



# CHURCH NEWS

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF ORTHODOX CHURCH OPINION

Nov.-Dec., 1999  
Vol. 11, No. 6 (82)

Supported by the voluntary contributions of its readers.  
Republication permitted upon acknowledgment of source.

## CONTENTS

THE LATEST FROM KOSOVO  
FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF CASE OF ARCHPRIEST DIMITRY SEVER  
IMPRESSIONS OF MATUSHKA SCHATILOFF FROM A TRIP TO RUSSIA  
A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE "TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS"  
ABOUT A PROPERTY IN JERICHO  
THE APOSTATE VYACHESLAV POLOSIN IS STILL NOT EXCOMMUNICATED  
A DECLARATION OF THE ATHONITE MONASTERIES  
MYRRH-GUSHING ICONS OF THE TSAR MARTYR  
THE POPE'S TRIPS  
ABOUT THE SAFETY OF TOURISTS IN THE HOLY SEPULCHRE  
A PAGAN PRIESTESS GOES TO RUSSIA  
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY  
AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS  
AN OUTRAGEOUS BLASPHEMY IN NEW YORK  
CONCESSION BY THE VATICAN TO THE JEWS

CHURCH NEWS  
639 Center Street  
Oradell, NJ, 07679-2003 USA  
Tel: 201-967-7684

## THE LATEST FROM KOSOVO

A bulletin "Service Orthodoxe de Presse" reports that Albanians demanded that a cathedral in Prizren be handed over to them because they claim it had always been a mosque. Also the Holy Archangels monastery is being claimed as an "integral part of the Albanian cultural patrimony." As proof the Albanians released a photograph depicting the cathedral when it had been turned into a mosque during the Ottoman occupation.

The cathedral was built by King Milutin in the 14th century and some 300 years later was remodeled into a mosque. In 1912 it became a church again, but only in 1950 was it fully restored to its original appearance.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has sent a protest to Bernard Kouchner with an explanation of the history of the cathedral that the Holy Archangels Monastery has been a spiritual center for Kosovo since the beginning of 17th century.

On September 22 in Prishtina there was a meeting of the Temporary Council of Kosovo, which was established by Kouchner, during which Bishops Artemije and Momchilo Trajkovich announced their resignation, declaring that for three months nothing has been done to defend Serbs from Albanians. They both joined this Council in the hope to be able to defend Serbs and better their terrible situation. The occupation of Kosovo by NATO troops has resulted in a catastrophe.

200,000 Serbs have gone into exile; 350 have been killed; 450 disappeared; more than a thousand Serbian homes burned; also 70 churches and monasteries destroyed in the presence of 50,000 international soldiers meant to keep peace.

Bishops Artemije and Momchilo Trajkovich, before departing, proposed a solution by dividing the region on the model of the Swiss cantons which would be ethnically homogeneous and a creation of a Serb protection force.

The Western powers adhere to their main goal to always defend Muslim's against the Orthodox. At present, the entire media industry laments the fate of the poor Chechens and condemns Russia for fighting against them. As in the case with the Serbs, no one mentions the loss of Russian lives in Chechnya!

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF CASE OF ARCHPRIEST DIMITRY SEVER

On Friday, October 29th, the Editor in Chief and publisher of "Church News" received a call from Archpriest Dimitry Sever in Canada in connection with information published by us regarding his decision to join the Moscow Patriarchate.

Archpriest Sever rather arrogantly demanded of the Editor the facts on the basis of which he was described with such unflattering traits and, as well, threatening our publication with a law suit demanding an immediate retraction of published information in the next issue of "Church News."

During this conversation we responded that it seems he did not take into consideration that the editor of "Church News" for a number of years worked in the Synod of Bishops headquarter's office and is aware of numerous complaints about him and that there is also a video tape (which we erroneously referred to as a "60 Minutes" program, while, in fact, it was a compilation by the Canadian "TV Report for May-June 1998." We obtained this film directly from the TV producers.

Archpriest Sever was also informed that the editor of "Church News" refuses to publish a retraction, however, if he wishes, he may himself write a short explanation and it will be published, but over his name only.

Archpriest Sever agreed to this offer, but later that evening he called again and said that after he had consulted with his Committee, neither he himself, nor his Committee, can agree to the "Church News" proposal and that soon a letter from his lawyer would follow.

It is amazing that Rev. D. Sever surprisingly renounced his desire to give his own explanation in the publication which, in his opinion, has slandered him!

Meanwhile, The Rt. Rev. Michael, Bishop of Toronto published the following:

### APPEAL

To all the Archpastors and Spiritual Children of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

On September 26th, 1999, the former Archpriest Dimitry Sever summoned an "Extraordinary Meeting" (previously, in May of last year, I had to halt such an action) where he declared his intention to hand over his parish to and he himself join the Moscow Patriarchate, which he termed the Mother Church or Russian Orthodox Church in Canada. By acting in this manner, he invited people unknown to us in an attempt to give this a sort of legal appearance, which would permit him to take possession and use the whole property, consisting of the Memorial Holy Virgin Protection church and the St. Vladimir's Home for our senior parishioners.

On September 24th he was handed by our lawyers 3 letters suspending his priestly ministry, deposing him as rector to the church and president of St. Vladimir's Home administration. The genuine parishioners of our Church gathered with their hierarch on Saturday, September 25th at 5 PM before the beginning of the vigil service. [They found] the church door locked. Fr. Dimitry declared it to be *private property*. On the church portico stood a group of people, who blocked the way to the church doors. There were handed announcements, declaring that the parish corporation's board voted to close the church for Saturday and Sunday, thus preventing us from having services. Also on Sunday we were prevented from serving the Liturgy. On 1 PM I declared this meeting to be illegal; its actions having no legal authority neither in an ecclesiastical nor in a civil sense. I read the letter suspending Archpriest D. Sever and departed.

The next day was the feast of The Exaltation of the Cross. The suspended D. Sever "served" in the presence of a hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate.

On the next Thursday, September 30th at 2 PM there was a hearing held in the Supreme Court and the judge heard the lawyers' arguments.

At the same day a letter arrived by fax from the Head of the Department for Foreign Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate who rejoices at "healing of the very painful wound of a regrettable separation" and also a letter from Alexis II stating that "Russian Orthodox were dispersed over the whole world not by chance, but because of the wise and full of love Divine providence" and he congratulates them with... "the joy of spiritual renewal." These words are a strange commentary on the seizure.

