Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose (1961-1982)

LIST OF LETTERS

1960's

1. June 14,1961 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Rose Quitting academic career

2. July 15,1963 Allison Engler Discovering Orthodoxy

3. Aug.28/Sept.l0,1963 Nina Seco VI. John, VI. Sava, Allison Engler

4. Sept. 12,1963 Allison Engler Orthodox faith, Saints, Dostoyevsky

5. Sept. 3/16,1963 Gleb Podmoshensky Bookstore proposal

6. Oct. 3,1963 Allison Engler Apocalypse, Life after death, Gleb

7. Dec. 18/31,1963 Gleb Brochure, bookstore, brotherhood

8. Dec. 30/Jan. 12,1964 Gleb Youth group, distrust of organization, money

9. Jan. 14/27,1964 Gleb Gospel reading, store by cathedral, buy books

10. Jan. 15/28,1964 Gleb Paid rent, kiosk, get books

11. Jan. 22/Feb. 4,1964 Gleb Freedom, shop preparation, atheist at talk

12. Jan. 30/Feb. 12,1964 Gleb Independence, financial problems

13. Feb. 21/Mar. 3,1964 Gleb Banking, bookcases, icons

14. Feb. 22/Mar. 4, 1964 Gleb Money, advertising, sign

15. Bright Wednesday Gleb Bookstore business & ministry

16. July 20/Aug. 2,1964 Gleb Vladimir Tenkevitch quits, Jordanville order

17. Sept. 9/22,1964 Gleb Bookstore business

18. Sept. 23/Oct. 6,1964 Gleb Printing on new press

19. Oct. 13/26,1964 Gleb Printing, business, icons from Jordanville

20. Oct. 14/27, 1964 Gleb First OW plans, business

21. Mar. 26/Apr. 8,1965 Gleb OW article, devil attacking, ads

22. No date Fr. Panteleimon Communism, Against False Union, VI. John's reply

23. Aug. 18/31,1965 Fr. Panteleimon St. Mark, ecumenism, translations

24. May 3/16,1966 Gleb Printing OW

25. July 13/26,1966 Gleb Manuscripts, Archmin. Amvrossy, Dr. Petrochko

26. Nov. 1/14,1966 Gleb Much talk in the shop, serious re: Vl. John OW

1970

27. Feb. 15/28,1970 Feb. Bishop Theodosius Fr. Plea to not support autocephaly

28. 18/Mar. 3,1970 Mar. David Black Alaskan Church, Metropolia, Bl. Herman

29. 8/21,1970 Mar. Bishop Theodosius Thanks for icon of St. Theodosius

30. 16/29,1970 Mar. Fr. Photios OW, living conditions, autocephaly, Schmemann

31. 19/Apr. 1,1970 Mar. Fr. Neketas Palassis Crisis year, Metropolia, Spruce Is., Bl. Herman

32. 23/Apr. 3,1970 Mar. Fr. David Black Fr. Florovsky, Orthodox practice, autocephaly

33. 31/Apr. 13,1870 Apr. Fr. Panteleimon & monks OW printing, living conditions, Meyendorff

34. 3/16,1970 Apr. Fr. David Black Meyendorff, autocephaly, conscience, responsib

35. 4/17,1970 Apr. Fr. Seraphim Bobich Thanks for critique of Meyend.'s attack of Synod

36. 19/May 2, 1970 Fr. Panteleimon . Ask for money for linotype

37. Apr. 19/May 2,1970b Fr. Seraphim Bobich Suspension, Iakovos/Athenagoras/Schmemann

38. Apr. 21/May 4,1970 Fr. Michael Azkoul OW w/Fr. M. Pomazansky on Schmemann

39. Apr. 21/May 4,1970 Craig & Susan Young Spiritual practice, preparation for baptism

40. Apr. 23/May 6, 1970 Fr. David Black Differences between Synod and Metropolia

41. Apr. 26,/May 9,1970 Fr. Neketas Schmemann, Metropolia, Iakovos, Florovsky

42. Apr. 29/May 12,1970 Vlad.&Sylvia Anderson Hindu texts, peace w/Youngs, display at Ft. Ross

43. May 5/18,1970 Craig & Susan Young Practice for children, confession, Uniates

44. May 6/19,1970 Dr. John Johnstone Convert problems, Moscow Patriarchate

45. May 10/23,1970 Fr. Michael Azkoul Schmemann, Meyendorff, Fr. M. joins Synod

46. Mayl0/23b Fr. Panteleimon & monks Thanks for money, M. Bain, Metropolia

47. May 21/June 3,1970 Mr. Alex V. Cattell Thanks for donation from St. Tikhon's Society

48. May 26/June 8,1970 Fr. Michael Azkoul Cnaonization of Bl. Herman, living conditions

49. May 27/June 9,1970 Fr. Neketas Service to Bl. Herman, anarchy, Hitler

50. June 1/14, 1970 Daniel Olsen Tsar, Soviets, Meyendorff

51. June 8/21,1970 Fr. David Black Metropolia, Schmemann & Meyendorff, Alaska

52. June 22/July 5,1970 Daniel Olsen Metropolia, ecumenism, betraying Orthodoxy

53. June 29/July 12,1970 Fr. David Black Bishop Theodosius, Sergianism, Metropolia

54. June 29/July 12,1970 Fr. Neketas OW, living conditions, VI. John's repose anniv

55. July 7/20,1970 Fr. Michael Azkoul Bl. Herman, coming canonization

56. July 13/26,1970 Fr. Neketas Canonization, Soviet bishops, Life of Bl. Herman

57. Aug. 5/18,1970 Daniel Olsen Canonization report in detail, Alaskan service

58. Aug. 8/21,1970 Fr. Michael Azkoul Linotype, Athenagoras/Iakovos investigation

59. Aug. 14/28, 1970 Daniel Olsen St. Herman reported as hippie saint, relics

60. Aug. 24,1970 Fr. Vladimir Bridievey Metropolia, St. Herman, autocephaly

61. Aug. 30,1970 Fr. Michael Azkoul Metropolia, Iakovos article, chiliasm, nihilism

62. Sept. 4/17,1970 Daniel Olsen Metropolia, Communist Church, coming tonsure

63. Sept. 4/17,1970b Madrid Mission Athenagoras' apostasy, true Orthodox pubis.

64. Sept. 8/21,1970 Lev Puhalo & Vassili Living conditions at Platina

65. Oct. 17/30,1970 Daniel Olsen Tonsure, OW on St. Herman canonization

66. Oct. 25/Nov. 7,1970 Madrid Mission Referrals to European Orthodox Missions

67. Oct. 30/Nov. 12,1970 Fr. David Black Ecumenism, Catacomb Church, Metropolia

1971

68. Dec. 28/Jan. 10,1971 Lawrence Campbell Christmas crisis w/Vl. Anthony, staretz game

69. Jan. 4/17,1971 Fr. Panteleimon Tonsure, Christmas crisis, need independence

70. Jan.23/Feb. 5,1971 Nina Kojevnikov Basic rule for prayer & daily readings

71. Jan. 31/Feb. 13,1971 Catherine Spark of Orthodoxy, refer Fr. Azkoul in St. Louis

72. Feb. 26,1971 Greek Minister of interior Protest treatment of Archim. Kyprian K.

73. Mar. 12/25,1971 Vladika Laurus Tonsure, obedience spiritually illegitimate, OW

74. Mar. 13/26,1971 Fr. Panteleimon VI. Anthony Ukase, VI. John's memory, independ

75. Mar. 21/Apr. 3, 1971 Fr. Panteleimon Jordanville trying to recruit them, stay in Platina

76. Spring 1971 (in Russian) Vladika Averky "I am in terrible state." VI. John's blessing

77. Mar. 24/Apr. 6, 1971 Mrs. Kontzevitch Independence, mockery of authority, obedience

78. Mar. 25/Apr. 7,1971 Daniel Olsen Turkish & Communist Yokes, Sergianism

79. Apr. 17/30, 1971 Mr. John Dunlop Translations, OW, Moscow Patriarchate

80. May 1/14,1971 Fr. Innocent name of St. Herman, not St. Germain

81. May 1/14,1971b Anastasios Leubke Name of St. Herman in unnecessary controversy

82. May 5/18,1971 Fr. Ambrosius Pogodin OK to visit, but don't tell Vl. Anthony

83. May 6/19,1971 Fr. Neketas Linotype, calendar, Metropolia spirit in ROCOR

84. May 8/21,1971 Fr. Panteleimon Vl. Nektary/Vl. Anthony, no contact w/Vl. A.

85. June 23/July 6,1971 Fr. Panteleimon Services to saints, calendar, publ. plans

86. July 7/20,1971 Fr. Panteleimon Vl. A's visit as peacemaker, ceasefire, Vl. Nektary

87. Aug. 3/16, 1971 Lawrence Campbell Fr. Neketas' visit, Mrs. Harvey, living conditions

88. Aug. 10/23,1971 Lawrence Campbell Monastery vs. church organization. Cover letter to:

89. Aug. 10/23,1971b Lawrence Campbell Rules for their monastic community if he comes

90. Aug. 13/26,1971 Dimitry Finish seminary, try to find inspiration at J'ville

91. Aug. 13/26,1971b Holy Transfig. Brothers Arkady ms., publications, 90% physical labor

92. Aug. 16/29,1971 Lawrence Campbell 6 month trial, debts, monasticism&world don't mix

93. Aug. 16/29,1971b Alexey Young Writing articles, Vl. John, Lives of Saints

94. Aug. 29/Sept. 11,1971 Dimitry Stay in seminary

95. Aug. 31/Sept. 13,1971 Fr. Neketas Fr. Theodoritos' visit, organizational view

96. Oct. 1/14,1971 Alexey Young Nikodemos, publish-personality, Amer. Orthodoxy

97. Oct. 1/14,1971 Fr. Neketas Idea of Orthodox America, traditional bishops

1972

98. Jan. 25/Feb. 7,1972 Michael Farnsworth Living conditions, decline of monasticism

99. Mar. 5/18,1972 Lawrence Campbell Royal Martyrs, lead type, weather

100. Mar. 21/Apr. 3,1972 Lawrence Campbell Cut off fr. ecclesiastical world, "Blessed" as title

101. Apr. 13/26,1972 Lawrence Campbell Catacomb documents, truck broke

102. Apr. 18/May 1,1972 Fr. Neketas True Vine, Vl. Vitaly, charismatics, feeling & inspir.

103. June 3/16,1972 Fr. Neketas Dogma of Redemption, True Vine, independence

104. June 5/18,1972 Alexey Young Nikodemos No. 4, don't let Fr. Neketas take over

105. June 12/25,1972 Fr. Neketas Veneration of Vl. John squashed, fighting Orth'y

106. June 13/26,1972 Daniel Olsen Celtic cause, millenium, calendar, J'ville tragedy

107. July 20/Aug. 2,1972 Fr. Panteleimon VI. Anthony's attitude on VI. John, pilgrims

108. All Saints, 1972 Fr. Neketas Spark of fervor, charismatics, Western Saints

109. Aug. 16/29,1972 Alexey Young Shroud, evolution, L. Puhalo, freedom to speak

110. Aug. 23/Sept. 5,1972 Nicholas Eastman Guidance towards monasticism, Unseen Warfare

1973

111. Jan. 7/20,1973 Fr. Neketas Sent back tickets to get one for Fr. Seraphim, obey

112. Jan. 31/Feb. 13,1973 Alexey Young Evolution, meeting in Seattle w/Fr. Panteleimon

113. Feb. 3/16,1973 Fr. Neketas VI. Nektary, reviving Good Tidings secretly

114. Feb. 4/17,1973 Nicholas Eastman Confession: Greek & Russian practice, come visit

115. Feb. 7/20, 1973 Igor Kapral Repose of VI. Savva, VI. John Chronicle, orphaned

116. Feb. 13/26,1973 Alexey Young Don't print Shroud article, need research

117. Feb. 25/Mar. 10,1973 Alexey Young Fr. P's rejection of Shroud, science, conscience

118. Mar. 1/14,1973 Fr. Neketas VI. John's crudeness, Church not a habit, VI. Savva

119. Mar. 4/17,1973 Nina Seco VI. John relics from VI. Savva, Life ofBl. Paisius

120. Apr/ 5/18,1973 Fr. Neketas Defending A. Young's article on evolution

121. Apr. 5/18,1973b Alexey Young Evolution=rival thought pattern to Orthodoxy

122. Apr. 8/21,1973 Fr. Johnikios Don't let Lev Puhalo print Dogma

123. Palm Sunday 1973 Fr. Neketaas A. Young wrong to print Shroud article, but…

124. Passion Tuesday, 1973 Alexey Young Should not have mailed Shroud, don't argue now

125. Bright Wednesday 1973 Alexey Young Fr. P's clique, evolution, Shroud, independ. labors

126. St. Thomas Sunday 1973 Fr. Neketas Need to guide & inspire converts, vs. strictness

127. St. Thomas Sunday 1973b Alexey Young Converts, theologians, struggling, don't fear threats

128. May 8/21,1973 Sylvia Anderson Comfort after Maggie's death, suffering through

129. May 14/27,1973 Irina Vagin Disharmony betw. Greek & Russian sides/ROCOR

130. May 27/June 9,1973 Vladika Laurus Our Greeks taking over converts, Dogma, Latinism

131. May 29/June 11,1973 Alexey Young Humanism, philosophy, 50% polemics in OW

132. June 29/July 12,1973 Alexey Young Fr. Ephraim, Shroud, evolution, suffering essential

133. July 4/17,1973 Fr. Johnikios V. Anderson/seminary, Boston open letter/Alexey

134. July 4/17,1973b Alexey Young No debate, Fr.E's disservice to Eng.-speaking Orth

135. Aug. 6/19,1973 Fr. Johnikios Boston & Seattle vs. VI. John on converts, ODT

136. Aug. 19/Sept. 1,1973 Fr. Neketas No fighting re; evolution & Shroud, recent Fathers

137. Sept. 8/21,1973 Alexey Young Sovietprisons, Kalomiros' reply, ODT

138. Oct. 25/Nov. 7,1973 Daniel Olsen Soulless calculation, heart not mind, catacombness

139. Nov. 6, 1973 Alexey Young Fr.E's 3rd letter, patristic revival, acad. theology

140. Nov. 10/23,1973 Deacon Lev Puhalo Don't print Acquisition w/o Kontzevitch's permiss.

141. Nov. 10/23,1973 Alexey Young Place for Nina Seco & Barbara McCarthy

142. Dec. 20.1973 Alexey Young Science & patristic notes for evolution book

1974

143. Jan. 9/22,1974 Alexey Young Community, evolution, Genesis, Apocalypse transl.

144. Jan. 24/Feb. 6,1974 Alexey Young Evolution

145. Feb. 2/15,1974 Alexey Young Teilhard, more evolution notes

146. Feb. 19,1974 Nina Seco Endure, peacemaking betw. Alexey and Boston

147. Feb. 1974 Alexey Young Fragment of letter on Fr. P. and evolution

148. Feb. 25/Mar. 10,1974 Alexey Young Kalomiros' 40-page letter, weak patristics & theol

149. Feb. 25,1974b Dr. Kalomiros Patristic research on evolution to come

150. Mar. 2/15,1974 Alexey Young Reply to Kalomiros' "stupid evolutionism"

151. Mar. 2-9,1974 Dr. Kalomiros Reply to evolution letter

152. Mar. 9/22 Alexey Young Scientific approach, Christian evolutionism chapt.

153. Mar. 10,1974 Nina Seco Avoid world and church world, spiritual zeal

154. Apr. 9,1974 Nina Seco Normal American seeker, prayer rule moderation

155. Apr. 10,1974 Alexey Young Same seeker, evolution research, right tone

156. June 7. 1974 Dr. Kalomiros Asking for reply to his letter

157. June 24/July 7,1974 Luke Walmsley Spiritual counsel, get college degree first

158. June 24/ July 7,1974b Nina Seco Taking church for granted, clergy crisis in SF

159. June 30/July 13,1974 Alexey Young Khomiakov, Optina, Western influence, Kireyevsky

160. July 11/24,1974 Nina Seco Carnal warfare, novices, trip to SF

161. July 24/Aug. 6, 1974 Michael Farnsworth Self-deception, crazy converts, sinning

162. July 30/Aug. 12,1974 Dr. John Johnstone Luke Walmsley's trials

163. Aug. 2/15,1974 Alexey Young Christian evolutionism chapter & patristic section

164. Sept. 5/16,1974 Nina Seco Don't try to help Maria Kraft, Boston temptation

165. Sept. 22/Oct. 5,1974 Alexey Young Christian evolutionism & patristic section

166. Nov. 21,1974 Fr. Ephraim Elder, Sobor, translations, Paul Bartlett

1975

167. Jan. 4/17,1975 Alexey Young Kalomiros, John Kraft, Kireyevsky, creationism

168. Jan. 7/20,1975 Alexey Young Daniel O.: correct w/o committment, Kireyevsky

169. Jan. 7/20,1975 Barbara Murray John Kraft, his mother's trying to get rid of him

170. Feb. 1,1975 Fr. Valery Lukianov Sobor, Solzhenitsyn, pastors keep savor of Orth'y

171. Feb. 6/19, 1975 Fr. Michael Azkoul Bulgakov, Solzhenitsyn, Paris Orthodoxy

172. Feb. 18/Mar. 3,1975 Alexey Young Kireyevsky, Sergianism, organization

173. Mar. 1975 Maria Kraft Monastery as reward, raising her boys = salvation

174. Mar. 25,1975 Alexey Young Birth control, sexuality, John Kraft's education

175. Mar. 28/Apr. 10,1975 Christopher Amerling News and pastoral guidance, Lenten reading

176. Apr. 29,1975 Dr. Kalomiros Solzhenitsyn, Sobor, Metropolia non-communion

177. May 16/29,1975 Alexey Young Fr. P.'s rebuke of Metr. Philaret, group pride

178. May 25/June 5,1975 Alexey Young Evolution book, weak converts, C. Amerling

179. July 17/30,1975 Alexey Young New Valaam Academy, community, NT, ORF

180. Aug. 13/26,1975 Vladika Laurus Fr. P cut off VLAverky for serving w/Bp. Petros

181. Aug. 15/28,1975 Barbara McCarthy Advice: Leaving community means spir. trouble

182. Aug. 24/Sept. 1975 Alexey Young B. McCarthy, NT, Ingrams, Fr. P's hold on converts

183. Aug. 25/Sept. 7,1975 Fr. Michael Azkoul Soloviev, Berdyaev, Kireyevsky, Florensky, Bulgak.

184. Aug. 26/Sept. 8,1975 Dr. Kalomiros Fr.P as only Orth, teacher, VI. Vitaly, "feel"of Orth

185. Sept. 12/25,1975 Fr. George Veneration of Western Saints, list of possible ones

186. Sept. 18/Oct. 1,1975 Fr. George St. Callistus, calendar

187. Sept. 21/Oct. 4,1975 Alexey Young Fr. P. “mess”, Hudanish/Old Believer visit

188. Sept. 29/Oct. 12,1975 Fr. Igor Kapral Bl.Aug., Saints, Latin influence, Fr. P’s party-line

189. Oct. 2/15,1975 Alexey Young Despondency, college boys, sect, VI. Averky

190. Oct. 4/17,1975 Alexey Young Fr.P’s anything permissible, don’t fight, politics

191. Oct. 5/18,1975 Fr. Valery Lukianov Fr.P, converts, coming schism, attack on Bl. Aug.

192. Oct. 8/21, 1975 Alexey Young Convert syndrome, oily letters, politics, don’t quit

193. Oct. 9/22,1975 NinaSeco Fr. P. & spiritual fakery, Fr.Dudko, VI. Averky

194. Oct. 10/23,1975 Fr. Michael Azkoul Bulgakov & Florensky by Schmemann & VI. John

195. Oct. 22/Nov. 4, 1975 Alexey Young Laurence C., old maidism, O. Believers, Nina/Fr.P

196. Oct. 24/Nov. 6/1975 Christopher Amerling Coming to visit

197. Oct. 24,1975b Andrew Bond True zealots, British Saints, Fr.P’s “expert” tone

198. Oct. 25,1975 Thomas Living conditions at monastery, trust, coming visit

199. Nov. 7/20, 1975 Phanourios Ingram Fasting, confession, Holy Communion, suffering

200. Nov. 18/Dec. 1,1975 Macarios Novitiate, seminary, narrow path

201. Nov. 27/Dec. 10,1975 Paul Bartlett Fr. Dudko, priesthood, Life of St. Gregory of Tours

202. Dec. 1/14,1975 Fr. Hilarion Fr.P’s crazy convert knowing better, objectivity

203. Dec. 3/16,1975 NinaSeco Isolation and aloofness, Orth, world for yourself

204. Dec. 3/16,1975b Alexey Young Hudanish, categorized for Vl.Averky OW, Vl.John

1976

205. Jan. 3/16, 1976 Alexey Young Sederholm, tiny groups vs. parishes, Laurence goes

206. Jan. 18/31,1976 Alexey Young Prelest, fancy, convert opinions, Laur.&Hudansh

207. Jan. 21/Feb 3,1976 Dr. Kalomiros Fr. P/Bp.Petros, community, Frs. cut off by party

208. Jan. 28/Feb. 10,1976 Alexey Young Rebaptism of converts, economy, psych, insecurity

209. Feb. 14/27,1976 Alexey Young Eugene zavarin, evolution as faith, naturalism

210. Feb. 22/Mar. 6,1976 Dr. Kalomiros Tone, degrees in science, Haekel’s theory,West, infl

211. Mar. 17/30,1976 Alexey Young ORF, BPV, NV Acad, grads, 5th c.Gaul, St. Greg T.

212. Mar. 17/30,1976b Nicholas Bl. Augustine vs. Patristic “experts”, love & piety

213. Apr. 3/16,1976 Nina Seco Getting priest for Etna, busy-busy,VI. Averky died

214. Apr. 3/16,1976b Alexey Young Nina's convert syndr., discouraged by VI. A's death

215. Apr. 12/25,1976 Christopher Amerling Laurence gone, VI. Averky's death, heavier burden

216. Apr. 18/May 1,1976 Andrew Bond Rebaptism, zeal not accd.to knowl.,Fr. P. fashion

217. May 22/June 4, 1976 Andrew Bond Boston letter/party, lost savor of Orth, rebaptisms

218. May 29/June 11,1976 Daniel Olsen Matthewites, Auxentios, zealotry, ecumenism

219. May 31/June 13,1974 Christopher Amerling Tests & struggles ahead, feel and love for Orth'y

220. June 2/15,1976 Alexey Young Right wing, helped create a monster, fragr. of Orth.

221. June 9/22,1976 Makarios Schaefer Judging one's spir.state, stay at J'ville, sum. help

222. June 10/23,1976 Fr. Hilarion Dark clouds ahead, asylum at Platina

223. June 10/23, 1976b Christopher Amerling Fleshly sins, humility, darkening atmosphere

224. June 10/23,1976c Fr. Alexis of Boston Loophole in your heart, letter to Andrew Bond

225. June 12/25, 1976 Daniel Olsen Jura Mtns., Gallic Saints, Russian book on VI. John

226. June 24/July 7,1976 Fr. Mark Wakingham Veneration of Western Saints, rebaptisms, zealots

227. June 30/July 13, 1976 Fr. Panagiotes Synod not breaking communion, inward freedom

228. July 4/17. 1976 Andrew Bond Reconcile to his bishop & priests, no fight, respect

229. July 12/25,19765 Fr. Kyprian Threats left & right, ROCOR on royal path, VI. Jn.

230. July 14/27,1976 Alexey Young A. Bond, moderate stand for true Orth., rebaptisms

231. July 16/29,1976 Fr. Neketas Written in blood, trust bishops, correctness disease

232. July 27/Aug. 9,1976 Fr. Johnikios Peace, no "extra hands", borrowing Macarios S.

233. July 29/Aug. 11,1976 Alexey Young Fr. P's censorship, Fr. Dudko, Barbara McC. there

234. Aug. 10/23,1976 Fr. Panagiotes No formal declarations on breaking communion

235. Aug.l0/23b Nicholas No startsi, spiritual reading

236. Aug. 13/26,1976 Alexey Young Boston authority, psycholog. diocese of Fr. P.

237. Aug. 16/29,1976 Seraphim Baptism, monasticism, obedience, opëппess, come

238. Aug. 22/Sept. 4,1976 Fr. Neketas Not offended, disagreement deep, aloof fr. details

239. Aug. 22/Sept. 4,1976b Christopher Amerling Suffer, commitment, NV Academy grads off path

240. Oct. 1/14,1976 Mr. Graves Western Saints, Bl. Augustine, Vita Patrum

241. Nov. 4/17,1976 Fr. Ioanikios Greeks in camp, narrow, “right,” double standard

242. Nov. 16/29,1976 Alexey Young Visitors, Mary Mansur, S. Kourdakov generation

1977

243. Jan. 27/Feb. 9,1977 Fr. Kyprian Ordinations, St. Kyprian, disunity, moderation

244. Jan. 28/Feb. 10,1977 Alexey Young NVA tapes, preparation for Holy Communion, SF

245. Apr. 13/26,1977 Christopher Amerling Ordination, wt. of cross, pull to heaven pilgrims

246. June 16/29,1977 Vladika Nectary Saints & holy men in Calendar, bishops’ authority

247. July 3/16,1977 Fr. Johnikios Evolution, philosophy, Kalomiros, theology, Axioms

248. Aug. 8/21, 1977 Fr. Johnikios Evolution, age of earth, mystery of creation

249. Oct. 10,1977 Not a letter Lect. notes: “How to Survive in Orth. Chr. World”

1978

250. Theophany, 1978 Andrew Bond Boston infl. in Eng., restored to communion

251. Jan. 22/Feb. 4,1978 Fr. Hilarion Proposed publications of Lives of Saints, ODT

252. Mar. 22/Apr. 4,1978 Andrew Bond Fr.P.infl. subsiding, calculation, keep working

253. Palm Sunday 1978 Mr. Stamos OC schism, Moscow Patr., jurisdictions, strictness

254. May, 19/June 1,1978 Fr. Chrysostomos Suffering from politics, catacomb existence

255. June 16/29,1978 Fr. Chrysostomos ROCOR reaction to fanaticism, moderation

256. Oct. 18/31,1978 Vladika Laurus L. Puhalo unbalanced opinions, superior tone, BPV

1979

257. Jan. 14/27,1979 Vladika Laurus Receiving Fr. Donald into RCA, married a widow

258. Jan. 20/Feb. 2,1979 Fr. Johnikios L. Puhalo’s attack on SAD arts, in OW,V. Averky

259. Jan. 28/Feb. 10,1979 Fr. Donald in Tennessee May join RCA as layman, not priest, keep publ.

260. Feb. 9/22,1979 Rev. Gooderidge Step backward to Ortho. Ch., see Fr. Ives DuBois

261. Feb. 9/22,1979b Timothy Shell OCA & RCA intercommunion, baptism, marriage

262. Feb. 14/27,1979 Fr. Basil Rhodes Timothy &Anna, Mosc. Patr., OCA ecum./modem

263. Mar. 7/20, 1979 Anna Demoniac fornication, dream attacks, joining RCA

264. Apr. 20/May 3,1979 Barry Baptism, believing heart,contact live trad.of Orth.

265. Apr. 30/May 13,1979 Fr. Herman in Greece Avoid test for bishop,God's work here, pilgrimages

266. May 1/14,1979 Fr. Roman Lukianov L.Puhalo to speak vs. tollhouses, disrespects Orth.

267. May 12/25,1979 Fr. Laurence Campbell Shroud, Party Headquarters,life after death/Puhalo

268. May 12/25,1979b Barry Monasticism/repentance, finish college, suffering

269. May 16/29.1979 Fr. Herman in Greece w/4 letters from others, writing only on Sundays

270. May 24/June 6,1979 Fr. Theodore Jurewitz Fr. Chrysostomos, sobriety, no longer expect much

271. June 1/14,1979 Fr. Yves Dubois Vl. Vitaly, cold pretentious, not take seriously

272. June 5/18,1979 John Hudanish Choir singing, basic humility, Etna style of parish

273. June 16/29,1979 Mrs. Prokopchuk Puhalo vs. tollhouses, Bl.Aug., sad, no debate,SAD

274. Aug. 9/22,1979 Fr. Akakios Give up reacting to Fr. P., Orth, of head not heart

275. Aug. 9/22,1979b Fr. Chrysostomos Sympathy for sufferings = for salvation; Akakios

276. Aug. 10/23,1979 Andrew Bond Positive attitude, not reaction; suffering Orthodoxy

277. Aug. 22/Sept. 4,1979 Fr. Mamas Open letter, spir. fakery, infallibility, VI. Andrew

278. Sept. 20/0ct. 3,1979 Fr. Hilarion Disfavor with Boston, J.Van Deerlin, Dudko inspir.

279. Oct. 23/Nov, 5,1979 Fr. Neketas Party attack: SAD, B'hood, J'ville, Russian v. Grks

280. Nov. 1/14,1979 Fr. Roman Lukianov History of Fr. P.& Fr. N., politics vs. Russ. theology

281. Nov. 8/21,1979 Andrew Bond Fr. Dudko, Boston line, J'ville talk, duller speaker

1980

282. Jan. 24/Feb. 6,1980 Fr. Ambrose Fr. John Lewis changing jurisdictions

283. Mar. 13/26,1980 John Hudanish Failed as spir. father, not Christian or caring, pride

284. Mar. 26/Apr. 8,1980 Maria Kraft Gleb & Welfare Dept, want him to stay, not uproot

285. Mar. 31/Apr. 13,1980 Fr. Neketas More SAD attacks, no Seattle conf., cry of anguish

286. May 14/27,1980 Fr. Michael Azkoul SAD attacks, no Seattle conf., tollhouse not dogma

287. May 23/June 5,1980 Fr. Demetrios Puhalo scandal, Dudko, Fr. N's conf., heart in Orth.

288. May 30/June 12,1980 Fr. Hilarion Children's page for Orthodox America, ODT

289. June 2/15,1980 Fr. Neketas Open letter from Fr. Herman on Fr. Dudko

290. June 9/22,1980 Fr. Demetrios Dudko & positive Gospel, suffering, PA 1981 conf.

291. June 25/July 8,1980 Fr. Michael Fr. H's letter, black list, attitude of Fr. N., schism

292. July 19/Aug. 1,1980 John Hudanish Puhalo censored by Synod, tone, Dudko's speech

293. Aug. 5/18,1980 Rev. Cardoza Search for true Orthodoxy, Santa Cruz Russ, conf

294. Aug. 5/18,1980b Michael Catacomb Ch., Dudko,Bl. Aug. v. Fr.N, definitions

295. Sept. 3/16,1980 John Hudanish Moscow, Dudko not joining Catacomb Ch., heart

296. Oct. 14/27,1980 Fr. Photios Declines PA conf., no prayer for suffering Russians

297. Oct. 14/27,1980b Fr. Demetrios Deep distrust of Grks, no public prayer, sad,schism

298. Nov. 14/27,1980 Anna, Catechumen Non-Orth. Christians, Dudko, interfaith marriage

299. Nov. 22/Dec. 5,1980 Vladika Gregory No reply to Puhalo & Fr. N., Kalomiros at PA conf.

300. 23/Dec. 6,1980 Fr. Demetrios SAD Appendix, West, captivity, Kalomiros' schism

301. 23/Dec. 6,1980b Constantine Gk.schism, commem. Dudko at Lit., SAD Append.

302. Dec. 7/20,1980 Mrs. Irina Hay SAD, Bp.Ignatius & Bp.Theophan on angels

303. Dec. 9/22,1980 Vladika Gregory Synod on life after death, Puhalo, no public debate

1981

304. Dec. 28/Jan. 10,1981 George & Margaret Attacks by Seattle/Bost. on SAD, Moscow& grace

305. Jan. 17/30,1981 John Hudanish Kicked us out, supercorrect, work on yourself

306. Jan. 24/Feb. 6,1981 James Paffhausen Jurisdictions, grace, can't change OCA, UCSC talk

307. Meatfare Sat. 1981 Fr. Alexey Young Genesis course, Orthodox America, evolution book

308. Apr. 1/14,1981 Vanya Danz Spiritual looking in mirror, Fr. P, monasticism

309. Apr. 14/27,1981 George Can't advise his maniscript, humbly confess Orth.

310. June 13/26,1981 Fr. Michael Azkoul Bl. Augustine, correctness, distrust of Orth.bishops

311. Aug. 13/26,1981 Dr. Johnstone OW 96 Tavrion, Metr. Philaret, Moscow & grace

312. Aug. 18/31,1981 Vladika Laurus Visit St. H.Pilgrimage, seminary B.Voytan, Tavrion

313. Aug. 21/Sept. 3,1981 Vladika Gregory OW96, silent majority v. Boston sect, 200 at Pilgr

314. Aug. 21/Sept. 3,1981b Fr. Gregory Party at PA conf.,Tavrion, Pilgrimage success

315. Aug. 21/Sept. 3,1981c Fr. Photios Forbid to publish his correspondence w/ Kalomiros

316. Sept. 4/17,1981 Fr. Demetrios Greeks dry of Christian love: humble themselves

317. Sept. 25/Oct. 8,1981 Fr. Michael Henning Boston schism too deep for personal forgiveness

318. Sept. 25/Oct. 8,1981 Fr. Demetrios OW not controversial, Bost. became pressure grp.

319. Sept. 26/Oct. 9,1981 Fr. Johnikios Basil Voytan's seminary classes at Platina

320. Oct. 17/30,1981 Fr. George Macris OW96, non-finality of Russian Ch. situation/grace

321. Nov. 25/Dec. 8,1981 Fr. Demetrios Puhalo gone,Moscow, Alice in Wonderland Orth'y

1982

322. Jan. 15/28,1982 Fr. George Macris Wait for free Russia, reading into Synod Decision

323. No date "young seeker" Guenon led him to Orthodoxy

324. Mar. 26/Apr. 8,1982 Fr. Vladimir Nina Berchier unfit for marriage, failed monastic

325. May 1/14,1982 Vladimir Seminary training, living conditions at Platina

326. June (early) 1982 Fr. Alexey Young John Kraft's seminary & summerplans, floaters

327. June 1982 Br. Gleb Preparing for seminary and future

328. Oct. 1,1982 Fr. Herman From Dr. William H. deVlaming on Fr. S's death

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1960's Letters

001.

June 14, 1961

Liebe Eltern,

A hot day—too much like summer for San Francisco. I finally finished the thesis and turned it in last Friday, but they don't get around to sending out the degrees until September, for some reason. For the time being I'm still involved in Chinese things, as I'm helping my former Chinese professor translate an article (from Chinese) on Chinese philosophy for a philosophical journal. The hypocrisy of the academic world is nowhere more evident than in his case. He knows more about Chinese philosophy than probably anyone else in the country, and studied with real Chinese philosophers and sages in China; but he can't get a job in any college here because he doesn't have degrees from American colleges, and because he isn't a fast talker—he's too honest, in short.

It's true that I chose the academic life in the first place, because God gave me a mind to serve Him with, and the academic world is where the mind is supposed to be used. But after eight or nine years I know well enough what goes on in the universities. The mind is respected by only a few of the "old-fashioned" professors, who will soon have died out. For the rest, it's a matter of making money, getting a secure place in life—and using the mind as a kind of toy, doing clever tricks with it and getting paid for it, like circus clowns. The love of truth has vanished from people today; those who have minds have to prostitute their talents to get along. I find this

difficult to do, because I have too great a love of truth. The academic world for me is just another job; but I am not going to make myself a slave to it. I am not serving God in the academic world; I am just making a living. If I am going to serve God in this world, and so keep from making my life a total failure, I will have to do it outside the academic world. I have some money saved up, and the promise of some more by doing a little work, so I should be able to live frugally for a year doing what my conscience tells me I should do—to write a book on the spiritual condition of man today, about which, by God's grace, I have some knowledge. The book will probably not sell, because people would rather forget about the things I am going to say; they would rather make money than worship God.

It is true that this is a mixed-up generation. The only thing wrong with me is that I am not mixed-up, I know only too well what the duty of man is: to worship God and His Son and to prepare for the life of the world to come, not to make ourselves happy and comfortable in this world by exploiting our fellow man and forgetting about God and His kingdom.

If Christ were to walk in this world today, do you know what would happen to Him? He would be placed in a mental institution and given psycho-therapy, just as would His Saints. The world would crucify Him today just as it did 2000 years ago, for the world has not learned a thing, except more devious forms of hypocrisy. And what would happen if, in one of my classes at the university, I would one day tell my students that all the learning of this world is of no importance beside the duty of worshipping God, accepting the God-man who died for our sins, and preparing for the life of the world to come? They would probably laugh at me, and the university officials, if they found out, would fire me—for it is against the law to preach the Truth in our universities. We say that we live in a Christian society, but we do not: we live in a society [text missing]

002.

Monday, July 15, 1963

Dear Alison,

I received your letter Friday on returning from Church, where I had received Holy Communion. And so it seems that in these few years our roles have been reversed: I, who was still seeking then, have found the object of my search; and you are now once more seeking. But this is as God wills.

I am very happy to hear again from you, and I am quite certain about the meaning of your writing now. I have prayed for you always, and have thought often about you; and it is quite correct that you have been especially on my mind during the last month or two.

When you last heard from me I was very near to the Russian Orthodox Church, though still somewhat uncertain; and though I had renounced the worst of my sins, I still lived very largely as the world lives. But then, unworthy as I am, God showed His path to me. I became acquainted with a group of fervent Orthodox Russians, and within a few months (it was, significantly enough, on the Sunday of the "Prodigal Son" just before the beginning of Lent) I was received into the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, whose faithful child I have been for the year and a

half since then. I have been reborn in our Lord, I am now His slave, and I have known in Him such joy as I never believed possible while I was still living according to the world.

I have become what the world would call a "fanatic"; in fact, all true Orthodox believers are "fanatics." Such "fanaticism" is justified by the fact that the Orthodox Church is the one true Church of Christ; it is the reality of which Roman Catholicism and all other churches are but pale shadows at best. This may seem like an extreme statement to you, and as proof I can only ask you to discover it for yourself.

Everything is according to the will of God; of this truth I have had very clear and remarkable experience in the last two years. The ways of God seem often strange to us; but His purpose is always the same: to draw men to Himself. As I said, I am quite certain of the meaning of your writing to me now: God wishes to use me to tell you about Orthodoxy—not because there is any virtue in me, but because Gods Truth is so powerful that it can be made known even through someone as totally unworthy as myself.

What I say must seem very unlikely in the eyes of the world. You have visited an Orthodox Church, as far as I know, only twice in your life: you yourself are probably still a nominal Anglican, and separated from all religion now, and your husband is probably Protestant or of no religion at all; there is perhaps no Orthodox Church within a hundred miles of you and perhaps you think of Orthodoxy as something "Eastern" and exotic. It is therefore very "unlikely" that you are to become Orthodox; and yet I am quite certain of the fact, and I feel that you are going to recognize the will of God in what I am saying. If this is so, and since the Orthodox Church is the one and only Church of Christ, then nothing the world can say or do will stop you from being truly joined to our Lord in His Church; and our Lord will send the means in due time to achieve His purposes.

I will not attempt to say much about Orthodoxy in this letter, but will wait to discover your reaction to what I have already said. And everything that I can say, of course, will be a very imperfect expression of truths that mean nothing until one experiences them with ones whole soul. If you are really interested in Orthodoxy, I can begin to send you books (not books about Orthodoxy so much as books of very practical spiritual advice which are a necessary nourishment of the Orthodox life), icons, etc., as well as introduce you to Orthodox people. I know, for example, a very devout American girl in New York who is a convert to the Russian Church. One of the joys of the Orthodox life is knowing such people (even if only by correspondence), for in Orthodoxy especially the sense of community is very strong; among devout people, everyone is "brother" and "sister," and these words are not mere metaphors. All who have taken the name of Orthodox Christians are striving together for the same goal; and even in this life we have a foretaste of the perfect love that will bind us together in our Lord in the eternal Kingdom He has prepared for His faithful.

Orthodoxy is the preparation of souls for this Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. The schismatic Churches have, in lesser or greater measure, forgotten this truth and compromised with the world; Orthodoxy alone has remained other-worldly. The aim of the Orthodox life (of which we all fall miserably short) is to live in this life in constant remembrance of the next life, in fact to

see even in this life, through the Grace of our Lord, the beginning of that life. This is the meaning of the "joy" of which I just spoke, and which to me is the strongest proof of the truth of Orthodoxy. The saint lives always in this joy—I will tell you later some wonderful stories of some of our modern Russian saints and how this joy was expressed in them. And Orthodoxy alone continues to produce saints—I mean real saints, not just "good men." The present Archbishop of San Francisco (he came here recently from Paris) is such a man. He leads a life of real crucifixion—the strictest asceticism (he never even lies down), a totally selfless giving of himself to others, Christian kindness and patience even in the face of the most evil and slanderous accusations (for Satan attacks our Church very strongly, in many ways); but always he is full of such love and joy that one is always happy and at peace in his presence, even in sorrow and in the most trying circumstances.

These are very difficult times. Most of the priests and bishops I know (the bishops of our Church are very close to their people, very warm, and very easy to approach) are convinced that these are the last days of the world and that the reign of Antichrist is at hand. This is of course a very easy subject to get carried away with; but our Lord has told us to be prepared for the signs of the end, and those who are not interested in them are only going to be seduced by them. The faithful remnant of Christians in the last days, as our Lord has told us, will be very small; the vast majority of those who call themselves Christians will welcome Antichrist as the Messiah. Therefore it is not enough to be a "non-denominational" Christian; those who are not true Orthodox Christians belong to the "new Christianity," the "Christianity" of Antichrist. The Pope of Rome and practically everyone else today speaks of "transforming the world" by Christianity: priests and nuns take part in demonstrations for "racial equality" and similar causes. These have nothing to do with Christianity: they do nothing but distract men from their true goal, which is the Kingdom of Heaven. The coming age of "peace," "unity," and "brotherhood," if it comes, will be the reign of Antichrist: it will be Christian in name, but Satanic in spirit. Everyone today seeks happiness on earth, and they think this is "Christianity"; true Orthodox Christians know that the age of persecutions, which began again under the Bolsheviks, is still with us, and that only by much sorrow and tribulation are we made fit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

The heart of Orthodoxy is prayer; and I may truthfully say that before I found Orthodoxy I never had the slightest idea of what prayer was or what power it had. Often, of course, one is cold in prayer; but I have known times, both by myself and with others, of truly warm and fervent prayer, and of heartfelt tears of repentance: and I have known the joy of seeing my prayers answered. Thus encouraged I, feeble and unworthy, have been bold to speak to our Lord and to His Mother and His Saints (I have known no one who prays to the Saints with such faith and fervor as Orthodox believers), and their guidance in my life is as real to me as my own breathing.

Please forgive me for speaking so much about myself, but it is impossible for me to speak about Orthodoxy in the abstract; all I know about it has come from my experience. On a more external level you may be interested to know that I have never returned to the academic world and never shall; that I have still not finished the book I began two years ago, both because of its length and because of the change in my views since then (the book is a discussion of the spiritual state of the contemporary world in the light of Orthodox Truth); and that, God willing, I intend to

become a monk (and perhaps a priest) in the service of God when I have finished the book in a year or two.

As to your state, it seems to me to be not at all hopeless, but rather encouraging. You feel yourself deserted by God; and yet you had the strength to resist the Satanic temptation of your father and to suffer all that has happened to you with some patience. God has weakened you, I think, to prepare you to find all your strength in Him; and the way to such strength lies in Orthodoxy.

Write soon and tell me what is in your heart. If I have spoken boldly, it is out of the intense certainty and joy with which I am filled by our Lord when I receive His Most Holy Body and Blood. How can I not speak boldly when it is as clear as day to me that everything in this world passes away in an instant, and all that remains is our Lord and the indescribable Kingdom He has prepared for us who take His light yoke upon ourselves (and indeed, how light is that yoke that looks so heavy to unbelievers!) and follow Him. Pray for me, who am unworthy of everything that has been given me.

In Christ, your brother,

p.s. What part of Illinois is Ursa in? Is it near any large city?

p.p.s. I am enclosing a few English articles that appeared recently in the small journal of the San Francisco Diocese.

p.s. again: After writing the above, I was reading a few pages from one of our recent spiritual fathers (he died in 1907 and has not yet been canonized), Father John of Kronstadt. I read a few pages from him every night, and usually I find that he speaks very directly and explicitly to me about some problem or circumstance that has been troubling me that day. Tonight, just after finishing this letter, I read (opening the book at random) the following:

“As a mother teaches her child to walk, so also God teaches us to have a living faith in Him. A mother will make the child stand, and leave it for a while by itself, then she will tell it to come to her. The child cries without its mother; it wants to go to her, but is afraid to attempt to move its feet; it tries to walk, makes a step, and falls down. God teaches the Christian faith in Him in like manner: our faith is as weak as the child beginning to walk. The Lord leaves the man without His help and gives him up to the Devil, or to various distresses and afflictions and afterwards, when he is in extreme need of help of being delivered from them (for we are not ready to go to Him until we are in need of salvation), He bids us look on Him and come to Him for that Help. The Christian endeavors to do so: he opens the eyes of his heart and tries to see the Lord by means of them, but his heart, not being taught how to see God, is afraid of its own boldness, and stumbles and falls. The enemy and inborn sinful corruptions close the newly opened eyes of the heart and cut him off from God, so that he cannot approach Him, though God is near, ready to take him into His arms; only God must be approached with faith, and an effort must be made to see Him fully with the spiritual eyes of faith. Then He will Himself stretch out His helping hand, will take the man into His arms and drive away the enemies. Then the Christian feels that he has fallen into the arms of the Saviour Himself. Glory be to Thy goodness and wisdom, Lord! Thus during

the efforts of the Devil against us, and in every affliction, we must see clearly with the eyes of the heart, as if He stood before us, the Saviour, the Lover of men: and look upon Him with boldness as upon our inexhaustible treasury of goodness and mercies, and pray to Him with all our hearts, that He may give us a portion of this inexhaustible fountain of blessings and of spiritual help; and we shall immediately obtain what we are praying for. The chief thing is faith, or the spiritual vision of the Lord and the hope of receiving everything from Him, as the Most-merciful, the Most-true. This is the truth; this is from experience. By these means God also teaches us to acknowledge our extreme moral infirmity without Him, to be contrite in heart, and constantly in a prayerful frame of mind.

003.

Aug. 28/Sept. 10, 1963

Dear Nina [Seco],

It has been just about a year since your visit, and already we are almost strangers to each other. That is of course primarily my fault, since I am a hopelessly irresponsible correspondent. However, I will try to write once in a while, hoping that you will do likewise.

I am quite interested in your English-language Orthodox Church and would like to hear to more about it and about the priest. While I am quite satisfied with Church Slavonic myself, and in fact feel myself to be more Russian than American, I realize that one can't expect many converts to go so far. In fact one of the chief difficulties I've had in my own modest missionary endeavors is the linguistic and cultural barrier. People are invariably fascinated by the Slavonic services, but any more intimate contact with the Church seems out of the question to them. What kind of success has your Church had? Do you have any organized missionary activity? I know Vladiko John and Fr. Leonid (at St. Tikhons) want to begin something of the sort here (missionary activity, that is), and Gleb has some ideas of his own on the subject. But so far nothing has been begun.

I remember telling you last year that I would be going to Jordanville this Christmas. However, since I found myself unable to work more than five months, I saved only enough money to live until now, and I've now gone back to work (as a busboy again, but in a pleasanter place). The book I have been writing is in much better form, though still far from finished. It turns out to be a study of the consequences of atheism as contrasted with the consequences of faith (historical-psychological-spiritual-philosophical-theological). I sometimes despair that I am making it too abstract and philosophical, so that no one will be interested in it or read it. Presently I'm working on an essay (which turns out, like the book, to be rather long) on the person and influence of Pope John XXIII in the light of Dostoyevsky's "Grand Inquisitor," in which I hope to interest Fr. Konstantin.

Vladiko John, as you must have heard, has been confirmed as Archbishop of San Francisco, and if the diocese is still a long way from real peace, at least there is some kind of order at last. I believe work on the new cathedral has finally begun again. Vladiko John is my favorite among our bishops, even though I find it next to impossible to understand him. He is constantly filled

with such a deep peace and joy that it is spiritually beneficial just to be in his presence. I was present at several crucial moments in the past months, when Vladiko was surrounded by excited, weeping, practically hysterical crowds (you know how Russians can be!), but he was exactly the same as ever, still calm and even joyful, denying all the angry accusations against other bishops, and exhorting all to spiritual peace and obedience.

Vladiko Savva was here for several months and did much in defense of Vladiko John. He still has high hopes for establishing a monastery (though Gleb, as usual, is pessimistic about it), but apparently he will do nothing until he leaves Edmonton and is permanently established elsewhere. He was searching for potential monks while he was here, but so far Jon is the only definite one. For myself, I have yet to finish my book and see Jordanville before I make my choice. Do you happen to know any potential monks? And what of your own hopes, are they any nearer realization? There are few any more who think of the monastic life or take it seriously, even among Russians; Gleb's mother, for example, gave me some very "practical" advice on why I shouldn't be a monk.

Recently a girl whom I knew in college wrote me after having disappeared for several years. I had despaired of ever hearing from her again, and the circumstances lead me to believe that there is a spiritual meaning in this reestablishment of contact—in short, I think that Our Lord wishes to draw her to Holy Orthodoxy. The last time I saw her she was a fervent Anglican (High Church), with a great deal of spiritual awareness and a great love for Our Lord. At the same time she has a kind of Dostoyevskian impulsiveness that occasionally leads her into strange adventures. While always dreaming of becoming a nun, she has had several unhappy marriages, for which the fault was not primarily hers (her husband simply left her with an unborn child); or if the fault was hers, then it was the fault of having an overly trusting nature that too easily follows early impressions of people. Right now she's living on a farm with a man she married in despair, and the child from her previous marriage. She seems to be reasonably content, and I know she is capable of suffering a great deal in silence if need be; but, even though she has no intellectual doubts of Christian Truth, she finds her faith to be more or less dead. I'm going to be sending her books and icons as soon as I have some money (she welcomes them), but what she needs most is contact with real believers and fellow pilgrims on earth. Forgive me for burdening you with all this, but if you feel it in your heart to do so, please write her something (I mentioned you to her, but said nothing about you), if only to let her know that Christians still exist. (She senses "something missing" in the Anglican and Catholic Churches, and she was impressed with the genuineness of the Russian Orthodox service the two times she was present at it.) You will both be rewarded, I am sure. Her address is Mrs. Charles Bradbury, Route 1, Ursa, Illinois. (Her name is Alison.)

Please pray for her, and for me, wretched sinner but fellow pilgrim that I am. Jon promises to write soon. Let us hear some thing from you.

Your brother in Christ,

004.

Sept. 12, 1963

Dear Alison,

As you see, I am an irresponsible correspondent. I began this letter two weeks ago, which was late enough, and then I went back to work (as a busboy in a restaurant!) and was too tired to finish it. Please forgive my long delay in answering your letter.

I think you are quite correct that there is something missing in the Western Churches; what is missing, I think, is precisely faith. For several centuries now men have been turning their eyes more and more to the earth and chasing the fantasy of earthly happiness and worldly comfort. In such a world even those who still believe in the other world find their faith more and more difficult to preserve; the "spirit of the age" becomes so dominated by worldly concerns that one sometimes begins to doubt ones sanity in continuing to believe what "everyone" regards as incredible. But that is only a passing temptation; there is something worse, and that is what you have noticed: people continue to believe outwardly, and go through the motions of Christian worship, but somehow the substance of faith has evaporated. The spirit of the world is so strong and persuasive that it acts without our knowing it. Of course the world has always been making war on Christian faith, but today it has very nearly succeeded in winning the war. Do you remember the terrible words of Our Lord: "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" In the last days faith is to be almost entirely extinguished. And yet the appearance of faith will probably be maintained; Antichrist, we know, will attempt to imitate Christ. Probably the "world Church" that is being formed by the "ecumenical movement" today (whose center, of course, will be Rome) will keep intact most of the externals of Christian worship and dogma—but its heart, true faith, will be missing, and so it will be simply an imitation of Christianity. I'm writing an essay on this subject now, in connection with the "new Christianity" of Pope John XXIII, and I'll send you a copy when (and if) its published.

Orthodox people of course have the same problem, but with us it is somewhat easier, for several reasons. With us Christianity is less abstract than it tends to become in the Western Churches. When we pray it is always before our icons, which are made with prayer and are blessed by a priest and allow us, with our human weakness, to look upon the very face of the Saints and so gain great strength and fervor in prayer. The Saints are present in a special sense in the icons and thus are close to us; and indeed, many icons are noted for working miracles of healing and protection, due to the special intervention of the Saints (and especially of the Most Holy Mother of God). I think you've heard of the "weeping icons" in New York (there are at least three now); in them the Mother of God is warning us of impending catastrophe and calling us to repentance. (One of the icons was here and I prayed before it, though I didn't see any tears. The icon that weeps the most is a simple paper reproduction which is dissolving from the great quantity of tears.) Also, most of our music is not modern "composed" music (there is some of that, and it's too bad), but ancient chants composed by Saints inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it speaks directly to the heart. The Orthodox Church also preserves many of the old Christian sacraments and customs, long since abandoned by the West (such as the distribution of blessed breads, the anointing with oil every Saturday night and before every feast, the blessing of foods at different seasons, the holding of candles or flowers at different feasts, the kiss of forgiveness at the beginning of Lent and the kiss of peace at Easter, etc.), some of which confer Grace and others

of which simply make more vivid and real the meaning of the feasts. And the Orthodox Church retains undiluted the traditional Christian disciplines, especially the practice of strict and sometimes painful fasting, which are necessary more than ever today if we are to overcome the power and temptations of the world.

But most important of all is faith, our immediate contact with the other world, without which nothing else would have any meaning. By ourselves we are powerless to preserve this, and if Our Lord were not with us, faith would dry up in us even as it has in the other Churches. But Our Lord is with us, and in a special sense with the Russian Church, which He has chosen for a special role in these times. (The Russian Saints of the 19th century prophesied concerning the Revolution and the providential dispersion of Orthodox Christians to every country of the world, before the end. The "Russian mission" has a spiritual meaning, even though the Soviets have capitalized on it for their own Satanic purposes, and even though someone as Orthodox as Dostoyevsky interpreted it in too worldly a sense.) It is by trials that faith is strengthened, and the Russian Church in Exile today lives by the prayers of its millions of "new martyrs," who are to Orthodox faithful what the first martyrs were to the early Church. Indeed, I think it highly likely that we Orthodox today, living in a time and a place of "peace" and "security," will before too long be called upon ourselves to die a martyr's death for our faith. The possibility is certainly a real one in the face of the anti-Christian spirit of "peace" that seems to be overwhelming the world today and lulling people into the sleep of worldliness and forgetfulness of Heaven.

As far as I can see, the closest of our churches to you is in Rock Island, Ill. It is at 1110 10th St., Warsaw (I think Warsaw is a suburb of Rock Island), in case you ever go there. There are two in Chicago: a cathedral with an Archbishop at 2056 N. Kedzie Boulevard, and a chapel at 2141 W. Pierce Ave. There are other Orthodox churches of various kinds (mostly Greek and Russian) in most fair-sized cities in the Middle West (several in Kansas City and St. Louis), which would be listed in the telephone directories, but they haven't got much spiritual strength and are rapidly going the way of the Catholic Church. Our churches always have services at six or seven (for about two hours) on Saturday night and at ten Sunday morning. I imagine, however, that you seldom go to the cities. We are fortunate in San Francisco to have many fine Russian churches; in fact, I think San Francisco is now the chief center of the Russian emigration. It is more difficult, though still quite possible, to lead an Orthodox life without the help and consolation of frequent attendance at church. The sister of my godmother, for example, lives in Peru and has been for several years without a church, and only receives Holy Communion about once a year when the Archbishop comes from Chile. Many of the desert saints, too, were seldom in church; and St. Mary of Egypt, I think, received Communion only once in her life. (Have you read her Life? She is a marvelous Saint; I will send it if you haven't.) But we, alas, are not so strong, and require much more help.

In reading your letter over again, I see that you say, "Your life is now complete, and you have many friends a great deal dearer than I. I am not one of you." But that is not true. As a matter of fact, I have very few close friends; but that is not what I mean. Spiritual friendship (and every other kind, while having its consolations, ends with death) does not require the conditions (common activities or work, a common circle of acquaintances, frequent meetings, etc.) without

which worldly friendships simply evaporate. Spiritual friendship is rooted in a common Christian faith, is nourished by prayer for each other and speaking to each other from the heart, and is always inspired by a common hope in the Kingdom of Heaven in which there shall be no more separation. God, for His own reasons, has separated us on earth, but I pray and hope and believe that we shall be together when this brief life is over. Not for a single day have you been absent from my prayers, and even when I heard nothing from you for two years and thought perhaps I would never hear from you again, you were still closer to me than most of the people I see frequently. Oh, if we were real Christians, we would be strangers to no one, and would love even those who hate us; but as it is, it is all we can do to love a few. And you are certainly one of my "few."

I had better finish this at last, for I know you must think I have deserted you. Since I began typing this, this afternoon (it is now night), I have already lost my job, and must look for another one. It is somehow a sobering thought for me, with all my philosophical and abstract pretensions, to be a failure as a lowly busboy. I will be sending soon to the monastery in New York for books and such things, and I'll get a few things for you. Please be kinder to me than I have been to you, and write soon. And pray for me, a sinner.

