



CHURCH NEWS

An Independent Publication of Orthodox Opinion

AUGUST, 2004

Vol. 15, No. 8 (# 132)

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

Due to open-heart surgery performed in mid-July, the editor-publisher of "Church News" has received many letters and get-well cards from our readers. I am especially grateful to these numerous readers for their prayers for the success of this operation. Owing to them I am on my way for recovery. Many thanks for your concern!

A. Schatiloff

CONTENTS:

FROM THE INTERNET CESSPOOL
VISIT OF FIRST HIERARCH OF AROC METROPOLITAN VALENTIN TO USA
ARCH-PASTORAL VISIT OF HIERARCHS OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
CHURCH IN NOVAYA KUPAVNA RECEIVES REGISTRATION
CHURCH IN TVER REGION RECEIVES REGISTRATION
ORTHODOX RESIDENTS OF SUZDAL OBSERVE FEAST OF ST. THEODORE OF SUZDAL
UNPRECEDENTED APPEAL OF METROPOLITAN LAURUS
AN UNCONVINCING APPEAL
"THE GENERAL REBIRTH, OBSERVED ALL OVER RUSSIA"
SCHISM IN BULGARIAN CHURCH
FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS

CHURCH NEWS
639 Center St.
Oradell, NJ 07649
Tel./Fax (201) 967-7684
E-mail: churchnews@optonline.net

FROM THE INTERNET CESSPOOL

The First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church, Metropolitan Valentin, after a pastoral visit to the USA, where he underwent an urgent open-heart operation returned home on Tuesday, July 3rd. Starting from that date, almost for three weeks on the Internet "site" of Archbishop Gregory and his immediate collaborator, Priest John Claypool there appeared false and slanderous "data" about the departure of Metropolitan.

Some "unidentified" (?) person has informed the Russian Federation Consulate in New York that the Metropolitan has with him \$100,000 and is leaving USA without paying for his operation. Similar information was reported to the custom's department of "Aeroflot" airlines. As a result, Metropolitan was subjected to a humiliating search, but, despite these Internet reports **the Metropolitan was not arrested and no money was confiscated from him!**

This did not prevent the slanderers, a day or two later, from stating on the Internet that the "New York Times" had published an article about this case, the supposed arrest of the Metropolitan and the confiscation of his \$100,000!

Two or three persons, in no way connected with the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church, called the editorial office of the newspaper and were told that the newspaper has printed nothing about this case and in general is not familiar with this subject. Not content with this, the false informers placed on the Internet an outdated and filled by them questionnaire the personal information about the Metropolitan (at that misspelled his last name) with the false subpoena. For the convenience of USA residents it is now possible to get such official questionnaires off the Internet. A few days later, there again, on the site of a parishioner of Fr. Claypool, Shafik Tadros, under the name of "Paradosis List" there was again published a questionnaire with the Metropolitan's name, who supposedly agreed to return to USA on December 8 in order to be tried by the American court! All of this false bacchanalia was published on the Internet address:

<http://www.russianorthodoxautonomouschurchinamerica.com/subpoena.jpg>

This address is a page on the website of Dormition Skete!

Being upset by this insistent slander, on August 9 Protopresbyter Vladimir Shishkoff and Abbot Andrew (Maklakov) went to the office of Robert Heinemann, Clerk of the United States District Court, Eastern District of New York, located at 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, NY 201, main telephone # (718) 260-2600. They spoke to a clerk in the office there and asked him if the subpoena obtained from the website of Dormition Skete were genuine. He told them that there were several anomalies in the document which pointed to the possibility it might be a forgery. In particular, he mentioned that the name and the telephone # of the US Attorney was missing and the address of the US Attorney was incorrect. He also said that the original should have a raised seal over the signature of Mr. Heinemann's name. He didn't not recognize the signature that is on the document. In order for them to find out for sure, he directed the Fathers to the office of the US Attorney, which is located across the street at 147 Pierrpont St. Brooklyn, BY 11201, telephone # (718) 254-7000.

There they spoke to one of the Assistant US Attorneys, Grace Moody, who stated that the document seemed to her to be a forgery. She noticed the missing name and the telephone # of the Assistant US Attorney, and that in addition the address is wrong. She said that there was no case number and that therefore she could not reach the system to see if there was such a case pending. She seemed unfamiliar with the case and asked who had requested the document from US Customs. The Fathers responded that the request was ostensibly made by her office. She laughed and said that that would never happen. After the Fathers have explained to her what the supposed crime of Metropolitan Valentine was, she said that had the US Customs wanted to prosecute the Metropolitan, they would have arrested him immediately at the airport. She also said that had her office needed any information from the US Customs, they would get it directly from them without using a subpoena, for which there is no need. She said that the Grand Jury hearing is secret and that no information about it allowed out, and therefore questioned how anyone could have gotten a copy of subpoena had it been real.

As both Fathers were returning home, they received a telephone call from Fr. Dionysi McGowan who related to them that he had just called the US District Court himself (718-260-2600) and talked with someone in the Clerk's Office. Fr. Dionysi told this person about the subpoena and was asked for the name and spelling of the person who was named of the subpoena so that it could be looked up in the computer. Fr. Dionysi was told that the name of Anatoly Rusanstov (sic) was not in the system. Then Fr. Dionysi was told to call the office of US Attorney (718-254-7000). He spoke to a clerk named Brenda and told her about the subpoena. She asked Fr. Dionysi for the name of the person, spelling and other information from it. She also said that there was no record of such a person in their computer system. She also said that the information from the subpoena did not sound correct and that it may be a forgery.