On Monday, October 4th, the judge verified the indisputable legal rights of the bishop of the Diocese of Canada as well as of Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR. The next ruling of the judge, issued on October 8th, in particular stated that "Dimitry Sever can not be either a member of the Holy Protection Church, nor president of the St. Vladimir's Home (#3h). We also received the right to possess the keys and all documents and so forth (#3b). Since that time they stubbornly refuse to obey the judge's ruling and, in order to drag the matter out, have appealed the decision. It is quite obvious that the situation will require a prolonged court case.

It should be noted that the followers of D. F. Sever insist that, supposedly, they built the building with no financial assistance and therefore are the owners.

Therefore, I ask all those who made donations to the Memorial Church through the period of 1986-1992 to inform us of the amount of money donated.

We appeal to all members of the ROCOR to help in this matter. For this reason we have established a  
**FUND FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE MEMORIAL CHURCH IN THE CITY OF OTTAWA.**

The Bank account number is CANADA TRUST 354-59859.

The Diocese of Canada and her parishes were able to bear the burden of the first part of this litigation during which our lawyers stated the proper understanding of our parish by-laws which is very useful not only now, but also for the future.

We are faced with very substantial financial expenses in paying for the services of our lawyers. With this seizure we have not only to defend our rights, but also to properly maintain the Protection Church, in honor of the millennium of the Baptism of Russia in the city of Ottawa.

+ Bishop Michael

The donations for the Foundation may be sent to:

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Michael  
 42 Sherk Crescent  
 Kanata, Ont. K2K 2M6 CANADA

According to the rulings of the Canadian judge, the Moscow Patriarchate has little chance of winning this case, but at any rate, she is deliberately creating financial difficulties for one of dioceses of the ROCOR.

#### IMPRESSIONS OF MATUSHKA SCHATILOFF FROM A TRIP TO RUSSIA

After we returned to the US, a number of our readers expressed the hope that the editor of "Church News" will share some of her impressions from a trip to Russia which included St. Petersburg, its boroughs and the "Golden Ring" and whose main purpose was to see the important monasteries and historical churches of Russia.

For the vigil service and Liturgy for the feast of the Dormition I attended the ROCOR church in St. Petersburg. It is a church in one of the rooms of the apartment of the rector on the 4th floor. All the walls of that room are covered with book shelves. From the make-up of this library it is obvious that Fr. Vladimir is a person with wide theological and historical interests. Of the service one can say it was conducted in a sort of "catacomb" manner. A small choir sang very well, but very quietly; the service rubrics were properly observed. There were no more than 20 people in the room. A white bed sheet, stretched on a string from one wall to another, served as an iconostasis. On it there were pinned up a few small icons.

Another ROCOR priest was present also in the church, but he did not participate in the service. From a light-hearted conversation between these two priests it came out that one (with a family) is living on \$13 and the other (celibate) \$12 per month. Probably that does not include donations for special, private services.

From the priests and several other sources we learned that in St. Petersburg there are (according to one source, 6, and another, 7) small communities which consider themselves as belonging to the ROCOR. My efforts to persuade them to unite and then rent a decent place for a church did not find much understanding. Yet all of those with whom I happened to speak, unanimously expressed their sadness that they feel deserted by the ROCOR. Their letters are never answered. All requests to Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville to send some spiritual literature, even in the form of booklets, are neither denied nor fulfilled: they are simply ignored. The biggest concern was a silence on part of Bishop Michael of Toronto (a bishop ruling 3 dioceses in Russia, while only a junior vicar of the Metropolitan) who has never supplied the parishes with the necessary documentation so that they can register their churches. The present

registration expires at the end of this year. In addition, any complaint by neighbors of noise coming from too many people being in an apartment puts such a parish at risk of being closed.

According to the bulletin "Vertograd-Inform" # 9, the parish of Grand Duchess Elisabeth in St. Petersburg, formerly in the ROCOR, joined the diocese of Archbishop Valentine of Suzdal and Vladimir. It seems, that since the time of murder of Fr. Alexander Zharkov this parish has had no permanent rector. Now Fr. Basil Lurie has been appointed rector, who was ordained for this purpose by Archbishop Valentine. Fr. Lurie for this reason resigned as a member of the editorial staff of "Vertograd-Inform" which considers itself to be within the fold of Russian Church Abroad.

In the Lavra of St. Alexander Nevsky almost no monks are visible. In St. Peter and Paul Fortress fresh flowers were laid on the grave of Emperor Paul I. It is encouraging that the memory of this martyred Tsar is not dying out among the people.

But, in general, the cathedrals of St. Petersburg astound one with their grandeur outside as well as inside and yet, also, by their astonishing church illiteracy, especially with their Western religious paintings, which under no conditions may be considered as icons.

From St. Petersburg by way of a cruise I went to the famous Valaam Monastery.

It is a very far from being restored. To one side of a huge church, which is under restoration there are conducted services. The main church was badly damaged in 1940 by the bombs of its very own Soviet planes. In a side section there stands a modest iconostasis. Instead of the usual Archangels or Holy Deacons on the northern and southern doors of the iconostasis I saw a half-nude figure, dressed in very tight pants, of calf-length, holding a cross much taller than itself. Not being able to read the inscription of this unusual icon because iconostasis was closed off by a rope, I went to ask a woman who was selling candles and booklets who was depicted in the icon? She rather crudely yelled out in the church "the Wise Thief."

It is said that there are some monks on Valaam Island, but I happened to see only one. There was no chance for me to see a few sketes.

After arriving in Moscow and seeing the Kremlin cathedrals, I also visited a special exhibition to honor the 60th birthday of Alexis Ridiger. Among the vestments at this exhibition was one of outstandingly beautiful embroidery which was used also by Patriarch Tikhon. Unfortunately, it is not known to whom it belonged originally. All the lower part of sakkos was embroidered in gold with a psalm text used during the vesting a bishop. Of course, the upper part and the sleeves of this sakkos were equally richly embroidered.

But on the other hand I was astonished, or more accurately outraged, when I noticed a very modest "podriznik" which had been removed from the relics of St. Metropolitan Philip of Moscow. An explanatory note stated that it was done with the personal permission of Ridiger himself! Truly, for the sake of publicity, he does not hesitate "to take a shirt from a corpse"!