In Christ, your brother,

P.s. In any kind of danger or affliction, pray (besides to the Mother of God) to Saint Nicholas; he is the greatest of the Saints, and a speedy intercessor. Also, for healing, pray to Saint Panteleimon, a fourth-century martyr of the universal Church. I will pray to him also for you and your husband.

005.

Sept. 3/16, 1963

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

After some thought I've decided your idea is really quite practical. Here are some of my own ideas about putting it into effect:

First, find a garage or a small shop in or near the Richmond district, preferably on Geary, Clement, or California Street, for no more than $30 a month. (I looked at the place on California Street; an interesting building, but it has been condemned and will be torn down.) It should have a fairly large window for display purposes; if there isn't one, we should make one. Then, equip it with a few tables, bookcases, etc., with of course an icon with lampada in one corner, Fr. German on one wall, pictures of Jordanville etc. on other walls, and a bulletin board by the door. Also a samovar, or at least a pot of hot water, in the back. Then, get a supply of books, icons, etc. from Jordanville, including present and past issues of Orthodox Life in English and Russian, and the current issue of Pravoslavnava Rus, and whatever other Orthodox materials from other places that can be obtained with little or no immediate payment. Advertisement can be through Russkaya Zhizn and by word of mouth—it could be announced also at the Bogoslovskii Kyrs [Theological Course at St. Tikhon's] and on bulletin boards of churches, as well as privately We could be open at first only a few days a week perhaps—say Tuesday and Thursday nights and

Saturday afternoon, the intention being to provide an informal gathering place for whoever might be interested. Several people could be responsible for opening and closing the shop, a different person each day, to divide the labor. All work would be voluntary and unpaid, all proceeds going to expansion of the activities of the "Brotherhood"—first, purchase of more books for sale, especially the Fathers; second, providing the book store is a success, the publication of some sort of bulletin (perhaps), etc.

Such a bookstore would, first of all, be a service to Russians in San Francisco, a few of whom are beginning, through the influence of Vladiko Joann, to be interested in the Fathers but hardly know that it is possible to buy Orthodox books. Second, it would provide a gathering and discussion place for both Americans and Russians, young or old, who might be interested; third, it would be a place to which to refer Americans knowing little or nothing of Orthodoxy, both for literature and discussion. If God blesses the undertaking, interest will be awakened and books will be sold, and that will be the financial basis of all further undertakings, which can be planned when the need and occasion arises for them.

All that is required to begin is a small amount of cash (for rent, furniture, paint, etc.), and, most of all, at least four or five enthusiastic workers. I am quite enthusiastic already, though I must confess that Jon, as usual, is pessimistic; but that need be no hindrance. If Fr. Deacon Nicolai and his friend Nicolai, and perhaps one or two others, could be inspired with some enthusiasm, the project could easily be undertaken.

Let me know your opinion of these ideas. And pray for me, your sinful brother in Christ,

Eugene

006.

Thursday, Oct. 3, 1963

Dear Alison,

I seem to recall your mentioning ghosts and such things in a letter several years ago, but I don't remember saying anything in reply. I think these things are in a category similar to that of details concerning Antichrist and the last days: one should know something about them so as not to be led astray by false doctrines and "revelations," but at the same time it can be spiritually dangerous to be too preoccupied with them. As a matter of fact I am somewhat interested in them myself, and I plan to devote a chapter of my book to them, since I think they will have an important (negative) role to play in the near future. The prevalence of books on the subject, both by spiritists and by scientists, is perhaps only a preparation for the approaching seduction of many souls who, having no knowledge or experience of these matters, can be easily led astray by a few spectacular "phenomena." I think it quite possible that the words of Our Lord, "There will be false Christs and false prophets, who will rise up and show great signs and wonders, so that if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived" (St. Matthew XXIV, 24), as well as the false miracles of the "prophet" of Antichrist (Apocalypse, ch. 13), who even brings down "fire from heaven"—that these may refer, among other things, to very extraordinary psychical and demonic phenomena, which materialistic people will have to accept as "miracles."

I have no doubt of the authenticity of many of the phenomena described in books like the one you read. The accounts of scientists are of course more trustworthy than those of spiritists, but only as regards the specific details of observed phenomena; never trust the interpretation of phenomena offered even by the most reputable scientists, for they usually know nothing at all, and never enough, either of spiritual experience or Christian doctrine.

Concerning the dead, Orthodox tradition has preserved much, both of theory and of practice, that the Catholic Church has long since abandoned. Of practice, there is the custom of remembering the dead at every Liturgy and at other special services. Everyone present who so desires submits a list of his own (one list for the living, one for the dead), and the priest reads all the names aloud, besides his own lists. If many people are present this sometimes takes 15 or 20 minutes (which the Catholic Church would surely regard as "inefficient" and a "waste of time"!), but it is a wonderful sign of the unity of all believers, living and dead, present and absent. Another sign of the Orthodox attitude to the dead is the marvelous joyousness—restrained, but still joyous—of the services for the dead, with the constant refrain of "Alleluia" and the emphasis placed rather upon rebirth in a new realm than upon the departure from this world. The coffin of a dead man is placed in Church for the whole day of the requiem service, and other services are celebrated while it is there; the holy atmosphere is beneficial for the departed, and I have found it very beneficial and comforting for myself when I attend such services. I have told non-Orthodox friends and relatives of this custom and I am always surprised at their uniform reaction: "How depressing!" I find it to be just the opposite; and how can it be otherwise, if we believe in Heaven? It can be nothing but good to be reminded of death and the next life. Another custom is for relatives of the dead to sit up all night (one at a time) the first night reading the psalter over the body.

These customs, of course, are themselves based upon definite doctrines: first and most general, that the dead are alive in another realm; second and more specific, that the soul remains in the immediate vicinity of the body for a time and receives immediate benefit from religious services and atmosphere. The most generally accepted account of this is that of St. Makarios of Alexandria, as revealed to him by an Angel to explain the Church's custom of holding special services on the third, ninth, and 40th days after death. (The Orthodox Church preserves this custom even today, as well as holding memorial services on the anniversaries of death, name-day, etc.)

"When, on the third day, the body is brought to the Temple, the soul of the dead man receives from his Guardian Angel relief from the grief which he feels at parting from his body. This he receives because of the oblation and praise which are offered for him in God's Church, whence there arises in him a blessed hope. For during the space of two days the soul is permitted to wander at will over the earth, with the Angels which accompany it. Therefore the soul, since it loves its body, sometimes hovers around the house in which it parted from the body; sometimes around the coffin wherein its body has been placed: and thus it passes those days like a bird which seeks for itself a nesting-place. But the beneficent soul wanders through those places where it was wont to perform deeds of righteousness.

"On the third day He Who rose again from the dead commands that every soul, in imitation of His own Resurrection, shall be brought to heaven, that it may do reverence to the God of all. Wherefore the Church has the blessed custom of celebrating oblation and prayers on the third day for the soul.

"After the soul has done reverence to God, He orders that it shall be shown the varied and fair abodes of the Saints and the beauty of Paradise. All these things the Soul views during six days, marvelling and glorifying God, the Creator of all. And when the soul has beheld all these things, it is changed, and forgets all the sorrow which it felt in the body. But if it be guilty of sins, then, at the sight of the delights of the Saints, it begins to wail, and to reproach itself, saying, 'Woe is me! How vainly did I pass my time in the world! Engrossed in the satisfaction of my desires, I passed the greater part of my life in heedlessness, and obeyed not God as I ought, that I, also, might be vouchsafed these graces and glories. Woe is me, poor wretch!' After having thus viewed all the joys of the Just for the space of six days, the Angels lead the soul again to do reverence to God. Therefore the Church does well, in that she celebrates service and oblation for the soul on the ninth day.

"After its second reverence to God, the Master of all commands that the soul be conducted to Hell, and there shown the places of torment, the different divisions of Hell; and the divers torments of the ungodly, which cause the souls of sinners that find themselves therein to groan continually, and to gnash their teeth. Through these various places of torment the soul is borne during thirty days, trembling lest it also be condemned to imprisonment therein.

"On the fortieth day the soul is again taken to do reverence to God: and then the Judge determines the fitting place of its incarceration, according to its deeds. Thus the Church does rightly in making mention, upon the fortieth day, of the baptized dead."

If all of this is true, of course, there is a very basic error in the book you read: that souls remain on earth for an indefinite time in a kind of purgatory: they remain, instead, for only a few days. On the other hand, it is still true that the dead do sometimes communicate with the living, both from Heaven and from Hell, because neither Heaven nor Hell is located in "space" but in a spiritual dimension; both of them, perhaps, are right before our eyes, but we are spiritually blind and cannot see them. The Mother of God and many Saints have often appeared to men, and occasionally a dead relative or friend appears to someone for a special purpose. Among Orthodox people I have heard of someone in Hell (Orthodoxy has no "purgatory"; Hell is the place of purification as well as of punishment) who appeared to a relative to encourage her prayers for him, and of someone else (a suicide) in Hell appearing to his sister in dreadful torment to beg her to stop praying for him, since her prayer only increased his torment and he was irrevocably damned. Certainly the dead who are able to do so pray for us, as we do for them, but judging from the careless preparation most people make for death, they themselves are greatly in need of prayer and are probably unable to give much help to the living. For those who are unprepared, there must be a great shock and a great sense of helplessness upon arriving in a realm wherein every earthly talent and power becomes weakness and impotence, and only spiritual power is of avail.

The reason why it is dangerous to be too preoccupied with these matters (as well as things like clairvoyance and extrasensory perception, which are a spiritual gift of some saints, but often a spiritual evil when used by men insufficiently pure) is that, belonging to the realm of the mind and spirit, they are especially liable to the interference of demons, who live in these realms. The authentic phenomena of spiritism, for example (and there are many of them that cannot be explained as hoaxes), are probably primarily due to the activity of demons; real mediums are apparently actually possessed to some degree by demons masquerading as the dead. If there is a rare case of actual contact with the dead through spiritism (do you remember how Saul contacted the ghost of the prophet Samuel through the Witch of Endor?), the demons take advantage of it for their own purposes.

Friday

The only thing I accomplished yesterday was writing these three pages, having had to work for twelve hours. I'm a janitor in a restaurant at night (until three or four in the morning), which is hard work but quiet. Being a busboy is easier, but one has to smile at people and be properly servile. I have the same horror you do of the "business world," and I almost become hysterical when I have to find a job. Once I find a job it's all right; it's rather a waste of time, but at least it makes it difficult to become overly proud. I think I lost my last job because they sensed my heart wasn't in my work, which it certainly wasn't.

Thank you for your kind offer of a place to go in time of need. Perhaps there will be such a time. Speaking of my family, I saw them last week, and it is obvious that they are becoming more and more worried about me. They would have been only too happy if I had followed a normal worldly vocation, but they set their hopes so high on me and now I turn out to be a religious "fanatic"—so I imagine they must…

A young Russian friend of mine who lives in Monterey showed them some slides of Russian monasteries and churches in North America, and they thought they were "quaint" but old-fashioned, etc. But what really shocked them, my father especially, was a photograph of an old monk who had spent forty years in his cell and hardly even spoke with other people. He has perhaps attained to a high spiritual state, but all my parents could see was the example of a totally "wasted life." I fear I became rather desperate when I spoke of a life of prayer and spiritual attainment, and how the true values are not of this world but of the next—only to meet with total incomprehension and the suggestion that too much religion is really "sickness." Well, where communication breaks down at least prayer is still possible; but it makes me both angry and sad to think of the many Protestant ministers posing as preachers of "Christianity," but actually leading their flock down the path of seduction and leaving them totally unprepared for the severe realities of the next life. I met my parents' minister; he never once spoke of God or religion, and on hearing I was writing a religious book he seemed anxious to change to topic of conversation.

I have more to say, but I had better send this while I can. Thank you for the photograph; I will try to get a recent one from my father. I really don't know where the town of Warsaw is; it would be a great good fortune if your town is the one. You might try to find out if there is such an address

there. I am enclosing some literature you may find interesting. I have sent to the monastery for some other things, including a very interesting account of after-death experience.

Please remember me in your prayers,

In Christ,

Eugene

007.

Dec. 18/31, 1963

St. Simeon Verkhoturski

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

Most of your ideas seem fine to me. The only thing is, they should be put in the right order. Having a rather practical mind myself (in addition to being a dreamer), I offer the following as a concrete (though only approximate) procedure of action:

1. Introductory brochure—catalog, on which I am working now; to be printed by photo-off- set, or maybe by Matushka Ariadna. (Have you thought of her printing-press? It might be possible to get our brochures, and even a small bulletin, printed in this way. Perhaps we could make an agreement with her whereby we could do most of the work of printing ourselves.)

2. Opening of a store. The best thing for now is probably to find a small shop. We could look over the ones I've found together some Saturday. As for books, I begin this week getting $40 a week in unemployment insurance, so for several months I'll have about half of that to spend for books, whether I work or not. This will be a start. As for tables and bookcases, maybe Fr. Deacon Nikolai can help—I think you said he has some money. From Jordanville we will need the whole series of books (including service books—I think several people in the Theological Course will want some). Meanwhile, Jon and I will write to publishers and see about discounts on books in English. I suppose you could begin ordering books right away from Jordanville—maybe just a box at a time, so they won't all come at once. In fact, if you ordered right now some of the books that pertain to the subject matter of the Bogoslovskii Kyrs, I could probably sell quite a few of them in class. I'll enclose a list of these books, which you can have them send directly to me, if they will. (I hope they will send a receipt, so both they and we will know just which books we have, and how many; I'll keep my own record, in any case. Another question: how long will it be before they expect some payment on the books?)

3. Some kind of bulletin in English, to be begun on a modest scale and distributed to names on the mailing list. But we don't need to plan anything about this until after the store is opened and flourishing (!).

4. More ambitious plans for publishing pamphlets and books, whether in Russian or English: likewise can be thought about later. The manuscript you mentioned sounds good; the only trouble is the author. Nothing should be mentioned about the "Protocols," and I think it might even be wise to publish the manuscript (if we get that far!) anonymously, or under a pseudonym.

I don't know how it is among Russians, but among English-speaking people the name "S. Nilus," when it is recognized, is always associated with the name of Hitler; and so, quite apart from the Masons, the effect of publishing the manuscript under his name might be disastrous. Anyway, this project will have to wait for a little while at least.

Concerning the precise nature of our organization, I have some questions. Just what is a "brotherhood" in the Orthodox Church? Isn't it supposed to be some kind of monastic society? For what purposes are Orthodox brotherhoods established, under whose auspices, with what qualifications for membership? Is the patronage of a canonized saint not required? As you see, I can be very practical when I have to be. In the present case there is a good reason for this, since the plan itself (I think) is quite practical, and it is time now (if ever) to make vague dreams into concrete realities.

Today is the feast of St. Simeon Verkhoturski. There was a splendid service last night in the convent, together with akathist. (Vladiko John was present.) But unfortunately very few (five or ten) attended. It is not only Americans who have to be missionized!

I was planning to go mushroom-hunting tomorrow, but unfortunately I have to work tonight (at the Mark Hopkins Hotel, and everyone will be drunk, I imagine), so I will have to postpone it until Saturday. I've been reading some mushroom books, and I discover that there are several other very edible and easily identifiable varieties in this area.

Let us know your further ideas. Pray for me.

In Christ,

Eugene

P.s. Jon will be writing in a few days.

008.

Sunday, 30 Dec., 1963/Jan. 12, 1964

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

I received your letter yesterday, which answered my questions very well and was encouraging. I myself grow more and more optimistic. Yesterday we received our first official response, from a publisher. We had feared they might not give a discount (a few don't), but they offered 25%; so 10 or 15 of the early Fathers can go on our list.

I have found two more stores on Clement St., one near 9th Ave., the other near 25th; but the original one near 24th is still the best one, I think. It is still empty, so I'm sure we can get it for $35. There would be room in it for probably two good-sized tables, about three bookcases, one desk, and several chairs, and it has a good display area in the window. I hope you will be here soon to look at it, and also to make our plans more definite. I see no reason why we should not be in business by the beginning of Lent (March 16). I will make enquiries this week about a license and such technicalities.

I encountered, by the way, a group of English-speaking Orthodox young people the other night who are forming a group of their own. I don't know why I was invited, but it was a good way of finding out what life there is among other Orthodox. The answer is: NONE. Dead, absolutely. They are sincere, their intentions are good; but they simply have nothing to work from. Not only are they unprepared for spiritual meat, they are hardly even ready for milk. I'll tell you about them next time I see you. (The ones I met were Syrian, Russian-Metropolia, and Ukrainian, and they are planning to expand.) Actually, we will not be in competition with them, since their plans do not go beyond "inter-Orthodox" understanding, and study of Orthodox "traditions" on a very elementary level; beyond that, their interest is vaguely ecumenical, not missionary. They are turned inward upon themselves and are trying to "understand" their own religion; whereas we are going out to bring to the world riches of which we are not worthy, but of whose value we are certain. One of the Ukrainians let slip a disdainful remark about some of the Russians he has known who think they are preserving the "real" Orthodoxy. That's us, and I think we should do just what he accuses us of doing: forget the other Orthodox (with a few exceptions, like Mt. Athos and the Old Calendarists, who still take Orthodoxy seriously), and concentrate on Russians and on American converts. Our adherence to the Church Outside of Russia should be made clear from the beginning; that will help frighten off at least some of the well-meaning who think they are as "Orthodox" as anyone; all their cooperation would have as its object the attempt to drag us into the mire of ecumenism and compromise.

I am still putting together a preliminary draft of our introductory brochure, incorporating the ideas in your last letter. What is important, I think, is for it to be as precise, strong, and yet positive as possible.

About printing: I had hoped to get a bulletin started almost immediately, and I have some definite ideas on its nature, That is why I thought of Matushka, on the condition that we could do the work ourselves and so have to pay only for paper and ink. If we have to pay more, of course, we'll probably have to wait a while.

Jon and I both share the Russian distrust of "organization"; it will be good if our Brotherhood can have as much spirit and as few words as possible. The reason I asked about organization, however, was because it will never do to have things so vague that anyone who considers himself "Orthodox" thinks that a sufficient reason for joining us. The restriction of active members to the Church Outside of Russia, and the composition of a strong introductory statement, should make our nature clear enough.

The financial problem seems nearly solved. $25 apiece would probably meet all preliminary expenses, and I will have, within a month or so, about $150 more (including income tax refund), which I could present to the store in the form of books on credit (as Jordanville is doing).

That seems to exhaust the subject for now. I received your mothers Christmas card, for which please thank her. We received also a nice letter from VI. Leonty, who may perhaps be very important for us in future. The mushrooms are about exhausted in this area, but we have discovered a new and most delicious variety (the "honey mushroom") that grows on the roots and trunks of trees and is quite common.

By the way, did you say you know someone who makes picture-frames? It is time to think about details like that. Besides books and icons, we will probably be able to carry, to begin with, only Jordanville religious objects, such as crosses; later maybe we can expand to lampadki, incense, etc.

Write if you have any new ideas or information,

In Christ,

Eugen

009.

Jan. 14/27, 1964

Feast of St. Savva of Serbia

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

This morning we left our decision up to St. Savva and our Lord. The Gospel reading for Saint Savva (St. John X, 9-16) ends, "I have other sheep also which do not belong to this fold. I must bring them in also, and they will hear my voice. Then they will all become one flock and one shepherd."

In my own Gospel reading (one chapter daily) I read today St. Luke X—which, if you recall, was the same passage I opened at random and we both read when we were returning by train from Carmel almost exactly a year ago, "The Lord sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come. Then He saith unto His disciples, the Harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest…. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way…"

And Jon, opening the Psalms at random, read (Ps. 36:16),

"Better is the little which the just man hath than the great riches of sinners…. They shall not be put to shame in an evil time, and in days of famine they shall be filled…. By the Lord are the steps of a man rigidly directed, and His way shall he greatly desire."

I think the place next to the new Sobor [cathedral] is perfect. If we cannot succeed there, we can succeed nowhere. The location itself is probably worth at least $50 a month in advertising. I've talked to the owner and made an agreement: the rent does not start until Feb. 15, so we have almost 3 weeks free. I will pay the first months rent tomorrow. I will talk to the Zavarins tonight, but I'm sure they will lend us something. They want to bring the matter up at the meeting Sunday, and perhaps others will help out too. They know several sources of Russian books in Paris, including one who might give us books on the same terms as Jordanville. There is no reason why we cannot succeed. We have, theoretically, $250 now, and need (according to my calculations) about $250 more to begin. Pray! We'll see you Friday.

In Christ,

Eugene

P.S. You will have to apply pressure to Jordanville. Persuade them that I am a very astute businessman (!). Contact Shura again, and Vladimir, and have them pack the books if necessary!

Jon reports that this is a very auspicious day for beginning our work. God is with us!

010.

Jan. 15/28, 1964

St. Paul of Thebes

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

The passage to which I turned in the Gospel this morning was St. Luke XI "Our Father", and then: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Can anything be clearer?

I paid the first months rent this morning, so now it is too late to back out. Now it is time to get to work. About painting I am uncertain. Only a fairly small area really needs it, but it would be nice to change the color (which is green)—but that would mean a lot of work (and paint). The store is about 15 x 30, and about 13 feet high. It has a balcony, which will be our shipping department, and in future it can serve as a place for our printing press(!). You will like it very much, I'm sure.

I talked to Alyosha Kennedy, who is in charge of the Kiosk at the Sobor, to make sure he didn't regard us as competition. He thought the idea was wonderful. Everyone who hears about it is enthusiastic.

Now all that is needed is to make Jordanville start sending books and icons, and to raise $300, which I don't think will be so difficult, now that everyone can see we're in earnest. We'll see you soon,

In Christ,

Eugene

011.

Jan 22/Feb 4, 1964

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

I am very happy that you have discovered someone else who is enthusiastic about our project, but I am a little puzzled as to what his idea will involve. Is our store to become the Kiosk of the Sobor? And if so, what about the old kiosk? And how will we be able to preserve any freedom of action? Wont the numbers of books we can sell be greatly restricted? Or does he (and do you) have something else in mind? It would be fine if the Sobor could pay the rent for a while, but it might involve certain difficulties. And what of Gubin? Is he going to take part in the business?

I have almost no new information. Genya and Alyosha Zavarin are going to lend us some money soon, but I don't know how much. They also suggested a place where we can get a fine table top (actually a door) for $10 or less, to which we could add legs ourselves. (We will need at least two big tables.) We will need very few ordinary bookcases at first; there is a special kind I am thinking of for our English books which I can probably make myself quite cheaply. I had the electricity turned on again in the shop. Jerry, by the way, after hearing of our plans, sent us $10, which is a source of encouragement. Nina sent us a list of over 100 names.

I am doing very little about the store this week, being chiefly concerned to get some kind of job, at least for a while. My talk on Sunday provoked a very animated argument, chiefly between me and an atheist named Vadim, who set forth a complete "Superman" philosophy and accused Christianity of being a failure, both because it is no longer powerful (in a worldly sense) and because every Christian isn't a saint. Some of his arguments were half-true, but mostly he spoke straight from Satan, and I was rather discouraged at the weakness of my own words. How small and feeble we have become! But how much more must we fail to become discouraged, and trust more in our Lord.

I am sorry to hear about Fr. Nikolai. Does this mean that he will not be buying books from us either?

I think it would be good to talk to Fr. Leonid about the "Brotherhood" side of our project (or whatever it is to be called), since he is the most missionary-minded priest here. He teaches at the Theological Course from 8 to 9 Friday night, so if you came to St. Tikhons (in the basement) by 9 Friday we could talk to him.

I always pray to St. Innokenty, and now I shall pray to Fr. Gabriel. And you pray to St. Savva, since it was through him and on his day that I decided to rent the shop. God willing, everything will be well. Let us trust Him and His saints, and His most Holy Mother.

In Christ,

Your sinful brother,

Eugene

012.

Eve of the Three Saints

Jan 30/Feb 12 1964

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

I received today the first English books for our stock, 3 copies of the Pilgrim purchased with credit I had at an English bookstore. Apart from that, however, I feel rather paralyzed from lack of money. I learned today that we have to put up a bond of $200 to guarantee payment of sales taxes. The money is refunded to us when we go out of business, but at the present moment it's just another burden. That brings our initial expenses up to $800. Against this we have the first months rent paid ($85), $35 in cash, $50 from Genya Zavarin, total $170. Then there is the $85

for one months rent which you have found—if they can pay it on March 15; and $25 from Iuri—if he can give it to us within two weeks or so. This gives us $280. Finally, Alyosha Zavarin will give us something ($50, I hope) if he gets a job soon; and we can get another $50 from early sale of Jordanville books—if they arrive soon. Therefore, even the most optimistic estimate gives us only half of what we need. (That is, unless Fr. Nick will still buy his books, but even then we will be $300 short.)

What's to be done? The wisest thing, I suppose, is simply to give the whole thing up and curse the world for being so complicated. It would be very sad if we had to do that, especially after finding the store building and having prepared to opened accounts with 20 or 30 publishers. There is no way of cutting down expenses. $300 is the absolute minimum for books in English, and $500 is the minimum total expense to April 1. There's only one other source I can think of: my parents. If they can lend me $400, we can begin. I'm not sure how they will react to such a request. There would be no trouble if I needed the money personally, but I don't know what they'll think about such a business venture. But if we can really order as many books from Jordanville as we need without beginning to pay for them for at least 6 months, we should be able to pay off all other debts by that time, assuming that the business is at least moderately successful.

About the business itself, it would be easiest and probably best if it is organized in the beginning in my name alone, especially since, as it now stands, I will be personally responsible for most of the money involved. That way no legal documents or contracts will be required; everything will simply be accountable to me, and I will be responsible for everything. This is just for the bookstore, of course, not the Brotherhood. In fact, it would probably be best to concentrate in the beginning on the bookstore. We could say in the introductory brochure that one of the purposes of the bookstore was to serve as a material foundation for the Father Herman Brotherhood. We would probably have a better idea of precisely what the Brotherhood should be after we see what interest the bookstore inspires, and also how much money it makes. Tell me what you think about these ideas.

Concerning Mr. Gubin's idea I am somewhat dubious. If the bookstore is connected with the Kiosk, there would probably be legal complications, besides which the whole thing would probably frizzle out in the end. (And I doubt that Khrarov or anyone will want to pay $85 for a Kiosk anyway.)

I haven't heard yet about the bookshelves. Jon looked at them through the window and was pleased with them, and he also thought he saw some tables we might use. Someone called this number a few days ago (twice) and asked for Evgeny Zavarin. Is it possible that you gave them my number but the wrong name?

We can talk about other things when you come up. You have to come up this weekend, because our final decision whether to proceed or not must be made immediately. Books must be ordered right away. Try to bring some money with you if you can get it (from Iuri, for example).

Pray! God's Saints will show us the way, if what we do is pleasing to Him!

Your Brother in Christ,

Eugene

P.S. Be thinking about a name for the bookstore. All I can think of is “Orthodox Christian Bookstore and Icon Shop.”

013.

Feb 21/ March 3

Tuesday morning

Dear Gleb,

There was a package from Jordanville this morning, but I can’t pick it up until tomorrow. I’ll let you know what’s in it.

I got to your bank yesterday just as it was closing, just in time to see that they had deposit slips out, but no withdrawal slips. I presume one has to ask them for these, and I’m afraid they would regard me rather suspiciously if I did. But they do business by mail also. Why don’t you just send them your bank book and a signed note stating the amount you want to withdraw, and they’ll probably fill out the withdrawal slip for you and send you the money.

I got enough lumber yesterday for two bookcases, and I’m expecting delivery at any minute (I’m in the shop). It cost $15, including cutting and delivery charge. That’s about $5 more than I wanted to pay, but $5 less than it would have cost at the other place, and less than half what it would cost to buy them already made (if someone made them, that is). I changed the plan somewhat and managed to save a little money.

That was a good idea of Iya’s to have me write about icons for Blagovestnik. I’ve almost finished the article. I think the Vladimir “youth” is going to meet Bishop Philotheos Thursday night.

I’m enclosing a letter that arrived this morning.

Pray for me.

Your sinful brother in Christ,

Eugene

P.S. If your mother can make nice Easter eggs, try to get her interested. We’ll pay her a commission!

014.

Monday morning

[2/22/] 1964

Dear Gleb,

I don't know whether I'll see you today or not, so I'll mail this now. You didn't fill out the whole withdrawal slip, and the bank is sure to be suspicious if it's filled out in two different handwritings. Anyway, I probably won't be downtown for a few days. Why don't you just fill it out and mail it in? They would send it back by return mail.

I finished most of one bookcases yesterday, and hope to get them both in place by this afternoon.

I heard most of VI. Filofei's last night and was extremely unimpressed.

The most important things for you to do by next weekend are to contact Ariadna Ivanovna about advertising, VI. Nektary about blessing (you should call him as soon as you arrive Fri. night, to make sure he has time), and making preparations for silk-screen cards.

Your Slavonic sign looks very nice.

Mme. Langeron brought her cot yesterday. She thinks she knows someone who makes eggs.

Pray for me.

Your sinful brother in Christ,

Eugene

015.

Great Wednesday

Dear Gleb,

Much business yesterday ($35)—a constant stream of people to buy cards; but today nothing at all for 3 hours. A man bought some books for a Russian girl who wants to commit suicide—pray for her (Barbara). Our friend finished Feophil in one sitting (he stayed up half the night), and apparently enjoyed it. His impression: everything is possible with faith, love, and humility.

Today was Fr. Leonid's name-day, and many came to pray with him.

Our advertising material is being mimeographed today, and it will be ready for mailing by the end of the week.

I hope you will be able to come on Sunday. We could have a small Easter feast in the evening. I plan to go to Holy Communion tomorrow, please forgive me for everything, and pray for me.

Your sinful brother in Christ,

Eugene

016.

20 July 1964

Holy Prophet Elijah

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

I was waiting for some interesting news before writing you, but there hasn't been any interesting news, so I'll write anyway. Business has been very slow, except for a large sale to Mr. Ivanovsky (for which I haven't received the money yet).

The Philokalia arrived, but no one has bought yet. Vladimir was in yesterday. I gather that he has no particular interest in a Brotherhood. Which means, I suppose, that we two "brothers" should work all the harder.

You should have received your Paissy Velichkovsky by now.

Olyas Kiot will soon be finished and will look quite nice, I think. I can begin your Kiot next if you'll bring up the icon next weekend.

From Jordanville you should order the following:

10 each of all icons 8 x10 1/2" (3rd size).

10 Prayer Book, Russian script, paperback.

10 Selected Prayers to the Mother of God.

5 Hymns from All-night Vigil and Liturgy

5 Slobodskys Brief collected articles

10 St. Theophan the Recluse—What is the Spiritual Life.

5 Talberg, ? .

10 Sologub, Fr. John of Kronstadt.

5-10 Fr. John of Kronstadt, Thought on Divine Services.

5 Living Wheel from the Spiritual Field of Fr. John of Kronstadt.

5 Chuzhoo, Fr. John of Kronstadt.

10 Fr. John of Kronstadt, vol. I. My Life in Christ.

20 Sokoloff, Manual of Orthodox Services.

I think I will run away from everything and go to the woods tomorrow (just for the day).

The shoemaker came yesterday and delivered your shoes (for which you owe $4.75).

These two feast days have been very splendid, but I suppose they were even more so in Monterey.

I'm afraid I haven't had time to make out the list of English books, but I'll try to get around to it soon.

As you see, nothing is new. I presume you will be here next Saturday. We should think about another ad for Russian Life.

If the tone of this letter sounds a little weary, it's because I'm tired, but otherwise I am in good spirits and hope you are the same. My regards to your mother and Ija.

Your brother in Christ,

Eugene

017.

9/22 September, 1964

Dear Brother in Christ, Gleb,

Glory be to God! The press is already bought and will be delivered (I hope) on Thursday. (But if not then, probably not until next Tuesday, so don't be shocked if you don't see it this weekend.) I also bought all equipment, so all we need now is paper and ink (also a marble slab and a cabinet which I'll have to make). If all goes well we can begin printing something in two weeks.

Everything cost $200, so the money from Fr. Gabriel will be very welcome. There should be no difficulty paying him back after Christmas. However, we will be in a critical condition until then. I am still a little stunned. There will be nothing but work from now on. To succeed we must be really brothers. May God help us!

My mother is making a Christmas card with the new Sobor on it. If it's successful (the sample she sent isn't bad) we can print a Russian greeting ourselves!

Pray for me.

Your sinful brother in Christ,

Eugene

018.

23 Sept/ 6 Oct, 1964

Dear Gleb,

Wait until you come this weekend before writing VI. Vitaly. He sent us an outrageous bill and it must be corrected. I forget what else you were supposed to do, but it can wait until Saturday.

You won't recognize the printing room. I've gotten all equipment and we can begin printing _____ ! I have the cabinet almost finished and it is successful. I have samples of several kinds of papers—but it's going to cost money.

You are right about a picture on the cover. But I think there has to be a "The" in the title for printing.

I've got another small helper for printing, I think.

Let me know when you arrive. If I don't hear from you I'll be at the Greyhound Depot at 7:45.

Pray for me.

Your brother in Christ,

Eugene

019.

13/26 Oct., 1964

Icon of the Iveron Mother of God

Dear brother in Christ, Gleb,

Our printing boys came yesterday and turned out some nice work. If they will give us much help, our work will be fairly easy!

Business was bad yesterday, and even though the whole week was better than usual, we are still a long way from making money—and to support a printing press we have to make lots of money. We have to have an ad in the newspaper very soon, but we must have rizas first, so that people will not come to us and get the impression that we are just amateurs and can't supply them with even the most ordinary religious articles. Therefore:

1. Please look up the letter from the riza-deacon in New York (and bring it with you this weekend so I can mark the prices down somewhere) and order from him two gold and two silver rizas of each of the smaller two sizes (that is, four pairs altogether); we've waited so long now that we'll have to take them sight unseen. Then I can make some kiots and we can be in business. I lost a $25 sale this week because we had no rizas.

2. Order 6 calendars from Martianoff—a few people do seem to want them.

3. From Jordanville order the following:

a. Service to Fr. John of Kronstadt (somebody has just printed it, and it is probably Jordanville). At least 25 copies.

b. Icons size 8×10":

20 each of:

St. Panteleimon, St. Nicholas (half-stature), St. Nicholas (full-stature), Of the Passion.

10 each of:

Wetbeard, Iverskaya, St. Paraskeva, Znamenie, Annunciation, Baptism of Christ, Palm Sunday, Ascension, Pentecost.

c. Small icons (4 x 8):

20 each of St. Ekaterina, and Vera, Nadezhda, Liubov, Sophia.

d. 1965 calendar, if its ready yet. 20 copies.

For the moment the icons are most important.

I'm sorry to write so much about business, but we do have to have our feet on the ground before we can do much dreaming. We're dreaming about a magazine and we can't even afford the paper!

Nonetheless, if we work hard God will bless us. Pray for me.

In Christ, your brother,

Eugene

020.

Tuesday

14/27 Oct, 1964

Dear Gleb,

I received your letter this morning and have despatched the letter to Martianoff. I added a note about the 6 calendars, so you don't have to bother—but save the envelope for future use.

The Service to St. John is being sent from Jordanville (I received the bill today), so you needn't mention it in your letter.

We have a chance to sell the two gold rizas after all if we can get them right away—please write immediately (and tell him to rush the order).

You are not the only one who is possessed by depression. I have been attacked especially strongly in the last week or so. This only means that the devil doesn't want us to start a magazine. But with the aid of the Lord and His Saints, we can fight him! Once we get busy, things will be much better. I started building a bookcase yesterday, and already I feel better! I'm ordering some more type today, and some paper this week, so we can begin soon. If the boys will help us I think we will have no problems. I still think we can have a first issue out in December. If you will give me proper instructions, I can see about having a sample cliche made next week.

Pray for me.

Your sinful brother in Christ,

Eugene

021.

26 March/ 8 April [1965]

Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

Dear Gleb,

I can't find anything about persecutions at the Pochaev Lavra in the English Orthodox Life (there was something about the Siberian Protestant peasants in January, 1963, but that's all), and I don't have any issues in Russian before 1963.

The Devil has begun his work against us. A Russian lady came in this morning to look us over and tell us of the rumors about us in the Russian colony: that we are Communists with a store full of Soviet books; that we are Soviet diplomats using the store as some kind of front; that we are American converts (!); etc. By the time she discovered I wasn't Russian, she was so charmed that she didn't mind too much and even bought ten dollars worth of eggs, icons, and cards.

"When you come up we must think of ordering some of the Large Jordanville icons, even if they aren't in the best style.

I placed the ad in Russian Life again for this weekend. To preserve what little reputation we have, we cannot advertise in the other newspapers. Also, we should have Skripkin or someone like that write an article about us for Russian Life.

Pray for me.

Your brother in Christ,

Eugene

022.

no date [during Archbishop John's lifetime, before Jan. 66]

Dear Fr. in Christ Panteleimon,

I must ask you again to forgive me for my long delay in writing you about Against False Union and in returning the manuscript, but it is only now that we have finished the latest OW that I have had the time to read it once more and offer my comments.

In general, of course, the book is very good and is very needed today. We would have liked to publish it here, but it is quite true that our hands are full right now just printing the magazine. The only important criticism I would make of it concerns the author is very imprecise and even erroneous views of the whole question of Communism and the Russian jurisdictions; I think that here he is rather naive in seeing as external and secondary a question that is actually quite subtle and extremely important. The statement on p. 82, for example, that there is "full essential communion" among the different jurisdictions, is simply false. There is no communion whatever between the Russian Church Abroad and any of the other groups, and for very good reasons. The Moscow Patriarchate is subject to the anathema laid against the Soviet government and all who cooperate with it, laid upon it by Patr. Tikhon; obviously there can be no "essential communion" with those who are subject to the Church's anathema. As for the Paris jurisdiction, it appealed to Constantinople not only to escape Soviet influences, but even more (since its spirit, after all, is close to that of the Soviet Church) to escape the traditional Orthodoxy upheld by the Synod of Bishops Abroad. Its apostasy is not accidental but quite deliberate, as is that of the American

Metropolia. And the differences have nothing to do with "legalistic concepts" but with the upholding of Orthodox Truth and tradition.

I believe the author is deceived in regarding Communism as purely a political phenomenon that wears no "masks." Perhaps he is thinking of it in terms of the Turkish Yoke—an external yoke whose intent was to enslave a nation and allow the conquerors to live well. But Communism applies an internal yoke, since it is essentially a spiritual movement (in an inverted sense). Its aim is not to conquer the world and enslave the nations, but to fight God, primarily by destroying faith in the hearts of men. There is no comparison in previous history with such as system. Communisms whole aim is to prepare the world for Antichrist, and its most subtle work is to gain control of the Church and make it over into a new Church for Antichrist. This it is very successfully doing with the Patriarch of Moscow and is now attempting to do with the whole Orthodox Church through its representatives at Rhodes. To believe that Communism is satisfied with political influence is, I believe, completely to misunderstand its nature.

As to specific corrections, it is perhaps impractical at this late date to offer many minor corrections. However, I would strongly recommend one major change: the entire omission of the paragraph on p. 82 which raises the question of the Russian jurisdictions (begin with line 5 of p. 82, ending with line 1 of p. 83). The omission would not affect the continuity of the thought (its effect is only to cause a slight pause) and leaves out no essential point (since it is only an illustration of a point already made). What it does do, I believe, is to obscure the point already made by giving as an example a situation that raises new and very complicated questions of Communism, which is nowhere adequately discussed. (What is more, it seems to me to treat rather barely the whole question of jurisdictional dependence.) Such an admission would also certainly facilitate the reception of the book among circles in the Russian Church Abroad.

I am returning the manuscript separately and certainly hope for the widest possible circulation for the book.

Concerning the article "The Patriarchate of Constantinople"—in view of the most recent sign of the rapprochement of Rome and Constantinople, perhaps some brief comment or interpretation of it has appeared in the Greek press which we could use in our magazine, either as a footnote to the article or in our "news" section. We should start printing that issue about the middle of January.

Thank you for the book of St. Mark. We will finish taking the pictures soon and return the book then. I only hope that we can succeed in transferring the spirit of such a marvelous book into our English version.

I have already written Nina Seco about Archbishop Johns reply to the Greek situation. He doesn't want to make any decision until the Synod meets next Tuesday. He is favorable to the idea of a traditionalist Greek jurisdiction; the only complication would seem to lie in the precise means of establishing it, and especially in the connection with Bp. Peter?

023.

August. 18/31,1965

Dear Father in Christ, Panteleimon,

Please forgive me for my long delay in replying to you. We have received your two translations, together with the letter of Br. Haralampos. Thank you very much. We will gladly print both articles, under the conditions set forth in the letter. The "Life of St. Mark" will appear in our first issue for next year, and "The Ecumenical Patriarch" perhaps in no. 5 or 6 of this year. I presume that you wish the translations to remain anonymous. If you approve, we will use the formula used by the Greek Theological Review for your other translations, "translated by a monk of the Holy Mountain."

In connection with the Life of St. Mark, we would like to publish in the same issue a more detailed account of the state of the soul after death (this will be our issue for Great Lent). There is a homily of St. Makarios which we could reprint from Orthodox Life; it speaks of the reason for commemorating the dead on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th days after death, but mentions nothing of the "aerial custom houses," If you know or have translated a good text on this subject, we would be very grateful to hear of it.

As for the article on the Ecumenical Patriarch, I think it would be wise to include a note on the two instances when "the Slavic Orthodox Churches gave a splendid lesson of Orthodox thinking to the Mother Great Church of Christ." I confess I am not familiar with either instance: neither that involving Nicholas of Ochrid in 1930, nor that at the third meeting at Rhodes. Also, I wonder if you could give us the exact date of the issue of Typos in which this article appeared.

We are very interested in the small book on ecumenism which you would like to publish. Until now we have printed everything on a small hand press, but recently we have purchased a large electric press which will enable us to expand our printing activity. Our first task will be to catch up on the printing of our magazine (we are now at least a month behind), and then we will begin printing pamphlets and small books. At the present moment we cannot promise anything, but I think we will be ready to undertake the printing of such a book by early next year. I would certainly be most interested in reading the manuscript, if you could send it. As to the cost, that would depend upon just how long the book is and how many copies you wish. Since our press exists solely for the propagation of Orthodox Christianity, we would certainly charge as little as possible.

I do not recall whether or not I have sent you a copy of the icon "The Joy of All Who Sorrow." In any case I shall do so tomorrow. I think it was quite successfully printed. I believe the cost was about $500 for 3000 copies, but I do not know what they charge for smaller icons. I will obtain the address of the company (it is near San Francisco) for you as soon as I can.

We have sent you a few extra copies of the latest issue of our magazine, which you may use as you wish. If you wish to sell them, please keep the money for your monastery. If you can use more copies than that, please tell us.

We very much look forward to receiving other translations and articles from you, as well as any suggestions or comments you may have about our magazine. God willing, may this be the beginning of a fruitful cooperation for the good of Holy Orthodoxy! We shall have many

enemies, not least among the modernist Orthodox, but it is our duty to speak the truth. Please pray for me, a sinner, and for Gleb, and also for Hieromonk Savva, a young Serbian priest who may soon be joining our small missionary brotherhood.

Respectfully in Christ our Lord,

024.

May 3/16, 1966

Christ is Risen!

Dear Gleb,

Here is your telegram, which arrived during vigil Sat. night. Also the check for VI. Seraphim. Two people came by Sunday to congratulate you:

1. Vera Utehina, who also gives her greetings to Ija.

2. Mrs. Goch (Ira Nikitina), who knew you in Latvia, I gathered. Her address now is: 3587 Notre Dame Dr., Santa Clara Telephone: 241-9521

According to Deacon Nikolay, Archimandrite Amvrossy is attached permanently to our Cathedral. There is also apparently something to the rumor that he went over (for a short while) to the Metropolia, but I haven't heard the full story.

The rest of the brochure is finally set up and will be printed tomorrow. I'm printing 4000 copies, which takes a long time.

The neighborhood stray cat who chose us for the honor had her 4 kittens this morning in our back room. Whether that is supposed to have any significance I don't know.

I will start setting up St. Nectarios before this weekend and have everything ready for efficient work. What's your verdict on the color picture?

Pray for me.

In Christ your brother,

Eugene

025.

July 13/26 1966

Dear Gleb,

Here is the revised manuscript. It will take 3 pages in our magazine. It you translate it for ____, tell Fr. Constantine that it will appear in English in our magazine, so he won't try to print it himself in English.

Archimandrite Amvrossy was in this morning; he saw Vladika in a dream last night: he was in white vestments (as in the tomb) censing, and he gave a blessing with the word "_____"—and Batyshka awoke with a feeling of peace and joy. He also saw St. Mark of Ephesus in a dream before he had seen a icon of him. He's a good man, even if he's a little crazy He's discouraged about doing any more scholarship—too much petty work, too little time. We'll have to try to inspire him!

Sunday night I received an inspiring telephone call from your Dr. Nicholas Petrochko. We talked half-an hour. He's just came back from the Holy Land and says everyone is strongly against Athenagoras and for Metr. Philaret. The Boston icon of St. Mark of Ephesus is everywhere. He ordered subscriptions for St. Sabbas Monastery, the library of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Dutch Monastery in The Hague, and gave me the name of a Br. Basil to correspond with in Holland. His son is travelling with Fr. Alypy—Fr. Alypy has been refused permission to visit Athos, by the way. I promised Dr. Petrochko to make you write him (he wrote you several months ago and never received an answer); he says you can't be busier than he is, since he works 20 hours a day.

Dr. Nicholas Petrochko He ordered

631 Valley View Dr. 30 copies

Endwell, N.Y 13763 of this issue

Eric was in today, and I tried to cheer him up a little.

Pray for me.

In Christ, your brother,

Eugene

026.

Nov. 1/14, 1966

Dear brother in Christ, Gleb,

Well, it seems to be my lot in life to give people long faces. You had a very long face when you left last night. I hope it was not any kind of uninie [depression], but simply serious resolve. Tonight I kept Lawrence-Rex out in the rain even while we prayed, for his intolerable childishness and impertinence (when someone instructs him for his own good, he simply spits back), and when I left he was still outside, but very sober and glum.

Last night, after my uninie that made you so solemn, Br. Lawrence gave me a pouchenie: I do not talk enough, for instance to people like our new Br. Eugene. I received this pouchenie in silence, as usual, but in all honesty I think he is wrong. If anything I talk too much.

When I say this I do not think I am trying to justify myself; forgive me if I am wrong. I mentioned to you this weekend that I thought our skete was no longer a dream, but real. It is already so real to me that I can see it failing after we have started—for many reasons, but to

begin with for one reason·, in our shop there is much talking and little action, and this kind of talk could destroy us. For you and me I am not afraid. We know what we want and when we are free we will be able to work 100% for it. But Br. Lawrence seems to get worse instead of better. This criticism of every little small point is like a cancer, and he seems unable to correct it because he has apparently no spiritual self- awareness. Fr. Sava corrected him on this tonight but it seems useless. I wonder if he is serious, and what it will take to get him serious.

And Sava himself—he came today for three days, and already Rex is worming in, flaunting the authority of our brotherhood because he knows he has a soft touch on the inside which he can use against us, Sava talks to him—for whose good? You may have a soft touch for him and think he's just "spoiled"—but I suspect he's quite rotten at the core and will do us nothing but harm. I hope not, but his actions indicate that he cannot be taught anything; I feel very uneasy about him.

Probably all this is giving you a long face again; please forgive me. But perhaps my main function in the brotherhood will be to introduce seriousness by pointing to the work that must be done. So far our Brotherhood has been a picnic, with much laughing, but what happens when the sorrow and tribulation and real work begins? Are we ready for it? What can we do to prepare ourselves for it?

I can try to give work quotas; but I don't think any ustov would do much good now. We need a single minded seriousness about the work before us; otherwise any little thing can deflect us from our path. What would happen, for example, if the four of us are on our skete, and Rex drives up? If we are no stronger than we are now, it would split us. Will we be strong enough to do the work, keep up the services, get up in the morning, refrain from unnecessary talk, drive away visitors, keep all the canons, and yet keep harmony?

Do you know what we are embarking on? It's beyond us! And yet with serious ustov and by God's grace, we can do it. Since there is no one else, you and I must do the leading; if we are strong enough, it can cover up at least some of the weakness of our brothers.

Brother, life is passing, and we shall die. Let us be even more resolved to bring into reality what we dream about.

You can tell me if what I see is true, or if I am simply filled with a sense of self-importance.

But now enough of over-seriousness. Time is running out on our magazine, but if we start now on the Vladiko issue we may get it done in January. By Thanksgiving I want an outline and basic material of the St. John and Vladiko articles, and a complete table of contents with approximate number of pages. If it's more than 40 pages we're in trouble. The Kursk icon article can be short, since it's already in O. L. and will soon be reprinted.

I was thinking this weekend, but didn't mention—What about our January issue? We have nothing, and we'll be so exhausted by the Vladiko issue we'll never be able to throw anything together. But today Fr. Amvrossy called—he'll be ready soon with a substantial article on St. Mark for the January issue (his feast is Jan. 19), all about his writings, etc.—I think again something very important. I'll hunt illustrations. Then there's the Tinos icon, and 2 or 3 small things will fill it up. Leave this issue to me. I think Fr. Amvrossy will come through. Again he's

wacky and lax, but he's an important man, and I think we can help him to produce something substantial.

Well, brother, I've made you very pensive and serious. Today there was a comedy of errors—I went 4 times to the hardware store and came back each time with a bigger piece of pipe. Sava found a hole in the pipe and tried to repair it with candle wax. Br. Eugene came back and offered enigmatic comments. Misha came in and went to work with some gooey brown glue. Br. Lawrence came in, observed water, glue, and people everywhere, and offered criticisms of everything. Robert came, then Rex—and in the end (thanks mostly to Misha) the sink was fixed and even the toilet leaks more quietly.

Pray for me, your determined but sinful brother,

Eugene

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1970's

027.

February 15/28, 1970

The Right Reverend Theodosius

Bishop of Sitka and Alaska

Box 697

Sitka, Alaska 99835

Your Grace:

We enclose some copies of our recently-reproduced icon of Father Herman, which we beg you to accept with our compliments. Also, separately we are sending by air mail a copy of our latest Orthodox Word, which is devoted chiefly to Father Herman. You will note that in our article on Fr. Gerasim we did not pass by in silence his outspoken views on the "Metropolia" question; these were important to him and, we believe, to Orthodoxy in Alaska. In presenting this and our other article on the Metropolia, we have no intention merely to engage in polemics, but rather "to speak the truth with love." We assure you—as you will see from our mention of you in the Fr. Gerasim article—that we have nothing whatever to say or think against you; since the time when our Archbishop Anthony introduced you to us in our former San Francisco bookshop we have had nothing but respect for you and sympathy for the immense task which you and your priests have in spreading Orthodoxy in Alaska.

Now, as we are sure you recognize, a time of crisis has come. If the Synod of Bishops Abroad has hitherto looked upon the Metropolia as something like "semi-canonical," this will no longer be the case if the "autocephaly" is approved. We have heard from several sources that this whole project is being forced upon the Metropolia by a small group whose actions are little known and not approved by the majority. We have every hope that you yourself do not approve of it. If so,

you have the opportunity to make a decision that will doubtless set the course for the future of Orthodoxy in Alaska.

We do not know what attitude you have towards the Russian Church Outside of Russia. It may be that you have received negative impressions from some few in our Church who at times become too enamored of polemics, or perhaps from some of the unfounded slanders which still circulate about our Church. But you have met our Archbishop Anthony and probably other of our leading hierarchs, who certainly do not give the impression of "fanatics"; and you know personally Abbot Panteleimon and (we believe) Father Neketas Palassis, and perhaps others of non-Russian background who, like them, have come to the Russian Church Abroad out of the conviction that here alone today is Orthodoxy being defended straightforwardly and outspokenly, whereas nearly everywhere else Orthodoxy has become the tool of politics and of everything else except love of truth. It is our fervent prayer that you too will follow their example; indeed, being of Russian descent yourself and bishop of an area where love of Russian Orthodoxy is still high, you would only be "coming home" to the Church where, for a time at least, all Russian hierarchs abroad were united in their witness of age-old Orthodoxy in the face of Communism and every other form of hatred or compromise of Christian Truth. As for the alternative—one can only imagine the pain that would come over the Orthodox soul that had to witness such a sight (which would, now become possible) as someone like Metropolitan Nikodim handling the relics of Father Herman—a man who (as the latest St. Nectarios reprint from a National Council of Churches bulletin informs us) is ready "to swear on the Cross and the Scriptures" that a certain statement protesting religious persecution in the USSR contained "fictitious" signatures, while he certainly knew otherwise and while; these "fictitious" people were undergoing interrogation and imprisonment (for "political" reasons, as Metropolitan Nikodim says!). Could one's conscience be silent at this?

We ourselves have no official status within the Russian Church Abroad, apart from personal rank of Church Reader which we both possess. We write; this letter to you prompted by nothing but our love of Father Herman, of Orthodox Alaska, and of the unchanging Orthodox Truth which—alas!—only a small flock seems interested to preserve today. As the lamentable situation caused by the "autocephaly" becomes ever more tangled and bitter, we cannot but see the hand of Father Herman himself calling those who will hear out of the politics and confusions of the conflicting "jurisdictions" onto the firm ground of unshaken Orthodoxy. Indeed, Father Alexy Ionov, who has come to the Russian Church Abroad with his parish over the "autocephaly" question, had been assigned to write the Life of Father Herman for the Metropolia!

We are certain that you will find a warm reception among us if you yourself choose this course, and a maximum of support. For ourselves, we shall certainly offer you every assistance we are capable of, whether through the pages of The Orthodox, Word or in any other way we can help the cause of Orthodoxy in Alaska.

We would be honored to receive a reply from Your Grace to this letter.

Respectfully, with love in Christ our Saviour

Father Herman Brotherhood

028.

Feb 18/Mar 3, 1970

Dear Father David [Black],

We just received the first three issues of Orthodox Alaska and would like to share a few thoughts with you about it. It is a good and welcome beginning—sober in tone and format, conscious of past tradition (wisely preserving Bp. Philips cover), written clearly and simply, concentrating on the essentials—lives of Saints, Church calendar and feasts, monasticism, not even afraid to be a little outspoken about heresy. With God's blessing it can do much good for the Orthodox in Alaska.

It should be pointed out, however, that Dr. Bensin's book is so inaccurate as to be unreliable even as the foundation of an amended text. In the Father Herman article he places; St. Sergius' Holy Trinity in Serpukhov, speaks of an "Abbot and well known preacher" who is apparently fictional or confused or confused with someone else, puts St. Seraphim in Valaam (where he never was), etc., and seems to invent some details out of whole cloth. There are better sources!

But even if not perfect, Orthodox Alaska is a welcome beginning, and to speak frankly, its tone is far more serious and Orthodox than the bulk of what passes for the "Orthodox press" in the "lower 48." For this reason—to speak to you from the heart—we are sincerely pained at the thought of what will happen to Alaska if it accepts the "autocephaly." I suspect you already realize that the Metropolia has been living so far on the capital of the old Russian (that is, genuine Orthodox) spirituality, which she still has some contact with owing to the presence in America of the Russian Church Abroad, which preserves and lives by this spirituality. Most of the Metropolia has strayed far from this spirituality, and only a few individuals now will probably find their way out before the Metropolia reaches the end of the trail in "Eastern-rite Protestantism." (I'm speaking quite frankly with you because I think you see enough to know I'm not trying to "insult" anybody but only describing things as they unfortunately are.) But Alaska is remote, neglected» and besides has deeper roots in Orthodoxy. Can't it at least be saved?

We've just written a personal appeal to Bp. Theodosius to stand up for the truth and put Alaska on the right path—for I'm sure you and the other priests and the whole of Alaska will follow him if he does choose this path. Of course there are tremendous obstacles in the way of such a difficult decision, but if it is not made now it probably never will be. To go with the "autocephaly" is to choose the way of the "general trend" of the times, which is away from the Church entirely. (Indeed, Moscow couldn't even wait for the Metropolia to sign before she announced that she will give communion to Catholics that is, that the Unia is already here and the martyrdom of St. Peter the Aleut, instead of a sign and inspiration for all Orthodox faithful, becomes an absurd and futile gesture. But to stand against it (which in practical terms today means choosing the Russian Church Abroad because, whatever her human failings, she happens to be the only one even interested in truth today!) means to stand with our modern-day confessors and those unashamed of real, "narrow" Orthodoxy (the Orthodoxy that Father

Herman, Bp. Innocent, and others brought to Alaska)—men of the caliber of Abbot Panteleimon and his monks, the monks of Holy Trinity Monastery, Fr. Neketas Palassis, and others.

If Bp. Theodosius does choose this path, it would be by a miracle of Father Herman (but Fr. Alexy Ionov, who was supposed to write Father Herman's life for the Metropolia, has already chosen this path with his whole parish!). I'm convinced the response of our people would be overwhelming.

Although as brothers in the name of Father Herman our hearts are with Orthodox Alaska, up to how it hasn't been possible for us to enter into cooperation with the official Church in Alaska, owing to its "semi-canonical" status (and our caution is only too well confirmed in the "autocephaly," which will stamp the Metropolia with the seal of the Moscow betrayers and persecutors of the faithful); if His Grace has the courage to stand up and be numbered with the confessors of Orthodoxy, we will offer every support possible for Orthodoxy in Alaska and encourage our readers to do the same. How our hearts long to receive you all as full brothers in that small flock of Orthodox faithful which now seems about to face the hatred not only of the world but of those "Orthodox" who do not care enough for their faith. May God and Father Herman and the holy New Martyr Peter guide aright His Grace and all of you in Alaska. We are praying for you and ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

P.s. Br. Gleb sends his greetings. Enclosed is our just-printed icon of Father Herman. Separately you will receive (in case you don't have it already) F. Golder's life of Father Herman. Both are gifts from us.

