



CHURCH NEWS

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF ORTHODOX CHURCH OPINION
February, 1997

Vol. 9;2 (No. 58)

Republication permitted upon acknowledgement of source

With this second issue (No. 58) of Volume 9 (which is the fourth complimentary issue of our series in English) we would like to avoid sending anyone unwanted literature which might clog up their mailbox. So we request that if you wish to continue receiving "Church News" in English please write to us in that regard.

Both the Russian and English versions exist only on the basis of the voluntary support of our readers. We will gratefully accept any donations to cover the costs of publishing, mailing and maintaining subscriptions to our various sources.

We apologize for any confusion caused by the mixup in our numbering system. The numbers in parentheses are correct and consecutive from the beginning of the publication of the Russian version in 1988. This is the second issue of this year (which actually corresponds to Volume 9 of the Russian version) and the previous issue was for Jan. of this year and should have read Vol. 9; # 1, the Sept.-Oct. '96, issue should have been Vol. 8; # 6 and Nov.-Dec.'96, issue Vol. 8; # 7. Thus although there are no English versions for Vols. 1-8 (up to July-August), to avoid further confusion we will number the English version exactly as is the Russian.

CHURCH NEWS
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FROM LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD

A Scandalous Agreement by the Chiefs of the REM in Jerusalem to Sell OPS Jericho Property

The President of the Jerusalem Section of the Orthodox Palestine Society, Bishop Anthony (Grabbe) just recently visited the Holy Land in order to defend some property in Jericho owned by the Society which illegally had been handed over to some Palestinians by the Chief the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Theodosios. While in Hebron to meet with Yasser Arafat he also met with the mayor of Hebron in the municipal building, Mustafah Natsheh. Mistakenly assuming that Bishop Anthony must be a person of responsible position in the Mission (which is a separate legal entity from the Society), the Mayor voiced some grievances in the hope of gaining his assistance. In this encounter the mayor made it clear in his bitter complaints about the former Chief of the Mission, Archimandrite Theodosios and the present Chief, Archimandrite Bartholomew, that they had agreed to sell several plots which belong to the Ecclesiastical Mission, and now, had not answered his letter regarding this verbal agreement. Since for some time he had not gotten any response to his letters to the previous and present Chiefs of the Mission, the mayor handed Bishop Anthony a copy of his letter to Archimandrite Bartholomew and Bishop Anthony promised to forward it to the Synod of Bishops.

One can assume that Archimandrite Bartholomew (not speaking Arabic and being afraid of exposing the secret verbal agreement to sell REM property) was postponing an answer until a suitable translator will be found. Bishop Anthony received an English translation (in addition to the Arabic text) of the letter and in fulfillment of his promise to the mayor, he forwarded the letter to the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA.

The mayor's letter, dated Jan. 15th, 1995 in Arabic and June 25th, 1996, in the English translation reads as follows:

(The English translation is under the letterhead of the Pontifical Institute of the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center)

To: Archimandrite Bartholomy, Chief of the R. E. M.

Greetings and respect,

I refer to the repeated and successive meetings with Your Excellency with regard to the lease of some pieces of land connected with your mission, for the establishment of some projects such as:

1. The piece of land adjoining to the University of Hebron plot # 201 from Parcel # 34403 for the establishment of a cultural center and a museum and a library for a lease of \$40,000, for a period of 99 years.

2. The piece of land adjoining to the Monastery of plot # 97, Parcel # 34405, part of which is 24 Dunams, to construct a tourist rest house for receiving guests of the Municipality for a lease of \$100,000 for the period of 99 years.

We hope that Your Excellency will agree to such a deal, with the knowledge that these projects will preserve the antiquities found and will prevent the attempt of encroachment on them and will add value and enhance the position/status of the Monastery and the Oak of Mamre of our Forefather Abraham, before the eyes of the pilgrims and visitors.

Yours respectfully,

Mayor of Hebron

cc: Mr. Ali Alsafarini, Legal Advisor of the R.E.M.

It is common knowledge in the Near East that when one speaks about a "lease" of a property for 99 years it means nothing less than the sale of real estate.

Establishment of a "cultural center, and a museum and a library" and also a "tourist rest house" in immediate proximity to the Monastery of the Oak of Mamre quite obviously indicates that what is being discussed is a complex of large buildings for which the ridiculously low price of \$140,000 is being offered!

Some questions inevitably arise in connection with this: is it possible that these illegal acts of both chiefs of the Mission have been arranged behind the back of the ROCA Synod of Bishops, or do they themselves now share the opinion that any church owned property could (and should) be up for sale and at any price? How can it be that three chiefs of the Mission in a row could be dishonest men? Abbot Nicholas stole money and objects from Mission's museum then left for the OCA, Archimandrite Theodosios (not even being a member of OPS) quite knowingly handed over to Arafat property in Jericho (which included the Tree of Zaccheas) -- who now is in Detroit under direct obedience to Metropolitan Vitaly -- and began the talks with the mayor of Hebron about selling a huge piece of Mission property, and now, his successor, Archimandrite Bartholomew, following in his footsteps, has also agreed to sell the same property which belongs to the REM! Have these chiefs received any money for this sale of Mission property? Why during only 10 years have there been already six persons in the position of chief of the Mission, while during previous years a chief of the Mission held this position for roughly 17-18 years?

Let us hope that finally the mayor of Hebron will receive an answer to his letter not from Archimandrite Bartholomew, but from the Synod of Bishops!

A SEMINARY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN RUSSIA

The Orthodox bulletin "Vertograd" published in Moscow (from the jurisdiction of the ROCA) in its issue # 12 (21) reported that the correspondence course seminary established by Archbishop Mark of Berlin, has been transferred to the supervision of Bishop Eutikhy of Ishima.

At present, there are 202 students enrolled. Of this number only 42 registered for exams. The number of seminarians who passed more than 10 exams totals only six individuals. Rather miserable progress, considering this institution is already several years old!

AN AMAZING APPEAL

The bulletin "Vertograd" in the same issue # 12 (21) in the section entitled "Documents" published the following appeal from the Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochaev to the Russian Bishops Conference of the ROFC, (in the jurisdiction of Synod of Bishops of the ROCA):

Your Eminences, God Inspired Archpastors:

The Orthodox Brotherhood of the Venerable St. Job of Pochaev, fulfilling its ministry in Russia with the blessing of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA and under immediate supervision of Archbishop Laurus, is turning to your eminences with a humble, filial request. Being witnesses of the general zealous veneration and doubtlessly graced-filled help of the strugglers for faith and piety of our Holy Church, we petition Your Eminences to intercede before the Council of Bishops of the ROCA to consider the following for possible glorification among the host of saints:

-- The Most Reverend Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov) formerly of Poltava, a new Recluse, a confessor of the Royal Martyrs, who blissfully passed away in 1940 in France;

-- The Most Reverend Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Syracuse and Trinity, a "Chrysostom" among the Russians abroad who left us, the Christians of the last times, God-inspired instructions on how one should save oneself and preserve one's fidelity to the true Church in times of universal apostasy;

-- The venerable Father Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) of Platina, an exceptional apologete, theologian and missionary, a humble monk-ascetic, who by his own example showed contemporary men a way to the grace filled harbor of the True Church and also proved the possibility in our times of following the thorny path of ascetic *podvig* [a term in Russian hagiography which literally means "exploit" or "feat"] by remaining in the "spirit of the ancient fathers."

