

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC & FOREIGN RELATIONS
of the
SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

NEWSLETTER #34

November, 1980

FROM THE LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

On October 24, His Eminence, the Metropolitan, having recovered from the operation performed on him in San Francisco, returned to New York. Although the Metropolitan feels himself to be in quite satisfactory health, on the orders of his physician, he must again be admitted to the hospital in December for an examination.

Transfers:

In consequence of the repose of Archbishop Theodosius of Australia and New Zealand, the Synod of Bishops has appointed His Grace, Bishop Paul, formerly of Stuttgart and Southern Germany. It is presumed that Bishop Paul will be able to take up residence in his new see in December.

To fill the vacancy left by Bishop Paul, Archimandrite Mark (Arndt) has been appointed. He is to be consecrated with the title of Bishop of Munich and Southern Germany. His consecration has been scheduled for November 30 and will take place in the Synodal cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign in New York City.

Archimandrite Mark, known as Michael Arndt before he received the monastic tonsure, was born on January 29, 1941, in Saxony, just as was the late Metropolitan Seraphim (Lade), the first bishop of German nationality. Having completed his secondary education in Frankfurt-on-Main in 1961, Fr. Mark enlisted in the German military for a year and a half. Thereafter he was recalled several times and attained the rank of lieutenant. In 1963 he enrolled in the School of History and Philology in Frankfurt, transferring later to Heidelberg University. There he specialized in English and the Slavic languages, studying, in addition to Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian, Czech and Macedonian, as well as their literatures. His doctoral dissertation was written on the theme: "Biographical Literature of the Principdom of Tver' in the 14th and 16th Centuries."

In the autumn of 1973, Archimandrite Mark began the course of Belgrade University's Theological School under independent study.

Ordained to the rank of hierodeacon in 1975, Fr. Mark completed his teaching activity in regard to Church Slavonic and Old Russian languages and literatures, and also his scholarly research because of his reception of the monastic tonsure. Three days afterwards, Fr. Mark was ordained to the rank of hieromonk and was appointed temporary pastor of the parish in Wiesbaden. In the summer of 1976, Fr. Mark was elevated to the rank of archimandrite.

The future bishop is completely fluent in Russian, Serbian, Slovak, German, French and English.

He also can make himself understood in Czech, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Spanish and Italian, being also well versed in Latin.

ROBBERIES COMMITTED IN CHURCHES

With great sorrow Archbishop Antony of Geneva reported to the Synod of Bishops that in the recent past, taking advantage of the absence of the pastor of the church, Fr. D. Khvostov, thieves entered

the memorial church in Brussels and robbed it of its tabernacle (fortunately without the Precious Gifts), its altar cross and Gospel, as well as many icons.

Preparing to depart on vacation, Fr. Dimitry had providently removed from the church all the sacred vessels and the most valuable icons, concealing them in the church residence.

At the same time, in mid-September, an attempt was made to plunder our cathedral in Geneva. Thieves entered the church through a window in the vestibule area, using a acetylene torch to cut through an iron grill and cutting the glass of the window. But as soon as they began to pry the icons from the church's walls, the alarm system which had been installed in the church was triggered and summoned the police, who arrested the three thieves. They were identified as Rumanian political emigrants who lived in the vicinity of Paris, France. They had managed to steal very little; ten icons had been placed by them in a sack. Insurance will cover the cost of replacing the damaged kiots, iron grill and window. This was the fourth time that robbers have broken into the Geneva cathedral over the last thirty years.

DEDICATION OF THE NEW SCHOOL BUILDING IN NYACK, NEW YORK

On 1/14 October, the feast of the Protection of the All-holy Theotokos, the divine services were solemnly celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Laurus, with His Grace, Bishop Gregory concelebrating, together with a goodly number of clergy and laity. Following the services, the dedication of the new building constructed to house the church school, was performed. Thereafter those present were invited to a sumptuous banquet prepared by the parish's sisterhood.

COMPLETE CONFUSION OF IDEAS

In its October 2 issue, the Ecumenical Press Service reports that on September 14, in Damascus, there took place the solemn ceremony of the enthronization of Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, as the head of the (Uniate) Church of Antioch and All East, and of the Universal Syrian Church. This patriarch, the twenty second in his line, is a member of the World Council of Churches and is a committed ecumenist.

It is noteworthy that at this enthronization the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Hazim attended, an event without precedent. Also attended the Papal Nuncio to Syria, representatives of World Council of Churches and diplomatic representatives including a personal representative of the Syrian President.