029.

March 8/21, 1970

St. Theophylakt

Your Grace [Bishop Theodosius of Alaska]:

We thank you for your kind response to our letter, sent through Father David Black. We were especially touched by the icons of St. Theodosius, for whom we have a deep devotion.

In looking through the Life of St. Theodosius written by our own Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, which we hope to translate and print in a future issue of The Orthodox Word, we found the following note made by Archbishop Anthony, which we would like to share with you.

"A tiny part of the relics of St. Theodosius came as a wondrous blessing abroad to our Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochaev and was placed in an icon on the Saint painted by Archimandrite Kyprian. This icon was given as a gift and blessing from His Eminence Metropolitan Anastassy to the Sobor of the American Metropolia, being designated for the city of Cleveland for the cathedral church of St. Theodosius. The fatal decrees of the Sobor then separated us. May this icon be a pledge of the future reunion desired by all".

By the prayers of St. Theodosius and Blessed Father Herman, may this reunion be accomplished in those who truly desire it!

With all respect and love in Christ our Saviour,

Reader Eugene Rose

Reader Gleb Podmoshensky

P.s. May we have Your Grace's permission to use the icon you sent us as an illustration for our Life of St. Theodosius? If so, could you send us another copy from which to make the reproduction? If you have any other illustrations appropriate to the Life, we would very much appreciate the opportunity to use them. We have seen, but cannot now obtain, a photograph of the faithful holding the relics of St. Theodosius after the Soviets attempted to desecrate them.

030.

March 16/29, 1970

3rd Sunday of Lent

Dear in Christ Father Photios,

Rejoice in the Lord! We send greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were very happy to hear from you and are only too happy to exchange ideas with you. It is good to hear about your varityper. We had one demonstrated for us several years ago, but the cost was too prohibitive, and without offset press and camera we couldn't do it either. Our problem is a little different from yours: your problem is money, ours is time. Of course, if we had the money, the time would take care of itself, but right now we have all our own primitive equipment, and it just takes too long to print. Beginning with the new issue we've expanded to 50-60 pages, and it will take four weeks to print, assemble, and despatch each issue. Of course, there are just two of us to do everything, but more people won't solve the problem either; the process of setting type by hand just requires too much concentration and painstaking labor, and with more people efficiency is actually reduced, at least in our poor experience. Our answer is linotype and, God willing, after Pascha we may have one—which of course will add mechanical complications to our problems, since the machine will have to be an old one.

Yes, we are "struggling" in the mountains—much more pleasant than struggling in the city, I assure you! We don't notice the lack of conveniences at all. If we do spend a lot of time chopping wood, that gives us valuable exercise—printing is definitely indoor, sedentary work (or rather "stationary"). The lack of water affects primarily the garden, but we're trying "organic gardening" with mulch and hope to get some crops with a minimum of water—there's enough in the soil for 45 inches of winter rains and snows to grow quite a bit, I think. Judging from the state of the world and America, our home-grown crops may turn out to be quite valuable in a few years. Frankly, we are pessimistic about the future and hope to print as much as possible in these few years that are given us, anticipating a drought of the printed word in perhaps a very short time. Nikolai probably described our poverty to you: right now we have two cabins, one a

hunting cabin which we live in (which Nikolai helped finish), and the second a printshop which Gleb and I built. We have now an outdoor chapel with a cross and an altar table on a tree stump where Archbishop Anthony served Liturgy last fall and Father Panteleimon blessed water on November 1st; we hope to start building a real chapel this year and other buildings as possible. Whether anyone will join us we don't know, but we are going one step at a time, trusting in God and doing our best with what we have.

You are of course welcome to use whatever materials and illustrations you wish from The Orthodox Word. We wish no payment from any Orthodox reprinters, all the more so from those few who are printing the real Orthodoxy; our copyright is to scare off Catholics, who shamelessly take Jordanville material and pass it off as their own. If you take a whole article or translation, we would like the OW credited, for the sake of identification of sources. We would love to translate some other of St. Mark's writings from Russian, but there's no chance now for that, and they are mostly rather long and more difficult than what we've translated so far (on purgatory, filioque, etc.).

May God prosper your printing plans. Lives of Saints are one thing desperately needed in America to give a dose of real Orthodoxy for those withering away from the two-dimensional academic Orthodoxy of Schmemann and the new "autocephalous" monstrosity. A word of advice: one of the best hopes for success is regularity, especially of a periodical. If you could put the Vineyard out regularly, even once every two months, you would have a good basis, both for financial support and for building a regular readership. It would help, too, if the Lives of Saints were put out in a series with some stimulus for readers to "subscribe" or somehow be inspired to get the whole series. The American Orthodox public is so undernourished with printed food that it has to be educated to know what it should read. The "official" press—Young Life, Upbeat, Concern, the learned quarterlies—is actually poisoning the Orthodox public and stunting their appetites; and now with the "autocephaly," they will make a big point of trying to persuade everyone that this is what they should be reading. We are a minority and will have a hard time persuading many that they should be eating real food and not TV dinners.

But the "autocephaly" is perhaps really a blessing—now the sides will be clearly drawn and the choice perhaps a little clearer. Especially now at the beginning of the great divide we should try to do as much as possible to reach those who might still have doubts about the great all-American Church.

Our Orthodox Word covers are very easily done—by letterpress. We print twice—once with a halftone or line engraving in whatever color desired, once in black for the text. Total cost this way is about 2 1/2 cents per cover for 2000. In the beginning, when we had only a small hand press that couldn't print big pictures well, we had the color picture printed outside by offset (at a cost of about 5 cents per cover including paper) and then printed the text ourselves.

We ask your prayers for our humble work, and hope to keep in contact with you. We will certainly cooperate with you however possible.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

P.s. Please pray for Bishop Theodosius and the Alaskan Church. As slim as the hopes might be for them to secede from the "official" Church and join us, with Father Herman's prayers anything is possible. One nun from Novo-Diveyevo wrote us that the whole Autocephaly scandal is owing to the fact that Father Herman apparently does not want to be canonized by the Metropolia—and perhaps she is right! If Alaska does not come to us, Father Herman will do something, I'm convinced!

031.

Mar. 19/Apr. 1, 1970

Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria

Dear Father in Christ, Neketas,

Bless us, Father! Rejoice in the Lord!

We are always happy to hear from you. One feels the noose begin to tighten with which the "official" Church will try to strangle, and one treasures all the more every contact with like-minded souls who want the real Orthodoxy. We've heard no more about the Metropolia, but the general picture is clear: whether now or after some delay, whether Iakovos joins now of after a year or two, the "autocephalous" Church is here, and everyone who has not love for true Orthodoxy will rush to join, and they will wage war against us—not because we are any external threat (only a few will leave them), but because their consciences aren't clean, and the Synod represents their conscience. I think 1970 is the crises year for American Orthodoxy: towards the Metropolia, the Greek Archdiocese, etc., our attitude has not been entirely definite yet, but now they force us to define ourselves and them, which is all to the good. A few of their people who might have continued with them and gradually lost their Orthodoxy until it was too late to get it back, will now step away from them. And it will all [be] to the good if the Synod now (as in 1927) excommunicates them and informs everyone that their bishops are not bishops, their priests are not priests, their sacraments are not sacraments; if Iakovos joins them, he falls under the same ban. Up to now our older priests haven't understood the Greek situation, but now (if Iakovos joins them) they will—because they do understand the Soviet Church situation. One of our SF cathedral priests who was somewhat soft on the Metropolia has come out now with a good attack on them because, as he says, regarding Moscow the situation is absolutely clear, there is no room for any other interpretation than ours.

We received an interesting comment from a nun in Novo-Diveyevo: this whole scandal arose because Father Herman does not want to be canonized by the Metropolia! I think there may well be something to that. From the history of Spruce Island we know that Fr. Herman has been severe with those who unworthily approach him, and he was definitely on Fr. Gerasim's side! If (as it now looks) the canonization was intended by the Metropolia leadership to be a part of their political trickery (for Meyendorff says that only a "Local" Church can canonize saints), Fr. Herman will do something and is already doing it. Fr. David Black writes us that they have two monks for Spruce Island—one of them we know as not serious, the other is probably Hieromonk

Seraphim [Bobich] from St. Tikhons Monastery, who just wrote us that he has left the Metropolia for the Synod and will go to Mt. Athos—he says they wanted him to go to Spruce Island, but he won't because he would have to remain in the Metropolia. Now the last of the best element is leaving the Metropolia, and their long- desired union can be achieved all the easier. Bp. Theodosius, by the way, responded to our appeal to him kindly (through Fr. David), if formally, and sent us icons of St. Theodosius, which, whatever the intention, touched us deeply. If any whole piece of the Metropolia can be saved, it is Alaska—as far along as it already is on the same general path of decline with the rest of America, nonetheless it has deeper roots and it has Father Herman, and being an isolated diocese it might still revive with a transfusion of real Orthodoxy. Father Nicholas Harris in Anchorage writes us asking for 5 copies of the Fr. Gerasim issue—we know nothing of him. Anyway, we're praying especially hard for Alaska, and if it could be saved then Schmemann and Iakovos could keep the Atlantic and Pacific and the Moon as well!

We must get to printing. This issue is going nicely after a late start, and we hope to have it mailed by the end of next week. Spring is here, and we're beginning to plant a few crops that don't need much water. We're glad to hear of Presvytera's recovery—please give her our greetings. As for the article on Fr. Panteleimon's visit; it perhaps wouldn't be too late to put it even in the May-June issue. Approximate dead lines are: for March-April, one week after Easter; for May-June, June 5-10.

We are looking forward to the Kalomiros article on evolution. What about his other article that you started printing on the Synod etc? If that won't come out soon in the Witness, could we get a copy of it separately? Later this year we want to print a 50th-anniversary Synod issue, with the main article by Vladika John, and we are looking for another article from the missionary and/or Greek point of view—any ideas? We thought of asking Kalomiros to write one if he hasn't already written a suitable one.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

032.

Mar. 23/Apr. 5, 1970

4th Sunday of Lent

Dear Father David [Black],

Thank you for your letter, which we read with great interest. We appreciate your frankness. On those things which divide us—actually one thing, the Synod-Metropolia question—there is not much to "argue" about; a resolution will be reached not basically through argument but through prayer, earnestly seeking God's will, patiently awaiting its manifestation, and resolutely following it. Still I would like to say a word or two more to you, speaking as one "convert" to another.

I am no Russian, do not share particularly in any Russian psychology, and don't think I'm viewing the issues through any rose-colored glasses. Nonetheless, I don't think it's possible, in the long run, to stand above the question of "jurisdictions,"—not in the Russian Church, at least. We share your respect for Fr. Georges Florovsky as a theological scholar and interpreter of the Fathers; such respect is widespread in the Synodal Church—his books on the Fathers are basic textbooks. Br. Gleb knows him and received his blessing go to Jordanville to study. But there is also a reason for the lower opinion of him that is widespread in our Church, often among the same people who respect his theological scholarship. Orthodoxy—as is particularly noticeable in times of crisis such as our whole century has been—is not merely a doctrine to be understood, but a conception of life to be lived. Fr. George, it seems to me, has failed in the vital dimension of Orthodoxy in practice. What is the result of his many years of appearances at ecumenical gatherings? Orthodoxy, to be sure, has become better known—but not as the Church of Christ, rather as a "fourth major faith" which used sometimes to give trouble to the Protestants by insisting on making "separate statements," but now has come around to the general heretical view of the Church which the Protestants expound (Archbp. Iakovos, indeed, states clearly: "The Church in all its denominational forms is the body of Christ"!). In the situation which Vladika Vitaly describes (Orthodox Word, 1969, p. 150-1), Fr. George himself gave a push in the direction of this heresy: not by saying anything heretical himself, but by giving in to the pressures that always exist at ecumenical gatherings to say something that will please the Protestant majority and will be interpreted by them in a heretical fashion. The Orthodoxy of Fr. George at such gatherings is formally correct, but it is thus only formal Orthodoxy, not living Orthodoxy, hot Orthodoxy in practice. And Orthodoxy today is being destroyed from within precisely by this lack of living Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy has one thing to say to the ecumenical movement: here is the truth, join yourself to it; to remain to "discuss" this truth not merely weakens the Orthodox witness, it destroys it. The Protestants long ago were right when they said: If you have the truth, why are you participating in the ecumenical movement, which is a search for an unknown truth.

A second aspect of Fr. Georges failure at "Orthodoxy in practice" was his failure to stay and support the Russian Church Abroad. Where is the heresy or sectarianism involved in the basic idea of the Church Abroad: that all Russian hierarchs should remain united, at least with their fellow hierarchs abroad, but also the extent possible with the Catacomb Church in Russia—and when God shall finally permit, with the visible Church in Russia too? The Metropolia has cut the Church Abroad out of her history books, but she nonetheless was an organic part of it, and the most objective view of the history of Russian Orthodoxy abroad in the last 50 years cannot but conclude that the Metropolia does not want to be in communion with the Church Abroad and has several times deliberately broken off from it. Read the history of Metr. Platon vs. Bishop Apollinary in 1927 (that will be in our new issue!), of Metr. Theophilus who was devoted to our Church and -was forced to leave it, of the infamous Cleveland Sobor (cathedral) vs. Archbp. Vitaly: where is Church truth and justice, where are our confessors who stand for peace and unity—all in the Church Abroad, no doubt of it!

When Fr. George speaks of our supposed tendency to "Catharist sectarianism"—I do not take it lightly. He is a man whose words are to be taken seriously. But how can he back up such a

extreme statement? I suspect that he doesn't make much of an attempt, and that the statement is more emotional than rational—as is Archbp. John Shahovskoy's recent paid advertisement which accuses the entire Church Abroad of being in a state of "delirium, hatred, and Pharisaic pride"! This is not merely unfair, it is slander! Yes, we are a minority; yes, the rest of the Orthodox Church tries to cut us off— and will redouble its efforts if the "autocephaly" is signed; yes, we are conscious of defending Orthodoxy, which is trampled on today by Orthodox hierarchs themselves. But how are we different in this from St. Athanasius in the 4th century, who found every Church in the city except one in the Arians hands? How are we different from St. Maximus the Confessor, who when informed that three Patriarchs had entered into communion with the Monothelites said: "Even if all the world enter into communion with them, I alone will not!"? (This statement was repeated, by the way, by Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky in 1927 against Metr. Sergius.) How are we different from St. Mark of Ephesus, who defied an "Ecumenical Council" and every single hierarch with the "Catharist, sectarian, delirious" belief that he alone was in the truth?!!

Forgive me if my zeal runs away with me, but I wanted you to see my point clearly: the Church Abroad today is the focal point of the battle for Orthodox truth and principle. Of course we have many faults, of course the general decay has infected some of our members too—but we are still fighting for the truth, and there is frankly no sign that any of the "Fourteen Autocephalous Churches" or the American jurisdictions is doing so. If you are encouraged by Fr. Schmemann's recent semi-conservative statements—-well, I can only say that they seem to be a faint reaction to Metr. Philaret and to the effect he has produced on the conscience of a part of the Metropolia; but that will soon pass, and particularly if the autocephaly is put over the path of the "American Church" is clear: in harmony with the spirit of the times to the Unia and "Eastern-rite Protestantism."

Actually, don't think I'm trying to convert you back to the Synod (though it might seem like it!), I cannot presume to advise you; you have your own conscience, and your desire to be with the Metropolia in Alaska—given the mutual semi-recognition that has prevailed until now between the Metropolia and the Synod—I can view as a possible alternative. But our concern is with the Alaskan Church under the conditions of the "autocephaly"—and when we spoke of Alaska joining our "small flock" we mean not merely the Russian Church Abroad but the Church of Christ, for we are convinced that they who accept the autocephaly will thereby place themselves outside the Orthodox Church even without the Synods excommunication that will probably follow. What connection can there be between light and darkness, Christ and Beelzebub, the Church of Christ and the system devised to infiltrate, weaken, and destroy it!

Archbishop Anthony, by the way, reminded us of a point which we haven't seen mentioned anywhere in the autocephaly arguments: Moscow in 1933 excommunicated Metr. Platon and everyone in the Metropolia; if the Metropolia recognizes Moscow as "canonical," then this act too is "canonical"—and the Metropolia has had no sacraments for 36 years! If I were a priest or layman in the Metropolia, that would give me cause for worry, indeed—to have to live with the realization that until the autocephaly is signed (when, presumably, "economy" would take effect) every sacrament that I administered or received would be invalid, and thus a mockery and

blasphemy of God! Of course, we do not believe that the excommunication was canonical, any more than we believe that the autocephaly will be canonical. But whatever the one is, the other must be the same!

Every Orthodox Church has its faults and weaknesses, and there are times when one can only suffer in silence certain things that are done by the Church's representatives; but if this silence must be stretched to include actual violence to one's conscience and the defense of unprincipled "canonical" acts that affect the very validity of the sacraments—then how can one be Orthodox at all any more?

But I have carried on long enough. About Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky I can only say: some of our own people have criticized one or two points of his theology, although to my knowledge the only people who find fault with any doctrine of his on the sacraments can do so only by drawing conclusions for him which he never made himself and which would have horrified him. In any case his "Catechism" is taught nowhere and his influence is entirely in a different sphere: precisely in "living Orthodoxy," in the whole idea of a unified Russian Church abroad that preserves the "old" Orthodoxy and, in the midst of heretics, tells them straightforwardly that Orthodoxy is not merely one other denomination but the Church of Christ. Whereas the ecumenist heresy that Archbp. Iakovos explicitly expounds is the current in which all Orthodox will be carried unless they stand apart and confess Orthodoxy, at the risk of being cut off by the others and condemned to absolute aloneness.

By the way, we hear from Hieromonk Seraphim of St. Tikhons Monastery that he was asked to go to Spruce Island, but will not because he would have had to remain in the Metropolia, and he has now come to us. It will be no easy task in our day to establish a monastery there, and I'm convinced that unless Alaska shows solidarity with the Church Abroad and rejects the "autocephaly" Father Herman will not bless a monastery and it will not succeed. If we are not mistaken, your Athonite monk is Archimandrite Makary Kotsyubinsky—?—whom Gleb knows.

Forgive my frankness, and pray for us. We would like to hear from you again. We are happy to hear from Daniel Olson that Father Herman's relics are soon to be returned to Spruce Island. May Father Herman guide and protect us all!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

033.

Mar. 31/Apr. 13, 1970

St. Mary of Egypt

Dear Fr. Panteleimon and Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

Bless us, Father! I pray that this finds you all well and in the grace of our Saviour, and finishing the Fast in good shape. Thanks to God we are both fine and have just about finished the new OW-—we hope to mail it by Wednesday or Thursday. It is 56 pages including cover but still

seems so small to us. But it takes a full four weeks to print, and as old age approaches we find our Gutenberg- style printing more and more difficult. On our Pascha visit to San Francisco we will look into the linotype situation, in particular one that a priest-friend of ours may sell us cheaply. Of course, we then have to build a room for it and get a new generator, so it would be two months before we could begin using it; but we shall see.

For a month we have been in the midst of spring, cool but sunny, and it is a wonder to see life reemerge. The pink-raspberry oak leaves with yellow clusters are beautiful. We discover also that we have wild gooseberries all over, and we hope to have jam before long. Two ground squirrels have taken up residence around our cabin and behave like something out of Walt Disney. They come rapping on our windows for nuts, eat out of our hand and then try to take a finger along with them, try every trick to get inside the house where the mound of nuts must be (one of them succeeded in getting in by hiding on the porch and then darting in when one of us went out); I've had to rescue them from inside stovepipes on the porch, and they even try to climb into our chimney. But they are good company.

This morning we have been visited by 6 inches of snow, and I fear for our poor little peas, which are just peeking through the soil. I'm taking the mail out on snowshoes for the second time—they are surprisingly fast. With snow everywhere we feel quite remote, as also when the wind blows greatly, as it has been for a month now. We've struck up an acquaintance with a small colony of Seventh-Day Adventists nearby, and they will sell us fresh vegetables when we don't have any; they've also printed a newspaper in the past, and we exchanged ours for theirs. They don't belong to the sect itself, as they regard it as being in apostasy, and they've read some of our articles with interest. They seem like down-to-earth people.

What's the state of the autocephaly? We don't hear anything but vague rumors. Have you seen Meyendorff's attack on the Synod in the last Orthodox Church? That should be answered, at least for the sake of the three hierarchs who are slandered most cheaply there. Are you planning a reply? If no one else does, we'll write him an Open Letter. The full text, by the way, of Shahovskoy's super-political hymn of praise of the German Army in 1941 was recently printed in Orthodox Russia (the supplement for March)—and such a man dares to talk of "politics in the Church"?!

We have only Fr. Alypy's icon of St. Seraphim; please do send the other two. Also, could you send us a few candles? Also the account of Paissy Velichkovsky and the "rags"?

We wrote an appeal to Bp. Theodosius of Alaska to come to the Synod, and are now in correspondence with Fr. David Black—good people, but lacking a certain awareness of things. I still think we have not seen the last of Fr. Herman's deeds this year.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

P.s. We are planning an all-Synod issue later in the year, with Vladiko John's long article (16 pages). We would also like something from the Greek and/or missionary standpoint, and thought of Kalomiros—perhaps a simple article on the Old Calendarists and their ties with the Synod. Any suggestions?

034.

April 3/16, 1970

St. Nikito

Dear Father David [Black],

Thank you for your letter, which we received at the same time as the Feb. Orthodox Church. You didn't say what you thought of Fr. Meyendorff's attack on the Synod. I will share with you a thought or two on the question of conscience and responsibility, especially as regards someone whose words are to be printed and widely distributed.

In our new Orthodox Word, which will be sent out in a few days (God willing!), in reporting some of the Metropolia's response to the Synod's protest against the Autocephaly, we had occasion to quote Archbp. John Shahovskoy and others. We were very careful to make our citations exact and in context, which we believe to be a matter of principle for journalists and editors. At first we planned to preface the Archbishop's statements with the words "Archbp. John S., in a paid advertisement in Novoye Russkoye Slovo…" Then we thought better. He did not submit it first to the newspaper as a paid advertisement, but wrote it as a letter to a laymen, and it was only subsequently printed. Thus, though our original statement was formally correct, it was not precise, and it might lead people to think that he had written the statement with publication in view. (Perhaps he did, after all—but we prefer to give him the benefit of the doubt!) Therefore we revised the statement to read "Archbp. John S., in a letter to a layman which was published as a paid advertisement in NRS…" A fine point? Perhaps—but this way our conscience is absolutely clear, and by giving every possible benefit of the doubt and by scrupulously avoiding any kind of personal attack, we keep the discussion on the level of principle, where it belongs. You will note that in our remarks on Metr. Platon in this issue we deliberately make no mention of such compromising facts as that his governance of the Diocese was so inept that St. Tikhons Monastery was going to be sold at auction, or that (after the faithful rescued it) he then took it as his private property and tried to will it to his daughter!)—because such facts, while they add fuel to a polemical argument, do not affect the basic question of principle. I think you will understand this. And I think this principle has been followed by the Synod in its present arguments against the autocephaly—I don't recall a single personal attack; all is on the level of principle. (If you should ever find us descending from this level in the heat of argument, please tell us!)

What, then, must be our response when we read the attack of Fr. Meyendorff? One can perhaps understand his over-simplified view of Church history since 1917, when he quotes documents that favor his stand and ignores the others (however, one of his documents is an acknowledged forgery!—see the new OW); one becomes a little puzzled that he can so easily dismiss the canonicity of the Synod without seeing that his remarks must surely also apply to the Metropolia,

from 1920-26 and 1936-46 (and he neglects to mention that no one recognized the Metropolia from 1926-36): one sighs at the lack of "consistency" he finds in the Synod's recent history—for it is his own narrow view of "consistency," based on a caricature of our stand, that is violated, not the Synods; one is, frankly quite disturbed that virtually all of the "facts" he cites are distorted, inaccurate, or simply imaginary.

But when he attacks personalities, one cannot be silent. In the first place, the argument is on the childish level—if we cooperate with the Communists, you did too, and you're Fascists as well! Even if that were true, it would not affect the principle involved; but it is actually a slander based on half-truths and innuendo. Metr. Anastassy did not ever invoke any "blessing" on Hitler's "state police"; he did, in 1938, thank the German government in a very proper note for money given for a church and for a law legalizing our Church. Later, when the German treatment of Jews, Russians, etc., became known, Metr. Anastassy was so outspoken that his office was subject to several crude searches by the SS. To imply that he was pro-Nazi, as Fr. Meyendorff does, is irresponsible (and to put the words "blessing" of "state police" in quotations is dishonest—he is quoting only his own imagination); to say that his attitude is equivalent Metr. Nikodim's active service for Communism simply has no relation to facts and is a "defense mechanism" of the cheapest sort. And all this when there is a real Hitler supported in the Metropolia—Archbishop John Shahovskoy, who (having left the Synod 10 years earlier) in 1941, after Hitler had overrun Western Europe and his activities in Germany were better known than in 1938, published an astonishing hymn of praise of Hitler's army on the occasion of the invasion of Russia: "The bloody operation of overthrowing the Third International is entrusted to the expert, experienced German physician…. This required the iron-precise hand of the German Army, a professional military experienced in the most responsible battles…. This army, having passed through the whole of Europe in its victories (over Western civilization!!!), is now powerful not only in the might of its arms and principles, but also in obedience to a higher call, to Providence…. Above everything human operates the sword of God…." (Novoye Slovo, June 29, 1941, Berlin.) Our bishops, who are supposed to be involved in "politics," were careful to refrain from such partisan involvements even when it looked as though the Soviets might be overthrown. And yet Archbp. Shahovskoy has an honored place in the autocephaly arrangements and constantly accuses the Synod of "politics" (in fact, his harangues against the Synod in Cleveland were instrumental in causing the schism of 1946), while our Metropolitan, a man of staunch principle, is slandered! Frankly, I would rather not touch this side of Archbishop Shahovskoy—but if Fr. Meyendorff is convinced that pro-Naziism is a valid argument against a hierarch and a Church, he should know to whom he had better direct his criticism!

The same thing is true of Metro. Philaret and Archbp. John Maximovitch in China—it is formally true that for a few days in 1945, when falsely informed that Metr. Anastassy was dead, the Synod dissolved, the Church situation entirely changed in Russia as a result of the War, and the Patriarch validly elected, did commemorate Patr. Alexy—but when contact was soon resumed with Metr. Anastassy and the truth became known, they both became so staunchly anti-Moscow that Archbp. John is remembered to this day by Moscow (see One Church, for example) as the leader of the "schism" in China, and Metr. Philaret's very life was constantly in danger from his anti-Soviet and anti-Patriarchate statements and sermons. It is complicated—and

frankly boring—to tell you this in a letter, but I know you will listen to facts—but Fr. Meyendorff has built a few misleading half-truths into a monstrous innuendo against three of our leading hierarchs with the intent to discredit our whole Church, and thousands will believe his few simple words and will never be informed of the facts. It remains to be seen whether he will print our answer (if no one else writes first)—not in the interests of presenting the "other side," but simply to correct inaccuracies, falsehood, and defamation of character.

Do you see what I mean by conscience and responsibility? Of course, I don't mean to blame the Alaskan Church for such irresponsible (at best!) remarks of one Metropolia editor. But now we hear that the Metropolia bishops have signed the autocephaly. Will Alaska follow in conscience*. No matter how Orthodox you may be, you are now committed to this act—I say it openly—or unprincipledness. Do you think it is a coincidence that now, after so many years of ignoring us, the Metropolia begins to come out with irresponsible attacks against us? Of course Nikodim did not tell Fr. Meyendorff to do it, but don't you think he knew the Metropolia psychology well enough to know that such attacks would now be made against the one body Moscow hates the most? The Synod has long accused the Metropolia of lack of canonical foundation; but now, it would seem, the shoe is on the other foot—thanks to Moscow!

But no, it is not on the other foot. Principle is principle, truth is truth, and if God is truth that which is untrue and unprincipled can have no part in the Church of Christ, no matter how many canons one may quote.

Well, you will read our arguments in the Orthodox Word. For us, nothing has changed, just as our Synod has kept—by God's grace, I am convinced—the one straight, unquestionably Orthodox and principled line from 1920 to the present, while everyone else around us has changed. But 1970 is nonetheless perhaps the year of decision for American Orthodoxy. I fear that those who don't act now will find later that it is too late, that they are already "committed" to another path. May this not be so of the Alaskan Church.

Let us pray all the harder to God and to Fr. Herman that we may all be enlightened and saved.

Trusting in your prayers, with love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

P.s. We have just received Hieromonk Seraphim Bobich's Open Letter to Fr. Neketas—wow! We wouldn't have dared say these things outright, because we would be dismissed as anti-Metropolia fanatics—but a priest of the Metropolia has the right, and he speaks the truth, and it can and will be demonstrated.

035.

April 4/17, 1970

Sts. Joseph & George

Dear Father in Christ, Seraphim [Bobich],

Bless us, Father! Rejoice in the Lord! You cannot imagine the joy and fervor with which we received your letter to us and the Open Letter which Fr. Neketas published. At last, after months of intrigues, half-truths, cowardly compromises, defamation of character—from the Metropolia comes a clear, straightforward, unfearing voice of truth and conscience. Glory to our God! You have said what needs to be said, and we will fight with you on this front, the fight for true Orthodoxy!

Frankly, we would have hesitated to say outright what you have said—we are "Synod" people, and we would be accused of anti-Metropolia hysteria, fanaticism, and the rest. But you have been with them, and know them at first hand—and you say just what needs to be said.

We would like also to print your letter, and the same issue to document some of your statements about Archbishop John Shahovskoy and Fr. Schmemann. We hope to prepare also an Open Letter to Fr. Meyendorff about his recent irresponsible attack on our Synod. If such are the arguments they have against us, then they have no case at all and are operating on the basis of their emotions— and exactly according to the plan by which Nikodim, who knows their psychology, is conducting his warfare against Orthodoxy!

We would like to hear more form you—your present plans, etc. Do you know of anyone else in the Metropolia who has spoken out (besides Fr. Alexy Ionov, Mme. Tolstaya and others in the Russian press)?

Probably you will not have an easy time now—the devil will try to stir up all kinds of trouble for you. But God protects those who witness for Him. Our prayers are with you.

We ask your prayers also for us. By God s will and the prayers of his saints we have found an isolated place where, we pray, there may soon be a small skete. At present there are just the two of us. Gleb is a graduate of Jordanville and once visited you at St. Tikhons (some years ago).

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

036.

April 19/May 2, 1970

Bright Saturday

Dear Father in Christ, Panteleimon,

Christ is Risen! Bless us, Father!

On your visit to us last November you expressed interest in helping us with the purchase of a little more advanced printing equipment than we now have. The time has come for us to take advantage of this offer if you are still able to make it.

While in San Francisco for Pascha, we visited our friend Fr. Alexy Poluektov, who was in seminary together with Gleb. He is very interested in printing and recently bought a whole printshop. He is moving it soon to his "dacha" on the Russian River, and he offered to sell us his

linotype (a no. 5— the smallest kind), which we saw in operation. We saw other linotypes that day also, but they were more expensive and more complicated for us to undertake.

As to cost: the linotype itself is $600—which is quite reasonable, and as the pot for heating lead operates on gas (easily adjustable to bottled gas) we save the expense (and noise) of a second generator. Cost of the annex to house the machine: $300. Moving, final adjustment by mechanic (if necessary), hookup for gas: $200 or maybe more. The whole project will cost around $1200. Of this we have $300 in a special linotype fund and can find another $200, leaving a balance of some $700. We will be most grateful for whatever help you can give us on this sum.

Enclosed is a letter to us from Hieromonk Seraphim of St. Tikhons Monastery. He is a good monk, but apparently weak, and Bp. Kiprian et al are apparently trying to exploit his humility to the extent of making him renounce his marvelous, fighting letter—for all the wrong reasons. If he doesn't get out of there soon, we're afraid they may capture him. We've just written him begging him to leave, even inviting him to come here if there's no place else. Probably he's afraid of "imposing" himself on someone's hospitality. If you have any spare nook, perhaps you could invite him directly, or at least send him a word of encouragement if you aren't already in contact with him. (Please send his letter back to us.)

We spent a profitable 5 days in San Francisco and Monterey and returned to find summer weather begun and much to do before August. Pray for us.

With love and respect in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

037.

Bright Saturday

April 19/May 2,1970

Dear Father in Christ, Seraphim,

In truth Christ is Risen! Rejoice in the Lord! Bless us, Father!

Of course, we shall do as you wish and not print your letter. However, I must assure you that among those Orthodox faithful who value their faith above everything else, and who are aware of what is happening in the world, your letter did not at all bring ridicule to you, but instead has inspired and strengthened many in the fight for true Orthodoxy today. If there is anything ungrammatical in it—I myself did not notice anything in particular—this is not even noticeable beside the obvious fact that it was written from the heart and it exposes a situation that must be known to those who love Orthodoxy and wish to fight for it. Perhaps it could be considered a "mistake," or at least not prudent of you, to mention the three names openly—but if so, I think it is a providential mistake, for these three men are traitors to Orthodoxy, on the same level (although more refined) as Patr. Athenagoras and Archbp. Iakovos, and it is time that the Orthodox faithful be informed of this. Archbp. John Shahovskoy for 40 years has been preaching a "poetical" Christianity that is against monasticism and every kind of strict Orthodoxy; Fr.

Schmemann is clearly attempting to Protestantize Orthodoxy; and Fr. Meyendorff, by his irresponsible and slanderous attack against the hierarchs and faithful of the Russian Church Abroad (in the Feb. Orthodox Church) shows himself so anxious to follow in their footsteps that he departs even from ordinary honesty and fairness. These men are clearly leading the Metropolia into "Eastern-rite Protestantism," and now the Metropolia hierarchs have unanimously joined with the enemies of Christs Church in order to speed up this aim—it is too late to do anything for the Metropolia, anyone who wishes to remain in Christ's Church must leave her now before being caught in her snares.

You have been suspended—but glory be to God for this also, for you are suffering for confessing true and heartfelt Orthodoxy, and thus you are encouraging many others. Only stand firm! They will try to persuade you to be so humble that you will regard everything you said as a mistake, and then they will try to make you follow them into heresy out of "humility." No—the monks of Mt. Athos are true monks, and they are humble, but you know what they say about Patr. Athenagoras, and they refuse to follow him or to pray for him as their bishop. Now the Metropolia itself forbids you to pray for their bishops at services—this is surely a sign that your connection with them is finished. For what could you "apologize" to them—that you do not have all the facts to back up your statements? But those facts do exist, and we will be printing many of them. Dear Father—we consider that your letter does honor to the faithful of the Metropolia; it is one of the few honest and honorable things to come from the Metropolia in recent months. But the Metropolia leadership does not want this, it is proud of its apostates, for they have given it worldwide recognition. Then do not hesitate to come and join us who are gathered around some of the few Orthodox bishops left today.

Frankly, we are anxious to see you leave St. Tikhons as soon as possible; before they put all their pressures and persuasions to work on you. Metropolitan Philaret is spending several weeks now in Europe and the Holy Land, which is probably why you don't hear from him. Isn't it possible for you to go to stay at one of our places while waiting the outcome of you petition?—to Jordanville, Fr. Panteleimon's monastery in Boston, or to the Synod in New York? We would gladly invite you to stay with us, but we are far away and so for we have only two small cabins in the forest under primitive conditions. Nonetheless, if now or in the future you wish to come to us, you are more than welcome. For eight months now we have been living in the Coast Mountains of California, about 250 miles north of San Francisco, in a complete wilderness area—the nearest town, 2 miles away, has only 50 people, and for 40 miles in three directions there is no one at all except a few hunters, hikers, etc. Gleb and I are both ordained Readers, and hope by the end of the year, by God's grace, to be tonsured monks. Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco has celebrated Liturgy here, on an outdoor Altar-table on the spot where we hope to begin building our chapel this year. Abbot Panteleimon of Boston has also visited us. We read the daily cycle of services ourselves, but for Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion we must go to San Francisco (as we did on Christmas and Pascha) or wait for a priest to visit us.

We hope to hear from you soon, and ask your prayers for us sinners.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

038.

April 21/May 4, 1970

Monday of St. Thomas Week

Dear Father in Christ, Michael [Azkoul],

Christ is risen! Bless us, Father!

It is probably two years now, if not more, since you wrote to us and submitted a manuscript for publication. The beginning of a long letter which I started to write to you at that time lies buried somewhere together with your manuscript among our still-unpacked things. I beg your forgiveness for such neglect. As there are just two of us to do all the work of our small "community," some things simply don't get done, and although our new location outside the distracting city allows more concentration, we are still far behind in everything.

In the last several years we have read with interest some of your articles in The Logos and elsewhere. We have been especially pleased to see someone outside the Russian Church situation write with such sympathy and understanding of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, and we have admired also your clear grasp of the principles involved in the present-day battle of Orthodoxy with apostasy.

As I recall, the article which you submitted to us we regarded as rather too general for our use, as we try to concentrate on practical issues as well as standard Orthodox sources. If you still wish to cooperate with us, however, there is another kind of article which we could use.

With the March-April Orthodox Word we are beginning an occasional series of articles on "Renovated Orthodoxy," in which we hope to pinpoint some of the leading currents and figures that are trying to lead Orthodoxy off the straight and narrow traditional path into positions that, if not always identifiable as heresy, are nonetheless no longer Orthodox. The first article, by a leading Russian theologian, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, points out the Protestantism of Fr. A. Schmemann's "liturgical theology." We ourselves hope later to write an article on the ethereal "esoteric chiliasm" of Archbp. John Shahovskoy. For another topic we thought you might be able to give us an article: the theological-philosophical background, assumptions, implications, etc., of the activities and words of Athenagoras, Iakovos, et al. There is at least one outright heresy involved here, which Iakovos recently expressed by saying "all Christian denominations make up the Body of Christ"; but there seems to be much more involved than that. Athenagoras seems to be a chiliast, talking of the "third age of the Holy Spirit," seeing visions of a "common chalice," etc. Their "reforming" zeal seems to extend to the overturning of everything Orthodox and traditional while bowing down to the cheapest kind of atheistic humanism. (See Fr. Patrinakos' editorials in recent issues of the Orthodox Observer-—he even says that we don't have to pray for good weather any more, because man now "controls" it! I can send you copies if you don't have them.) Etc., etc.

What is the inspiration behind all this? Where is it leading to? What are its theological-philosophical first principles? In short, what we would like to see is a documented exposition of the essence (from the Church and philosophical points of view) of Athenagoras-Iakovism, so that his disease can be pinpointed and hopefully cast out of the Church.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on this. Asking your blessing and your prayers,

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

039.

April 21/May 4, 1970

Monday of St. Thomas Week

Beloved in Christ, Catechumens Craig and Susan [Young],

Christ is Risen! We were glad to hear of your joyous Pascha as well as to receive such a frank and open letter from you. To set your minds at ease at once, I (and Gleb as well) see no great obstacle on your path to Orthodoxy from anything you wrote. Often the devil uses the most petty tricks— misunderstandings, etc.—to weaken our resolve especially over such a God-pleasing action as you are about to take. A brief explanation is generally enough to clarify the matter and dissolve the misunderstanding. I note also that, like some other new converts and those approaching Orthodoxy, you have experienced some particularly striking spiritual feelings. But these also—although without doubt they are given you by God's grace—you should be somewhat cautious about. They should be considered rather like honey spread around the edge of a cup by which God attracts you to the strong drink of Holy Orthodoxy; but they have no particular significance in themselves, they should by no means be sought or asked for, and later when you have passed from the milk of your first "baby days" in Orthodoxy to the meat of a more solid foundation and experience in the Church, you will find that the Orthodox spiritual life is nourished in other and deeper ways.

I will try to give you whatever advice I can. You will find that in many practical questions involved in leading an Orthodox Christian life, various answers may be given depending on the person and the circumstances. Here also you may find that certain things which you might allow yourself now, you will later find objectionable when you have a more mature experience in Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is very strict concerning doctrine and religious practice; more than this, if one enters into it deeply one will find that it gradually transforms one's whole life so that one has an Orthodox way of approaching some things that might seem outside the religious sphere altogether; but in its approach it is never "authoritarian" or "legalistic" and you will not find in it such a thing as a "holy day of obligation" (for one comes to church not out of obligation but out of love and devotion) nor an "index of forbidden books" (although there is a definite idea of what kind of books Orthodox Christians should be reading.)

Concerning what an Orthodox Christian should or should not read: A spiritual father has the right and duty to advise his spiritual children about any kind of reading they should particularly

avoid—this in general applies to those who are immature or not widely read and who might really be harmed by reading something which they were not prepared to digest or understand in the right way. (See for example our latest Orthodox Word, p. 30, where Father Herman says that "a person who may not know the truth solidly should by all means avoid" books like Saint-Simon's.) With your background, you clearly have the experience and judgement to determine your own reading. As you grow in Orthodoxy, you will doubtless find some changes in the kind of things you read, but that is a matter for you to judge—with the occasional word of advice, perhaps, of those more confirmed in the faith. At the outset I would note only two things: (1) Whatever else you read, there should be regular reading in basic Orthodox sources—Holy Scripture, Lives of Saints, spiritual reading (writings of St. John of Kronstadt, Pilgrim, Philokalia, etc.)—which should be emphasized especially in Great Lent, when movies, worldly music, parties, TV, and frivolous readings and activities of all kinds should be avoided as far as possible. (2) One should avoid by all means eclecticism—putting Catholic saints, Buddhas, or whatever in one's icon corner, or reading Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic or other "spiritual" writings on the same level as Orthodox spiritual writings. To read enough about Hinduism to be informed about it is, of course, another thing. There are two new converts to Orthodoxy in the San Francisco area who come from Hinduism and can tell hair-raising things about its satanism; for it is indeed true, as the Fathers say, that "the gods of pagans are demons."

Which brings us to the question of Kwan-Yin, Buddhist temples, etc. I myself had enough experience in Buddhism and its temples never to want to get near them again, and I threw out the Buddhist idol in front of which I once prayed. But here again your developing Orthodox conscience will have to be your guide. I myself was never interested in Kwan-Yin and don't even recall if there is much religious devotion attached to this image; if your statue had ever been in a temple or used for devotion I would be very nervous about having it around, but if (as is probably the case) it was made as a work of art, that wouldn't be quite the same thing. Be aware, and judge for yourself. As for Buddhist temples, I should by all means avoid being present in them during any kind of service—to the cosmopolitan tourist, such a service would be only "quaint," but for us there are involved "spiritual" presences which are not of God, and they can act upon us in ways we cannot foresee. As for visiting them when there is no service going on—well, if you do, your attitude should be more aware and cautious than the ordinary tourist's. Frankly, to all questions of idols and temples the Fathers replied with a categorical No! But in our day of cosmopolitan indifference the question, while not basically changed, is presented in a less radical way, and a reasonably mature individual should come to this conclusion for himself. You will find, I think, that many things which you now may regard as neutral or indifferent will seem not quite the same in future.

And now I'd like to mention a few things you didn't ask about, with the hope that you will enter the Orthodox Church with as few "residues" from Roman Catholicism as possible. For there are certain Catholic practices which, whatever secondary benefits they may have, are not in accordance with the Orthodox way of life and could interfere with adjusting oneself to it. You mention "meditation." The Catholic practice of calling up images, memories, etc., of a sacred character is considered by our Fathers as unnecessary and improper. To reflect on one's reading is one thing, as is likewise to say the Prayer of Jesus or any other prayer in silence; but

"meditation" as such is quite foreign to Orthodoxy and in fact can be the entrance to a refined path of spiritual deception. You are on the right path when you find yourself substituting the Prayer of Jesus for it—if in fact what you mean by "meditation" is the standard Catholic practice. The principle involved here is that one should not trust one's own thoughts and feelings, but fit oneself to the standard of the Church.

Again, it is fine to have a prayer room, but from what you say I gather that all or most of the icons in it are to be of the Holy Face—which we call "the image not made with hands." (By the way, we do not accept the legend of "Veronica's Veil," but have a different account of its origin, and there is a special feast dedicated to it on the day after the Dormition, Aug. 16.) A prayer room with this icon in a central place, but with other icons also of our Saviour, His Most Holy Mother, and the saints— would be normal, as is a particular devotion to an icon or saint. But in Catholicism, I believe, there is a special connotation to the word "devotion"—a special concentration on one aspect of our Saviour's Life, etc.—which is again, foreign to Orthodoxy. We have no special "devotion" to the exposed Sacrament, because for us the Holy Gifts have their proper place in the Liturgy and in the life of the faithful without needing any "special" or "extra" devotion. And of course we do not accept at all such later "devotions" as the Sacred Heart, which seem to us immoderate or out of balance and context with the rest of our Holy Faith.

Again, a minor point—I get the impression that you have a vigil-lamp burning before the image of Archbishop John. While it is an accepted practice to pray privately to [a] saint not yet canonized, it is best to place their image (there can be no official icon before the Church's canonization) a little to the side of the usual icons, so that the vigil-lamp burns before an icon of our Saviour and those saints whom the Church as a whole has acknowledged as such. The Church, while not interfering with anyone's private devotion, tries to guard us against placing too great a reliance on our private judgement and feelings.

Well, that is enough for now. We saw Archbishop Anthony on Tuesday, and he approves May 31 (Sunday) as the date of your reception into the Church. By Church "economy" your baptism and confirmation will be accepted and you will be received by confession of faith (as were Vladimir and Sylvia) before the Liturgy on Sunday. This will involve reciting the Creed, probably renouncing the errors of Catholicism in general (there is a specific formula of renouncing each of several heresies in the Hapgood Service Book, but it is generally not followed in full), and confession of sins. No specific godparents are required when one is received into the Church in this manner. If you have not yet contacted or chosen the priest who will perform this ceremony, I would advise you to write to: V. Rev. John Shachnoff, 525 36th Ave., S.F. 94121 (he lives about 10 blocks from the Cathedral), sending him a Xerox copy of your Baptismal and Confirmation Certificates (if the latter are not available, your word will be accepted if you are quite certain you were confirmed; in this case simply give as full information as possible on when, where and by whom you were confirmed) and telling him briefly of the Archbishop's decision, of our speaking to him and to you, etc. He will then speak to the Archbishop and make all preparations. Fr. John (the "plump" priest with bass voice) probably knows English better than the others and is also Secretary in charge of recording such events.

(He will give you certificates later). The last week before May 31 you should spend in special preparation and fasting—which for married couples (which is perhaps not clearly set forth in books) includes abstinence from marital relations, which is true also for all fast days.

We may be going to Fort Ross on May 30 (the Archbishop will attend, and it will be a kind of special pilgrimage to our local American Orthodox holy places before the canonization of the first American Saint) and we may see you there. Meanwhile we hope to hear more from you and will try to answer any questions.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

040.

Wednesday of St. Thomas Week

April 23/May 6, 1970

St. George the Great Martyr

Dear Fr. David [Black],

In truth Christ is risen!

Thank you for your letter and the opportunity to continue our discussion of some of the important Church issues of the day. I shall reply to some of your rather complicated questions somewhat simply, for I think the basic issues today are simple, even though many are forced to take a tortuous path to arrive at this conclusion.

One misconception which, I believe, causes you unnecessary "problems" about the Synodal Church, is unfortunately widespread: that the Synod builds its case largely on canonical questions, big or small. The opposite is, if anything, the case: our hierarchy, well realizing the irregularity of the times, goes out of its way not to enforce the letter of the canons or condemn anyone only on this basis. Even with the Metropolia, its own free sister, for 25 years it has been extremely lenient and even now does not rush to apply the canonical penalty which she deserves. It is rather Moscow, at the bidding of its Communist masters, which tries to use canons to have the Synod condemned, to crush those few who protest in the USSR, etc.—in feet, if there are Pharisees in Orthodoxy today, it is surely the Moscow leaders and no one else, who are consciously destroying the Church and at the same time using the Church's laws to do it.

No, the case of the Synod is based upon one thing: faithfulness to Orthodoxy, first in spirit, and then to every possible canon. Contrary to one widespread misconception, the Synod has never condemned or judged the Soviet Church or declared it to be without grace; it has many times emphasized (chiefly in the Russian language, to be sure) that the judgement of this Church and its hierarchs must be left to a future All-Russian Sobor in a free Russia, and that until such a Sobor can be called no question affecting the whole of Russian Orthodoxy—as well as any pan-Orthodox questions—can be resolved. And until that time the free Russian Church can and will enter into no contact whatever, no negotiations, no dialogue, will not even sit at the same table with the representatives of Moscow—not because they are uncanonical (although there is much

that is uncanonical in their behavior) but because they collaborate with and serve the most determined enemies the Church of Christ has yet fought against. If every Orthodox Christian is commanded by the canons to depart from a heretical bishop even before he is officially condemned, or be guilty also of his heresy, how much more must we depart from those who are worse (and more unfortunate) than heretics, because they openly serve the cause of Antichrist?

But there, probably, is the crux of the issue and the root of our differences: for there can be no doubt that the Synod as a Church views our times as apocalyptic (as indeed St. Paul and all the Apostles did their times) and Communism not as merely another tyranny like the Moslem yoke, but as a radical evil in the direct service of satan for the destruction of Christ's Church and the enslavement of mankind (all of which can be read in the writings and seen in the actions of Communism). A few outside our Church share this view, but clearly the consensus of "Orthodox opinion" today (not the conscience of the Church—that is sometimes expressed by only a few), at least among world Orthodox leaders, is that this is just another of many similar crisis in the Church's history. But really, can the restrictions of the Moslem yoke (although, it is true, the free parts of both the Serbian and Greek Churches were at one time forced to break off with the Church authority inside the Moslem territory and form church organizations similar to the present Russian Church Abroad), or even less the admittedly unedifying behavior of some Russian bishops in submitting to the external political pressure of Peter I and Catherine, be seriously compared to the behavior of quite evident and conscious enemies of Christ's Church, who hold their office at the will of the atheists in order to discredit and destroy the Church? Have you read some of the recent statements of Boris Talantov, who within the USSR has come to the same conclusion concerning the Soviet Church that our Church holds?—that its root disease is "Sergianism" (i.e., the concordat of the Patriarchate with the Soviet Government) and that its leaders (no one would think of condemning the ordinary clergy and faithful or even a courageous bishop like Germogen) are consciously destroying the Church? The Metropolia cannot possibly take the side of Talantov when he says openly that Nikodim betrays the Church abroad, for it has received its autocephaly precisely as one of these acts of betrayal! The Metropolia can continue to talk about "persecutions" in the USSR, but now its hands are tied and it dare not look with absolute openness at the church situation in the USSR for fear of finding itself compromised if a radically negative view of the Patriarchate should be expressed or prevail. And what happens if in future (as some Communist officials have said will finally happen) the Soviet Government decides finally to liquidate the Patriarchate by saying that it is not even a valid ecclesiastical organization but exists only to fulfill the will of atheism, and that even some bishops (quite possible!) were unconsecrated?! Well, this latter point is speculation, but I think the Metropolia has enough reason already to continue to be uneasy over the church situation in Russia, and that the autocephaly will not set everyone's conscience at ease.

If they wish, world Orthodox "leaders" can condemn the Synodal Church (as Fr. Schmemann does) for "apocalyptic fruitlessness"—but the spiritual fruits and examples which God has granted to the Church Abroad, recognized by many outside our Church, would seem to be strong evidence against such an easy condemnation.

But to speak of "spirituality" brings-лis back to Fr. Florovsky and "Catharism". Of course, these evident spiritual fruits are not the criterion or proof of the Synod's soundness, but rather a result of it. But when Fr. Florovsky cites the "spirituality" of the Catharists, one's Orthodox head swims: what possible standard of "spirituality" can he be applying to those fanatical and most anti-Christian sectarians? True, there is a Hindu "spirituality"—and I know people who have experienced it at first hand and called it beyond doubt satanic: and there is a kind of "spirituality" which fervent sectarians of many sorts have—but these have nothing to do with Orthodoxy, and none of them can be called "Christian" in any but a marginal sense. Whereas the spiritual fruits of our Orthodox pillars of the Church Abroad are unquestionably Orthodox spiritual fruits and testify to a sound Orthodox formation and environment. And by the way, the Orthodox Church still considers St. Isaac the Syrian as an Orthodox Saint, whatever Catholic scholars (and those Orthodox academics who follow them) may have deduced for themselves. (I'm not sure even Fr. Florovsky doubts this.)

But all of this does not yet lead to the deduction which you expressed (whether or not you believe that we hold it): that "the Church in Exile is the only faithful Orthodox Church." No, our Church has not declared this, and the most one could possibly say, I think, is that the Synod almost alone is carrying on the battle for Orthodoxy today on the main fronts (against ecumenism-communism-renovationism, et al). I would rather call the Synodal Church the voice of the Orthodox conscience today; however much Fr. Schmemann was displeased over it and misunderstood the fact, nonetheless Metr. Philaret in his "Sorrowful Epistle" addressed the world episcopate in a plea—not to join the Synod—but to return to Orthodoxy. The Synod has not "condemned" Athenagoras and Iakovos, but merely warned the Orthodox faithful against their heresy and un-Orthodoxy, and some among the Greeks have obeyed the canons and departed from a heretical bishop before his condemnation so as to be free of his heresy. Our Synodal faithful are not Orthodox supermen; they are subject to the same influences that are destroying the Orthodoxy of many today, and in fact in my observation of some of our parishes a part, certainly, of their preservation of Orthodox ways is owing to their more recent immigration, but the next generations after them will be in trouble too. But their hierarchs are fighting for them, not leading the way to their apostasy.

In sum, then, the Synod is not putting itself against the Orthodox world, it is leading the fight for them also, and it must condemn heresy and apostasy where they appear. From the practical point of view, I agree wholeheartedly with those like Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Neketas (and more and more people in Greece now) who tell their people in America to go to Synod churches and nowhere else— for the Synod in practice has preserved Orthodoxy, both outward and inward, better than the other jurisdictions, and the latter are going to become Uniates before they know it. The response is now up to the other Churches and jurisdictions. If they follow Moscow and cut the Synod oif completely from "world Orthodoxy" as uncanonical, schismatic, sectarians, etc.—then I do not know what one can possibly think, since the Synod has remained faithful to Orthodoxy and has the spiritual fruits to show for this, while the others have changed and abandoned both—than from that moment the Synod and those who follow her are left as the Orthodox Church, and the others are outside of the Church. There have been times in the Church's history when a few hierarchs or monks represented the whole Church; it is thus

conceivable that in our day one part of a Local Church could represent the whole Church. Their Orthodoxy, it is true, vindicates the integrity of the whole Church—but nonetheless, those outside of communion with them are outside the Church, in such a situation. This result would not be our doing—it would be the doing of those who would cut us—and thereby Orthodoxy—away from themselves. I do not see the situation as quite this radical yet, but it would seem to be going in this direction. Metr. Ireney calls for peace with those who prefer not to join the Metropolia now but to remain under their Mother Churches; what then of us who are not under a Mother Church. I think, alas, that another of the unwritten benefits which Moscow obtains from the autocephaly is that the Metropolia, as the preliminary articles of Frs. Schmemann and Meyendorff indicate, will be forced to wage war against the Synod, to stifle her conscience if for no other reason.

A few minor points: "autocephaly" as "independence" is, I think, adequately criticized in our Jan-Feb Orthodox Word: if the means are dubious, the end can only be illusory. And if Moscow gained anything in way of prestige, etc., then the Metropolia has a tainted "independence," to say the least. And if now Bp. Theodosius goes to Moscow—what a cruel blow to the faithful in Russia who will find their own betrayers have deceived even America. Does the Metropolia really want to reduce the Russian faithful to absolute hopelessness?

As for the Serbian Church: if the Synodal hierarchs were indeed Pharisees or at least "canonists," they would not serve with Serbian bishops, who in turn serve with the Soviets; but in fact the situation of each Iron Curtain Church has been viewed separately, and the Serbian Church is the only one the Synod considers not Communist-dominated and with whom there can be concelebration. I believe the Serbian Church was also the only one that accepted our canonization of St. John of Kronstadt. An abnormal situation, perhaps—but I wouldn't call it inconsistent.

The other "inconsistencies" of which Fr. Meyendorff accuses us have been answered in Fr. George Grabbe's reply to Fr. Meyendorff's attack, as were the other main inaccuracies and mistakes. Fr. Neketas is probably printing this soon. We still hope to get off our own reply, bringing up some different points.

A final note: you write that "the autocephaly has been accepted from the hands of some who may have compromised their episcopacy—though, canonically speaking, no Council has confirmed that compromise, as is necessary before it is accepted as definite fact." But if you must wait that long, you will never be able to act in an Orthodox way at all! And what if that Council turns out to be a "Robber Council"—must you then wait another 50 or 100 years to find out which Council the Church accepts? No, the Holy Spirit guides the Church now\ only one's conscience must be attuned to receive this guidance. The Russian Church Abroad, I would say, has received a prophetic call for the Orthodoxy of these times; only let the Church hear, and act accordingly!

May Father Herman pray for and enlighten us all!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

041.

April 26/May 9, 1970

St. Stephen of Perm

Dear Father in Christ, Neketas,

In truth Christ is Risen! Bless us Father!