Besides the authoritative and doubtlessly God-inspired quality of the writings of these *podvizhniki* of piety, their sanctity is verified by numerous miracles, the news of which increasingly appears in the church press. Their sainthood is so obvious that the veneration of those great strugglers is spreading far beyond borders of the true Church of Christ -- including the Moscow Patriarchate and other renovationist (*obnovlentsy*) circles. The works of Archbishop Averky, published in Russia in large quantities, of Hieromonk Seraphim and also the biography of Archbishop Theophan, are leading many of the Russian people towards faith, which by itself is already a great miracle.

At the same time we observe, however, some alarming efforts by leaders among the Sergianist Church [i.e., the Moscow Patriarchate] to make us lose contact with our strugglers of piety from the ROCA, and to present things in a way, that those saints are only accidentally part of our Church, but were "dissidents" of a sort in her or even did not belong to her. A festive glorification of them by our Church would put an end to these blasphemous insinuations, and once more would testify to the world that true sainthood is inseparable from the true Church, in the bosom of which the grace of Holy Spirit pours forth in abundance. In this way, the canonisation of these saints will become one more proof of the truth and salvific nature of our Church; one more mighty call to the misled Russian People to return to its grace-filled bosom so that through the prayers of her great sons they might find salvation and inherit eternal life. Amen.

[Signed] Rector of the Church of Holy Royal Martyrs, Steward of the Brotherhood, Priest Constantine Tocheny; member of the clergy of the Church of the Holy Royal Martyrs, member of Board of Trustees of the Brotherhood Priest Serge Kiselev; President of the Brotherhood, Alexander Soldatov, and others.

It is obvious that this petition, addressed to the hierarchs of the Russian Conference, is submitted by those who base all the sainthood of assumed saints entirely on their written works, and in case of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, on even less, because they are nearly non-existent.

Archbishop Theophan was very troubled by the fact that he was the one who introduced Rasputin to the palace of the Tsar the Martyr. Very soon after he found himself outside Russia, he became ill with paranoia, believing that he was being persecuted for having been an accomplice in the catastrophic Soviet Revolution. In 1925 he left Yugoslavia for Sofia, Bulgaria, and stayed there till 1931, almost never venturing to appear anywhere. While he was in Sofia, a young man, Alexander Taushev got acquainted with him and eventually became his spiritual son. In 1931 he left for France, believing himself to be persecuted by the Masons for his supposedly frank sermons against them, although abroad no one had heard of them. In 1940 Archbishop Theophan died in Paris totally alone. The miracles he is alleged

to have performed, it seems, are known only the writers of this appeal and then only based on his "life." Archbishop Theophan strongly disliked Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitzky) and passed this on to Archbishop Averky.

Archbishop Averky is the author of several very valuable books in a purely Orthodox vein, but this in no way testifies to his personal sainthood nor to any miracles of which no one who knew him well has ever heard. At the time of the departure of the Synod of Bishops from Belgrade during World War II, the then Protosingelos Averky, refused to carry the miraculous Kursk Icon, which had been entrusted to him because he had a large quantity of luggage and was afraid it might be lost. In the 60's, sorrowfully, Archbishop Averky became an important leader of the democratic mutiny of lay people against the principles of hierarchy (which started in San Francisco in connection with building a cathedral there), which passed also to the east coast of the US. We can recall that during the meals for all the hierarchs at one of the councils in Mahopac, New York, (the Synodal hermitage) the admirers of Archbishop Averky brought him meals specially prepared in Sea Cliff and demonstratively carried them into the dining room, being afraid that otherwise he might be poisoned as an "zealot of Orthodoxy." Those lay-people insisted that no decisions of the Bishops' Council would be valid, unless they were approved by them, the laity. At that time, Archbishop Averky expressed strange views that Holy Spirit Himself governs the Church and therefore She doesn't need any sort of administration.

Nevertheless, both of those candidates for sainthood at least were without doubt Orthodox, while the personality of Hieromonk Seraphim Rose raises some doubts.

Before converting to Orthodoxy, Hieromonk Seraphim tried out several religions and being an admirer of China and Chinese people to the extent of learning their language to perfection, he in particular became very much involved with Buddhism.

The admiration for him in Russia is based entirely on two books "The Soul after Death" and "Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future." While it is true that there is nothing overtly objectionable in those books, yet the environment in such Eastern philosophies as Buddhism, Hinduism, and occultism, in spite of all the efforts of their former victims to get rid of this poison, inevitably leave on their psychology a ineradicable trace. This is true also of Fr. Seraphim, who, out of love for the Chinese people and China, in order to convert them to Orthodoxy, applied some Jesuitical tactics, namely, substituting Christian terminology with Buddhist concepts. Well educated and seriously converted to Orthodoxy Americans in the Church Abroad, regard Fr. Seraphim with suspicion and reservation, although he is popular in the most modernized Orthodox exarchates of all those in America, that of the Antiochian Exarchate, also the OCA and even the "evangelical Orthodox." The fact that he has become popular among the Sergianists and even in "renovationist circles" does no honour to Hieromonk Seraphim! Influenced by the propaganda of Gleb Podmoshensky in 1993 a group of admirers established "The Seraphim Rose Foundation" in order to publish his works. Podmoshensky, his former co-brother (many years ago defrocked by Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco for his connection with a sectarian pseudo-Orthodox group), only a few months after his repose, published in his English magazine information about miracles which supposedly happened at his grave. With the passage of time, Podmoshensky's magazine started to promote even a covert form of Buddhism. For example, in issue # 187-8 ("The Orthodox Word") on the bottom of the cover, which shows Chinese inscriptions surrounding an icon of the Theotokos, the theme of this issue is described as: "Ancient Chinese Foreshadowings of Christ." The magazine has an article written by a Hieromonk Damascene, which begins with words: "*Christ the Eternal Tao* [a pamphlet] was inspired by the life of the Chinese scholar Fr. Seraphim Rose (then known as Eugene Rose) and his teacher, the Taoist philosopher Gi-ming Shien." On page 66 we find: "...Just as the ancient Greeks had once seen the fulfillment of their philosophy in the revelation of Christ, so Fr. Seraphim recognized the fulfillment of the philosophy of Lao Tzu in the ancient Orthodox Christianity which Greeks (and by extension, the Russians) had preserved".

Unfortunately, the members of the Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochaev have exemplified the Russian saying: "Not knowing the ford, they fell into the water." In English this might be freely rendered as, "Look before you leap."

A DIOCESAN MEETING IN MOSCOW

In a special enclosure to the newspaper "Russkaya Mysl" ("Russian Thought") in the "Tserkovno-obshchestvenii Vestnik" # 6, information was published about a diocesan meeting in Moscow, held on Dec. 12, 1996, chaired by Patriarch Alexis and with the participation of Archbishop Sergius Solnechnogorsky who is director of the affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also the patriarchal vicars: Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk, Archbishops Job of Odintsovo and Savva of Krasnogorsk, and also Bishops Arsenios of Istrinsky, Tikhon of Bronnitsa, Eugene of Vereisk.