PATRIARCHATE OF MOSCOW DEFENDS THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN METROPOLIA

With regard to the organization of the dialogue with the Catholics, the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, in its #6 issue, has printed the curious facts of its attempts to obtain participant status for the "Orthodox Church in America" and the "Autonomous Church of Japan" for the dialogue held on Patmos and Rhodes.

The Patriarch of Constantinople sent to Moscow a report on the composition of the members of the Commission for the organization of the dialogue between the "Fulness of Orthodoxy" and the Roman Catholics, in which no space was accorded the "Orthodox Church in America" and the "Autonomous Church of Japan."

The Patriarch of Moscow sent a protest to Constantinople, pointing out that the absence of these two representations has consid-

erable significance in view of the importance of the question of the dialogue and because "the labors of the Joint Theological Commission can be efficacious and beneficial only when each of the local Orthodox Churches is accorded the possibility of making its own contribution towards the creation of general ecclesiastical unity." In connection with this, on January 3, 1980, Patriarch Pimen expressed the hope that this omission in the list of the Commission's membership would be corrected.

No reply was received from Constantinople in return...

Then, on March 26, Patriarch Pimen again wrote a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, in which he expressed his amazement that he had hitherto received no answer, asking at the same time that Constantinople inform him as to whether the reports in the press on the designation of Patmos as the site of the Commission's sessions corresponded to reality. And again he emphasized that it was essential to include the autonomous Churches of the Moscow Patriarchate in the membership of the Commission for the dialogue with the Catholics.

Finally, on March 28, a letter arrived from Patriarch Demetrios, in which he expressed his opposition to the participation in the inter-Orthodox Commission of representatives of "the Orthodox Church in America" and the "Autonomous Church of Japan" insofar as they "have not been universally recognized by the Orthodox."

In connection with this, at a session of the Sacred Synod presided over by Patriarch Pimen which took place on April 24, a resolution was adopted: "4. To express our dismay at the opposition of the Patriarchate of Constantinople with regard to the participation of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America and the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Japan in the impending Orthodox-Roman Catholic theological dialogue, which can complicate the acceptance of its resolutions by the Orthodox pleroma. The existence of two local Churches: the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America and the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Japan in aforesaid statuses and their belonging to Orthodoxy are obvious facts. Hence it would be correct to separate the question of the formal recognition of their status, if this is for any reason problematic for any local Church, from the question of their participation in any pan-Orthodox activities, one of which is the forthcoming dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches."

THE GROWTH OF ECUMENISM IN YUGOSLAVIA

The Keston News Service, published in England at Keston University, reports with satisfaction that the ecumenical movement in Yugoslavia is not only not at a standstill, but, on the contrary, is even making progress.

And example is cited in the activity of "one of the ecumenically-minded and more progressive Orthodox bishops" Andrej, formerly bishop of Banja Luka but transferred to Srem in July of this year. During his assignment to Banja Luka Bishop Andrej became especially close to the local Roman Catholic Bishop Pilcher. The Zagreb-based Catholic bi-monthly Glas Koncila continues to report on Orthodox, Protestant and Islamic events, as well as on items directly concerning the Roman Catholic Church. Alojz Turk, the Catholic Archbishop of Belgrade, while in Rome this past summer, assured the Pope that the priests of his diocese "behaved in a spirit of ecumenism to their brothers and other religious communities and especially other nationalities. The faithful and clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church equally hoped that their relations with the Catholics would become increasingly frank and open

in the spirit of the Gospels. The Catholic and Orthodox theological faculties have held five joint symposia with representatives of other religious communities."

It would appear that the repose of Archimandrite Justin (Popovich), whose authoritative and profoundly Orthodox opinions were taken into account by many, has loosed the hands of the ecumenists.

A tendency towards closer relations among the various Protestant sects is also noted in Yugoslavia.

MORE ON OBERAMMERGAU

The chancery of the Synod of Bishops has received a large packet containing a letter from the American Jewish Committee, signed by Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, its national director of interreligious affairs.

Addressing himself to "dear friends," Rabbi Tannenbaum writes that he sent the material enclosed in the envelope in connection with the fact that the question of the status of Jerusalem requires study for the forth-coming Jewish-Christian dialogue. He also took the liberty of enclosing "several documents examining the theological and historical issues raised by the Oberammergau Passion Play."

All of the material which accompanied the letter had, in fact, nothing whatsoever to do with the status of Jerusalem, but, besides six articles printed on a duplicating machine and photostats with reviews of the Oberammergau productions, there was also a nineteen-page booklet entitled "What Viewers of the 1980 Passion Play Should Know."