Thank you for your welcome letters and the frank comments. Yes, I think you are right. Up to now we've emphasized the Metropolia's Russian-ties because it should be at least reminded of its canonical and brotherly obligations. But it's quite obvious that the Metropolia has totally "forgotten" these and is not even in the least embarrassed by them. But now that it considers itself the Orthodox Church in America, it's time to open fire on the most general front: to show what kind of "Orthodoxy" it represents. This issue we have an excellent article criticizing Fr. Schmemann's "liturgical theology," by probably the leading Russian theologian today, Fr. Michael Pomazansky—now 80 years old and living in Jordanville. Frankly, up until recently I had more or less accepted Fr. Schmemann by his reputation, as an "Orthodox" scholar, somewhat open to criticism but probably not too dreadful after all. But after this article, with liberal quotations from his book, he appears as nothing less than an open Protestant. We hope before long to have an article on Archbp. John Shahovskoy also—do you know, by the way, if anything of his has appeared in English besides the Pastori I heard that Leaves of the Tree is being translated. If Fr. Schmemann is their "theologian," he is their "spiritual" man— and what a twisted, self-deceived and deceiving "spirituality" he expounds! As far as Orthodoxy is concerned, we have all the weapons on our side, and all they can do is refer to their long-despised "canons" and make vague charges of "sectarianism," etc. But the conscience of the more sensitive ones left there is not easy. We're corresponding with Fr. David Black, who shows all the deficiencies of a St. Vladimir's education—and be's becoming hard-pressed to defend his Metropolia. He admits its spiritual impoverishment and the Synod's spiritual wealth (but his idol, Fr. Florovsky, told him we are like Catharists, who were also "spiritual"—good heavens, what an upside-down notion of "spirituality"!); he admits the Soviet bishops may have compromised their episcopacy—but no council has condemned them, and some of Peter's and Catherine's bishops were also no good! He even prays that the Metropolia bishops haven't "sold out Orthodoxy." We mince few words with him, but he keeps writing back, so there is at least a seed planted there.

I hope you aren't accusing yourself of getting Fr. Seraphim into trouble. He wants us not to reprint his letter, and sounds so apologetic now (after being suspended on Passion Monday) that we fear he might even give in to them, under the guise of obedience and humility, and renounce everything he said. But even if he didn't want such publicity, I think it's providential—a call of attack against their "strong" points, which are properly put in the same category as Athenagoras and Iakovos. I think Fr. Schmemann and others would like to present the Metropolia now as the "middle way" between the extremes of Iakovos (even Fr. David admits he's not Orthodox) and Metr. Philaret on left and right. But under attack they can't sustain this position, and for practical reasons anyway they will have to come to terms with the Greek Archdiocese. The weapons are all on our side, and it's time we let loose with them—now is truly our "time of decision."

By the way, can you give any more information of the 3 new parishes from the Metropolia— did the whole Smoky Lake parish come, etc? We hear from a friend in Vancouver that their parish will vote soon, and if the Metropolia wins a significant number will leave and come to us.

We've more or less concluded an arrangement to get a linotype, and we're now building a floor for it. Pray for us. This will widen our possibilities considerably.

Vladiko Nektary just visited us for an hour or so on his way to S.F. and brought us a little Paschal joy.

With love in Christ our Lord,

Eugene

P.s. Are you going to print Fr. George Grabbe's reply to Fr. Meyendorff?

042.

April 29/May 12, 1970

St. Memnon

Dear in Christ, Vladimir and Sylvia [Anderson],

Christ is risen!

We received a letter from Craig Young in which he told us of his "Hindu" readings and your reaction to this. I replied with a statement of the Orthodox principles involved (avoidance of eclecticism, the change in one's whole life (including reading habits) which acceptance of Orthodoxy involves, etc.). In his reply to this, which we received yesterday, he seemed to understand the point and to be quite ready to abandon his "eclectic" readings. He seemed to have gotten quite a shock from your reaction, and this doubtless helped his "understanding" in a way that a more "objective" way perhaps would not have.

However, he seems to think that in the midst of this there has arisen some kind of bad feeling between your two families, to the extent that they think even of postponing their reception into the Church until this is overcome. I pray that this is only a misunderstanding (which the devil is always quick to stir up especially in those about to make such an important step), and that it will be quickly cleared up. In his letter to us Craig repented of his intellectual pride and self-esteem, and he seems to me to be quite willing to enter into the Orthodox point of view on such matters. They are both "infants" in the Faith (still in the womb, in fact!) and with time and experience they will breathe in the Orthodox spirit. Now that you've given them their "shock," I hope you'll make it clear to them that there's nothing personal involved. It would be a tragedy if virtually the only two Orthodox families in northern California were not at peace and harmony with each other!

About the "Self-Realization Fellowship," I encountered it slightly in my "searching" days, when I was exploring all kinds of Eastern religions. It seems to be more a product of post-Protestant sectarianism of the "New Thought" variety, with a facade of pseudo-Hinduism. Its headquarters

used to be not far from San Diego where I was born, and I recall passing its blue-domed (rather like Russian domes!) “mushroomburger stand” (they’re vegetarians, I gather) on the highway between San Diego and Los Angeles.

I don’t know what to make of our weather. We’ve sowed our summer garden, and then yesterday it snowed for several hours, and it looks like more of the same today.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

P.s. On May 30 (Saturday) Vladika Anthony will serve at Fort Ross, and he would like to make this a big event preceding the canonization of Father Herman (Fort Ross being our only accessible local holy place, with an indirect historical connection to Fr. Herman). Why don’t you arrange to set up a table outside and sell books (in English and Russian) and especially little things like icons, which the people will be likely to buy? This is done regularly at such events on the East Coast, but just hasn’t become a custom here. Only ask Vladika Anthony’s blessing first—I’m sure he’d be only too happy, to have this done. Pictures of the Tsar, Imperial Family, Vladika John, etc., would probably sell quite well. Icons of Father Herman, copies of OW with Fr. Herman on the cover, etc., would also be timely. (Just an idea!)

043.

May 5/18, 1970

St. Irene

Dear Craig and Susan,

Christ is risen!

Please forgive me for such a delay in writing—just too much to do! I wrote Vladimir and Sylvia, begging them to clear up the unfortunate and unneeded conflict between you. They seem to be so terribly emotional! I pray that this has already been resolved by now.

Now for your questions:

Your son (what is his name?), if as I presume he has been baptized (you should then supply his baptismal certificate too) will be received by chrismation and thereafter may (and is encouraged to as often as possible) receive Holy Communion without confession until age 7, after which he must go to confession each time—which is of course very elementary at that age, but instills this Christian principle in the child at an early age. By age 7 the child should also be observing the Church fasts, especially the pre-Communion fast, and while fasting is not required of him before that it is wise to begin preparing him early for this, by giving him a smaller breakfast than usual on days when he is to receive Communion, etc. You can judge for yourself how much you can expect from your own child.

The general practice of Orthodox confession differs, I believe, from the general Catholic practice, by being less legalistic and formal. We have the same seven major sins, but apart from

major sins there is a general emphasis on one's constant sinfulness in minor things, whether in word, deed, or thought. One should also make oneself aware of these things and confess them so that they won't pile up on one. One need not go into unnecessary details of circumstances, etc., unless you have some particular question about this; you will find that the local priests are accustomed to quite general confessions, the important thing being to mention specifically any major sins, to sincerely repent of all your sins and imperfections before God, great and small, and to leave nothing weighing on your soul. It is especially important to retain no animosity for anyone, and it is the custom to beg mutual forgiveness with those nearest one (usually ones family) before receiving Communion. (The customary reply is: "God will forgive; forgive me.") As for the first confession, I am sure it will be satisfactory to mention briefly and generally any major sins of the past, and then especially any major sins since you last received Catholic confession.

On the subject of birth control, the Orthodox Church is certainly no more "liberal" than the Catholic, and any kind of interference with the natural object and result of intercourse, i.e., the begetting of children, is strictly condemned as a severe sin. Certainly the "pill" falls into this category. The "wisdom" of man is one thing, the law of God is another. As to abstinence on fast days, this is part of the same asceticism or self-denial that decrees fasting from foods. Married love is not regarded as "evil" any more than meat or eggs are, but our life here is a preparation for an eternal life where "there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage," where there is an endless feast not of earthly foods, and a part of the discipline on the way to this Kingdom is through taming the flesh to the spirit. St. Paul speaks of husbands and wives denying each other (I Cor. 7:5), and this is interpreted as referring especially to preparation for Holy Communion, but also to other fasting periods. Women, by the way in their "unclean" periods are not suppose to enter a church. Last year, when one women was in this state on Easter, Archbishop Anthony told her she could go to church and stand in the back, without kissing icons, taking antidoron, or of course receiving Communion.

I hope all this doesn't discourage you. I think you will understand that it doesn't come from any attempt to place impossible demands upon people, but rather from great reverence for the things of God and the necessity for our purity in approaching these things.

It is true that the Church day—beginning with Vespers—begins at sunset, but it is the universally accepted custom in the Russian Church to fast from midnight to midnight.

As for the "intolerant" attitude of our Synod to other Orthodox Churches: Several years ago a Catholic girl was received into our Church, and she told me that one of her earliest puzzlements concerned the seemingly great contrast between the frightful statements made about heretics, apostates, etc., and the universally kind and loving approach which she always found when talking to our clergy and faithful. I see no conflict whatever. To guard the truth one must speak straightforwardly about those who depart from it, in order to protect the flock and, if possible, to enlighten those in error. But to every soul the Church opens Her treasures—if only he will listen to the truth an accept what She teaches—which comes from the Holy Spirit—and not his "reinterpretation" of it. With regard to those Orthodox Churches that are departing from the truth, one should be if anything even more outspoken—for their leaders, having known

Orthodoxy, are consciously departing from it and trying to lead the flock away with them. But in all my contacts with the zealots for Orthodoxy within our Church, I can truthfully say that I haven't found one of them without true Christian love for those in error; they would be the first to embrace Patriarch Athenagoras and others if they repented of their errors and returned to Orthodoxy. The contrary impression, I believe, comes chiefly from the criticism of those whose idea of the Church is very vague and who therefore accuse our zealots of "lack of love" when they rightfully attack apostasy.

The Orthodox Church situation, alas, is not getting any better, and the action of the Metropolia in finally siding with the Soviet Church renders communion with them impossible. One can have every sympathy with the suffering members of the Moscow Church, but the evidence that the leaders of this Church are trying to discredit and destroy the Orthodox Church in the interests of the triumph of Communism is too irrefutable for us not to speak out against them. But even here we do not pass judgment on them, but only try to refute their lies and try to help those whom they persecute and imprison in the USSR.

I hope I didn't give you too much of a scare on "meditation." Certainly there is nothing wrong with reading Scripture and reflecting on it. It would be even better to read also a commentary on the Scripture passages—such as that of St. John Chrysostom, which exists complete in English (Eerdmans series).

I certainly pray that you successfully fight off the Uniate temptation. I have heard of so many Catholics coming to a spiritual dead-end there, that even if I weren't Orthodox I would advise you to stay clear of it. The universal complaint of these Catholics is that they finally realize that they are "play-acting," they go through the motions of Orthodoxy without being Orthodox, and at the same time they lose their identity as Catholics and feel themselves to be neither Orthodox nor Catholic but in some strange limbo—and end by becoming Orthodox, going back to "Western" Catholicism, or worse.

I don't know the exact time of services at Fort Ross, but as a rule one can count on such a feast-day Liturgy beginning about 10 a.m.

Certainly you can invite whomever you wish to witness your reception into the Church.

I hope that answers your questions for a while, but don't be afraid to ask more. Learning about the Orthodox faith is a lifelong task, and you will hardly have touched the surface when you are received into the Church. But you have the essentials, and with these you can already swim in the Church's current of grace.

Trusting in your prayers,

With love in Christ our Saviour

044.

May 6/19, 1970

St. Job the Long-Suffering

Dear Dr. [John] Johnstone,

In truth Christ is risen!

Many thanks for your letter, the enclosed article, and the two checks for $15. The excess above your renewal we have applied to missionary-library funds; trial subscriptions have been entered for the three libraries whose addresses you sent.

We surely sympathize with you in your very difficult situation and pray that you will soon find a solution to your uncertainties. My own experience as a convert is rather the opposite of yours, as almost all the people I know in the Synod are Russians—and in the main I have found them to be such a caliber of people, from bishops to laymen—Orthodox through and through, aware of what's going on today, and ready and willing to suffer and die for their unashamed faith—that there are just no words for it. The world does not know these people. Of course, most of them have known the Soviets at first hand, and that seems to make a difference that most "free" Orthodox just can't imagine.

There is, of course, a language problem, but with time that is resolving itself. I was surprised recently when I stopped and counted some 30 converts at the San Francisco cathedral in the last three or four years (exclusive of those who marry into the Church)—at a cathedral where there are no English services or sermons, no priest who speaks fluent English (they all speak "passable" English, however), and no "convert" program whatever. And almost all of them are being successfully rooted into the faith. Here the language problem is obviously secondary to something else—which can be seen also in the fact that several of the most recent converts have come from the Greek Archdiocese and the Metropolia.

About the Moscow Patriarchate, by the way, contrary to common impression our Synod has never "condemned" it, reserving that judgement to a future All-Russian Sobor; but the Synod's position is unbending that until such a Sobor there can be no communion or contact with such a dubious ecclesiastical organization. Speaking of the 1920's, we've printed almost nothing yet of the available material on the schism of 1927—when the majority was anti-Sergian, and the "Soviet Church" triumphed only because its opponents were imprisoned, murdered, and driven underground. And now the Metropolia, for the sake of the "Patriarch's" signature, has prejudged the case of the Soviet Church and found it "canonical"—because everyone else says so! Our Synod has yet to issue its final statement on the matter, but certainly the situation of the Metropolia has become now so dubious that no further communion with it is possible. Spiritually and theologically, also, its direction is already clear— with the current of the times; and we will print several critiques of its theologians to point this out in detail.

By the way, do you know Hieromonk Seraphim of St. Tikhon's Monastery? After his outspoken letter which Fr. Neketas published he was immediately suspended by Bp. Kiprian (on Passion Monday), who seems to be trying to exploit his monastic "humility" and "obedience" in order to extract a full retraction of things which are, after all, true! Please pray for him.

We hope to hear more from you.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

P.s. Platina is on most maps, I believe—some 45 miles west of Red Bluff on Hwy 36 (some maps show only Beegum, 5 miles east, which is no longer on the hwy). It is a wilderness area, and our conditions are appropriately "primitive"—two small cabins with no conveniences. Our former bookshop remains in San Francisco. Under such conditions we of course are not too anxious to have merely casual visitors, but those who really want to see us are welcome; but those had better notify us in advance, as we are sometimes in San Francisco for several days at a time, and it is a 100-mile round trip from the main hwy to find this out (no telephone, either). We can put up an occasional rough- and-ready male visitor overnight. As you see, we are "escaping"! If God blesses our venture, of course, there will be more provision for visitors in future.

Fr. Panteleimon visited us for several days last November, and we are just now taking advantage of his generous offer to help us buy a linotype. It's so old that I'm afraid Father will have to pray for us every time just to get it started! Glory be to God for all things!

045.

May 10/23, 1970

St. Simon Zealot, Apostle

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

In truth Christ is risen! Bless us, Father!

Many thanks for your letter. First of all—yes, we would most certainly like to see your answer to Fr. Schmemann, the sooner the better. We might even be able to substitute it for our already prepared article on Fr. S's "liturgical theology," which has no particular timeliness—depending on length. We ourselves thought of writing something by way of reply to that, as also to Fr. Meyendorff's attack in Orthodox Church, but we couldn't find the time and concentration, and than Fr. George Grabbe's replies came out. Fr. Grabbe's replies, while always sober and factual, are really addressed to Russians who can't get excited about people like Frs. S & M. because they've long recognized them as apostates and just don't listen to them any more. But for English-speaking people there should be a more fighting approach, I think; in English these people are "theological authorities," and it's up to us to prove that they aren't. We heard just yesterday from Fr. Neketas that you had written such an article; he plans to print it together with Fr. Schmemann's original to give the complete picture and avoid any charges of unfairness. But our circulation is probably at least double his, although I'm sure none of our outlets can come close to The Orthodox Church, which I would imagine must be 5-10,000. Diaconia does make an effort to get the whole picture and present opposing viewpoints, though I get the impression that they cull Orthodox publications and pick out the newsworthy articles rather than taking manuscripts as such.

It was our good fortune to be blissfully unaware for several years of what was being printed in The Orthodox Church, but with the Metropolia scandal we decided we had better see what they are saying. We've seen the last 6 issues now—and such a brand of shady, second-rate journalism is just about without peer in the Orthodox press. Quite apart from his attack on the Synod, even

poor Athenagoras isn't allowed to be represented, and then his letter is finally presented in a footnote as some kind of "mystery," by implication a forgery. Fr. Meyendorff is apparently aware of addressing a very limited audience who can't be trusted to distinguish the "right" point of view (evidently the party line) from any others. We're still hoping to get the time to write him an Open Letter on this subject, with a note on its implications for their new "American Orthodoxy."

You have confirmed our own general impression of Metropolitan Philip as a well-meaning man who unfortunately wishes to be at peace with everyone. So many of our young American priests of almost all jurisdictions go through a vague and mostly external Orthodox education and then gain parish experience mostly in how to get along with people, and they simply aren't equipped to stand up and fight for Orthodoxy. But now—1970 being perhaps the very year of decision, our American "watershed" for Orthodoxy—those who don't stand up and fight, knowing what they're fighting for and against and having the weapons to do it, just won't be Orthodox any more.

We rejoice in your coming to the Synod. In The Orthodox Word we've tried not to push any too-exclusive idea of the Synod, but the logic of church history itself is forcing the role of "guardian of Orthodoxy" upon the Synod. Diaconia already speaks of the forging of a Synod-Old Calendarist "ultra-conservative alliance" against the rest of Orthodoxy, a rather politically-toned appraisal, but perhaps even useful if it leads some to investigate that there is something worth conserving in Orthodoxy. Probably you do not know many of our Russians in the Synod; my own acquaintance with them, from laymen to bishops, has persuaded me—as I just wrote to Dr. Johnstone—that they are in the main of a caliber you just don't meet in the world, or in other Orthodox Churches, today. The stamp of faithfulness to Christ and His Church, and confessing these, is on them. Experience of the Soviets has given them an awareness, also, that you just don't find elsewhere.

About Athenagoras-Iakovos, we have nothing at all except their occasional sermons and epistles in the Orthodox Observer. Fr. Panteleimon is undoubtedly the best source for material here. Yes, perhaps a "theological" analysis is too flattering to them, but certainly we have the right to analyze those statements and actions by means of which they are changing Orthodoxy, and show what they mean and where they lead. Perhaps this is a big order, but it would be nice to have some kind of coherent appraisal of them.

Within a week or two, God willing, we will have a linotype, and hopefully the worst part of our tortuous hand-setting days will be at an end and we can start producing more. Please keep us in your prayers.

With respect and love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

046.

May 10/23, 1970

St. Simon Zealot, Apostle

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Fr. Panteleimon and Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

Bless us, Father!

We send our sincere gratitude for the $200, which was safely received. As it turns out, this was precisely the sum we needed for completing the purchase of the linotype itself, which is now accomplished. Truly, God sends us just what is necessary and just at the right time. Next week we are transporting the linotype here, which will be an enormous task, but Fr. Alexy has promised to come here and get it back in working condition for us. We've built the floor for it and hope to get enough of the walls and roof on at least to keep the rain off, within the next few days. By now, of course, we've gotten so far behind with the new OW that we would like to put the new machine into operation immediately, despite our inexperience, but it remains to be seen how easy this will be, what things have yet to be bought for it, etc.

Enclosed is a check for $10 from a girl in San Francisco (non-Orthodox, a potential convert) who recently informed me that my godson Michael Bain had died; she wishes this sum to be used in his memory, so I send it on to you and beg you to remember him at the Divine Liturgy. His is a very strange story which I do not entirely understand. He was received into the Church at the S.F. Cathedral about 4 years ago when he married a Russian girl, a zealot for Orthodoxy who has turned her whole family into zealots (her brother is now studying at Jordanville after overcoming his period of rebellion). I talked to him once or twice and gave him literature, and at the last moment I was called in to be his godfather. He was to be received with Chrismation, coming from Anglicanism, on Saturday night after the Vigil. He couldn't produce his Anglican Baptism papers, and Vladika John, who was present, after a brief examination which the poor boy didn't pass at all, found him unprepared to be received into Orthodoxy. However, the wedding was next day. For the next half hour Vladika sat in a chair, then walked around a little, in silence, appearing to be completely absorbed in thought (but probably, rather, praying), while the rest of us stood quietly in the darkened church and an unusual thunderstorm broke out, the lightning visible through the windows—a very eerie experience. At the end he decided the boy could be received then through Chrismation, and would produce the Baptism papers the next day. I don't know much what happened after that, except that there was an obvious conflict between the quite ordinary jazz-loving American boy and his cultured, zealous Orthodox wife. But after several months there was some kind of incident, revealing some kind of psychological disturbance, and he was in the hospital with a badly cut hand and never completely recovered the use of his fingers. Vladika John visited him in the hospital and told the family that the devil was fighting for his soul. He nonetheless recovered and was attending school, until now I am informed that he has died—how, from what, I haven't been informed as yet. There may be some lesson from it all in the end. Anyway, I beg your prayers for the repose of his soul.

We hear that Fr. Michael has come to the Synod and has written a reply to Schmemann— who truly deserves to be brought down from his ridiculous pedestal. We're firing one shot in this direction with our new issue. We're anxiously awaiting Fr. Michael's article.

The Metropolia coup is over, and after it I think the air is clearer and our own consciences clean; we did what we could, and the good ship Metropolia has shown it doesn't want to be saved from shipwreck. Let us therefore fish out the survivors and go to war in earnest for our Holy Orthodoxy!

Warm weather has come to the mountains, and we go to our nearby creek (a mile from the post office) two or three times a week to get enough water to keep our garden growing. Our mother deer had offspring last week (I think the nest is in the tall grass to the east), and we are waiting for her to display it (or them). Our squirrels drive us crazy, and one of them is also expecting. Truly, all creatures praise the Lord, even our snakes (of whom we have faintheartedly killed several). We've heard nothing from Hieromonk Seraphim. We are gradually building up our "skete," in full expectation of having it turn one day into an Orthodox refugee camp. We aren't too close to the news here, but what we get a week later (from U.S. News) is enough to evoke suitable comparisons with 1917. The whole Metropolia affair seems to fit very nicely into the political pattern of the times; I guess that's what comes from having your "theologians" so well attuned to the spirit of the times.

Pray for us, dear Fathers,

With love in Christ our Saviour,

047.

May 21/June 3, 1970

Mr. Alex V. Cattell

St. Tikhon's Society, Inc.

598 15th Ave.

San Francisco, Calif. 94118

Dear Mr. Cattell,

Last Friday evening we returned to Platina with our new linotype and put it safely in place. We then opened our mail and found the check of St. Tikhon's Society for $400. You can imagine our feelings. Truly, everything is given by God—in the right way and just at the right time. With this money we have already been able to pay some important expenses connected with the purchase of the machine.

Please extend our heartfelt gratitude to the St. Tikhon's Society for it's most generous and thoughtful gift. And please pray for us that we may bring forth fruits worthy of the love which you and others have shown us.

With gratitude and love in Christ our Saviour,

Father Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

Br. Gleb Podmoshensky

Br. Eugene Rose

048.

May 26/June 8, 1970

St. George the New Martyr

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Bless us, Father!

We received your manuscript safely, also the corrections. Definitely, we will print it. It is just what is needed—completely fair and objective, but right to the point, and raising just the right questions for Orthodox at this crisis point. We only wish it could get an even wider circulation.

We had hoped to print the article in our new issue, but further complications added to our usual belatedness make this probably impossible. Our "March-April" issue is now so late that it will be the only one to be sure to reach our subscribers before the canonization date of Father Herman; and last week the Slavonic text of the service to Father Herman was finally approved—and so we have dropped everything else to translate it and put it in this issue, where it will take up probably half of the pages. On top of that, we just bought a linotype in a special arrangement requiring us to transport it here by June 1—into a building which is still only half-finished. The linotype is still in a hundred pieces, taking up some of our printing room, and can't be put into working shape for some weeks, so we find it to our exasperation a short-term liability which won't start justifying itself until "May- June." But glory be to God for all things—in a month or two, God willing, we will be doubling our production. In the meantime, we ask your prayers that we will be able to get the present issue out safely. Your article then will go in the May-June issue, together with another long and important article on the Catacomb Church, about which all too little has appeared in English. The anti-Sergianist texts of 1927, which we also hope to start printing, have a quite contemporary relevance; as with the Greeks and the Calendar-modernist question, so in the Russian Church the basis of today's disorders dates to the '20 s, and was already answered then.

Truly, may God grant peace to His Church! But judging from the pace of contemporary apostasy, our immediate prospect is for much battle. May God help us.

Trusting in your prayers,

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

P.s. We were happy to hear of your official acceptance into the Synod, about which we would like to make a brief note at the beginning of your article. May God strengthen you in your chosen path. If you happen to see Bp. Laurus, please give him our warmest greetings; we have close ties with him.

049.

May 27/June 9,1970

Priest-Martyr Ferapont

Dear Fr. Neketas,

Bless us, Father!

We're sitting in a surprise rainstorm of two days duration, more or less cut off from the world by a slippery road. Very good for our garden, but of dubious value to our linotype, which sits under a plastic covering and a hastily-devised temporary roof. It took us four days to get it dismantled, loaded (with a fervent prayer that the lift on our rented truck would work on a 1500 pound load), transported, and unloaded. Unfortunately it will now be a matter of weeks before the building is finished, linotype assembled, gas and electricity hooked up, etc., which also interferes with our sadly belated March-April issue, which we will start finally to handset in only a day or two, hoping to get it out not long past July 1st. Once the linotype is operating we will progress rapidly, but meanwhile…pray for us!

We received the officially approved service to Fr. Herman last week and have translated it and will include it in this issue, the only issue that will reach our readers before the canonization. It will be 24 pages in the middle of the magazine, and we'll also print 1000 or so separate in brochure-form. We tried to keep some poetic feeling in the English, not with entire success, I'm afraid. The Slavonic itself is sometimes inspiring, and sometimes rather pale. The troparion is still in doubt; we stand for the old one, but there may be a completely new one…or perhaps a choice of two. This being really the first "American" service, we've tried to make it a model, right down to the acrostic, which worked out rather successfully in both languages. The Slavonic committee does not care much for acrostics, but we found it rather inspiring to have to work within the norms of a sacred phrase from the words of Father Herman. Jordanville is printing Fr. Kyprian's icon of Fr. Herman in 2 sizes—4 x 5 and 6×9. Were having our icon reprinted in smaller size—something like 2 1/2×3 1/2.

Yes, we have the text of Fr. Michael's answer to Fr. Schmemann—it's just what is needed today. Unfortunately, because of the service, it will have to go in next issue. It's 15 pages long. The Synod is now getting quite a nucleus of American priests. May God grant all to flourish under her. It will doubtless take a while before the Russian psychology comes around to accepting the. Synod's crucial role in world Orthodoxy, but fortunately there are some who understand already.

Is the Synod priest you mention in Alaska by any chance Fr. Nicholas Harris in Anchorage? He ordered a number of copies of our Fr. Gerasim issue and subscribed at that time. We hear from Fr. Elias Armistead that he is bringing his wife to Alaska to open an Inn—but still he doesn't say a word about what he's doing, though he notes that our richest diocese, San Francisco, doesn't give him a dime. But for what? Our doubts about him only grow.

We read with interest your comments on the times. Alas, I fear that the free, liberal, naive America of our childhood is gone, and the increasing anarchism will only call forth a dictatorship, of right or left, depending on who can seize it. Whichever it may be, we Orthodox don't have a bright future, in worldly terms; but doubles this will give us our chance really to

confess our Orthodoxy in difficult circumstances. The "official" jurisdictions might be able to make their peace with the new conditions and "flourish" ; la the Soviet Church or the Church of Greece, in which case we who are less politically-minded would be reduced to a more or less catacomb status even under a rightist dictatorship, while under leftists we might not even be allowed to exist. Although we don't get much news here (mainly week-old comment in US News) and aren't really aware of the "polarization" of feelings that is going on, my guess is that rightism will install itself, leading to one last world conflagration, out of which may emerge… the beast of the last days who will finally reconcile all.

But that is all guesswork. For us what is important is to stick to our holy Orthodoxy, which is our real battle, and face each new day in a spirit of confession.

Hitler, by the way, was a most interesting apocalyptic phenomenon. Besides his insane jealously of the Jews, which led him to destroy them so that the Germans could be the "chosen race" and he the Messiah (I even recall, though I can't find the source, that he once said that if he couldn't be the Messiah then he would willingly be Antichrist!) he was himself basically a Bolshevik with an idol-worship of Lenin and Communist techniques who saw 20th-century world history as a battle between his National Bolshevism and Soviet international Bolshevism, and who when he saw the end of his hopes gave his political inheritance to the Soviets in the words: "The future belongs to the stronger Eastern power [nation]." In the last days of the war the Nazis organized "werewolves" who took their inspiration from the positively "mystical" broadcasts of Goebbels to the effect that since the war was lost, Germany and Europe must be positively destroyed so that the new order of the future could be built on the total ruin and ashes of everything man had hitherto valued and built. Hitlerism, in short, is only the handmaid of Communism, which in turn points to the "mystical" pinnacle of modern times: Antichrist. Hider, also, while anti-monarchist, kept the crown and scepter of the Holy Roman Emperors "just in case" the times should change and a "monarch" should be demanded; and he once also said "if the monks of Mount Athos should ever sign a document giving me the inheritance of the Eastern Empire, by all means preserve it" for just such a change in the spirit of the times. Exactly the same features are apparent also in Napoleon, who however chose the side of the Jews and convened their Sanhedrin for the first time in 1800 years to have himself proclaimed Emperor. Napoleon also (I forget whether just in the Russian campaign or in general) had his soldiers and followers tattooed on the right hand, without which they had no right to receive food.

Perhaps these are all "minor details," but I somehow think they will loom large when modern godlessness comes to demand its symbolic crowning.

But again, such speculations carried too far tend to divert our attention from the one important thing: Orthodoxy. World and national politics will take their course without us, but few indeed are they who care to stand up for Orthodoxy. For ourselves, we feel even more pressingly the need to print whatever we can of solid Orthodoxy while there is still time. May God help us all to work while there is still light!

Thank you for letting us see the letters to John Harwood, which we return herewith.

Please pray for us in these crucial days.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

050.

June 1/14, 1970

Holy Pentecost

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel [Olson],

I pray this finds you well and in the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the Feast of Whose Descent upon the Apostles we celebrated today. We spent the day here and read the kneeling prayers ourselves, as we've been travelling too much of late and plan to go to San Francisco again in two weeks for the day of Vladika John's repose. Our unseasonal rains, which broke out again yesterday, made our road somewhat slippery in any case. I have a feeling our weather portends a cold, white winter, for which we had better start getting prepared!

A brief book report: I was somewhat disappointed in Hunt for the Czar, expecting to find more about the mysterious figure of Genelevsky, about whom the author has apparently written another book. There is actually nothing new revealed in the book, and about all that is documented is the fact that at various times various people have believed that one or more members of the whole imperial family escaped from Ekatarinberg. I found the author far too prone to jump to conclusions which he favors, and which half the time just don't make sense: for example, finding a newspaper clipping of a "Nicholas Romanov" visiting S.F. in 1919 makes him think it very likely that it was the Tsar—but if he was in hiding surely he wouldn't call himself "Nicholas Romanov"! In general the book is full of guesses and intimations which, I think, really lead nowhere because (leaving aside for the moment whatever proof there is on the opposite side) the whole idea of the survival of the imperial family does not make sense psychologically, whether from the point of view of the Tsar or that of the Bolsheviks, and it gets itself mixed up in a number of self-contradictions. For example, several times the author mentions that the Tsar and Tsarevich wanted to live in Poland because it was close to Russia in case the political situation should change—but if the Tsar is incognito and goes out of his way to make everyone believe he is dead, what possible role4s there for him in Russian politics? And the longer he waits to reveal himself, the more difficult it will be to persuade people he can possibly be alive; if he wants to be ready to reascend the throne, he surely has to let people know who and where he is far in advance. Again: if the Tsar is so anxious to make everyone believe he is dead, what is he doing coming to S. F. "very possibly" to prepare a wild book on his escape for publication and then to sell it to the movies!!? The parts of "Rescuing the Tsar" which the author quotes certainly do not carry much conviction as to their truthfulness, seeming more like far-out spy fiction. And from the Bolshevik point of view: what possible compensation could have persuaded them to let such a great potential hindrance to their cause (the very symbol of the "old order") out of their power? And since when did they begin trusting their enemies to keep such an impossible secret? But on the contrary the Bolshevik psychology is quite understandable if they really murdered the imperial family: of course they would never let the Tsar out of their hands, and under the conditions of civil war it is quite likely that the murder would be performed not publicly by command from the top, but as the conditions (the advance of the White Army)

demanded; of course they could not admit to the world that they had murdered the whole family (defenseless woman and children—nothing to the Soviets, but world opinion must be respected!) and that is why the first announcement mentioned only that the Tsar had been "executed" and left it vague where the rest of the family was—a stimulated massacre of the whole family was certainly not in the Bolshevik interests. It is also understandable why no one could be found who had witnessed the act—most if not all the participants were back of the Communist lines, where the Bolsheviks could handle them as they saw fit, and if any of the murderers were caught by the Whites, they weren't likely to confess such a crime which would mean their own deaths; the one person who was suppose to have participated quite understandably said he was outside the building at the time. All this psychological evidence, while not direct proof in itself, does serve to confirm the generally accepted story of the massacre, for which there is after all some fairly good evidence which there seems no logical reason for the Soviets to have manufactured. Without quite strong evidence to the contrary, I think the story of Romanov survival will have to be classed with the similar stories concerning the Dauphin Louis XVII, who apparently died or was killed as a child in prison under equally shady circumstances which the revolutionary government didn't care to reveal, but who was resurrected many times in later legends. The psychology of various pretenders, while weird, has enough precedents (false Dimitrys and by the dozen!) not to be surprising.

Here it is June and we've hardly started on the March-April Orthodox Word, almost half of which will be devoted to the service to Father Herman, hopefully in two colors. Pray for us. These next two months will be a trial, but after that, God willing, we should begin to make progress. Gleb's brother in law is coming for a few days this week, and we'll let him try to finish the linotype wing to the printshop. Fr. Alexy will probably be here within two weeks to put the linotype together, and then we can really start work. We already have a tank of liquid gas for it, and before long we might even have such modern conveniences as a gas burner and gas refrigerator! But most of all we dream of getting more building done so as to get more protection against the relentless fogs of November-September and sometimes later. Hopefully we'll get more snow this year and so avoid the fogs in Jan-Feb, which settle in with long rainy periods.

Did I mention that Fr. Michael Azkoul sent us an excellent answer to Fr. Schmemann's attack on the Russian Church Abroad (his answer to Metr. Philaret's Sorrowful Epistle)? In their mutual correspondence, Fr. Schmemann finally admitted that he simply didn't have the facts about the Russian Church Abroad. The manuscript was turned down by Fr. Meyendorff for The Orthodox Church (Fr. Michael notes that Fr. Meyendorff is extremely emotional about the Synod and simply can't reason about it, while Fr. Schmemann is somewhat more reasonable, half of his own family being in the Synod!), but is extremely objective and fair, and mentions a fact that hasn't been brought out before— that the Moscow-Metropolia negotiations took place in Geneva and New York under WCC auspices, with representatives of the WCC present! Alas for our beloved Alaska—Bp. Theodosius has been to Moscow twice (Once for the Patriarch's funeral, and several weeks ago to receive the "Tomos"), and on June 5 (we just received photographs) Bp. Juvenal (second under Nikodim in the Foreign Relations Dept) served with him before Fr. Herman's relics and on Spruce Island. Next we fully expect to hear that the Soviets, out of

"brotherly" feeling, are sending monks to Spruce Island—an ideal espionage center. God save us all. It is all very sad, but we have yet to see what Father Herman will do.

Pray for us,

With love in Christ,

051.

June 8/21, 1970

Sunday of All Saints

Dear Father David,

What is there to say: The Metropolia has gone through with its coup, which for the present involves only itself, but obviously has possibilities for a future union of all those who think a "unified Orthodox Church" is the answer for American Orthodoxy. No, it is not the answer, and is the product of very superficial thinking on the question. The answer is a return to real Orthodoxy, so sorely diluted in this century in America. The Metropolia move, I believe, is the watershed of 20th-century Orthodoxy—from now on there will be two "Orthodoxies" in America: the real one (of which no one can doubt that our Synod has become the beacon-light) and the imitation, the product of the Protestantized-academicized Paris school joined to the practical indifference and secular Protestantism of American life. The proof of the case against the Metropolia (and the other like-thinking jurisdictions) lies not in its dubious tactics or even its criminal negotiations with the Soviets, but in the fact that its leadership is not preaching Orthodoxy but a cheap surrogate thereof. Yes, some priests still try, but the future belongs to Frs. Schmemann and Meyendorff, who are not Orthodox, and the future generation is being raised on the blasphemous parody of Orthodoxy contained in the official publications, from Young Life to Concern. These people doubtless mean well, but they have been drastically miseducated, and now they try to enforce their abysmal ignorance of Orthodoxy upon the whole Church.

We assumed, in our last letter to Bp. Theodosius, that he would understand that unity with the Synod involves rejection of Moscow and vice versa. It is not only Metr. Anastassy but our own Archbp. Anthony of San Francisco and many other hierarchs who have pleaded for the restoration of this unity, to which the Metropolia always turned a deaf ear. Now, of course, the Metropolia's schism is complete, and no further communion is possible. But now we may at least thank God that the air has been somewhat cleared, and those still able to choose can do so. The issues are critical: Orthodoxy vs. non-Orthodoxy. In worldly terms the Metropolia has all the odds on its side: numbers, prestige, publication of wide circulation with an editor who, frankly, is not to be accused of fairness or honesty. But the Metropolia does not have principle or truth on her side, nor can she be considered any longer as within the Church. The official representatives of the Metropolia either do not know the facts of Church history of the last 50 years (Fr. Schmemann has admitted to Fr. Michael Azkoul that he doesn't know the facts about the Synod!) or else they are deliberately distorting them. The "ship" of the Metropolia, as a Church, has come to shipwreck; from now on individuals can still be rescued, but the judgment of the whole body can only be given over to the free Russian Church of the future.

The Synod's position of truth and principle, of what Orthodoxy is and what it is not, will be presented in detail in future publications. Our Orthodox Word will soon print Fr. Michael Azkoul's excellent reply to Fr. Schmemann's attack on the "Sorrowful Epistle" (Fr. Meyendorff turned it down, predictably), in the hope of setting straight Fr. Schmemanns distortions and faulty theology. Fr. Michael has now come to the Synod—not because he thinks that Metr. Philip is a heretic, but because in not breaking of with Moscow over the issue of giving communion to Roman Catholics he enters also into crypto-Uniatism, as the Metropolia already has done far more decisively. "Global Orthodoxy" has not listened to the Synod's pleas, and therefore those who wish to remain Orthodox have no choice but to leave "global Orthodoxy." In the 15th century those who were not with St. Mark of Ephesus were not in the Church—and this situation is being approached today.

Alas, the basic Church issues of today are disguised in clouds of rhetoric and academic half-truths. The capitulation of Orthodoxy today comes not in the forms of signatures to a pseudo-Union, but as a gradual series of acts of apostasy. Those who love the truth must now separate themselves from this relentless and soul-destroying process. The Church as seen through the eyes of the Metropolia presents a timid voice to the world, ever ready to apologize for its deviations and to accommodate itself to the times and to the powerful of the world. Not such is the Church of Christ! And there is precious little time left for us to thunder the truth to an indifferent world!

You cannot imagine our sorrow at hearing of the doings of Bp. Theodosius and the visit of Juvenaly to Alaska. May Fr. Herman yet save Alaska, and enlighten and guide us all in the path of Orthodox truth!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

P.s. Is it really true that not one parish of the Exarchate decided to enter the Metropolia, as reported in the Romanian newspaper Credinta? That would make the celebrated "dissolution of the Exarchate" imaginary indeed!

052.

June 22/July 5, 1970

Priest-Martyr Eusebius

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel [Olson],

Many thanks for your letter and the article from America—a truly sad commentary on what can be done by "reformers" who have no love for what they're "reforming." One can see it coming in Orthodoxy too, and those who do not consciously stand up in defense of the Faith will most likely have the ground pulled out from under them. One can see all the more urgency in not budging one inch in the "ecumenical" direction. The new "theologians" can talk until they are blue in the face about "witnessing Orthodoxy," but to anyone who loves Orthodoxy it is plain that their intellectual discussions and tea parties with the Protestants are simply a pleasant way of betraying Orthodoxy. Recently a group of Catholic and Orthodox "theologians" had a "dialogue" on the Eucharist, issuing in a joint statement that fundamentally the two Churches are in

agreement, with a footnote to the effect that intercommunion is still premature. But how can one be "witnessing Orthodoxy" if one doesn't even inform the Catholics that they have no sacraments and that all their intellectual formulations are a million miles from the life-saving grace to be found in the Orthodox Church? Either these Orthodox "theologians" are dishonest (and thus trying to trick the Catholics?!) or they've already changed Orthodoxy in their own minds to make union easier. In any case, it's not "Orthodoxy" that is being witnessed!

We also have been continuing our correspondence with Fr. David Black. His defensiveness, I think, is an excellent example of the success of the Soviet diplomats who arranged the autocephaly. Nowhere in the agreement is it written that Metropolia clergy will now rise to the defense of the Soviet Church—yet they have to, in order to defend their own position! Truly, every blow directed against the Soviet Church is a blow directed against the Metropolia, and indeed it is now decidedly not in the interests of the Metropolia for there to be any detailed exposure of Church life in Russia, concerning the Catacomb Church, for example. In his letters to us Fr. David has tried to drag out every skeleton he can find from Tsarist times—but most of those we would never dream of apologizing for, while the Metropolia has now voluntarily placed itself in the position of defending Church figures who are involved in evils undreamed of by all the heretics and apostates of the past. One need not "judge" the Church in Russia (as we are accused of) in order to see that it is impossible, if one has a Christian conscience, to deal with such as Nikodim. We have some more comments on this in the new OW. By the way, the "dissolution of the Exarchate" is another example of a Soviet victory from their negotiations: in Canada not one church voted to join the Metropolia, and in America 43 churches voted to stay with Moscow, which includes all but one of the churches in the latest Exarchate list that we have. The priest who writes for the Hellenic Chronicle openly writes that the Metropolia and Moscow alike are perpetrators of lies who cannot be trusted.

Anyway, we are still praying for Alaska, that by the prayers of Fr. Herman the faithful there may still be awakened and saved.

This is suppose to be a short letter, as there is much to do. The service for Father Herman's canonization, by the way, will be celebrated only in San Francisco on August 9, since that is not his feast day; all other churches will have just a pannikhida the day before and a moleben after the Liturgy on Aug. 9. We will try to get together some Orthodox information on Australia in a few days. We hope to have the service printed in English within a week—in 2 colors, not an easy job!

Here were in midsummer and suffering—but probably nothing like you. 95 degrees is about as high as it goes, though it's close to 115 degrees in Redding, where we go as seldom as possible. I'll have to tell you our animal adventures some other time—we've seen our first bear, kept a fawn for 24 hours, and saved our squirrel family by killing a huge rattlesnake. Gleb sends greetings.

053.

June 29/July 12, 1970

Sts. Peter and Paul

Dear Father David [Black],

I was glad to receive your reply to my latest rather outspoken letter and welcome the opportunity to continue our "dialogue"—even under the somewhat strained circumstances that now prevail. t It would not be fair on my part to pretend that a tension does not exist between our Churches. From the tone of your letters, and from what I have heard of the words and actions of Bishop Theodosius, I would gather that you would like nothing better than to be in full peace and concord with Moscow and with the Synod. I can tell you frankly: impossible! There are issues at stake which cannot be solved by reference to canons. Above the canons is He Who inspired them: the Holy Spirit, Whose guidance is apprehended by the immediate feeling (not emotion!) of the believing Orthodox heart. On the question of canons there is no better example in the world today of Phariseesism than the Moscow Patriarchate, which insists on the letter of the law where its own worldly interests are concerned, while in everyday practice it is surpassed by none in laxness, as is quite noticeable in the former Exarchate.

But it is not as despisers of canons that our Church will have nothing to do with the Moscow hierarchs; and few in our midst even raise the question of whether there is grace within the Moscow Church—this is not for us to decide under present conditions. It is rather the indissoluble tie of the Moscow Patriarchate with an unquestionably God-hating and Satanic power that makes all contact with her impossible. You will find in our midst great sympathy and pity for all but the leading hierarchs of Moscow—and even for some of them you will find fellow-feeling owing to the inhuman circumstances under which they have been forced to betray Orthodoxy. (Rumor has it that Metr. Sergius was given the alternative in 1927: sign the Declaration, or every church will be destroyed and believers arrested and killed. If so, he signed out of faintheartedness, trusting more in the power of the Soviets to destroy than in the power of God to preserve the Church.) But this fellow-feeling cannot allow us who are free to recognize the Patriarchate and thereby freely place ourselves in the same trap she was forced into! And this the Metropolia has done, thus fixing the gulf between us as absolute. From my contact with our people I can tell you: with every fiber of our body and every feeling of our soul we are repulsed by this free act of betrayal, and the feeling of sympathy which we do have for all but the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate we do not have for the Metropolia. No, we do not "hate" you, and we recognize that most of you have followed this act out of a lack of awareness of the Church situation today; but thereby the Metropolia has alienated herself from us even more than Moscow, where the Church consciousness is forcibly crushed, but not freely given away!

Do you not yet begin to see the enormous implications of the most important part of your agreement with Moscow—i.e., the unwritten part? Do you not yet see how your supposed "independence" binds you so tightly that you must now begin to do things that you would never have dreamed of before? With all our heart we would like to be one with you at least with those of you who sincerely love the Church and want to serve Her above all but we can be one with you only in the Truth, not in false friendliness. And this uncompromising attitude of ours will only inspire even more bitter feelings in some of you than Fr. Meyendorff has already shown in his slanderous attack, and men like Fr. Meyendorff will echo every last bit of the Moscow

propaganda against us—not realizing that this is one of the most important "clauses" of the Autocephaly Agreement: to join in destroying the "Karlovitz Schismatics."

I will tell you another of the unwritten "clauses" of that agreement, which you yourself are following in your arguments for Moscow: "Every bishop, priest, and layman of the Metropolia agrees to defend the Moscow Patriarchate, not merely as a persecuted organization that cannot be judged by those outside the USSR, not merely as a Church that may yet possess the grace of the Holy Spirit, but as a fully canonical, in no wise dubious Orthodox Church, entided to a role of leadership among the Orthodox Churches of the world." One can even paraphrase the Declaration of 1927 to read: "Every blow directed against the Patriarchate of Moscow is a blow against the Metropolia, and her joys and sorrows are those of the Metropolia."

Do you not yet begin to grasp the immensity of your spiritual bondage? Do you not see that the Metropolia can no longer look at the Church situation in the USSR with objective eyes? That it is no longer in the interests of the Metropolia to have a complete exposure of that situation? That the Metropolia cannot welcome the publication of the statements of many hierarchs in 1927 unequivocally condemning the Declaration of Metr. Sergius and the Church organization based on it? That it would not be in the interests of the Metropolia that Boris Talantov be released from prison and allowed to continue his writings on "Sergianism" as the root of the evils of Russian Church life today? That the Metropolia has taken its unequivocal stand on the side of Sergianism and against the Catacomb Church, about whose very existence the Metropolia now would prefer not to hear? Indeed, if any word can describe the Metropolia's present state, it is surely: "Neo-Sergianism."

Further, the Metropolia remains her old self, only with an inflated title that is recognized by no one save Moscow. Therefore, her dependence upon Moscow is obvious: without Moscow's special intercession she will have no chance to sit as a full member of any Pan-Orthodox Conference; in any court cases concerning "jurisdictions" she will have to call upon witnesses from Moscow; etc. As for the Exarchate: the Russian text of the Autocephaly Agreement (but not the English text as printed by Fr. Meyendorff!) specifies that the entire Canadian diocese of the Exarchate is excluded from the "autocephaly," and a list is given of 43 churches in the U.S. who voted to remain directly under Moscow (this includes all but one of the Exarchate churches in the latest list I have seen). Can anyone argue that the "autocephaly," for the conceivable future, is anything but an empty tide? And likewise, that the advantages so far are not heavily on the side of Moscow and her undoubted scheme to seize hegemony of world Orthodoxy?

Yes, our statements about Frs Schmemann and Meyendorff will be documented in The Orthodox Word. We have already two long articles waiting for space. Recent complications and delays have put us several months behind, and we have an unwritten rule that contemporary polemical material must never occupy 50% of an issue. But with God's blessing this and other material will soon see the light in the hope of giving more precision to certain aspects of contemporary Orthodox thought. The small deviations of yesterday are already resulting in great divergences, which we hope some will yet see in time.

I assure you that all I have written here does not in least diminish our love and prayers for you and all of Orthodox Alaska. Through the grace of our Saviour and the prayers of Saint Herman, may we yet come to true unity in the undimmed Orthodox Faith.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

P.s. Yes, we still plan to print the life of St. Theodosius and will welcome the article on his canonization.

Fr. Michael Azkoul, by the way, received canonical release from the Syrian Archdiocese and so was not obliged to show that his Archbishop is a heretic!

054.

June 29/July 12, 1970

Sts. Peter and Paul

Dear Father Neketas,

Bless us, Father!

It's Sunday and a feast day, and I have a chance to rest and catch up on correspondence. First: thank you for letting us see the enclosed letter. Indeed, it is time to apply strictness in Orthodox reading material. It just can't be assumed that the Orthodox reader will get through a book by Schmemann etc. unaffected by the big and little discrepancies from Orthodoxy, which by now have added up to a whole new approach to Orthodoxy. As the list of pre-schism Western Saints, we recently discovered this list in an old Orthodox Russia which I will try to get around to copying one of these days. It was short—probably some 15 or so names, most of them included in our article on St. Cassian last year. Whether there is another longer list I don't know. The Dutch Orthodox sent us a list of some 40 local (Dutch) saints in their calendar, but I haven't yet been able to get from them a list of non-Dutch Western saints.

We are plodding on with The Orthodox Word, but it will be another week before it's out. We resolved to make the Service to Father Herman a model in every way, including typographically, which means printing every page twice (2 colors), and we printed a number of extras to bind separately. Glory be to God, it is almost finished, and we are sufficiently full of inspiration and hope to want to print a whole series of services to the glory of God and His saints and for the inculcation of genuine Orthodox piety in this direct way. We are already dreaming of the service to St. Nectarios (if Fr. Panteleimon or someone can be persuaded to translate the Orthros) and St. Mark of Ephesus.

Of course, this presumes that we will get caught up on The Orthodox Word. Our linotype still sits unassembled, and there are several complications that await resolution—such as long-awaited parts needed for gas connections, and the problem of obtaining matrices of type. One set (Roman and Italic) if new costs almost as much as the whole linotype ($500). We have located a used set at about half that, and are hoping for word of something even more reasonable from the East. Of course there is also the problem of getting and keeping the machine in operation. One

look at an operators manual persuaded me that my ignorance was just about absolute. But we trust in God, and await Fr. Alexy Poluektov in a week or two to assemble the machine and give some ABCs.

We were blessed to receive Holy Communion at the Sepulchre of Vladika John last week on the 4th anniversary of his death, and again yesterday when Vladika Nektary visited us on the feast of Sts. Sergius and Herman. Glory be to God! We noticed in S.F. that attendance at the Sepulchre declines each year, and it seems, sadly, that the Russians are forgetting him, and that when the older generation of those who knew him is gone in a few years, his memory will almost vanish among them—and will be preserved then chiefly by those non-Russians, most of whom did not know him, whose acquaintance with him is based not on personal relationships but on the attraction of his sanctity. Thus are God and His saints glorified in unexpected ways.

The report of Glebs tonsure on Father Hermans canonization day—is just another wild rumor. The day for both of us is, however, indeed drawing nigh, but it will only be after the canonization. I can't remember how many times I've already been made a deacon or priest myself! In fact, a student-composer friend even composed an "Axios" which he rushed to me in time to be sung at my ordination! But everything comes in God's own time.

Have you heard anything more from Fr. Seraphim of St. Tikhon's? Our letter a month ago was returned "No longer at this address," and the other day we learned from a seminarian (his co-conspirator) that he refused to "repent" and left at the end of May to visit relatives.

We were fortunate two weeks ago to be visited by Fr. Alexander Mileant of Los Angeles—one of our finer young Russian priests. He fell in love with our place and made us realize all the more how fortunate we are to be here. Indeed, while the world relapses into anarchy and men become lower than beasts, we live in a veritable paradise where speechless creatures, our nearest neighbors, continually praise the Lord by their very existence. Three weeks ago we found a fawn lying exhausted by the side of the road. We brought it home, kept it overnight, got it to drink milk, and returned it to the hill down which we presumed it had fallen. (We would have kept it longer but discovered there's a strict law against it.) Then two days ago our mother deer who comes every day for our garbage brought her fawn for us to see—apparently the same one, and too touching a sight to describe. She's so used to us that she suckles the fawn only 10 or 15 feet away from us, and we hear their talk among themselves—rather like sheep's bleating, only higher. Recently, too, we saw our first bear running up our hill—and fortunately we did not take Vladika Nektary's advice and offer it sugar; it didn't seem like that kind of bear, much too businesslike! Even our one local enemy, the rattlesnake, praises the Lord—such a beautiful yellow with a pattern of diamonds on his back and the bearing of a prince, albeit a sinister one! Last week we had a 15-minute battle with a huge one before we dislodged it from its squirrel-hole and beheaded it (thereby saving our squirrel family, where the father joins the mother in carrying the young from nest to nest). Of course, it is not our lot in this life to sit back and enjoy all this, but we are grateful to have a little corner where God's order is so evident. What will be here in future—is in God's hands, and may it be for His glory! Somehow, in the back of our minds, we keep seeing our wilderness transformed into an Orthodox refugee camp! May God's will be done!

Of the names you sent, 4 are not present subscribers (Alepakos, Sims, Blackstone, Brukses, nor are the 3 Metropolia people (Magner, Dimoff, Eppler), to all of whom we will send the next issue.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

055.

July 7/20, 1970

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Bless us, Father!

As Br. Gleb is at present overloaded with other assignments, I will take a short respite from printing The Orthodox Word to answer for him.

As you are already in contact with Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, I am sure you have already received his permission to take part in the canonization services. As for lodging, I would advise contacting Abbess Ariadna, 3365 19th St., S.F., 94119, who has rooms to let.

We are glad to see your zeal for Father Herman for the Russian Church Abroad, and we only pray that you will manifest it in due measure, so that genuine fruits may come from it. In going to Spruce Island I am sure you realize that you must be "wise as a serpent," proceeding with utmost caution even when you are sure of your ground. The question of Bp. Theodosius is extremely sensitive: certainly we recognize that he is in schism or worse and has no rights over us, but if we are incautious and give him unnecessary grounds for offense, he might take desperate measures that could ruin all our good beginnings; also, if he felt himself to be "attacked" by our Church he might be driven even more into the arms of the Soviets.

We shall be most interested to hear of your further plans. Frankly, we have no very clear idea of your intentions on Spruce Island, and we trust in the prayers of St. Herman to enlighten the way, that everything done may be for the glory of God and of His Saint.

Most likely we shall be seeing you in San Francisco at the canonization, if we can find each other in the crowds, and we look forward to talking to you then.

Asking your prayers and blessing,

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

P.s. The English Service to Father Herman will be finished this week and we will send you several copies immediately.

056.

July 13/26, 1970

Holy Fathers of Six Ecumenical Councils

Dear Father Neketas [Palassis],

Evlogeite!

As you rightly suspect, we don't have much sense of the needs of publicity, but at your prodding we've sent "publicity packets" to the San Francisco newspapers, Time and Newsweek. We don't have address of New York Times, so are sending their packet for you to send on, and an extra one in case you think of someone else. What about Religious News Service? We have no idea where to contact them. Our life of Father Herman is all sold out, but we sent everything else we could think of. We purposely avoided any hint of conflict between Kodiak and San Francisco, hoping the contrast of "local" vs "worldwide" will seem reasonable to the venerable editors. Of course, it's rather late, but there should be some response at least in San Francisco. We gave them Vladika Anthony's address for further questions.

As to our people being confused about the canonization—really, who can blame them? As far as I can recall, this new OW is the first place where it's even hinted that there are two separate canonization services. I don't know how successful our account will be, but it's obvious that some kind of explanation had to come out. I suppose this issue will finally try Bp. Theodosius' "patience" to the breaking point—but it's about time he realized there is a war on, over the survival of Orthodoxy (or rather, over who will remain within Orthodoxy!), and he's on the wrong side! Mrs. Fern Wallace sent us a clipping of Fr. Michael Irwin's talk in Juneau—and he couldn't have done any better if he had set out deliberately to discredit their cause. He admits some Soviet bishops are Soviet agents, that the whole autocephaly follows political trends set forth by the Soviet Government; Bp. Theodosius is quoted as saying the Soviet people he found to be happy and well dressed, and if some complain about the Government, well, so do Americans! Talk about stooges of the Soviets—and mixed-up ones at that; Nikodim should have reminded them not to talk about "Soviet agents," at the least! We hope to collect a whole set of articles like this, preferably direct quotes, and base an article on them—please send us anything you come across. The Metropolia, apparently, remains the same old humbling Metropolia, and I wonder if it will even be able to follow up its advantage.