The meeting heard a report of the treasurer about the financial standing of the diocese and also "as usual, the participants of the meeting directed the patriarch's attention to the fact that the sale of candles, in stands and stores of Patriarchate, undermines the solvency of Moscow parishes." This time Patriarch ordered the sale of candles outside churches to be stopped.

Of special interest was a speech by Archpriest Nicholas Krechetov, the chairman of the disciplinary committee. "He directed the attention of the participants to the activity of some Moscow priests, who, in his opinion, exceed the limits of acceptable difference of opinion in the Church by spreading unorthodox views and leading the faithful to other

confessions. Addressing those present, he offered to ask His Beatitude to excommunicate the unnamed priests, who collaborate with Christian radio broadcasting, by putting the matter to a vote."

In reply to this speech the Patriarch rightly pointed out that it is a chairman's privilege to request a vote, and at the same time he acknowledged that "the addresses of some priests (in particular George Tchistiakov and Vladimir Lapshin) tend to scandalize those who are not steady in the faith." Yet, he said, that "in this case, any canonical measures are out of place, but it would be necessary to talk with those priests and only then take the appropriate measures."

The bulletin "Vertograd" in the issue # 12 (21) published a number of public announcements of the clergy who participate in this catholic radio station. So, Priest G. Tchistiakov, on Jan. 4th, 1996, proclaimed that: "...Neither Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, nor Metropolitan Innocent nor the many other bishops, archbishops and metropolitans of our Church during the past century, nor any of the priests, philosophers, theologians, lay people ever said that the Christians of other confessions are wrong, that the Christians of other confessions are heretics."

Abbot Innocent Pavlov on January 8th, 1996, declared that "the Church-Slavonic language is an ecclesiastical nonsense! Do you understand? I say this as a philologist."

Priest Vladimir Lapshin on Sept., 1996, expressed a typically Protestant view: "...I disagree that we have to be saved, because I am deeply convinced that Jesus has saved us; Jesus did everything for our salvation. And we acquire this salvation through faith in Jesus Christ."

On March 12, the same priest announced that, "As far as the Feast of the Entrance of Holy Theotokos is concerned, let us frankly admit that such event most probably never happened and could not happen."

But the further we go the worse it becomes. On Oct 27th of the same year, he instructed his radio listeners: "We all defend whatever we please, but only not in Christ: whatever dogmas or whatever canons which appear to us as absolute and unalterable. All of this is nonsense!!! Take the canons -- they were accepted some one and a half, two millenia back... One may not turn the Church into a ghetto with medieval world-views!"

Then he advised those who were baptized in the Orthodox Church to try to find a place in it in particular, but "if this does not work, and if today you belong to one of the Protestant churches and all that surrounds you there you like and it makes you feel comfortable, well, God speed. I believe, that the Lord has many ways and that Lord leads us by different ways. Maybe your path is exactly there."

It is self-evident that Patriarch Alexis has heard, and not for the first time, about the activity of whole number of priest-heretics in his diocese, who under his very nose and with his own blessing promote Roman Catholic and Protestant propaganda within his flock.

Since Moscow Patriarchate priests are accustomed to being submissive to and having no rights of before their hierarchs, one can only admire the courage of Archpriest Krechetov, who was not afraid to speak up against the heretics in front of the Patriarch himself and "the whole honorable assemblage." And as far as the Patriarch himself and his attending bishops go -- his position is very peculiar: on the one hand he has to pretend to be a defender of Orthodoxy, and on the other, as Americans say, "money talks." This heretical radio broadcasting is totally subsidized by Roman Catholic money through the "Church in Need Fund" which grants every Moscow Patriarchate bishop substantial monetary "assistance."

SUSPENSION OF ARCHIMANDRITE ZINON

The newspaper "The Russian Herald" ("Russkii Vestnik," published in Moscow) in its issue # 49-51, 1996 published a decree from Archbishop Eusebius suspending a very renown iconographer (in Russia as well as abroad) archimandrite Zinon.

Archimandrite Zinon himself responded to this decree in an open letter to Archbishop Eusebius, comprising an entire page of the newspaper, which was published in "Russkaya Mys!" # 4153. Also the Jewish Russian paper in New York, "Novoye Russkoye Slovo," likewise had a lengthy report on this story.

No doubt, Archimandrite Zinon should be suspended and tried by an ecclesiastical court for not only allowing Roman Catholics to serve in the church of his monastery, but also taking communion from them. This is why the Apostolic Canons 10, 11, 45 mentioned in the decree are quite appropriate. But Apostolic Canon 55 directs the deposition a clergyman who "would insult a bishop." Apostolic Canon 39 states that clergy are not to do anything without their bishop's permission, according to famous canonists Balsamon and Nikodim Milash this refers to the management of properties. Canon 30 of the Council of Laodecia speaks of the impropriety of clergymen bathing with women! And the 31st Apostolic Canon has in mind clergy who abandon their bishop to "set up another altar" which Archimandrite Zinon never did and, according to his letter, did not plan to do. The same can be said about the 10th Canon of Carthage and the 5th of the Council of Antioch.

In his open letter to Archbishop Eusebius, Archimandrite Zinon writes: "During our conversation you have said that you have no objections to permitting Catholics to serve in the monastery, since such cases have happened numerous times and occurred also in the Trinity-Sergiev Lavra as well as in other monasteries, but you were outraged by

my taking communion with them. You knew perfectly well about my 'pro-Catholic views.' The case which outraged you happened on August 15th 1996."

The archbishop's decree is dated Nov. 14th, 1996. What made the archbishop wait for three months before suspending Archimandrite Zinon? Would it not be much simpler just to refer to the 55th Apostolic Canon about "insulting a bishop" in order to have him expelled from his diocese?

In our times, probably hoping that the majority of lay people are unacquainted with "The Pedalion," the compilation of canons, contemporary hierarchs (unfortunately not excluding some in our own ROCA) in their decrees string the canons like beads on a thread to make things look more impressive, and are more after quantity, as has happened in case of Archimandrite Zinon. In his long letter he states, that he will be obedient to this decree and under no condition leave the Moscow Patriarchate. And this means that he did not leave his bishops and did not set up another altar", as well as being a monk, he did not bathe together with women, at least simply because in our days it has been long forbidden everywhere by the civil laws!

CONTEMPORARY EASTERN "ORTHODOX" PATRIARCHS

The official Vatican information service "The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity" # 91 (1996/I-II), usually received very late, published 55 pages of documentary reports about the Vatican's relations with Orthodox Churches, and all shades of Monophysites who call themselves Orthodox.

Starting with the report about the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Vatican bulletin states that from June 27 to 30 1995, Patriarch Bartholomew was in Rome. "During his visit, the Patriarch had three private meetings with the Holy Father; he participated in the Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Pope in St. Peter's Basilica and during which, after the proclamation of the Gospel in Latin and Greek, the Patriarch and the Holy Father then together recited the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the original Greek and, after the Mass, they together blessed the faithful."

