

## NEWSLETTER #11

Department of Foreign Relations  
Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church  
Outside of Russia.

JULY 1977.

### DEBATE CONCERNING THE PASCHALION.

As we stated in our last bulletin, a conference was called at Chambesy, in session from 28th. June until 3rd. July n.s, especially to discuss the question of the calendar and the celebration of Pascha. The number of participants at this conference was not large - in all eight bishops and as many clergymen and laymen. Metropolitan Damascinos, secretary of the Pre Conciliar Commission, presided. Metropolitan Ignatios of Lattacia acted as secretary to the commission. Also present were representatives of the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and the Anglicans.

The conference rejected a proposal for a fixed date for the celebration of Pascha, citing that such a grave violation of the decree of the Council of Nicaea would cause a schism in the Orthodox world. The conference agreed that, as before, Pascha should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon, which falls after the vernal equinox. The conference also decreed that Pascha should come after the Jewish Passover, and should not fall at the same time as the latter.

However, the point was raised that the Julian calendar, on which the Paschalion has always been calculated, is supposedly inaccurate, and that there is now a thirteen day discrepancy with the solar year. It was also noted that, according to existing records, the Paschalion is five days off from the lunar year, and that with the passing of time this difference will increase. The commission decided to request the next plenary session of the Pre conciliar Conference to appoint a commission of astromers to calculate for the maximum number of years ahead possible, the dates on which the Sundays after the full moon following the vernal equinox will fall.

On other questions, the commission made no definite resolution, but it did make a concession to ecumenism, in that it called upon those who wish for a settlement of the questions considered by the Pre-Conciliar Commission to work together with those of the heterodox who were also interested in them. This is a big innovation, for the Oecumenical Councils never permitted heretics to participate in settling the questions awaiting their decision.

### WHAT CAN ORTHODOXY EXPECT FROM FAITH AND ORDER?

The monthly magazine of the World Council of Churches, "One World", in its May issue carried Nikos Nissiotis' answer to the question: What might an Eastern Orthodox Christian expect from the Faith and Order Movement today? Professor Nissiotis, a professor of theology at the University of Athens, gave the following answer:-

"First, he hopes that there would not be any unnecessary debate about priorities between Christians" arising from the "national interests of mother churches."

"Second, churches in the Faith and Order movement must acknowledge they all share in the historic community of faith, given form by the unbroken continuity of the apostolic Church. Our present divisions cannot

remove that bond."

"Third, ... Professor Nissiotis stresses the link between the unity of the Church and the unity of mankind."

"Fourth," he considers "that the Gospel has to be one in all human situations, as it calls all peoples to enter into unity through vision and struggle. And the struggle can only be won through sincere repentance by all who decided to serve Church unity as the sign and hope of the unity of the whole of mankind."

Prof. Nissiotis considers that "that concept of unity has developed through a long series of stages ... starting with an exchange of information and comparative studies among the churches, then moving through to deeper encounters between different Christian traditions."

Speaking the the name of the Orthodox Church, the professor brings in an idea which is completely new to Her, although it is very widespread in the false teaching of the West - that the Christian is not required to serve the Church, but that She Herself must be rennovated and must serve the world. His faith in the future unity of all mankind, without any reference to the membership of individual people to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and to the participation of others in evil, is absolutely contrary to Orthodox teaching.

#### OEUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE IN DANGER

According to the Ecumenical Press Service (EPS) of 9th.June, the Oecumenical Patriarchate has reason to be disturbed that its very existence might be "at stake."

In connection with recent election campaigns throughout Turkey, slogans were brandished, stating that "Turkey is Moslem" and that only Mohammedanism and no other religion should be permitted there.

There was a demonstration on the 24th.May in Istanbul, in front of the Patriarchate itself this demonstration was organised by the "Istanbul Student Union." Slogans were again displayed on placards: "Out with the Patriarchate!" and "Close the nest of treason to Turkey!"

According to observers, this was a manifestation of a more widespread movement against all religions except Islam, and thus, as always, the security of the Greek minority in Turkey was threatened. The sentiment of resentment against all non-Moslems in Turkey is repeatedly breaking out there, and has recently been aggravated because of the tense situation between Greece and Turkey concerning the Cyprus question.