Certainly, you will be welcome at our refugee camp! Of course, we don't know what God has in store for us, or where it will [be] possible to flee when the time comes. But there is some 1500 square miles or so of almost totally uninhabited land just south of us, the "Yolla Bolly Wilderness Area," where even hunters and hikers are fairly rare. Up to the 1920's, at least, according to my textbook on "California Trees," it was the least explored part of California even from the point of view of identifying flora and fauna.

Fr. Elias [Armistead] writes: he's coming for the canonization, perhaps "with an Alaskan or two." He's "desperate' for help, and "money is no object"—he'll gladly pay to import someone from Europe to help. Next year he'll probably go to the Near East, or maybe throw up the whole Alaska adventure and hide in the Holy Land. ??? Frankly, we've about given up looking for any fruitful activity in his direction. Apparently, after all, the surest way to bring forth fruit for Holy Orthodoxy is to find yourself in a narrow, confining, almost impossible situation, with no way

out but to pray and work with sweat and tears. Too much freedom, too much money, too much opportunity, too many ideas—seem too easily scattered to the wind. We must simply thank God for all our suffering and trials—there's just no other hope for us!

We've seen the Byzantinish icon of Father Herman by the Metropolia—but it doesn't look in the least like Father Herman! Fr. Kyprian's icon is the best so far, but his face doesn't resemble Father Herman too much either.

Pray for us.

057.

August 5/18, 1970

Pre-Feast of the Transfiguration

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel,

Here it is already a week since the great Church events of this year, and only now am I sitting down to try to tell you a little about them. I know how anxious you are to hear about them, but this will be only a brief sketch—we hope to have a fuller account with illustrations in our July-August Orthodox Word.

For us the great celebration began a month early, with the yearly Liturgy in Vladika Johns Sepulchre on the anniversary of his repose (June 19/July 2). Father Herman was commemorated then, too. Then, on the feast of Sts. Sergius and Herman of Valaam (June 29/July 11), Vladika Nektary came to us just after dawn and served Divine Liturgy. This, probably Father Herman's namesday, was the beginning of daily litiyas for the repose of the about to be glorified Saint.

On the feastday of St. Seraphim (July 19/Aug. 1) Vladika Anthony made a surprise visit to us not long after dawn (together with Deacon Nicholas, who brought a beautiful small cupola he had made for our printshop), and served the third Liturgy in our outdoor chapel, followed by a panikhida for Fr. Herman and the first reading of the Ukase of Metr. Philaret which will be in our new OW.

The next week we expected Bp. Laurus, Gleb's onetime instructor at the seminary, to visit us, and we hastily finished a small kellia we had begun some months ago—a lean-to, 8×8 ft., at the back door of our living cabin. He arrived Wednesday but stayed only a few hours and went right back. Thursday afternoon we left for San Francisco, and on Friday evening the chief services began. But first we received an appropriate tongue-lashing (good for humility!) from Vladika Anthony for the "18 bishops" we had predicted—we had this printed in the Russian press also. Alas, our information was not too reliable, and no more than 12 or so had really been expected, and several of these were unable to come owing to last-minute illness, urgent business, and the like, and only 5 attended after all, making the celebrations more modest but no less solemn for all that. Later Vladika Anthony thought he had been a little harsh on us and touchingly consoled us by telling us that with Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Innocent, and the reposed bishops of San Francisco and Alaska there would indeed be at least 18 bishops spiritually present!

And indeed, for all these bishops and for everyone else connected with Father Herman, commemoration was made at the requiem services of Friday night and Saturday morning. We were especially pleased to hear the list of names end each time with Archimandrite Gerasim of Spruce Island (who was also mentioned in Vladika Anthony's sermon on Saturday morning), since he suffered so much in his own lifetime from the local Alaska clergy, and from the other side was criticized by some of our Synodal people for what they thought was his failure to take a definite stand after 1946. But now, when the whole Church was gathered to canonize his beloved Father Herman, Fr. Gerasim too was there where he belonged. Fr. Panteleimon of Boston arrived for the Friday evening service, bringing with him relics of several saints, which were put out for veneration, as well as the icon which we sent you the other day, which was given out Saturday night to all present. In the afternoon Fr. Vladimir of Jordanville arrived, bringing a relic of St. Herman (a tooth which Fr. Gerasim had given him years before), which was placed in the icon Fr. Kyprian painted together with another relic—a piece of Fr. Herman's coffin which Fr. Gerasim had given Bp. Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo.

On Saturday evening at 6 o'clock Metr. Philaret arrived and the final panikhida was served for Father Herman alone. And then the long-awaited service to our newly-glorified Saint began. After the choir sang 3 stichera of the Resurrection, the cliros choir of seminarians and clergy began—loud and clear—the stikhera to St. Herman: "Leap up, ye waters of Valaam." Up to the last minute, Vladika Anthony hadn't decided how much should be sung in English, and he finally decided to begin with the final two stichera on "Lord, I have cried." But rather than the 3 or 4 feeble voices he perhaps expected, there was a veritable crowd of enthusiastic young English-singers, and he blessed us to add the "Glory" in English too, which we did, slowly and solemnly. Here, as throughout the service, all the "special melodies" were followed strictly, whether in Slavonic or English.

At the Litia there was a procession around the outside of the Cathedral, and the first commemoration was made of "St. Herman, Wonderworker of Alaska." Before the polyeleos, Vladika Anthony gave an inspired sermon which set the tone for the entire celebration. St. Seraphim, our paschal Saint who greeted everyone with the words "Christ is risen," had prophesied the exile of the Russian faithful. And now, in the midst of this exile, the faithful have come together to celebrate the memory of yet another paschal Saint—Saint Herman, who reposed amidst lighted candles and the reading of the Acts, in preparation for eternal Pascha. And therefore Vladika Anthony—who earlier, for seemingly obscure reasons, had instructed all clergy to bring white paschal vestments for the canonization—now ordered all in the cathedral to hold burning candles to greet the newly-glorified Saint as at the Easter service.

After the polyeleos, the Metropolitan unveiled the icon with the relics of St. Herman, and the assembled clergy (20-some priests—32 on Sunday, 5 deacons, plus servers) thunderously sang the first triumphal Magnification of St. Herman, repeated first by the choir, then by the clergy, then by the seminarians on the cliros in English, then again by the clergy.;

The veneration of the icon and relics by the multitude of faithful took up the rest of the service, while Gleb and I read the canons—one troparion of each canticle to St. Herman in English. The lauds were sung in Slavonic and English, "O Most glorious wonder" being sung most rousingly

by the seminarians in both languages. Everyone was inspired with a genuine paschal feeling, and Fr. Nicholas Dombrovsky emphasized this the next morning in his sermon at the early Liturgy by calling the celebration a second "Pascha in the summertime," occurring just 67 years and 8 days after the first such "Pascha," St. Seraphim's canonization, of which the Saint had prophesied in those words. After the evening service the American converts (of whom there were between 50 and 100 present) lined up to receive confession from Fr. Panteleimon, which lasted until 2 a.m.

On Sunday the whole day was one long church service, beginning with the early Liturgy at 7 and the blessing of the water at 8:30 (into which some water from Father Hermans spring was poured). The final prayer was read at 4 in the afternoon, and Fr. Panteleimon, who spent the time between 4 and the evening service in Archbishop Johns Sepulchre, could truthfully tell a group of Greeks to whom he spoke at 9 p.m.—"I came to church at 8 this morning and just got out now— glory be to God!"

The Liturgy proceeded slowly and solemnly. At the Entrance with the Gospel, the icon with relics was carried around the altar table—but not by the two oldest priests, who lifted it up at first, but by Archimandrites Panteleimon and Kyprian, as representing the monastic clergy at this monastic celebration. Vladika Anthony insisted on this understanding of the celebration and enforced it throughout. Before the Communion—in which it seemed the whole church participated—the seminarians sang stikhera in Slavonic and English.

During the moleben there was a procession around the church with the icon and relics, followed by "Many years" sung for the hierarchs, Fr. Panteleimon, Archimandrite Panteleimon of Jordanville—it was surely significant that this monastic festival should coincide with the namesday of the founders of our two leading monasteries in this country!—and for our Brotherhood. The Brotherhood, now of St. Herman, was also presented by Metr. Philaret with a Gramota from the Synod of Bishops, the text of which says perhaps as much about the Synod as it does about us. If anyone doubts that the Synod has missionary interest, the Gramota calls us to be "a missionary brotherhood, in lively contact with Americans seeking instruction." And it sets forth our future too: "You are establishing a place for an endeavor of prayer and labor." Indeed, within the next days or weeks, God willing, we will both be tonsured monks here, and then our real life's labor will begin!

At the conclusion of the services the rite of the "Panagia" was celebrated: all clergy and servers walking in procession to the dining room below, singing the troparion to St. Herman. At the trapeza there were no speeches, but rather a monastic atmosphere of silence (not, unfortunately, fully observed by all!) while the life of St. Herman was read, mostly by Vladika Anthony.

In the evening, following the Vigil to the Smolensk Mother of God, a panikhida was served for Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky. Again, how appropriate that this feast of the whole of Russia Abroad should occur on the eve of the repose of the founder of the Russian Church Abroad. Afterwards we went with Fr. Panteleimon to hear him talk to a small Pan-Orthodox meeting, composed mostly of Greeks who are extremely upset about the direction the Greek Church is taking, but are wary of following the "Russians." Fr. Panteleimon answered their questions and gave an excellent talk on the difference between the abstract approach to Orthodoxy—academic

discussions of what Orthodoxy is, definitions of "spirituality," etc.—and the concrete approach, built up of all those things which are widely considered today as [un] important or old-fashioned—beards, cassocks, absence of pews and organs, daily morning and evening prayers, fasting.

On Monday morning after Divine Liturgy there was another moleben to St. Herman, and then a general panikhida in Vladika Johns Sepulchre, first by Fr. Vladimir in Slavonic, then by Fr. Panteleimon in Greek; and at the conclusion of this, as if summing up the whole paschal feeling of these days, Fr. Panteleimon greeted all in Russian with: Christos voskrese! to which all enthusiastically responded: Voistinu voskrese!

We arrived back home only after midnight on Monday, after seeing Fr. Panteleimon off with Fr. Neketas Palassis and Fr. Ephrem for Seattle, and the next day our great feast continued into a third day when Frs. Kyprian and Vladimir with Deacon Nicholas and four seminarians arrived to spend the day. Fr. Vladimir carried the icon with relics of St. Herman completely around our land, giving us yet another blessing of our Patron Saint. Later in the day Fr. Alexy Poluektov arrived to begin putting us back in a working spirit by starting to put our linotype into operation; he stayed 3 days. On Wednesday Fr. Elias Armistead stopped by on his way back to Alaska and spent the night.

And now, after all this celebration, we are about to start, God willing, a more productive phase of missionary work. Our linotype is operating, and as soon as type and lead arrive (any day) we will begin our new issue. We are beginning a new series on "Documents of the Catacomb Church," as ignorance on this subject seems almost complete in America, and such ignorance is one. reason why the Metropolia so easily fell into the autocephaly trap. Fr. David Black writes us concerning Bishop Germogen as a "catacomb bishop"—which shows that he is totally unaware of the Church crisis of 1927, when the "Sergianists" seized control over the majority of bishops with aid of the Secret Police. We, of course, sympathize with Bishop Germogen, but all the same he remains a "Sergianist.") But too, this is partly our fault, for there is very little in English on the whole question, and one of the secret blessings of the autocephaly is that now this and other important questions will be fully presented in English. How many will yet be awakened by this remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, the future of the autocephaly is uncertain. Those remaining in the Metropolia have apparently accepted it entirely and try to pass it off at a great success, but from the outside it is obvious that not all is well. Constantinople and the Patriarchal Romanian parishes in America have made a definite stand against it, and not a single parish of the Moscow Exarchate in America or Canada has joined it, and in fact Moscow has sent a new bishop and two priests from the Soviet Union to Canada. For the indefinite future it seems likely that only Moscow will recognize the autocephaly which it granted itself, which will obviously place the Metropolia in greater dependence on its "Mother"—which is perhaps the way it was planned. Bp. Theodosius of Sitka has, to our great disappointment, entered whole-heartedly into the Soviet spirit. He has reported that in the USSR he found "smiling, happy faces"; if some complain about the government there, so do Americans about their government! Of course, he says nothing about prison camps, persecutions, Catacomb Church, Boris Talantov, the 10,000 churches closed in the

last 10 years—in a word, our worst fears about what would happen to Metropolia clergy seem already to be coming into reality. The psychological and spiritual price of the autocephaly is tremendous. And in the Aug. 10 New York Times Bp. Theodosius is quoted as saying, "Father Herman was a hippy"! This is sacrilege! St. Herman is our recourse and defense in the face of the evils of these times, of which hippyism is only one misguided symptom, but to mix his holy name with those very evils…! I had better not say any more. At best, this is just another sign of the ecclesiastical immaturity of the new autocephalous Church; another sign of it is the Metropolia's "service" to St. Herman—a product of embarrassing illiteracy which, the way it is written, cannot even be performed properly, as it omits several Theotokia. It has a "velichaem" in place of "yblazhaem," inserts the Beatitudes into every troparion of the canon (whether this is just plain ignorance or an attempt at novelty is difficult to say), includes several errors of fact about St. Herman, confuses a service with polyeleos with an ordinary weekday service, has at least one inadmissible "ecumenical" troparion in the canon, etc. Typographically it is not printed but poorly mimeographed. (This is the Slavonic service; we haven't seen the English, which is supposedly the original.) We showed it to Fr. Vladimir and he was astonished and could only say: "Why such poverty?" The answer is clear: immaturity. And now, rather than learn from those who do know better (frankly, a quite acceptable service could easily have been written in Moscow, but the Metropolia is spiritually "independent" now from Moscow, and dependent only politically), the autocephalous Church proclaims its "maturity" to the world, thereby closing itself off from the source of genuine ecclesiastical wisdom and maturity. This is all very sad to those of us who do not at all want to enter into rivalry with the Metropolia, but would hope to grow with her in genuine Church consciousness until American Orthodoxy might one day in truth enter its Orthodox maturity. Now, alas, the Metropolia, an unripe fruit, has been untimely plucked, and who will be able to put it back in its place? We are sorry most of all for the young and inexperienced who are being led by their heads down an unfruitful path…away from Orthodoxy entirely. Seemingly it is God's will to isolate the tree of genuine American Orthodoxy so that it will bring forth genuine, even if perhaps not many, fruits. Already those like Fr. Panteleimon, Fr. Neketas Palassis, and others who are single-mindedly cultivating real Orthodoxy, are being dismissed as "troublemakers," "narrow-minded fanatics," and the rest. God grant us all the strength and patience to bear all for His Holy Name and Truth!

I've been writing for 3 days and must stop at last! I hope this gives you something to fill a little of the 3 bleak months to follow. We hope to hear from you soon, and especially to hear your impressions of Orthodox (and even non-Orthodox!) Australia. Our prayers are with you. Gleb sends his greetings.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

P.s. A note that probably will not appear (at least not in full) in the OW. Two weeks before the canonization our Vladika Anthony flew to Kodiak to obtain a blessing at Fr. Herman's relics. He went incognito, without panagia or any outward sign of his rank, although when he found the church closed he did answer Fr. Makarios Targonsky's question as to who he was. Under his ryassa he wore cuffs and epitrachelion and while making the rounds of the church and altar he sang a panikhida in a whisper, ending with "Eternal Memory" at the relics of St. Herman. He

told us that this was what was done by Orthodox clergy at the tomb of St. John the Merciful when it was in the hands of the Catholics. Thus our statement about the relics of St. Herman being like St. Nicholas' was verified by the action of this true hierarch of the Church. Undoubtedly Bp. Theodosius who seems to want to please everyone, would have welcomed Vladika Anthony and allowed him to serve freely, but from our side the conscience does not allow this—a seemingly fine but very important point. It was precisely the lack of such a conscience, of such a sensitivity for real Orthodoxy, that led the Metropolia hierarchs to their downfall. God preserve us all in His True Faith!

058.

August 8/21, 1970

Apostle Matthias

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Bless us, Father!

Thanks be to God, our linotype is now operating, and as soon as lead and type arrive in a few days we will begin, and hopefully quickly finish, our May-June Orthodox Word with your article. In rereading this article we find two important statements for which we would like to have some kind of confirmation available in case of attack: namely, "Was not the 'secret meeting' between the Metropolia and Moscow at Geneva under the auspices of the WCC? Were not representatives of the WCC present at the recent 'meeting' in New York?" Can you give us any more detail or evidence on these statements, and if possible name the WCC representatives involved? I don't think we need to footnote these statements, but we would like to have some further evidence handy in case someone chooses to challenge them.

And there doubtless will be attacks! The Metropolia would like to ignore the Synod, but their response so far indicates that they have been hit hard by the various criticisms from our side. Your article is important especially as coming from someone "outside" and not from those troublesome reactionary Russians.

I wonder how your investigation of Iakovos & Co. is progressing? Recent statements of Athenagoras, Iakovos, the Clergy-Laity Congress, and The Orthodox Observer indicate progress in abandoning Orthodoxy is going very rapidly—but how do you grasp hold of the whole situation and explain what's going on? That's a real problem.

We were happy to see Frs. Panteleimon and Ephrem from Boston, Fr. Neketas Palassis, Fr. Michael Lightfoot, and Fr. Elias Armistead at the canonization of St. Herman in San Francisco. The significance of this event for American Orthodoxy is doubtless great—spiritual seed of which the future will reveal the fruits. We will have a full account in the July-August OW. The San Francisco Cathedral is a real stronghold of Russianness, and that we were able to sing a large part of the service in English is a wonder in itself, and probably a sign of the times. The San Francisco Examiner of Aug. 10 reported our view of the canonization, but the AP story in other

papers carried headlines blowing up Bp. Theodosius' sacrilegious statement: "Russian Church Canonizes a 'Hippy"Monk." How just plain painful.

But God is with us, and in these critical years it's up to a small number of us to fight for that genuine Orthodoxy that has been faithfully handed down to us.

We ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

P.s. We would appreciate if your would send us any material you find that reveals a change in attitude of Metropolia, especially clergy, concerning Soviet Church and Government. Bp. Theodosius has already taken the lead by finding Soviet people "comfortable and happy" and saying that "as Americans we have to reassess our ideas of life in the Soviet Union." A collection of such statements would make a good article!

059.

August 14/27, 1970

Prophet Micah

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel,

Rejoice in the Lord! We were happy to hear of your trip to Australia, and especially that you were able to meet Fr. Vladimir Evsukoff. We do have quite a few subscribers in Australia, and we suspect that there could be quite a few more if we could find a way to reach them. Any suggestions?

We were very happy that you were able to supply the Geelong parish with an icon of St. Herman—but that probably means that many other churches in Australia were without one, thanks to a not very efficient distribution system. We received a very touching letter from Abbess Tamara of the Eleon Convent in Jerusalem. When Archimandrite Anthony Grabbe returned from New York she asked him: And where are the icons of St. Herman? To which he had to confess his total forgetfulness. She thought of having the Convent iconographer paint an icon, but only a few days remained. And then she thought of The Orthodox Word, and looking through back issues she found our small icon in color, and that was the icon of the feast in Jerusalem. We sent her some more of the other icons, so by December they will be better prepared!

Thanks for the clippings. We have quite a few now, most of them with slight variations on each other, but none so hurting as the AP story of Aug. 10, which appeared in some form in the NY Times (which we haven't seen yet). In the Monterey Peninsula Herald it was headlined: RUSSIAN CHURCH CANONIZES U.S ;;;;;;' MONK, and began: "In a centuries-old ceremony, a Russian monk described as a 'hippie' of his time has become the Orthodox Church's first American saint. ;; modern terms you might call him a hippie,' said the Rt. Rev. Theodosius, bishop of Sitka and Alaska. 'He was a real conscientious objector, a pacifist.'" Even without the

sacrilege of "hippy," all the Metropolia material on Father Herman makes him a representative of the "social gospel." The official booklet with his Life and Service (which we finally obtained yesterday) states: "Father Herman first championed all these causes (civil rights, freedom of the individual, respect and dignity of all people, especially the long suppressed and often ignored minorities) within the context of the Christian Faith. He was a contemporary American…and a worthy patron of the newest of the Autocephalous Orthodox Catholic Churches." This is the voice of a "mature," "Orthodox" Church? I think the Metropolia is already well on the way to something else entirely, the vague "Christianity-in-general" that floats in the air today at the mercy of every wind of senseless new doctrine.

From what we hear, the Metropolia's canonization in Kodiak was, at least outwardly, a great success. We are happy for the Alaskan people, who now have an intercessor to whom everyone can pray, but our hearts are pained at the prospect of these and other simple people being led away from Orthodoxy entirely by their leaders. The Metropolia tells us that their canonization was a "demonstration of the young powers" of the new autocephalous Church—but if one looks at the basis on which the future "Orthodoxy" of this Church is to be based, one can only conclude that their canonization was rather a last sign of the old Orthodoxy which they are leaving behind, a part of that Orthodox capital which they received from Holy Russia and through the Synod, and which they now think they are enough to do without, striking out on their own. One need only look at their Service to St. Herman to see what they can do on their own. This, their first Service in English to the first American Saint, should be a model for all the future, based on the best Slavonic model so as to transmit the genuine Orthodox spirit and forms of piety to future generations. But what do they produce? An amateur, not at all well grounded in church services, is left free to write whatever he feels like, and then he signs his work! As a result, the link with the past becomes very weak, and once one or two more services are written based on this model (they already speak of canonizing Metr. Innocent) there will be nothing at all left of the solid framework upon which 1000 years and more of Orthodox piety has been based. Without this framework everything becomes dependent upon individual feeling, and the result is pure Protestantism. One can't help but think of the Roman Catholics: probably a thousand years ago they were still more or less Orthodox, but having separated themselves from the Church and followed leaders who took as their standard various contemporary currents instead of unchanging Orthodox standards of piety, they gradually evolved for themselves a piety no longer in the least recognizable as Orthodox, permeated with prelest. Today the situation is worse, because the contemporary currents that will be taken are no longer even vaguely Christian, but at best are a humanistic "social gospel" or worse—as Bp. Theodosius has already suggested—Hippyism, which is already strongly permeated with open satanism.

With all this in view, I think we should thank God that our Synod is separated from the Metropolia—and not through any "uncharitable" action of ours, but through the deliberate act of the Metropolia itself—and now offers a refuge to those who still sense and want real Orthodoxy. The times are late, and it must needs be, as Apostle Paul says, that there be heresies, that those who are proved may stand out. God help us to stay on this difficult path, in the face of increasing attacks and eventual persecution. Appropriately, we begin in our new issue of OW a series on the Catacomb Church in the USSR—perhaps giving us a foretaste of what is to come even in

America. The last US News & World Report (a very sober and reliable news magazine, not at all like Time or Newsweek) reports what is undoubtedly a nationwide conspiracy to kill policemen and blow up police stations (they have struck several times in the S.F. area in recent months) and quotes some authorities who say that at this rate there will be open civil war in America within 5 to 10 years.

About Spruce Island: I somehow feel that the Metropolia will now conveniently "forget" it; if they cannot find anyone to go there, they will of course not send any relics there at all, and Fr. Gerasim's worst fears will be realized. Thanks be to God that we have a least a small relic in San Francisco. Actually, it has apparently always been assumed in the Metropolia (we have a 10-year-old letter of Fr. Makarios Targonsky to prove it) that Fr. Gerasims own homesteaded property on Spruce Island (but apparently not including the church) would go to the Synod on his death. But whether there was a will, or what the situation is now, I don't know. Fr. Michael Lightfoot of San Diego recently went there to try to find out. But don't breathe a word of this to Fr. David Black, or else Bp. Theodosius will leap to some kind of defensive action! We're afraid even to ask any kind of question of the Alaskan clergy, since they're all so much behind their Sovietized bishop. (I enclose a clipping on this subject.)

From your letter I presume we never sent you the separate service to St. Herman, as we thought we had. It's enclosed, together with icons to give to Australia or anyone else. Our lead came and we expect type today and hope to begin printing the new OW by Saturday. Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour, Eugene

060.

[Fr. Seraphim's handwritten notes at the top of next letter read: "quiet intercessor, peace & harmony, translate into action (Fr. As paper) [Possibly Aug. 1970]

Dear Fr. Vladimir S. [Bridievey, OCA],

Thank you for the materials on Fr. H. which you sent to us, as well as for your letter, which touched us deeply. For the sake of the love of St. Herman which we share in common, please permit us to share a few ideas with you on the church troubles of today which give sorrow to us all.

You write that you regret that our labors for St. Herman remain so "distant and separate" from yours in the Metropolia, and you pray that "peace and harmony" will come to the Church, especially through the intercession of St. Herman by means of "translating into action" St. Herman's example to us. We agree with you wholeheartedly and fully. But do you not see what is involved here? The difference between us is real and it will not vanish if we simply forget it. And the difference (the chief one) is so great that no compromise is possible on it. One of us must make a definite move: either we must say that our 43-year-old attitude to the Moscow Patriarchate is wrong and we accept your stand; or else you must say that your attitude is wrong and you renounce the autocephaly and all contacts with the Moscow Church. There is no middle position.

Do you not realize the seriousness of our firm conviction that the Metropolias concordat with Moscow is a betrayal of the Orthodox Church and of the faithful both within and without the USSR? Do you know of the propaganda benefits which the Moscow Church and the Soviet Government have already obtained from the autocephaly? (Thanks, for instance, to published statements of the Bishop of Sitka that are pure Soviet propaganda.) Do you know the whole story, from 1927 to today, of the Catacomb Church and its persecution by the Soviet Secret Police according to indications given by the Moscow hierarchs? Your Metropolia now supports this persecution by its support of the Patriarchate, and when your bishops appear in the Soviet Union as honored guests of the Patriarchate, the faith of every Catacomb Christian is publicly trampled upon. Do you see, in a word, how we are opponents of your autocephaly and protest publicly because of sorrow in our hearts that is too deep to hold back?

We believe that you and many other sincere people in the Metropolia have accepted the autocephaly out of ignorance of its full implications. But it is then our duty to inform you of the full facts and beg you to stop this path of betrayal and sacrilege. St. Herman cannot possibly be the patron of such an "autocephaly," and we only pray that in time this will become clear to many.

Do you know the Life of St. Maximus the Confessor? All the Orthodox Patriarchs accepted the Monothelite heresy, and he was begged, for the sake of peace and harmony in the Church, to do what everyone else was doing and keep his opinions to himself. And he said: "Even if the whole world enter into communion with the (heretical) Patriarch of Constantinople), I alone will not." That is the kind of Orthodox confession that has preserved the Church for 2000 years; that is the faith that St. Herman lived; that is what we must follow today. Indeed, we have the example of St. Peter the Aleut who died for refusing to accept Roman Catholicism, which, according to our modern ecumenists, is very little different from Orthodoxy. And we are gladly willing to suffer torture and martyrdom for this faith, but we will never recognize either the Patriarchate or the Metropolia, which have betrayed this faith.

Yes, dear Father, with all our heart we wish unity with you—but only on the ground of Orthodoxy, without any reservations of conscience, without betraying our unity with those who suffer persecution in the USSR. You are one with the official Soviet Church, but not with the faithful of Russia. Whereas we are one with the faithful in the USSR, and they have informed us of this, [handwritten letter ends]

061.

August 30/Sept. 12, 1970

St. Alexander Nevsky

Dear Father Michael,

Bless us Father!

Thanks be to God, our linotype is running and your article is nearly set, and hopefully in two weeks the whole issue will be out. Most of the rest of the issue is devoted to two very moving

accounts of the Catacomb Church in the USSR, by someone who spent five years in the Solovki concentration camp. I believe the whole question of the Catacomb Church is extremely hazy in the minds of most Orthodox, and with God's help we will try to correct that with a whole series of articles—for the basic issues are, after all, quite clear and can even be named: "Sergianism" vs. Orthodoxy. The statements of the non-Sergianist hierarchs in 1927 were quite explicit and should serve as a foundation for further discussion of the question. An interesting revelation of the ignorance touching this subject: Fr. J. Meyendorff in a recent note in The Orthodox Church, trying to explain how the Metropolia was really not under the Synod in 1935-46, notes that in the agreement of 1935 both the Metropolia and the Synod commemorated first of all "Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsky"—i.e., the leader of the opposition to Metr. Sergius, the head of the Catacomb Church! The Metropolia from top to bottom is simply absolutely ignorant of the facts and principles of the Russian Church situation in the 20th century. The only change in the situation since 1935 is that we no longer know the name of the head of the Catacomb Church, or even if there is one; but the existence of the Catacomb Church is attested in Soviet sources themselves.

Concerning the autocephaly and WCC: the point is quite important and will doubtless not be mentioned anywhere else, so we will go ahead and print it. When you have time, we hope you will look up the detailed information, which we would like to have whether or not we are challenged on it.

Your move to St. Louis should be a comfort to Dr. Johnstone, about whom we had been somewhat worried. He had written us that the nearest Synod parish was in Chicago, and definitely Russian-oriented, and that certainly would have meant great hardship for him and his family. May God grant you strength in your pastoral labors!

On the Iakovos article: Please don't think we're trying to press you to supply an article; in fact, it will be a while before we have the space to print it, so there's no rush at all. However, re your remarks, I think it is indeed important to point out that the present crisis within Orthodoxy is not at all superficial but profound and doctrinal. What Constantinople is coming up with is simply unbelievable (and Fr. Meyendorff in the June-July Orth. Church puts the Metropolia fully with Athenagoras & Co. by stating that those not in communion with him are "outside the communion of world Orthodoxy"), and the only other question is—not whether heresy is involved—but where to start describing such an all-embracing apostasy. By the way, Fr. Constantine Dombalis has recently appealed in the Hellenic Chronicle for the canonization of Athenagoras while alive! In the face of such Orthodox disorientation, the burden of proof would rather lie with the Athenagorists to show that their teaching has anything in common with Orthodoxy. But the times being what they are, most Orthodox will have to be shown why and how Athenagoras and Iakovos are not Orthodox.

Therefore, the question is: how to make the situation dear? The most obvious doctrinal issue is the heresy concerning the nature of the Church; both Ath. and Iak. can be quoted on this. But that does not say too much yet, because this heresy seems to be an only incidental part of their teaching. But what is it, then, that actually motivates them? I have always found, in trying to understand and criticize systems of thought, that the most effective criticism must first

understand the basic motivation of the thinker and then strike at the heart of the whole system, letting incidental heresies and errors fall into proper perspective.

Now, of course, the frustrating thing about Athenagoras and Iakovos is precisely that they seem to have no system, no real ideological motivation, at all, but are simply at the mercy of every wind of doctrine that falls in with their own ambition. But I think one should take as an axiom that ideas, after all, are primary, and even those who themselves are not motivated by ideas are nonetheless at the mercy (in that case) of someone else's ideas. And certainly, the present crisis of Greek Orthodoxy cannot be traced to Iakovos' ambition or any other personal motive—these existed in past times and did not cause the crisis in ideas, in theology, which exists today.

Several years ago I myself began an investigation into what might be called the "basic philosophy of the 20th century." This exists now partly in unfinished manuscript, partly in my mind; but I pursued the question far enough, I think, to discover that there is, after all, such a basic philosophy in spite of all the anarchy of modern thought. And once I had grasped the essence of this philosophy (which, I believe, was expressed most dearly by Nietzsche and by a character of Dostoyevsky in the phrase: "God is dead, therefore man becomes God and everything is possible"—the heart of modern nihilism, anarchism, and anti-Christianity) everything else fell into place, and modern philosophers, writers, artists, etc., become understandable as more or less clearly, more of less directly, expressing this "philosophy."

And so it was (getting back to Iakovos) that the other day, as I was reading Iakovos' article in the July-Aug. Orthodox Observer. "A New Epoch?" that I suddenly felt that I had found an insight into the "essence of Iakovism." Is not, indeed, the basic heresy chiliasml What else, indeed, could justify such immense changes and monstrous perversions in Orthodoxy except the concept that we are entering entirely new historical circumstances, an entirely new kind of time, in which the concepts of the past [are] no longer relevant, but must be guided by the voices of the new time? Does not Fr. Patrinakos, in past issues of the Orthodox Observer, justify Athenagoras—not as a theologian, not as traditionalist, but precisely as prophet, as one whose heresies cannot be condemned because he already lives in the "new time," ahead of his own times? Athenagoras himself has been quoted (I can't find this source now!) as speaking of the coming of the "Third Age of the Holy Spirit"—a clearly chiliastic idea which has its chief recent champion in N. Berdyaev, and can be traced back directly to Joachim of Floris, and indirectly to the Montanists. The whole idea of a "new age," of course, penetrates every fiber of the last two centuries with their preoccupation with "progress," is the key idea of the very concept of Revolution (from French to Bolshevik), is a central idea of modern occultism (visible on the popular level in today's talk of the "age of Aquarius," the astrological post-Christian age) and has owed its spread probably chiefly to Freemasonry (there's a Scottish Rite publication in America called New Age). (I regret to say that the whole philosophy is also present in the American dollar bill with its masonic heritage, with its "novus ordo seclorum" and its unfinished pyramid, awaiting the 13th stone on top!" In Christian terms, it is the philosophy of Antichrist, the one who will turn the world upside down and "change times and seasons." Indeed even the Calendar is involved, for the most thorough Revolutions (the French; and Bolshevik tried and failed and had to be satisfied with the compromise of the Gregorian calendar) introduce new calendars. The

Pope and Athenagoras have already expressed themselves as for the new "universal" calendar. And the whole concept of ecumenism is, of course, permeated with this heresy and the "refounding of the Church."

The recent "thought" of Constantinople (to give it a dignified name!) is full either of outright identification of the Kingdom of Heaven with the "new epoch" (the wolf lying down with the lamb) or of emphasis on an entirely new kind of time and/or Christianity that makes previous Christian standards obsolete: new morality, new religion, springtime of Christianity, refounding the Church, the need no longer to pray for crops or weather because Man controls these now, etc.

How appropriate, too, for the chiliast cause that we live (since 1917) in the "post-Constantinian age"; for it was at the beginning of that age, i.e., at the time of the golden age of the Fathers, that the heresy of chiliasm was crushed—in the West, I believe, chiefly through Augustine and in the East by Origen(?), with their commentary on the thousand years of the Apocalypse not as an earthly "millennium" but as the life of grace in the Church on earth. And indeed, together with the Revolutions that have toppled the Constantinian era we have seen a reform of Christianity that does away with the Church as an instrument of God's grace for men's eternal salvation and replaces it with the "social gospel." Iakovos' article has not one word about salvation, but is concerned only for the "world."

I have said enough! I offer these ideas as suggestions, and if you find them useful in organizing thoughts on Athenagoras and Iakovos I'd be glad to help with what references I have. I wouldn't mind tackling the subject myself, but for the foreseeable future I simply won't have the time or opportunity, and besides that my research has been primarily in contemporary thinkers, and what is needed now is something more strictly patristic as well as concise.

Let us know your thoughts, and pray for us.

With love in Christ,

062.

Sept. 4/17, 1970

St. Ioasaph of Belgorod

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ! I'll write a note while your letter is fresh, and while we're paralyzed waiting for our generator to be repaired. We're still kept busy enough on building projects, however!

Your letter was a joy to us, too. Sometimes I'm afraid we let the worldly side weigh a little too heavy with us, and we start sliding toward despondency. The linotype is slow (so many things to watch for, and I proceed almost purely by trial and error; the books I have sometimes omit the most elementary things because, apparently, everybody is supposed to know them—but I don't find out until I have lead squirting out and then have to find out what to do about it! Gleb took one look at the machine in operation, with its rumblings and groanings, the big arm slamming

down from the back of the machine and (hopefully) returning with the type in one piece, and he retreated to the printing department. But I'm beginning to master the principles at last and am finally beginning to set type faster than we could by hand.)—the linotype is slow, the generator breaks down, paper doesn't arrive, Post Office breathes down our neck to be more regular, etc. But this apparently is to be expected if the work is God-pleasing, and we take comfort from that.

We've finally heard about (but not from) Father Seraphim, from several sources. He left St. Tikhon's just before their May-30 celebration, with Soviet hierarch present, and is now safely on Mt. Athos in the Skete of St. Elias. It will, however, be a miracle if he survives, as the conditions are most difficult—all old, feeble monks, and he alone is strong enough to serve and work. He told a seminarian who visited us two days ago that he likes it there, but he can't keep it up if someone else doesn't join him.

Several Canadian parishes have apparently left the Metropolia for the Synod, but I'm not too certain about the details. The Metropolia seems convinced that their autocephaly is a great success, but objectively I don't think it could be considered so. Indications are no one will recognize it for a while except Finland and Iron Curtain Churches (and not all of them); the Exarchate churches in America met in August and, despite Nikodim's attempts to persuade them, they voted unanimously to stay out of the Metropolia, some of them even preferring to join some other jurisdiction if necessary. So Moscow will have at least three bishops here all the same, with foreign titles—Mark of San Francisco becomes "of Ladoga." Nikodim was quietly kept away from the canonization in Kodiak, but he visited the next week with Archbp. John Shahovskoy—and on Spruce Island they met our Fr. Michael Lightfoot—who wrote us that he was not allowed to serve on Spruce Island, and a seminarian was assigned to watch him and give the now-standard argument in some Metropolia circles (Alaska, for example): we know your bishops are the best, that you alone have monasteries and spiritual centers, that you preserve Orthodoxy better than anyone else—but why pick on everyone else and judge them? I hope our new article by Fr. Azkoul will make it clear that the Synod is "judging" no one, only calling on all to stand up with us for Orthodoxy. The response to this is close to zero so far, but I think there's more below the surface than appears in broad daylight and before long there will be solidarity shown in a few places, but not many. The Greek Church (Athens), by the way, has protested so strongly to Athenagoras against Moscow giving Communion to Catholics that I don't see how they can avoid breaking off Communion with Moscow now—and that from the "ecumenist" Archbp. Ieronymos—one senses he feels the pressure of the Old Calendarists, who are apparently getting stronger. Meanwhile, even though Athenagoras did not recognize the autocephaly, the Metropolia is clinging to him, and Fr. Meyendorff writes in the new Orthodox Church that anyone who does not recognize Athenagoras as a genuine Orthodox Patriarch is simply "outside the communion of world Orthodoxy." And this at a time when Athenagoras is being driven to wilder and wilder statements (he's afraid that Moscow will turn out to be more modernist that he, and thus will take over the leadership of "world Orthodoxy"!), and when a Greek Archpriest in America (Fr. Dombalis) has seriously called for the canonization of Athenagoras while alive!!!

Truly, the Orthodox way in our times is not easy, and more and more we begin to look to the time of martyrdom. Our new issue has two articles on the Catacomb Church in Russia, and the

relevancy to our own situation already becomes visible. We are beginning a collection of statements from the Metropolia on the situation in the USSR today ("things there are changing, full churches, happy people," etc.), and its service to the Communist cause is only too apparent—and this at a time when many documents exist concerning the actual situation there, some of them positively bloodcurdling—such as Anatoly Marchenko's My Testimony, which Gleb just read, concerning the satanic tortures he has undergone just recently (and for smuggling the book out he was put back in concentration camp) where he indicates that treatment is getting worse, if that is possible! The writer A. Kuznetsov (who recently escaped) writes: "If you are a citizen of Soviet Russia, you automatically cannot be a 100-per-cent decent person"; and Marchenko writes that when he was in freedom he couldn't bear to look at happy, successful people, knowing how they had to sell their souls (and often help out in torturing others) in order to achieve this status. But Bp. Theodosius of Alaska says he was surprised how well off and happy people were…

As I see it, there are two great gifts that God has given Orthodox people today: in the Soviet world, the difficult gift of suffering, which by God's grace will probably be the salvation of Russia; and in the free world, the gift of freedom—to speak and witness the truth and tell what is going on. How poorly this gift is being used among us—and how soon, perhaps, it will be taken from us. While there is daylight, we must speak out.

But I am being carried away, and my short note is going over into worktime. Already we are getting cooler weather and the leaves are turning yellow, and winter promises to be earlier and harder than last year. Vladika Anthony paid us a surprise visit two days ago and served Liturgy—probably drawn to us by the relic of St. Mamas (on whose day he came) which Fr. Panteleimon gave us in August. The day of our tonsure is tentatively set for Oct. 14/27, if Deacon Nicholas can help us get a church built by that time—a small chapel about the size of our printshop.

We look forward to seeing you before long. Please keep in mind that you are welcome to come and share our life here at any time, for a short or long time. If you get here early enough, you can spend the winter, and take turns with us going for the mail on snowshoes! Pray for us—and pray also for Archbishop Leonty of Chile and his flock—a Marxist government is about to be installed, and the future is uncertain. Archbishop Leonty has already been in prison in the USSR and served Catacomb Liturgies there and knows well the character of these times.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene

063.

Sept. 4/17, 1970

St. Ioasaph of Belgorod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ!

We were most happy to receive your letter and hear of the existence of your Orthodox mission in Madrid. We will gladly enroll you as our regular subscribers, and we have already sent you copies of all the back issues that we still have—one copy of each issue for your library, and extra copies of issues that we thought might interest you especially and which you can distribute as you see fit.

We are sending your name also to two other places in America where people of our Russian Synod are publishing material in English: to Holy Trinity Monastery in New York, and St. Nectarios Church in Seattle, Washington, and they will undoubtedly send you their publications. Please tell us also if you are in contact with our missionary centers in Europe: with Fr. Basile Sakkos in Geneva (who publishes La Foi Transmise in French), with the St. Seraphim Brotherhood in England (which publishes a magazine in English), and the Dutch Orthodox mission in The Hague (some of whose members speak English). If not, we will send their addresses to you and you can establish contact with them also.

And truly, it is important for our small flock of true Orthodox Christians to have contact with each other, for the days are evil, and many seek to destroy the Orthodox Church today—even some of those who are called "Orthodox bishops." Here in America we are very familiar with the apostasy of "Athenagoras & Co.," and unfortunately the other national jurisdictions in America are hardly any better; all of them fraternize and pray with Catholics and Protestants and are ashamed to tell the heterodox that they have wandered far from the Truth, which is only in Orthodoxy. The members of our Russian Church Outside of Russia almost alone stand up and fight for the purity of our holy Orthodox doctrine and practice, and for this we are slandered and called names everywhere. But here at least we are perfectly free to speak the truth, which is not the case in many countries.

Please write us and tell us more about your Mission. How often and where do you have services? How did you discover the Orthodox Faith? What kind of difficulties do you have with the Greeks, the Catholics, etc? Please write us fully about yourselves.

We will send you regularly two copies of The Orthodox Word. If there are many of you and you need more copies than this, please tell us and we will send you more; we have a "missionary fund" for just such a purpose.

We ask your prayers for us. There are just two of us so far who do all the work on our publication, and it is often very slow and hard work. We are Brother Gleb and Brother Eugene. We look forward to hearing more from you.

With love in Christ the Saviour,

064.

Sept. 8/21, 1970

Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God

Dear Brothers in Christ, Lev [Puhalo] and Vassili,

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ! We greet you on the feast which you so love, the Nativity of our Most Holy Theotokos, and wish you abundant spiritual joy in these holy days. These summer and fall feasts have been very important for us too, and have given us many important beginnings— and soon, God willing, will give us the beginning of our monasticism, too.

We are sorry to hear of your difficulties and sympathize with you in them. But of course they are also from God and doubtless are for your benefit, as Orthodox Christians and chosen of God. Only be patient and don't get discouraged! The Apostle indeed, doubtless seeing how easily we become disheartened, repeats his words of encouragement for us: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice!" So be it!

Please permit us to be quite bold and offer you an alternative to your present plans. Of course, if you are quite definite on going to Montreal, don't let us dissuade you, but we have the impression that you are not that definite about it.

Perhaps we should not be so bold as to "invite" you here to share our poverty, for we have almost nothing to invite you to. But in all seriousness, if you have it in your hearts, you are more than welcome to come here and share what we have for a short or a long time. I will give you a word on the pros and cons.

Con: Our accommodations are limited and primitive, consisting of two buildings: printshop and living cabin (which now has something like 4 or 4 1/2 rooms, depending on how you count), with a reasonable capacity of four or five like-minded souls. This week, on orders from Archbishop Anthony, we are supposed to have help in building a small chapel, the back part of which could double as a study-room. There is a wood stove in each building and a 2-burner hotplate, but no water except what we carry in or collect from rain and snow, and a outdoor privy. Our winter, while mild by ;ast Coast standards, is severe enough by California standards: temperatures occasionally below 20 degrees, precipitation 40 to 50 inches, including anywhere between 2 feet (last winter) to upwards of 8 or 10 feet (2 years ago) of snow. From November to March, but especially in midwinter, we have almost complete isolation, including the possibility of being snowbound for a month or more (not last year, but this winter looks to be harsher); we have snowshoes, however, and the trip to town for mail and emergency rations is not really difficult (2 miles). For the time being, of course, we do not have a priest, and in the winter it may be several months between Liturgies, although last Christmas we were able to get out (to San Francisco). On Sundays and holy days we sing the Typika, in addition to the regular cycle of daily services.

Pro: A good library, chiefly in Russian, of Holy Fathers and basic Orthodox books; the daily cycle of services (as much as our strength allows), with ample opportunity to gain practice in reading and singing—we have all the Slavonic service books; daily reading of lives of saints and spiritual reading at trapeza; a common task—translating and printing for the spread of Orthodoxy in English.

Do you get the picture? It would probably be irresponsible to "invite" you to this, our Orthodox "refugee camp," especially in winter, but if your hearts respond, do not hesitate to act. You would not in the least "inconvenience" us, so don't give that a thought; it is we who would

inconvenience you. Just remember that you have a place here. And to speak from the heart: we think you belong here, as someone who knows you in fact told us at the canonization.

Write us. And pray for us especially in these next weeks. God willing, on Oct. 14/27 Gleb and I will be tonsured here and what we have will become, such as it is, a monastic institution. Whether you are here or elsewhere (we'd like you to be here!) pray for us especially on that day.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Eugene Rose

065.

Oct. 17/30, 1970

St. Andrew of Crete

Dear brother in Christ, Daniel,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. By God's grace your onetime brothers Gleb and Eugene are now (for four days already) Fathers Herman and Seraphim, and still overwhelmed by the magnitude of what has happened. Our humble place is now the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage—already a contradiction, since our rule is coenobitic, but we just can't find a more suitable translation for "Pustyn," which is the name given us by the Synodal Ukase. After a time of some agitation and uncertainty—ten days of rain which ended only the day before our tonsure, which was a beautiful calm, sunny day (though cold), fear that the church wouldn't be finished (it wasn't, but we managed to put up temporary walls and roof), both of our trucks broke down, etc.—we are now in our fourth day of calm monastic life, although of course not without trials. We were unable to follow the full monastic custom of spending five days in church, or even three (as in Jordanville), but Vladika Nektary stayed over for a second day and so we did spend the better part of two days in church and received Holy Communion both days. And now we are alone, trying to adjust to our now somewhat stricter rule of life, reading the holy Fathers and praying for guidance in our still somewhat uncertain first days until we shall be confirmed in our permanent rule of life—with, God willing, our own priest to serve Liturgy and keep our good Archbishop from worrying about us. Already we've had a sign of how close God is to us, for on our first trip to the post office after our tonsure we found a letter from our longtime friend Priest-monk Theodore (one of Vladika John's orphans from Shanghai), who for several years has been priest at an Old-Calendarist convent in Greece and now unexpectedly is in America and wants to come to us right away—whether for a short or long time only God knows, but he was a member of our Brotherhood from the beginning, and his sudden reappearance now after so many years is surely providential. Please pray for him.

What more is there to say? Our new Orthodox Word weighs upon us, and now we must get back into the rhythm of a full working life. The new issue will be double and will be mostly devoted to the canonization, with a great many pictures. There is a great deal else we should be doing—getting our wood supply ready (the nearby mountains are already covered with snow and our cold season has started), finishing our kitchen on the balcony, building new kellias—but we have

only four hands and must do what our strength allows. Fortunately Deacon Nicholas has taken the building of the church entirely in his hands and—except for last week when we worked full time with him—we can concentrate on printing.

Our future here—is in God's hands. Everything that has happened so far is so much beyond us that we don't even dare dream of the future. We are trying to go forward one step at a time, watching out for a fall, and trusting in the prayers of Vladika John, who is surely with us now—in fact, in these days we have seen the realization of two prophecies (if it is not too bold to use that word) which he made to us. But we will tell you of those in person.

Pray for us, and let us hear from you soon.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Sinful Monk Seraphim

P.s. Just imagine the names that were given us! And Vladika Anthony didn't even realize that the day of our tonsure was the namesday of Abbot Nazary of both Sarov and Valaam! (the one who is mentioned in the service.) Glory be to God!

066.

Oct. 25/Nov. 7, 1970

Martyrs Martyrius and Marcian

Dear Brothers in Christ [in Madrid],

Rejoice in the Lord! Please forgive us for such a delay in answering your last letter. Since that time the two of us who live here permanently have been tonsured monks and are now Fathers Herman and Seraphim, and our monastery is the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage.

In answer to your question, the address of the St. Seraphim Brotherhood in England is: c/o Nicolas Mabin, 8 Golders Green Crescent, London NW 11, England. I am sure they will gladly send you their Orthodox Chronicle.

We have great sympathy for your problems as a young mission; in fact we have some of the same problems ourselves, and we are quite poor. Right now the only help we can give you is to send our publications. A friend of ours who has lived in Brazil says he can obtain some liturgical books in the Portuguese language—would this help you, or is the language too much different?

We will be very interested to know whether you had any special commemoration of the canonization of St. Herman of Alaska, or will have the service to him on his feast day (Dec. 12/25). Also, what icon you have of him—the one from Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, or another one?

We hope you have received by now the first copies we sent of The Orthodox Word. You will notice there that we have already devoted some attention to the Western saints of the Orthodox Church, and we hope to print much more about them. We would be most interested to receive from you the lives of your patron saints, or information on any other Spanish Orthodox saints.

We ask your prayers for us,

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Sinful Monk Seraphim

067.

Oct. 30/Nov. 12, 1970

Martyrs Zenobius and Zenobia

Dear Father David [Black],

Thank you for your frank letter to Br. Gleb of some weeks ago. Although, of course, your tone was distressing to us, we very much appreciate knowing how you really feel, so that real differences and misunderstandings between us will not be glossed over by polite words. Please permit me to be now just as frank.

We must confess to being uninformed on one point: just what is this "literature," these "irresponsible mailings" to which you refer as containing "vicious untruths" designed to mislead the faithful? As for our Orthodox Word, we can understand that you do not share the point of view expressed in some articles there; but I am quite certain that there is nothing there that could reasonably be called a "vicious untruth." If you are referring, therefore, to some other literature of which we do not know, please tell us about it, and if possible send it to us. If there are, indeed, "vicious untruths" there, we would be as anxious as you are to have this situation corrected. The true issues at stake are much too important to approach them with any but the highest standards of integrity.

What are these issues? We have the distinct impression that you have not faced up to them. In your letter you are still talking around them. The question is not who is more "pious" than the other, who keeps or breaks more canons, or how many unedifying cases one can find in the other "jurisdiction." No one has said that piety or faithfulness to canons are the "special virtues" of the Synod. Of course there are pious and impious, strict and lax, alike in several jurisdictions. But in a day when traditional Orthodox piety is literally trampled on and despised in the highest circles (especially, of course, by Athenagoras and Iakovos), and when through lack of inspiration or examples the faithful are losing the very essence of Orthodox life, it is necessary to defend it and to point out shining examples of it in our day—and these, whether one likes it or not, are chiefly to be found in the Synod.

What about ecumenism? Entertain whatever abstract ideas you like about "good ecumenism," — can't you see that those who invented it understand it in a heretical sense, and they see Orthodox involvement in it as a more or less grudging acceptance of that heresy?—or that the actual practice of it is literally dissolving the fabric of the Orthodoxy of those who participate ("the Truth which we have not known"; "refound your Church," invocations of "Saints" Gandhi, Martin Luther King, etc.). Don't you see that no one speaks out unequivocally about this except the Synod (and please don't cite the Metropolias episde of a year or two ago that was condemned by the people in the Metropolia itself for its compromising, lukewarm spirit!), and that

Metropolitan Philaret's heartfelt and truly Orthodox appeal to all Orthodox bishops found no response in the Metropolia except for Fr. Schmemann's inaccurate and evasive reply wherein he does not answer the Metropolitan's points, but instead argues ad hominem, trying to discredit the Synod's right to speak the truth to other Orthodox bishops. If the Metropolia is really not soft on ecumenism—then let us see a straightforward epistle from her hierarchs, calling Athenagoras and Iakovos (by name—that is the only brotherly Orthodox way!) to account and showing solidarity with Metropolitan Philaret—but on the contrary, the Metropolia runs away from Metropolitan Philaret straight into the arms of Moscow, which is currently competing with Constantinople for the lead in spectacular un-Orthodox acts and statements, and Fr. Meyendorff states that anyone outside of communion with Athenagoras (I believe you realize he is a heretic?) is outside the Orthodox Church.

And Moscow? No one has said that the Metropolia is "soft on Communism"; that is not the question at all. But cannot you see that the position [into] which the Metropolias act has put its own clergy and faithful is such as to make them, willing or not, apologists for the Moscow Patriarchate and, directly or indirectly, for the Communist Government in back of it—this against the best information available in the West concerning Soviet agents inside the Patriarchate (which your Metropolia apologists accept). And against the witness of the brave protesters within the Patriarchate in the USSR, who openly call their hierarchs traitors to Orthodoxy, not to mention other more personal names. Your best people become such apologists—witness your own Bp. Theodosius and his remarks "life is not uncomfortable, people are not unhappy…. We have to reassess our ideas of life in the Soviet Union," etc. Such remarks can be excused only on the grounds of absolute ignorance—of the prison camps and tortures behind those "not unhappy" people, of the most recent testimony such as that in the book of A. Marchenko (My Testimony), articles and press conferences of A. Kuznetsov, etc., etc. that prison treatment is if anything getting worse, that the only "happy" people are those who escaped the concentration camps through hypocrisy and (often) through willingness to torture others, that "it is impossible to be a Soviet citizen and at the same time a decent human being." (These are from people who lived the Soviet Life.) Even Bp. Theodosius, in his ignorance, becomes the apologist of the bestial Soviet system—but he literally has to, in order to defend his own position. No, you are not "soft on Communism," but you are beyond all doubt the dupes of the very skillful politicians of the Soviet Patriarchate.

I hope you will read carefully our new Orthodox Word with its two articles on the Catacomb Church. You will see then that is not only we in the free world, but those over there as well (who have earned the right to their judgment by the tortures which they have undergone for Christ and Orthodoxy) who do not accept the Moscow Sergianists. And perhaps you will begin to see that our uncompromising rejection of the Metropolias concordat with Moscow has nothing to do with theoretical concepts of "canonicity," but is part of the very life-blood of our Orthodoxy; this concordat is not "uncanonical"—it is treason to the Russian Church and to her new martyrs. You cannot begin to imagine the profound sorrow and tears the "autocephaly" has caused us. And if now representatives of the Metropolia begin to deny the existence of the Catacomb Church (we expect they will, for that is the Moscow "line"—in defiance of present-day documents and information in the Soviet press-—this will only be another indication of that instinctive "defense-

mechanism" which forces the Metropolia into an ardent defense of "Sergianism" with all its propaganda line. And even if not a single Catacomb Christian could be found, that would not change the truth of the Catacomb position in 1927— attested in numerous documents—nor would it make Sergianism true or Orthodox.

When you talk of reconciliation, therefore, you are truly seeing things through rose-colored glasses. In 1946 the Metropolia slapped the Synod in the face and kicked her bishops out (have you really not read that disgraceful history?); in 1970 she betrays the Russian Church entirely. To what, then, are we supposed to be reconciled? To total lack of principle? To the "spirit of the times"? The conscience of your own "silent minority" of older Russian priests is not at ease; should we betray them too by joining you? Our bishops for 25 years have been kind and over-kind, preserving Orthodoxy and being ready at any time for full reconciliation, with no loss of "autonomy" to the Metropolia; but the Metropolia has never wanted this, but waited the time when she could make her separate terms with Moscow—which, you must surely know, has "excommunicated" us just as she had "excommunicated" you—you yourself, in fact, were not even a priest of God until April 9, 1970, if you accept the canonicity of Moscow! The Metropolia has chosen her path—then what rosy-pink idea of Christianity must you have to turn to us for "reconciliation" now? Orthodoxy is more serious than that!

And whatever you may say of "certain circles" of the Synod, I can assure you that our bishops and our priests and most devoted faithful think as we do. Bishop Nektary certainly does, however polite he may be on the telephone; Archbishop John Maximovitch most emphatically did; and as for Father Gerasim,—the fact that he remained in communion with the Metropolia while considering himself a priest of the Synod should not mislead you into rosy ideas about him either. His past statements leave no doubt whatever as to which side he would have been on today; and his correspondence, of which we have seen a large part, contains some statements about the Metropolia and its clergy (by name) that are so strong we would rather not print them.

What, then, would you have us do when our conscience says that the Church has been betrayed? Keep silent—when we are free (for God knows how much longer!) and can speak the truth as we see it? St. Mark of Ephesus was not silent, though he was called a troublemaker; St. Maximus the Confessor would not keep his opinion to himself, even though this "confused" the faithful: the whole history of the Church is an inspiration to us to cry with a loud voice when the Church has been wronged.

You doubtless disagree. But I hope you can at least glimpse the depth and sincerity of what the "autocephaly" has inspired. "Autocephaly," by the way, is surely a euphemism for the event that has occurred, when the Metropolia remains exactly what it was, when Moscow keeps every one of its parishes and even sends a new bishop and priests, when no Churches outside the Soviet block recognize it and Athenagoras calls it "non-existent" (and surely we will be allowed to agree with Athenagoras when he speaks the truth?). No, what has occurred is a concordat, a "legalization" of the Metropolia like that of the Soviet Patriarchate in 1927; and if you and the vast majority of even the clergy of the Metropolia were not in fact ignorant of Russian Church history for the last 43 years you would know that Metropolitan Sergius' act in 1927 was condemned by many bishops in the USSR as initiating a "neo-renovationist schism," that those

bishops were imprisoned and/or killed because they opposed Sergius, and that therefore in your ignorance you are not only receiving "legalization" from a neo-renovationist schismatic body but are acting fully in accord with the Soviet "new church politics" whose aim is to use the Church to destroy itself, after giving maximum benefit to the Soviet Government itself. At the very least, you should have refrained from any kind of concordat when there is the slightest doubt that any of this might not be false, and when the majority of free Russian hierarchs do not agree with you; you should have waited (even [if] it takes a hundred years—truth is that important for the Church!) for a true and free All-Russian Council, instead of accepting the poisoned gift of the Moscow Robber Council.

I am perhaps being unjust when I say "you," as if you agreed with everything that has been done; but as a matter of fact, whether you agree or not, you are responsible before God and before the Church for what has been done if you do not speak or act against it. And I fear that you will find, if you wish to remain in favor in the Metropolia, that you will have to agree with what has been done, and you will have to apologize for it when it is attacked, and that—unless you are fully in accord with it, which we cannot believe—you will defend it for psychological reasons (because we and other "trouble-makers" are attacking it) and not for reasons of conscience.

You talk about the "unity" of your diocese and the "Orthodox preaching" of your bishop, as though these existed in a vacuum that has nothing to do with the betrayal from on high of your whole Church, in which your bishop very activity participated (doubtless in ignorance—may God forgive him!). By our articles in The Orthodox Word we have no intention to fragment your "unity," but only to speak the truth. Where that truth leads, we firmly believe, is in the hands of God—and, for Alaska, St. Herman.

And if St. Herman is truly God-pleasing—as no one now doubts—and the Metropolia's concordat with Moscow is really the monstrous betrayal we firmly believe it to be: then it can scarcely be that Alaska will escape troubles. You perhaps think it evil of us to have connected St. John of Kronstadt with the burning of St. Michael's Cathedral—but Orthodox piety has always taken such "coincidences" most seriously. And such acts are signs of God's love, for "whom God loveth, He chastizeth." May St. Herman act less severely, yet just as openly, for the salvation of Alaska!

There, dear Father, I have spoken my mind and heart, and my conscience is clear and without any bitterness. Please forgive me if anything has offended you. And please, Father, has a little charity toward Fr. Elias Armistead—he is surely not a "creature" in the sense you mean! We know very little about his activity there; but if there is any serious canonical irregularity there, our Church is surely no less anxious than yours to have it corrected. We would appreciate hearing any facts that disturb you.

In general, as I said at the beginning, we are not in possession of all the information that apparently inspired your letter and we hope you will enlighten us on this. But your tone sounds a little bitter, and I pray that will not last. The past of Orthodox Alaska has seen many sorrows and disappointments, and only God knows what the future holds. May His will be done, through the prayers of St. Herman and—if we can be so bold—of Father Gerasim. Amen.

Since I began this letter, Br. Gleb and I have been tonsured monks, and are now Fathers Herman and Seraphim, by God's grace.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Sinful Monk Seraphim

P.s. We hope you will continue to send us Orthodox Alaska—but since we are literally without funds we hope you will consider it as an exchange for your own subscription to The Orthodox Word.

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1971

068.

Dec, 28/Jan. 10, 1970/71

Sunday after Christmas

Dear Brother in Christ, Lavrenty [Campbell],

Rejoice in the Lord! We tried to call you Friday night to tell of the conclusion of our visit with its trials (from Elena Yurevna's), but no answer. I rested at her place for a while, while Fr. Herman conversed, and we left in time to reach here safely by daybreak Saturday.

As you are our brother, and furthermore are directly exposed to Vladika Anthony, I must give you a brief outline of our most unpleasant experience with him. Please keep it to yourself, but do not forget it either.

Thank you for your phone call of Friday morning. While we were quite conscious of our obligation to visit Vlad. Anthony on the way back, we would not at all have been prepared for what happened if you hadn't warned us. You sounded quite troubled by what Vladika told you about us; and undoubtedly you had cause. Frankly, I think the man is sick—and his disease is the state of being unable to trust anyone except himself, which leads him to build fantasies out of nothing—either much better or much worse than they really are.

Of course, we ourselves are to blame for not trying harder to see him before anyone else—I called his upstairs phone without even thinking that he was very likely downstairs and we made a few other mistakes like that. But others are more debatable—that we were obliged to be at the late Liturgy so everyone (or at least Vlad.) could look at us, etc. But all this is secondary and was only a pretext for Vlad s real concern: to show that he is our boss, that we will do nothing without him, that otherwise we are "disobedient" and he will reform us or break us trying. And the means he uses are cheap: he made me wait downstairs for 2 hours while, using every trick of Russian psychology (I, being an American, am apparently unimportant and will simply do whatever the Russians tell me!), he shouted and bullied Fr. Herman to tears and breakdown, until Fr. H. finally rallied himself to give it back to him punch for punch. I meanwhile was in a similar state downstairs, and barely overmastered the temptation to do something desperate like break in

on them and demand to hear for myself what was being done to my brother and our monastery. (I haven't prayed so fervently, especially to our real Vladika downstairs, in a long time!) I was finally ushered in to attend the rather calm conclusion to the whole affair, when Vlad s wrath was finally changed into something resembling mercy.

Legitimate chastisement from ecclesiastical superiors should begin and end in mutual trust and without undue disturbance. But we for two days have been turned inside out and have no peace, feeling our very consciences to be violated. I have experienced one of the greatest disillusionments of my life, and both of us have been given a wound that will last for life. Vlad, had loosed his very demons on us, and something is dreadfully wrong. He has "played" at being Staretz and Abbot, and it is a grim game, [letter ends]

069.

Jan. 4/17, 1971

The 70 Apostles

Dear Father in Christ, Panteleimon,

Evlogeite!

The spiritual bond between you and your Synodia and our small Brotherhood has always been most close. Years ago you offered us refuge if we should ever need it, and we offered the same to you when you came and saw for yourself the wilderness which God and Vladika John have given into our keeping. And so now we turn to you before anyone else in a time of great trial and crisis for us, begging your counsel and your prayers. We will also consult with several of the Russian clergy (bishops) before making any decisive step, but your advice will be of especial value to us, inasmuch as our very existence is for the sake of the American Orthodox Mission. And we feel most strongly that at this moment our existence is in grave danger.

The danger before us is by no means a new one in the history of the Church; it concerns the independence of a monastery in the face of the power of the local bishop. I will give you a rather detailed account of the events of the past months so that you can get as full a picture as possible of our situation.

In several brief meetings with our Archbishop Anthony in the months before our tonsure, the subject of our status after tonsure was discussed in rather general and indefinite terms. I was a little disturbed even then that on two occasions Vladika took Fr. Herman aside to speak to him privately on these matters (undoubtedly because he is Russian and thus easier to communicate with), because in everything we have done we have always acted together and in absolute unanimity, doing nothing without the other's blessing. But such was our trust and confidence in Vladika Anthony, and our sense of the blessing and presence of Vladika John and the rightness of our path (on which we have been led quite beyond our own will and our own powers), that we could not harbor suspicions of any kind right up to the day of our tonsure. We were aware that Vladika Anthony was to be, purely formally and temporarily, our "Abbot" for the sake of tonsuring us, and that then or soon he was to appoint one of us to this position, as he had

promised. This also we did not especially welcome, but we understood that once a "monastery" was organized (which we had not asked for; we only asked Vladika to tonsure us, being afraid of too grandiose ideas) some kind of "Abbot" was of course required, although our principle of mutual counsel would continue as before. Then, shortly before our tonsure Vladika Anthony shocked us by inquiring whether we would consider moving away to some place with water and conveniences for the sake of those who would join us; and we were hard pressed to get Vladika to see that there was no one in sight who was about to join us, and that in any case it would not be water and conveniences that would attract like-minded people, not to mention the fact that it was due to the evident help of Vladika John, after our fervent prayer to him, that we obtained this land. We were so concerned over Vladika Anthony's seemingly unrealistic plans for us that we immediately wrote him a letter explaining our position more fully (we sent a copy of this letter to Bishop Laurus); and he replied in writing with seeming understanding and with the statement that he would apply no "episcopal pressure" of any kind on us.

Finally, the day of our tonsure arrived, and we cannot doubt that God's blessing led us to this decisive act of our lives, truly a second baptism. After the tonsure Vladika Anthony announced the opening (by Synodal Ukase) of the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage, with himself as Abbot for the time being. His title was proclaimed by the deacon during several ektanias, which made us, despite ourselves, a little uneasy. Then, after the trapeza, he announced, in the presence of Vladika Nektary and our Staretz, Fr. Spyridon, that both of us were to be ordained hieromonks within five days. This caused astonishment to both of us, as we thought that Vladika had informed us that this question would not be raised for some time. In our present state of overwork and with no place to serve Liturgy during the winter (our church is not even half finished), the question was impractical in any case, and such a rapid and radical change of our status we felt to be a threat to what we already had. Our urgent plea to be allowed to establish ourselves in the monastic life finally dissuaded Vladika, although he was greatly displeased and announced that he felt personally offended, but that our "disobedience" might be spiritually beneficial for us. Vladika Nektary comforted us after this incident, and indeed came to our defense in front of Vladika.

In the three months since then we have been hard at work preparing and printing our canonization issue of The Orthodox Word in the face of cold weather, much snow, and mechanical difficulties. We are quite aware that the monastic life is not supposed to be easy, and also that we must be prepared to accept responsibilities that we would frankly rather avoid—for our very status as a missionary monastery is an open invitation to American truth-seekers and would-be monks to come and disturb our blessed peace and quiet, even if only to find out how unworthy we are. Whether God will bless a larger or smaller missionary community here, or whether we will remain two "crazy monks in the forest," we are prepared to accept anything that God sends us in furtherance of the cause which Vladika John blessed and which brought us here: the mission of the Orthodox printed word, especially in English.

On the day before Christmas, much against our own inclination, we left on a 3-day trip to San Francisco to fulfill what we felt to be our obligations: to receive Holy Communion on the feast day, to pay our respects to the Archbishop, to visit Marina (who for months has urgently wanted

to talk to me about her troubles of the last months, most of which you know about) and Mrs. Kontzevitch (who needed to talk to Fr. Herman), and to pay a brief visit to our mothers in Monterey. We left only with much forcing of our will, because the moment we left our Hermitage we felt extremely unsafe and uneasy, and the very thought that we would have to appear in church before everyone, wearing our mantias (which we thought was required of us) persuaded us that we were simply hypocrites who were going to show ourselves off and therefore increase the totally unjustified and unrealistic awe and respect which many people in San Francisco (who are far away and so respect the idea behind us without seeing our many faults and sins at close range), apparently have for us. The warning of the Saviour, "Beware when all men shall think well of you," has long troubled us.

After stopping in Redding to pick up a metal part which we had ordered to replace a part of our printing press that had broken a few days earlier, we passed through Berkeley and stopped there to see if we could drive Mrs. Kontzevitch to church in San Francisco. She was already waiting for a ride with someone else, and so we spent a brief hour with her before going to San Francisco, where we arrived only in time for the beginning of the Vigil service, without being able to stop first and pay our respects to the Archbishop, as we had hoped, knowing that he is rather sensitive about such things. After entering the Cathedral, we immediately went into the Altar and received the Archbishop's blessing. After the service he asked us if we would stay with him, and we replied that we would be staying with Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov, as we always do (reading our rule of prayer together with him), making a particular point of trying to nourish the spark which he has within him and which could, God willing, become a flame of great service to Christs Church. He too has an exaggerated opinion of us, but we feel responsible for him in that he has told us more than once that the very idea of our existence in the wilderness is the one thing that keeps him alive in the face of what he finds an extremely discouraging time. He told us long ago that Vladika Anthony had destroyed the spark within him, but we attributed this to his immaturity and emotional temperament; in recent months he has served only rarely, and the fact that he served at the canonization and several times recently in the new Cathedral is owing chiefly if not entirely to us.

On Christmas morning we attended the early Liturgy, as we have always done in the past (except for the day of canonization, when we attended both Liturgies), and had hoped to leave right away for Monterey; but Marina had persuaded us to have lunch at her house, and then we hoped to see Vladika briefly. From Marinas I called Vladika at his upstairs phone, and received no answer; as it turned out, he was apparently downstairs where I somehow didn't even think of calling. Therefore, as it was already almost dark, we decided to go to Monterey and return by noon the next day to see Vladika on the way back to Platina. We read the Vespers service in the car on the way.

On leaving Monterey in the morning (neither of our mothers had given us any difficulties at all, at which we marveled and thought: our trip has been too smooth, probably Vladika will give us trouble!) we stopped at the St. Seraphim church, where Fr. Gregory was about to begin the Liturgy. We talked with him for a few minutes and then left, anxious to get to Vladika in San Francisco by noon.

Dear Father, please forgive me for burdening you with all these details; but perhaps you will be able to see in some of them where our heart and soul are and give us a word of advice. Here we are alone. We have our Russian friends and advisers among the clergy, but they do not see us as we really are, but place us in some Russian frame of reference which does not encompass that mission to which God has evidently called us and Vladika John blessed. Please be patient!

Already before we left Monterey, Laurence Campbell had called me and warned me that Vladika Anthony was extremely angry at us, and that to his (Laurence's) great disturbance Vladika was saying things about us which did not seem at all true or fair. At any rate, we were at least a little prepared for what followed.

Shortly after noon we arrived to find Vladika at trapeza. He received us with extreme coldness, and none of us said more than a word or two while eating.

Then he called us to his quarters—rather, he called Fr. Herman, and had me sit below for two hours alone. At this I was extremely upset, and imagined to myself that my brother was sitting upstairs being subjected to all the tricks of Russian psychology in order to force him into some kind of breakdown—for what crimes and to what purpose I did not know, knowing only that I would be expected meekly to accept the result, as an American "without rights." My imaginings, it turned out, were precisely correct. I have not prayed so hard, especially to our Vladika John in front of his kellia, in many, many months. I looked at the portrait of the Tsar-Martyr and begged him to help us too! It was evident immediately that a powerful monastic temptation had struck us; and while rejoicing that our path was now not too smooth, that at least someone was no longer "thinking well" of us, I already feared for the very existence of our young Hermitage and of our entire work.

After two hours I was ushered upstairs to hear the rather quiet conclusion of the whole event. Vladika informed me that he was very disappointed in us because we did not see him first to receive his blessing to go to Marinas, to Monterey, etc., because we wore our mantias (not proper for visiting monks)—for which he thought of depriving us of them for a while so we would not show them off— because we did not attend the late Liturgy so that people (and he himself) could look at us, because we went to confession to our former secular priest instead of visiting our Starets in Palo Alto, not to mention lesser transgressions such as not staying with him, etc. To this I begged forgiveness, as Fr. Herman had done. But one other point astonished me: he complained of recently receiving a letter from us in which (as we had orally agreed with him months before) we spoke of presenting the Rule of our Hermitage for his approval, and we apologized for not presenting it by Dec. 12/25 as we had promised. He told us now that it was not for us to present our Rule to him, but for him to give us a Rule. In conclusion he had decided that he had misplaced his confidence in us and had mistakenly tonsured us without sufficient trial, and that now he would have to see how we pass through his trials of us. He then smiled, gave us a cake and two bottles of wine, and blessed us to leave.

From Fr. Herman I learned that in the preceding two hours Vladika had indeed played fully on the Russian psychology, had shouted, bullied, pointed out the monastic vows accused him of disobedience to his Abbot, using crude language and telling him that he had not been "tonsured

in a barbershop," and in general brought Fr. Herman to tears and breakdown in front of him. Finally Fr. Herman in desperation replied to Vladika in the same manner, and to his dismay he found that Vladika liked this kind of combat and in general gave the impression of "playing" at being Abbot and threatening with his authority, etc. In substance Fr. Herman protested that Vladika had blessed us as an independent church organization and should leave us alone, to which Vladika loudly stated: "I will not leave you alone!" And he proceeded to tell him of those monastic obediences which we should owe him as Abbot: not to write anyone or invite anyone to come to us without his blessing, to sign over our property to him, to have our publications supervised by him, etc. etc.

Dear Father, I can only say that from this meeting I have received one of the greatest disillusionments of my life, and both Fr. Herman and I have been given a wound that will last all our lives. I cannot say that we had not been warned. Vladika Nektary had warned us that Vladika Anthony will allow no individual initiative within his Archdiocese and that he feels himself to be his slave, and that his attempt to take away Vladika Nektary's podvorye had so exasperated Vladika Nektary that he had replied to him: "You can talk about this to my lawyer." Father Alexei Poluektov had told us of his extremely bitter experience with him in his own parish, and how under the guise of "confirming" the printed word he has been smothering Fr. Alexeis own printing activity, taking and keeping manuscripts without further word. Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov had described his own unpleasant experience which had completely destroyed his trust in his own Archbishop. And others had warned us in the most alarming terms, even telling us not to put our fingers in his mouth or "he will bite them off." All these warnings we attributed to the particular circumstances of these individuals, and our trust in our Archbishop did not waver. Now this trust and confidence has been completely and absolutely shattered. Perhaps we know nothing of monasticism, but we nonetheless firmly believe that in the Church of Christ a legitimate chastisement from ones ecclesiastical superiors should be carried out in mutual trust and end in a peaceful state for all concerned; I myself was on several occasions chastised by Vladika John and always felt the rightness of the chastisement and benefitted from it. But for over a week now we are completely upset and almost despair over our very future and the future of The Orthodox Word.

Dear Father, please understand that our concern is not that we have been chastised for our monastic transgressions; whether justly or unjustly accused of them, we will gladly bow down in obedience to our Archbishop, who indeed tonsured us, and follow his advice in future trips to San Francisco. Further, our concern is not that in administering this chastisement to us our Archbishop used means which we feel to be utterly wrong and extremely painful to us, and which have only served to undermine and destroy the mutual trust and confidence which existed between us until now. This is a secondary and transitory matter, even though it has left a deep scar in both of us. And we have no personal feelings whatever against our Archbishop, and no desire to cause him any trouble or shake his legitimate authority in any way. We understand also that Vladika Anthony had only the highest motives in all that he said to us: to uphold his own authority and to apply a chastisement in order to make "real monks" of us (in his own understanding!); he even told us that one day we would be in his position and administering the

same kind of chastisement to others—to which Fr. Herman cried out from his heart: "God forbid!"

Rather, what we are deeply concerned about is that this incident has revealed Vladika Anthony's hitherto hidden idea of what we are as a church organization; perhaps, indeed, he used this incident as a pretext to make this known to us. Vladika Anthony believes—in complete contradiction of our oral understanding with him before our tonsure that we are simply monks in absolute dependence on and obedience to him alone as "abbot." But this conception of our Hermitage can result in nothing but the total destruction of what we have built up for seven years now, and it is based on nothing but the Archbishop's own purely external preconceptions of us.

In Vladika Anthony's conception our Hermitage is evidently a Diocesan institution of which Vladika is Abbot and dictator, and wherein nothing will be done without his express blessing. He himself, I believe, has only come to this conception gradually, through feeling out our weaknesses, and now he feels that the time has come to strike out for his conception. But now that we look back we can see many signs that very early Vladika Anthony did not see us for what we are and are doing, but that even then he was already fitting us into his own picture of what we should or could be in his Diocese. Thus, when we first told him of our plan to move to Platina he smiled and said: "I am not against having a monastery in my Diocese." On the day of our tonsure, when he could not persuade us to accept priesthood immediately, he shook his head and said: "But what am I going to say at the Synod?"—meaning obviously that he had already informed the Synod of his plans for us, which did not in the least correspond with our own ideas. (To this Vladika Nektary very sensibly told him: "Just tell the Synod the way it is; there should be no problem in that!" On that same day, just before the services and our tonsure (as if as a final temptation of the devil to dissuade us at the last moment from this decisive step) Vladika Nektary informed us that at the Synod and everywhere else everyone was talking about us, and report had it that we would be ordained priests within the week, would soon rise in the clergy ranks, and "you won't be here very long!" etc. etc. And what kind of spiritual picture must Vladika Anthony have of us if in October he considered mature enough to become immediately hieromonks (i.e., already spiritual fathers) and in January, for the sins which I enumerated above— which we, in spite of ourselves, cannot see as anything more than formal and external— he loses all trust in us and feels it needful to take us over completely?

Our own picture, which we have built up over seven years, is this: we must follow exactly the Synod s Ukase which founded our Hermitage: "to conduct in the monastic calling the very same missionary and publishing work which they have conducted up to this time." There are only two changes in our present status: our Brotherhood has become a Hermitage, and we have entered the monastic calling. God willing, our missionary and publishing work will continue and expand, but it will do so only under the previously-existing conditions of independence and freedom. The Orthodox Word cannot be censored: Vladika John blessed us to print without censorship, and he only made occasional suggestions and we came to him on doubtful points. For the rest, we take most seriously into account your opinion and the opinion of other of our fathers and try to print nothing solely on our own authority. Even the Zeytoon article to which you took such exception we printed only after long talks with Archimandrite Kyprian of Jordanville, who really talked us

into it and overcame our doubts; and Vladika Anthony himself looked at all the pictures in that article before the issue was printed. (At that time we did not even suspect the existence of a contrary opinion in the Greek press.) This is a policy of prudence and council and mutual trust, which censorship would utterly destroy. Again, to fulfill our monastic and missionary function we must be absolutely free and trusted to write to whom we feel the need, we must be able to tell anyone at a moment s notice to come here in time of trouble, we must have all authority to dismiss troublemakers, and in a word we cannot afford the idle luxury of waiting while someone 250 miles away, on the basis of opinion and hearsay, makes our decisions for us. There are at least 5 or 6 people to whom we have confidentially said: If ever you have trouble or need, this is a place of refuge for you. Now this would become impossible.

But of all this, as an abbot, you yourself are much more aware than we, and I write it down only to clarify my own thoughts.

Dear Father: You know us well enough to know that we are in all things obedient and respectful of legitimate ecclesiastical authority, and that we have never tried to impose any kind of authority over others (this if anything is our great weakness!) or seek for ourselves any kind of position or tide in the Church. But if it now comes down to practicing "humility" and "obedience" and allowing a complete outsider to take over and destroy our work, our conscience will not allow it. (Please tell us if we are wrong!) Vladika Anthony has never given any comments on The Orthodox Word and has told us that he does not read it; he knows nothing of our daily life or ride of prayer and asked nothing about these even on the day of tonsure, by which we assumed that he gave his blessing for us to continue as we are with full trust in us, our relation to him being exactly that of St. Sergius of Radonezh to the Abbot Metrophan who tonsured him and then left him alone in the wilderness; he knows nothing of Americans or of the needs of the American Mission and has never spoken to either of us about these things, even though the Synodal Gramota and Ukase have blessed us precisely as a "missionary" organization. In a word, he is not capable of assuming responsibility before God, as Abbot, of our work.

And worse, as we now see: he views everything in his Diocese precisely as a "Diocesan" activity for which he alone is responsible—and if we let him do it The Orthodox Word too would become a Diocesan publication, and there are already a number of articles which he would doubtless not have allowed us to print (for reasons of his personal taste) if he had been censoring us as he would now like to do.

We have thus been led into a situation where, in order to preserve our independence and continue our Orthodox Word as before, we will have sooner or later to show open "disobedience" to our Archbishop, insofar as he regards himself as our "Abbot." And we believe that he, being of an extremely dominating character, will try to crush this "disobedience" even if he has to break us or destroy our work in doing it. I am not exaggerating! For Vladika Anthony there exists no other principle except the authority of the Archbishop. We had only to mention to him the word "Stavropignialny" in connection with the independence of our Hermitage to cause him to shout: "Too late! That will never be!"

Now you have the picture of the crisis which is upon us. In our minds there is only one way out, and that is to become absolutely independent of Archbishop Anthony Since the Synod (without our approval) has made him temporary Abbot, we will have to petition the Synod to let us have an abbot from among our own number, while granting us Stavropignialny status, dependent directly on the Synod. Before doing this we will have to do what, if we were wiser, we should have done before our tonsure: let Vladika Anthony know exactly how we regard ourselves, in writing; to which he will give us a reply which should state clearly enough how different his own conception of us is. The unfortunate part of this is that Vladika will most certainly not give up his hold over us without a fight; and since he occupies an important position on the Synod, we already have much against us. It should not be too difficult to paint a suitable picture of us: young, self-willed, proud, disobedient, untrustworthy, milk-drinking novices, etc. Our only defence will be people like you who know us and our work and can say a word for us—not to defend our words against an Archbishops words, but simply to speak of us as we are.

We are most eager to hear your comments and to have your advice. Now, as always before in our activities in the Church, we wish to act not on the basis solely of our own opinion, but with the counsel of others wiser than we. Also, any advice you might give us as to the form or content of a petition to the Synod, as well as of the Rule which we should submit to the Synod, would be most welcome. Your monastery is the model which we wish to follow for our own "American monastery in regard to organization, independence, etc.

Please use your discretion in revealing the contents of this letter to others. We would wish, however, that the letter itself not be shown to anyone at the Synod, in order to protect the people mentioned therein. Also, I have written extremely frankly and in a way which would not be understood by those who do not know us well. We firmly believe that Vladika Anthony will stop at nothing to get his way with us as well as with others—not because he has bad intentions, but because he is possessed to an extreme degree with the sense of his own authority and rights. We sorrow all the more over the necessity of writing this letter in that we sincerely love and pity our Archbishop. He is apparently a lonely man; all fear him, but there is no one close to him, and he regards us as "his own" whom he will force to be his obedient disciples. We cannot do it! Vladika John blessed us for an entirely different path, and by his prayers and God's grace we have travelled for seven years on this path. If we had wished to be a Bishops disciples, we would long ago have joined Bishop Nektary, who has wanted to establish such a monastery. For the sake of the independence of our own work, we have already had to preserve carefully our separate status with respect to him also, and to this day our relationship with him is very good. If our Hermitage requires supervision by the Synod, we would gladly welcome him as our "supervisor"—but not as "Abbot"!—all the more so as he has already promised to drop in on us every time when travelling between San Francisco and Seattle. Our relationship to Vladika Anthony could also be quite good—on the condition of our absolute independence from him.

Pray for us, dear Father, and please send us at least a short word. We realize that this trial has come upon us for our sins, that it is a trial of our monastic resolve which we must bear worthily and in patience, that in the end it will doubtless be for our benefit in forcing us to define ourselves more precisely in order to preserve our independence and our missionary work. For the

next two weeks we hope to do nothing but concentrate on finishing our much-delayed OW (for July-October!), but at any time after that our disagreement with our Archbishop might come out into the open. We are already facing another trial in the expected influx of summer visitors, whom we have neither people nor facilities to handle; but in everything we trust in God, Who has brought us this far by the prayers of His saints and His Most Holy Mother.

With much love in Christ our Saviour,

p.s. It is now the day after Epiphany, and we are still as upset as ever over our future. A thought occurs to us after another sleepless night: would you be our "advisor" in all problems concerning our organization, Rule, etc.? After all, insofar as we are an "American" institution, we are direcdy imitating you, and we value and need your advice more than anyone else s. If you will help us by being our "advisor," we will submit to you our Rule for advice and correction before submitting it to the Synod, and consult you first on all questions of organization. We have already decided that from now on all our documents will be written and submitted first in English, and there is no one here who can advise us in this language or on the problems of preserving our status. (Our bishop friends will most likely tell us that we simply have to bow down to the powerful ones on the Synod, but that "Russian" psychology is not relevant to our case. Please forgive us, but we are really frightened, and unless you help us we will become desperate! We are naive babes in those questions, and it will be very easy for us to be taken advantage of.

Upon rereading last night the Synod's official "Decree on Monasteries," it becomes evident that Vladika Anthony has all along (without saying a word to us) been regarding us as a Diocesan Podvorye (Metochion). That would be the end of us!

If you would like to talk to us by phone, tell us what time we can reach you conveniently, and we will call from town. For us the best time is between 12 and 4 p.m. (Pacific Time) any weekday or Saturday, although another time could be arranged if necessary.

070.

Jan. 23/Feb. 5, 1971

Priest-Martyr Clement

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina [Kojevnikov],

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ! I was glad to receive your letter—not because I have any particular means to help you, but because all of us who have been baptized in Jesus Christ are one in Him, and it is our joyful duty to bear one another's burdens, as the Apostle Paul tells us. This is all the more true of me, since I myself have gone through somewhat the same experience you seem to be going through. Coming from a Protestant background, I rejected it completely and became an agnostic and atheist, and then started searching for some meaning to life in various philosophies and Eastern religions, until I finally came to the point where I thought there was no meaning to life at all, and I wondered why I should keep on living. And then I went for

the first time to a Russian Orthodox Church, and something in my soul responded to this, and I began a gradual but sure recovery from my spiritual disease of despair and lack of faith.

Many people today say that God has turned away from us and does not listen to us. But I have found that just the opposite is true: it is we who have turned away from God and followed vain philosophies and our own selfish desires. But God remains always the same and is always ready to receive us with great love.

Right now you probably feel that there is no hope for you. This may be very painful for you, but it us actually a good sign—if only you do not give up but continue to beg God's mercy. Real spiritual death is the state where one no longer desires God or feels anxious because of not having His grace, but instead is satisfied with those worldly things which actually separate us from God—wealth, honors, and the rest. Because you are anxious and unhappy—that means you are still alive spiritually, and there is indeed hope.

However, do not expect any sudden light, revelation, or whatever. True faith comes from a small seed which is planted in our hearts by God Himself, and which is nourished and gradually grows through God's grace and through our own actions which are in accordance with His commandments and the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church, which has been given by the Holy Spirit and handed down to us through our Holy Fathers.

You do not say what you are doing in trying to open the door of faith, and so here I will give you a suggestion: God is everywhere and sees and hears everything; therefore you do not need to cry out to him loudly or dramatically—but you must be persistent. The seed of faith which you have within you will sprout and grow only if you water and tend it every day, and not just when you feel like it. Therefore:

(1) Every morning just after getting up and every night before going to bed you should read the morning and evening prayers in the Orthodox prayer book—at least the opening prayer "O Heavenly King" (where we call on the Holy Spirit to come and dwell in us) and a few of the other prayers. (If you do not have a prayer book, tell me and I will get you one.) Say a brief prayer also for those who are close to you, asking God to preserve and save them; and for those who have died, asking God to grant them eternal rest. And add a prayer in your own words for your present situation: O Lord, grant me faith in Thee and set me on the path of salvation—or something like that. Even 5 minutes in the morning and evening of such prayer, spoken from your heart, will begin to open the door of faith for you.

(2) Read every day at least a chapter or even a few verses from the Four Gospels: begin with the first chapter of St. Matthew and read all the way through the book of St. John, and then start all over again. The whole foundation of our salvation is there in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and it is there that you will learn to love Him and have faith in Him.

(3) We have already sent you (after Mrs. [Tania] Blinoff told us about you) the book Unseen Warfare. Try to read a little of it every day too, if possible, for it tells about the spiritual warfare which is the whole meaning of our existence on earth.

Do not read any books on "spirituality" by Catholics, Protestants, psychologists, or anyone who is not Orthodox, because they will only mix you up. There may be wisdom or insights in some of these, but only in our Orthodox Faith is there to be found the whole path of salvation, the infallible way of coming to God. Many people spend a lifetime trying to find what is only to be found in the Orthodox Church; but God has granted you the good fortune of being born in His Holy Church, and you only need to return to what is yours already. Even I, from a Protestant background, felt that I had "come home" when I found Holy Orthodoxy; how much more you will feel the same way when faith begins truly to grow within you.

When you pray, please pray for the sinful monks Herman and Seraphim, who are trying to serve God in the monastic calling. Please write again, and feel free to ask any questions, and I will try my best to answer them.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Monk Seraphim

071.

Jan. 31/Feb. 13, 1971

Sts. Kyr and John

Dear Sister in Christ, Catherine,

Many thanks for your letter of a month or more ago. It's a comfort to us whenever we get a live response from out there in the somewhat indefinite region of American Orthodoxy. Our whole purpose is to keep up contact and mutual inspiration among the isolated Orthodox "sparks" out of which, God willing, the flame of genuine American Orthodoxy will blaze up.

Where do you go to church when you can go? Do you have contact with Fr. Michael Azkoul in St. Louis? He's probably our closest English-speaking priest to you. Right now he's building a congregation starting from the living room of Dr. John Johnstone.

I hope our latest Orthodox Word will make up a little for your having missed the canonization of St. Herman.

The Pryzbylski's, as I recall, recently subscribed on their own.

Please keep in contact with us, at least occasionally and keep us informed on the state of Orthodoxy in the great Midwest. And pray for the sinful monks Herman and

Seraphim, Monk

072.

February 26, 1971

The Minister of the Interior

Government of Greece

Stadiou and Dragatsaniou Sts.

Athens, Greece

Your Excellency:

We have heard that the Archimandrite Kyprian Koutsoumbas has been reduced to the lay state by the official Church of Greece. We beg you to use your authority to protect him and his priesthood against any act of violence from the official Church of the Government.

In America we know Archimandrite Kyprian Koutsoumbas as a highly respected priest of the Old Calendarist jurisdiction, which is recognized by the Holy Synod of the Russian Church Outside of Russia and many bishops outside of Greece. We, in common with many Orthodox Christians in America, wish to believe that the Greek Government will respect the sincere religious convictions of those in Greece who have separated for canonical reasons and for reasons of conscience from the official Church, and will allow Father Kyprian to freely practice his Orthodox faith and exercise his priesthood without interference from the Government.

If, despite our hope, Archimandrite Kyprian should be subjected to any kind of violence on the part of the Church or Government, we and many thousands of Orthodox Christians outside of Greece can only regard this as an ACT OF PERSECUTION against the true Orthodox Church and faithful, about which we would be obliged to inform the readers of our Magazine.

With respect Seraphim, Monk

Herman, Monk

Editors, The Orthodox Word

073.

March 12/25, 1971

St. Theophanes the Confessor

Your Grace, Dear Vladika Laurus,

Bless us, Vladika! Evlogeite!

We hasten to inform you of an extremely serious situation which has arisen with us, and which already threatens the whole future of the missionary work which we have conducted now for seven years. We beg you to give us your help and advice. We are writing in English, inasmuch as that is the language of our publications and our everyday life, and because our whole existence is for the sake of English-speaking people, above all Americans, who form the majority of our 1500 subscribers.

First we should tell you that we are laboring to the best of our strength in the monastic life, rejoicing in Gods great mercy in granting us to wear the angelic habit. The trials that have come upon us since we received the monastic tonsure we understand and accept as a part of the hard

and narrow path of Christs Cross which we have taken on ourselves, and not for a moment have we regretted receiving the tonsure.

Please read what follows not as any kind of "complaint"—for we are not protesting against any individual act, and we are not in any immediate trouble—but rather as a statement of principle concerning the nature of our existence as an organization within the Russian Church Outside of Russia. However, we must tell you at the very beginning that our Archbishop Anthony does not understand this principle and in fact is trying to substitute for it his own plans, and in a very short time, if we do not act very soon, his misunderstanding will lead to a crisis that could bring an end to The Orthodox Word and to our work in the name of St. Herman. The Synod itself has acknowledged the value of our missionary work, and we are therefore all the more certain that to preserve this work we must act decisively, even if by this we must incur the anger—which we believe would be completely unjustified—of our Archbishop.

Already before our tonsure we had occasion to believe that Vladika Anthony was beginning to form unrealistic ideas about us, and we sent you a copy of our letter to him in which we tried to give him a more realistic picture of us. To this he replied with a letter saying that he fully understood and agreed with us and would apply no "episcopal coercion" of any kind on us. We had complete trust in Vladika Anthony and thought that he did understand us. We had made clear to him that whatever official status we might have (whether as a "monastery" or not), we could only operate with complete independence from the local Diocesan Bishop, just like our monasteries in Jordanville and Boston, and he readily agreed with us, telling us that one of us would have to be the Head. We informed him that we were preparing our Rule and would present it to him by St. Herman's feast day in December, to which he also agreed. We realize now that in order to obtain the status that was necessary for us we should have appealed directly to the Synod instead of allowing our local Bishop to be intermediary for us; but such was our trust of Vladika Anthony that, even though we did not know all that he was doing and saying at the Synod, we had no suspicions whatsoever that any kind of misunderstanding would arise later.

On the day of our tonsure, October 14/27, we heard for the first time that the Synod had blessed the opening of the St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage, which we accepted with joy, and also that Vladika Anthony had been appointed Head ("for the time being")—which upset us very much. But we still did not understand what was happening, and we waited for the Synod s Ukase to see exactly what it said. For the next two months we were extremely busy with the Canonization Issue of The Orthodox Word, with difficulties caused by bad weather, etc., and we did not find out anything more definite until Christmas, when we went to San Francisco. At the end of December we saw the Synod's Ukase for the first time, and then at Christmas we were subjected by Vladika Anthony to a terrifying "inquisition" lasting several hours, in which when we tried to make clear our position he merely threatened us with his rights as "Head" of our monastery (all the way to supervising our daily correspondence), telling us that an independent or stavropignialny status for us is "out of the question" and that we had no right to write a Rule for our own monastery, but that he would give us one. If we do not agree to all this, he told us, we are guilty of "self-will" and "disobedience." After this we were completely shocked and shattered and did not know what to do. For several nights we could not sleep, and we thought of

writing to you and a few other of our friends in the clergy; but we were in such a state of shock that we really did not know what to say, and we were afraid that our letter would merely sound like another "complaint," of which you probably already see too many. Also, we simply could not believe what had happened, and we waited for some written document from Vladika Anthony that would give us something definite to act on. We are very glad that we waited before writing to you, because now we have a written document to base ourselves on, and in the 2 1/2 months that have passed since our last meeting with Vladika Anthony we have gotten over our shock and are able to think and act clearly and calmly, without any agitation in our souls and without any bad feelings against Vladika Anthony. In spite of everything, we have the utmost respect and love for him, especially because of all that he has done for the canonization of our patron, St. Herman; we have no intention of questioning or disturbing his legitimate ecclesiastical authority, and it is only with the greatest sorrow and heaviness of heart that we are now about to undertake those steps which will preserve our independence from him. However, this is an obligation which we owe, not only to our own work, but to Vladika Anthony; because before God he cannot take responsibility for an activity he is not familiar with, in a language he does not know.

Enclosed is a copy of Vladika Anthony's Ukase of Feb. 25/Mar. 10, which we received last week, and which makes clear what he thinks he has done: he has opened a Diocesan monastery with himself as Head, and we are in absolute obedience to him.

Dear Vladika: you know us as loyal sons of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, in everything obedient to lawful ecclesiastical authority, not in the least inclined to "rebellion" of any kind, and that in The Orthodox Word we have defended the Synod and every one of its bishops with such firmness and devotion that it is no exaggeration to say that a large number of our readers look up to the bishops of the Synod with extreme respect, as virtually the only pillars of Orthodoxy and true bishops in the world today. Further, we must tell you that so far Vladika Anthony has not given us any specific "obedience" against which we protest; therefore, we repeat, this is not a letter of "complaint," and Vladika Anthony himself could not give you any case where we have disobeyed him.

The question, therefore, is much bigger: the whole organization of the "St. Herman of Alaska Hermitage" was devised entirely without us, who are its only members, and now that we see what is involved we must decisively declare: the Ukase of Vladika Anthony establishing a Diocesan monastery with himself as Head, is not acceptable to us and we do not accept it. Not only in principle must we oppose a Diocesan monastery which cannot preserve the independence that is absolutely necessary for a work such as ours, but we have discovered to our great sorrow that Vladika Anthony himself is a man we cannot and do not trust. He has badly deceived us—of which, perhaps, he is not even aware, for we now suspect that he has never even listened to what we have told him, but always had in mind his own completely different plans for his own monastery—and he is now trying to force us to accept what he has accomplished by his deception for the sake of obedience.

But such "obedience"—for the sake of a worldly end—is very clearly spiritually illegitimate. We are the disciples of Vladika John, who blessed and inspired our work from the very beginning

and, we firmly believe, is with us now in spirit; it is to his blessing, in fact, that we ascribe entirely whatever success we have had so far. And from him we have learned: above canons, church discipline, etc., comes the spirit. If by obedience, by faithfulness to the letter of canons, or by any other thing good in itself, the spirit of a man is crushed and is extinguished, then there is something terribly wrong. Vladika Anthony has already accused us of a tendency to "disobedience" and "self-will"—and, while admitting that we are in all ways sinful, we can only say that in the present case these accusations are beside the point. Before such virtues as obedience have any meaning, they must have a place in a definite context, in a common task, in a fruitful work. Such a context would be, for example, a monastery with a Elder responsible for the souls of everyone living in it (such as Fr. Panteleimon's monastery in Boston), or an established working monastery such as Jordanville; in our case, the context is The Orthodox Word and our missionary printing labors, which for seven years now we have followed with great labor and sacrifice, in everything being obedient to the Church and to each other, so that never did one of us exercise his "own will," obeying rather each other and the common task that united us. Without this we would never have survived; but with this and the blessing of Vladika John we have survived this long and now seem called by the Church to expand our work and bring forth greater fruits.

But now Vladika Anthony, not knowing our work (he does not read The Orthodox Word and knows almost nothing of the American mission) is trying to impose his own "work" upon us—a "monastery" governed by him from San Francisco, where one of the "obediences" at the present time happens to be the printing of The Orthodox Word. But since he does not know us or our work, all of his plans and Ukases are based purely on external appearances—on what kind of role it looks as though we could play in his diocese, or (he used these exact words with us once) on "what will they think at the Synod?" We tell you frankly, Vladika: this is not serious; it is some kind of game with him, enforced precisely through the "episcopal coercion" he promised he would never use on us, and the result is precisely that it harms our common work and instills in us such a sense of gnawing, inner frustration that if it is allowed to continue it will completely destroy our missionary work and extinguish the spark, the spirit, that Holy Orthodoxy has given us, and that Vladika John knew how to fan into a flame of desire to serve the Holy Church. Perhaps that flame is weak in us, but it exists, and it is quite possible for it to be extinguished.

It is not our intention to start a fight, or to force anyone to accept our word against Vladika Anthony's—because undoubtedly he will have a completely different version or interpretation of everything that has happened to us. We can only make it clear that, whatever may have happened in the past, in the future we can have no tie with Vladika Anthony: he cannot be any part of our monastery (if the Synod affirms that we are a monastery), and our monastery cannot be a Diocesan institution. If Vladika Anthony has opened a monastery, we are not a part of it. We promised obedience to him, "God helping us," and in our conscience we cannot believe that God will help us to destroy the blessing of Vladika John and that small beginning of service to the Holy Church that we have begun with his blessing. Doubtless Vladika Anthony thinks we are inexperienced and he must "take us in his hands" and "make something of us" for the sake of the growth of the monastery. We have our own candidates who may in future be joining us—but if Vladika Anthony is to be our Head, we must tell them to stay away or go elsewhere, rather than

to become a part of his totally unrealistic plans. And we will tell you frankly: Vladika Anthony has no one who would be interested in joining "his" monastery, and in fact that is why he has to act through us.

All of this is probably shocking to you, and you may wish to advise us to be patient, to accept what ever Vladika Anthony imposes on us for the sake of obedience, or to try to "negotiate" or "compromise" with him. But we tell you firmly: no compromise is possible. Vladika Anthony does not listen to us, and in fact he thinks we have no right to tell him anything. He has already shown us his intentions, and as long as he has any direct authority over us we will be filled with mistrust, suspicion, and gnawing frustration. These are the fruit, not of legitimate authority, but of usurpation.

However, we will listen most carefully to whatever you may advise us to do. In particular, we beg you to help us with practical advice: how can we achieve our independence? We wish henceforth to talk with the Synod not through the intermediary of Vladika Anthony, but directly. Should we appeal to be declared a stavropignialny monastery? We had always thought it too far above us even to be called a "monastery," but the Synod has already approved this in principle, and Vladika Anthony still thinks highly enough of us to appoint one of us as Blagochinny. Or, if the Synod will not bless us as a monastery, what status can we have directly dependent on the Synod? We do not ask anything "special," but only that status Fr. Panteleimon's monastery and Jordanville have enjoyed from the beginning: independence, not for the sake of self-will, but for the sake of the common work which the Synod has already blessed. You and others among the bishops and clergy know both us and our work far better than Vladika Anthony does

In the meantime, we urgently request of you:

(1) Not to sign any documents about us based on material coming to the Synod through Vladika Anthony;

(2) If Vladika Anthony's Ukase of Feb. 25/Mar. 10 is going to be published in Orthodox Russia or elsewhere, please try to stop it, as it does not correspond to reality and will only cause trouble if it becomes widely known.

Please do not think that we are despondent. We are in good spirits, even though we are quite worried about our future. This attack upon us has convinced us more than ever that we are doing a God-pleasing work and it has strengthened our resolve to continue and stand firm in it. Our few months of monastic life have already given us so many trials and temptations—yet in every one of them Gods help has been close, and we only marvel at how close God is to us. Our last trial began when we received Vladika Anthony's Ukase last week, and we were very much troubled—but in less than 24 hours, completely unexpectedly, Vladika Nektary and Fr. Boris came with the Kursk Icon, and our trouble was turned into joy and the certain realization that God is with us!

And now we approach the difficult time ahead as a literal Golgotha—for we fully expect Vladika Anthony to be furious when he finds out what we are trying to do, and he will doubtless do everything against us that he can. But at the same time we rejoice, knowing that the sufferings

before us are much less than our sins deserve, that only from such a narrow and difficult path can spiritual fruits come forth, and that in everything God and His saints—St. Herman and Vladika John—are with us.

A final point: in Vladika Anthony's Ukase the name of our Staretz, Archimandrite Spyridon, is mentioned. We are on the best of terms with him and we would hope that after, God willing, we achieve our independence, he will continue as our Staretz. But in the meantime, for obvious reasons, we do not want to involve him in our difficulties, and so we emphasize that the responsibility for this letter and for everything we may do in future rests solely with the two of us.

We ask your holy prayers and will welcome your advice. Please be assured that we will not do anything rash, and will act only after having consulted others among the clergy who know us well.

With love and respect in Christ our Saviour,

Monk Herman Monk Seraphim

THE ORTHODOX WORD

Orthodox Christian Books and Icons

PLATINA, CALIFORNIA 96076

074.

March 13/26, 1971

St. Nicephorus of Constant.

Dear Father in Christ Panteleimon,

Evlogeite! Thank you very much for your word of encouragement, and please forgive us for preserving such a long silence. We have been very busy printing, and not until last week has there been anything new regarding our status and relationship with Vladika Anthony. After writing you we decided to do nothing more until Vladika Anthony should make some written statement; and now that Statement has come.

Last Wednesday we received Vladika Anthony's Ukase of Feb. 25/Mar. 10, apparently sent to all priests of the Diocese, which says in part: "A coenobitic monastery for men has been opened by us…. Headship of this new monastery has been taken by me upon myself" (in ink there is added in our copy—whether it is in the original or not we don't know—"for the time being"); "for the regulation of the monastic life of the brethren, who may increase in number, by the present Ukase MONK HERMAN is appointed BLAGOCHINNY (one in charge of 'good order') of the monastery. The Blagochinny is responsible for the doings of the monastery immediately before me, as its Head…"; "the publication of the magazine The Orthodox Word…the brethren should now look upon as their monastic obedience… Concerning everything else additional instructions will be given to the Blagochinny."

In a word, our worst fears are realized: Vladika Anthony has taken us over, and although so far he has not given us any "obedience" to which we object, it is clear that our work, blessed by Vladika John, has lost all independence and will now proceed solely on instrucdons from San Francisco. Clearly, if we are going to do anything about this intolerable situation we must begin to act now.

We have written—in English—a letter to Vladika Laurus (we will send you a Xerox copy next week when we go to Redding again), informing him that we do not accept this Ukase and have lost all trust in Vladika Anthony, and asking his advice on what to do to become independent of Vladika Anthony.

You will see our arguments in that letter; but to you we would like to say something more. To Vladika Laurus we did not mention any of the San Francisco clergy we mentioned to you in our last letter, fearing lest word of this might somehow get to Vladika Anthony and he would cause them trouble; for this reason we wish to fight entirely by ourselves, on the basis of our rights as an independent monastery, without raising any question as to the character or motives of Vladika Anthony.

But to you we speak frankly: Vladika Anthony, under the guise of outward correctness and good form, is a "quencher of the spirit." Vladika Nektary was here last week, and he told us: "You are fortunate that you have someone to complain to; I have no one. But if you only knew what a gnawing frustration he instills in me…." Vladika Anthony is an excellent "peacemaker," but he crushes every good initiative. Vladika Nektary wanted to do something about Alaska, travel there, etc.—but Vladika Anthony forbade it outright. We gave Fr. Alexei Poluektov the text—smuggled out of the Soviet Union by a Catacomb nun—of an akathist to St. Nina which apparently exists no where else in the free world; Vladika A. heard of it and exclaimed: "it must be approved," and he took it and it was never seen again. Even the Service to St. John of Tobolsk—which Vladika John served for many years—was printed in Blagovestnik without Vladika As knowing of it, and he forbade the last part of it to be printed—on the grounds that it was never "approved." Vladika A., when he first came to San Francisco, said he would continue everything started by Vladika John; but he forbade the Liturgy to be served in the Sepulchre more than once a year, and the people in the Archbishop John Society tell us that Vladika A. is not devoted to the memory of Vladika John and they feel he is a foreigner. Laurence Campbell, I believe, grasped exactly Vladika As psychology when he recently told us: Vladika A. does not encourage veneration of Vladika John because he still has many enemies and thus Vladika A. regards his memory as a divisive factor in his diocese. Vladika A. deliberately omits the name of Fr. Neketas Palassis from the Jordanville calender of clergy because, he told us in December, "we don't want to irritate Athenagoras"! And a few weeks ago Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov visited us and told us straight: "Vladika A. has killed my spiritual life"—that, of course, is an exaggeration, because the Deacon himself should be doing something about it, but it has meaning when you contrast it with another statement he made to us several years ago: "Vladika John saved me; without his encouragement and pushing me to be a Deacon, I probably wouldn't be in the Church at all today"—that is all the difference between a bishop who inspires and a bishop who stifles the soul under the form of external correctness.

It does not require much imagination to see what will happen to us if we accept Vladika As "coup" over us. All our "peculiarities" as an independent monastic institution will be abolished. Already when Vladika A. serves here he forbids mentioning "Orthodox Kings" in the troparion to the Cross; "the Synod has approved another text"—but Vladika John left us another tradition which almost no one but us is keeping; our right to follow the Spruce Island tradition of celebrating a second feast to St. Herman on Nov. 15 will doubtless be abolished as an example of "self-will"; if Vlad. A. ever becomes aware of how much we are "irritating Athenagoras" in The Orthodox Word, that will have to be censured out; any special veneration of Vladika John, especially in Russian, will be blocked as too "controversial"; etc., etc., etc. If we give one inch in the beginning, we will end with a completely soulless and pointless "obedience" which has no ability to inspire anyone else. Lev and Vasya are returning to America in May and will probably come here—frankly, we think they fit here, and they seem to have no other place, and their spirits could well be quenched and their service to the Church wiped out if they don't find their place; but do you thing Vladika A. could understand that, or care? Laurence Campbell visited us last weekend and told us of the uninspired and uninspiring condition of church life in the midst of the city; and we were horrified most of all that souls are thirsting and perishing and almost no one cares; even the clergy and shepherds are minding their own business or "establishing monasteries" (by force!) for the glory of the diocese without even seeing these perishing souls. We are content to let the world bury its dead; but Vladika John gave us a spark and a mission, and we will be faithful to that even to death.

As you see, we speak to you with absolute frankness. Our eyes have been opened, and we are absolutely resolved not to fall into the hands of a man who only wants to use us for his grandiose external plans. We are acting with great sorrow and heaviness of heart, with all love and pity for our Archbishop, but with unflinching resolve.

Since our last letter to you we have become much calmer and much firmer. All the events of Christmas are of minor importance beside the main issue: are we to continue independent, in the tradition and with the blessing of Vladika John, or do we become the slaves of someone who thinks only of the Church's outward prosperity and success and probably thinks he is assuring us a good "career" in the Church? In spite of everything, we will follow Vladika John, and if need be we will flee completely to the wilderness or become "fools" in order to remain faithful to Vladika John.

In these last months we have been very conscious of how close God is to us. On Feb. 1 we finished the Canonization issue with Daniel Olson's help (another one who fits very well with us but would wither away under Vladika A.!), and no sooner had we returned from delivering the issue to the Post Office and seeing off Daniel, then immediately our truck broke down and would not move an inch. We thanked God and began carrying water a half mile from a newly-discovered spring (not on our property) and carrying mail, groceries, and gasoline up hill from town on foot—very difficult, but good for us. Then, in the middle of the new OW, our generator broke, and Fr. Herman for the first time heard me fall close to despondency: "maybe what we're doing is not right, after all"—but in 24 hours Deacon Nicholas arrived with two mechanics (without knowing about our desperate plight), fixed our truck enough to take it back to San

Francisco for major repairs, and left us another truck on which we took the generator to be repaired, and just now mailed the new OW. But then again in Redding the Post Office inspectors discovered a technicality according to which we cannot have a 2nd Class Mailing Permit unless we open an office in Redding; but this has resulted now in a change whereby we will mail here in Platina instead of Redding (assuming everything is approved by the Post Office bureaucrats). And then last Wednesday we received Vladika As Ukase—but in 24 hours Vladika Nektary arrived with the Kursk Icon, which he allowed us to carry around our mountain, and we received Holy Communion from the Reserved Gifts.

Therefore, in spite of our troubles, we are bold and joyful; for truly God and His saints are with us.

Our next step will depend on Vladika Laurus' practical advice as to what we should do next. We hope to speak at length with Vladika Nektary when he comes to celebrate Liturgy for us in the next week or so, and also with our Starets, Archimandrite Spyridon, who wants to serve on Annunciation (or, we hope, Pascha itself), and then we will act. We will probably call you after receiving a reply from Vladika Laurus.

Please forgive our frankness; but we are sure you understand the spirit in which this is written. How we wish we could talk to you. So much has happened in this last year, and so much has become clearer—by the prayers of St. Herman and Vladika John, we are sure. Pray for us,> dear Father. Enclosed is a question sheet on manuscripts, which we hope you will be able to answer.

With love in Christ our Saviour.

075.

March 21/April 3, 1971

Praise of the Mother of God

Dear Father in Christ Panteleimon,

Evlogeite!

Enclosed is our letter to Vladika Laurus, to which we have not yet received a reply. There is no new development in our "case" as yet.

Our Staretz, Archimandrite Spyridon, is planning to come to us for a week or more—from Annunciation to Palm Sunday, and then just after Pascha (he has to serve Passion Week and Pascha in Palo Alto), and so, God willing, we shall have the Divine Liturgy several times here.

Glory be to God for everything! In all our trials, we become more and more conscious that something is happening that is far beyond us. What the end will be, God alone knows, and it is in His hands. We begin to get a rather definite idea that "Synodal opinion" does not place much confidence in our future. In February Archimandrite Kyprian wrote us from Jordanville, advising us to pack up as soon as possible and come to Jordanville, because we are in danger of falling into prelest, and because Jordanville is dying off and in ten years there won't be anyone left to do the work. Recently Fr. Vladimir also began hinting that we would be best off in Jordanville, and

Vladika Laurus last year also emphasized how much they need people there. With all respect to Jordanville, to which we are absolutely devoted, we are so conscious of the blessing of Vladika John to trod a different path, that we can only accept the opinion of these respected fathers as a "temptation" to get us off our path. The devil, it appears, is trying his utmost to get us out of here, and we are thereby all the more convinced that we are where we should be. Two days ago, as if we didn't have problems enough already, I met an Indian at the Post Office in Platina, who asked me what we were building, and when I replied "A chapel," he told me, "this land belongs to us Indians, and I'll do everything I can to stop you." I don't know exactly what he meant, but as we are unarmed and two miles from the nearest neighbor, it is not difficult to imagine what could be done to us. And so we are literally reduced to trusting in God and the protection of our patrons, St. Herman and Vladika John. May God s holy will be done!

With love in Christ our Savior,

Seraphim, Monk

076.

To Vladika Averky [outline for letter in Russian Spring 1971]

1. I am in terrible state.

2. Interview with Vladika Anthony—brief— _____?

3. We are horrified because in back of this event is a frightful lack of_____: We think we

are still independent again, in monastic calling; and he thinks he has taken us over as Abbot.

4. Already on top of posting[?] he announced Ukase whereby he was Abbot (temp.) and tried to force priesthood on us as obedience—we were greatly disturbed but were calmed by thought that this was some purely formal temporary status.

5. Throughout these last months when thought of monasticism approached, our discussion with Vladika Anthony was much too indefinite and almost entirely oral (although he wrote to us discussing use of_____?). Now we find that his idea is entirely different from ours.

6. We cannot operate within the idea blessed by Vladika John which we have pursued for 6 years, and which is now blessed as monastery by Synod ("to conduct in monastic calling the same missionary work….") unless we are absolutely independent: in organization, in our life and work, able to make all decisions necessary for this life and work and organ, without dictation from without.