The visit ended with the signing of a common declaration in which they thanked the Lord "for this brotherly meeting of ours, which took place in his name and with the firm intention of obeying his will that his disciples be one."

Then they "gave a positive evaluation of the result of the theological dialogue, which 'not only prepares way to solving the existing difficulties, but henceforth enables Catholic and Orthodox to give a common witness of faith.'"

In their declaration the Pope and the Patriarch also referred explicitly to the celebration of the Great Jubilee: "let us invite our faithful to make this spiritual pilgrimage together towards the Jubilee," they said.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Diodoros, probably the most Orthodox Patriarch in the group of "Orthodox Patriarchs" occupies a special position.

During May 1994, an Apostolic Nuncio and Bishop Duprey visited the Patriarch and were received by him very cordially. The Patriarch explicitly asked the Cardinal to convey to the Pope his gratitude for arranging the Fundamental Agreement between the Vatican and state of Israel, since it benefited the Christians in this area.

In an unofficial manner, the Patriarchate has monthly meetings with the "three Patriarchs" in Jerusalem, Orthodox, Armenian and Latin. At these meetings common declarations are produced, "sometimes simply to come together as brothers." This gives Christians the possibility to speak with a united front before the hostile Jews and, in a way, create politically sympathetic views abroad. Yet, for this assistance from West, the Patriarchate will have to pay dearly. As is mentioned in the report, "Even though it is not possible yet to face explicitly the problems that exist in the relationship between the Churches, the fact that these meetings take place in a fraternal and open spirit already represents considerable progress and gives hope for further steps in the future. This can be seen in the developing and growing (not yet official) participation of Greek Orthodox in the week of prayer for Christian Unity and the presence (received with applause) of a Metropolitan and an Archimandrite of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate at the solemn opening of the Diocesan Synod of the Catholic Church June 3, 1995."

Of the recently reposed Patriarch of Alexandria, Parthenios, we read that he "on each occasion expressed veneration and fraternity towards the Holy Father, mentioning 'the oneness' of Greek orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians."

Patriarch Ignatios IV Hazim of Antioch lags in no way behind the others. Catholics stress their close relations with him which began, the bulletin states, in 1991 with the close relationship between the Antiochian Patriarchate and the Council of the Catholic Patriarchs of the East. In September 1995 a Catholic Orthodox agreement was drawn up covering up 6 points: mixed marriages, preparation for marriage, first communion, sharing the eucharist, shared catechesis and antisemitism. "It is to be hoped that the participation of two bishops from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in the coming Assembly in Lebanon of the Synod Bishops will contribute to deepening the communion between our two Churches."

Speaking of the Moscow Patriarchate, Catholics mention a whole number of protests made in connected with their Uniate propaganda in Russia, yet after giving reports about many conferences and agreements, the bulleting states that: "In spite of certain resistances and difficulties that have not yet disappeared, there can be no doubt that present relations with the Russian Orthodox Church are substantially improved. That has been possible because the two Churches have had the will to continue the bilateral dialogue, also and especially where the circumstances are more

difficult and more complex. The recent documents of the Holy See with regard to the situation in countries of Eastern Europe, have confirmed the rightness of this attitude."

There is valuable information given about the relationship of the Moscow Patriarchate with Catholics in the bulletin "The Centeniel" of Feb. 1997, based on a recent communique which stated that "regular bilateral meetings between the delegations of the Holy See and Moscow Patriarchate were held on the premises of the Department for External Church Relations of the Patriarchate on Dec. 17-18, 1996." "The delegations," continues the communique, "were headed by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk ... and Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity... At the meeting, which was held in atmosphere of openness and mutual respect, a whole range of problems were discussed connected with an urgent need to settle the matter of bilateral relations between the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church in the territory of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus." After stressing the difficulties connected with Uniate propaganda in Russia, the delegates came to conclusion that, "In order to find a solution to the problem of interconfessional instability in the Western Ukraine and Transcarpathia, it was agreed that representatives of Orthodox and Greek-Catholics in the region would be invited to meet at an early date with delegations." It was also noted, that "a serious danger for the internal life of Christian communities is being posed by the appearance and activization of the numerous so-called new religious movements and sects... In this regard both sides agreed on the necessity of holding an interconfessional conference in the near future."

The situation is not much better with the Serbian Patriarchate either. After refusing to attend an ecumenical prayer for Christian Unity in Assisi, because it was held on the day of the Orthodox Nativity, Jan 7th in 1992, Patriarch Paul in 1993 asked the Pope to receive his delegation in Rome, which arrived there and was received in a separate audience. "More recently," the article goes on to say, "the Serbian Orthodox Church has taken two major initiatives towards the Catholic Church which should be mentioned. The first concerns the precarious situation of the Catholic community in Banja Luka and its Bishop, His Excellency Msgr. Franjo Komarica, who was visited by an Orthodox Bishop in the name of the Council of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church (May 1996) as sign of fraternity and comfort in his isolation."

"And the second, equally important, was the participation, through this Pontifical Council, of His Excellency Msgr. Lavrentije, Bishop of Sabac-Valjevo, in the 'Pilgrimage of the European Youth.' in Loretto September 6-10, 1995. Not only did the Patriarch allow Bishop Lavrentije to accept this invitation, but it was the whole episcopate gathered at the Council of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who decided to send him as representative of the episcopal organism of the Serbian Church"

Catholics note with pleasure that the correspondence between Vatican and the Serbian Patriarchate is a very intensive one.

From this published information it is obvious that all the other Orthodox Churches have more or less, compromised themselves by relationships with the Roman Catholics and other heretics and even pagans, as occurred in Australia (Canbarra) during ecumenical services. This forces us to finally pose a direct question: is there left in the world even one Orthodox Patriarch?

ISRAEL'S PRESIDENT IN VATICAN

As per The New York Times of Feb. 4, 1997, Israel's President Benjamin Netanyahu while in Italy paid a visit to the Roman pope and used the opportunity to reaffirm the previous invitation of Rabin in 1994 to the Pope to visit Jerusalem. Diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel were established in 1993.

The pope received Netanyahu in a 20 minute audience who told him: "We look forward to receiving you in Jerusalem," to which the pope responded: "God bless Israel."

One of the major obstacles to the pope's visit is the issue of the status of Jerusalem. The Israeli government insists that the city be recognised as an integral whole, as capital, while the pope demands (so far) that Jerusalem maintain the status quo under which Christians and Muslims have equal rights.

Netanyahu said to the pope that "our position on Jerusalem is unshakable. Jerusalem has to stay united. We are ready to give guarantees to Christians and Muslims, but we do not intend to discuss the city's political sovereignty."

After the president's visit, the Vatican declared, that "the pope intensely watches the events in the Middle East and he hopes that all Jews, Christians and Muslims, believers and unbelievers -- can create and foster peace, while respecting the rights and dignity of everyone."

