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WITH THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
AND THE COMING NEW YEAR

THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF CHURCH NEWS WISHES TO EXTEND TO ITS RESPECTED READERS
GREETINGS AND WISH THEM ALL THE BEST.

THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF THE HOLY NEW MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
MAY THE LORD SEND US PEACE AND A LESSENING OF THE PERSECUTION BY OUR HOSTILE ENEMIES.

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NATIVITY EPISTLE OF
HIS Eminence VALENTIN, METROPOLITAN OF SUZDAL AND VLADIMIR

To their graces the archpastors, the honorable pastors, and the honorable monastics:

*Today the Divinity placed upon Itself a seal of humanity
So that humanity be adorned with the seal of Divinity,
(Ven. Ephraim the Syrian).*

Again and again the twilight of a wintry night learns of the ray of the brilliant Divine announcement of the Good News: the great mystery, the God-Logos was manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16), the Son of God has become incarnate and become the Son of Man, while remaining the Son of God, in order to uplift us fallen into sin, to the "first blessedness". God becomes the son of the All-pure Virgin, being like us in everything, except sin, to call us to be God-like. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered... into the heart of man" (I Cor. 2:9) this blessed condition of life with God and in God, the path to which is revealed to us through the Nativity of Christ.

How disgusting and worthless turn out to be the supposed "pleasures" in whose pursuit a miserable man multiplies the number of his sins, if only we would keep in mind the genuine good-fortune of sanctity, of the joy of communion with God, of eternal life with God, for which purpose God has created us!

As result of the fall into sin by the first human beings, which was multiplied by more and more new sins of later generations, humanity has lost its original ability to see God "face to face". Its "eye of the heart" became clouded, became veiled with the crude covering of flesh which forced it to seek only the consolations of fleshly joys.

Human beings – the best and supreme creation of God, who bear the image and likeness of the Creator Himself – were irresponsibly immersed in the abyss of non-existence. Even the greatest righteous ones of the Old Testament who sat "in the darkness and shadow of death" (Ps. 107:10) while waiting for Christ's incarnation, understood that after death they would share in the condemnation which was drawn down upon the entire human race by sin. "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning" said the righteous Fore-father Jacob (Gen. 37:35).

There was no possibility for the human race to be able to prevent the unavoidable perishing of humanity – temporal as well as eternal. Only the Divine Incarnation could save humanity from condemnation and eternal death – through the change of the entire sinful nature of humanity through union with the sinless and utterly all-perfect God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ accepted the flesh of His fallen slaves, whom He Himself had created. He became man and suffered in the flesh in order to redeem our unfortunate flesh from condemnation and death and to regenerate us unto eternal life.

It is necessary to remember that the union of human nature with God and which was revealed to us through the sacred mystery of the Nativity is a two-fold process. The Lord, Who has condescended to us, and accepted the image of the slave, died for us by the shameful death on the Cross, calls to us to take the small step toward Him.

We should not "rest on the laurels" that He has redeemed us and has saved us. The sin ruling the human race and the redeeming *podvig* [ascetic struggle] of Christ, the Savior of the world, only opens for us the path for salvation through participation in this *podvig*, through union with Christ. Whether we go down this path or not depends upon the free will of each one of us and the Lord, Who knows all hearts, does not force us to make such a decision.

We are surrounded by the world in storm, whose prince is the God-hating devil. This world presents to us many tempting images, which advertise crime and sin. The overwhelming majority of our unfortunate countrymen and contemporaries are fascinated by these images and like a thoughtless herd goes where the enemy of our salvation, the devil, invites them.

He invites humanity to his banquet — to hell, whispering to them to part from Christ and the Kingdom of God. He draws us pictures of worldly well-being, comfort, material achievements, cozy home, much good-tasting food, expensive and seductive clothing.

It is hard, very hard, to make a proper choice under these conditions, especially, if those close to one in every way try convince one "to live like anybody else does". A Christian in the contemporary world seems like "a heterogeneous body," a fool. But Christ the Savior has told us: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world... therefore the world hateth you" (Jn. 15:19).

He draws our sacred Christian holidays within the orbit of his demonic power, to emasculate their spiritual content and to turn them into a reason for secular delights, a means for more new sins.

In the West, "Christmas" is celebrated everywhere, i.e., "the Nativity". However, this "Christmas" is least of all connected with the spiritual experience of the mystery of the Nativity. This is a commercial show, when the number of sold products brings in a ten-fold income, through a flood of tempting advertisements, and people engage in senseless amusements and sins during "Christmas vacation".

The main personality of this "Christmas" is a half-pagan "Santa Claus" who is a blasphemously distorted image of St. Nicholas. He advertises various drinks, cigarettes, clothing and, in general, calls people to spiritual relaxation and sin. For us in Russia, most regrettably, Christmas gradually has become a commercial holiday.

Despite all these temptations, let us try again and again to concentrate on the great mystery of God's Nativity. In this mystery we are amazed and astounded by the especial self-effacement of the Son of God, who accepted the "form of a slave". In the irmos of the Nativity canon we sing: "I see an unusual and most glorified mystery: the heavens -- a cave, the throne of the cherubim – a Virgin, the manger – the vessel in which lies the uncontainable Christ God...." The cradle of

the Christ Child in the poor Bethlehem cave carried in it the beginning of the deprivations and sufferings of the God-Man. Bethlehem was the threshold of Gethsemane and Golgotha!

Today the mercy of God has led us to the sacred cave and we with the eyes of our faith contemplate the wonderful image of Christ's Nativity. We become the participants in this saving event, but what did we bring as a gift to the Child Christ? Unfortunately, nothing but our sins!

We see that in those places where Christ was born today blood is flowing, tears are flowing. The fields of Bethlehem, which once heard the angelic song "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace", today resounds with cannon fire, bringing not peace, but death and destruction.

May the Child God teach the unwise and save the world which has sunk into darkness and the shadow of death [sin].

My beloved in God Archpastors, pastors, venerable Monastics, brothers and sisters!

On the day of the all-joyous Feast when Orthodox Christians glorify the Christ Child, born from the unwedded ever Virgin Mary, with a feeling of great spiritual joy I greet all of you who are endlessly dear to my heart on the day of our salvation.

In the upcoming New Year may the Child God Who has been born grant a blessed peace on earth and peace to our souls and our homes.

May the Lord God give to all of us saving love for each other, so we can sing of the Trinity in one essence -- Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit! Amen.

+ Humble Valentin, Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir
Suzdal, 2002 / 2003

ABOUT LITIGATION AGAINST METROPOLITAN VALENTIN

The Internet agency Vertograd News in several issues gives details about the ongoing litigation against the First Hierarch of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church.

The court hearing, scheduled for November 11th in response to the appeals of the lawyers of Metropolitan Valentin, actually fully confirmed the illegal verdict of the very same court on September 23rd, which not only was not able to prove the guilt of the Metropolitan, but was not able to ascertain even the exact dates and times of the supposed "crimes". It is said in the report that "the court session began with a hearing of the request of the Metropolitan's lawyer Arcady Kolesnikov, who demanded a challenge of the reporting judge Vera Lupandina. Arcady Kolesnikov stated that on November 1st, he filed a request addressed to Vera Lupandina to have copies of certain papers from the case, but this request was denied. After a conference, the court did not grant the request to challenge the judge Vera Lupandina, but at the same time, permitted the lawyer to have the copies made of this case..."

On the day of the hearing at the Court of Appeals, Metropolitan Valentin forwarded to the regional court of Vladimir his response to the opinion of the prosecutors which approved the decision of the Suzdal local court. The First Hierarch of the AROC has pointed out that in the course of the investigation the necessary inquiries were not included, which without any difficulty would establish the impossibility of his committing the crimes of which he is accused, nor was other expertise included. The assertions of the prosecutors that the lawyers of the Metropolitan supposedly exercised pressure upon the "victims" and therefore at the very beginning of the investigation they started to make statements in favor of the Metropolitan was included in the court documentation despite not a single piece of evidence of such pressure. The First Hierarch of the AROC responded that the psychology-psychiatric expertise of the "victim" Eugene Kutsik came to own independent conclusion as to which of his testimonies are to be considered as truthful. Such conclusions are beyond the competence of the physicians-psychologist and nevertheless, the court treats them as "proof". The Metropolitan considers it to be a grave violation of the due process that the court "did not believe" the testimony of "victim" Benjamin Kutsik to be truthful, although he repeatedly testified at all court sessions. As a result, Benjamin Kutsik has sent to the Vladimir regional court a cassation complaint in which he requests that his testimony in favor of Metropolitan Valentin be taken into consideration, because the court systematically ignores them..."

From the very beginning of the court hearings, the appeals on the part of the defense to include this or that material in the case were practically all denied. While, again a mockery in our opinion, the court was willing to include in the case the texts of the appeals, while the appeals themselves were actually systematically denied. Among the presented appeals were some very important ones, for example, the text of the interrogation by the lawyer Vladimir Ryzhov of the mother of the brothers Kutsik and who testified in detail how much pressure her children experienced from members of the "Nashe Delo" ("Cosa Nostra") organization and about the motives for which Eugene Kutsik slandered the Metropolitan. For this reason the court even went into a consultation room (which seldom happens) and was consulting there for more than 40 minutes. However, the request to include this appeal was denied. Also not included were the press publications which were testified about the pressure applied by the "Cosa Nostra" as well as in general information about the participation of them in these events. By the way, during the court sessions, a group of three or four strong young men of about 30 years of age in camouflage uniforms was constantly present.

The court has granted the request of lawyer Vladimir Ryzhov to include in the material for the expertise a photograph of unknown origin, which the judge Isabella Musygina has received from a group of some "Russian Resistance Movement". This photograph, depicting an unknown man, was included in the case without the knowledge and agreement of the

participants of this case. Even more, the lawyers accidentally discovered it when preparing the material for the cassation appeal. There was an attempt by the "Cosa Nostra" group to give out such photographs at the courthouse in August.

Several people, to whom the photograph was shown, but not given, testified that the photograph is a doctored montage representing a naked man with the head of Metropolitan Valentin!

The lawyers of Metropolitan Valentin are planning to submit this case to the presidium of the Vladimir regional court as a matter of review or to the Supreme Court of Russian Federation.

On the same day, November 12th, the arbitration court again postponed the review regarding the suit by the administration of the Suzdal region to remove the diocesan house in which is the convent on Vasiliyevskaya Street.

On November 20th, according to the same Vertograd information, the mayor of Suzdal, A. Y. Ryzhov, succeeded in his attempt to deprive Metropolitan Valentin of his status as representative on the City Council. Ryzhov raised this proposal at the meeting of the City Council, insisting that a convicted criminal may not keep the status of representative. The members of the representatives voted that this question be postponed. Then Ryzhov insisted upon a telephone conversation of the representatives with the administration of the legislative council of the Vladimir region and there the representatives were told that Metropolitan Valentin, as a convict, has to be deprived of his representative status. New elections in the region which Vladyka represented are scheduled for January, 2003.

Metropolitan Valentin himself refused all the awards received by him as well as the status of representative already in July and shortly after that sent to all the representatives his official resignation. However, he had to appear at the meeting of the City Council when he found out that the new Mayor Ryzhov transferred the school to another building, which is in very poor condition and he plans to open in the old school a casino and a discotheque. This school is located within 40 meters of and between two churches. Right across a narrow street there is a new Synod building which has also a church. Of course, the Metropolitan called this move a blasphemy and in no uncertain terms informed the representatives of his opinion.

UKAZE OF METROPOLITAN OF SUZDAL AND VLADIMIR VALENTIN

"#122/54

November 21st, 2002

UKAZE

To Anthony Ter-Gregorian

For almost two years you have sent over the Internet offensive your articles which are harmful and seductive to the faithful of the AROC.

You did not heed the repeated attempts to persuade you to stop your intrigues and go down the path of salvation, to live and labor for the benefit of the Church of God in a spirit of peace and love, but just the opposite, you increased your intrigues, slander and so on by which you are assisting the enemy of our salvation.

On November 20th, 2002 you sent out over the Internet your article, foul from beginning to end, full of lies and slander.

For systematic intrigues and sulkiness among the AROC, you have placed yourselves outside of the Church of God. From now on you are not to be considered a member of the Russian Orthodox Church and your cries in the future will not be investigated by the members of our Church, of which herewith you are informed (according to 39th Canon of the Holy Apostles, 52nd of the Cartage Council, 102nd of the Sixth Ecumenical Council).

The Manager of the Diocese + Metropolitan Valentin"

EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION IN SUZDAL

On Saturday, November 10/23rd after the vigil service there was a nomination rite of Archimandrite Irinarkh (Nonchin) and on Sunday 11/24th his ordination in the Synod's church dedicated to the Iberion Icon of the Mother of God.

The new hierarch of the Russian Church received the title of Bishop of Toola and Briansk. Under him there will be parishes in the Toola and Briansk regions and a Catacomb convent.

Bishop Irinarkh was born in Nizhni-Novgorod region in 1967 and was religious from his childhood. He came to Suzdal in 1984 and in 1987 was tonsured a monk. Together with Archimandrite Valentin in 1990 he left the Moscow Patriarchate and joined the ROCA.

The Nonchin family is well known for their piety. The brother of the new ordained Bishop, Fr. Valentin, is a priest and his son Vladimir is the cathedral's protodeacon.

Bishop Irinarkh, who on number of occasions has refused to be consecrated a bishop, now the 12th Bishop in the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church.

MEETING OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE AROC

On November 19th/December 2nd there was a regular meeting of the Synod of Bishops of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church, presided over by her First Hierarchy, Valentin, Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir.

Archbishop Theodore reported about his trip to the Caucasus where in the *stanitsa* (village) Otradnaya he consecrated a newly built church.

In the city of Belorechensk (Krasnodar region) a community was registered. Priest Alexis Gorny was appointed rector. Also the community of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg in the village of Novaya Kupavna in Moscow region was received with its rector Fr. Andrew Walewski. The construction of the new church is proceeding at great speed.

Vladyka also reported on the legal proceedings created by pressure on the Suzdal diocese by the local authorities where the FSB (former KGB) is trying to get a court decision about the building on Vasilyevskaya St. in Suzdal in which is the Laying of the Garment Convent.

The day after the Synod's meeting it became clear that, thank God, this effort has failed. On December 3rd the arbitration court decided to deny the demands of the Suzdal administration and the building remains in the possession of the convent.

Vertograd/Razsylka # 331 reported that according to the participants in this trial "the representatives of the administration failed to give a basis for their demands. On various sessions they referred to various paragraphs.... The representatives of the administration could not comply with the court demands to present the grounds for their suit in a written form".

The Synod discussed in detail the situation of the Church in Georgia and Byelorussia, where the MP alone is officially recognized. The same is planned for the Russian Republic, where legislators want to introduce a law which would grant the MP the status of state Church.

The Synod of Bishops has approved the sanctions which the First Hierarch imposed upon Anton Ter-Gregorian as well as Tatiana Sanina 'for spreading God name-worshiping literature' for which, until her repentance, she is excommunicated.

As it is in the minutes, "regarding the written 'repentance' of Tatiana Senina that she is sorry not because of her delusions, but that she has sent Metropolitan Valentin her booklet, to deny and to let him know that in case of repeated spreading of this heresy, Tatiana Senina will be forbidden to receive communion".

It also ruled that "in the future following the spreading of similar errors, the lay people will be forbidden to receive communion and clergy suspended with a motion that they be defrocked".

At the meeting was heard the "appeal" of Hieromonk Augustin (Lima) with a very impudent "request to answer his 12 questions, regarding many heresies preached by Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie)." Hieromonk Augustin is rector of a parish in Gilford (England), which many years ago was established by Mr. Vladimir Moss.

This parish has been in 9 different jurisdictions (sometimes twice) and Fr. Augustin himself was just recently baptized and ordained in Suzdal.

Vertograd in Razsylka # 329 not without reason, calls the parish of Vladimir Moss "record-breaking" and points out that during the time of its existence it has changed 9 jurisdictions (an average from 1-4 years in each)!

At the conclusion of his outrageous letter Fr. Augustine declares that "in order to defend myself from deadly infection, we are forced to cease prayerful communion with you. Starting with the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the temple, November 21st/December 4th your name no longer will be commemorated at the services in the English Orthodox parish of Archangel Michael in the city of Gilford."

Since Hieromonk Augustin was baptized and ordained by a "heretical" hierarch, one can only recommend he go and search for a "true" ordination some where "in a far away land". What a blessing that there is no shortage of still available "jurisdictions"!

Regarding the matter of the Gilford parish, the Synod has ruled "to take into account the fact of their separation and let God be their judge as well as the canonical rules they have trampled upon".

The Synod of Bishops also included His Grace Bishop Irinarkh of Tula and Briansk as a permanent member.

UKAZE OF METROPOLITAN VITALY REGARDING ARCHBISHOP LAZARUS AND BISHOP BENJAMIN

The Internet news Razsylka # 235 of November 20th published the text of an Ukaze signed by Metropolitan Vitaly and Bishop Barnabas regarding the ordinations they have performed.

"Ukaze" dated November 1/14th on feast of Sts. Kosmas and Damian "appeared on the web, created by Archbishop Lazarus, a roster with unacceptable composition of Hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia with the their Eminences Lazarus and Benjamin and unlawfully consecrated by them four clergymen".

In order to make sense of this "grammatically correct" sentence one has to read it several times. Then follows:

"Trampling upon the church rules without a slight consciousness of their guilt, the latter have created an artificial ecclesiastical organization and in this way they bring to temptation and error our God-loving flock.

In view of this, we remind and affirm what our five hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad have already declared and affixed by their signatures in the Regulation of August 8/21st of the current year, namely that by their unlawful actions their Eminences Lazarus and Benjamin and those with them, have placed themselves outside of our Church.

Consequently, not to consider the above mentioned hierarch and the clergy under them to be the clerics of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia.

+ Metropolitan Vitaly
+ Bishop Barnabas"

A more illiterate "Ukaze" so far has never been published. To begin with, it is unknown to whom it is addressed and the issuance number is missing.

In this amazing "Ukaze" it is not explained in what capacity it was signed by Bishop Barnabas, right under Metropolitan Vitaly, since the official Secretary to his Synod is considered to be Protopresbyter Victor Melekhov!

According to the report of Vertograd/Razsylka # 332 of December 2, the jurisdiction uncanonically begun by Metropolitan Vitaly (after retiring creating a parallel jurisdiction to the ROCOR) as expected is now suffering a catastrophic breakdown.

The secretary in the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly, Protopresbyter Victor Melekhov and Archpriest Joseph Sunderland in an open letter to all members of the ROCOR (V) have written that "With the greatest sadness we have to give evidence to catastrophic situation in which our Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has found herself".

The authors of this letter write: "At present our Church is passing through a serious crisis. We are unable to hide this sad truth. Actually, our Church Vessel at present is without rule and is rushing through a total fog into an unknown destination".

Quoting the aged Metropolitan's Christmas epistle that he might be kidnapped and be unable to rule the Church, these clergymen write: "Although enemies could not kidnap Vladyka, they managed to deprive him of his freedom. This happened quietly, without a scandal or violent seizure. It happened with assistance of Ludmila Rosniansky. Rosniansky has made an agreement in which she promised to put Metropolitan Vitaly under the control of Archbishop Laurus". The authors of this letter testify that Ludmila Rosniansky, the long time personal secretary to Metropolitan Vitaly, prevents all connections of the Metropolitan with the outside world. However, she was famous for this even when the Metropolitan resided in Synod.

Then the clergymen complain that the French clergy supports Rosniansky "using her influence over the Metropolitan and obtain from him any decisions they feel necessary".

It is very possible that this very illiterate ukaze, which was signed by Bishop Barnabas, was composed by him and signed by the Metropolitan!

As a main problem for their Church the clergy see in fact that ROCOR (V) "has no precise confession of faith" and as example present several changes in resolutions about the Cyprionite Synod.

As the Vertograd quotes them: "Without a precise confession of faith and without a solid ecclesiastical position, it is impossible to understand a schism by Archbishop Laurus. It is impossible to correct the previous errors and deviations".

In the hope of "correcting" something that was impossible to correct to begin with the authors of the letter have composed their own "confession of faith", which was also signed by priests in Canada: Michael Martsinovsky, Andrew Kencis and Mark Smith.

Since the authors of this letter at present have not found the "precise confession of faith" in the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly – where will they be drawn in the search for the "truth"?

They also mistakenly consider "Archbishop Laurus" as creator of the schism. Since Metropolitan Vitaly, although under pressure resigned and publicly acknowledged it, but later in violation of the canons decided to restore to himself the powers of First Hierarch – the actual creator of the schism was no one but Metropolitan Vitaly himself. It seems that Metropolitan Laurus was properly elected by the Council of Bishops. His radical change of the course of the Church Abroad toward the MP is quite another matter.

THE SECOND CONFERENCE ON CHURCH HISTORY

The Internet publication of the ROCOR (L) has announced that "A conference was held on 13-16 November, 2002, in the Synodal Library of the Moscow Patriarchate (Andreyev Monastery, Moscow) devoted to questions of the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century. One year ago a similar conference was held in Sentendria (Hungary). With the blessing of their hierarchs, clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church (MP) and the ROCOR participated, as well as representatives of historical academia. The conference held 25 lectures and reports from scholars from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Latvia, Germany, the USA.

The conference concentrated on the following topics:

History of the Russian Orthodox Diaspora, especially in the Far East, Holy Land, the Baltics, USA and Balkans.

Problems of jurisdictional divisions within the Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad.

Problems of the survival of the Orthodox Church under the totalitarian regimes.

Position of the Orthodox Church during period of the Second World War.

Position of the Russian Orthodox Church towards the Ecumenical movement.

Repressions by the theomachist regime and the podvig of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

In studying these topics, the participants noted that a number of stubborn stereotypes hinder the discovery of ecclesio-historical truth. Contradictions were also exposed, caused by conflicting understandings of church-historical terminology."

Archpriest Michael Ardov wrote an excellent article on this topic which we published: "The Sergianists in Their Own Repertoire".

"The speakers used historical sources which have not been previously introduced in the scientific circles.

Under the conditions of relative freedom to express its positions, the ROCOR during the investigated period formulated its theological evaluation of the anti-Christian essence of the Communist ideology.

The discussions of the political policies of the leaders within the MP and the Church Abroad during the Second World War displayed certain disagreements according to the conference members. At the same time it was agreed that the representatives of the Church in their activities under the yoke of theomachist totalitarian regimes were forced to compromise with the government. However, under these conditions the Church managed to preserve the purity of faith and canonical structure."

"The purity of faith" of the MP is more than dubious: in 1961 she joined the WCC at the demand of the Communists and at one time even permitted Roman Catholics to receive Holy Communion. Regarding "canonical structure" – this was violated by Sergius Stragorodsky when he usurped the rights of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, whose *Locum Tenens* he was and then, in violation of the 30th Apostolic Canon, he was appointed by the atheist Stalin to the position of "patriarch". The results of his compromises with the government at time of his appointment were visible: in the entire territory of Russia (excluding those parts occupied by the Germans) there were about 400 open churches and 4, not yet arrested bishops, including Sergius himself!

"An important area of research was considered to be the study of the life stories of the hierarchs of the Russian Church, with their differently evaluated, but an important, experiences under the conditions of theomachist governments.

It was noted that the Nazi leaders aimed at breaking the Church into isolated and even hostile to each other church organizations was met with internal church opposition.

The members of the Church in the Homeland as well as Abroad had a different understanding of their service to Russia. One thing is clear, that first of all they hoped in God's Providence and believed in the internal strength of the Russian people.

The conference considered the examples of usage of the Church by the Government in aim to strongly oppose the political systems.

The importance of a thorough study of the witness of the Church in the theomachist environment was noted and the podvig of the New Martyrs and Confessors. This task becomes more possible with access to cases of investigation as well as other documents from the archives.

It was stressed that ROCOR is to be praised for preserving the traditions of Russian piety and Orthodox churches.

The continuation of such conferences was found to be desirable to further mutual understanding between the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church.

November 3/16th 2002. "

Out of 18 speakers there were 7 representatives of the ROCOR (L), which long ago have revealed themselves as the supporters of union with the Moscow Patriarchate. Participants in the conference included Archpriests Alexander Lebedev, Victor Potapov, Nicholas Artemov, Peter Perekrestov, Reader Andrew Psarev (editor of "Pravoslavnaya Rus" magazine), Nun Wassa and M. Nazarov.

As expected, the speakers from the Church Abroad as well as the MP did not mention the Catacomb Church with even a single word. Archbishop Mark of Berlin, contrary to all evidence, long ago declared it to be non-existent!

The common conferences with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate continue. Thus, the same Internet source reported that from November 1st to 2nd there was a seminar in Jordanville, called "Symposium in Memory of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow". The Symposium was chaired by Archbishop Mark of Berlin. One of the speakers was Alexander Yakovlev, professor at St. Tikhon's Theological Institute in Moscow!

From the Internet's Otkliki information (which like Vertograd has published the results of the Moscow conference) we learn that at the gate of the Patriarchal town house the following important dialogue happened:

Question: What is the reason that journalists are not allowed to be present at the conference? According the Russian Federation laws regarding the media, if a public organization, which the Moscow Patriarchate happens to be, announces a conference – the press has the right to be present.

Answer of the secretary to the superior of the monastery, Archpriest Boris Danilenko, Ms. Irina: May be, but we are subject to His Holiness. According to the blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch, this is a closed conference. At it there are discussed delicate matters which are not subject to... This is not a conference anyone can attend.

Question: Please tell us who are the participants?

Answer: It is not blessed... After the end, there will be no press conference. Turn off your wonderful little tape recorder and goodbye..."

It is amazing that the superior of the monastery is not an abbot or abbess, but an archpriest: after all, all sorts of miracles can happen within the Moscow Patriarchate!

The reason why this conference is veiled in such deep secrecy is partly explained in the interview given after its close by Archpriest Victor Potapov. In particular he explained that the "conference is striving to **create** a historical background or base, upon which we could begin serious dialogue for unification of the two branches of the Russian Church... And this

conference, like the first one, has the blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and whole Russia as well as the Synod of the ROCA". (emphasized in the original)

To the question when does Archpriest Potapov consider the time for the future union of the two Churches, there was a following answer:

"It is hard to set a time. I believe it is not **behind the mountains!** [an expression meaning that it is coming rather soon, "Ch, N."]. It is very important that both Churches feel they are children of our one Church. Of course, **the vast majority**, I mean the Church Abroad, also hope for that, pray for the unity of the churches and I believe, it is already not behind the mountains".

Unfortunately, from the texts of the interview of Rev. Potapov, it is nowhere mentioned who interviewed him, but one has to give him credit, the questions were cleverly put and logical and to slip past them was very difficult even for such a professional like Fr. Potapov.

From this interview one may notice how much his principles have changed over the years. Among the various questions was the following:

"We know the facts of the relations of Metropolitans Anastassy and Philaret toward the MP, but unfortunately they do not quite correspond with your views. In Russia your book "By Silence is God Betrayed" is well known. In it you list a lot of facts about collaboration of the First Hierarchs of the MP with the KGB, where you mention their code names. What do you think about the collaboration of such hierarchs? After all, the membership in such agencies is life long...?"

Answer: This too has to be submitted for consideration... and in the course of our conferences these questions will definitely be raised.

Question: And your personal opinion?

Answer: My personal opinion is that this is very sad and there should be repentance... but the fact that a person has collaborated still does not mean that he is deprived of the grace.... If his ordination was a correct one – **he is a true hierarch!** Certainly it is very sad and this has to be revealed and to repent...."

It seems that Archpriest Potapov does not know that among the important heretics, were even those properly ordained – including a number of bishops, for example Constantinople's Bishop Macedonius, Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople and a number of others.

Among the questions regarding the MP there was also a question about "globalization" and connected with it the almost universal registration of people who receive an individual number.

The answer of Archpriest Potapov almost matches the faith of so called Protestant "fundamentalists".

"I will not discuss the matter of 'globalization' I do not know much about it. I have a personal Social Security number, as all Americans have, and my daughter, just born, got such a number. I see nothing frightening in this. **One should not be afraid of the antichrist! We should wait for his coming.** We know that after the antichrist there will come Christ. Yes, come O Lord! Is not this what the first Christians believed? To stress antichrist, be afraid of him? I do not consider... Why? Was not this predicted by the Lord? And regarding the unity of the Russian Church.... We pray for it at each service. This was the last prayer of the Lord in Gethsemane. He prayed that we all be united as He is with His Heavenly Father".

Fundamentalist Protestants preach that if they believe in Jesus Christ as God, they are already "saved" by this sole fact, and how they live is already unimportant. It is known that the level of life of the first Christians and the contemporary ones is very significant. By the way, this is the main reason why the fundamentalists so generously support the state of Israel: they believe that the sooner there will be the end of this material world, the sooner they will be taken in the Rapture to heaven.

At the end of this highly slippery interview, the reporter who had at hand a previously published quite decent book by Archpriest Potapov "The God is Betrayed by Silence" and in which he has a lot of material testifying to collaboration for MP with the KGB – asked him to sign it, as souvenir of this meeting.

Archpriest Potapov replied: "**This** I will not sign!" To the question: "For what reason?" -- his wife answered: "These are bad people!" Father Victor obediently repeated: "Because... you are bad people!"

According to Internet reports "the conference started and concluded with common prayer of ROCOR (L) and MP clergies"

A REPTILE

by Archpriest Michael Ardov

In Russian the word "reptile" has a double meaning: usually it is a class of animal, but it also refers to mercenary journalists. M. I. Michelson in his collection of "Popular and Accurate Words" (St. Petersburg. 1896) writes: "Reptiles are mercenary writers who sell their pens — gigolos of the press"). In pre-Revolutionary Russia there existed such term as "reptile journalism".

The persecution which now exists against the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church started in the Vladimir region when it was decided to fabricate a criminal case against our First Hierarch Metropolitan Valentin. He was accused of nothing less than pedophilia. The slanderous material was and is produced by our former clergyman, defrocked Archpriest Andrew Osetrov. He has produced a video cassette with compromising material. And then, a venial newspaper "Prizyv" ("Appeal") issued in Vladimir, published series of articles, which broadcast their lies and illiteracy. But the campaign against us did not restrict itself to this. Over the summer "Prizyv" joined the odious capital publication "Quite Secretly". In

the issue 8 (159) for the current year further material was published, belonging to Larisa Kislinskaya known in journalistic circles as a "reptile". To refute this dirty cookery point by point is a thankless task, but this example makes it easy to explain to the reader what "reptile journalism" means and what are its typical methods.

To begin with, Ms. Kislinskaya has absolutely no understanding of church matters and she even does not know how to properly address the clergy. So, she addresses the main provoker and slanderer in this way: "Father Andrew (Andrew Osetrov)." Kislinskaya does not know that the last name of a clergyman (and at that, without the given name, but only after it) is put in brackets only when it refers to monastics. And the former archpriest is a married man with 12 children. Or, for example: "The reporters of the newspaper 'Prizyv' have reported that just before the celebration of the millennium of the baptism of Russia, Fr. Valentin ordered a multitude of ancient books, vestments and iconostases be burned which were kept in the Church of the Sorrows. Fr. Valentin and his clergy have taken from the Kazan church about 20 candlestands and more than 40 icons and iconostases".

'Iconostas' in the Orthodox Church is the term for a "more or less a solid wall which divides altar from the middle section" (Christianity, An Encyclopedic Dictionary, M. 1993). Therefore the fantastic scene of burning a multitude of "iconostases," which were kept in the "Church of the Sorrows" could not have happened. It seems that the "reptiles" from "Prizyv" had in mind not "iconostases", but "arks" (which is explained in the same dictionary, as a frame for icons)

One can add to this absurd accusation the following. Metropolitan Valentin was always known for his care and zeal for God's churches. In Suzdal itself and its suburbs 18 churches belong to our Church and each of them has an iconostasis and holy icons.... How much perverted fantasy must one have to represent our Metropolitan as a destroyer of sacred items...

But what of the "burning of iconostases"! Kislinskaya informs her readers of far more startling things: "The present rector of the Trinity Church in Alexandrov, Victor Kukin, related that in 1977, the future Metropolitan Valentin, while a student in Zagorsk seminary raped a young man, for which reason the principal decided to have him removed. Shortly after that, the principal died in unknown circumstances and the matter of the removal was closed".

The Zagorsk seminary (officially "Moscow Seminary") was reopened in 1946 and her principles can be counted on one hand. In 1977 it was headed by Archbishop Vladimir (Sobodan), at present the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine. It would be interesting to ask him: under what circumstances did he "die"? Even more interesting would be to know in which manner did he rise from the dead?

The persecutions against our Church happening not only with fabricated accusations of the mercenary press. In Suzdal there happened to appear revolutionary militia groups of the organization "Nashe Delo" ("Our Cause"). They terrorize clergy and parishioners and try to provoke enmity and separation among local residents. Kislinskaya defends them all the way: "...in the beginning of 2000 several patriotic organizations participated in the matter, united under the slogan 'Nashe Delo'.... In several newspapers there soon appeared publications about extremist minded young men. As a terrible example of extremism on part of 'Nashe Delo' there was quoted such ideas: 'The boys must be brought up as defenders of the Homeland and the girls as future mothers'.

But here, one of these "several newspapers" -- "Noviya Izvestiya" ("New News") in the issue of June 29th reported that the Internet site of "Nashe Delo" was closed for no other reason than the extremism of this organization. It appears that "Nashe Delo" did not appeal for the proper bringing up of children, but for "forbidding all political parties and movements," to have media censorship and so on. In other words it was promoting the cessation of the existing constitutional order.

The publication of Kislinskaya is aimed at people not only unacquainted with church life, but at those who have no idea of many other things: "Among the friends of Valentin there are several ambassadors from foreign countries, from whence to him come purposely 'blue' [homosexual in Russian slang] delegations. In one of the houses belonging to the autonomous ROC, on the second floor there is even a hotel for them. The nuns, who live on the first floor, with outrage speak of orgies, pornography, which whirl there to create muscle tone, about heavy drinking. But they are afraid -- they have no where to go and no where to live -- they totally depend upon Valentin."

It is unclear what the Foreign Ministry is looking after? Why does not it cancel the accreditation of these ambassadors for this activity, which does not correspond to diplomatic status?... And the fate of those anonymous (actually non-existent) "nuns" is not as helpless as represented by Kislinskaya. Those who supplied the "evidence" against Metropolitan Valentin did not come off as losers. Andrew Osetrov brags that he has secured the future of his many children for quite a long period. His main collaborator -- former Protodeacon Krassovsky (who is unemployed) is building in Suzdal a two story brick house and purchased an apartment in Moscow. Former Nun Sophia (Morozova) also obtained a house.

We very well know that the funds for all of this (also for the sordid publications in the press) are coming from the Moscow Patriarchate, which with the assistance of "state structures" hopes to suffocate the Autonomous Church, to get rid of a real rival. Most probably, also the guys from "Nashe Delo" receive salaries from the same source, who ride in cars, walk around with girls and in such a easy manner fulfill their "patriotic mission".

The "reptile journalists" at all times were known that they above all guarded and guard morality. Kislinskaya has concluded her article with a significant phrase: "But besides the worldly judgment, there is God's judgment. One cannot influence this judgment, and as the poet has written, "it is deaf to the clink of gold". It is waiting.

A truth is a truth: The Creator is "deaf to the clink of gold"; in this He differs from creation. The more so, if this creation is named a "reptile".

The disgusting slanderous article of Kislinkaya was published in the summer, but so far nowhere have we seen a denial of it. However, there is nothing to be surprised at: Usually the "reptiles" publish their slanders, but refuse to publish the refutations. Therefore, although a bit late, we are glad to publish the excellent article by Fr. Michael Ardiv.

PERSECUTION OF 117 MONKS OF ESPHIGMENOUMONASTERY ON MT. ATHOS

The Greek Orthodox Internet source TV@FOL.COM on November 27th published an appeal by the monastery about the persecution of them by the New Calendarists.

The monastery, established in the fifth century and in which there are now 117 monks, is the only one on Mt. Athos, which does not recognize Ecumenism and the New Calendar and therefore does not commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Therefore it is subject to special persecution by the civil and religious authorities. The monks are threatened with exile from Mt. Athos under the pretext that they do not recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate as an institution.

The appeal states that "The Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou appeals for the moral support of all people, so that the human rights and religious freedom of its 117 monks will be not persecuted, so that the monastery will continue without hindrance to pursue its spiritual life and philanthropy towards all people".

The abbot of the monastery, Methodios, in an interview given to the newspaper "Kathimerini", published in English, said: "It is a spiritual matter, and we will not back down. We have to protect Orthodoxy from the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate and its approaches toward other Christians".

The Monastery of Esphigmenou severed communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Mt. Athos administration as early as 1964, when Patriarch Athenagoras met with Pope Paul the VI in Istanbul. After this meeting the monastery started to display a banner with the inscription "Orthodoxy or death".

The address of Esphigmenou Monastery is: Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou; P.O. Box 5913; 630 75 Ierissos – GREECE. E-mail: ath153@in.gr

PERSECUTION OF THE NON-GOVERNMENT CHURCHES

The fact of ferocious persecutions by the Moscow Patriarchate of all the "non-traditional confessions" is common knowledge, while "traditional" Catholics, Muslims, Judaism and certain Protestant groups are being registered in the Ministry of Justice. However, the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church, according to the MP (and this means the tightly connected with her government) – is not always recognized in Russia as being a "traditional confession" and often is simply persecuted as we see in the case of Suzdal where the MP has been severely threatened by its competition.

The very same can be observed in Belorussia, Ukraine and Georgia.

From Internet information it is evident that at the end of October Bishop Agathangel (jurisdiction of Metropolitan Laurus) wanted to register the communities of the ROCOR (L), but was flatly refused. According to Belorussian laws "the parishes existing here have no right to perform the services and other acts of a religious character". These believers have to defend their rights in the courts. While in Belorussia, Bishop Agathangel as a result of this met with lawyers.

In Belorussia, the ruling bishop of the MP is the Metropolitan of Minsk and Belorussia Philaret (KGB code name "Ostrovsky"). "The New York Times" of November 23rd reported that: "There's been a web of restrictions and control of religious communities in the last few years. You can't have outdoor events. You can't build a church without permission from the authorities, and you can't get permission. This new law has really codified and clamped down on everything. The law has 40 articles of bewildering complexity, but at its root, it outlaws regular meetings of worshipers of any faith not registered with the state, and strictly limits the places where even registered faiths can hold services".

The very same information is also given by the Swiss "International Herald Tribune" of November 25th, 2002.

Similar lawlessness is happening in Georgia. According to a letter of Metropolitan Ephrem of Boston, dated September 27th, sent to Richard Miles, the USA Ambassador to Georgia:

"From the Georgian town of Shemokmedi, in Guria near the Black Sea, there have come to me reports from first-hand eyewitnesses of incidents of violence, destruction of private property, and verbal and physical abuse directed against innocent people, including children, who have broken no law. Specifically, these are Orthodox Christians who have separated themselves from the Patriarchate of Georgia because they do not consent to the Patriarchate's ecclesiastical policies. In other words, this is strictly a matter of religious convictions. It has been reported to me that the above acts of violence have been provoked and encouraged by clergy of the Georgian Patriarchate.

These faithful are affiliated with us and they are, in fact, a mission of our Church. Furthermore, they are supported in their church work by funds sent from our Orthodox Christian institutions and parishes in the United States.

I ask you to investigate this open violation of the rights of these innocent people. For more specific details about these incidents, I urge you to contact one Otari Babunashvili (wotar@hotmail.com) a resident of Tbilisi who is fluent in English.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours + Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston"

In middle of October it became known that the Catholicos-Patriarch Elias II (code name in KGB "Iverieli") and the President of Georgia Shevarnadze have both signed a "constitutional agreement" according to which the Orthodox confession is declared to be elevated to the rank of "state religion".

According to the newspaper "IzvestiyaRu" – "From now on the Orthodox Church will collaborate much more with the state institutions... In the 'power structures' (police & army) there will appear chaplain-priests, spiritually ministering to the army and MVD (the new form of KGB). Priests will also come to prisons, to the convicts". According to George Tsereteli, representative of the Georgian Parliament, "The main gain which was obtained by the state as a result of this agreement with the Church – is social harmony."

In contrast to other religious organizations the GOC does not have to go through the procedure of re-registration with the Justice ministry.

It seems that all the former "satellites" of the USSR have again united and any one, even the most Orthodox, if he only considers it impossible to belong to the "state Orthodox Church," actually immediately becomes also an enemy of the state. What is a difference between these agreements and the Sergian treachery?

A SUDDEN DEATH

In mid-October all the diocesan bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate received the following telegram: "I inform you of the sudden death of His Eminence Archbishop Eugene, of Nizhny Novgorod and Arzamas, temporary ruler of diocese of Tambov, which occurred on October 11th. I request your holy prayers for the repose of the newly departed colleague. Patriarch Alexis".

From the reliable sources we learn that the death of the archbishop happened under curious circumstances: he died of a heart attack while practicing on a sport device.

We know that the Church wishes her children a "Christian death", "painless, shameless and peaceful". It seems, the death of archbishop Eugene was quite "painless", sort of "peaceful" and in general speaking even not "shameful". But the question is: was it a Christian one? A. X.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CATHOLIC HOLIDAY OF "ALL SAINTS" IN SERBIAN SCHOOLS OF SREM

The newspaper of the Serbian Patriarchate "Pravoslavlje" ("Orthodoxy") on its first page published a protest by Bishop Basil of Srem against the establishment in the region of Srem of the Roman-Catholic holiday of "all Saints".

As reported by Bishop Basil: "recently the local education department, led by Zoltan Bunjik, has changed the official feast days calendar of the Serbian Republic and this has created within the Serbian Orthodox diocese and the Theological school of St. Arseny of the Srem in Sremski Karlovci an guarded concentration. According to Zoltan's calendar, on Friday November 1st, while we write this letter, on the day of a Roman Catholic feast in the region of Vojevodina there will be no classes. In this way the children and teenagers of all the faiths are forced in an official manner to observe this holiday. Winter vacations, according to this calendar, will start a few days earlier than usual. Beside the feast of All Saints, there Christmas Eave and the Christmas Day will be celebrated, but all this is to be celebrated until January 6th. Probably Christmas Day will be a working day.

Bishop Basil correctly suggests that this is a case when one has to alert international public opinion and to complain about the violence to the rights of believers.

Since the TV station in Novy Sad broadcast the declaration of Nenad Chanka in which he called the Serbian Church a "clero-faschist organization" Bishop Basil sees this as "the beginning of new persecutions" of the Serbian Church.

Actually not only of the Church. The very same newspaper published a frightening article in which it is stated that no less than 1/3 of Serbs is already using Latin script and the author expects that within 20 or 30 years the Cyrillic script will disappear among the Serbs. Russian newspapers have also published the suggestion that Latin script be introduced in Russia, too.

Undoubtedly, this is an international march against national consciousness and the culture of the Orthodox countries.

However, history tells us that the Church thrives on the blood of martyrs. A revival of monasticism can be observed in Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and some parts of Bosnia.