In his numerous responses regarding the resolutions of the Synod of Bishops of the ROAC, Archbishop Gregory expressed his surprise that the Synod could have appointed an Administrator in the person of Protopriest Vladimir Shishkoff, ignoring the fact that he (Archb. Gregory) was already a ruling bishop in the USA.

It seems, that Archbishop Gregory had no idea that a number of clergymen, who have petitioned the First Hierarch of the ROAC to be admitted into his jurisdiction, have stressed that under no conditions would they be willing to be under his administration.

Some readers of the Internet have expressed surprise that none of the ROAC clergy has made an effort to defend their First Hierarch in the Internet sites. This is to be explained by obedience of the clergymen to a decree, made by the Synod of Bishops, urging them to stay away from Internet polemics and to use it only for purposes of preaching Orthodoxy.

Considering that the majority of persons who use the Internet are not subscribers to "Church News," and the false attack on the First Hierarch of the ROAC has exceeded all acceptable levels, we consider it our duty to make an exception and to refute the outrageous slander via Internet.

Editor and Publisher of "Church News," Presbytera A. Schatiloff

VISIT OF FIRST HIERARCH OF AROC METROPOLITAN VALENTIN TO USA

The unexpectedly prolonged stay of Metropolitan Valentin (due to an urgent heart operation) has had tremendous significance for the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church administrative life in this country.

The Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) in one of his sermons pointed out that there are no such things as "accidental" acquaintances and meetings: sooner or later in some manner their significance will be revealed later on.

The urgent operation of Vladyka Metropolitan in the state of Colorado, unexpectedly led to his close acquaintance not only with Archbishop Gregory, but also his monks and clergy.

Archbishop Gregory appointed Abbot Fr. Andrew (Maklakov) to be sort of the Vladyka Metropolitan's "shadow". He speaks Russian perfectly and spent two full months with the Metropolitan. This gave Archbishop Gregory, as well as his clergy, the opportunity to discuss various important church problems, regarding various practices.

Pretty soon it became obvious that Archbishop Gregory does not share the opinions and practices of his First Hierarch and even during the stay of Metropolitan in America, he forwarded to the Synod of Bishops a complaint, accusing him of violations of a multitude of canons.

The main reason for the conflict was the practice of Archbishop Gregory to accept anyone who joins the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (even from the Church Abroad) through chrismation or a repeated baptism. So, he **baptized** in Bulgaria a priest of 30 years' record Ludmil Petrov and had him re-ordained.

The conversations with the Metropolitan on similar themes in the presence of Archbishop Gregory and his clergy, opened the eyes of some of them and as a result, Archbishop Gregory lost four of his faithful assistants.

Meanwhile, one of the main collaborators of Archbishop Gregory, Priest John Claypool, together with his Archbishop initiated via the Internet an absolutely outrageous and slanderous attack on the Chairman of the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Valentin.

On July 2/15, 2004, there was a meeting of the Synod of the AROC, presided over by the First Hierarch, Metropolitan Valentin with the participation of: Archbishop Theodore, Archbishop Seraphim, Bishop Anthony, Bishop Irinarkh and Bishop Ambrose.

According to the Minutes # 48, "The Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in its meeting discussed numerous complaints of clergymen and lay people of the ROC regarding the activities of His Eminence, Archbishop of Denver and Colorado Gregory (Abu Assali).

The Synod of Bishops has charged him with the following:

1. Demanding that all those to be accepted into the AROC from the true Orthodox Christians of other Churches – be baptized.
2. Disobedience to the lawful decrees of the Synod of Bishops of the AROC.
3. Interference in church matters outside of his own diocese. (It should be remembered that the parishes of AROC in Bulgaria are under direct rule of the Synod of Bishops and have never been within the diocese of His Eminence Gregory)
4. Arbitrariness toward and unfounded repression of the clergy under him".

While still in the United States, Metropolitan Valentin on several occasions has tried to persuade Archbishop Gregory to repent and to change his views, strange to the Orthodox Church, but with no results.

After the return of the First Hierarch to Russia and his report about this pastoral trip, the Synod of Bishops has resolved:

1. "To offer to His Eminence Archbishop Gregory of Denver and Colorado to present justifications [for his actions, "Ch. N."] or to repent to the Synod of Bishops of the ROC of each of the accusations with which he is charged, after which to have a separate deliberation regarding the status in the Russian Orthodox Church of His Eminence Gregory
2. In case he will not do that within a week's time, to consider His Eminence Gregory to be no longer a member of the Russian Orthodox Church, no longer to have a prayerful communion with him and to suggest that all the clergy and lay people who until now are under his omophorion, are to come directly under the administration of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church".

The last point, # 18, of the resolution of the Synod of Bishops is the following:

"Considering the latest events and the declarations made via the Internet by Archbishop Gregory, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church no longer considers His Eminence Gregory (Abu Assali) to be a hierarch of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church".

In order to justify himself, Archbishop Gregory has published on the Internet dozens and dozens of pages in which countless canons are quoted (something that needs much time to check the correctness of their application in every particular case). Of course, he is not squeamish there in making direct and absolutely illiterate slanders.

In his retort against the charges by the Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Gregory over three pages refers to the "Kniga Consistorium" and at that admits that it is only about a year that he has known of its existence. "He believes that [Metropolitan Valentin, "Ch. N."] is not a subject to the Holy Canons but rather to a document called *Kniga Consistorium* which contradicts and overthrows the Canons, and makes him a mini Pope. I first heard about this book of rules approximately a year ago through the Grabbe family (?!) (which used over the Rudder is in violation of Canons 1 of the 4th Ecumenical Council, 2nd of the 6th Ecumenical Council, and 1st of the 7th Ecumenical Council as well as the 3rd confession of faith and oath of a hierarch at his consecration and Ukaz #362 of the Patriarch Tikhon and the Russian Church".