BRUTALITY OF CROATS IN SERBIA

A bulletin "The Centeniel" of Feb. 1997, states that the International Haag Tribunal judges heard Serbian representatives who testified to crimes committed by Croats against Orthodox Serbs in Krajina, where more than 2000 Serbs were killed. The Tribunal is about to complete its hearings. Some witnesses testified in Belgrade in cooperation with the offices of Haag Tribunal and the Documentaion Center of Krajina "Veritas." Describing some details of the brutality of the Croats against the Serbs, a case from Pakostan was presented, where Tudijman's soldiers played football

with the severed head of Djuro Cupic from Jagodinja Gornja. Serbian representatives presented more than 150 cases of outrageous brutality by Croats. Nearly all documentation was accepted by the Tribunal.

The official publication of Serbian Patriarchate "Pravoslavlje" of January 1 listed details of more than 40 Orthodox churches which have been blasphemously desecrated by Croats. In this report it is to be noted that the Catholics made sure that holy altar in each church was crudely desecrated first of all.

Certainly, it is very comforting to hear that the Haag Tribunal has become involved in matters of persecution of Orthodox by the Roman Catholics, but it is interesting to note, that no one in the so-called educated Western World ever uttered a word about the same Croats, who in the 40's slaughtered some 800,000 Orthodox Serbs only because they were Orthodox.

A RECENTLY APPEARED EPISTLE BY METR. PHILARET CONCERNING GRACE IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

This epistle of Metr. Philaret Voznesensky (who reposed in 1985), the previous First Hierarch of the ROCA, quite unexpectedly was sent to us by one of our readers in Russia. We feel that despite the passage of 18 years its importance remains undiminished and we were glad to have the opportunity of being reminded of the basic principles of the Holy Fathers in regard to schismatics and heretics which were shared as well by all the other First Hierarchs of the ROCA. Metr. Philaret in his letter discusses mainly the dioceses in Western Europe, but his opinion was no different on matters concerning the Moscow Patriarchate which he does not mention by name simply because, at the time he wrote this letter, we had no contact with the then USSR.

We enclose this letter as a special addendum to this issue of "Church News." Those who wish additional copies may contact us at a rate of \$1 a copy.

A Letter of Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky)
to Abbess Magdalena (Countess Grabbe),
Superior of the Lesna Convent in France*



November 26 / December 9, 1979

Your Reverence,¹

I am writing this letter en route — onboard the ocean liner *Orion*, which is sailing to Australia. The ship is a rather large one, 42,000 tons (that's roughly the size of the *Titanic*)² and comfortable enough. This morning my travelling companion, Protopriest Constantine,³ served Liturgy in our cabin, and I took Communion. We did the same yesterday, it being the *apodosis* of the Feast of the Entry of the Most-holy Theotokos, since neither on the actual day of the feast, nor on the day following did we manage to serve — the ship was continually tossing. But since Thursday the ocean has grown calm, and now we are sailing peacefully.

For a long time now I have been wanting to share some thoughts of mine with you — on issues concerning which we proved to be of differing views. Of course, I write not in order to initiate a sharp polemic, but rather an exchange of opinions.

You most likely recall that, not during my last visit to the Convent, but during the one previous to it, you and I had somewhat of an argument over the fact that the Convent⁴ receives into its church those who, in essence, are followers, members of the former exarchate⁵, and not of the Church Abroad. And conversely, many of our spiritual

* Printed in *Tserkovnie Novosti (Church News)*, No. 58, February 1997, by Matushka Anastasia Schatiloff (née Grabbe), niece of the recipient of this letter. As is evident from the photocopies of the original, this letter was typed on both sides of five sheets of Metropolitan Philaret's familiar letterhead bearing this stylized Cross. (Compare this with his *Last Message to the Flock* found in his typewriter after his repose, copies of which were distributed at his funeral. A reproduction appears in *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 19, No. 15, 1985, p. 2) The photocopies also show that certain personal references have been deleted by having strips of paper taped over them, apparently by whoever first put the copies into circulation, which was not Matushka Anastasia. Note that these references have only been masked, not cut out, which would have resulted in loss of text on the reverse side of these sheets. For the sake of precision these deletions have been noted below.

¹ Here the second half of the salutation, apparently "Mother Magdalena", has been masked in the photocopy.

² Quotation marks, parentheses, all emphasis, and ellipsis marks are those of Metropolitan Philaret. All bracketed insertions and footnotes are the translator's.

³ Protopriest Constantine Fedorov.

⁴ Here in the photocopy the name "Lesna" has apparently been masked before the word "Convent".

⁵ The "Temporary Patriarchal Russian Orthodox Exarchate", based in Paris, had been formed in 1931 when Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky), having already withdrawn from the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, placed himself and his flock under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Although the exarchate itself was abolished in 1965 under pressure from Moscow, the present successors of

children regularly attend [the churches of] the Parisians, and there they go to confession and receive "Communion"...

You pointed out that the Convent acts thus for missionary purposes, in order to give the erring ones the opportunity to pray and be sanctified by the Mysteries in a true Orthodox church. But to this I will say: that may very well be so, just as the emissaries of Holy Prince Vladimir attended the Greek Orthodox Church. However... and it's a big "however"! The emissaries of the Prince reported to him concerning the beauty of the Orthodox Faith, and the result was that both they and the Prince himself did not remain in their error, but exchanged paganism for Christianity. And it seems clear to me that proper "missionary work" will exist in the Convent only then, when the Convent, while allowing "them" to visit the church, will, however, allow them to approach the Mysteries *only upon the condition* that, having received the Mysteries from us, they refuse the "Mysteries" performed at the "Rue Daru"⁶, and in general in the churches of the exarchate.

Otherwise what is the outcome? The outcome is that everything with them is in order, and there is no need for them to change or correct anything. And we, by admitting them to the Mysteries and not demanding any integrity or constancy in this regard, confirm them more strongly in the conviction that everything is fine with them and that their path is the true and correct path.

At the Third Pan-Diaspora Sobor⁷ they started making speeches about how we should unite with the Parisians and with the American False-Autocephalites "**in a spirit of love**". Love, you see, should unite us, and there is no need to emphasize our differences. But such talk ceased when I cited the words of one of the Holy Fathers which read thus: if we, supposedly in the name of love, so as not to trouble our neighbors, are going to keep quiet about their error and not explain to them that they are on a false path, then this is **not love, but hatred!** Does he do well who, upon seeing a blind man approaching a precipice, does not tell him about it, so as not to "trouble" him? Is that then love?

At the latest Bishops' Sobor,⁸ Vladyka Anthony of Geneva⁹ began to deliver a speech in that vein... He said: as regards Paris, there we have a common flock (that is, we and the exarchate). We both alike service one and the same Orthodox people.

At that point I could not contain myself and I burst forth with a speech...

Metropolitan Evlogy and his adherents remain in submission to the Ecumenical Patriarchate as its Russian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western Europe.

For further information in English on this and other points of recent church history touched upon by Metropolitan Philaret in this letter, see: *A History of the Russian Church Abroad: 1917-1971* (Seattle: Saint Nectarios Press, 1972).

⁶ The street in Paris on which the Church of Saint Alexander Nevsky, the cathedral of the Evlogians, is located.