A magazine "Byronica" published in Switzerland in issue # 8 for October-November has an article from which it is obvious that the Serbian monastery Dechany (14th century) which at one time was in total decline – unexpectedly started to revive, but in another, interesting form. It there are now 33 young monastics, but not as previously, coming from peasants, but the opposite, the representatives of contemporary Serbian culture. Today's monk widely uses computers, e-mail and cell phones. Fr. Hilarion Lupolovich, 28 years old, only 6 years ago was a promising actor of the Belgrade stage, Fr. Arseny Jovanovich, almost completed dentistry school, then art school and is now an iconographer. Zvezdan Stefanovich for a number of years managed luxury hotels in Buenos Aires and Belgrade...

Shortly after the repose of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), his cell attendant Archimandrite Theodossy (Melnik) left the jurisdiction of ROCOR and joined the Serbian Orthodox Church. He was appointed the Abbot of Decany monastery where he earned the respect and the love of the brotherhood. Having a very outgoing and friendly character, during the Second World War on several occasions he saved the monastery from attacks by Muslims and once an Italian military unit was located in the monastery.

TEN COMMANDMENTS DO NOT FIT INTO AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

"The New York Times" of November 19th reported that in the town of Montgomery (Alabama) the chief justice of Supreme Court of Alabama, Roy Moore, has put up in the court room a stone monument, in a form of pedestal on top of which there are the tablets of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament. On it is written: "Law of Nature and of Nature's God". The monument, more than 2 tons and four feet high, was christened "Roy's Rock".

Almost immediately this monument became an object of worship. Many people came, fell on their knees before it and began to pray. However, liberal religious groups protested that Justice Moore has converted a courtroom into a church.

This judge was little known to the general public, but because of the monument, in a short while he became a hero. Nevertheless, the federal judge ruled that the monument had to be immediately removed. His ruling states that "This court holds that the evidence is overwhelming and the law is clear that the chief justice violated the Establishment Clause. The monument is nothing less than an obtrusive year-round religious display intended to proselytize on behalf of a particular religion, the chief justice's religion."

The civil liberties groups made a joyful declaration that "Justice Moore was elected to administer justice, not to serve as a religious minister."

During his election campaign, Justice Moore promised to install the monument in the Supreme Court.

The state of Alabama is a very conservative Protestant state. A lawyer for the justice said this ruling will be appealed.

Another lawyer, Stephen Glassroth, of the Jewish faith, has sued, declaring that "It offends me going to work everyday and coming face to face with that symbol, which says to me that the state endorses Judge Moore's version of the Judeo-Christian God above all others".

Justice Moore argues that his monument is in no way a symbol of state religion, but only acknowledges the role God had played in the American history.

Christian groups have pledged not to back down on their positions

CATHOLIC SCANDAL GETTING OUT OF PROPORTION

For the first time in many centuries, lay Catholics have started a movement demanding active participation in the life of their Church. This is especially visible in freedom loving America. Outraged by the perverseness of their clergy (mainly because of almost mass pedophilia) and that their episcopate for decades not only did not remove the criminal clergymen, but, sometimes with rewards, just transferred them to other parishes. The lay people have begun to organize societies and significantly reduce their donations to the church and Vatican and now, start even open demonstrations. They believe that their donations for churches should be used as requested, but not to pay for expenses created by perverted clergy.

According to "The New York Times" of December 9th there was a demonstration in Boston with placards of more than 400 Catholics against Cardinal Law demanding that he immediately retire. A letter, signed by 45 Catholic priests to Cardinal Law also demanded his immediate resignation. This is an absolutely unheard of instance in Roman-Catholicism.

Pressured by this major protest, Cardinal Law unexpectedly went to the Vatican, without even making any arrangements to change his schedule of pastoral visits.

The Boston Diocese, which sadly has become famous for the perversion of her clergy, is forced to pay millions of dollars due to court demands by the victims – children and teenagers, who were abused by clergy. As a result, at present the diocese has to decide whether it should declare bankruptcy or to sell in a hurry almost all her possessions, including some churches and schools.

Approximately the same situation exists in a number of other Catholic dioceses, not only in the USA, but other countries too, including such a Catholic one as Ireland.

When the scandal of complaints about the Catholic clergy has reached the international character, American bishops had as special meeting at which it was ruled that there will be "0 tolerance" regarding criminal clerics and such cases will be referred to police authorities. With this regulation the American bishops, summoned by the Vatican, went to consult with the Pope. But the regulation of the American episcopate was considerably watered down by the Vatican and this created a new displeasure on part of lay Catholics.

It is interesting that the accent is upon pedophilia only, while every Catholic priest before his ordination pledges to observe celibacy. Illegal relations with mature women is no longer given any consideration!

AMERICAN FEAST OF HALLOWEEN

It was noted long ago that people most eagerly imitate the most harmful habits from the "cultures" of other countries. In the first place it is foul language, music and only then – the customs. The Russian people have not escaped this misfortune too, by littering its enormously rich language with a mass of foreign words, which, in addition, in many cases are wrongly interpreted. Also foreign customs have leaked into Russia, especially from America. So, one can see store windows with Christmas decorations and signs about "Christmas" as well as Halloween.

Unfortunately, there was no reaction in Moscow to this diabolical holiday, although Professor G. N. Filonov, who is in charge of "the office of civil education of the state NII".

The newspaper "Russkiy Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in issue # 43-44 published a "conclusion of measures taken regarding Halloween by the government and municipal administrations".

Professor Filonov quite reasonably considers that "the practice Halloween in any of its forms is unacceptable for the Russian system of education". The conclusion of Filonov is based upon the opinion that the holiday of Halloween is "destructive for children as well as grown ups in relation to psychological, pedagogical and social matters" and "also contradicts the legal regulations regarding the secular character of education in the government and municipal educational administrations".

In this case, the "Opinion of the Jewish Organization" signed by Rabbi Z. L. Kogan, the President of KOROOR, definitely stands out favorably in comparison with Prof. Filonov's statement. Rabbi Kogan, in an open letter addressed to President of the Education Department in Moscow, L. P. Kazina, writes:

"The Congress of Jewish Religious Organization and Unions in Russia expresses its concern regarding the obligation for students in government and municipal educational administrations of secular quasi-religious ideologies ('world culture' and similar) and openly destructive of religious beliefs (the 'pedagogy of the epoch of fire', the 'noosphere pedagogy' and others).

A vivid example of the violation of the rights of students in government and municipal administrations to freedom of conscience is the requirement that they participate in the Halloween 'holiday' which is introduced more and more in Russian schools".

"The organizers of the Halloween speculate on attraction of children to fairytales and something unusual. No one among children, in sound mind would agree to participate in a ritual which is connected with the Satanism, while any child would be happy to participate in a costume carnival of the humorous tendency and in addition with the shade of magic as it is presented to the students in the governmental and municipal schools by the organizers and promoters of this action.

"However, the Halloween is not a faire tale carnival, but quite definitely a quasi-religious event, which has a direct connection to Satanism. By conducting Halloween holidays in the governmental and municipal educational administrations, the promoters of this are propagating satanic religion... All of which is a blatant violation of the basic laws of freedom of religion and of religious groups.

"To force Jewish students to participate in the Halloween holiday and to thrust upon them the destructive religious teachings is a hidden form of the spiritual-cultural genocide...."

Rabbi Kogan appealed to his fellow countrymen and "representatives of other religions in Russia" not to participate in this satanic holiday and is asking the head of the Educational Department to forbid it in Moscow schools.

It was very sad when one sees in America little children (of 4 and 5 years) dressed as devils or wearing the masks of vampires and witches!

This rabbi is absolutely right in his appeal to the Education Department, but at the same time, it is very strange to see that the Moscow Patriarchate until now has had no reaction to the criminal seduction of children's souls!

It is interesting, that the magazine "Pravoslavnaya Rus" of Jordanville in # 20 quoted the newspaper "San Antonio News" about this pagan holiday.

"The local witches of the town of San Antonio, Texas, are getting ready for the holiday of Halloween, which as they believe, has its source in ancient Celtic pagan religion. One of the witches remarked: 'on this day our new year begins. On Halloween we offer our new years resolutions and start a new life'. She also remarked that the witches are amused when they watch that this holiday is observed by Christians in America. She believes that in this way, they do communicate with the ancient pagan custom".

One cannot deny the logic of this witch!

There are in America a number of witch groups who claim that they do not believe in 'black magic' but are practicing "white magic" for the benefit of humanity.

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED (letter of Bishop Gregory to Metropolitan Vitaly)

Your Eminence, Dear Vladyko!

I see in the unwillingness of the two bishops to come to the meeting of the Synod of Bishops until Bishop Valentin departs, a symptom of a total misunderstanding of the aims and significance of our ministry. If you will not stop it immediately, we will be living with an unacceptable internal schism.

First of all, such an act is the direct violation of the canons and principles of the Statute of Governing the Church Abroad. Even more: this is a phenomenon which never happened from the very beginning of the Church Abroad in 1920. It is a direct violation of the bishop's installation oath. If you permit this in a single case, later you might witness a total destruction of our Church which would start with the Council of Bishops.

In the serious principal matters there always were and always can be different opinions, but each hierarch gave an oath to obey the Council of Bishops and the Synod and therefore is obliged to show up at the Councils. (Rules: I Ecumenical Council 5; Forth 19; Second 6; Sixth 8).

Vladyka Lazarus should be warned that he might be declared responsible.

What is the basis of today's temptation? Mutual distrust. And by whom and why is it planted and exaggerated? Can we believe that the agents of the Moscow Patriarchate would leave us in peace? It is most important for them to stop the movement toward us within the clergy and the flock in Russia. And they are supported by people whom we have trusted. Every one of our difficulties benefits our enemies.

Vladyka Lazarus can serve as an example of agent propaganda. He came here and we have surrounded him with care. I tried to do everything so that he would feel our unity. It seemed we have become close. But then, he went to Washington, where he stayed for more than a week and he returned estranged from me, as if I was not a laborer in the establishment and strengthening of the Church Abroad, but now became a new enemy of it. Unfortunately, Vladyka Lazarus didn't take into consideration that three Metropolitans in the course of more than 50 years would not fully trust me if I were an enemy of the Church. My enemies were always the Soviets, the Eulogians and the American Metropolia. With Metropolitan Philaret there was a trusted cell attendant, unfortunately very mercenary minded; he did not spare any effort to ruin my consecration, implant distrust of me and to disrupt the work of the Synod. Vladyka Philaret didn't fall for that. Due to intrigues introduced among us, the Synod was weakened and your work made very much difficult.

Now, when we have increased our representation in Russia and the unity of episcopate is more important than ever, and agents have used the ignorance of Vladyka Lazarus regarding our recent past and, on other hand, have used his circumspectness against the only important clergymen to come to us from the Patriarchate.

Could we expect that the KGB would not react to this?

Very soon we received "warnings" about the "danger" of the new hierarch. No matter how I investigated, none of his enemies could give any concrete facts which would make him one not to be trusted... There was also criticism of Vladyka Lazarus of his past before he joined us. Very soon our enemies have seen that this would not help them. So they then exploited his natural mistrust. They could not prevent the ordination of Vladyka Valentin, but we know how it disturbed the Patriarchate. And here now, a new temptation. Vladyka Lazarus will not come until Vladyka Valentin departs!

But he does not take into consideration the rules regarding accusations and that the main principle of conciliar administration is not suspicion, but mutual love. If he has any accusations against Vladyka Valentin, they have force only in his presence. Without his explanations neither the Synod, nor the Council can hear them.

By the way, Vladyka Lazarus heard some rumors about me and I would be in no way offended if he in a brotherly manner would tell me of them and listen to my explanations. If he wants to report them to the Council of Bishops, let him do it, but in my presence.

We have not a sovietchina [a Soviet style government] and when there were complaints about a hierarch, then according to Statutes and in correspondence with the canons, first the accusing reports were to be sent to the accused. I do not know if some one complained about me. I was not informed of this. But we cannot introduce within ourselves the Moscow way of life, which was created by the KGB. Any complaint firstly is to be sent for a response and explanation to the accused. Only after that can it be a subject of deliberation. (6th canon of the 2nd Ecumenical council and the paral.).

This is why Vladyka Valentin cannot depart if there are any accusations against him. And if there are none, then why be afraid of his presence? It is against the rules of conciliarity. We can do nothing in opposition to the Moscow Patriarchate, if we present ourselves as a divided kingdom.

We cannot any longer leave the present situation in Russia with its disorder, and to establish order while one of the ruling bishops is absent, according to the rules this is impossible. It is an extremely urgent matter: after all, at present we have now contradictory instructions. This is why I am deeply convinced and will insist at the Council of Bishops that Vladyka Lazarus is obliged to come so that order in Russia would be created with his participation and, of course, with the participation of Vladyka Valentin, so that their relations would be clearly regulated.

We have a war against the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of Russia. To conduct it in a state of separation, that is, with this existing internal struggle – is unthinkable.

I ask for the holy prayers of Your Eminence and remain your co-brother,

August 20th/September 2nd, 1991

+ Bishop Gregory

As usual this letter of Bishop Gregory to the Metropolitan (with included an official report to the Synod of Bishops regarding this matter) also remained unanswered. But from it it is evident, how right he was in his warnings to Metropolitan Vitaly. The present schism of all the parts of the former Russian Church Abroad in Russia and Abroad is a complete fulfillment of a prediction made some eleven years ago!

GREEK MODERNISTS IN AMERICA

"The New York Times" on December 2nd published an article reporting that the Greek New Calendarists are weary of being dressed as befits the clergy.

Among the laughable reasons given by some modernist clergy (in particular Priest John Melissaris) are: when visiting cemeteries the wide sleeves catch on the monuments and thus stain their rases or, during the rite of blessing a car, they catch there, too. When it rains, their vestments become "wet mops". It seems these clergymen have never heard of the invention the umbrella!

The modernist clergy also demand the right to cut their hair and to shave, because their wives do not like it.

The article states that in Western Europe the Greek clergy long ago started dressing like Roman Catholic clergy and they are in no way reprimanded by their hierarchs.

The modernist movement has become strong enough that the Archbishop of Athens Christodoulos proposed the Synod discuss the matter of the appearance of contemporary clergy, but his brethren decided to postpone the matter for the time being.

In Greece itself, for some 500 years the appearance of the clergy has not changed in any way.

Priest Panagiotis Missyris complains that the priests are constantly the subject of criticism by lay people, who try to control what they eat, what they say and, even, which kind of a car they drive.

A monk Moulatsiosis, who a few years ago made the news in Europe by founding a rock band and selling several million records, wears a black coat with a scufia adorned with a diamond cross and the hierarchy says nothing about it, because it knows his popularity.