In the cathedral in which the sarcophagi of the Russian Grand Dukes are located I noticed the coffin of Grand Duke Dimitry Donskoi, who a few years ago was "canonized" by the Moscow Patriarchate. It was in no way different from any other coffins: there was not even an icon of Dimitry Donskoi, no vigil lamp or even flowers. Some "glorification"! One can only ask: was it necessary and why? Vladimir Monomakh, at least, we know from the chronicles of his piety and asceticism, while Dimitry Donskoy at one time was at odds with St. Sergius of Radonezh!

From Moscow I went to Suzdal, where I spent a week. It was a pleasure to see some churches, received from the city some 2 or 3 years ago in a half-ruined state with no floors and iconostases, by now in complete order and some even having painted frescoes. Instead of a burned out wooden house, there stands now, in the very center of this city, a new stone Synodal House which was declared by the city's authorities to be an architectural treasure and is under special protection for its beauty and original design. In it there are two nice churches. It is unusual for Russia too, to see a front yard which is a complete bed of flowers, divided only by narrow cement paths. The flowers were planted by Bishop Theodore and he himself takes care of them. There are a lot of flowers also around the church, which belongs to the diocese and also was at some time fully restored. It is across the road from and facing the new house. Archbishop Valentin, with assistance of a pious Orthodox woman managed to restore in Suzdal itself and its environs 17 churches and a new one is being built in a new development which never had a church before. In the neighborhood of Suzdal one can see churches which are in such ruinous condition that they should be totally rebuilt. Among them is also a church within the estate of Gen. Suvorov!

It was especially painful was to see one destroyed church. A huge building, by now without doors and windows, only partially covered with a roof, having no floor and a broken-through altar wall. All the walls were covered with graffiti; arrows in Russian and English at the corners pointed to "toilets", in other places, again in both languages, there were blasphemous inscriptions and calls for the use of drugs. Inside this former church were many beer bottles and other garbage. And, just across a narrow road were local residents peacefully sitting about. They seemed to be in no way concerned by this disgrace of their own village.

Not far away from Suzdal in the village of Kideksha there are two churches. One of them is already restored through the efforts of Archbishop Valentin and another, next to it, he could not get from the authorities. Several years ago they declared it to be a historical monument and under state protection. But nothing is being done to save this deteriorating church. And this is indeed a historical place, where the saintly brothers Boris and Gleb met with their armies. All efforts by Archbishop Valentin to get from the authorities the empty and deteriorating Monastery of the Laying Out of the Holy Virgin's Garments have failed. The Suzdal Diocese 4 times during the current year applied for ownership

of this monastery, but was denied under the pretext that those buildings are needed for courses for restorers. Yet, in August the very same monastery was given to the Moscow Patriarchate with "no strings attached" when the first request was made this April.

While visiting places of interest in Suzdal, I paid attention to one of the churches of Holy Protection Convent which was given by the authorities to the Moscow Patriarchate. There are quite a few nuns there. A lot of flowers around. One church had a sign "trapeznaya" which did not surprise me, since in some monasteries occasionally churches are used as dining halls. But this was a special case: on the lower part of the sign were indicated opening and closing hours of... a very popular restaurant in the neighborhood. The Moscow Patriarchate feels no shame in turning a church into a restaurant, and not only that, but one in which during the evening an orchestra plays!

Despite the general Church regulations, weddings are performed in this convent and one can hold a wedding reception there as well!

A whole number of ancient monasteries have preserved their names, but unfortunately, cannot be considered monasteries. Many of them are museums, established on the location of this or that former monastery, which are filled with icons and inventory from the churches which were robbed years ago by the atheists and who have no plans to return them to owners and now exhibit these items for money's sake. The explanation tags identify quite a few items as belonging to this or that church or monastery. Such monastery museums include Pherapont Monastery, Kyriilo-Belosersky, Andronikov Monastery near Moscow and many others. Yet, monasteries do exist, but in a "peculiar" way. In all of them, except seemingly in Uglich, there are "novices" -- modestly dressed young women, sometimes wearing cassocks and a kerchief, which evidently turns them into some sort of "monastery/convent" communities.

Everywhere they work in countless monastery stores (in Danilov Monastery alone there are at least five of them!), help in refectories, or take tourists on tours. For example, in Savvino-Storozhevski Monastery my companion and myself initially were lead by a "novice", but soon after, as a special favor, she was replaced by a priest monk sent to us by the abbot. In a conversation with him it came out that the brotherhood consists of 70 men. When he was asked and what those "novices" are occupied with - the answer was: they are very helpful in the kitchen and refectory! Such are the monasteries of the 20th century, at least in Moscow Patriarchate! Near the entrance to Donskoi Monastery, at the gate, there were two stands selling books, icons and embroidered belts run by two women in cassocks and scufias, while some busy-looking monks were walking around the main church!

One grievous impression was of the pre-Revolutionary grave markers (and some times even whole sarcophagi) left thrown about in some monasteries (for example in St. Savior Andronikov Monastery) and also near big churches under restoration. Today's Russian people literally walk upon the graves of their ancestors.

In one of the monastery/museums was a path connecting two buildings paved with the pre-Revolutionary grave markers with all the engravings and crosses still on them. One of the museum personnel, when I expressed disgust, explained that supposedly, "time ago the monks themselves did it"! This is a more than dubious version.

The inventories of the countless religious stores are interesting. On sale are a lot of pre-Revolutionary reprints, including some of our ROCOR books. Almost everywhere there are reprints of the school text book on religion by Archpriest S. Slobodskoy. In several places were seen some of the works by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitzky), whom the Moscow Patriarchate has labeled a heretic, the "History of the Church" by Talberg. Literally everywhere are many books about the Imperial Martyrs which means they are in great demand!

There is also many beautifully made icons (certainly none of the Imperial Martyrs!); Western "religious paintings" are rare now. According to our standards the books are very cheap, but they are printed in small amounts, therefore one has to hurry to purchase them. Unfortunately, the books one can buy for rubles in Russia quite often are sold in our stores for many more dollars than their actual value which only testifies to the unscrupulousness of contemporary merchants. A book by Nilus, which I purchased for 65 rubles (a bit less than \$2) is being sold in some of our church stores for \$6!

#### A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE "TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS"

The True Orthodox Christians was a name adopted by some catacomb groups in Russia which in the beginning called themselves "Tikhonites" as opposed to the Renovationists, Living Church members and later - the Sergianists. Following this trend, there are old calendarists groups in Greece with similar names. Those Greek groups were never in catacomb status, but they were outlawed by the Masonic Greek government.

As in Russia, all those groups are fragmented and are not in Communion amongst themselves.