⁷ The Third Pan-Diaspora Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad took place at Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y. from Aug. 26/Sept. 8 to Sept. 6/19, 1974.

⁸ The previous Bishops' Sobor had been held in September 1978 at Synod headquarters in New York.

⁹ Archbishop Anthony (Bartoshevich) of Geneva and Western Europe. Here in the photocopy "Anthony of Geneva" has been masked to simply read: "Vladyka A."

First of all, I pointed out that we really do have a place where we have a flock in common with other ministers of the Orthodox Church. And that is Boston. We have our parishes there, and the monastery of Archimandrite Panteleimon¹⁰ is located there too. And it has Greek practices and Typicon. All the faithful there attend both one and the other equally, since that monastery is of our jurisdiction, is absolutely Orthodox, and has our Orthodox “spirit”, despite the difference in Typicon and practices.

And to which I then added: but tell me, what sort of “common flock” could I have with the Parisians, when their head, Archbishop Georgy,¹¹ while passing by our Memorial Church in Brussels¹², spits in its direction with the words — “Ugh, the Karlovci contagion!”¹³ This was seen and heard by our people who were present there... But the exarchate spits not only upon our churches but upon the Church Typicon and the canons. They perform weddings there on Saturdays, and generally whenever you like — just so long as you pay the money. They served a funeral there for an *unbaptized Jew* — as was reported to us with indignation by our “Zarubezhniki”.¹⁴ What kind of “common flock” could there be here and what could we have in common with them? When I was serving in Brussels for the Day of Mourning,¹⁵ a certain woman started to approach the Holy Cup. I said: ask her whether she went to confession. The answer: “no”. “Then you cannot receive Communion”. She began to make a commotion — what is this, all that is needed is a clear conscience, and so forth... But I, I didn't get into an altercation with her, but only thought to myself: “Ugh, the exarchate contagion”... For she was one of the “Parisians”.

I am accused of excessive strictness and of “fanaticism”. But I have sufficient basis for holding to my point of view, for behind me stand great authorities, both ancient and contemporary.

I shall begin with the ancient ones. First and foremost — was it, then, in the present spirit of “condescension” towards those who have broken away that these words were spoken: “but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”?¹⁶ We know **Who** said these words. Who then will dare to gainsay Him?...

Let us turn to the great authorities. Here we have the hierarch Saint Gregory the Theologian, the incarnation of meekness and pure Christian love towards all, and in particular towards those who have gone astray. However, he frankly states that not every peace is to be prized, nor is every war to be feared. “There is a shameful peace, and there

¹⁰ Archimandrite Panteleimon (Metropoulos) of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

¹¹ Archbishop George Wagner.

¹² The Church of Saint Job the Much-suffering, consecrated in 1950 as a memorial to the martyred Imperial family and to all those who had lost their lives at the hands of the Communists in Russia.

¹³ “The Karlovci schism” was the disparaging term used for the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad by its detractors. The name is derived from the Serbian town of Sremski Karlovci where the Synod of the ROCA first convened in 1921, and where its headquarters were located until the end of World War II.

¹⁴ Lit.: our “Diasporites” — a colloquialism for the members of the ROCA, formed from the Russian adjective *zarubezhnaya* (i.e., ‘abroad, in diaspora’), as in *Zarubezhnaya Tserkov*, the Church Abroad.

¹⁵ Apparently July 4/17, the anniversary of the execution of the Imperial family.

¹⁶ Mt. 18: 17.

is a good and praiseworthy division”, says Saint Gregory.¹⁷ And the context of these words clearly indicates that he had in view those who had broken away — who had gone off into schism.

Next is Saint Basil the Great — a man stricter than most. Yet we know that when it was a question of a schism that had only just begun to form, then the hierarch was in favor of showing the maximum condescension and, for the sake of facilitating for the fallen the matter of their return to the fold of the Church, strove in every way so that the least possible demands be made upon them as the condition for their return. But how drastically he shifts his position when he speaks of an obstinate and prolonged schism. “Such a schism”, says Saint Basil, “is already in all things like unto heresy, and one must treat such schismatics *as one would heretics*, not permitting any communion with them.”¹⁸

Severe and categorical. But even more severely and more categorically speaks the third of these great authorities, Saint John Chrysostom. It's a pity that I do not have here at hand with me on the ship his marvelous sermons, preached precisely concerning schismatics. But I remember them well and shall strive to convey them as accurately as possible.¹⁹

Saint John Chrysostom begins his talk on schism by citing the ancient testimony of that great saint, Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer. Saint Ignatius says that there is no sin worse than that which brings division into the Church, and he warns that this sin is so great, that not even the blood of martyrdom can wash it away!²⁰ Corroborating this, Saint John Chrysostom says: I say this for those who *indiscriminately go to all churches* — both to ours and to those of the schismatics. If they teach differently than we do — then for that very reason, of course, one ought not go to them. But if they teach the very same as we do — **then all the more cause why one ought not to go to them**, for here is the sin of lust of authority...

Was it not for this very cause that Evlogy, of sorry memory, broke away and became a schismatic leader, because he could not endure the seniority of Metropolitan Anthony?²¹ Alas, it is so! I recall how my late father, Bishop Dmitry, upon returning [to China] from the famous “conference of the four”,²² for all his customary caution in

¹⁷Saint Gregory the Theologian *Oration 6*: 20. Of course, here and elsewhere in this letter the Metropolitan is citing the Holy Fathers from memory and not giving exact renderings from their works.

¹⁸ In like manner, Canon VI of the Second Ecumenical Council reads in part: “We call those heretics...who, though pretending to confess the sound faith, have schismatically separated and have gathered congregations in opposition to our canonical bishops.”

¹⁹For the full text of this and the subsequent quotations from Saint John Chrysostom, see his: Commentaries on the Epistle to the Ephesians, Homily XI.

²⁰ Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, compiler of the *Rudder*, in turn cites this passage from Saint John Chrysostom in his own notes to Canon XXXI of the Apostolic Canons.

Saint Cyprian of Carthage, in his *Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church*: 13, writes: “If such men were even slain in confession of the Christian name, not even by their blood is this stain washed away... He cannot be a Martyr, who is not in the Church.”

²¹ Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

²² This conference had been arranged through the mediation of Patriarch Varnava of Serbia, with the approval of the other participants, in an attempt to reconcile these hierarchs and restore unity to the

making comments, said in grief: “I did not imagine that an Orthodox hierarch could be as insincere as this Evlogy, whom one simply has no desire to call ‘Metropolitan’“. And Bishop Nestor,²³ who, as a hierarch, received the minutes of the conference, showed them to Fr. Nathaniel.²⁴ They contained, incidentally, these words of Vladyka Dmitry: “Inasmuch as His Beatitude Evlogy is today saying the exact opposite of what he said yesterday, then I too am forced today to likewise say the opposite and I hereby declare my total disagreement with him”...

Saint John Chrysostom continues: Thou (he is addressing his interlocutor) sayest, “We are all the same — they serve, pray, and teach the same as we do.” Very well — why then are they not with us? One Lord, one Faith, one baptism!²⁵ They have broken away — in that case, one of two things must be so: either all is well with us and they are in poor straits; or else all is well with them, and we are in trouble!