A bulletin issued by the American Jewish Committee reports that "Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, AJC's National Director of Interreligious Affairs, pointed out that the Oberammergau Passion Play remained one of the most anti-semitic presentations being shown anywhere in the world, and added: 'The fact that approximately two million people have exposed to this emotion-laden anti-Jewish message since World War II suggests that Oberammergau has become the international capital for the promulgation of some of the worst forms of demonic religious anti-Semitism in the world today.'

"The charge was made at a news conference at AJC National Headquarters, at which Bertram H. Gold, the agency's Executive Vice-President, presided...

"Rabbi Tannenbaum stated that the present production could not help but 'nurture and incite hatred and contempt for Judaism and the Jewish people.'"

The statement of the American-Jewish Committee on the subject of the "reworked" Oberammergau Passion Play for 1980 calls attention to an assertion made in the preface to the Play, which says: "After serious disputes in past years concerning the text of the play, the Parish of Oberammergau was induced to revise the text in order to take into account primarily Jewish objections, and to adapt it to the theological propositions of the Second Vatican Council."

The Committee's statement is so detailed that it calls the reader's attention even to such minutiae as the actors' costumes. In the words of the critics, Christ Himself, His closest disciples and followers are represented in bright pastel-hued costumes; they speak softly and peacefully, while opponents of Christ's teaching are represented in heavy, vivid oriental costumes, and the mitres of the priests and rabbis are capped with horns; they speak loudly.

Summarizing all their objections, which had been set down in detail, the critics conclude: "As our American Jewish Committee studies indicated, the Gospel narratives differ among themselves in describing key events, and it would have been possible to devise a text fairer and more sympathetic to Jews that was equally true to

Scripture. The Oberammergau Passion Play, however, in its present form invokes and emphasizes those Gospel episodes that cast the most unfavorable light on Jewish motives and actions."

MONKS PROTEST AGAINST SMUTTY FILM

Orthodox Christian Witness, a bulletin published by Fr. Nicetas Palassis, has reproduced a clipping from the Seattle Times newspaper (Oct. 19) which comprises a report that the monks of the monasteries of Meteora in Greece, which are situated on precipitous cliffs near the town of Kalambaka, not only barricaded the gates of their monasteries, but covered the buildings with plastic sheets to make certain that they did not appear in a film being shot in the area, which they consider to be "erotic and amoral" of content.

One of the actors stated: "I've made James Bond movies all over the world and never run into this kind of problem."

The disenchanted producers had no choice but to construct a hastily contrived monastery facade atop a 400-foot crag in another location.

One of the monasteries' priests stated over the telephone that: "We shall let no one enter, tourist or Greek, until those un-Christian film people have gone."

MONASTICISM IN NORTHERN AMERICA

Under such a title, the Word, official mouthpiece of the Antiochian Exarchate in America, printed several articles dedicated to monasticism in America, in its October issue.

The first article was adorned with a beautiful photograph of the cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Jordanville, but what exactly it was doing there remains a mystery to the reader, for Holy Trinity Monastery is not mentioned at all in the article itself.

St. Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania (which now belongs to the "Orthodox Church in America") merited all of a half page, which consisted of two large photographs and ten lines of explanation. The remaining portion of the article was dedicated to "New Skete," which is under the jurisdiction of the "Orthodox Church in America," too.

Two other articles in this issue of the Word are also dedicated to "New Skete", and one to Mother Alexandra's convent.

The first article was written by Br. Job, the guestmaster, under the title "Monastice Hospitality Yesterday and Today"; the second was written by Fr. Anthony Scott, under the title: "American Orthodox Monasticism."

The first two articles, profusely illustrated, provide a very interesting picture of the "skete," which, by way of clarification, is usually a place where monks who have reached a higher spiritual plane seek solitude, rather than a common mass of monastics in a large monastic community.

Monks and nuns, totalling some thirty individuals, work together, but live at a distance of several miles from each other, having, however, a common church for the divine services. The monastery subsists on the labors and earning of its inhabitants: the nuns produce seven types of cheese, make jams and preserves, bake bread and pies, etc.; the monks occupy themselves with a task somewhat less usual for monastics—they raise pedigreed dogs. Everything in "New Skete" appears to be unusual. The refectory is a spacious place, quite bare, in the midst of which two tables have been placed, at which young people are seated. All of them wear lay clothing, and around them, on the floor, as many as ten large dogs of the German Shepherd variety are lying.

Even Fr. Laurence himself, the abbot of the monastery, is seated at table in lay garb, embracing a large dog.