In Russia a very strict conspiracy for several decades made every another group suspicious of the others, although they share the same basic principles and same faith. In the end result it created in Russia a multitude of absolutely uncanonical groups, although certainly some are indeed canonical, but even now, despite the fall of the Communist regime it is very difficult to make distinctions among them.

A similar situation happened in Greece, yet for entirely different reasons. Greeks, while zealously guarding pure Orthodoxy, by their very nature easily fall into schisms, some times over what amounts to nonsense. This is assisted also by insufficient theological education of the Old Calendarists episcopate. The Turks in every way oppressed or simply closed the theological schools in Greece, which almost totally prevented the Old Calendarist clergy from receiving a good education, while New Calendarists had no qualms about receiving a higher theological education in Catholic and

Protestant schools. At the same time, the Greeks very easily ordained a multitude of bishops and as easily retired them or even defrock them; then another group is ordained instead and new Synods created.

Therefore, it is almost impossible to make distinctions among countless Russian and Greek groups of the "True Orthodox Christians", even more so because each of these groups "anathematizes" the others and on principle does not want to work for unification.

Unfortunately, the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR also refused an effort to unite at least a dozen of catacomb groups with their bishops, carelessly trusting the statement of Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko) that he is the only indisputable representative of the Russian catacomb groups and all others are uncanonical. Realizing the importance of uniting "True Orthodox Christians" in Russia, the late Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) was hoping that he might persuade his fellow bishops to get to work on this problem, yet nothing came of this effort for the reasons mentioned above. If all these groups were to unite, they would form a powerful opposition to the Moscow Patriarchate but this has not happened due to the intrigues on her part as well as by the KGB -- which amounts to about the same thing!

The same has happened also in Greece, close to half of whose population is Old Calendarist, but unfortunately, there is little hope for unification among their various groups.

## ABOUT A PROPERTY IN JERICHO

from a Member of the OPS

The members of the board of directors of the Orthodox Palestine Society of the Holy Land were deeply upset when they received undeniable confirmation that one of the pieces of land belonging to the Society and located in the center of Jericho in Israel was sold to Yasir Arafat and given over to the Palestinians by the "Russian Orthodox Church Abroad", which received \$7 million for it.

This information was published for the first time in the Russian newspaper "Novoye Vremya" ("New Time") on November 28th, 1998.

On this plot, sacred to every Christian, and by no means to the Palestinian Muslims, was carefully preserved the so called "Zacheas fig tree", mentioned in the Gospels (Lk. 23:4).

Since neither the Orthodox Palestine Society of the Holy Land itself, nor any of its members in the USA participated in this act (criminal by civil standards and blasphemous from the point of view of an Orthodox Christian) the Board of the Orthodox Palestine Society of the Holy Land immediately filed a strong protest even before this was made public in "Novoye Vremia."

On April 11, 1997, a full page article was published with title "We will not give away even a finger's worth of land in the Holy Land" and reporting that in connection with this action, there will be filed a court suit against Arafat to annul this deal.

In connection with this publication in "Novoye Vremia" it was decided to temporarily stop this action until full information would be obtained regarding mysterious seller -- a usurper of someone else's property.

With this in mind the OPS sent with its lawyer a member of society's board, Baroness Margaret von Luilsdorf, to the Holy Land. After overcoming tremendous obstacles and even threats to her life from people who might know the truth, the Baroness learned from Arafat's legal advisor as well as from other sources that the person, who claimed to be the official owner of the property was the former Chief of the Ecclesiastical Mission of ROCOR in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Theodosius (Clare).

However, it is quite clear that Archimandrite Theodosius could not have accomplished this criminal machination on his own, without any support on part of some group or organization.

The legal firm representing the Society's interests on March 5, 1999, addressed letters Metropolitan Vitaly and the Chancellery of the Synod of Bishops requesting them to supply the Society with information regarding this matter as well as to state Synod's stand in this case. Much to the Society's surprise and bewilderment, there was NO answer to the lawyers' letter!

After waiting in vain for almost six months, as a next step, the Board of the OPS on September 22, 1999, mailed to all the hierarchs of the ROCOR the necessary information. And again, there has been no reaction whatsoever.

At the last meeting of the OPS of the Holy Land it was decided to inform the Russian public through the Society's publication "Golos Pravoslaviya" ("Voice of Orthodoxy") that the above mentioned deal was illegal, done without the knowledge of the board of the Society which is the sole rightful owner of this property. In the archives of the Society there is ownership documentation as well as correspondence about it with Arafat.

Now the Society has no other alternative, but to start an official investigation in order to find all the criminal participants in this affair and also clear up who actually received those belonging not to him/her \$7million for the selling the OPS's property.

New York, USA

Member of the OPS of Holy Land,

Dr. V. Volokitin

THE APOSTATE VYACHESLAV POLOSIN STILL NOT EXCOMMUNICATED

A Russian language Catholic newspaper "Russkaya Mysl" in # 4288 for October 14-20 published an article by the Ecumenically minded abbot of the Moscow Patriarchate Innocenty (Pavlov) who sharply criticized his "authorities" for as yet not excommunicating the former priest Vyacheslav Polosin for renouncing Christ the Saviour and becoming a Muslim.

According to information given by a correspondent of "Blagovest-Info" who spoke to an anonymous staff member of the Department of Foreign Church Relation of the Moscow Patriarchate, "the Holy Synod of the ROC will not consider the matter of the excommunication of Archpriest Viacheslav Polosin. Probably "the matter [of defrocking Viacheslav Polosin] will be limited" to a resolution from the diocesan bishop, Clement (Kapalin), Archbishop of Kaluga and Borovsk.

In this article Abbot Innokenty demonstrates his knowledge of canon law and quite reasonably says that the resolution of defrocking should be preceded by the decision of an ecclesiastical court of 6 bishops presided over by the ruling diocesan bishop.

The abbot discloses another reason for silence on part of the Moscow Patriarchate. As was learned from "the circles around the Patriarchate" any decisive regulations in this matter are unwelcome, because "according to the 'authorities' this can strain the already existing, not so simple, inter-religious situation in Russia. No matter how idiotic this explanation sounds, nevertheless, this remains the only reason which explains the Moscow Patriarchate's politics."

Probably, here Abbot Innokenty makes a serious error. Why should a group of known KGB-ers, starting with Ridiger/Drozdov himself, all of a sudden be worried about the formalities of defrocking an apostate?