What do these clear and categorical words of this Holy Father signify? They indicate nothing other than that schism is **graceless**. Christ was not divided, and His grace is one. If one is to believe in the “state of grace” of schism, then one must either admit that we do not have grace — those who broke away having taken it with them; or else admit that there are *two* graces (and obviously two true Churches, for grace is given only in the true Church).

Continuing to expound his thoughts, Saint John Chrysostom finally draws his conclusion — inevitable and incontrovertible: “I do say and affirm that schism is just as terrible an evil as heresy.”

And heresy separates the human soul from the Church, from God, — and from salvation.

Here are some more voices from antiquity. Saint Peter of Alexandria saw the Saviour in a torn robe — the Lord was clutching it in His hands. The hierarch made so bold as to inquire: Who has rent Thy garment, O Saviour? There followed the mournful and indignant reply of the Saviour: Arius the madman — he has separated My sheep from Me which I have purchased with My blood...²⁶

In the lives of the saints it is related that the righteous Gregory once had a revelation. He beheld the future Dread Judgment of Christ. And at that judgment the Lord summoned Arius to Himself and threateningly asked him: Am I not the God-man Christ, equal in Divinity to the Father and the Holy Spirit? How is it that you reduced My Divinity to the level of creation and have brought this assembly deceived by you (the followers of Arius) to eternal torment?...

ROCA. It was convened in October 1935 in Sremski Karlovci with Patriarch Varnava presiding. The four Russian hierarchs participating were: Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky, on behalf of the ailing Metropolitan Anthony), Metropolitan Evlogy of Western Europe, Metropolitan Theophil (Pashkovsky) of America, and Bishop Dmitry of Hailar (Far East). Vladyka Dmitry also acted as secretary for the conference, with Count George Grabbe (the future Bishop Gregory) as his assistant.

²³ Bishop Nestor (Anisimov) of Kamchatka.

²⁴ Archimandrite Nathaniel (Lvov), subsequently Archbishop of Vienna.

²⁵ Eph. 4: 5.

²⁶ From the Life of Saint Peter, Pope of Alexandria, who is commemorated on November 24.

What do these terrible words tell us? That the heretic leads his followers to eternal torment!... We have already seen that — not according to the present spineless reasoning, but according to the teachings of the Holy Fathers — schism is just as terrible an evil as heresy, and that obviously the end of it will be the same. I do not dare to pronounce judgment on our contemporary founder of schism, Metropolitan Evlogy; but I fear for his soul and I fear for all those who have been deceived by him and his successors and have been carried away into schism.

And I cannot understand the position taken on this issue by the late Vladyka John — a true minister of God and a man of God.²⁷ Why didn't he “dot the i” from the very beginning and explain to the Evlogians the total falsehood of their path and position? For it is precisely because of this, because it was not stated at once and clearly where the truth is and where falsehood (for two truths there cannot be), where is white and where black, where light and where darkness, which path is correct and which incorrect — there would not now exist this “inter-jurisdictional hodgepodge” and the position would be clear.²⁸

That fact, that many from among the “Orthodox” indiscriminately attend whatever church, what does it tell us? Why simply that people do not hold the truth dear. For this very reason they don't bother giving the matter much thought. “The services are identical, everything is the same — what need is there to philosophize?” Or, as our Fr. John Storozhev in Harbin (the last spiritual father of the murdered Imperial family), one of the best pastors of the Diaspora, used to say with poignant irony: “the bells ring; the popes²⁹ serve; the singing is good — what more do you want?” To which may be added the oh, so familiar: “After all, God is one!”...

If only people loved the truth and cherished it — would they really be content with such indifference? No, and a thousand times no! Their soul would ache, and it would not rest content until it had discovered where is the truth, which can only be one — for two truths cannot be. How correct Vladyka Nektary³⁰ is when he always affirms: there is no such thing as “different jurisdictions”; but there is only the Orthodox Church Abroad, and outside of her are schisms and heresies.

Now I should like to cite a contemporary authority, one not ancient, but an authority before whom we all must bow. This, of course, is that great “Abba of all abbas”, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky].

Vladyka Anthony, when presenting the abbess' staff to Abbess Paula, said to her: “Be condescending to all, know how to converse with those weak in faith and with scoffers. Behave wisely with heretics, but never agree with them that they supposedly

²⁷ Archbishop John (Maximovich) had been the ruling hierarch of the ROCA Western European Diocese from 1951 to 1962, with his residence first in Paris and then in Brussels. In 1964 Archbishop John had been one of two candidates for Metropolitan of the Church Abroad before the Sobor elected its youngest member, Bishop Philaret of Australia, to the office. Vladyka John was glorified as a saint in 1994.

²⁸ Although it is clear what the Metropolitan intends to say here, it appears that his thoughts were flowing more swiftly than he could write, and thus he seems to have gone on to the second clause without having completed the first. The translation reflects the original and nothing of the text has been inadvertently omitted here.

²⁹ *Pope*: colloquial Russian for the simple village priest.

³⁰ Bishop Nektary (Kontsevich) of Seattle.

have the grace of the Holy Spirit; know that the Roman Catholics, the Mohammedans and all other heretics are without grace." And we have already seen that the Holy Fathers equate obstinate and prolonged schism with heresy. Consequently?...

A quotation from a Paschal encyclical of Vladyka Anthony's (1934):

"The present age is rich not in ascetical feats of piety and confession of faith, but in cheating, lies, and deceits. It is noteworthy that several hierarchs and their flocks, for the most part Russians, have already fallen away from Ecumenical unity, and to the question: "What dost thou believe?"³¹, reply with references to self-proclaimed heads of all sorts of schisms in Moscow, America, and Western Europe. It is clear that they have ceased to believe in the unity of the Church throughout the whole world and do not wish to admit it, attempting to bear calmly the refusal of the true Church to have relations with them, and imagining that one can supposedly save ones soul even without communion with Her... Those who have cut themselves off from Her deprive themselves of the hope of salvation, as the Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council teach concerning this, *having recognized the renegades as being totally without grace*, according to the word of Christ: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

"Unfortunately, some Orthodox laymen, even, alas, many priests (and hierarchs) have subjected themselves to this state of gracelessness, although still retaining the outward appearance of the church services and *the apparent performance of the Mysteries*."

Ponder those last words of the great Abba: the apparent performance of the Mysteries... What horror! But these his words concur totally with my own conviction regarding the gracelessness and inefficacy of schismatic Mysteries.

When at the Sobor I cited these words of Vladyka Anthony in support of my conviction, the hierarchs received them in silence — Vladyka Anthony [of Geneva]³² likewise held his peace. While Vladyka Filothei³³ thanked me on behalf of the entire Sobor for such an exceptionally important explanation.³⁴

Peace and God's blessing be with you. May the Lord and His Most-pure Mother preserve you and the Holy Convent in health and prosperity!