7. Since Vladika Anthony insists on giving outside direction, we must be free of him; stavropignialny [followed by 8 page letter in Russian by Fr. Herman]

077.

Mar. 24/April 6, 1971

Dear Elena Yurevna,

You know how upset we have been in the past few months over the status of our Brotherhood and the whole future of our missionary work in the Church. Unfortunately, Father Herman's letters to you seem to have communicated more our present feeling of disturbance than the basic principles that have inspired us and continue to inspire us; and from this you have come to believe that we have a revolutionary or reformist idea of monasticism.

Please believe us that nothing could be farther from our intention. In order to explain this, I am writing you this letter in English in an attempt to avoid some of the emotional overtones that we seem to become involved with when we write in Russian, and to give you in this way as clear and brief a picture as possible of our present situation and our hopes for the future. After Vladika John, it is you and Ivan Michaelovich who have helped and inspired us on this path, and nothing would cause us more sorrow than for you to become convinced that our Orthodoxy was in danger, or that our missionary work is about to come to an end.

It is true that we are presently threatened, and we take this threat very seriously. But the cause of this threat is not difficult to understand, and it does not in itself place us in any uncanonical position. In a word: our bishop does not understand us or our work, and he is trying to "use" us for his own plans. Spiritually and canonically, we are in the right: it is absurd and impossible to "establish a monastery" against the wishes of the only monks in that monastery; the very "Decree on Monasteries" of our Synod of Bishops sets forth the right of monks to elect their own Head; and the very idea of monasteries in Orthodox history is clearly that of independent spiritual centers that have their own autonomous life and are not subject to interference from bishops unless they try to introduce novelties in dogmas or church life. This is the ideal, and this is the way Jordanville and Father Panteleimon's monastery in Boston are operated today; and this is why monasteries can be inspirers for the rest of the Orthodox people—because they offer the possibility to preach and live Orthodox Christianity free from all external influences—whether the cares of parish life, the whims of bishops, or whatever.

In our present case, we have a fundamental disagreement with our bishop over the organization of our monastery: we wish to be independent and continue the tradition of Jordanville and Father Panteleimon, while our bishop wants to control everything himself which would mean the end of our missionary work (as you yourself very well realize). Therefore, the question of "obedience" does not enter in at all, and it is spiritually illegitimate for our bishop to try to impose his ideas concerning the organization of our monastery by this means. When Fr. Panteleimon was received into the Synod, no bishop appointed himself "Head" over his monastery; and we have exactly the same right to independence. Our mistake was that we did not in the very beginning stand up for this principle, and this allowed our bishop to believe that we were weak and that he could do whatever he wanted with us. We misplaced our trust in him, and we confess that you were right all along about him. But now we are prepared to stand up and fight for the independence which the Church and its canons guarantee to monasteries.

Monastic obedience cannot possibly be "slavery"; if that were true, then the Church would be divided up into "slaves" and "tyrants." Some people in the Church at various times have tried to enforce this perverted concept, but it does not come from the Church or from monasticism. All Orthodox Christians, and especially monks and nuns, are trying to cut off their own will and lead

a God-pleasing life; but to meekly bow down to tyranny, most especially when this tyranny only destroys a God-pleasing work and extinguishes the Christian and monastic spirit in its victims— is certainly only a parody and mockery of Orthodoxy and monasticism.

We are absolutely resolved, in all obedience to the Church and lawful ecclesiastical authority, not to become a part of any such mockery. We pray that our firmness will not lead to any scandal, and that we can proceed according to the letter as well as the spirit of all the Church's canons. But we know also that the canons were made for man, and not man for the canons, that above the canons is the spirit that inspired them, and that to preserve this spirit we are prepared even to go against the letter of separate canons, if these are enforced in order to crush our spirit. In actual fact, no one would dream of trying to enforce the letter of every canon today, for then there would be no Orthodox Christians left at all! Our own bishop is in San Francisco "uncanonically," for it is against the canons to transfer bishops from one Diocese to another (this canon has caused considerable fighting recently in the Church of Greece); it is also against the canons to ordain a deacon before the age of 25, or a priest before 30 (this is strictly enforced in the Greek Church, and one of our priest correspondents in Africa wrote us a year or two ago that a priest was desperately needed for Tanzania, but the only candidate there was 25 years old and under no circumstances could he be ordained before 5 more years— but according to the letter of this canon most of our Russian priests are "uncanonical". Etc.

Please believe that despite our recent trials we are not crushed in spirit. In fact, on the contrary, now that our very existence is being attacked, we are more persuaded than ever that the path on which Vladika John blessed and inspired us to go, is correct, and that by his prayers, and in accordance with God's will, we will go on this path through every suffering, all the way to martyrdom, if God calls us to this. The fact that such a severe attack has come upon us only persuades us that the devil wishes us to give up this path, because it is right.

You seem to believe that we cannot continue the path we have begun as monks. But we believe, on the contrary, that only in monasticism, with all the suffering and trials that this choice must inevitably bring upon us, can our work spread and bring the maximum good. While we were "in the world" everything came easy to us—we had much work but no great trials and attacks—but now everything is difficult, on every side we are attacked, trials and temptations are many. But these are spiritual proofs that our path is right, even more right now than it was before.

We are weak and sinful, and what we have undertaken is far, far beyond our strength and our spiritual talents. Nonetheless, God multiplies His favors to us, and we go forward with difficulties and sorrows, yet certain that He is with us, and Vladika John also. The form which our future existence will take is still uncertain. We always thought that to be a "monastery" was beyond us, but in principle the Synod has blessed this and the only problem now is one of organization and independence—and this has happened without our own will being involved at all, in fact it has been forced upon us. If our work so far has pleased God, then surely He will not leave us now or abandon us to the path of pseudo-Orthodoxy!

Glory be to God for everything! Do not believe for a moment that we are abandoning the path we began with Vladika Johns blessing. We go forward with absolute trust in God, on the straight

monastic path which Vladika John foretold to us when he called our Brotherhood a "reflection of Valaam" and when he told me, when I told him of our hopes for a missionary monastery away from the city: "I too believe that there will be such a missionary monastery in California."

Only pray for us, dear Elena Yurevna, and do not lose hope in us; and do not cease to tell us what is right!

With love in Christ our Savior,

Sinful Monk Seraphim

P. S. After I had written the above, Father Herman read the address of Vladika Vitaly (the elder) on the occasion of his consecration as bishop. One paragraph in it tells of what inspired the great accomplishments of his younger years, what his basic spiritual orientation was. It is precisely the same as ours, and even if we never accomplish a fraction of what he accomplished, this attitude is worthy of imitation, and we are both absolutely convinced that only by its means will we be able to bring forth any fruits at all in the Church of Christ. The Pharisees will doubtless find that these words of Vladika Vitaly are full of "self-will" and "disobedience," but following them he accomplished great things in and for the Church, and they burn with the very spirit that is so needed in the Church today, the same spirit we long to burn with!

[quote in Russian follows]

078.

25 March/ 7 April

Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God, 1971

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel,

Rejoice in the Lord! I pray this finds you well and laboring successfully in the fast—or rather, prepared for the Great and Holy Week. With us these last weeks of long services (abbreviated, at that!) have been rather difficult, but at least we are left with few illusions about being "ascetics"! Our peace and quiet have been almost undisturbed.

Your question on the difference between the Turkish and the Communist Yoke is a very important one, but the answer is not entirely simple, and those who think only in terms of "canonical-uncanonical" will probably find it much too complicated. I think it's important, first of all, to realize that the question of the Moscow Patriarchate is not primarily one of "canonicity"—that question ultimately will be resolved only by a free Russian Church Council (after the Soviet Yoke is overthrown). At that Council doubtless much will be forgiven owing to the unprecedented difficulties of these times, and those who will be justified then are not necessarily those who regarded themselves as "canonically correct," but rather those who kept alive the spirit of the Church, which is after all above the canons and inspires them. But in the meantime we have to live with the situation that exists, and choose whether to have contact and communion with Moscow or not; and therefore we have to somehow penetrate to the spirit of this question and make our decision on this basis. A very great help in this is the "Documents of

the Catacomb Church" which we are now printing, because in them the bishops who were present at the very outbreak of "Sergianism" give their judgements on what was then the central question of the day, and most of those who opposed Sergius did so because they believed he had placed himself outside the Church, and they had to speak out in order to remain within the Church themselves. In our days the atmosphere is not so tense and most people probably regard the question now as academic—although the reaction to the Metropolia's autocephaly has considerably sharpened the issue.

To answer the question, one can say that first of all, in so far as the political situation is concerned, the situation of Moscow under the Soviets and Constantinople under the Turks is exactly the same. But those who are satisfied with this argument do not realize how Greeks outside of the Turkish boundaries reacted in the 19th century. (I'm paraphrasing now an article on the "Russian Church Abroad" by our Archbishop John, which we hope to print soon). When the Patriarchate of Constantinople obeyed the Turkish political demands and excommunicated the Greek rebels, the latter in their turn, while not doubting the Patriarch's Orthodoxy and remaining with him in spirit, nonetheless declared his decrees invalid and governed themselves in complete independence from him—and when an independent Greek state was formed, this independence took the form of the autocephalous Church of Athens. A similar situation prevailed under the Serbian Patriarchs Arsenius III and IV, who went into exile with their flocks and refused to submit to the new Patriarchs elected inside the Turkish boundaries. Thus, from the political point of view, the existence of the Russian Church Abroad is fully justified by Orthodox history, while the Metropolia is chiefly to be criticized for being insensitive to the whole situation of the Russian Church and for helping, even if ever so little, the political schemes of the Soviet State.

But there is a deeper dimension to the question. The Turks persecuted the Church and, when possible, used it for political purposes. But their worst intention did not go beyond making Christians slaves and, in some cases, forcibly converting them to Islam. The Christian thus might be a slave or martyr, but on the spiritual side he was free; the Turkish Yoke was external.

But with the Soviets, the aim is much deeper: ultimately, to destroy the Church entirely, using the Church's hierarchs themselves (when possible) as the agents of this scheme; and, on the way to this end, getting the Church to defend Communism abroad and to preach a "Communist Christianity" that prepares the way ideologically for the coming triumph of world Communism, not only as a universal political regime, but as an ideological and pseudo-religious tyranny as well. In order to appreciate this one has to realize what Communism is: not merely a power-mad political regime, but an ideological-religious system whose aim is to overthrow and supplant all other systems, most of all Christianity. Communism is actually a very powerful heresy whose central thesis, if I'm not mistaken is chiliasm or millennialism: history is to reach its culmination in an indefinite state of earthly blessedness, a perfected mankind living in perfect peace and harmony. Examine the printed sermons of the Moscow hierarchs: again and again one finds the same theme of the coming of the "Kingdom of God on earth" through the spread of Communism. This is outright heresy, or perhaps something even worse: the turning aside of the Church from its very purpose—the saving of souls for eternal life— and giving them over to the

devil's kingdom, promising a false blessedness on earth and condemning them to everlasting damnation.

The whole of modern Western Christianity is permeated already with this worldly, basically chiliastic orientation, and the more "liberal," more worldly Orthodox Churches (such as the Metropolia) have been infected from this source; and probably the reason why most people in the Metropolia so easily accepted the autocephaly is because inwardly they do not grasp what is happening, they are themselves already halfway on the same path that the Moscow Patriarchate has taken.

Just the other day I read an astute comment on the iconoclastic crisis of the 7th-8th centuries. Before the Seventh Ecumenical Council the Orthodox Church did not have any explicit "doctrine on icons," and so one could argue that the Iconoclasts were not heretics at all, and the dispute was one over the secondary issue of "rite" or "practice." Nonetheless, the Church (in the person of Her champions, the leading icon-venerators) felt She was fighting a heresy, something destructive of the Church Herself; and after Her champions had suffered and died for this Orthodox sensitivity, and Her theologians had finally managed to put down explicitly the doctrine She already knew in Her heart—then the cause of Orthodoxy triumphed at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and the Iconoclasts were clearly singled out as heretics.

I suspect that the very same thing, only much vaster and more complicated, is happening today: that those who feel Orthodoxy (through living its life of grace and being exposed to and raised on its basic treasures—lives of saints, patristic writings, etc.) are battling together against an enemy, a heresy, that has not yet been fully defined or manifested. Separate aspects or manifestations of it (chiliasm, social Gospel, renovationism, ecumenism) may be identified and fought, but the batde is largely instinctive as yet, and those who do not feel Orthodoxy in their heart and bones (e.g., those who are brought up on Concern and Young Life instead of lives of saints!) do not really know what you're talking about and they can't understand how you can become so excited over something which no council has ever identified as heresy. In the testimony of the Catacomb bishops of the late 1920's one finds again and again that the GPU agents asked them first of all whether they were for or against Sergius, and if they were against, then these agents demonstrated that Sergius had "violated neither dogmas nor canons"! Thus, either the atheist torturers are "defending the Church"—or else there is something dreadfully wrong, and the Church is up against an extremely formidable enemy. As it turns out, however, there are several dogmatic and canonical grounds on which Sergius was wrong; but first of all the Orthodox soul sensed that he was on the wrong side.

So the first part of the battle comes down to presenting basic Orthodoxy and raising people in the real spirit of Orthodoxy—above all the example of those who have lived Orthodoxy, God's saints and confessors. That's why, for our times, the most important thing is not general and abstract knowledge of Orthodox history, dogmas, canons, etc. (St. Sergius' and St. Vladimir's Seminaries turn out many who know these pretty well, but they do not become defenders of Orthodoxy, WHICH IS WHAT is needed), but rather the examples that have been given for our time—most especially Russia's new martyrs and confessors. And one of the saddest signs in the present controversy over Moscow is that those who defend the Metropolia, instead of setting

forth such inspiring examples, quote the most shameful documents and examples of Turkish and Russian history (Fr. David Black quoted several unedifying examples from the Synodal period of the Russian Church to us, and he probably doesn't even know the worst ones!) thinking thereby to defend their own position. That is, the Church has always been bad, and it's no worse now than before! But what a horrible, what a psychologically and spiritually crippling defense! If that's how they have to defend themselves, then wouldn't it be better to avoid doing the things that reduce them to such an extremity? Is "stepping out on the world Orthodox scene" really so important to the Metropolia that it must do it at the expense of the suffering Russian Orthodox faithful? To give one small example: Metr. Nikodim is the Metropolia's great "benefactor," and no one can doubt that his success with the Metropolia has strengthened his position with the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other hand, the layman Boris Talantov in the USSR has openly called Nikodim a betrayer of the Church, a liar, and an agent of world anti-Christianity, for which statements (among others) he was imprisoned by the Soviets; Metr. Nikodim tells the West that he was in prison for "anti-governmental activities". On Jan. 4 of this year Boris Talantov died in prison, undoubtedly the victim of Nikodim (among others). Can the Metropolia feel itself to be on the side of this confessor? I don't see how it can. By the way, we'll have an article on him in this issue—pray for the repose of his soul.

I think I've said enough for a while! Our "Catacomb Documents" and "New Martyrs" will doubtless give a clearer picture, once we've got more of them translated and presented. Our new issue will have Metr. Joseph—a real champion of the Church! Interestingly, in him as well as in others the statement comes out that Sergius has done something that is "worse than heresy," THAT HE has murdered the Church from within.

About library information: can you Xerox a page or two from each of the two books you mentioned? That way we can get an idea of how detailed the listings are, and maybe we could commission you then to do some Xeroxing from one of them. How many pages in each book?

Our weather has been up and down since you left. It turned cold just after you left, and since then spring weather has alternated with cold and rain. The first days of March were just about the coldest since we came here—19 to 20 degrees at night, with tremendous hurricane winds and flurries of snow. We've only had 5 inches of snow and about the same of rain since January. Real spring is later this year than last, and only a few of the smaller bushes have fully blossomed out. The leaves are just beginning to break through the buds at the tops of the oaks—beautiful little pink leaves with yellow blossoms that will become acorns. The peak of spring won't be here until early May, most likely. Last year was the first time that I've gone through spring in the country—a really inspiring experience!

This last week we've finally got the refectory erected, for which you gave the foundation. It's not finished, but at least we got it all covered and waterproofed before yesterday's rains. We were expecting Fr. Spyridon to serve Liturgy today, but the bad weather probably kept him away. Most likely he'll come for Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. If it rains then, we can have services in the new refectory-church.

Our life in the wilderness continues to have its trials and temptations, but much more its joys. At one point when our spirits were low Vladika Nektary arrived completely unexpectedly with the Kursk Icon, served a moleben, gave us Holy Communion from the Reserved Gifts (we were in the midst of Vespers when he came and hadn't eaten yet), and let us carry the Icon over our mountain. God's blessings to us just never cease! Only we're continually worried that we don't produce enough; just too much to do.

By the way, thanks for sending the Jeane Dixon book. We were interested to see that her doctrine of Antichrist was basically Orthodox, and who knows, maybe even the details or her predictions about him are correct. However, in one important respect she is off: for his reign is the culmination of human history, after which comes the new heavens and the new earth, whereas she predicts after his reign a new age of peace and harmony and union of world religions, which are themselves the doctrines of devils! Looking at her "ministry" as a whole, one cannot but think that whatever truth she speaks (whether in doctrine or accurate predictions) is only used by the devils to gain credence for her whole philosophy—which seems to be a combination of "conservative" Catholic prelest and the chiliastic philosophy of the age. She seems entirely too persuaded that her "gift" obliges her to go around being a combination healer-holy woman. But where does her "gift" come from? It seems to be a combination of a rare natural faculty (6th sense) and information given by demons. She hears voices giving the names of winners at horse races—do angels do that?! And often her voices and visions come in pieces and fragments—a few letters of someone's name, etc.—which is typical of the way devils operate, as for instance at seances, and reveals that she is in contact with the infernal, anarchic world, and not with the heavenly. Doubtless a well-meaning woman, but her "holiness" fits in too nicely with the "spirituality" of this evil age!

Pray for us, and drop us a line or two.

With love in Christ our Savior,

Seraphim, Monk

P.S. I just read in an old Readers Digest Jeane Dixons own account of her two interviews with President Roosevelt in 1943-44.1 think they show very well how the devils "use" her "gift". She predicted a few things such as the Presidents death within 6 months, but the President was most interested in one question and asked it several times of her: "Will we be allies with Russia?" "Am I right in going with Russia?" She—who seems to be quite anti-Communist—told him the results of her visions and voices, that in a generation the U.S. and USSR would fight together against Red China, and FDR was finally reassured: "Then I am right to go with Russia." In a few weeks he went to Yalta and gave half of Europe to Stalin!

Father Herman sends his greetings and poklon.

079.

April 17/30, 1971

St. Zossima of Solovki

Dear Mr. [John] Dunlop,

Christ is risen!

I pray this finds you well and in the grace of our dear Saviour. Actually, I've been meaning to write you for some time, but the pressure of work never seems to give me a minute. Even this will just be a note concerning one practical question, and everything else will have to be once again postponed. But so that you will at least have some idea what is on our mind—we would like somehow to encourage or enlist a gathering of the talents and minds for the better propagation of genuine Orthodoxy in English: i.e., not just the collection of translators and translations, but perhaps some kind of consensus on what should be printed, and how, given the resources we have—the printing establishments of Orthodox Life, Orthodox Christian Witness, Orthodox Word. Well, perhaps what I'm saying is coming over foggily, but if you see what I'm trying to get at, perhaps you could make a comment or two.

Your study on the Moscow Patriarchate is an extremely good example of one kind of thing that is needed today, and one could only wish for it a wider circulation and a more permanent format—as a regular book.

But to get to the point of this letter: From your quotations from the two articles by Talantov ("Sergievshchina" and "The Secret Participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Struggle of the CPSU…"), it appears that these are by far the most interesting and profound of the documents to come out of the USSR in the last decade. But in "Patriarch and Prophets" there are only a few brief excerpts from both. Is Bourdeaux planning to print them elsewhere? And in any case, do you have the complete manuscripts, either in Russian or English, and if so is it possible for us to obtain a copy of them from you? And if they can be obtained only from Bourdeaux himself, do you have his address?

As you can see, we are very interested in printing one or both of them ourselves, perhaps in their entirety (depending on length). Our present Orthodox Word has an article in Talantovs memory, mostly taken from his own writings. But these two articles would be first-class documents in themselves.

We will be most eager to hear from you.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, Monk

080.

May 1/14, 1971

Prophet Jeremiah

Dear Father Innocent,

In truth Christ is risen!

I will be honest with you and come to the point: Why "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel"? While souls are starving and perishing for want of Holy Orthodoxy, are you going to devote your time and energy to idle academic exercises?

Doubtless you are correct that at one time the accepted English form of "Germanus" was "Germain"; that was a matter of usage and not of principle, since there is no reason in the world why foreign names must come to us through the French. But language is a living thing, and the name "Germain" is virtually nonexistent in present American usage, and is, I would say, almost quaint. Even the great French saint of Auxerre is widely known in English as "Germanus," not "Germain." (Both names, surely, are good usage.) Why, therefore, force "Germain" on people? It has nothing to do with "correctness"; there is no "proper traditional way," as you say, of transcribing Orthodox names into English. "Germain" is old English usage; "Herman" is at least one present American usage. Your campaign to force one usage over the other seems to us wasted energy.

When our Brotherhood of St. Herman was founded, we gave some thought to the variant versions of this name. Then and since we have seen defended (some of them with just as much certainty as you display) such variations as: German, Gherman, Guerman, Germain, Gairman, Germanus, Germanos. We preferred "Herman" for one simple reason: it has long been the accepted English usage of those who love and revere the Saint. If you went to Alaska today, you would scarcely find one person who would know who you are talking about when you mention "St. Germain"; and to call them "Metropolia proletarians" under "German influence" is quite beside the point—they are just simple village people who love St. Herman and would be bewildered to find that it's a matter of "principle" to change his name. How many prayers the Saint has answered, how many miracles worked, when addressed as St. "Herman"! Surely therefore, the Saint himself does not consider his glory lessened by this name and spelling!

We, therefore, cannot agree that the name "Herman" is "private and peculiar"; and in fact, whatever may be the philological accident or coincidence that produced this result, the spelling "Herman" comes closest in pronunciation to the Slavonic "German" (where G is closer to English H than G). But we are not in the least interested in engaging in controversy over the issue, nor are we concerned to enforce the name "Herman" on the English speaking world. We see no good reason to change our spelling, but there are too many other important things to be doing to be upset if someone else chooses a different spelling. Uniformity on the matter would be desirable, but there are other things much more necessary and critical.

In the name of our Precious Savior, Fr. Innocent, do not make a major issue out of something so minor. The new parish in Tucson has several recent converts to Orthodoxy; you will only upset and scandalize them if you insist on waging a campaign, and using their parish to do it, for the name "Germain." No matter how "correct," academically speaking, you might think yourself to be, such a campaign would in fact be your own private campaign, and you would get other people to accept it chiefly so as not to offend you personally—surely a small triumph.

We have spoken with absolute frankness. Forgive us, Father, and pray for us, and be assured of our prayers, and of all respect and love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, Monk

081.

May 1/14, 1971

Prophet Jeremiah

Dear Brother in Christ, Anastasios [Luebke],

Christ is risen!

We were glad to hear from you, and pray that this finds you well and in the grace of our Risen Lord.

In the same mail with your letter we received a letter from Priestmonk Innocent, who enclosed a copy of a part of his recent letter to you, concerning the names "Herman" and "Germain." He had recently written us two letters on the same subject, which we had not yet answered—we were slow in answering, to be frank, because we are not at all interested in entering into controversy on this subject, considering it to be of very minor importance. Fr. Innocent, however, insists that it is extremely important, and he even seems determined to make a regular campaign out of the issue; therefore, I have just written him a letter, and I write this now to you, so that our Brotherhoods opinion on the subject might be known.

When our Brotherhood was formed, we gave some thought to the variant versions of this name. Some people, for reasons unknown to us, are very adamant for one form or another, although Fr. Innocent is the first person we have heard to defend "Germain" with such determination. Others have said that the name should or even must be German, Gherman, Guerman, Germanus, Germanos, even Gairman. There are things to be said for and against almost all of these; and we finally decided to accept the name "Herman" for one simple reason: it has long been the accepted English usage of those who love and revere the Saint, in Alaska and elsewhere. Call it a philological accident if you will, nonetheless the usage is well established (and the Saint himself has granted miracles to those who use it!), and it would require a major campaign, probably causing much bad feeling and totally unnecessary fighting, to establish any other version in its place. Such a campaign, we believe, would be a sin, because it would detract from more important things and it would constitute precisely what Fr. Innocent calls the forcing of a "private usage" upon the Church. Incidentally, the Slavonic "G" is actually closer to English "H" than "G", and so "Herman" is just about the closest way of transcribing the pronunciation of the Slavonic name.

We are amazed that Fr. Innocent insists that his way is the only "proper traditional way of doing things in the Church." Despite his insistence, we cannot see that one spelling should be preferred over another as a matter of principle. The question is not one of "principle" at all but of usage. He is doubtless correct that the standard form of "Germanus" in English at one time was "Germain." But language and its usages, which are relative, change; and I do not think one could say that "Germain" is standard usage any more at all. In America it is virtually unheard of, and

even the great French Saint of Auxerre is more commonly referred to on English as Germanus, not Germain.

Fr. Innocent writes, in his letter to you, that Metropolitan Philaret "agrees with my contention." It may be that the Metropolitan agrees that "Germanus," abstractly considered, might be most fittingly rendered by the old English "Germain"; but I doubt very much that the Metropolitan agrees that a campaign should be undertaken to force everyone to use this unfamiliar version. On matters which do not directly concern doctrine and church practice, the Church is flexible, judging minor issues by the spirit and not the letter. The question of "Herman-Germain" is one of the letter, and should not be allowed to take the place, time, and energy of the far more important questions facing Orthodoxy in America today. That Fr. Innocent refused to serve in your parish unless you call it "St. Germain"—simply bewilders us, and seems to us a case of misplaced priorities.

Dear brother in Christ: we are sorry we had to write all this and thus, in spite of ourselves, enter into controversy on this matter. But Fr. Innocent has demanded an answer of us, and so we have given it. But we beg you: do not let this small "temptation" swerve you from your path to serve God's Church in the name of His glorious Wonderworker. If you are at all like us, you are probably at least a little hurt by this seemingly unnecessary controversy. But that, of course, is just exactly the way the devil attacks: he will try to bring down the loftiest ideas and plans by the most trivial means. But our experience in warfare with him is built up by an appropriate and prayerful response to each such temptation and trial.

Please be assured that we are with you fully, whatever spelling your parish may adopt! Uniformity on this question, while desirable, is itself a secondary question, and the times are too critical to waste time on it, we know in any case that it is one and the same Saint who is being glorified. We will not presume to advise you on your answer to Fr. Innocent; pray to God and His Saint and they will guide you. In case of doubt, Fr. Panteleimon (I believe you said he is your spiritual father) will give you wise advice.

As for liturgical goods: we have not sold any for some time. Previously we bought some hanging icon lamps from the Central Book and Art Shop in New York City (321 East 14th St., 10003); chalices and other sacred utensils are probably best ordered directly from Greece. We no longer have any Greek addresses, but doubtless Fr. Panteleimon could give you several, and you can request catalogues from them.

Please pray for us, and keep firm your spirit of serving God's Holy Church and praising His saints.

With love in Christ our Savior,

Seraphim, Monk

082.

May 5/18, 1971

Martyr Irene

Dear Father Ambrosius [Pogodin],

IN TRUTH CHRIST IS RISEN!

Thank you very much for the letter and gift, and please forgive our long delay in answering. There is so much for just the two of us to be doing, and as you see, we are very late in publishing our magazine. But by God's mercy and the prayers of our patrons, St. Herman and Vladika John, we continue to exist and have hopes to increase our publications.

We are sending you separately our copy of St. Gregory's [Palamas] Homilies, and are happy to be able to help you in this.

We are very touched that you would like to visit us. But probably you have far too idealistic a picture of us! Our whole "pustyn" is only two cabins and a small unfinished church, to which we add a little at a time, and we have very little of modern conveniences. Still, for us it is a paradise, for it enables us to concentrate on our work, removed from most of those distractions which are such a temptation today for those who would serve the Holy Church. We are sufficiently remote so that our visitors are few, and generally interested to see us, and not just "tourists."

You are correct that it would be very unwise to write to our Archbishop about visiting us. Because of your situation our contacts with you will have to be "informal" for an indefinite time. With the Moscow Patriarchate, of course, we have no contact, as a matter of principle; but we know that you are not in your present situation because you support their "principle" against ours, but rather by force of circumstances. As you see in The Orthodox Word, we believe in the principle of the Church Abroad; but sometimes a living soul becomes caught, as it were, in a net of circumstances that threaten to choke and strangle him, and then it would be a sin of phariseeism not to offer, if one can, at least a word of encouragement. That is the testament we have received from Vladika John, from whom we have also learned that in Christ not all "hopeless" situations are really as hopeless as they seem…. I believe you understand all this well enough, being yourself, just like we are, an "orphan" of Vladika John! As to what form, on the basis of all this, our future contacts will take—surely God, through the prayers of Vladika John, will teach us! We only know that God does not want living souls to be stifled, nor fruitful trees to remain barren.

But perhaps I am becoming too philosophical! May God and His saints guide you aright in all your ways.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, Monk

083.

May 6/19, 1971

Righteous Job

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Father in Christ Neketas,

Evlogeite! Please forgive our long silence. Somehow, since the Canonization last year our correspondence with you has slowed to a trickle, which is unfortunate, as our common mission of English-language Orthodox enlightenment would profit by more intercommunication, not to mention the mutual encouragement which is often so necessary. Anyway, please know that spiritually we are with you and think of you often and pray for the success and expansion of your endeavors for Christ's Holy Church in these dark days.

As for us: we plod along and even begin to feel—thanks largely to the linotype, which is now operating fairly smoothly—that we can begin to catch up and even undertake a little more than The Orthodox Word. Our trials are many, which persuades us we're on the right path—but they are almost all of a rather menial character, mostly mechanical failures and strange "accidents" and bureaucratic red tape. Most recently the Post Office discovered (after a year and a half!) that we have no right to mail with a 2nd Class permit in Redding, as we have no city address there; but fortunately our local Postmaster agreed to accept our mailings, and after the inspectors vainly searched for a rule that says a 4th Class post office can't do this, they finally agreed.

Laurence Campbell tells us of your interest in his calendar. It will need additions and corrections, but it is a good and necessary beginning. His labors have crystallized our own calendar ideas, and God willing, we will print such a calendar this fall for 1972. Fr. Panteleimon is sending his own additions and corrections, and we've found some Romanian and Western saints to add. Our next OW will have the Synod's Resolution in 1952 concerning Vladika John's list of 20-some Western saints, which we will also add. Please send your own suggestions. We will of course add the Saints of Mytilene. As for St. Peter the Aleut: frankly, the Synod, or rather the Russian Church since long before the Revolution, has always been timid about doing anything without elaborate official confirmation; thus the feast of the Martyrs of the Boxer Rebellion was always observed in China as a requiem service, and they were considered apparently "uncanonized." However, if God grants us to print the calendar, we will add all these saints, only probably keeping them somehow distinct so that no one will fly on our necks.

Which brings us to another important point: As you note in regard to the unfortunate article in the recent St. Seraphim Chronicle (which we haven't seen), there are people in the Synod who just aren't aware of what's going on, who are living Orthodoxy unconsciously on the capital of the past, as it were. Such an attitude is actually probably quite widespread in the Synod, and one can even suspect that the fact that the Synod as a body can be said to preserve Orthodoxy as no one else has, is due more to the historical "accidents" (of course, this is first of all God's Providence) of Revolution, exile, etc., than anything else. In San Francisco after Vladika John died we felt distinctly that he almost alone had been the spiritual power of San Francisco's (or at least the Cathedrals) Orthodoxy, and if there was no counteracting force in the meantime, the services in the Cathedral in 20 years time would be perilously close to the Metropolia spirit. Among Russians there are very few sources of such a spiritual force that can counteract the drift of the times—anywhere! The conscious Orthodoxy of the Synod in future years, we believe will come from converts and Greeks, for the most part. And it may even be that this will cause

friction and trouble. But of course we must just go forward trusting in God, speaking the truth and being vigilant.

We read the Newsletter with great interest. For improvement, we can only wish for a regular section of Greek news. (Mostly translations from Typos, I presume.) Perhaps Mrs. Vagin could help out on that— there's an informed and aware Russian! Also, is it possible to issue the Newsletter in magazine format, i.e., like the beautifully done Supplicatory Canon; or does that involve too much extra labor in typing, stapling, etc.?

I somehow thought I had lots more to say to you, but it's gotten lost somewhere—that's what comes from letting our correspondence lapse. We'll try to write a little more frequently. Anyway, don't by any means thing you're conducting a monologue with what you publish—every word of real Orthodox material in English is a seed whose future fruits are incalculable.

Pray for us, and let us hear a word occasionally. It would be nice to see you and have a good long talk, but God knows when that will come about. You're always welcome here, if you ever venture that far out!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

084.

May 8/21, 1971

St. John the Theologian St. Arsenius the Great

Dear Father in Christ, Panteleimon,

CHRIST IS RISEN! Evlogeite!

It was very good to talk to you, and one only regrets that the time was so short. We do hope you will be able to visit us the next time you are out on the West Coast, and we can discuss many things more thoroughly.

Glory be to God, we are well and in good spirits. As for the "problem" that still hangs over us, we have been so immersed in our printing work and plans—calendar, Catacomb Church, new martyrs, etc.—that we haven't been thinking much of it, and in our conversation with you we hardly mentioned it. But for your information as well as to keep our ideas straight, we will give here a brief progress report.

First of all, since Christmas Vladika Anthony has left us alone, so much so that one might almost be tempted to think that he was really content to let us be independent. But such an appearance is deceptive. The Ukase he sent us in March clearly sets forth, in his mind, his "rights" over us, and he can feel himself able to put these rights into effect at any time. And again, we already know from past experience and from talking to others that Vladika likes to assert his "rights" suddenly and unexpectedly, and one is apt to find that what seemed to be a time of peace and repose was really some kind of trap in which one has committed all kinds of sins, usually of omission, against these rights. Our "day of reckoning" with him is doubtless not too far off.

Please forgive us for speaking in a way that might perhaps seem disrespectful to our bishop, but we know that you are fully as aware as we have become of being realistic about such things among ourselves, so as to avoid worse evils in future. In all, we have told only seven people of our situation: besides you and Vladika Laurus, the five people in San Francisco (Vlad. Nektary, Fr. Alexey, Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov, Laurence Campbell, Mrs. Kontzevitch) already knew or suspected, or even warned us, what was going to happen.

From San Francisco there are only two new developments: Laurence Campbell on a recent visit told us that there is talk among laymen who are close to Vladika about our "disobedient" attitude toward him. There is no way they could have formed such an opinion except from whatever Vladika himself has told them. Which only reinforces our idea that Vladika is not acting very seriously with regard to the "monastery" he has formed, talking about our "faults" to others. His approach is worldly, and his behavior is apparently governed by the fact that he has been personally offended by our behavior. You will remember that he declared himself to be personally offended when we declined to be made priests immediately; and to this was added our improprietous behavior at Christmas. This seems to us an unsound basis of behavior, and it can only be a potential threat to our common work, which certainly transcends the personal offenses of a day.

The second new development: when Vladika Nektary visited us recently he called Vlad. Anthony shortly before and requested permission to serve and give us Holy Communion. Vladika told him to relay to us this message: since our Starets was unable to come for Pascha (he is serving in Palo Alto now), and since our behavior at Christmas shows that we are in danger of falling into prelest (?!), he asks us to reconsider our decision about accepting priesthood. Does this make sense? Does one ask a person in danger of falling into prelest to accept priesthood?! Clearly, neither the suspicion of prelest nor the offer of priesthood can be taken seriously in the context of any serious church activity. They are not the statements of someone who knows our work and wants to do what is best for that work; they come, rather, from someone on the outside who is thinking about what will look best, and also what he can best control; for clearly a priest is more closely bound to his bishop than is a simple monk. And so we are only confirmed in our diagnosis of our case and in our desire to be independent of Vladika Anthony. If any further good will come from our Brotherhood, it will be from our independendy pursuing the path already begun, with Vladika Johns blessing, not by meekly accepting directions from without. We recently found, by the way, Vladika Vitalys (Maximenko's) address on his consecration as bishop, in which he movingly speaks of the spiritual-psychological conditions under which he was able to bring such fruit as a missionary of the printed word: in absolute independence, "not bothering anyone and not bothered by anyone." Exactly! And that's normal in the Church, not bending oneself into some other shape for the sake of a purely formal and fictitious "obedience," That's the way Vladika John acted, and that's the inspiration he gave us. If we fall into heresy or give scandal, that's another matter. For us here in the wilds, our idea of a bishop is somewhat modelled on the vultures who circle our mountain constantly now: "overseeing" everything, they nonetheless do not bother those animals that move around doing their own affairs, but come down to examine and clean up only when they smell something rotten! If Vladika A, after all his

"disillusionment" with us, still wants to ordain us priests, then clearly he doesn't smell anything seriously rotten!

We had a good long talk with Vladika Nektary about all this, and, while he said he would not "advise" us, if it were he that was involved he would simply disobey those directives which he felt to be destructive of the idea by which we live, and thus if there were going to be a complaint at the Synod it would have to come first from Vladika A. himself. This of course reinforces what Vladika Laurus told us about not taking any formal action but nonetheless expressing our disagreement with such actions. And so we are patiently awaiting what will come, content that at least for the time being we are not actually being bothered by any pressing demands and can concentrate on the work at hand, with which we are only slowly catching up.

Vladika Nektary told us in more detail about his own relation to Vladika Anthony, and we will tell you of one or two points so that you will be informed of what seems clearly to be an unsound situation that may later have broader repercussions in the whole Church. Vladika Nektary told us: "I am not a bishop; I am a doll in a ryassa." Vladika A. gives him no freedom whatsoever, and will not even allow him to tonsure a candidate to be his cell-attendant. One incident in particular is most revealing: In the cell in which Vladika John reposed in Seatde there is small bed, on which he was laid just after his repose. One day at the Synod Vladika Anthony, without saying a word to Vladika Nektary in advance, in an irritated tone announced to the bishops that an intolerable situation exists: Vladika John never lay down to sleep, and yet in his cell in Seatde there is a bed; it must be removed. The bishops more or less agreed (although apparently this hasn't been done yet), and Vladika A receives the impression of a zealot for the memory of Vladika John. Later Vladika A. came to Vladika Nektary's cell at the Synod and made a prostration to the ground before him, begging pardon if he offended him. We do not want to believe that all this was some kind of "act," and we can easily enough believe that Vladika A acted sincerely, unaware of how very wrong such behavior surely is. Why create such a scene, when the matter could easily be discussed with the local bishop (Vladika N.) on the scene? The Synod need not be involved at all. But why, after all, remove the bed when it actually does have such significance, as the first bed in which Vladika John lay in 40 years? The basis for such behavior is surely unsound. In our own case we have noticed that Vladika A. does not care to discuss things with us; he acts only as he sees fit, and everyone else must agree with him. And as regards his veneration of Vladika John, we find it to be, like other things, more outward than real. Otherwise he would not have simply declared our Brotherhood abolished, without consulting or even telling us in advance, and certainly without thinking whether, for the sake of the blessing of Vladika John which rests upon it, the name should somehow be preserved even in our monastic state. Likewise he would not have abolished Vladika John's Blagovestnik in order to begin his own (frankly trivial) Tropinka. He told us directly: I'm opening my own little magazine; Blagovestnik is closed; if you want to print anything in Russian, you will not call it Blagovestnik. Vladika Nektary, a very sensitive man, was very hurt by this. Are we wrong to suspect some kind of jealousy at work here? Of course, it's not our business to judge that; but we cannot be blind to actions which are, in a church sense, wrong.

I think you can understand after all this why we do not care to have any direct contact at all with Vladika Anthony. Rather than have a monastery subject to him, we will have no monastery at all—that will be more fruitful. For the time being we will stay as we are, acting independendy while awaiting future developments. The question of priesthood, of course, will not even arise until we can be assured of an officially independent status; for someone who does not understand what we are doing here, it would be the easiest thing in the world to send a useless wilderness priest to one of the several S.F. parishes that need or will soon need a priest.

For the immediate future we sense two sources of trouble: Vladika A., against our wishes and without our knowledge, collected money in every parish for his monastery—probably several hundred dollars at least. That was six months ago, and we have not heard anything from him as to giving it to us. We suspect that it will involve some kind of "plan" of his own, and so we are >afraid of this money. Even accepting it with no strings attached bothers us, because he would give it as "Abbot" of his "Diocesan" Monastery. Of course, we also would not want to offend those who gave in good will, knowing us, although we would never have asked them ourselves, not wishing to be parasites. So we are hoping that our "day of reckoning" with the Archbishop will come before he tries to give us the money, and then the use of it will be up to his conscience.

Secondly: soon we will put out our Orthodox Word devoted largely to Vladika John, openly confessing his sanctity. We believe that Vladika A. would prefer the veneration of Vladika John to be quiet and private, and all emphasis on sanctity to be hushed up. If so, he might react adversely to this issue; although we don't know, (all of this would become more evident, of course, if God grants us to print something in Russian.) Then, of course, we would only rejoice if we were to suffer for our veneration of Vladika John.

A third point I forgot: Probably soon will be the S.F. Diocesan clergy assembly; and as a "Diocesan" organization we would be obliged to attend and give a report. What do we do about that? I think we had probably better send instead a letter explaining why we do not attend, not acknowledging ourselves to be a "diocesan" organization; and of course, that would precipitate our day of reckoning. To become involved with the Diocesan clergy would be our spiritual suicide. To name only one point: possibly the majority, or at least the most vocal members, of the clergy are against Vladika John, and our public veneration of him would be a Diocesan scandal.

All of this is a clearing of our mind, our Brotherhood's "confession" to you, as it were. Please do not despair for us. We are in good spirits and working hard, and are much better prepared now for the coming trials than we were some months ago. We are most consoled of all by the fact that the bishops in whom we have confided did not at all tell us to be falsely meek and let the powerful do what they want. Thus we are not too unrealistic and naive in believing that truth and principle and serious labor for the Church should come first, and all politics and organizational questions second.

After receiving a third letter from Priestmonk Innocent (together with a copy of the letter he wrote to Anastasios Luebke, telling him he would not serve for a parish that was calling St. Herman instead of Germain), we wrote a reply to him begging him not cause a scandal and make

a useless campaign out of such a minor thing which is after all a matter of usage and not principle. But we will stick to the Alaskan usage of Herman.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

085.

June 23/July 6, 1971

Vladimir Mother of God

Dear Father Panteleimon,

Evlogeite! This is solely a "Publication Question Sheet"; a letter will follow shortly. Thanks be to God, we are well and in good spirits.

1. Life of St. Mamas: safely received with many thanks. It will go in the May-June issue, as Vladika John will have to be our saint for March-April! By the way, it does no good to send us anything by "special delivery," which is unheard of here; all our mail just sits in the post office until we go and get it.

2. Life of Blessed Archbishop John in Russian is enclosed—this is our closely guarded "secret project" about which no one knew. Glory be to God, we finished it the evening before Vladika Johns repose and delivered it at 6. a.m. to the Sepulchre before Liturgy. First response from everyone was favorable, after the shock wore off, but we await further repercussions. We visited for two hours with Vladika Nektary, who was just sent home; his condition is still serious, but hopeful; he is on a strict regime with absolute rest prescribed, even idle gestures being prohibited.

3. Calendar: have you checked through the whole thing? How widespread are the discrepancies in dates of commemoration of saints, and how can we make the calendar usable for Greeks as well as Russians? We would like to start printing, God willing, in Sept.

4. Service to St. Nectarios: we would like to print this year as part of OW (and separately), if possible before November. We hope to print one service a year, next year hopefully St. Mark of Ephesus. We have your translation of Vespers and the French translation of part of Matins; can you supply the Canon and anything else missing? If you want to supply the whole Matins, wonderful; otherwise we will translate from French. But we will need to know what Tone the kathismata are in, also the stikhera or lauds, and whether there are any "special melodies" here or in Vespers. Also, please give Acrostic, if any—but we don't require it to fit the English Canon! (This is what the Slavonic Menaion does.) And please suggest whether we should supply more rubrics and/or text of the "common" parts of Vespers and Matins for our Americans who don't know the order of services.

5. If we catch up, print the calendar, etc., this year, we would like to begin thinking, for next year, of printing a full Horologion for church use. What do you say and suggest? Will we need to appeal to an "English Liturgical Committee" of the Synod, which might involve endless

complications and delays, or is it sufficient for your monastery and ours to work out the text between us and then offer it jointly to the English-speaking Orthodox world? Daniel Olson was just here for another week and volunteered his services, and astutely observed: everything depends on a standard Psalter, no adequate version of which has yet been printed in English; and he thought we should use yours. Can you send us a copy, or is it being printed?

If we do not hear from you in writing within a reasonable time, we will have to put you again to the expense of a phone call! As you see, we are full of hopes and plans for the future, while God gives us the time and opportunity. We are more than ever convinced that Vladika John and St. Herman are with us, and with their help we can do much.

Asking your prayers,

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

086.

July 7/20, 1971

St. Thomas of Melea

Dear Father in Christ, Panteleimon,

Evlogeite!

On looking over our file of letters to you since our "crisis" began in January, I note that we have sent you a "progress report" about every two months; and another one is now due! And so I send you this brief report, even though there is very little if any change in our situation, in order to keep you informed and, for our own benefit, to bring everything out in a "confession" so it will not lie hidden within us and later, taken too much for granted by us, cause some kind of trouble. This, by the way, is the exact opposite of the principle by which Vladika Anthony operates: keep everything hidden, do not let a person know how he stands, and then operate suddenly so as to catch him by surprise so you can do with him whatever you want. This we find to be spiritual poison, which only produces bitterness and resentment, which are pointless and fruitless.

After our last letter to you we heard from San Francisco that Vladika Anthony knew or suspected our attitude toward him, and that he was resolved not to lose his reputation of "peacemaker" for our sakes, and so he would not touch us for the time being. Perhaps Vlad. Nektary advised him not to be so hard on us, or perhaps he just guessed at our feelings. At any rate, we received a striking confirmation of this diagnosis very soon. On the Feast of the Ascension, when we were still unable to travel to San Francisco because of our truck, we were astonished when shortly after dawn who should arrive but Vladika Anthony himself! He acted as though it were the most natural thing in the world for an Archbishop not to be serving in his own Cathedral on such a feast day (Vladika Nektary served there), and told us he had wanted to come to us after Pascha but only now got the opportunity. We of course were quite nervous, but resolved to place all our hope in God, and His saints, to accept gratefully the spiritual gifts of Divine Liturgy and Holy

Communion, and then see what God would send us—we rather hoped that we would finally "have it out" with Vladika and bring everything into the open.

After Liturgy Vladika said we would have no reading at Trapeza, as we had "much to talk about." After some small talk, the Russian who had driven Vladika retired to rest, and we waited to see what Vladika would say. To our great astonishment we found that he was just as tense and nervous as we were—and that he didn't say anything at all! He asked about our service on Pascha, without expressing any disapproval of the fact that we didn't try harder to get to San Francisco then; he told us about the service at Fort Ross the next week without even suggesting that we come to "be seen"; and said not a word about "obedience," "prelest," or anything of the sort!

After Vladika himself retired to rest for a while (to my kellia, where Fr. Herman had placed in a conspicuous place a small card with the text in Russian, to inspire us: "Stavropigialny missionary Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochaev—Vladika Vitaly"), Fr. Herman and I consulted: we decided he had indeed come as a "peacemaker," and that if he himself does not raise any issues we also should say nothing, following Vlad. Laurus' advice not to do anything rash but simply to continue acting independently. After resting, Vladika briefly looked at our printshop, where he made the offhand comment (with a nervous laugh) that perhaps he had offended us in the past?—to which we said nothing at all. And he left.

Nonetheless, with this visit our situation did not change in the least; only a "cease-fire" had been declared, as it were. We simply continued our independent printing activities expecting war to break out again when we finished our Russian Life of Vladika John, which we issued as published by the Brotherhood of St. Herman of Alaska"—which Vladika had supposedly abolished! We left San Francisco on the same day we came, and Vladika Anthony had time only to read the text hurriedly before we left, and obviously he had not yet "digested" it thoroughly. To our surprise, in principle he did not seem opposed to it, did not even protest that he hadn't been informed in advance, and about the text he only wondered "what will people in the Kazan church think?" (Here is the life of a saint of universal significance, a patron saint of the Russian Diaspora—and he wonders what the local trouble-makers might think! That surely reveals something about restriction to a narrow, "diocesan" outlook, to say the least!) But we fully expect some later repercussions, and do not expect the "ceasefire" to last indefinitely!

So you see, we have "peace" for a while, and we continue to operate independently; but the basic unhealthy situation remains unchanged. How long it will be before the next battle breaks out we do not know, but we suspect it will not be until after the Sobor of Bishops in Sept., at which Vladika will doubtless wish to present himself as "head" of a peaceful and flourishing monastery. We remain at our battle stations, but we follow the advice of Vladikas Laurus and Nektary not to do anything rash and to wait until we are provoked into action. Meanwhile we will shortly send a new letter to Vladika Laurus and see if he has any further advice. Our present idea is to wait until Vladika Anthony makes some new attack against our independence, and then to present him with an outspoken letter, full of respect and love but very firm, telling him what we will not do. We are convinced that he will listen only to strong words and actions; meek requests he will simply ignore or crush. We are quite certain that he will fight long and hard

against a stavropignialny monastery in his Diocese (Matushka Ariadna has that status, and he can't do a thing with her!), and that he would never have permitted it if we had asked for it explicitly before our tonsure; doubtless he will finally grant it, if at all, only to avoid a scandal. If only he could be made to see that as independent we will be his best friends, whereas as his crushed slaves we would be only his secret enemies! Our resolve to be unflinchingly firm is only reinforced by seeing Vladika Nektary—who, facing death, finds his most difficult trial is to accept spiritually Vladika Anthony's unjust and condescending treatment of him, not allowing bitterness to creep in. Vladika Nektary chose the path of meekness; but we cannot afford that! We are only sad that we ourselves cause Vladika Nektary sorrow because we would not become his disciples when he himself wanted to establish a monastery—but we realized then that that would be the end of our independent mission of the printed word, and we hate to think of the position we would now be in if we had agreed to follow him out of politeness or pity. We do not regret that we have faithfully followed the words of St. John Cassian: "Flee women and bishops!"

We regretfully come to the conclusion that in the San Francisco Archdiocese, under the present leadership, there is simply no room for monks; they can exist and flourish only independently of that lead leadership, as Abbess Ariadna does. Vladika Anthony's relentless (but apparently unintentional—that's just the way he operates) persecution of his monks is emphasized by his visit to Vladika Nektary in the hospital, where he so upset the sick and dying man that the nurse had to make him leave" (He was apparently chastising him for opening a parish in Portland without his knowledge—he needn't worry, that parish seems to be in the process of closing itself down, and almost certainly will do so without Vladika Nektary.)

There you have our situation, up to date. If we do not hear from you on our manuscript questions, we will call you within the next 3 weeks or so. Our summer has been mercifully cool until the last few days, but now the heat has begun in earnest and both of us are suffering from it. Pray for us, dear Father!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. A bad sign—word reaches us from S.F, that laymen (whom we know) close to Vlad. Anthony are spreading the story that we are in "prelest," have no one in charge of us, etc. Why doesn't the ruling hierarch tell us his "suspicions" instead of laymen?

087.

Aug. 3/16, 1971

St. Anthony the Roman

Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Rejoice in the Lord!

Congratulations with the namesday child. We are sending him an inscribed copy of vol. 6 of the OW, so he can clearly see what we are doing.

The calendar has been sent to Nicholas Mabin, airmail. Time is fast approaching when we must either print it or give up the project for this year. First we must finish two OWs, the first of which has been begun. Pray for us!

Response from the Russian OW has been very disappointing. Have the Russians really lost all sense of what a podvizhnik is?

We've apparently reached the peak of the pilgrim season. Yesterday we had a surprise visit from our nearest Orthodox neighbors, the Harveys of Redding (a Russian woman married to an American, at whose baptism by Vladika John, it turns out, I was present). Mrs. Harvey knows much about Vladika's Shanghai days and says, "Vladika performed so many miracles that we took them for granted, and most of them are not written down."

Last week Fr. Neketas visited us for 2 days and served Liturgy twice, once at midnight, Greek style; Fr. Sergius from San Diego arrived in time for the second Liturgy. Now there is a real priest who puts our Russians to shame. From what he says, added to what we've already heard, it would seem that he is not at all in favor with the Archbishop—why, is a mystery, but it's sad.

Our cool summer finally became warm (but not really hot) for a month, until last week when we had three days at 98 degrees (the hottest since we've been here), with 80 degrees at night, and we felt in a constant state of fever. But that was all, and today one feels already an early-autumn coolness in the air. Mrs. Harvey confirms our fears of a hard winter—there's an abnormal amount of butterflies on the highway! (I don't know whether that's Russian folklore or what!) Anyway, we expect that God's kindness to us our first two winters is about to change to strictness, and the problem of firewood and winterproofing what buildings we have is about to be undertaken in earnest. Problems of chicken coops and hens also stand before us.

We got two more rattlesnakes after your departure, which cause us to "walk circumspectly." We also struck up an acquaintance with a small owl who came at dusk two nights looking for our mice. We even talked to him, and he answered 4 or 5 times with a clucking sound, until he got tired of answering the same question so much.

How goes your resolve to abandon the world, both within and without yourself? ·.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We're sending you a book on forced labor in USSR: please xerox it (you'll probably find it interesting reading too) and send it to the address below. The Meteora book is for you to read; bring it back with you your next trip.

Mr. Y. Gabriel Jegoroff

932 1/2 Margaret St.

Monterey, Calif. 93940

[Fr. Herman's note:] rush, hurry up! quick, as soon as possible, immediately, at once, fast, NOW!

088.

Aug. 10/23, 1971

St. Laurence the Archdeacon

Dear Brother in Christ Laurence,

Congratulations on your namesday! May God grant you to grow with each year in Christian virtues and attain in the end to His eternal Kingdom!

Enclosed is our official epistle to you to help you make up your mind about joining us. What does it say to your heart?

Fr. Fyodor s being so upset is apparently significant of something; he complained also to Deacon Nicholas. As for giving advice, he asked for it, telling Fr. Herman that he was dissatisfied where he was, that he had a chance to go to Vlad. Vitaly, or maybe he would join us, and what did Fr. Herman think? Fr. Herman's reply was by no means unkind or sharp, but it was very definitely based on the idea that we could not possibly ask someone to travel 3000 miles to our primitive conditions when he was no more than casually (if at all) interested in what we are doing. Fr. Herman suggested that he read several issues of the OW if he wanted to know what makes our community "tick," but that probably he would find himself more at home with Vlad. Vitaly's Russian-oriented work. That Fr. Fyodor could get so upset at this leads one to suspect that he indeed did have in mind just what he told you: that he, being experienced (?) in monasticism, wanted to come and "run the show."

But of course he is correct when he says that what we are doing is "irregular"—from the point of view of the prevailing Russian Church practice. There are, however, plentiful precedents from the lives of Saints—St. Sergius, for example—for going to the wilderness to save your soul. "Establishing a monastery" is another matter, but we did not come here with the intention of "establishing a monastery," and in fact we've had nothing but trouble since Vladika A. "established a monastery" for us; but if this is what God wills and the Church desires that we have, then we will fight to have a real one, and not a fake one that is just a bishop's whim, and we will fight for the genuine, independent monastic spirit and not be tempted by any barren fig trees that come around boasting of their "experience," ukases, organizational ability, or whatever.

In the prevailing Russian understanding today a "monastery" is a place with an incidental collection of people, with a definite function in the Church: to serve as a bishop's summer residence, picnic center, manpower pool for church needs, etc. And "monks" are those people who becomes slaves, crushed by the authorities for the sake of "obedience," who can be used by

the church organization: the more hopeful ones as bishops, the less hopeful ones as hieromonks in parishes that can't afford anything better, and the complete fools to remain in the monastery and tend the cows. Against such a perverted idea, both of monasteries and of "obedience" and the monastic virtues, we emphatically protest, and if God grants us to have a real monastery here, it will fit into this "accepted" picture only over our dead bodies. This is what V. A. has in mind (and Vlad. Vitaly also, who recently forbade an Athonite hieromonk to reestablish the skete at Grad Kitezh or anywhere else), and this is apparently what Fr. Fyodor thinks also. In this concept "monasticism" has become some kind of spiritual gymnastics (pokloni, obediences, etc.) which can be acquired by living for a while in a "monastery" and once you have it you can become an incidental member of any other "monastery" and offer others the fruit of your gymnastic experience—in the meantime rising in the hierarchy of church ranks until, if you're lucky, you become a bishop and you can run your own show. No! Monasticism is a disposition and effort of the soul striving for salvation, and its coenobitic form is forged by living in community with others of the same mind and soul and coming to be one in aspiration with them, each one spurring the others on to salvation. This, from all signs, is what Fr. Panteleimon has, and the Greeks in general seem still very aware of monasticism in itself and not just as a function in the Church at the mercy of bishops. Fr. Neketas was shocked when we spoke to him of Fr. Panteleimon as a candidate for bishop; an abbot isn't supposed to be "promoted" to bishop, but remain where he is for life; and if Fr. Panteleimon did become a bishop, except in an extreme emergency, he would lose all respect in Greece.

This concept, however, seems to be dying out among Russians, certainly among bishops.