Fr. Scott reports that the monks of the "skete" are young men (all about thirty years of age). They were all members of various religious confessions in the past, who subsequently were admitted to the uniat church and were recently received into the "Orthodox Church in America." At least one of the monks was originally an adherent of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church who embraced uniatism, returning to Orthodoxy when the monastery was received into the "O.C.A." In general they do not wish to hear of "ethnicism and do not concern themselves with jurisdictional quarrels.", and thus all visitors are received with the same cordiality.

One of the authors of the articles describing this unusual monastery writes with winning naivete that "with the development of Orthodox monasticism on American soil, the spirit of Optina and the great Orthodox monasteries of the past is being re-discovered and renewed"! The other author maintains that "A visit to New Skete is a visit into the future of American Orthodoxy."

If this were indeed true (and thank God that there are in America Holy Trinity Monastery, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, St. Herman's Hermitage, Novo-Diveyevo Convent and the various other monastic institutions in California and elsewhere!), the "future" of Orthodox monasticism would be considered hopeless.

ACCORD BETWEEN CATHOLICS & ORTHODOX IN AMERICA

In its October 22 issue, the Orthodox Observer, official mouth-piece of the Greek Exarchate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, reports that on October 11, in New York, there took place a session of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Consultation, which has been organized by the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America and the National Catholic Conference of Bishops in the U.S. At this session both sides worked out and adopted a statement entitled: "Joint Recommendations on the Spiritual Formation of Children of Marriages between Orthodox and Roman Catholics."

The Orthodox were represented by Bishop Maximus of Pittsburgh, the envoy of Archbishop Iakovos; the Catholics by Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee.

The Recommendations now adopted repeated in part similar recommendations adopted in 1970 and 1978, but deepen the teaching on Christian matrimony and offer more detailed instructions on the raising of children born of mixed marriages.

The thoughtful reader cannot but notice here a criminal indifference to the truth to which the "Orthodox" side has agreed in the question of the Christian upbringing of children. For example, in point #4, entitled "Current Practice," it is reported that "Today each of our churches insists that the children of such (mixed) marriages be raised within its own communion, on the grounds that this is in the best interests of the child's spiritual welfare, thus presuming that one of the parents will relinquish the chief responsibility to the other. Yet if the purpose of the general law is indeed the child's spiritual welfare, its application should be guided by a prudent judgement concerning what is better for the child in the concrete situation."

Further one, proceeding to "Practical Recommendations," point #6 says that: "In some cases, when it appears certain that only one of the partners will fulfil his or her responsibility, it seems clear that the children should be raised in that partners church. In other cases, however, the children's spiritual formation may include a fuller participation in the life and traditions of both churches, respecting, however, the canonical order of each church. Here particularly the decision of the children's church membership is more dif-

ficult to make. Yet we believe that this decision can be made in good conscience. This is possible because of the proximity of doctrine and practice of our churches, which enables each to a high degree to see the other precisely as a Church, as the locus for the communion of men and women with God and with each other through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

In point #8 a conclusion is reached in which it is stated that it is essential to "urge our respective hierarchies to consider ways of reformulating legislation and pastoral guidelines in this area of communicating this on the parish level..."

A Laodicean indifference to the Truth emanates from this entire statement, and no doubt remains that with the implementation of such guidelines children will find it more difficult than ever to grow into believing Orthodox Christians.

REPLACEMENT FOR ARCHBISHOP VALERIAN

In its October 8 issue, the Orthodox Observer, a newspaper of the Exarchate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in America, reports that the diocesan conference of the Romanian Episcopate of the "Orthodox Church of America" has unanimously elected Archimandrite Nathaniel (Popp) as vicar bishop to Archbishop Valerian (Trifa).

The following is reported by Solia, the official mouthpiece of the Romanian Church, in its October issue. To the conference, whose main purpose was the election of a vicar bishop, three candidates were brought up, of whom two expressed their gratitude for the honor accorded them but withdrew their names from consideration on grounds of advanced age and physical infirmity. Thus, a single candidate remained, Archimandrite Nathaniel, who was elected accordingly.

Fr. Nathaniel was born in America, is forty years of age and received his higher education in Rome's Gregorian University. One should note that he was at that time a uniat, for the newspaper reports that after his return from Rome he was attracted to Orthodox teaching and, in 1968, was received into the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Archimandrite Roman (Braga), one of the candidates who withdrew his name from consideration, among his reasons for declining the nomination, mentioned that he "grew up in Romania and willingly or unwillingly I nourished myself with the way of thinking of that place and of those times. I consider myself unable to totally relate to the American young people, as my way of thinking is so different from theirs."

Apparently Archbishop Valerian will be subjected to deportation in the not-too-far-distant future. In that case the future vicar bishop would replace him.

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