To begin with, the "Kniga Consistorium", does not exist. Before the Russian Revolution of 1917 there was a collection of rules that was entitled "The Statutes of Ecclesiastical Consistories", which has never been translated into English. Secondly, this is a collection of guiding rules regarding civil church matters, such as the countless matters regarding church properties, such as of monasteries and parishes, building of churches, the wills of abbots of monasteries, divorce procedures, baptism of non-Christians and the like. The only section that can be referred to the Bishops is the rules regarding the establishment in dioceses of an ecclesiastical court. Yet, here also there is not one sentence about the powers of a bishop!

It was not possible to use abroad "The Statutes of Ecclesiastical Consistories" (this collection of civil rules concerning the Church), therefore the ROCOR actually has almost never made use of it.

In addition to all of this, Archbishop Gregory does not hide his belief that he is the only one true Orthodox hierarch in the whole world. Such a proud sense of self-importance will not lead to anything good!

After his return from America and the two meetings of the Synod of Bishops, mainly deliberating on the case of Archbishop Gregory, Vladyka Metropolitan has informed us that at present he has visited the parishes in Ukraine, and then, after the feast of the Dormition, he will be absent for about a month from Suzdal while visiting other parishes of the AROC.

ARCH-PASTORAL VISIT OF HIERARCHS OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Diocesan Administration of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church has forwarded to us from Suzdal the following information about the Arch-pastoral visits of the First Hierarchy of the AROC Metropolitan Valentin and Archbishop Theodore of Borisovo and Otradnaya.

"On July 27th, His Eminence Metropolitan Valentin and Archbishop Theodore of Borisovo and Otradnaya went to Ukraine. They served in the catacomb communities, and met with clergy and faithful.

The next day, the Metropolitan and Archbishop Theodore went to the town house of the Synod of Bishops in the village of Sovietka, Rostov region, where the community has built a new church dedicated to Apostles Peter and Paul. The house was made in the house of the Church Warden F. P. Fedosov; a bell tower and a cupola were built. The church has three altars: the main in honor of Apostles Peter and Paul, and side altars to St. Alexander Nevsky and all the Suzdal Saints. For eight years the rector has been Fr. Artemy (Smitchenko).

On July 29th there was a solemn vigil service for the renovation of Sts. Peter and Paul church.

The next day, His Eminence Metropolitan Valentin with Archbishop Theodore and clergy arrived: the Dean of the Otradnaya region Archpriest Nicholas Hirny, Archpriest George Novakovsky and Archimandrite Jacob (Antonov) have consecrated the newly arranged church with a moleben and Blessing of Water and then the procession with holy Relics and the Divine Liturgy. The church services were concluded with a festive trapeza and a prolonged conversations with the faithful.

The vigil and the Liturgy for Sunday was served by Archbishop Theodore in the St. John the Baptist Church in the town of Armavir, where is also a community of the Russian Church. Concelebrating with the Archbishops was Archpriest Nicholas Hirny and the rector of the church, Fr. Jonas (Rossokha). After the Liturgy, Archbishop Theodore addressed the faithful with a short sermon in which he has stressed the importance of preserving true Orthodoxy in our times. Just recently, the community for the sake of keeping the true Faith lost a nice church in Armavir, which was taken away by the Moscow Patriarchate. But the Lord in the first place does not need beautiful churches, but the Orthodox faith of Christians. After the service, Vladyka spent some time with the faithful and answered their numerous questions.

Archbishop Theodore left for stanitsa Otradnaya (a large Cossack village) where in a Kazan church he served a solemn vigil service on the St. Elias feastday. Concelebrating were the rector, Archpriest Nicholas Hirny and Priest Alexis Gorin, the rector of the community in town of Belorechensk. In the morning the Divine Liturgy was served with a moleben and procession around the block.

During this pastoral visit, Metropolitan Valentin received from the Synod of Archbishop Lazarus (RTOC) into the bosom of the Autonomous Russian Church two catacomb clergymen, who already have received their assignments.

CHURCH IN NOVAYA KUPAVNA RECEIVES REGISTRATION

In the relationship of the state toward the religious communities there is a noticeable tendency to violate the rights of believers. When a group of believers approaches the government with a request to let them use a half ruined church, in the beginning they are refused under the pretext of a lack of registration. When they apply for registration, they are

refused on grounds that all the churches have already been given to the ROC MP. But if the believers are not content with that and ask the government to give them a plot on which to build a church, the refusal is based upon "we have more churches than we need".

Such barriers had to be overcome by the parish of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church in the town of Novaya Kupavna, in the Moscow region headed by rector, Andrew Walewski.

As soon as the parish presented their documents for registration, the clerks of the Justice Department immediately called the Moscow diocese of the MP and informed them that "schismatics" had applied for registration.

As a result, immediately, as per the usual techniques of the MP in the RF, pressure was applied on the part of the media with slanders against the AROC First Hierarch, Metropolitan Valentin. The matter went so far as even mailing leaflets urging people not to go to the "schismatics".

When this didn't work, the registration offices started regularly to return the documents. The standard statute, affirmed by the Justice Department for the ROAC, was several times returned crossed out with a requirement to substitute the new demands. The authorities thus deprived the believers of their constitutional rights over a period of two and a half years. Only recently these believers received the long awaited registration and at that, only after they have threatened the local Justice Department that they would take them to the court. After such a long delay, these believers could have long ago built a church and have regular services!

It is unheard of that any MP parish would have such difficulties getting registration. Unfortunately, the local authorities of the Moscow region by such actions have made it clear that in the Russian Federation there are actually "privileged confessions", which do not have to meet such requirements.

