

Christmas Epistle

of His Eminence Valentine Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir
to the God-loving Flock of the Russian Orthodox Church

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold,
I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
(Lk. 2:10-11)

Dearly beloved children of the Church of God!

Glory to God in the highest, Who has granted us, yet again, to see the blessed joy of the great day of the Nativity of Christ!

With feelings of spiritual love, I heartily greet you, the beloved children of the Russian Orthodox Church, with this greatly triumphant and world-saving feast of the Nativity of Christ.

Now are our hearts filled with the great joy of salvation, of complete joy over the birth of the pre-eternal Son of God in the flesh. The great mystery of righteousness is accomplished; God is manifest in the flesh, for from the Virgin Mary is born the Divine Christ Child.

The overflowing spiritual treasury of God's Holy Church has bestowed upon our believing hearts, full of sacred happiness and exalted Christian hope, Her illustrious Christmas hymns, "Let heaven and earth together rejoice prophetically this day..., let angels and men triumph in spirit..., let the shepherds preach; and let the Magi bring their gifts from the East to Bethlehem. We shall bring unto Him in praise, offered upon unworthy lips, this hymn, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace amongst men of good will.'"

As once maliciousness issued forth from the palace of the cruel and inhuman tyrant, Herod, upon whose conscience lay the blood of his beloved wife, sons, and kin, so also now do evil deeds flow from the palace of the Herod of our day, directed at our Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church, "Sectarians, out of Russia! Sectarians, out of Suzdal!"

The luxurious palaces of the Moscow Patriarchate, just like the palace of Herod of old, are aflame with evil and treachery. Instead of lighting a Christmas candle, they set fire to monasteries and homes, where the clergy and monastics of the Russian Orthodox Church live and pray. They cover the walls of ROAC churches with shameful graffiti and thereby consciously commit apostasy from God, mock the commandments of the Holy Gospel, and the newly born Divine Child Himself. They extend the hand of

“friendship and love,” only to grab their fellow humans by the throat with the other hand. They believe in the Divine Christ Child, and thirst after His blood.

On the 17th of May of this year, the hierarchs of the once glorious Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which for more than 70 years preserved the pure gold of true Orthodox teaching, crossed the threshold of a similar palace. She was once looked upon with esteem and hope by the entire Orthodox world.

As long as the ROCOR existed, the Moscow Patriarchate was forced to reckon with her. The existence of the independent life of the Church Abroad served as a brake, keeping the MP from sliding down the slope into the abyss of sin.

And what have Metropolitan Laurus and the faithful of the ROCOR found? Hypocrisy and cunning. They believed that two equal parts of one Church were signing an Act of Canonical Communion, but in reality, they signed an “Act,” which was the final absorption of the Church Abroad by the Moscow Patriarchate, and the demise of its canonicity, as a result of which the Church Abroad has now turned into an organization inimical to God.

This was confirmed by Archbishop Evlogy, in his appeal to the faithful of Suzdal, when he said that the Church Abroad, **finally found the courage** to join the Mother Church in peace and in love, and in this manner announced the dogma of the adaptation of truth to serve the lies of the atheistic world.

Disheartened by the fall of the Church Abroad, we nevertheless had hoped, that She would be a vital force, restraining the world’s fall into Sergianism, modernism, and ecumenism. Sadly, however, it seems that our hopes were in vain.

The Orthodox world was shaken by the unprecedented ecumenical prayer of Alexis II with the Roman Catholic bishops of France, which took place recently in Paris. On the Internet and in other organs of the mass media, there was sharp criticism of this shameless apostasy. But not a single bishop of the ROCOR said one word in defense of the holy Faith. It would seem that they are no longer able to appreciate the depth of their fall, and the depth of the fall of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The former bishops of the Church Abroad again held their peace on November 11th, when Metropolitan Cyril, full of anti-Orthodox cynicism, traveled to Spain in order to consecrate an MP church in that country, and invited a Catholic bishop.

Just yesterday, the ROCOR confessed that ecumenism is a heresy. But today, by Her silence and by communing from one cup with heretics, She openly takes part in this heresy. These are the sad fruits of apostasy!

They all betrayed the Lord by their silence. Only one bishop, Diomid of

Chukotsky, spoke out about the blatant moral and canonical violations of the MP. Of course, the whole Orthodox world understands that the calls of Bishop Diomid to his fellow hierarchs are like a voice crying in the wilderness. But what the Orthodox world does not understand is how the once glorious ROCOR could forget the terrible anathema of the great zealot for Orthodoxy, St. Metropolitan Philaret, and maintain its criminal silence.

The ever-memorable Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) used to say, “It’s better for us to be alone in the world, than to allow ourselves to be drawn into a spiritual swamp.”

What is important for us is not to seek agreement and unity with the heretical majority of our contemporaries, but with the holy Fathers who have shone forth in ages past.

Let us zealously preserve the canonical stability of our holy Church, Which by its own life confirms the anathema against ecumenism, rejects the new calendar and Sergianism. The Lord has seen fit that we should continue this service, which used to be performed by the Church Abroad, of guarding the Orthodox Faith, in the courts of our saving Church.

May the Divine Christ Child not permit us to be indifferent to the fate of the Church of God! May He keep us from pridefulness, ambition, remembrance of evils, contentiousness, divisions, and false accusations, and may the hymn of Bethlehem ever resound in our hearts, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!”

With love in Christ Jesus,
Valentine
Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir