admit that he was in a business relationship with Apostolos Vavilos, who was accused and convicted by the court of selling drugs. This revelation renewed the demands for the resignation of Archbishop Christodulos now by a number of Greek clergymen. Initially, Archbishop Christodulos claimed that he had never met Vavilos, then it became known that he used him to secure the election of the Jerusalem Patriarch Eirenaios! At the same time, the Patriarch had also to admit that Archbishop Christodulos had sent this drug dealer to him.

All this resulted in a considerable decline in the prestige of the hierarchs of the Greek Church of Athens, to the point, that the newly elected President of Greece Carolos Papoulis refused to kiss the hand of Archbishop Christodulos.

The media reports that this information about the dubious commercial businesses by the episcopate as well as the moral corruption of a number of bishops has led many people to joining the Old Calendar groups. A Russian proverb says: "there is nothing bad without some good".

The Internet agency Portal CReDO.RU of March 4th reported that "the announcement by Patriarch Eirenaios against the Athens Archbishop Christodulos coincided with a very serious financial loss for the Jerusalem Patriarchate. On February 23rd an Israeli financial company revived a court order to freeze the Jerusalem Patriarchate accounts and gave right to seize property as a compensation for a loss of \$8 million. That was the amount that the Jerusalem Patriarchate has lost to the South African Israel Co. after the cancellation of an agreement to lease the Church's property in Abu-Tor near Jerusalem.

In these negotiations with "South African Israel Co." the Jerusalem Patriarchate was represented by the Patriarchal accountant Nikos Papadimos... "who has received from the Patriarch the power of attorney, which permitted him to freely dispose of the church's property".

After a few months, Nikos Papadimos disappeared and the Patriarch has accused him of stealing \$600,000, which represented actually about one tenth of the stolen money.

The Greek newspaper "Athens News" published commentaries regarding the statement by Patriarch Eirenaios, made by an hierarch of the Athens Church, who asked not to be mentioned by name in which he said: "Eirenaios feels that Christodulos is sinking and therefore, he tries to throw the last stone in order to secure his own position. He tells he is not at fault, because it was Christodulos who sent him this disgusting person". Another bishop has related that in order to meet with the Patriarch he had to secure the permission of Vavilos.

The Greek General Consul Petros Panayiotopoulos had warned Patriarch Eirenaios about the 'danger' of Vavilos as late as 2001, but the Patriarch replied: 'Vavilos is the spiritual son of Christodulos'.

Newspaper The New York Times of April 4th also has not passed unnoticed the scandal with Patriarch Eirenaios.

According to this report, the Jerusalem Patriarchate, which owns huge property in the Holy Land, has sort of secretly sold two hotels (which were managed by the Palestinians) to some Israeli living abroad. From the point of view of Palestinians the Patriarch has committed a terrible crime, because in the part of the city in which the hotels were

functioning it is forbidden to sell real estate to Israelis. The anger against the Patriarch has reached such a level, that when he was walking to the church, some threw the stones at him!

The Patriarch insists that he has not sold any property to the Israelis, although he admits that "I confirm that even if such a thing took place through fraud or any other manner, then we will cooperate with the legal consultants to annul these illegal measures".

KOSHER FOOD PRODUCTS FROM RUSSIA

The newspaper "The Jewish Press" of March 4th stated with satisfaction that the residents of countries belonging to the European Union, as well as the USA, pretty soon will be able to purchase kosher foods in big quantities made in the Russian Federation.

The food is prepared under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi Berl Lazar. A whole number of products is already available in Israel's supermarkets, where is sold smoked fish "Russkoye Morye" (Russian Sea), "Moya Semya" (My Family), "Mechta Khozyaiki" (Dream of a Hostess), margarine, fruit juices from Azerbaijan and jams from Tula.

It is expected that the amount of this production with the stamp "kosher" by the "Department of the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Russia" pretty soon will supply a number of "supermarkets" in Europe and Israel. These products are already sold in many stores in Russia.

Let it be remembered that the stamp "kosher" means that the products are prepared not only in accordance with the ritual rules about food of the Jews, but also – that they are prepared with no participation of the "goim" – as is customary among the Jews to call all non-Jews.

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS: Letter from Bishop Gregory to Archbishop. Anthony of Geneva, Sept. 27th/Oct. 10th, 1990

Your Eminence, Dear Vladyko;

I am very sorry that you did not participate in the latest Synod meeting. I believe that your participation would have very helpful regarding matters concerning our Church in Russia. The main slogan of the pessimists was "be careful" and for this reason they have sacrificed Suzdal, although it's Dean has sufficiently demonstrated his devotion and obvious growing sufficient devotion to the cause, although it is possible that the very first impulse might have been for some personal reasons. At any rate, now he has made a choice and now is imbued with the spirit of our Church. He felt the mistrust and he was saddened by it. The Metropolitan was acting very well and decisively, but he could not overcome the pessimists. Little help came from a letter from Fr. Herman (Ivanov-Trinadzaty, "Ch. N."), unfortunately only on the second day. Metropolitan has immediately copied it and distributed copies to all. They take too much into consideration the break in person of Vladyka Lazarus. He began to act a little bit more openly, but nevertheless, will not come out from his catacombs. He has no registration in Moscow, he does not want to come to Suzdal to work and therefore cannot be registered. Therefore, to start with we have to begin with Suzdal, and there is no bishop there. For Vladyka Barnabas to come there will be of no help, since he is a foreigner and can not be registered. It would be good if he would quickly realize the situation and would hurry the matter of the consecration of Fr. Valentin.