CHURCH IN TVER REGION RECEIVES REGISTRATION

On July 20th the government registered the parish of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church dedicated to the Theotokos icon of "Joy of All Who Sorrow". The rector of the parish, Fr. Sergius (Mironov) gathered believers from the village of Trestna and local villages of the Maksatikhinsk region. The local residents for quite some time had been asking the Tver diocese of the MP to appoint a priest for them and to organize a parish, but received in return nothing but silence. Such situation lasted until a priest-monk of the Russian Church, Fr. Sergius came to the village. Due to his efforts there was gathered a parish together and presented documents for registration.

Few days after that Fr. Sergius was visited by the dean of local diocese of the MP and one priest, both not sober. In an arrogant manner they demanded from Fr. Sergius that he join their diocese and when he refused, they threatened to "influence the agencies". The local residents unanimously support Fr. Sergius.

Then, a few days later a local member of the mafia volunteered to talk to the priest, who also received a refusal. A week later the MP dean came again and proposed he visit Archbishop Victor "for a report". Once again he was refused.

The very first service in the half ruined village church of the icon of "Joy of All Who Sorrow" was conducted on the feast of Pentecost. The believers on Saturday cleaned the church of rubbish, and young people decorated it with branches.

Fr. Sergius served a moleben with akathist and blessing of water and a procession. The church was so crowded that many who came for the holy day had to stand outside.

On June 27th in a miraculous way an icon of Theotokos of the "Joy of All Who Sorrow" was found and this happened on the eve of local feast of this icon. On the day of the feast, on June 28th after a moleben there was a procession with the icon in the village with blessing of houses and the local school. Fr. Sergius baptized a group of people in the Tikhvinka River. During the services a choir of young people sang. The teenagers now are learning the prayers, church melodies and troparia.

The local authorities agreed to give to the parish a former parish school building (in Soviet times it was a village club) and in which Fr. Sergius plans now to open a parish school again.

On July 25th during the Divine Liturgy in the Tsar Constantine Cathedral of Suzdal, Archbishop Theodore of Borisovo and Otradnaya, with the blessing of Metropolitan Valentin elevated Fr. Sergius to the rank of abbot.

ORTHODOX RESIDENTS OF SUZDAL OBSERVE FEAST OF ST. THEODORE OF SUZDAL

The festive services in the Cathedral of Tsar Constantine, the main church of the AROC in Suzdal were conducted by Archbishops Theodore of Borisovo and Otradnaya, the manager of AROC affairs on June 21st, the celebration of St. Theodore, who baptized the Suzdal populace. Concelebrating were Archbishop Seraphim of Sukhum and Abkhazia, and Bishop Irinarkh of Briansk and Tula with hosts of clergy who came for Archbishop Theodore's name's day.

A relic of the Saint, his finger, was set out for veneration and an icon with the relic. The complete relics of St. Theodore at present are in the possession of the MP.

There was a procession around the cathedral with the relics. In his sermon Vladyka stressed the important role which St. Theodore has played in preaching Christianity in these areas and urged the faithful to preserve the purity of the true faith. "The holy prayers of the Saint do not let our city, preserved by God, to perish in the abyss of heresies of the false Moscow Patriarchate and give the opportunity to all those who are seeking the True Faith to visit the churches of the True Orthodox Church. For this we have to be especially grateful to St. Theodore, the Suzdal miracle worker".

The service was concluded by singing "Many Years" to Archbishop Theodore and a festive trapeza.

UNPRECEDENTED APPEAL OF METROPOLITAN LAURUS (In our translation)

The Chancery of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has published in the Internet the following appeal, addressed to "Archpastors, pastors and lay people of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad":

"Today, at the site of the murder of the Royal Family in Yekaterinburg there towers the 'Church upon the Blood'. The main altar is dedicated to all the Saints who shone in the Russian land, and another side altar, where as a martyr the Anointed by God shed his blood together with the entire royal family and their devoted servants. This church was solemnly dedicated to them on the day of the Royal Martyrs in 2003.

930 years after the Baptism of Russia, the Russian land has been stained with blood of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia – by way of a new baptism.

Today, after three generations, this podvig calls the entire Russian nation to renew its moral Christian way of life.

Its loyalty to Christ is being tested. The believers have found the energy to build on the site of the murder of the Royal Family a magnificent and grand church in size and beauty.

A large bell has to be placed in the bell tower of this "Church upon the Blood". This bell of many tons, for a long time in the hearts and hopes of many in contemporary Russia is intended **as the bell of All-Abroad** [?!].

In connection with this the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad **appeals to all to make offerings within one's means to make this great bell possible**. The foundry has been waiting for quite a while to be able to start this.

The size of the bell will correspond to the offerings. To make a fitting bell will require 50 thousand USA dollars.

For the generosity and participation in this God pleasing deed, we are bestowing upon all the donors the Lord's blessing and sincere gratitude!

July 6/19th, 2004

Metropolitan Laurus

At the end of this appeal, the address of the Synod of Bishops is given.

For the very first time in the entire 80 year long history of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad her First Hierarch appeals to his flock to make donations for a bell being prepared for the Moscow Patriarchate!

AN UNCONVINCING APPEAL

His Grace Alexander (Mileant) Bishop of South America ROCOR(L) on August 2nd issued an appeal to his flock, consisting of 3 pages.

Two thirds of it are devoted to information on the treatment of his cancer, while the rest concerns the current church problems. This part of the appeal starts with the words: "Firstly I ask everyone to abide in peace and unity of mind. **Nothing is threatening our Church, everything is proceeding well and properly**". (All emphasis is by "Ch. N.")

I am gladdened by the discussions and meetings occurring between our committee and the committee of the Moscow Patriarchate on the matter of the rapprochement of our Churches. These discussions are being held in a completely serious and amicable atmosphere".

As a positive witness of these negotiations, Archimandrite Luke (Muryanka) from Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, Bishop Alexander quotes him and states that: "The apprehension of some of our clergymen and lay people **regarding the present rapprochement negotiations are groundless**, although I understand them very well: we have absorbed with our mother's milk the fear of Communism which overpowered our much-suffering homeland and the distrust of the once captured church over there. But, glory to God, **the godless government fell and crumbled into ashes in the wind**.

I personally feel that discussions on a complete unification with the Moscow Patriarchate would be premature. In the situation that has developed, our Church Abroad must preserve its administrative independence and totally uncompromising stance on matters of principle. The discussions should concentrate on the rapprochement between our Churches, the cessation of all enmity and the establishment of Eucharistic communion. This is not only desirable, but necessary.

It would be sinful on our part to ignore the therefore unseen spiritual elevation, the ubiquitous renaissance we observe in Russia now. Even worse would be active opposition to the spiritual nearing **of the two branches** of the once united Russian Church and to insist on a continuation of the war to the last drop of blood".

[And where is mention of the existence of the fairly large Catacomb Church which Archbishop Mark has proclaimed to have perished. In the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church there are more than 200 catacomb parishes, which are ministered by 3 or 4 bishops. Archbishop Lazarus also has a number of Catacomb parishes, "Ch. N."]

"Such an antagonistic attitude or enmity is entirely unfounded even on the basis of the fact that at each divine services we pray for the union of the holy Churches of God. With whom, one might ask, should we draw closer and work together, if not our own brethren by blood and faith?

Truly, what is happening now in Russia – is a miracle of the Omnipotent God, for which we had prayed over the course of our 80 years of exile. Seeing the changes occurring in Russia now, I am convinced that our New Martyrs have not spilt their blood for naught. Their blood is, in the words of the Christian apologist of old, the seed for the birth of new Christians.

And so, my beloved, I ask you to cast aside unnecessary worry brought upon us by the enemy of the mankind, who sleeps not in seeking means to break us apart and cause disagreement among us. **Let us pray that the discussions between our Churches are for the Glory of God and the strengthening of our Church.**

I feel that the spiritual condition now has more than matured for a rapprochement between our Churches, and so it is necessary to make every effort to establish amicable relations – this is our sacred duty. The time has come to heal the wounds inflicted upon our Church by the godless regime”.

This composition by Bishop Alexander clearly testifies that he himself is a “double-minded” person. Apostle James advises that “The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). Either he states the negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate are “premature” or tells us that at present “the spiritual situation is more than mature” for rapprochement with the Moscow Patriarchate!

Regarding his views on an “uncompromising stance in the matter of principles”, Bishop Alexander has failed to notice the Moscow Patriarch Ridiger was simply laughing at Metropolitan Laurus, when the former in his presence praised the treason of Metropolitan Sergius. The Moscow Patriarchate has no plans to leave the Ecumenical movement, which was anathematized by the ROCOR in 1983, but explains adherence to this heresy as a necessity to “preach Orthodoxy” to the heterodox. The traitors of the Church Abroad have even forgotten the agreement of the MP with the Roman Catholics in Balamand, signed also by a majority of the “Orthodox” Churches in 1993!

Against the background of the almost total betrayal by the Episcopate of the ROCOR under the leadership of Metropolitan Laurus, Bishops Daniel, Gabriel and now Agathangel of Tavrida and Odessa have so far announced disagreement with his policies.

His well based critique of the negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate is even more praiseworthy, since some time ago he left the MP and lives in Russia, which means he is more threatened by the unification of the Church Abroad and the MP.

On July 4/17th Bishop Agathangel published his appeal the “to the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR”. Since it criticizes the rapprochement with the MP – it would be useless to look for it on the Synod Internet site. It was published in Russia, by the agency “Portal CREDO.RU” on June 20th, 2004 and translated by Fr. Thomas Marretta.

Bishop Agathangel starts with the words: “I am writing this appeal out of concern that the documents submitted by our commission for negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate, if made public, lend themselves to more than one interpretation”.

Unfortunately, the length of this appeal does not permit us to fully reprint it, but we will give the most important quotations from it.

“The session of the Synod of Bishops held on June 22nd/July 5th of this year approved documents compiled at the joint sessions of the two committees, noting **their essential agreement with the basic positions of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.** [All emphasis by “Ch. N.”]. I think it is nonetheless essential to stress that the documents in question **do not express in all fullness the position of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, but rather reflect merely a few of the most general aspects** of the stance our Church took in its relations with the world of the 20th century. Unfortunately, in my opinion, **the documents submitted by our commission are characterized in many places by a lack of frankness and a tendency to pass over in silence matters connected with issues of primary concern.** For example, in the document entitled ‘About the Relations Between the Church and the Government’, nothing is said about Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) or his Declaration. Does this mean that the question of ‘Sergianism’ has been removed from the agenda and the discussion transferred to the level of abstractions about ‘the relations of the Church and government’? The ever-increasing veneration of this hierarch within the Moscow Patriarchate tells us that the problem of ‘Sergianism’ is far from resolved. Furthermore, **our document, with its ambiguous expressions, indirectly sanctions the legitimacy of ‘two paths’ with respect to ‘seeking an understanding of the relationship of the Church to the government’.** It does so by failing to condemn clearly and definitely the path of collaboration with the militant atheists. This is already in and of itself something altogether novel for the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in relation to the Soviet authority’....”

In two long paragraphs Bishop Agathangel gives the history of ROCOR’s resolutions of 1927 and then goes on to the problem of “The relationship of the Orthodox Church to Heterodox Confessions and the Possibility of Participating in Interconfessional Organizations”, which were discussed by joint committees.

It seems that there is nothing left for such discussion, because it is well known that according to the Apostolic canons “if anyone pray in the company with one who has been excommunicated, he should be excommunicated himself” (Canon 10 and a similar one, 11). Also, forgotten is the anathema proclaimed against the heretics and ecumenists, in particular, by the Church Abroad in 1983.

Speaking of the forthcoming Council of the MP, Bishop Agathangel says: “But if this fall the Sobor of the MP accepts the documents submitted on our side, then some will certainly say – and not only say, **but proclaim that all the obstacles dividing out churches have been successfully overcome, and that now only narrow minded persons and incorrigible sectarians can oppose union.** In view of the fact that the Moscow Patriarchate is about to hold its sobor, **the impression is created that the commission is busy with producing the compromising documents, thanks to which it will be possible to whitewash the present and past positions of the Moscow Patriarchate and, at the same time, to have in hand weighty arguments against the enemies of union.** Do we need diplomacy of this kind? **If we take this path, we will inevitably lead our Church to schism”.**

In the paragraph before the last, Bishop Agathangel writes: "Since, as the situation has developed, the opinions on both sides have been defined, I propose that it would be more correct **to halt negotiations until there is a definite, unambiguous condemnation of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius and all its consequences by the sobor of the Moscow Patriarchate, and likewise, the Moscow Patriarchate leave the World Council of Churches. After this talks can be resumed.**

Bishop Agathangel also proposes that the works of joint commissions "be accessible to all the members of our Church".

One cannot but agree with the correctness of His Grace Agathangel's judgment in this matter, although it is very doubtful that Metropolitan Laurus would somehow take it into consideration. The question is: what will Bishop Agathangel do if our prognosis of the complete agreement between the churches proves to be accurate? Is it possible that he will remain a member of Metropolitan Laurus' hierarchy?

Meanwhile, true to his sympathies toward the MP, Bishop Yevtikhy of Ishima and Siberia urgently adjusts his relationships with the local hierarch of the Patriarchate and the local civil authorities.

"THE GENERAL REBIRTH, OBSERVED ALL OVER RUSSIA"

The Internet publication "Gazeta" on July 21st published information about the historic monastery in Kostroma, where 391 years ago, a teenager Michael Romanoff was called to Russian tsardom.

We republish this information as an illustration of "the general rebirth observed all over in Russia" which is advertised by a majority of the ROCOR episcopate and clergy under the leadership of Metropolitan Laurus.

"Under the immediate supervision of the **Committee for Preservation and Utilization of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Kostroma Region** 'there already have been destroyed the unique buildings: the Bishop's Garden of 18th century and the 16th century a fortification building – zakhob'. (Emphasis by "Ch. N.")

Despite the neglect of the Soviet period, there were preserved in the monastery hundreds of graves of the Godunov family and encircled by an embankment, the Bishop's Garden.

The monastery itself is being used **by the Kostroma museum and the Diocese**. In the historic Holy Trinity cathedral **the services are allowed once a week, while in the church of St. Chrisanf and Daria (over the gate) – there is still an exhibit from the Soviet period, among others, of heavily armored units"**!

According to the Archimandrite of the Ipatiev Monastery John (Pavlikhin) in 2001, "the graves of Godunovs were defiled: **the remnants of the boyars were taken out of their coffins and sent to the institute of anthropology MGU, and the bones of the monks... were dug up and transported to an unknown destination**. The museum wrestles not only with the dead monks, but also with the living ones. **After 6 PM, the brothers are not allowed to remain in the monastery's territory and to enforce this dogs are let out. 8 of the 20 monks have to live in the town, because the museum would not grant them the cells on the territory of the monastery**. And a year ago, according to Fr. John, the Committee for Preservation and Utilization of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of Kostroma Region, S. N. Konopatov permitted a reconstruction of the Bishop's Garden, opening gates leading to the shore and establishing there an extensive trade!

The construction work in the Bishop's Garden **have not been coordinated with the Cultural Ministry of the RF**. At the time of destruction of the Bishop's Garden a rare fortification building was discovered joining the gates of 16th century – zahab. In ancient times it guarded the access to the monastery walls on the side of the river. According to the museum logic this zahab was to be preserved.

According to the Abbot, these violations didn't make the museum's administration wonder and the monastery on its own had to appeal to the federal architect Serge Demidov to stop the work until it could be coordinated with the Cultural Ministry. Meanwhile, the work has even quickened. So that the Abbot could do nothing but **jump into the bottom of the pit with the remnants of zahab, over which there was already the bridge construction and to force the builders to pour concrete over him together with it"**!

Certainly no one brought Metropolitan Laurus and his treacherous committee to similar places. But those who were interested in seeing the provincial museums, even in the immediacy of Moscow, could see the outrageous profanation of the historical graves and funeral grave sites, and in one former monastery turned into a museum a path paved with the grave plaques with inscriptions and crosses on them!

SCHISM IN BULGARIAN CHURCH

The bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of July 28th and August 11th has reported on the strained relations between the official Bulgarian Church and her "alternative" headed by Metropolitan Innocent.

The split started in 1982, when a considerable part of the episcopate and clergy of the Bulgarian Church demanded that Patriarch Maxim (appointed by Communists in 1981 and who collaborated with them) step down and retire. This action, despite the support of the head of the administration, Philip Dimitrov, failed and then was created the "alternative" Bulgarian Church. It was headed by Metropolitan Pimen (Enev) who in 1990 was a bishop in Nevrokop.

In 1996, under the leadership of Metropolitan Pimen, a Synod was formed and in July, in the church of St. Paraskeva in the Nevrokop there was performed the enthronization of the "anti-patriarch". the scandalous "Kiev Patriarch" Philaret Denisenko participated in it.