#### RUSSIAN ECCLESIASTICAL MISSION IN JERUSALEM REACTS TO COURT DECISION

In some local (Jerusalem) newspapers an announcement was placed, stating that the Supreme Court has dismissed the appeal by the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem from the decision of the District Court that the particulars hitherto supplied by the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem concerning its legal status are insufficient. This decision related to the right of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission to sue the Israeli Government for the return of Russian Charitable and Ecclesiastical property, which was passed by the Mission for many decades until it was turned over to the Soviets when the latter recognised Israel as soon as the State of Israel was established.

Since the decision of the Court contradicts the existing documents proving the rights of the Mission as a legal personality, recognised as such by the courts and the government offices, the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission intends to apply for a further review of its appeal, this time by

an enlarged board of Justices of the Supreme Court. The Chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission believes that the review of the appeal will be a success, and the standing of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission and its right to its property will be upheld.

Should the application for a review be refused, the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission intends to return to the District Court and submit more facts and arguments establishing its right to bring the suit.

The Chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission is confident that the charitable object of the ecclesiastical property will ultimately be recognised by the courts of Israel.

(Text of Press Release issued by the Russian  
Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem)

### THE "PASTORAL ZEAL" OF A GREEK BISHOP

The Religious News Service informs us that the Greek Bishop, John of Thermon, who is under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Iakovos, said that about ten Episcopalian priests, who disapprove of the ordination of women in their own confession, turned to him asking about reception into the Greek Archdiocese.

He said that he knew of cases when Episcopalian priests had been received into the Russian Orthodox Church, but he personally advised them "to stay in their Church and bear witness to the apostolic tradition.... In the long run, they will do greater service to Christian unity by staying in the fold."

- It is difficult not to marvel at the complete lack of pastoral zeal on the part of this officially Orthodox bishop!

### MAY PRIESTS DANCE?

A very well-educated priest of the Greek Archdiocese in America, Fr. George Tsoumas, has a column, "Religious Question Box," in the "Hellenic Chronicle." In the 12th. May number, in reply to the question: "Are priests permitted to dance?" he gave the following answer:-

"Priests are permitted to dance the symbolic Isaiah dance during their ordination or marriage services. Social dances are forbidden. One exception I know of is when a priest's son or daughter is married. Then the priest may dance in a dignified manner once or twice. For any further questions please call the bishop."

Unfortunately, Fr. Tsoumas does not explain what this "symbolic Isaiah dance" is, nor where it is to be performed in the marriage or ordination services according to the Book of Needs. About the necessity for the clergyman to wear clothing appropriate to his rank when he is dancing, Fr. George is unable to give any directive - surely only because it would be difficult for a priest to dance in his raso!

### YET ONE MORE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE!

The very number of translations of the Holy Bible available, made for all tastes, might easily rival a collection of cook-books.

Now, in the mid-eighties, we can expect the publication of a new edition of the "Revised Standard Version" which will in its turn be itself revised so that it will comply with the ideas of the proponents of Women's Equal Rights.

As reported in the "New York Times" of 5th. June, a committee of two - four scholars, headed by a Dr. Metzger, will retain the word "man" only in those instances when, for instance, it speaks of "a certain man planted a vineyard," but in the first psalm, which begins: "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly..." the translation will run: "Blessed are those, who...."

Dr. Metzger explains that "masculine" terminology was introduced into the Biblical text by earlier translators, who lived in a "male-dominated society."

To find editions of the Bible unspoilt by such "revisions" is now becoming more and more difficult, and the Orthodox must take every care to obtain the older and unrevised editions of the Sacred Scriptures, for we now face the very real possibility of losing them altogether.

#### GREEK CLERGY SOUND AN ALARM

The Greek paper, "Hellenic Chronicle" carried an "Open Letter" on 14th. July. This was from Orthodox in the jurisdiction of Archbishop Iakovos who call upon their fellows to unite to censure the activities of the leadership of that archdiocese.

The group that wrote the letter, among whom the priests George Economou and Theodore Stavrou, and deacon Christos Constantinou are mentioned, say that "for several years now, both the sincere piety and genuine Orthodoxy of this Greek Archdiocese have been called into question by other Orthodox jurisdictions."

Among the charges which the authors of the open letter bring against Archbishop Iakovos and his collaborators is "indifference ... in some cases even outright hostility and abuse - towards our Orthodox liturgical life, fasting, prayer, monasticism, and other Orthodox religious practices.

The fourth paragraph of the letter particularly upbraids Archbishop Iakovos and the other bishops and clergymen with "unOrthodox, uncanonical, heretical religious ideas and movements, intercommunal prayers and practice. They state that for these causes many of their brothers have already left the Archdiocese and joined other Churches. (About ten clergymen formerly under the Greek Archdiocese are now members of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia).

Declaring that it is the duty of every Orthodox Christian, whether a clergyman or a layman, to confess the Orthodox Faith and defend it against enemies both within and without, the authors of the letter invite the clergy to mutual support in this task and to respond to their call. May God aid these good pastors!

#### GLAZUNOV'S PICTURE

In the papers it is reported that the Soviet authorities did not permit an exhibition of the artist Glazunov's works. According to the "Time" magazine (11th. July), the chief cause of their disquiet was a picture entitled "Mystery of the Twentieth Century." The magazine gives a reproduction of this work, although, unfortunately, it is very fuzzy and indistinct. However, several details printed alongside give one an understanding of the reasons for the Soviet ban upon the picture's exhibition.

At first impression the picture is of a chaos, but nonetheless one can recognise the faces of several political figures. In the centre a large

representation of Stalin can be seen he is on a death bed, swimming in blood. On the right side of the picture, one sees the Emperor Nicholas II, holding in his arms his heir, the Tsarevich. Behind them, the tops of churches, encircled by flames. In the background, in a pale-blue aureole the white figure of Christ the Saviour approaches. It seems that the picture portrays the chaos in the world, which precedes the end and the second coming of the Saviour.

### THE MGR. LEFEBVRE AFFAIR

The Vatican is more and more disquieted over the actions of Archbishop Lefebvre, which might easily be compared to a "Roman Catholic Old Believer Movement." Mgr. Pierre Mamie, bishop of Lausanne, told his flock that Mgr. Lefebvre is creating an "anti-Church." In the Vatican, they fear that he will consecrate bishops, and thus set up a separate ecclesiastical organisation independent of the Pope, with his own hierarchs.

The Pope sent Mgr. Lefebvre a letter of admonition in his own hand. Two Vatican representatives tried to persuade him to desist from ordaining a hierarchy. He paid no attention to these things, but rather widened the scope of his activities to include, not only France, but even Rome itself and other European countries. Recently he even visited North America to bless a new church for his supporters. When asked why he had visited Paris to celebrate a confirmation service there, according to the magazine "Le Point" (27th. June) Lefebvre replied that he went there because the Parisian Catholics had a right to "valid" sacraments: thus he introduced a question concerning the "validity" of the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church now. Lefebvre spoke very bluntly of his conflict with the Vatican: "The matter concerns the radical incompatibility of the Catholic Church and the Church of the Council (Vatican II). Paul VI's mass represents the symbol and programme of the Church of the Council."

However, Mgr. Lefebvre has not totally severed communion with the Vatican, and according to the "National Catholic Register" (24th. July) he proposed relatively mild conditions for reconciliation. Archbishop Lefebvre asked three things of the Vatican: 1) "Recognition of full rights for the Tridentine Mass - the rite established for the Western Church after the 16th century Council of Trent - to co-exist with the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council;" 2) "Readiness to seek a suitable canonical status for the Fraternity of St. Pius X, the society of priests that Archbishop Lefebvre has established;" 3) "A joint approach to the Pontifical Commission for the interpretation of the Decrees of the Second Vatican Council, to which 'certain contested passages in these decrees would be submitted for a ruling bringing them in line with the Church's constant teaching'" This last proposal is obviously very difficult for the Vatican to accept, and they cannot do so because it would entail a revision of all the Council's decisions.

The impression given is that Mgr. Lefebvre is systematically and consistently moving ahead, but that the Vatican is at a loss and fears to take too strict measures. This of course in turn furthers Lefebvre's cause.

### THE JEWS DISTURBED OVER "CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY" IN THEIR MIDST

The organisation B'nai Yeshua (Sons of Jesus), headed by 29 year-old Michael Evans, recently purchased the former Stony Brook School for Girls on Long Island for \$480,000.00.

The new centre is located near the State University of New York at Stony Brook, at which a large proportion of the students are Jewish.

It is interesting that the organisation which describes itself as a Hebrew-Christian one, has existed for only four years and does not exceed four thousand members, and yet the rabbis consider it a dangerous threat. Several Jewish communities have already organised lectures about different religions and cults to help their people understand the issue and to counter B'nai Yeshua's activities. One rabbi told a reporter from the "National Courier" (13th. May, 1977) that he is "taking a deprogramming course to prepare himself to deprogram any member of his own congregation" who might be converted.

At a recent American-Jewish committee meeting, rabbi James Rubin warned that "every student in Jewish schools must be given a 'terrain-map' of cults to better prepare them for the world of 'new-time religion.'" Such a programme should be part of an intensified campaign to educate Jewish youth about their heritage, he added.

Noting that since 1965, more than 1,300 new cults have appeared in America, he remarked that "Jewish attraction to the cults is a stunning indictment of our inability to relate to our youngsters on a spiritual level." Another spokesman at the meeting identified the movement "Jews for Jesus" as the greatest single threat to Jewish life in New York, adding that they misrepresent the biblical Scriptures and distort Jewish symbolism.

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC INNOVATIONISTS

Innovation in the Roman Catholic Church is largely forwarded by various educational institutions. A major part in this programme is played by the "Catholic Theological Society of America." Already it proposes a complete change in the rules regarding sexual morality. The "New York Times" (29th. May) reports that the society advises Roman Catholics "not to rely solely on Biblical injunctions or Church codes as guides to sexual behaviour, but to make their own judgments about sexual morality."

The Catholic Theological Society is the main professional organisation of Roman Catholic theologians in the United States and Canada, and therefore has an important influence on the minds of Roman Catholics here.

According to the explanation now given by the Catholic Theological Society, the sexual act is to be judged moral if it is "self-liberating, other-enriching, honest, faithful, socially-responsible, life-serving and joyous." No act is to be considered intrinsically evil - "It is the whole action, including circumstances and intention, that constitutes the basis for ethical judgment."

One would like to ask these learned "theologians" what sin would be considered unjustifiable with their approach to the question.

#### OCCULTISM AND SATANISM FLOURISH

Lately interest in occultism and even satanism has appreciably increased. Such prominent magazines as "Time," and "Newsweek" have carried articles on these subjects.

A phenomenal growth of occultism and witchcraft has been remarked in Los Angeles, Miami and New York.

According to the Roman Catholic magazine "Twin Circle," over a thousand witches attended a convention in Los Angeles in 1973. A similar conference was held in San Diego, which is considered the centre for witchcraft. The State Experimental College in that city has a course in witchcraft on its curriculum.

A major drive of several witch groups aims to restore Halloween as a holiday for witches. They claim that it is the time when their chief goddess should be honoured.

### BLASPHEMY IN AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

The 19th. June number of the "Washington Post" carried a Blasphemous caricature of the Vladimirskaya Icon of the Mother of God, in the form of an aged hag, holding in her arms a child with Brezhnev's face. The cartoon was entitled "Mother Russia." Many protests have been sent to the paper's editor, and at the direction of Metropolitan Philaret a protest was sent in the name of our Synod of Bishops. A censorious article was also published in "Novoe Russkoye Slovo" on the first page. And a protest was sent by the Congress of Russian Americans.

Those that wish to express their own disapproval to the paper's editors are encouraged to send a letter to:-

The Editor of the Washington Post,  
1150, 15th. Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

### NUNS AS JAILERS!

The May number of "Religious News Service" carries a curious story about nuns in Bolivia.

Thirty-three American women, detained in prison there on narcotics charges, were incarcerated in a secured compound in the charge of Roman Catholic nuns of the order of the Good Shepherd.

A Roman Catholic missionary priest, who feared to give his name lest reprisals be brought against the American detainees, said that he did not understand why, but he knew that all the women arrested in La Paz were kept in the nuns' charge. This was confirmed by a Miss Fryer, a Lutheran, recently released from the prison, who stated that until fifteen years ago, the prison run by the nuns had housed criminals of both sexes.

The nuns receive a salary from the Government for their work. At present some 67 people are detained in the prison, and they are kept in a courtyard from nine o'clock in the morning until 6.30 p.m. every day, regardless of the weather. And then they are confined in a basement.

A curious appendix to this tale: the full title of the nuns' order is The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shpherd!

### THE PROS AND CONS OF HOMOSEXUAL MORALITY

In America a battle is being waged around the question of the rights of those people given over to the sin of sodomy.

In one county of the State of Florida, the court passed a decision banning discrimination against homosexuals in hiring, using community accommodation, or in community activities. This resolution evoked great indignation and much opposition. This was led by a famous singing star, Miss Anita Bryant, who is a Baptist. She founded an organisation called "Save Our Children," and she explained that when the law demands that you allow a known homosexual to teach your children and serve as an example for them, it is time to have done with "tolerance." She collected 66,000 signatures, and called for a county referendum on keepin or revoking the court's resolution.

The battle was not easy. It seems that some 150,000 open homosexuals live in the Miami area. On their side they received support from the Democratic Party, the National Council of Churches, 125 local clergymen and a former Attorney General, Ramsey Clark, who paid a special visit to Miami.

In a short time, their campaign raised \$350,000. However, the people promoting Miss Bryant seem to be in a stronger position than expected. She was supported by Roman Catholics and Orthodox Jews, and even by the governor of Florida. The battle became so heated that there were even instances of physical assault, and as a result some were injured.

As a result of the campaign, a two-thirds majority voted against the homosexuals, and the court's decision was ammended. The homosexuals then used this case to bring the question of their rights before the national forum. Anita Bryant and those of like-mind with her will not be at a loss. Indeed, Orthodox Christians, who hitherto have been on the sidelines on this and other issues, must give their full support to her.

The picture of America's moral decadence cannot better be demonstrated than in California. San Francisco, the "gay capital of America" as it is called, can now claim that one in five of its inhabitants is prone to this sin, and it proposes to set up a programme in the coming year to teach children "greater respect for homosexuals!"

This project was brought to the legislature by a groups of homosexuals. The Human Rights Commission and the Gay Advisory Committee made the recommendation that "sex-education" be revised so that the children might be taught "respect for human diversities." A special committee was set up to direct the revision of the question's presentation in school-books.

Detty DeLosada, speaking on behalf of the public schools, confirmed that revisions were being prepared for all school-books, from kindergarten through senior high school.

The co-ordinator on the Human Rights Commission in San Francisco, Gail Roberts, explained to a reporter from the "National Enquirer" that "the thrust of this proposal is to teach tolerance for the homosexual life-style. I hope the committee will correct any information that homosexuality is a disease, or a cardinal sin, or an illness - that sort of negative connotation."

#### HELP FOR HOMOSEXUAL PROPAGANDA

In his election campaign, President Carter promised aid to homosexuals. Now he has to show it in practice.

A militant acknowledged lesbian, Jean O'Leary, has been appointed by the President to the National Commission for the Observance of International Women's Year. This is the first time that a homosexual who has made no secret of their disposition has been appointed to a high federal position. O'Leary is one of the most prominent participants in the fight for recognition of homosexual rights. She led a delegation of homosexuals that was even received in Carter's office last year. O'Leary boasts that she persuaded the International Women's Year Commission to make "gay rights" a recommended discussion topic at all their conferences. She has penned a paper entitled "Lesbians and the Schools," in which she demands that all schools offer sex-education courses "to encourage students to explore alternate life-styles, including lesbianism." She also demands that such courses be taught by people who have themselves taken a similar course, and could influence school counsellors into taking "a positive view" of homosexuality. She also recommends that the students be provided with the

names and telephone numbers of homosexual counselling services. Besides inviting homosexual speakers to schools to encourage students to become homosexual, she recommends that books that do not mention homosexuality or that disparage it be banned from classes.

Imagine then what type of person has been now given a position by the President of the United States, which opens to her the means of furthering this most distasteful "reform", aiming to lead our young people into the way of vice. The crusade against this, which Anita Bryant leads, therefore acquires even greater significance, and deserves the support of every healthy person in the land.

PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND POPE OF ROME EXCHANGE GREETINGS

The Greek paper, "Hellenic Chronicle," carries (21st. July) the news that the Oecumenical Patriarch, Demetrios, and Pope Paul VI exchanged letters of best wishes on the occasion of the visit to Rome of a delegation from the Patriarchate led by Metropolitan Meliton, this for the elevation of five new cardinals.

Patriarch Demetrios took the opportunity to send the Pope a plaque, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Pope's meeting with the late Patriarch, Athenagoras.

Patriarch Demetrios noted in his letter that the visit of Metropolitan Meliton to Rome showed that the bonds of brotherhood were being entwined anew and "ever more tightly between the Old and the New Rome," and "are now such that everything which concerns the life of one of the two sister churches is lived by the other in communion with the same spirit."

The Pope replied that the Church of Rome intends to progress "along the road which would lead us to celebrate the Eucharist of the Lord together

The Patriarch expressed the hope that soon such a corporal unity would be achieved that "a perfect communion in the same chalice would be blessed with success."

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