The last has troubles with his health. I have arranged for him a visit to a good physician. He is all right, except for diabetes. I hope that he will leave here with the proper medications.

On Monday there was the parish feast of the Synod's lower church. There was a collection made during the trapeza with good results. I hope that the attention which Metropolitan shows toward Fr. Valentin will help bring more attention to him in the Synod.

Two days after he arrived I went to see him and found out that no one has talked to him, neither Vl. Hilarion, nor any one else. He was not shown the Synod's churches, nor the city. Once he was left with no lunch, because no one has called him or let him know of the time, he was given nothing to eat, they didn't learn that he is diabetic and needs a special diet. I felt sorry for him. I also have informed the Metropolitan about his situation and he has encouraged him with his attention.

At the meeting there was a short report made by the former KGB general, who escaped to America. I do not remember his real last name, but generally he uses the name of Orlov. He was not specially working on church matters, but he was in touch with them. It seems that his parents were believers and had him baptized. He very much sympathizes with our action in Russia, and believes that the episcopal consecrations should be performed in Russia, and not abroad.

Stephan (Krassovitzky, "Ch. N.") is at present in your area. I hope you will see him. It would be profitable for him to visit Lesna.

My work about the history of the Russian Church after the Revolution is published in the Jubilee Collection from Jordanville. I hope they will send it to you. I was given very few copies. I would like you to get acquainted with this work. Somebody has told me that you were not feeling well. I hope you have recovered. Asking for your holy prayers, I remain your devoted brother in Christ + Bishop Gregory

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of February 9/22 1990

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko!

First of all I greet you with the approaching Lent and wish you to pass this time to the salvation of soul. At the same time I ask your pardon for any insult or grief I have caused.

Yesterday I read your letter to Nastia (A. G. Schatiloff, his eldest daughter "Ch. N."), which in a way fills the gap in your letter to me of February 5th. When I told Nastia in a telephone conversation that I had received your letter to her, she asked me to read it over the telephone, which I did. Therefore, involuntarily, my present letter contains a certain reaction also at your letter to Nastia.

Please be aware that I do revere the status of our Metropolitan and in conversations even with the close friends I try not to damage his authority. Only in letters to you, who also care about his authority, do I express my concern with complete openness. I believe that you, as Deputy Presiding Bishop, can help him in some matters and therefore you must be aware of the situation without being ordered to. To a great degree the reason for my concern is the carelessness and effusiveness of the Presiding Bishop, a quality I have overcome in myself a long time ago. I am afraid that sometimes he speaks without thinking about the meaning his critics add to his words. And unfortunately, there are a lot of such critics. I believe that also you might have noticed that often he speaks carelessly. Thus, on a big gathering he has mentioned Vladyka Lazarus, when we have kept his existence a secret. The case with the Jerusalem Patriarch remains to be unexplained, while the results remain. In his conversation with strangers he also happens to be careless, sometimes contradicting to what he had said in another place. On many occasions I have collided with problem that he is criticized not based upon the statement of some journalist but based upon his own words, which were heard from him directly.

I was trained, that while having an important position, a person has to be very careful, keeping in mind that not all the collocutors are his friends and take care for the Church's interests. You cannot imagine how much criticism I hear from people who think that I listen to them with pleasure and with compunction, as being "hurt". In fact, I am always sad at this and try to answer with some antidote to calm the people. Some times they say plain nonsense. Unfortunately, sometimes it is hard to contrast it with official material, for it is non-existent. The Synod mostly says nothing. For example: you heard that after my report at the last meeting the Metropolitan said that he will give an explanation regarding Soloukhin's article. A month has already passed and there is nothing, while the Soloukhin's article, according to rumors, is being interpreted in various ways. Maybe by autumn something will be published in "Church Life"? I express my doubts to you as the Deputy Presiding Bishop, because your position makes it possible for you to do something. I am afraid that here is revealed a lack of concern that people not fall into temptation. It was revealed also in the case of Fr. Potapov (friend and fellow-sponsor of Vl. Hilarion), the dismissal of toilers with no replacement and so on.

I do not know if you can understand that after many years of important work, I have the habit of taking such minuses as facts of life, the cure of which I am now unable to help with, without inflaming the criticism or personal condemnation of such unfortunates as, for example, Potapov, for whom I feel very sorry.

Permit me to now tell you that your letter of February 5th has offended me with the mistrust and estrangement expressed in it. Your letter to Nastia, on the contrary, has somewhat explained to me the reason of your misunderstanding of the methods of our work, and in particular, my personal work. Probably, you are not taking into consideration how much time I must take for the simple job of forwarding material without working on it (I just hand to Nastia the magazines, newspapers and the like read by me), which is my very limited help, and what she does with it, I usually find out together with the other readers. This is very limited assistance, but I do not want to extend it – I have no strength. Now, from time to time I write articles and am preparing the third volume of my works for publication. Some time ago I used to edit the bulletins – I was receiving the material from various people, but they have never had anything to do with its editing and had no responsibility for it. Now I am myself in the same position.

Addressing the other matter: I am sending you the considerations of Stephan Yakovlevich about establishing the life of our faithful in USSR. It was written by him before Vl. Lazarus arrived. With the latter I will meet tomorrow and then will write to you. I believe that Vladyka's coming now and the secrecy of his existence will inevitably present a problem of reorganization

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

+ Bishop Gregory

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of June 24th/July 7th 1991

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko!

Thank you for your letter of June 4/17th with the enclosures. It saddens me that it confirms what I heard, that you are not able to come for the Council. There are two sad circumstances: Your absence on such important Council and you being sick, so untimely for us. On top of that, due to illness Vladyka Paul will not come too. On the other hand, our Secretary, just before the beginning of the Council was out for whole month in the South America, and after his return, also does not stay home. Some hierarchs have called us twice, because they were not able to get in contact with the Metropolitan and the Secretary.

I am depressed because of our lack of coordination in the USSR and I am afraid that this is not accidental, but is helped by the agency hostile to us. Now we were showered with various reports from critics, while Lazarus on the one hand is hiding in the catacombs, while on the other displays a lot of activity, without consulting anyone (including the Metropolitan)

and in this manner creates authority conflicts. To this are added the references to Vladyka Mark. All this could be coordinated if all would come to the Council.

Yeltsin wanted to send us three delegates for negotiations, all from the Patriarchate. The metropolitan has sensibly refused. The only good result was that it speeded up our receiving the exit visas for our Russian Hierarchs, but I am afraid that Vl. Lazarus will not use his and will not let his vicar come. This vicar is more practical than he himself, but is extremely obedient to him.

Unfortunately I have just met, but do not know your vicar and therefore have no opinion about him. Is he capable of independent activity?

Just now I tried to get in touch with Vl. Hilarion by telephone. I was told that he is absent. And on Monday the members of the Council traveling to Canada are scheduled to depart from New York. Not being able to reach anyone in the Synod, Vladyka Valentin called us about his arrival on Tuesday. In whole my long life I have not seen such disorganization before an important Council.

Thank you for your help on the bulletin. Nastia is very grateful to you. I, myself have no part in her work. I have no time and no strength for it.

I hope the Lord will help in strengthening your health. Asking for your holy prayers I remain your loving brother in Christ
+ Bishop Gregory

Confidential Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of October 7/20, 1992

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko!

It is quite some time since I have bothered you with my letters, but I do believe that you, as the Deputy Presiding Bishop should be informed about the situation in the center.

Unfortunately, there is nothing to boast about. I am troubled that the age of our First Hierarch is beginning to show. I do not know if you are familiar with the matter of the commission to oversee the parishes of Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochayev in Russia? Several months ago the Metropolitan commissioned Vladyka Valentin to watch over them. The two Hierarchs in Russia were pleased and the work went on smoothly. However, at the last meeting of the Synod, Bishop Barnabas very enthusiastically reported about his activity and it was proposed that he rule these parishes from Moscow. It seems to me, that the new decision is justified, but will the necessity for such a correction increase the authority of our Administration? To this are added the increased rumors about dissatisfaction with the Metropolitan's personal secretary. I do not speak about the dissatisfaction of the part of the clergy and that the Metropolitan is so seldom in New York, while the Secretary is always absent. Always no one is in the Office for days at a time. Repeatedly only the cleaning man is there.

I write this not to criticize, because I am hostile to any one, but because I am worried. On top of that the Metropolitan has cataracts. I have visited him and asked him to take care of it as soon as possible, after I saw how difficult it is for him to read. He has listened to me in good humor, but it seems, has done nothing about it. Operations by the new methods are done very quickly now. I have seen this with, for example, my eldest daughter.

After the meeting we learned that Bishop Barnabas was closely collaborating with Pamyat (Memory, a radical organization in Russia, Ch. N.). He has scandalized many with his conversations in which he suggested using this organization in cases of physical confrontation. The Russian papers wrote about it and it seems, that there is already a case in court. All this and the protests of our people have moved the Metropolitan to stop this action until the next Synod meeting.

I do not know how did you feel about the project to have the Council in your monastery. For me, personally this is attractive, but I have spent quite a bit on trips to Munich and Cleveland and I am not sure I will have enough funds for a trip to Paris. This is still a big question.

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