During the rule of Peter Stoyanov, who has also supported the alternative Synod, there were new efforts to dismiss Patriarch Maxim, but during the new registration of religious organizations the supporters of Metropolitan Pimen were registered as "The Bulgarian Orthodox Church".

Such a situation lasted until 1998, when the Synod of the Bulgarian Church appealed to the Local Churches asking for support of her structure and they altogether establish the unity of Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Until recent times nothing was known about the alternative Bulgarian Church. However, upon the request of the Synod of the official Bulgarian Church and at the order of the public persecutor general, on July 20th the police closed 250 churches and will not allow their clergy and believers into them: the police keep a very close watch over them.

The Bulgarian Patriarchate has already secured the support of the government, which recognizes only the Patriarchate and has already announced that all church property belongs only to it.

The Internet publication "N. G. Religii" on August 4th reported that the Patriarchate has appealed to the opponents to repent and again stated that there is only one Bulgarian Church and no other has the right to use the same name.

In his initial reaction, Metropolitan Innocent declared that his Synod will protest this violence, especially because in the opinion of the former Prosecutor General Ivan Tatarchev, the law approved by the Parliament in 2003 does not provide for interference of the state in church matters.

As a form of protest, many priests of the confiscated churches began to put up the tents in the immediate vicinity and serve in them. A group of lawmakers, opposing the state measures, is demanding the establishment of a special committee to investigate the actions of the police. At the same time it became known that the "alternative" opponents of the Patriarch Maxim are planning to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The problem is more complicated since it is expected that the sacraments performed in the churches of Metropolitan Innocent will not be recognized by the state, and this will especially affect baptisms and weddings!

The "former" Communists everywhere act in a like manner and there is no difference in their methods. The very same is happening in the Moscow Patriarchate, where all those who do not want to recognize her are violently persecuted!

According to this "Ecumenical News International" of August 25th Patriarch Maxim has made an official declaration, offering the clergy who are with Metropolitan Innocent to return to the Patriarchate and promising to impose no sanctions against them. About 20 clergymen have accepted this offer!

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS:

Letter of Bp. Gregory to Archb. Anthony of San Francisco of May 20/June 2, 1979

Your Eminence, dear Vladyka;

Thank you for the letter, received today, on May 16/29th. I certainly understand that your appeal to me, as well as other Graces [to refuse episcopal consecration, Ch. N.] was based upon your sincere conviction about information which you trusted. However, please believe me that if at that time I didn't agree with you, it was not out of vainglory, from which I suffer very little, but because of what I saw to be beneficial to the Church. I imagine that you have been alarmed by definitely false information, coming from polluted, and possibly Soviet agency, sources. However, I have not left your suggestion without attention. I do not remember if I have sent you copy of my letter to Vladyka Metropolitan and the Synod in which it is obvious that I am ready to humbly accept any decision, without any consideration for my own self-esteem.

I do not know, if you are aware that shortly before Easter, Fr. Nikita has alarmed the Metropolitan with information about my intolerance and about the general negative relations toward me, so that Vladyka called Archbishop Vitaly in order to investigate it. From the Interviews of the employees, Vladyka has established that my reforms in the house, even if they were unpleasant to some in the beginning, later were recognized as useful and they remained unacceptable to Fr. Nikita only. It was established that no one can stand him and not myself. Then the Metropolitan calmed down and Fr. Nikita no longer hesitated about his decision. Fr. Nikita has told to several people that if he will not be able to kill my consecration one way or the other, and if he would not succeed, then he will be forced to leave the Synod. Now, he does not remember this and has related, in Paris, what a wonderful service it was and how festive and how many people were present at the service of consecration.

Could I not take into consideration the source of this unrest, especially from an anonymous writing? Nevertheless, your collective letter has put me between two fires. As I have told you and also wrote, the very first consideration, which results in this or that decision, is obedience to the First Hierarchy, to whom I have in no way influenced by my will. Regardless of this, I have clearly seen that if Vladyka were to agree with you, the scandal would much greater than the one which you have been afraid of, no matter how I might try to lessen it. Do not forget, Vladyka, that this was happening not in San Francisco, but in New York. There I might be known through propaganda, but here because of work. I do not want to talk about it, but the fact remains, that the clergy got used turn to me, with all their complicated matters for help. Therefore, in the diocese there was a joy that now I would be able to help officially and not with private suggestions only.

Without unnecessary modesty, I cannot but know that for many, during long years of my service, I am considered a noteworthy activist and theoretician of our Church. If it would be declared that it is I, in particular, who was denied consecration at the last moment, this would scandalize our people and for enemies would be proof that our kingdom has separated within itself, that a lot of things that seemed to be a slander against me, were true. One has to be careful with the renowned names in order not to undermine ourselves. If it happens that I am unworthy and at the last minute a

candidate is removed from ordination who participated in all the important decisions over almost 50 years, then what was the Synod during that time? I am afraid, that the Hierarchs who have signed the letter, being afraid of the imposed upon them ghost, have not considered the results which would be obvious, if [the Synod, Ch. N.] would listen to them.

Thank you for your prayers for me. I ask you not to forget me in your prayers, which I need more the worse I am. However I still hope that you trust that in my episcopacy. The least interesting aspect is the honor, for it increases my work and responsibility, which I was not brought up to run away from.

I would like to see on part of the Hierarchs not only reconciliation with the fact of my existence, but also some brotherly love. But it seems I have to reconcile with fact that this is not always possible. However I do hope that with the Lord's help, in time they will be convinced that I am not as dangerous as it seems to them.

Vladyka Metropolitan is leaving for Europe on the second day of Pentecost.