### A DECLARATION OF THE ATHONITE MONASTERIES

On May 11/24th 1999 representatives of all the 20 ruling monasteries on Mt. Athos wrote a letter to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew reproaching his Ecumenist statements, especially regarding Catholics. It had two parts and was published through internet by two different senders. We will use the one sent on September 22 by J. Gabriel Haake.

How far this new epistle addressed to the heretic Patriarch is from the outstandingly precise declaration made by the very same Athonite monasteries, of April 9/22, 1980, made after an extraordinary meeting.

Now we read very mildly expressed protests, written in a very respectful manner, for example: "Are we obliged then, Your All-Holiness, to reconsider the Tradition of our Saints, from Photios, Gregory Palamas and Mark of Ephesus, up until Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain...?"

"How can we consider the following statements consistent with Orthodox Tradition?" "We are obliged from this... to reconsider our policy, to clean away the old yeast, to become new dough..." and elsewhere, "Our repentance for the past is indispensable."

While putting a number of quite reasonable questions to the heretical Bartholomew regarding his different declarations on Catholics and various Ecumenists and being perfectly aware whom are they addressing, the Athonite fathers write: "We would like to believe that You did not write this address yourself, and that it does not express Your actual sentiments. We console ourselves with the idea that the pen of some champion of Ecumenical thinking put your speech together and that on account of Your justifiably many and various duties, You were unable to appreciate its significance to Orthodox Faith and conscience of pious people of the Church."

In a second part of their letter, the representatives of the Athonite monasteries are saddened mainly over numerous Ecumenical common prayers. This does not prevent them from writing: "We want You to know, Your All-Holiness, that we foster the piety towards Your most reverent person and the institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate which is set down by the tradition of the Orthodox Church and the history of our martyred Nation."

The letter concludes with the words: "We filially put forward these our anxieties, believing that You will not ignore the sound of our pleas, but will bend sympathetic ear to them and will grant consolation to our hearts and to the whole Church, which in the imagery of the Holy Book of Revelation is aptly depicted as a woman flying into wilderness, pursued by the Dragon who seeks to drown her and make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.

"With these things in mind, we kiss Your most Divine All-Holiness' Right Hand and ask for Your Patriarchal blessings, remaining Yours with deepest respect and due reverence." Signed: "All the Representatives to the common Synaxis and Superiors of the twenty Holy Monasteries of the Holy Mountain of Athos."

It is absolutely clear that the heretic Bartholomew has managed to get all the monasteries on Mt. Athos "on their knees" and their letter has a character of an documented sadness, but without the former fervor, out of which at one time the monastery of Esphigmenou put up a flag with the inscription "Orthodoxy or Death"! Can one imagine the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils addressing in this way the heretic patriarchs of their day?

### MYRRH-GUSHING ICONS OF THE TSAR MARTYR

The newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" (Russian Herald) in the issue # 36-37 for 1999 reports that at present there are several myrrh-gushing icons of the Tsar Martyr and thousands of people rush to venerate them. Among the admirers of the Imperial Martyrs there are not only the laity, but also numerous clergymen and some bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate. The newspaper devoted a whole page to the subject of these icons, and in particular, the very interesting information that for the first time a bishop of the Moscow Patriarchate served a solemn moleben to the Tsar Martyr. From

description of this event we learn that at the beginning, the icon of the Tsar was brought in a church procession to the home chapel of Archbishop Ambrose of Ivanovsk and Kishinev. At that time the myrrh gushed with seven streams, but during the moleben in the archbishops chapel, "the icon was entirely covered with myrrh."

The next day, the newspaper says, "while the bells tolled, Archbishop Ambrose with a host of clergymen met the myrrh-gushing icon and also another myrrh-gushing copy of it in Ivanovsk, in the Transfiguration Cathedral." When the icon arrived at the cathedral's doors, "the archbishop went to meet it, bringing along with him all the clergy. When we approached the icons of the Great Martyr Tsar Nicholas Alexandrovich, we saw that over the width of both icons there were gushing from top to bottom a multitude of streams and the whole church was filled with a wonderful aroma." Archbishop Ambrose placed the miracle-working icon of the Tsar Martyr on the main altar, with the other, also an Ivanovsk myrrh-gushing icon, on the preparation altar. After the Liturgy, the archbishop served a moleben to the Tsar Martyr. During the entire service the icons never ceased to gush myrrh and the aroma spread throughout the whole cathedral. The newspaper stressed that "Vladyka Ambrose is the first among the episcopate of the Moscow Patriarchate to receive at his home a myrrh-gushing icon of the Tsar and prayed before it publicly with clergy. Probably, this is why the icon never exuded myrrh in such abundance. It was our Pascha in summer". (Underlined by "Ch. N.").

Yet, the very same newspaper describes also another hierarchical reaction. Thus, the Tsar's myrrh-gushing icon for a whole week was in St. Petersburg and visited several churches there. The last place visited by the icon was the favorite of the Imperial Family, the Theodore Cathedral in Tsarskoye Selo. This cathedral was almost totally destroyed by the godless Communists, but at present is being very speedily restored. The restorers hope to restore the interior of this cathedral to its former glory also. This will be a difficult challenge, since it is known that Tsaritsa Martyr loved the early non-Westernized iconography, was a patroness of it and purchased for this church icons from Old Believers. At the service in this cathedral, people unanimously sang: "Rejoice, O Tsar Nicholas, the redeemer of the sins of the Russian people." At the same day (St. Alexander Nevsky) there was all night vigil service followed by the Liturgy. In spite of it being a work day, people stood in line for hours in order to venerate the Tsar's icon. But, as it says a bit further on, "the common veneration of Saintly Imperial Martyrs by the Orthodox people of St. Petersburg was revealed more than obviously. The more surprising was a declaration of the St. Petersburg's ruling Bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Vladimir (Kotliarov). Vladyka Metropolitan said that some people are trying to create a schism within the Church; they arouse the passions by demanding the immediate glorification of the Imperial Martyrs. These people are stirring up the flock against the pastors and archpastors and vice versa. They are behaving like sectarians. The metropolitan condemned the 'startsy' [spiritual elders] and all others who venerate the Tsar Martyr. The ruling bishop also declared that any rectors, who will receive the icon of Tsar, will be deposed from their positions or otherwise punished" (underlined by "Ch. N.").

## THE POPE'S TRIPS

The Pope whose health has visibly deteriorated over the last few years (he has Parkinson's disease) is trying to visit as many countries as possible, before he loses the ability to work.