+ *Митрополит Филиарет*

+ Metropolitan Philaret

³¹ The question solemnly posed to a bishop at his consecration, to which he must reply publicly, declaring his confession of the Orthodox Faith and pledging to uphold the canons and teachings of the Church.

³² Here again in the photocopy this has been masked to read simply: "Vladyka A."

³³ Archbishop Filothei (Narko) of Berlin.

³⁴ At this point the bottom half of the front of this sheet of paper and three-fourths of the back side were taped over with blank white paper in order to mask the text when photocopied. The vertical strips of tape appear distinctly in the margins of the photocopy. In order to retain the Metropolitan's signature, which stands at the bottom of the reverse side, the sheet was not cut, but merely covered over.

“Enclosure”³⁵



This letter has turned out to be rather long. But having re-read it, I see that I have not said all that I consider necessary to say, and so I add this enclosure.

You, Matushka, have no doubt caught the basic trend of my thoughts. I consider (I speak, of course, only for myself) that the schismatics — American and Parisian — do not have grace, for otherwise one would have to admit the absurd: the existence of several true Churches, which do not recognize each other, nor have any spiritual communion among themselves.³⁶ This is already manifestly absurd because the Divine Founder of the Church said: “I will build My Church”,³⁷ and not “My Churches”. I was led to this conviction both by the words of the ancient Holy Fathers (cited by me above) and by the words of Abba Anthony concerning the *apparent* performance of the Mysteries among those who have broken away from the true Church. To such a degree do I not believe in the grace of the schismatics’ “manipulations”, that in the event that I were dying and it was necessary to give me Communion, I would receive it neither from the “Parisians” nor from the American False-Autocephalites, lest in place of the Holy Mysteries I should swallow a piece of bread and some wine.

But I have neglected still to emphasize that, the situation being such, it must be considered a most grievous thing that our “Zarubezhniki” also frequent the temples³⁸ of

³⁵ Metropolitan Philaret himself typed this title at the top of this separate sheet of paper.

³⁶ And as Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) pointed out in an article which he wrote not long before his repose: “Our previous Bishops’ Sobors never raised the particular question concerning whether or not the New Calendarists have grace. But the fact that formerly concelebrations with them were never permitted already testifies with sufficient clarity that the Church Abroad considered them to be without grace.” See: *Tserkovnie Novosti (Church News)*, No. 40, Sept.-Oct., 1994, pp. 2-4.

³⁷ Mt. 16: 18.

³⁸ The word employed here by the Metropolitan is not the usual *khram*, which can also be used (and is so used) for a Christian church, but rather *kapishche*, which designates a heathen temple only.

the schismatics — to “confess” and “commune” there. Of what are they communing? If the Holy Mysteries, then that means that we do not have the Holy Mysteries, as Saint John Chrysostom has elucidated so clearly. But if we **do have** the Holy Mysteries, then they do not, and these poor people go there in vain. “Apparent” Mysteries, according to the definition of Abba Anthony — that is what the ministers of the schism offer to these credulous people.

I quite understand what turmoil it would bring into the lives of those Russian people who believe in the exarchate and the false autocephaly, if that which I have written here were to be published. But will it really be better to remain silent concerning all this and take comfort in the “peace and quiet”, as Vladyka Anthony [of Geneva]³⁹ would have us do? Why, people are on a spiritually false path! This is terrifying! And will not the awesome judgment of God fall upon our heads, if we do not enlighten our erring brothers?

Some might raise an objection and say to me: Did not the Third Pan-Diaspora Sobor address both one and the other, the Parisians and the Americans, with a call for peace and unity? Yes, it did address them, but it addressed them not at all as was needed, and for that very cause this appeal produced no results, or rather, it produced a negative result. I had been *certain* that such would be the result. For we should have told them: you have gone astray, you have fallen away from the Church — strive to return to Her! But the appeal as published speaks to them as if they were within the Church just as we are, with equal rights and position. Whereas what should have been told them then and there was: you are not some sort of “different jurisdictions”; you are simply schismatics, and have no rights whatsoever... Come to your senses and return in repentance!

Most likely **such** an appeal would have provoked only an outburst of rage from the leaders of the schism (God grant that I am mistaken; but then, we know their attitude). But among their “flock”, many, very many may have pondered it over and come to understand that matters do not at all stand well with them, just as the late Sandrik Filatev and many others who have broken with the schism came to understand after hearing the serious and convincing explanations of Fr. Gerasim⁴⁰.

The question might be posed to me: why I didn't mention at the Sobor that I felt the appeal to be inappropriate. I would reply: because I saw the attitude at the Sobor and I feared an explosion and a possible catastrophe. For I had been forewarned that the enemies of the Church wished to arrange such an explosion, in order to “blow up” the Sobor from within. Therefore I was compelled to avoid issues which might have provoked heated exchanges.

I wish to return to the issue of heresy and schism. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anthony asks: is it permissible to be stern with heretics, who perhaps sincerely believe in the righteousness of their cause? One must never idealize heretics, he replies, since the basis for their departure is not virtue, but the passions and sins of pride, obstinacy, and malice. Sternness towards heretics, says Vladyka, is beneficial not only for the sake of protecting people from their influence, but also for the heretics themselves.

³⁹ And again masked in the photocopy to read: “Vladyka A.”.

⁴⁰ Fr. Gerasim Romanov.

Р. С. В будущем должно быть принято решение по поводу того, что необходимо сделать 14-27 декабря, т.е. в эти 14 дней необходимо принять решение по поводу "Christmas or not..."

We have seen that the Holy Fathers equate obstinate schismatics with heretics. Consequently, is it proper to coddle them as, unfortunately, occurs among us? And all this for the sake of an evil and false "peace"...

If the Lord permits me to live until the next Bishops' Sobor, at it I shall pose this question "point blank".⁴¹

[Written along the left-hand margin, in the Metropolitan's hand:]

P.S. This letter was completed onboard the ship, but is being sent only today, December 14/27, since I could not send it earlier — the mail system was overloaded before "Christmas"...⁴²

⁴¹ Metropolitan Philaret was true to his word. The 1981 Bishops' Sobor was convened in New York chiefly to celebrate the official ecclesiastical glorification of the New Martyrs of Russia; therefore regular church business was kept to a minimum. However, the Bishop's Sobor met again in 1983 at the Holy Transfiguration Skete, near Mansonville, Quebec, to consider, among other things, the very issues raised by Metropolitan Philaret in this letter. The members of the Sobor resolved to solemnly condemn and anathematize the heresy of Ecumenism. The text of the Anathema, signed and promulgated by the fourteen hierarchs present at the Sobor, is as follows:

TO THOSE who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ's Church is divided into so-called "branches" which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all "branches" or sects or denominations, and even religions will be united into one body; and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore, to those who knowingly have communion with those aforementioned heretics or who advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians: Anathema.

For a profound and sobering commentary on the ROCA Sobor of 1983, and the Anathema against Ecumenism, written by the then Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal, see: *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 10, 1983, pp. 3-4. For an English translation of Vladyka Vitaly's article, see: *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1984, pp. 2-6.

⁴²As can be seen, the Metropolitan wrote *Christmas* in English. His ship had docked in Sydney on Dec. 7/20.