Asking for your holy prayers, I remain truly yours + Bishop Gregory

To: the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia January 21st/February 3rd, 1986

DECLARATION

By the Secretary of the Council of Bishops, Gregory, Bishop of Washington and Florida

After the reading of the appeal to the Council of Bishops by Archimandrite Anthony [Grabbe], which he wrote after my conversation with the First Hierarch and which, in my opinion, corrects something that was missing in his opinion in the former, it was suggested that all express their opinion. I then stated mine with total openness and no prejudice, exclusively from the point of view of the interests of the church. I was asked to leave the meeting, which I unwillingly did, under condition that I will be called back after the end of deliberations.

I waited in vain until 1:40 PM, when I have learned from Archbishop Mark, that not only the deliberations regarding Fr. Anthony had been completed, but, in addition, that the minutes of the last meetings had been approved, although they were never shown to me, the Secretary of the Council. When I expressed my bewilderment on account of this, I was told that it them there were some deliberations which would have been unpleasant for me to hear.

We are not little children and not nervous ladies, but must be able to listen to pleasant and unpleasant things. The members of the Council must have noticed about me that I listen to everything calmly.

Therefore I had the clear impression that some members of the Council were afraid to hear an opinion which disagrees with theirs, so that it not be obvious that some suggestions conflict with the rules or obvious interests of the Church. This is why they do not want to hear my objections. This was indeed the case when I expressed my opinion, right after which I was asked to leave.

I categorically protest against such an unconciliar [несоборного] method of muzzling someone who disagrees. This is against the law, is unjust and decisions approved of in this manner I consider to be illegal. I formally protest against it and demand that my declaration be included into the minutes, as well as another written declaration.

The members of the Council should not be surprised that when the people will find out about such methods, they will suspect that in those resolutions there is prejudice and enmity, which are not supposed to be in the Church and has no precedent in any previous Council.

The humble servant of the Council of Bishops + Bishop Gregory

Notes by the editors:

In the minutes of the Council nothing is mentioned about Bishop Gregory's request regarding his two protesting declarations, but one of the two is attached to the minutes.

These deliberations concerned complaints against the Chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Anthony (Grabbe), who had just won litigation against the Israeli government which had confiscated the property of the Mission and the OPS and handed it over to the MP (which had occurred – at the time of this incident – 40 years earlier in 1946). Archimandrite Anthony had already prepared another litigation, this time against the MP and it was to be filed within two or three weeks after winning the first case.

Letter to N. P. Churilov of November 24th/December 7th 1990

Dear Nikolai Pavlovich!

Please pardon my delay in answering your letter of October 11th. All this time I have been very busy, especially when a friend came from Moscow, who meanwhile has become a priest and while living with us was urgently preparing himself for ordination. He is well prepared theologically, but not liturgically, but he is very diligent and in a few days has made great progress.

Meanwhile, how are you feeling? I believe that health care is better here than in Argentina and that what is difficult to treat there is easier to find help for here.

Thank you for the partial response to my article. Rest assured, I do not have any malicious feelings toward Metropolitan Sergius and have mentioned whatever good I could about him, for example, the effort to elect a new First Hierarch after the repose of Patriarch Tikhon. However, there are such grievous events are connected with him, like joining the Renovationists, for which I could not find the slightest justification. And regarding the nation: its sin is colossal. I

especially remember the first days of revolution, when examples of faithfulness to the oath [of loyalty to the Tsar] were rare events. Luckily, in my immediate family everything was decent, beginning with my father reportedly refusing taking the oath to the Provisional Government. On St. George's day in 1917, my brother and I established the Russian Society of Monarchist Youth. The early participation in the struggle against the Revolution and the living examples of those who led it and submitted to it – help me understand the difficulties of Metropolitan Sergius' position. But, when we venerate the Martyrs of the history of the Church and read of condemnations of those fallen [from the faith], even while glorifying the Martyrs we cannot be sure that at that some time we too will not fall. Therefore, when I write about the Sergianists, this is not a manifestation of hatred, but only the judgment of history. I feel very sorry for Metropolitan Sergius, but it does not change the fact that he has opened for the atheists a means to influence the Church's authority. Recently I read the report of a Chekist [secret police agent], relating how Patriarch Alexis was forced to take the path of Ecumenism, which he didn't want to accept. In the beginning, in 1960, he refused in every way, but then putting this aside finally surrendered. From that time the heresy has thrived. The misfortune of Sergius was that he seemingly was struggling, but after threats and jail, has let poison into the Church, while Alexis only argued, and when he became frightened let this heresy into the Church where it is alive to this day. And what the faithful have had to live through – is not to be described in any words.

Regarding the Collection, I was interested in the article of the late Voyeikov.

It is true that the approaching times are frightening. It is interesting that there is a growing literature dedicated to building this "New World". Besides the writings of the creators of the world, there is here also a growing literature which understands that this world is a preparation for the world of Antichrist. There is a particular publication "Omega". They understand everything but the Church. Therefore they have nothing with which to oppose this world. And the Pope, meanwhile, makes some agreements with Jews. Certainly, in Jerusalem one can expect all sorts of troubles. The disasters throughout the world are just beginning.. In various ways, they will affect everyone, and the higher civilization is in a country, the more severely will this be felt. But at present, very few understand this. I have no idea if my third volume will come out.

Do you run into Vladyka John? I respect him very much. At a convenient occasion, please greet him in my name. If your name day is St. Nicholas, I greet you ahead of time. God Help you. With love in Christ + Bishop Gregory

Notes by the editors:

The "friend" was Fr. Stephen Krasovitsky. The opinion about Metropolitan Sergius was evoked by fact that Mr. Churilov was an admirer of this Metropolitan. Bishop John (Legky) was for a short while bishop in Argentina.