His first dream is to visit Orthodox Russia, which, thank God, so far hasn't happened. Just recently he visited the predominantly Orthodox Romania. But now, according to the Associated Press on the Internet of September 5th, we learn that the Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis, ignoring all the protests of Orthodox Greeks invited the Pope to visit Greece. The head of the Catholic Church expressed a desire to visit the locations of St. Paul's preaching and to see the Acropolis. But a day before an episcopal conference regarding this matter was to be summoned, the Pope received the official invitation from the Greek government.

The Pope also expressed a wish to visit Biblical famous places connected with Holy Scripture, Egypt and Jerusalem. On September 19th he went to Slovenia.

Simidis explained his invitation of a Catholic to Greece with: "The Pope is a head of state, he is welcome here as are all the heads of states."

Yet, Archbishop Christodoulos and other church activists believe that if the Pope wants to be received as a spiritual leader, then the invitation should come from the Synod and its chief hierarch. This report says that it is doubtful that this invitation could be made in the name of the Church, since a majority of conservative bishops are against it.

Archbishop Christodoulos' spokesman V. Rev. Theoklitos Koumarios said that, "The Pope can come here as a visitor. This does not mean we have to welcome him as the head of a church," if he does not have an invitation.

Nevertheless, in a short while Archbishop Christodoulos is to meet with Cardinal Cassidi in order to discuss a papal visit.

According to the newspaper "The Christian News" for October 25th, the Vatican confirmed that between November 5 and 8, the Pope plans to visit India and then, on the 8th and 9th of the same month, Orthodox Georgia. He hopes to meet there with Edward Shevarnadze and Catholicos Ilia.

A spokesman for the Vatican, Navarro-Valls recently confirmed that during the month of December the Pope plans to visit Iraq, to see Ur of the Chaldeans, a supposed homeland of Forefather Abraham. Nowadays historians state that there are several cities with the same name. This visit has been sharply criticized by the US government, since they see it as giving support to Saddam Hussein.

The same newspaper, for October 18th, reports that a number of Catholics were quite displeased that on May 14th the Pope kissed the Koran in the Vatican. This outrageous act preceded several declarations made by the Pope stating that Muslims, Jews and some non-Christians, who believe in one God, will get to heaven, despite not believing in Christ the Saviour. The Pope also expressed the opinion that the Holy Bible is not the only source for true faith and that the God of the Koran is the very same God Who is worshipped by Christians.

It seems that this shameful act by the Roman Pope was kept secret for a whole month and only accidentally became known from a declaration made by the Iraq's Catholic Chaldean and Babylon Patriarch Raphael Bidawid, who while in Iraq, described in detail a Vatican audience he attended. According to his statement "We know that Pope John II has often voiced a desire to make a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Abraham, the common father of Jews, Christians and Muslims. For the Pope Abraham is a figure who helps the unity of believers... On May 14, I was received by the Pope together with a delegation composed of the Shiite Imam of Khadum Mosque and the Sunni president of the the board of directors of the Iraqi Islamic Bank. There was also present a representative of the Iraqi ministry of religion. I renewed our invitation to the Pope because his visit would be for us as a grace from heaven. It would confirm the Faith of Christians and prove the Pope's love for the whole of humanity in a mainly Muslim country."

The Iraqi theologians expressed a hope that the Pope would use this opportunity "to acquit the Jews and Christians for their misdeeds in the past." In this declaration there is also a demand that the head of the Vatican condemn the economic sanctions against Iraq of the international powers which have led to "suffering, hunger and disease of Iraqis stemming from the sanctions."

At the end of the audience in the Vatican on May 14, according to description of the Catholic Patriarch in Iraq, "the Pope bowed to the Muslim holy book, the Koran, presented to him by the delegation, and he kissed it as a sign of respect."

According to the newspaper "Russkaya Mysl" ("Russian Mind") the Pope confirmed that he wants to visit the Holy Land on May 25 (by the Gregorian Calendar, the feast of the Annunciation) in connection with 2000 jubilee of Christianity. He plans to serve on this day in the Church of Annunciation in Nazareth. He also will visit the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha. He plans also to visit the famous monastery of St. Catherine in Mt. Sinai.

Yet with the papal visit to Jerusalem, there might be some problems. In Nazareth the Arabs have insisted on building a huge mosque, because the place is supposedly sacred to Arabs. The building will be financed by the government of Saudi Arabia. This is very strongly opposed not only by all Christians living in the Holy Land (including Patriarch Diodoros), but by the Vatican in particular. The controversial location, which is very close to the Catholic basilica in Nazareth, belongs to the Israeli government. Muslim plans are to start the building just a few yards from the basilica and would partly conceal its facade. The Pope declared that if the Israeli government will not stop this Arabic action, the Vatican will close all its churches in the Holy Land for the year 2000. Christians were very disappointed that the government in Tel Aviv refused to deal with this conflict.

According to the Serbian Patriarchate's newspaper "Pravoslavlje" ("Orthodoxy") of October 15, just recently, in a demonstration, the Arabs placed on the location three empty coffins with names on them: one with the name of the Christian Mayor of Nazareth, another "Year 2000" and one with no name on it. A bit later, the same Arabs put up on the place a huge tent. The Israeli government either didn't want to or could not remove it.

The newspaper "The Jewish Press" of October 15 reported that the Israeli government is very much troubled by this threat by the Vatican, and which is supported by other Christians, to close all the churches, because it will negatively affect the arrival of the expected millions of tourists and this means a loss of income. At the same time, the government cannot ignore the population numbers: there are 42,000 Arabs in Nazareth and only 18,000 Christians.

"The New York Times" of October 15 reported that the Israeli government tried a compromise: it would permit the building of a mosque, but of much smaller dimensions than that intended by the Arabs and the minaret may not be any higher than the bell tower of basilica. According to the information given by "The Jerusalem Post" of November 5 the Arabs removed their tent and scheduled a corner stone ceremony to start the building of the mosque for November 23rd.

"The New York Times" for October 15th reported that as a first preventive measure, all the Christian churches will close on November 22nd and 23rd. The protest by Christians states that it is in order "To express the disapproval of all the churches at the way that their rights have been violated."

#### ABOUT THE SAFETY OF TOURISTS IN THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

As we reported earlier in issue # 4 (80), the Israeli government is very much concerned with the possibility of a catastrophe during a flood of pilgrims at the Jubilee year 2000. In this connection it tried on several occasions to negotiate with representatives of several faiths which are responsible for the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, but with no results.

The newspaper "The Jerusalem Post" reports on November 5, that the Ministry for Internal Security of Israel is insisting that the Holy Sepulchre Church install another exit. At present, for number of centuries there has been only one wide door for entering and exiting. The authorities insist that in case of fire or any panic in the church, which can hold as many as 2000 people, a major catastrophe might happen.

A spokesman for the Latin Patriarch, Abu Nasser, said that, "It is difficult to change a status quo situation that has existed for 150 years. Our position is very clear: the door is very crucial and is needed. But we prefer that issues pertaining to the Holy Sepulchre be solved among the churches themselves."

According to an agreement which was signed by the Turkish Sultan in 1849 it was determined that no internal or external alterations might be made without a common decision of the Greek, Latin, Armenian and Ethiopian churches. Interference in these matters by the representatives of the Israeli government is viewed by all the groups as a change in this status quo.

Traditionally the key from the Holy Sepulchre Church is in the hands of a Muslim family which has taken care of it for some 800 years. One of the important questions would now be: in whose hands will the key be if a new door is made?

The Israeli Minister of Internal Security, Shlomo Ben Ami, said that he is establishing a committee which will settle the matter to all party's satisfaction. There have already been several meetings of this committee, but it cannot reach any conclusions because of internal disagreement among all those who are responsible for the Holy Sepulchre. The government keeps insisting because pilgrims are already starting to come to Israel and it has to act more insistently.

At the same time, Yasser Arafat declared that no matter who gets the key for another exit door, under no conditions it may be given to a representative of the Israeli government. A Catholic spokesman, Abu Nasser, said that, "If the keys are kept in Christian hands, that will be fine, but if Israel wants to use this security issue as a way to establish any type of control over the Church, that could lead to reactions."

It is strange that the newspaper in no way reports the reaction to this issue by the Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarch. In the Holy Sepulchre not only every meter, but centimeter has a line between every confession which are using the church. A few years ago there was almost a fist fight between Greeks and Copts only because one of the parties washed the floor and went a few centimeters behind the "property" line, since it could mean that ownership is infringed upon.

For some reason, so far no one raised the question of on whose side the wall will be broken through for the exit door.

#### A PAGAN PRIESTESS GOES TO RUSSIA

According to information in "The Christian News" of October 11, about a year and a half ago one Russian Nicholas Osipov from the city of Rybinsk started a search for a connection through the internet with a priestess of the pagan religion of Voodoo. He stated that he is 31 years old, a teacher of history and a doctor at the same time, he was pleading with this pagan woman to visit Russia in order to teach this religion to more than dozen of his friends and acquaintances, whom he described as ordinary citizens, engineers, students, psychologists and technicians. This group consisted of people 18 to 48 years old. According to Osipov, all of them just dream that this pagan woman will come to Russia and teach them voodoo and magic. The "religion" he is so eager to import to Russia is plainly pagan. After sending photographs of himself and his friends to this priestess, Osipov wrote to Miriam Chamani a letter in the spring of 1998, asking her to send him literature, because "We can't get books on voodoo in Russia, either, as such books are not published here. We would kindly ask you to be our teachers in voodoo religion and magic."

The priestess gladly obliged, especially since some "benefactor" in America paid for her and her assistant's trip. And as far as any expenses in Russia are concerned, these planters of satanism in Russia guaranteed they will take upon themselves and even provide her with an interpreter!

"Priestess Miriam" has already forwarded to Rybinsk copies of her lectures and books.

This satanist was to leave for Russia on September 9 on a Delta airplane and spend three weeks there. She said she needed three days to get used to Russians and their way of life. Besides, she "will study the vibrations of the people who invited her, so as to best identify their needs." Then she wants to tour "the spiritual landmarks in the country" and "collect soil samples so as to ensure a safe return home." After that she will "look at ways of establishing voodoo communities in Russia." Certainly, all those satanic actions will be explained in detail at her lectures about her rituals.

For at least three weeks the Satanist Miriam will explain to Russians the difference between African paganism, "the religion of Wicca" and "Santoria" - an African paganism mixed with Roman Catholicism. In America she already founded a "Voodoo Spiritual Temple in New Orleans." The husband of this Satanist was also a pagan priest.

Poor Russia!

#### WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY

"BC Report" of September 27 reports that the Ecumenist WCC is on the brink of financial and ideological bankruptcy.

Founded in 1948 with the supposed goal of uniting Protestants of all colors and Orthodox within the WCC, very soon started to support terrorist Marxists and, in religious matters, theological modernists. Therefore, the monetary donations to this Masonic enterprise gradually started to dwindle. In August 1999 a German Lutheran bishop Wolfgang Huber, one of member of the financial committee, declared that the WCC has a deficit of 300,000 Swiss francs, which is the same amount in US currency. This declaration was made only 8 months after the WCC celebrated the 50

anniversary of its existence and at the same time announced that its membership rose to 12 more "churches" and has at present 339 denominations which are representing about 350 to 450 million "believers."

Nevertheless it became known that the displeasure of the "Orthodox" with Protestant prevalence in the administration of this organization has played a significant role in the decrease of Ecumenist finances. That, too, led to internal disagreements within the WCC. A vice-moderator of the WCC, Marion Best, insists that the reason for its decline in income of the nine major western denominations and USA, who kept the organization with their supporters. Placing an example, Marion Best said that of 22 "Orthodox Churches", who are members of WCC and make almost a half of the membership, there came "a meager \$36,000 and the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) gives nothing." However, this can be most probably explained by the internal difficulties regarding the financial situation of this particular Church.

Ms. Best also believes that "The Orthodox feel like they are being pressed on the ordination of women, and they are very conservative on sexual orientation." She also believes that the Orthodox have reason to complain. The Herere meeting featured 11 pro-gay workshops, which represented the interests of homosexuals. And an attempt to achieve "gender balance" in the Central Committee nearly caused a fist fight, when an Orthodox woman nominee decided to step down in favor of a male priest.

A representative of the "Orthodox Church in America" at the WCC, Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, said that, "The World Council, as an Orthodox-Protestant council played a valuable role during the Cold War, communicating across the Iron Curtain. But the profile of the council was only ever representative of a certain kind of mainstream, liberal Protestantism. And as Protestants continue to dominate the organization's agenda, the Orthodox have been extremely dissatisfied."

## AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS

For more than 30 years the Vatican has been having secret negotiations with Lutherans and now it is known that both reached an agreement on the matter of salvation.

The founder of Lutheranism, Martin Luther, born in 1483, completed his education in Germany and became a Catholic monk. Being scandalized by the sale of indulgences by Pope Leo X, Luther openly opposed this practice, left monasticism and married a Catholic, also a nun. It is interesting to notice that even 500 years later Catholic priests who leave their priesthood mainly because of the papal law of celibacy, in most cases marry former nuns!

Among a number of false teachings, the adherents of Lutheranism also distorted the Church's teaching on salvation. Lutherans believe that for the salvation of a soul one has need of only faith in Jesus Christ. Catholics, however, on this particular question, in accord with the apostolic teaching, declare that for salvation good deeds are also needed. But Catholics, being also heretics, invented a new teaching of the "extra merits" of the saints, who supposedly, had more good deeds than needed for their own salvation and those surpluses are in a treasury of the Roman Popes who may dispense them as they will. As a result, Pope Leo X and after him all other Popes started to sell "indulgences" (forgiveness of sins) for a great amount of money.

This greatly disturbed Martin Luther and on October 31, 1517, he placed on the doors of his church in Augsburg his own 95 theses in which he criticized the Pope. Thus came about a schism within Roman Catholicism, which resulted later in hundreds of sects, who go by the common name of Protestants.

According to "The New York Times" of November 1, exactly 482 years later, the Roman Catholics and Lutherans signed a 20 pages long agreement of mutual understanding in this matter. This event was marked with concelebration of Catholics and Protestants in the St. Ann's Lutheran Church in Augsburg and in the church there was a ceremony of signing of special common declaration. It states that, as of now, both religions can clearly articulate their "common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ."

However, the newspaper "The Christian News" of November 1, 1999, reported that 240 Lutheran theologians filed a very strong protest against this declaration which states, "In truth, the Joint Declaration is an ambiguous statement whose careful wording makes it possible for the Pope's representatives to sign it without changing, retracting or correcting anything that has been taught by the Roman Catholic Church since the time of the Council of Trent in the 16th century... The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification is not so much a compromise between Roman Catholics and Lutherans, as an out-and-out concession by the Lutherans."

The Declaration was signed for the Vatican by Cardinal Cassidy and on the Lutheran side by General Secretary Ishmael Noko and a number of representatives of Protestant sects.

Certainly, it is very easy to sign a declaration at the top level, but to expect a practical unification of Catholics and Protestants is not realistic. Yet, both parties are very happy that now they can continue their negotiations on another subjects.

## AN OUTRAGEOUS BLASPHEMY IN NEW YORK

In September in the Brooklyn Museum of Art an "art" exhibition opened called "Sensation." Sadly, the exhibit was held despite very strong protests by the New York City Mayor Giuliani and indeed made a big sensation.

The main object in this exhibition was an outrageous picture by British artist Chris Ofili, named "Holy Virgin Mary." If it were not for the name, one could hardly call this outrageous ugliness a human figure. But the problem is in

particular in the name and that on all sides this figure is surrounded with clippings of sex organs, made out of medical journals and pornographic magazines. Besides, on the bare chest of this "Madonna" there is attached... elephant dung! The "artist" didn't hesitate to go to a zoo order to get it. The inscription on this picture, indicating its name, is also "decorated" with manure. Beside this offensive and blasphemous "sensation," the "Washington Times" reported that there are such outrages as the Last Supper picture, made according to the design of Leonardo Da Vinci, in which instead of Christ there is a naked woman, along with pornographic pictures of little girls, a figure named "father", who is rumored to be the artist's father, a dirty marine with symbolic depiction of the male and female sexes and other similar examples of degenerate contemporary "art."

Mayor Guliani's protest, supported by Cardinal O'Connor, was widely advertised as an attack by the Roman Catholic religion. Unfortunately, if any protests were made by the Orthodox, they were so unnoticeable as to be nowhere mentioned.

According to the magazine "Time" of October 4, Guliani declared that the 7 million endowment, which museum is getting from the city, would be not given this year, because the taxpayers are not obliged to support blasphemous mockery of their religion.

But the defenders of "free speech" and expression in any form took the City to court, claiming the mayor's decision was nothing but illegal censorship.

There were numerous demonstrations against the opening of this exhibit: by the supporters as well as opponents. Nevertheless, some 350,000 visited this outrage!

According to "The New York Times" of November 4, since the first decision was not in favor of the city's stand, Guliani, (a very experienced lawyer himself) sent the matter in a different direction: he demanded an investigation into the sources of the many hundred of thousand dollars donated for this exhibit. The sponsors of the museum hamstring this investigation and will not supply the necessary documentation. They have the full support of Judge Nina Gershon. It seems, this will be a prolonged litigation.

#### CONCESSION BY THE VATICAN TO THE JEWS

For a number of years the Jews have tried to get the Vatican's permission to open to them the secret files of the Second World War in order to prove that Pope Pious XII was not energetic enough in saving the Jews from Nazis and that the Vatican tries to hush this up. The Papists have declared on several occasions that their Pope tried to help Jews, but categorically refused to grant them direct access to the documentation. Under the pressure from the Jews, the Vatican recently published some of the documentation from this period, which fills 11 volumes, but it seems that the access to specially secret documentation was denied them. Now the matter has become an especially controversial because Catholics want to canonize Pious XII and the Jews categorically oppose it!

According to the newspaper "The Jewish Press" of October 22, giving in to Jewish demands, the Vatican agreed to establish a special committee of six members: three from the International Jewish Committee for inter-religious Consultations and three Catholics, chaired by Cardinal Cassidi, a president of the Pontifical Committee for relations with the Jews.

Thus, in December there will be first meeting of the scientists, in order to work out a special schedule for their work in the Vatican. Each part selected their own scientists who have to be approved separately by each party.

The Jews in no way feel ashamed to say that "The findings of the commission could affect the process of beatification of Pious XII."

Rabbi David Rosen, Director of the Israel's Anti-Defamation League and Israeli Joint Committee declared that "the agreement is significant because it shows the spirit of cooperation and sensitivity for each other which both the Vatican and the Jewish leaders are showing."

One wonders how does the Vatican's decision regarding the beatification of Pious XII concern the Jews? "Beatification" in the Catholic Church is a first step toward canonization. So now, Pope Pious XII might be called "blessed," if there is Jewish "agreement" to it!