Concerning your quitting your job: it would doubtless be best for your peace of mind ("economic security") if you took a "leave of absence," preserving the right to return to your job; this would be normal and we would not regard it as a lack of faith in us or anything of the sort. However, in this way you would not get your retirement money and so would not be able to take your trip?? or maybe a shorter trip?? Decide what is wisest, by normal human standards.

This will be background for the accompanying epistle. We hope to see you on Uspeniye, when you will see the fantastic invention being put into operation for us by our Redding Orthodox neighbors.

With love in Christ,

089.

August 10/23, 1971

St. Laurence the Archdeacon

Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

You have told us of your willingness to drop everything and come to join us here as a full-fledged brother; and you have expressed your doubts. Now it is for us to tell you what you can expect and what we expect of you when and if you join us, no longer as an honored guest and brother from far away, but as a full member of our community.

1. First of all, we welcome you as a full and organic member of our monastic-missionary body, fully sharing our common joys, sorrows, difficulties, and everyday life, and giving your maximum to the common work and responding to the common need without second thought. We will sacrifice ourselves to the utmost to make room for you in our common body, and we will expect the same of you. Under no circumstances will we allow you to live as a "bachelor" and adjust ourselves to your whims and eccentricities, nor as any kind of "guest," paying or free, who gets room and board in exchange for work or money. You are a full member of us, or there is no point in your coming.

2. Our spiritual orientation is: devotion to St. Herman and discipleship to Vladika John and faithfulness to his testament and tradition to us, which includes in some degree being a "reflection of Valaam." We have neither startsi nor great spiritual gifts to offer you; we can only invite you to be our fellow-orphan of St. Herman and Vladika John, asking together their help to make up our numerous deficiencies. Many from outside, as you already see, will judge us, will say we are in "prelest," etc., and you will fall under the general condemnation. We cannot defend ourselves by pointing to any "spiritual" qualities which we do not have, but only by the fruits which God may bring forth from our common labors. We have sufficient testimony from outside to tell us that these fruits so far, even if small, are nonetheless real.

Vladika John divided his day into four parts of six hours each: rest, spiritual reading and reflection, work, and prayer. That is also the formula of our common life, only with the hours adapted to our weakness and needs. The active part of our day is devoted to work and prayer; no idleness. You will be given a chotki and a brief rule of cell prayer; besides this, you will carry the chotki with you everywhere and use it as your chief weapon against idleness and vain imaginings, fighting the devil with the Jesus Prayer.

3. As you know, we are experiencing difficulty with the local "authority," whose ideas concerning our status and the idea that inspires us are totally opposed to our own. Therefore, you must know that we do not accept him as Head of our community, nor do we accept his Ukase concerning our monastery, concerning which we have reported in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. Sooner or later there will doubtless be an open battle with the "authority," and you will be expected to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in this, fighting for the common idea that inspires us (without which we will not be faithful to Vladika John), and being counselled by responsible persons in the Church who know us and our work. We may well have to endure disgrace. But know that one bishop (N) has openly encouraged us to "disobedience," if that be necessary, telling us to "treasure the blessing of Vladika John above everything," and another (L) has said: "the fact that sorrows come to you testifies to the fact that you are doing a work of God… I think that you should be patient, undertake no dramatic moves, but by your conduct and your 'line' show that this (the behavior and ukase of V.A.) goes against your soul and is not suitable to you." In the meantime we consider that our monastery does not yet have an official status and is in a state of "persecution" until such day as we shall be free to exercise our monastic right to present our own Rule to the Synod and elect our own Head. Until that time we take protection under the name of "Brotherhood" which Vladika John blessed.

4. Our rule being coenobitic, everything is held in common, and no one has anything of his "own"—except, for practical purposes, the personal effects, books, icons, etc., in his own cell. All needs are paid for out of the common treasury; you must come to us poor. We will ask you to put whatever money you have left from the world in a safe place outside and not touch it until you either leave (in which case the money becomes your adjustment money back to the world) or make your final decision to remain with us (in which case you distribute the money to whomever you please, or to the monastery). If you come with your car, you will put the keys in the common treasury and it will be used by the community as needed and with blessing and will not become "yours" again until you make your final decision on staying or leaving, when you will decide how to dispose of it. In other words, you will be entirely dependent on the community, which means also: you on us, and we on you. The worry that we cannot feed another mouth is real only if you do not intend to work; the additional income to be expected from the wholehearted addition of two hands to the work force will more than feed one extra mouth.

5. Authority, when necessary, is exercised by the eldest in our community, Fr. Herman, and after him by Fr. Seraphim. The obediences to be given form a part of the whole work and circumstances of the community, and their importance will generally be evident. If in particular cases you do not always see this, you will just have to trust us. So that the activity of community will proceed by common consent, and not according to the whim of individuals, nothing is undertaken without a blessing, no matter what one may "feel" or "think," and all obediences are performed according to the rules and spirit of the community. Phrases such as "I insist, I demand, I refuse," etc., are absolutely forbidden. General questions affecting the whole community will be decided "soborno," by common consent (such as questions of stoves for winter). We do not acknowledge the right of any ecclesiastical authority outside the community to issue commands regarding our internal life, organization, or any individual member; any such attempt will be judged and acted on by the common consent of all members of the community. Our community is a monastery and not an episcopal dacha.

6. Worldly actions, conversation, manner, tone, objects, etc., are absolutely prohibited, as being utterly destructive of the monastic spirit. This includes:

a. Singing worldly songs, whistling, ostentatious spitting, littering.

b. Radio, newspapers, or magazines besides those received by the community, unless by special blessing for a definite purpose.

c. Crude or sexually oriented talk, reference to "urination," etc.

d. Arguing, proving ones point, raising ones voice, idle comments, complaints, and in general everything that upsets the general peace and order.

e. Demanding of special treatment or privileges, such as bed pans, special foods or preparation, or other paraphernalia and habits of old maids and self-pampered bachelors. Sufficient allowance will be given in cases of illness, allergy, etc.

f. Demands to be placed in a position of authority, on a "Board of Directors," etc.— these concepts are foreign to the nature of our community's existence.

g. Nosiness, curiosity, idle questions.

h. Crossing the legs (for: Life of St. Arsenius the Great).

i. And free and easy, worldly manner with visitors. After visitors have been greeted one or more brothers will be assigned to them, and the others will continue their work.

j. No food is kept in kellias, and no eating between meals, unless with blessing (water is allowed between meals).

7. Finally, in everything the spirit of mutual love, trust, and respect must prevail. For infractions of the above rules, penances of pokloni may be given; but the severest punishment will be given to the brother who allows the sun to set on his anger against another brother. According to the rule of St. Cassian, such a one will not be allowed to pray with the brethren until he comes to repentance and begs forgiveness. For without mutual love, trust, and respect, nothing written above makes any sense, and there cannot be any community at all.

And so, dear brother in Christ, you have the picture. We expect much of you, and we will try to give you much in return. Only in principle you must agree with all that is written above; and if you fall, accept correction. As slaves of Christ we cannot offer to God and His Church great spirituality, wisdom, organization, or podvigs; but we can offer our absolute determination and strenuous effort to be faithful to the testament of Vladika John to us and to forge a community which in some way preserves his spirit, helping, encouraging and strengthening each other in our weaknesses and falls, and being open and honest with each other. The rules above are in accordance with the "Decree on Monasteries" of the Russian Church Abroad, which we shall read to you on your next visit.

Your brothers in Christ our Saviour,

090.

August 13/26, 1971

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Dear Brother in Christ, Dimitry,

Rejoice in the Lord!

We were very glad to receive your letter and read it with great interest. We were touched at your defense of such "unpopular" ones as we. However, it would probably be best to discount a good part of what is said about our dire straights. Our last winter was a little harsh for the first month, but we were never in a very desperate condition; and after Christmas the weather turned quite mild. Fr. Kyprian apparently took too seriously some comments Fr. Herman made to him, which were not intended seriously. In January we received a letter from Fr. Kyprian: "immediately pack up and come to Jordanville by the beginning of Lent; we'll send Holowka to help you move. Your situation is hopeless and you'll fall into prelest, and besides Jordanville is dying off and in ten years there'll be no one left to do the work, and if you don't come nobody else will be inspired to come either." Needless to say, we took this as another temptation, of which we've

gotten quite a share since our tonsure (that, by the way, is supposed to be a sign that what we're doing is good after all), and we stayed put. Last month we saw Fr. C. again in S.F, and his refrain how is: "You're bezpopovtsi, you must get ordained or you'll fall into prelest" (which logic is not too clear to us).

Well, in the meantime we stay put, do our work (which never stops piling up), and remain more convinced than ever that we are right where we should be. By the way, so you will know: we aren't really trying to persuade anyone to join us. We didn't come here to "establish a monastery," but to save our souls and print the OW. If others are crazy enough to join us, perhaps God will bless a real monastery here; and if He blesses it, then He will give us the means of nourishing it, both physically and spiritually. Vladika John did tell us that he "believed' there would be a missionary monastery such as we dreamed of, but we wait to see what God's will is for us. We told a few people (you, Fr. Seraphim, and 3 or 4 others) that in case of need or if your heart feels so moved, there is a refuge here; whereupon Fr. Seraphim started looking for "candidates" to send us—which we don't need! If a monastery here is God-pleasing, then it will "build itself," or so we believe.

But about you: you're undecided, the clergy give you various advice…. Can I "advise" you too? If so—then don't take any advice too seriously, not even (or maybe even especially!) from bishops; 9 out of 10 bishops are entirely preoccupied with their own problems, such as finding priests, etc. The fact that you are undecided means—that you're undecided, neither more nor less. It doesn't mean you want to be in the white clergy, for that is a definite decision in itself.

Vladika Andrey's advice to join the white clergy is probably not a revelation. Fr. Herman, for all his veneration for Vladika Andrey (he was his spiritual father), on several occasions found it necessary to go against his advice—once when he refused to bless him to go to the seminary, and again several years ago when word came through a third person: "if Gleb isn't married yet, he should become a celibate priest."

The most sensible advice right now, of course, is to finish the seminary. But not necessarily; there is something more important, and I don't know if anyone else will come out and say it to you, so I will. We recall your discouragement about Jordanville last year; last week a visitor told us that you walk around the monastery with a very discouraged look; and your letter repeats that Jordanville doesn't inspire you. Answer a question: Of that which was inside you two years ago and persuaded or inspired you to go to Jordanville, how much is left? Or another question: What (or who) does inspire you? The greatest mistake—or rather, sin—you could make would be to allow the spark that brought you back to the Orthodox Faith to go out. And if Jordanville is doing that to you—and it has been known to do it—then you had better get out. If you sacrifice everything to finish the seminary, and while doing it go around gloomy, accepting thoughtless mockery and humiliation for the sake of "humility" (while in your heart carrying not humility at all, but just fatalism), and not being inspired by anything—then you may finish the seminary, but you probably won't be good for anything! ·

Forgive me for being so bold, but I feel a certain responsibility for you, having known you since before the day when you said: "If I should ever become really Orthodox, I would want to be a

monk." In fact, your sister even tells me that my vague answer to your question about drugs led you to take marijuana—so maybe I can make up for that!

But what can one say by letter? We would like very much to have a good talk with you. But from this distance I will venture my opinion: down deep you are not undecided at all; it is circumstances, lack of inspiration, and no one to guide you that make you that way. Down deep you're burning with a converts zeal and thirst for podvig, serving the Church, weeping and shouting for joy at what God has opened up for you—that whole undreamed of heavenly world which the Church gives you the means to approach, as compared to the filth and stench of the state in which you once were. Do I need to say more? We're both converts too!

Down deep you want the full uncompromising Orthodox life. You want not merely to "serve the Church" or find a place in the Church establishment" (probably you don't want that!), but you want to give your whole heart and soul and strength to God. But what form does this take? Apparently you have no one to point the way or inspire you. And you're faced with an atmosphere wherein the Church has become a habit, even a career, a clique with its own jokes and vices—and worst of all, the means of deadening a living soul and putting out its spark. It's wrong to douse this spark in the name of humility, patience, obedience, or any other Christian virtue; these too can become habits and deadening. The spark of Christian faith must be nourished; it can survive for a time with little nourishment, but if there is nothing to inspire it, it will not survive long. You were stupid enough (let me be frank) to fall for Nikita's line, disregarding good advice and falling behind in your studies by doing so; but now if you let your disillusionment leave a scar on your soul, and you go around as an embittered, complaining, bored zombie, you will be no good to anyone, and it will be your own fault.

Your heart will say whether all this is right. But what to do? I'll tell you what I've felt for a long time, since the time when what we have now was still a dream and you didn't know what you believed: that if God opened your heart to Orthodox faith, you would think and feel as we do, and you belonged here with us. But you have to have something more definite than that to guide you, and our existence here is, frankly, so precarious that we couldn't ask anyone to join us who didn't come to it by himself. And we couldn't accept you without first having a good long talk with you and presenting to you the real difficulties that face us, which are somewhat more serious than firewood and "prelest." But first of all comes your own heart, which must find a place where it can be nourished so that you can produce fruit. If that place is with Fr. Panteleimon, we would be more than glad for you, because we believe he can nourish the "spark" as few others seem to do.

We fear most for you that "public opinion" will force you into a category into which you don't belong, and that you will be weak enough to accept this and get stuck in it for life—or even worse, as happens too often, get bored with the whole thing and quit the Church altogether. You're probably not in high repute in Jordanville—a weakling who thinks too much, gloomy, behind in his studies, knows English better than Russian, with some kind of shameful sins in his past; he won't amount to much—put him in the korovnik, and maybe we can find a parish or some such place for him. If this is anything like the truth—don't accept it! You're called to more than that. You still have the "spark"— and you're called to keep it alive and communicate it to

others, producing fruit on Christ's harvest, perhaps in an unconventional way. Don't forget it! And don't let anyone tell you to be "humble" and "obedient" and let someone else—who doesn't see your heart or care who you are—fit you into a conventional mould that doesn't fit you.

Keep in mind Vladika John; pray to him. He's our guiding star, and when we sometimes get gloomy and begin to think that it's pointless to go against the conventional view, that after all the Church is supposed to be a career and not something to get inspired about and inspire others with, that what we're doing is too risky, that it's better to let our enthusiasm die out and let someone else tell us where we can be of "humble service" to the Church—then we bring to mind Vladika John and somehow everything makes sense again, and the "conventional" view doesn't make sense at all and if this attitude continues to prevail among Russians abroad they will fulfill the threat of Vladika John in 1938 and uzrezhetrcr _____. And then we go back to our lives of Saints and Holy Fathers and get our inspiration from them.

Our relationship to Vladika Nektary, by the way, is quite good, and in fact, although Archimandrite Spyridon (and not Fr. Mitrophan) is officially our "starets," we do not get to see him too often, and this function is actually performed for us by Vladika Nektary, who has comforted us greatly in our trials, and who tells us: I (Earlier he tried to persuade us to join him at his podvorye in Alameda (not Burlingame), but our soul was just not in the kind of monastery he wanted, and it would have placed our mission of the printed word in a decidedly secondary position, which we viewed as dangerous. And besides, we have always been very sensitive of the rule of St. John Cassian: "It was the advice of the Fathers, an advice always in season, that a monk should at all hazard flee the society of bishops and women; for neither women nor bishops permit a monk to remain at peace in his cell, nor fix his eyes on pure and heavenly doctrine." Monks and bishops are of most benefit to each other and to the Church when they are independent of each other, we're thoroughly convinced!

We've already heard about the Coptic service in Jordanville, and are only puzzled how it could have been allowed. But then, we ourselves were thoroughly chastised by Fr. Panteleimon and the Greeks about our Zeytoon article, although our minds are still open on that subject.

Fr. Theodore Tenkevich I knew for several years before he went to Jordanville, and was well acquainted with some of his strangenesses. We somehow thought he had "outgrown" them, but alas…. He was one of the original "founders" of our Brotherhood, and when he returned from Greece and wrote us he wanted to come to us, we had hopes; but Fr. Panteleimon painted us a dismal picture of him, and his sporadic correspondence with us only confirms it.

Pray for us. Write. We would love to see you, but will wait and see what God sends. Local folk tell us we're in for a real winter this year, but we go forward blindly. The Post Office recently tried to take away our 2nd Class mailing permit on a technicality, that we don't have an office in the city in which we mail. But the outcome was happy: now we mail in Platina instead of Redding, and if the snow is deep, our winter OWs will go down the hill on sleds! (Don't tell that to Kippie!)

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

091.

Aug. 13/26, 1971

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Dear Brothers in Christ [Fr. Panteleimon et al.],

Rejoice in the Lord!

Thank you for the card and manuscripts (Arkady and Transfiguration). We note that Jordanville celebrates St. Herman on July 27—but somehow this feast hasn't caught on with us. What does the monastery do with St. Panteleimon?

The Arkady ms raises several questions, about which I will be frank. Of course, we appreciate it, but right now it will go into our file and we have no idea when we can make use of it. Wasn't it you who once called for a task force for the problems facing Orthodoxy? Well, in the general scheme that won't work, but in specific areas such as the New Martyrs it's probably just what's needed. The New Martyrs can be presented, not just at random, but according to a definite scheme. The Polsky volumes are just a first collection of materials, a starring point, for a presentation of the New Martyrs. Few of them can or should be presented just the way they are—which is why we recently gladly promised Vladika Vitaly that we won't go into competition with him by printing vol. 1. And these volumes have the great weakness of understating the sources—they're stuck at random in the back, and half of them are pseudonyms or initials. On the contrary, one of the first things one should know is who is telling the story—and most of the material is simply quotes, improperly or not at all identified as such. We are in contact with a number of the sources of this material, and they supply some supplementary material; we also have some manuscript material, which should be added. As a result, of our New Martyrs of the past year, only Bp. Maxim is a more or less straight translation from the text. The rest of them are compiled from various sources, and the witnesses identified.

Therefore: a systematic approach, all the way down to an index of all martyrs mentioned in Polsky and elsewhere, which we are doing. (Part I of the System, as you can see, is: witnesses of the Catacomb Church). But this requires hands and minds. So far 90% of our hand and mind labor is devoted to the sheer physical problem of printing (and chopping wood, etc.), and our translation and intellectual work is snatched fitfully between hours at the printing machines. (That's not a complaint—it's probably our salvation!) Therefore our presentation of the New Martyrs comes out painfully slow; but the plan is there, and there is quite a bit of material. In this plan, by the way, our next need is for a translation of the whole of Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich (vol. 2, pp. 12-18), which was written by Alexei Rostov (formerly "S. Nesterov"), who has also given us some additional information; and hopefully we will also be able to get something on Archbp. S's years in America.

Your epistles are too cryptic. Send us a word—not necessarily about your "plans," but about your souls. Where are your hearts? Give us a word or two.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

p.s. Thanks also for the Theophil translation of some months back, which we've read several times to guests at trapeza. Is the monastery coming out with the book soon?

092.

Aug. 16/29,1971

The Holy Napkin

Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

Thank you for spending the feast day with us. Our services for some reason today took 3 hours, so you were probably to Williams before we finished. With Uspeniye we go on autumn time, and getting up time becomes pre-dawn, as you aptly reminded us.

In the last few hours we've reflected a little on your problem and will offer the fruits of it, in the form of a few principles and recommendations, which perhaps, when put together, will help you on the way to a decision.

1. Keep the "spiritual" and the "worldly" distinct: both spheres have their own logic. Your decision to join us, and later on to remain with us, God willing, should be taken according to spiritual logic; but preliminary questions such as trip, job, etc., are still subject to worldly logic. It is a dangerous mistake to start applying spiritual logic too early or in the wrong place, for that can hinder one later from making a safe retreat back to the world. Our wandering and ex-monks are living examples of what not to follow; if one is to live in the world (and one can do so fruitfully, from the Christian point of view), it should be with the independence and advantages of anyone else living in the world, and not with the handicap of the spiritual crippling that comes from not knowing where one belongs, trying to mix monastic and worldly life, having regrets about past decisions, etc.

Monastic rules give precisely a trial period of at least 6 months, during which time one's worldly rights, while as it were suspended, remain intact. Therefore it is simply not appropriate for you to make a once and for all decision now about staying with us. We welcome you and hope that you will eventually make this decision, since it appears to us that you would be most fruitful here; but that decision belongs at the end of the trial period, during which period all previously incalculable questions should be resolved. Therefore, definitely, if at all possible, you should take a leave of absence, so that if you do decide to return to the world you will have maximum freedom and security in which to bring forth what fruit you can bring forth in the world (the calendar is a good first fruit) without using up your psychic-spiritual energy on vain regrets and job insecurity.

2. One of your important debts to the world is the visit to your mother, which from what you have said and the way you apparently feel, should be made if at all possible this year.

3. The first two principles being, apparently, mutually exclusive, perhaps you should change some other element in the equation to make them both possible. What about visiting your mother, relatives, and Boston on your vacation (3 weeks?) on borrowed money which you would pay back after Christmas (when your $400 debt will be finished?), and then joining us in spring instead of November? Of course, I don't know what sums of money this would involve or how long it would take you to pay it back, but your trip would obviously have to be as modest as possible.

Beyond this we don't know what to say or recommend, as we don't see any other alternatives. Pray about it to Vladika John.

We forget to mention: Father Theodoritos (Mt. Athos monk, formerly John Mavros, who wrote articles and helped us set type in 1965) is now visiting Fr. Panteleimon, and will be coming to S.F. this week or next to spend several weeks with his brother. He would like to visit us,.and Fr. Panteleimon is giving him your phone number. Please do whatever you can to get him here: giving instructions (in case his brother might bring him), notifying us where and when to pick him up (we'll be going to the PO at least every other day) in case he comes by bus or plane, or maybe even bringing him yourself (we'll gladly pay for your trip). He's written two books in Greek, of which we are getting a partial Russian summary made: one on the life of St. Nectarios, another consisting of anti-ecumenist dialogues. In any case you would do good to meet him—his brother, Anthony Mavros, is [in] the phone book; call him if he doesn't call you in a week or two.

Pray for us. And watch out; besides the human factor, the devil is likely to try and disturb you or mix you up in future weeks. Don't trust your feelings too much, and make sense at least by worldly logic. [Letter ends.]

093.

Aug. 16/29, 1971

The Icon of the Lord Not Made with Hands

Dear brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. After I resolved finally to put off no longer writing to you, but to do it unfailing today—I realized that the feast celebrated today is that .of the Icon for which you have such devotion. And so I congratulate you on the feast, which according to the Russians is the "Third Saviour"—i.e., the third feast of the Saviour in the summer, the others being the feast of the Cross on Aug. 1, and the Transfiguration.

Please forgive my long silence, but in addition to our printing labors (which include a Russian Orthodox Word devoted to the Life of Archbishop John, which we finished the day before the 5th anniversary of his repose), we have had quite a bit of company—comparatively speaking. Seven people in a week is quite a crowd by our wilderness standards!

We read the article you sent with great interest; in fact, I read it several times, the last time just now. I find nothing wrong with it, and could think of only one possible change in the English,

which I noted. The point is a good one, aptly illustrated by Holy Scriptures and ancient and recent Fathers, and it is written with feeling, not as an idle academic exercise. It is not at all "vain and presumptuous" for you to write such an article, for if nothing else it helps you to clarify and develop your own ideas and feelings and check them against the "sources"—both Scripture and those who have lived the Faith which we profess and try to live ourselves. I can even think of a place where it might suitably be published: in a newspaper called Orthodox America, which, besides giving Orthodox news, enlightenment, and the proper Orthodox viewpoint on contemporary issues, has a section where Orthodox converts and all the dispersed children of "Orthodox America" in general share some of their ideas, insights, hopes, etc. Unfortunately, such a newspaper doesn't exist! Maybe it will one day. Nonetheless, even without a newspaper, it doesn't hurt for converts to share ideas with each other. Dr. Johnstone, for example, would probably be interested in seeing it.

Some years ago I wrote brief articles somewhat in the same vein, at the insistence of Archbishop John, who wanted at least a page or two of English material in the San Francisco diocesan bulletin (now defunct). I don't know who if anyone read them, and looking back on them now I find them, despite the "feeling" I put into them, somewhat "abstract," the product of thinking that hadn't had too much experience as yet either of Orthodox literature or Orthodox life. Still, for me, they served an important function in my understanding and expression of various Orthodox questions, and even in my Orthodox "development," and Vladika John "pushed" that.

Therefore, if you feel moved to write similar articles, by all means do so. You mention an important point: the great usefulness of citing the works of the Fathers. To this I would add: the great usefulness also of citing incidents from their lives, when appropriate. Especially in our days, clever "theologians" are able to quote the Fathers and twist them far enough to confuse the faithful. But what the Fathers did is often so clear and unequivocal that it can't be twisted. As an example" There is much talk now of the approaching "Eighth Ecumenical Council," how binding it will be on all Orthodox Christians as the ultimate authority in the Church, etc.—and then one remembers that the Orthodox already had such an "Eighth Ecumenical Council"—for the representatives of all the Patriarchates signed the decree of the Council of Florence. Nonetheless, because one bishop, St. Mark of Ephesus, stood up for the truth against the whole council, rejecting its decree (the Unia) because it contradicted Orthodox tradition—the whole Orthodox Church eventually likewise rejected it. Even so today the proponents of reform and unia will have many and subtle arguments, and we will oppose them not only with arguments and citations from the Fathers, but even more with the example of St. Mark of Ephesus.

If I have any suggestion for your future articles, then, it would simply be to keep in mind the lives of the saints. In this very article, in fact, there are at least two points that would be made more forceful by references to the lives of the authors of citations (one saint and one modern-day confessor). On p. 3, you quote St. John of Kronstadt on "love"—but he is not merely a great Orthodox saint of this century, he is a very incarnation of the love he talks about, and there is scarcely to be found a parallel in the lives of other saints to his absolute self-crucifying love and service to others, blessed by God in the manifestation of an abundance of miracles that can only be compared to those of St. Nicholas.

Again, or p. 2 where to quote I. M. Andreyev on Christianity as an "all-embracing new principle of life," this becomes yet more forceful when you know that this statement comes out of his experience of the horror of Soviet reality, and was born in prisons and catacombs and the awareness that was forced upon him there, that now one can't be a half-hearted Christian, but only entirely, or not at all; Christianity is either everything for one, or it simply will not stand the test of Soviet reality.

In this same line of thinking, by the way, you will probably find the enclosed little book of interest, a contemporary witness of Orthodoxy in the face of the same unbending Soviet reality. You can keep the book, as we were sent several.

Now that I've begun in this vein, I can think of other examples. On grace, for example, the Egyptian Father St. Paisius the Great failed to recognize his own disciple after he returned from a brief trip to Alexandria. It turned out that the disciple had met a heretic and had agreed with him that "perhaps" some Orthodox dogma was not true after all—and grace left him, and this was literally seen by his elder—so real is grace, and so carefully must it be kept.

I've said enough for a while. Give our regards to Susan and Ian. Tell Ian we have two baby deer with spots. Perhaps we will see you again before winter? Rumor has it the winter will be early and harsh, and it's true that our summer, except for a short period, was abnormally cool, and today is actually cold. We had three spectacular thunderstorms too.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

094.

Aug. 29/Sept. 11, 1971

Beheading of St. John the Baptist

Dear Brother in Christ, Dimitry,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray this finds you safely returned—although from what we hear not all your fellow-pilgrims left unscathed from Mt. Athos!

Alas, I've done it again! My letter has inspired you to take a decision—a leave of absence from the seminary. But after reading your new letter I very much doubt that that is a wise thing for you to do now. If you give up the seminary (and a leave of absence amounts to that), it should be only because it has become a spiritual dead end and because you have at least a promising alternative to it. But what's your alternative—Getting a job (if you can) and waiting for God to do something. Not much chance! You have to show an effort, some kind of "podvig," first. However discouraging you may find the Jordanville atmosphere, it is still a Church-saturated atmosphere and it gives you valuable Church learning. Whereas a job in the world, with no definite spiritual orientation or goal, is all too likely to be precisely a spiritual dead end for you.

Forgive me again for my frankness, but I sense that you are in great danger. You are floating in a cloud of indefiniteness, no definite goal in mind, waiting for something up happen; and

meanwhile feeling somewhat sorry for yourself and piling up some negative experiences and (probably) attitudes. For example: how have you taken your trip fiasco? Are you still thinking: that Nikita did this to me! Or are you thinking as you should: even though by worldly standards I "deserved" this trip, still, God, for my sins and my completely foul, complacent, and self-centered attitude toward serving Him, deprived me of seeing the holy places. Which of these is closest to your attitude?—that should be a key to your spiritual state.

Your letters give this impression: you're a great big spiritual baby who needs, first of all, a good spanking, and second of all some good hard work; and then you might be in a position to start thinking of your spiritual needs. If you are going to take any "advice" from me, I would give this advice: stick through this year of the seminary and do your best to catch up; and only then stop to think about what's next. Pray hard for guidance from God and from the God-pleasers—pray to Vladika John; but pray in the midst of some kind of labor to please God—the seminary is a good such labor— and not in a cloud of indefiniteness unaccompanied by hard labors, without a definite goal. IF YOU HAVE NO OTHER DEFINITE GOAL, THEN AT LEAST KEEP THE GOAL OF FINISHING THE SEMINARY, ONE YEAR AT A TIME, and God will surely send you guidance beyond that.

This is primary; other questions, such as frequent communion, will have their meaning and place only after you have sweated through more basic labors and attained a more definite idea of your goal and aims.

Nonetheless, to answer briefly your questions: About frequent communion, we discussed this recently with Fr. Neketas Palassis, and we found ourselves quite in mutual agreement on the question. Our present state "without sacraments" (but actually we do partake of the Mysteries about once a month or sometimes two) is temporary and has its place in our whole "plan," the first and absolutely essential step of which was to get free of the world and its ties, and not to do anything that will drag us back to it; and the context in which the priesthood has been offered to us so far has only promised to drag us back to the world we had escaped, and so we remain in our present state and await a more favorable sign. But that's a complicated story which can't be gone into by letter.

As for the restoration of Russia—we can only wait to see what happens, when it will be and what form it will take, and act accordingly. We feel God's guidance strongly up to this point, and pray he will not deprive us of it in future. May His holy will be done in us all!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We don't recall ever writing up the Munich podvizhnik!

095.

Aug. 31/Sept. 13, 1971

Placing of Sash of Most Holy Theotokos

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! To answer your requests immediately: the manuscript is going to Fr. Michael [Azkoul] in today's mail (but please send us a complete copy as soon as its out!) The 1968 copies are going to you likewise today. The stapler is Acme #1. Enclosed is the new OW, whose mailing has been delayed because we ran out of staples!

Concerning the whole Church situation which faces us, we had two interesting and indicative encounters this week. On Friday we [were] visited by Fr. Theodoritos, and what joy there was in meeting and praying with this true Athonite zealot. We were only confirmed in our judgment that, if the Greeks look to our Synod bishops for confirmation of their stand for true Orthodoxy, we in the Synod look to you zealot Greeks for inspiration in true and unbending Orthodoxy. Then, a few hours after Fr. Theodoritos left, we were visited by Hieromonk Theodore, newly moved to S. F. (surname Hoeins, not the one who was tonsured by Fr. Panteleimon)—and it turns out that he fully recognizes Athenagoras "until he preaches a heresy" (long since!), and is against the Old Calendarists and views the Athonite zealots as fanatics who will end in priestless sectarianism. I fear his views are all too close to the "organizational view" that prevails among many of our priests, and, one fears, even higher. This Sobor will doubtless reveal much concerning this. Please remember that we are with you Greek zealots in this, and keep us informed of crucial developments, decisions, etc. The day of "unconscious Orthodoxy" is past, and truly it is not enough for Russians to sit aloof and just wait for the restoration of Russia—which, when it comes, may take a surprising form and find most Russians off guard! We are more than ever concerned to preserve the independence of our monastery so that if—God forbid!—there should come a division in the Synod, we will be free to act according to conscience.

After you left us our weather turned abnormally cold, but now has turned hot again; but in general people are warning us of a cold winter. Our Orthodox friends in Redding have been overwhelming us with their benefactions, which include a gas refrigerator and a 1000 gallon water tank, for which we mush now devise a water collection system from rain and snow. But already we have running water on our front porch!

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

096.

Oct. 1/14, 1971

Protection of Most Holy Theotokos

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We read your two letters with great interest. Little did I suspect, when I casually mentioned Orthodox America in my letter, that it would evoke such a response! We have thought of such a periodical—actually a newspaper—as something to be realized only in an indefinite future, and rather along the lines of Fr. Neketas' Newsletter, only

greatly expanded. An American version of Orthodox Russia. But your idea is actually quite different, so it should have its own title and its own content and governing idea.

Which brings me to the point. There is no doubt that more Orthodox material in English is greatly needed, and there is definitely room for another Orthodox periodical in America. But before a single line is printed, the whole thing should be thoroughly thought—and probably also suffered! through. Vladimir has just written us of his concern that such a periodical might tend to duplicate the coverage of one of our existing Synod periodicals—i.e. Orthodox Word, Orthodox Life, and Fr. Neketas' publications. The fact that you are interested in serializing the "Shroud" article, when a similar article has already appeared in Orthodox Life, might tend to confirm this fear.

In our experience, the single most important thing for such a periodical is to have its own distinct "personality," its definite guiding idea together with the way this idea is expressed. This "personality" is seen not merely in the content, format, and editorial policy, but as well in the style, and the revelation of who is behind it (not anyone personally, but what kind of person: scholar? preacher? instructor? the voice of a "jurisdiction"? a convert speaking to and with other converts, etc.) and to whom it is directed (a scholarly audience? popular or semi-popular? converts? etc.). All this is not too easy to define, but it has to be at least felt if the periodical is in fact to have its own personality and not be merely a miscellaneous collection of materials.

Father Herman and I would be happy to be your "advisors" (in this sphere our two heads are definitely better than one!) in this, but that function is limited to general advice, plus any specific comments on content. The "creative" burden—specifically, the creation of a "personality," and that not as an artificial thing but as coming out of a definite desire to meet a definite need—will rest right on you and your collaborators.

But first of all: be warned. You are a convert, and a pretty new one at that. It is characteristic of converts to start out with big ideas, usually on an insufficient foundation, and most of their projects fall flat, leaving wounds behind them. I say this not to scare you, and certainly not to discourage you, but to encourage your sobriety! When convert schemes fail there are definite reasons. Sometimes it is trusting oneself too much and "knowing better" than anyone else; most often, perhaps, it is the lack of the down-to-earth dimension of practical wisdom and deep determination. A few years ago one convert wanted to build a boat, go to Alaska, and "open a monastery, orphanage, or what have you." One can almost guarantee that whatever he starts is not going to work out, because he himself does not reveal the specific determination to do one definite thing, and his schemes are not based on a specific need (not even his own) but rather an idle dreaming.

Having said this I'd like to encourage you to do some thinking on the "personality" of your proposed publication. Specifically you mention, besides the "Shroud," the departments of "Fathers" and "Orthodox Heritage." These are fine, but they do not yet give a personality or tone to the publication. In fact, this "personality" is so important that the very same article present in magazines of entirely different personality will be read and understood quite differently.

Father Herman and I discussed this matter at some length the other day, and we came up with something that may give you a "hint"; take it for what you find it to be worth. One thing that is largely lacking in our American Synodal publications is what might be called a sense of the "life" or "pulse" of the American mission. Perhaps this pulse is still faint, but it's the foundation of whatever will be in the future. Fr. Neketas keeps us informed of his parish's activities, but that's about all we hear. Are the rest of the American Orthodox, then, just isolated individuals in a Russian sea, or is there really something that ties us all together, which means: that we can help each other. A periodical could help to bring together, which means: that we can help each other. A periodical could help to bring together and mutually encourage our widely-separated brethren. If one looks, one finds quite a few who want the real Orthodoxy for which the Synod stands, as against the spinelessness of what passes for "American Orthodoxy" in general. There is Fr. George Lambros' parish in Buffalo, Fr. James Griffiths in NYC, Fr. Michael Azkoul s in St. Louis, the new parish in Tucson: and of course Fr. Neketas in Seattle and Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston (and its daughter convent there); and even our predominantly Russian monasteries at Jordanville and Novo-Diveyevo have their part in our true American Orthodoxy; not to mention Fr. Peter Carras and his spectacular Greek mission in Toronto (which has attracted 1000 families in less than two years!); and our many individual converts scattered throughout the land. By the way, Vladimir could write a very interesting report on his trip this last summer. In fact, if you want to know whom to consult, you should consult people just like yourself and put out a periodical by and for converts.

All of this is, conceivably, the raw material for a periodical; the use that would be made of it would be up to you. There could be good articles on various Orthodox topics by Dr. Johnstone, Fr. Michael Azkoul, and others; "reports" from parishes or missions; just plain "letters to the editor," if they were somehow revealing or significant; etc. etc. There are three of you now interested in this: you, Vladimir, and Dr. Johnstone; all American converts with families. We would hope to see coming out of this common situation something answering to the common needs of Orthodox Americans. In fact—to repeat myself again—"need" is probably the key word to the whole project. It should be undertaken not merely as a "good idea" or something perhaps usefiil—but only as and if it tries to meet a definite and even desperate need. How do you view this need, and what have you to offer?

Another question which is a whole field in itself: Orthodox material for children, which is badly needed. Whether and how that can be included in your project is, of course, another question.

All this I write not in the form of "suggestions," but rather to give you something to "react" to and to help make your own ideas more definite.

There are many "secondary" questions that are important too, and they should be thought through: practical questions of printing, format, cost, circulation, etc. We will be glad to discuss some of these with you when you come in two weeks (Oct. 23 is fine).

Concerning the title: Orthodox Spirit is already the title of a pan-Orthodox newspaper in Cleveland!

Reflect, consult, pray. Pray to Vladika John. There wouldn't be any Orthodox Word today without him.

Yes, it will be appropriate, when the project is definite, to get the blessing of Vladika Anthony, and you have the right to tell your readers so, as it is a part of your "personality."

Concerning the "Shroud": it is wise to take seriously (even when you may not agree!) Fr. Neketas' opinions, which generally reflect the views of Fr. Panteleimon and traditionalist Greeks in general. To this day we are not sure the Greeks are right about Zeytoon (they denounce it as a demonic apparition), but in deference to their strong views we will print nothing more about it, barring some spectacular development. Frankly, we don't know whether the "Shroud" falls into this category or not, as we have not studied it carefully, even though we have been disposed to accept it on the authority of Jordanville. But certainly Fr. Neketas' objections should be studied and his further opinion (after reading Sarah's manuscript) taken seriously. Neither of us read it yet, so we can't comment ourselves.

Many thanks for the offer to bring us anything. If there is anything specific we need, we'll write a few days before you come. We've already had two cold spells, and our warm weather of the last 2 weeks seems to be fading again today. We'd better get our stove established in the trapeza, or you'll suffer!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

097.

Nov. 1/14, 1971

Sts. Cosmas and Damian

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! Many thanks for your letters, and please forgive our usual long silence. As you notice, our OW is again late. Cold weather struck us already a month ago, and we were finally forced to finish our winter preparations; most likely we will have our hardest winter so far. Then two weeks ago I cut my finger badly in the linotype (carelessness) and had to have it stitched up. But God willing, the new issue will he out before Thanksgiving, and then we start on the calendar, which this year we will force upon our readers as the Sept.-Oct. issue, hoping to publish it regularly hereafter as a separate publication. We will see what the response is. It is slightly corrected from last year, and hopefully much more improved in future years.

Alexey Young was here several weeks ago, and we tried to give him as sober a view as possible about starting a new periodical; but he's still enthusiastic, so, God willing, the project will go on. We hear now that there is to be a new official Synod newspaper under Vladika Vitaly. May God prosper all there new shoots; but as for results, we will just have to wait and see. Sometimes a seemingly solid foundation just does not produce the expected results, and vice versa…. We only mentioned incidentally to Alexey an idea we have long had, for a newspaper to be called Orthodox America, somewhat modelled on Orthodox Russia, and viewed somewhat as an extension of your own Newsletter. In fact, we thought of you as the most likely to produce such

as thing. But it's been only a vague dream with us. Doubtless the future of genuine American Orthodoxy itself will govern the possibility of such a periodical. In the meantime, we printers have to be patient and "humble ourselves" before reality….

Strange… we thought we would be the winners in our proposed trade arrangement. By the way, could you send us 5 copies of Bp. Ignaty's Arena?

Sorry to hear about John Shaw's offensive letter. We met him last year at St. Herman's canonization, and then he came here for a few hours with a group of seminarians. He's a Jordanville graduate of this year, a convert and orphan (some kind of descendant of G. B. Shaw) who, as I understand, was raised by Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov (who has the mission to Old Believers, which has always seemed to us rather an academic thing) and made himself noticeable at Jordanville by his adherence to some Old Believer customs. Recently he wrote an article in Orth. Russia on a visitation to Bp. Peter in Astoria, and he may well have picked up some hostility to Fr. Panteleimon there. But most of all he probably has a bad case of what Russians call "self-opinion," or just plain conceit (of the convert-young graduate type), and it's probably incidental to him just how he proves that he's "more Orthodox" than you or anyone else. Doubtless this will pass, but how he will end up is another question. I've always found this type of petty bickering very sad, when the primary question of Orthodoxy itself is what is really at stake. Even some fundamental differences on minor points are not that important; but half the time the supposed differences are no more than temporary circumstances, as is the case with your new church building. Surely the few true Orthodox Christians of these last times should have more sympathy for each other, a disposition to believe the best possible and not the worst, and if necessary, to forgive the forgivable!

Some of the decrees of the recent Sobor of Bishops were encouraging, but some of the "undertones" worry us, if you know what I mean! But doubtless we will hear more of these and have something more solid to talk about in the future. From the first "milk" I drank in as an Orthodox Christian in the Synod, I was taught that we have two kinds (or perhaps "traditions") of bishops: on one side Vladikas John, Averky, Leonty, Nektary, Savva; on the other, those who now seem to have the governing positions. (Metr. Philaret would classify as an "independent," and as long as he is Metropolitan I see Vlad. John's influence as somehow present.) Not to say that anyone is a heretic or enemy of any kind; but nonetheless the two characteristic dispositions, rather difficult to define, do seem to exist. The one group of bishops has now just about died out, and from them we have inherited some things which, I fear, may make us somewhat "out of fashion" in the Synod in the future, about which we've already had some hints. But perhaps this is too cryptic, or in any case is more suitable for oral communication than written. (Next August, perhaps?)

We were saddened to hear that Fr. Theodoritos didn't accept ordination. But thereby is only emphasized the necessity in these dangerous times for all of us to make an extra podvig of sympathy and understanding for our fellow True Orthodox Christians.

We anxiously await your service to St. Nectarios in 1972. In the meantime, could you send us a copy before his Feast next week, of the Paraklesis Canon to him? All we have is the Vespers and whatever is in the French version.

Please pray for us, and forgive my idle talk.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. How is your progress on the "Convert's Manual"? Can you tell us some of your specific ideas for it?

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1972

098.

Jan. 25/Feb. 7, 1972

Dear Brother in Christ, Michael [Farnsworth?],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We read your letter with great interest and sympathy. Glory be to God that you are on fire with love for the narrow path the truly leads to salvation. May God grant you in His time to take on yourself the angelic habit which protects and separates us from the world—yes, even us poor monks of the autumn (or rather winter) of monasticism. If St. Makarios the Great could say: "I am not a monk, but I have seen monks," then what are we to say who dare to call ourselves monks and possess not one of the virtues of monks? And yet even we may dare to hope for mercy from God if we "love much," if we keep alive the flame that brings us to the Orthodox Church, where in monasticism can and should be the surest way to travel the narrow path to salvation. Whatever you do or wherever you go, dear brother in Christ, do not let this flame go out. But know that you cannot follow this path without taking the cross upon yourself, the "chain of suffering" which the Christian life is. And so be prepared for trials, troubles, sufferings, and everything you might expect or want the least. There is no other path of Christian, and least of all monastic, life. Be firm in these trials, knowing that with them you are on the right path, and without them you are on the path straight to hell. "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved."

As regards Jordanville (and the rest of us too!), you should know that St. Anthony the Great prophesied that in the last days monasticism would so decline that monks would not be distinguishable from laymen—and yet, because of their enduring of the sufferings of those times, their reward would be greater than that of the early desert monks.

You ask for our advice. First, do nothing quickly (in any case, we are still snowed in, and getting in and out is a problem). If you are in a place where it is possible to serve God and to work on yourself (you aren't required to eat so much are you?—you'll find we feed you too much too!), then get the maximum benefit from it, with patience and without judging anyone else. Make any

move only after due consideration, and bring with you to any new place what you have acquired in the old place through patient enduring and learning.

Finally: we ourselves came to this place to serve God and to save our souls, not with the intention of acquiring novices. If anyone wants to be a novice with us, it is his choice—we will not persuade him. If, after sufficient reflection, prayer, and advice from whomever you can get sound advice, you choose to come here, we will welcome you to w[armly?] and do the utmost to give you whatever we can give you. But you cannot come here to do what you please, or to reach for spiritual heights on your own before you've put the foundation under your feet. We will demand of you obedience, trust, and openness.

Please forgive me if this sounds abrupt. I write praying God that I may say something of use for you. Whatever you do, we would hope to hear from you. And please pray for the worthless monks Herman and Seraphim.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

099.

March 5/18, 1972

Martyr Conon (a wonderful life!)

Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

Rejoice in the Lord! We sympathize with you in your trials and troubles, which however are doubtless for your good. Use them wisely!

It's good news that there was 760 pounds of lead. Enclosed is $20 more for payment—but wait a day or two to cash it, as the money won't be in the bank until Tues. or Wed. Now I'll be able to start setting the calendar early, so it won't be too great a burden all at once. But who's going to buy it if it's not an issue of the OW? We have no idea how many to print. In a few years it will very likely support us, but right now it's all still uncertain.

If Alexey wants a review of Nicholas and Alexandra, by all means write him one. Our hesitance is based only on our monastic scruples, but for most Orthodox laymen in America movies are a part of their life, and if "Orthodoxy" intrudes into this sphere, by all means they should be told what's what. Only don't be all grim and negative—i.e., the film itself may be all grim and negative and should properly be lambasted; but let the readers know about the bright phenomenon which the film didn't get. That they are saints!

Our weather is bright and warm, and green leaves are visible (the oaks are waiting a while). The frightful winter never came, but it looks like we may have a frightful summer instead. But that's in God's hands. We've been doing a little spring cleaning, and the kitchen begins almost to look like a kitchen.

I guess we'll see you when we see you. Fr. Spyridon may be coming on Palm Sunday-Lazarus Saturday with Dmitri Murzo, but we haven't heard anything certain. We pray he does.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

As for "rehabilitating the dead," anything is possible under Communism! Vladika Laurus writes that, even apart from his recent accident, Archim. Constantine has been failing lately, and the crucial time is at hand—who's to take his place? Only by a miracle will it be someone better, and obviously a certain "Eminence" would like to take over! Our own independence becomes all the more important. Nata icon was from Boston.

100.

Mar. 21/Apr. 3, 1972

Passion Monday

Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

Glory be to God for all things! We had Liturgy yesterday, but a joyful feast nonetheless, with 3 pilgrims (Alexey and family). We also received, on Saturday, a very moving letter from Vladika Anthony, which reveals a loving heart. After it something of the empty pit in the bottom of the stomach seems to have been removed. Nonetheless we thank God that in His Providence the events of the past year and a half have cut us off, as it were, from the ecclesiastical world and left us to make it on our own in the wilderness; this is only for our good and perhaps even the good of others.

Unless we hear something before then to change our plans, we will most likely go to Sacramento early Thursday in order to receive Holy Communion (probably in the smaller church), and return here before dark, creating as small a ripple as possible on the church surface. God willing, we will meet Pascha externally (at least) like the desert-dwellers, even though internally still our old selves.

But if one of our "problems" seems to be looking better, new troubles have not been slow in peeking their heads over the horizon. Fr. G. Grabbe writes that one does not dare call anyone "Blessed" before the Church gives us the right to do so, and he cites the case of St. John of Kronstadt. But for all his correctness, G. G. is wrong!—the Church does not call anyone blessed by fiat—that's R. Cath. "beatification" (as on back cover of latest Orth Life!). St. John of Kr. still is not called blessed, because he doesn't fit into that category. Fools for Christ are called blessed even during their lifetimes: Bl. Xenia, Bl. Theophilus, etc. etc. Of course, there are those who wouldn't like to call Vlad. John a fool for Christ, and in fact (that's the key!) would rather forget him entirely. But we stand and fall with his "foolishness," which surely one day will be seen to be wiser than the wisdom of many. But we are being watched….

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.S. Whenever you come, don't forget another box of lead.

101.

Apr. 13/26,1972

St. Artemon, Martyr

Dear Brother in Christ, Laurence,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Enclosed is absolutely the first copy of the new issue, slightly delayed due to uckywenie (various).

Enclosed also is a letter from a prospective catechumen, to whom (today) we have given your name and tel. number. Pray to your guardian angel and lead him to the true Church. (We told him Metropolia isn't in communion with Synod.) Don't forget: he's a living soul, and probably quite fragile!

Glory be to God, we are surviving, although amid various adventures and trials. Monday the truck broke down (fuel pump) and is now in Cottonwood, whither it went at AAA expense. Hopefully I'll get a ride somehow this morning to go pick it up.

But how close is God! —As I was sitting in the truck waiting for the tow truck, I read the days mail—in which there were the fantastic catacomb documents which are mentioned on p. 3 of this issue, the likes of which have not been seen since 1927-29. The day after receiving them, we printed that page—as if we had been waiting for them!

[in Russian]

Will try to get the prokeimena texts out to you on Saturday.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ

Sinful monk Seraphim

P.S. Any chance for more lead soon?

102.

April 18/May 1, 1972

St. John of Decapolis

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! It was good to hear from you again, even if some of the news is bad. But it is all our common sorrow, and only emphasizes how careful we must walk these days, and how close the small flock of Christ must be bound together in mutual love and concern.

My how the Metropolia must be hurting to come out with such an irrational attack! One almost feels sorry for them—the Greeks don't recognize them, their patron Moscow is being discredited everywhere, and the Synod kidnaps her own people by "fanaticism." Nonetheless, one cannot forgive them for one thing: they call themselves Orthodox; and so we have to keep speaking the truth! And my, Father George is a real fighter, isn't he! That's refreshing, even though we wouldn't use just the same approach ourselves—but they won't forgive him for it!

We haven't heard about Father Lev's and Vassily's troubles. But frankly, we've been rather concerned about them for some time, seeing in some of their actions and letters many of the symptoms of an all-too-often fatal convert's disease: overly-critical, "know-better" attitude, somewhat flippant tone, frequent running about, hypersensitivity, etc. When Father Lev was ordained, our concern only increased, because if these symptoms are accurate then ordination might be just the fatal step from which it's impossible to turn back and be just an "ordinary Christian" again. But all these speculations don't help the situation; we can only pray for them and ask God's mercy for us all. Any more news of them?

The April Logos brings yet a stronger dose of Pentecostalism, and some of their defenses against the arguments you and others have been raising; which helps us strengthen our own article. Fr. Eusebius' "charismatic" experience is not nearly as spectacular as many others', and in fact seems to belong more to the category of Protestant-revival type emotional release than to some of the darker aspects of the "charismatic" movement. Frankly, I doubt that he's had the full "Baptism in the spirit," because in "charismatic" literature it's unheard of for someone who wants "tongues" not to get it if they're really "baptized." Our article will be quite strong, as it becomes increasingly evident that the movement could become widespread—the necessary conditions are all present in the "American" jurisdictions. And who is the Synod priest Emmert mentions as having "advised" him? We fear it sounds like Fr. James Griffiths, about whom we've been receiving alarming indications of late. Both Emmert and Monios, by the way, have recently become subscribers to Orth. Word.

We received a good letter recently from Fr. Michael Dudas in Florida (Metropolia), who gets your Witness (and agrees "90 per cent" with it), and sees through Eusebius very well.

The True Vine·. We were waiting for your comments before giving ours, but we'll go ahead anyway! Laurence Campbell sent us a copy of his letter to Vladika Vitaly—it displays of course his usual lack of tact! Also it pays perhaps undue attention to some small points which in all charity could be overlooked. However—it's doubtless very disrespectful of us!—we find its bluntness rather refreshing and perhaps even useful for the common task, entering as it does a context where the expected response is "Yes, yes, very good," etc. (while in the meantime one says what one really thinks behind the scenes where the "official" people don't hear). And frankly, considering the material which Vlad. Vitaly had to work with, the first issue really is a disgrace. Knowing Vlad. Vitaly and his Russian publications (the article on "Ecumenism" is a

rather notable exception) we expected something like this; and in fact I told Fr. Herman sometime before the first issue appeared: "if he puts a Dore on the cover, it's the last straw! That will crush the Greeks and converts!" Mercifully, he saved his Dore for an inside page! We will make three frank comments:

(1) The editor does not have the feeling for what's going on: what inspires converts, iconographic taste, the approach to the whole subject of mission. The periodical is not conceived as a missionary publication; it is an immigrant jurisdictional publication, Victorian in taste, the contents of which are entirely incidental and do not point up a single theme or point of view. Its power to inspire is zero.

(2) The "Editorial Staff" cannot possibly be responsible for this! We heard Fr. Panteleimon was to be in charge of art—if so, he should be fired immediately! It would seem that whatever advice the "editorial staff" gave was not listened to very seriously—on the principle, most likely, that the "bishop knows best." Do you know how Vlad. Vitaly referred to The True Vine in his Diocesan bulletin in Russian?—"under the editorship of Archbp. Vitaly with the cooperation of the most outstanding theologians of true Orthodoxy." This all sounds to us suspiciously as though advantage is being taken of the "editorial staff" in order to put across something they don't entirely sympathize with! They don't claim to be "outstanding theologians" at all; they are zealots of Orthodoxy—but "theologians" sounds more important and official!

Saturday

St. George the Great Martyr

(What a wonderful text to his service—full of Pascha and spring! But too difficult to translate because of all the variations—until we finally have our English Paschal Triodion. So much for us all to do!)

Since beginning this we've received your note, which seems to confirm the first two points above. But it's the next point that's most disturbing to us.

(3) We've known for years that Vlad. Vitaly does not approve of the "Jordanville ideology," that (at least 10 years ago when Fr. Herman visited him) he purposely does not even receive Orthodox Russia, that at the Synod's 50th anniversary celebrations he spoke of the need not only for an English publication but also for a Russian one "because there is no satisfactory Orthodox publication in Russian" (approximate quotation). (We also have our complaints about Orth Russia—but nonetheless it's fully Orthodox, has its definite function in our common Orthodox task, and now that Fr. Constantine is failing in health we dread to think of any conceivable alternative to it; many people are "tired of Antichrist"—but the subject is precisely becoming most relevant right now!) We know also that despite his many words about the need for English publications, Vlad. Vitaly has never even mentioned in his Russian publications or in his small correspondence with us (except to grant us permission to translate and print his article) either Orthodox Life or Orth Word—the reason in our case being apparently, as he once told a friend of ours, that we have "gone overboard" on the subject of Archbishop John, with whom his

differences were apparently not merely personal, but seem to involve a whole different orientation to Orthodox life and mission.

And now in The True Vine we find that no other Synodal publication is mentioned (except for the Witness, which is not however identified). Further, the lengths he goes to avoid using the word "Jordanville" are truly astonishing: he lifts a whole article from OL without a word as to source; he reprints "Feofil" and barely manages to say "Holy Trinity Monastery" (but not "Jordanville"); he "steals" the whole translation, word for word (and it is still in print!) of "St. Mary of Egypt" from Jordanville (and he sets it up again himself, while one of his priests tells us that his English-language publications have cost him a great deal of effort), and goes out of his way to say that he "encountered it in the English language"!!! Likewise the "New Martyrs" gives no credit to Jordanville.

All this is quite distressing to us, because it shows a total and evidently deliberate setting aside of the "common task" which the rest of us have been working and sweating over for some years now. It is almost as if, now that the "official" publication has come, all the rest of us "unofficial" laborers in the vineyard can quietly retire, or perhaps pay our dues to the central organization!

Well, we don't want to upset you, which is also why before The True Vine came out we never mentioned to you or others our fears about VI. V. We have always placed the common missionary and Orthodox cause for which were all working above every kind of personal difference or suspicion, and will continue to do so. But it is essential for all of us for whom this cause is not merely an "official" assignment, but our very life's blood, to be aware of certain tendencies and dangers. Judging from the first issue we personally doubt that The True Vine will ever amount to much, and very , likely it will more or less die out by the third or fourth (increasingly tardy) issue—unless a real "official" campaign is made for it and it becomes fully subsidized. In any case, the "unofficial" labors of the rest of us become all the more important!

About this whole thing there are other points we would like to mention, but we will save them until we see you personally. The ground is a little dangerous!

Concerning 2nd Sorrowful Epistle: By all means keep the St. Nectarios masthead on, and we won't need over 100 copies at most. We'll give your address, but some just might find it easier to order from us.

We haven't seen the reviews of The True Vine by Dr. Johnstone or Fr. Photios. Where are they?

Good for our confessor Polycarp! But what a sad situation it reveals! We dread to think of how typical it might be. Thank God for you Greeks, who are forcing some of our Russians to take steps they otherwise might not have thought of for some time. (But don't tell that to Basil—rather Vassillyy!)—who when you mentioned something like that to him before almost accused us of selling out to the Greeks!)

We will be very happy to see you and your parishioners in June. We will be here all the time, God willing, except on July 2.

Monday we start setting up our "charismatic" article—our biggest bombshell to date, and it really contains our whole missionary confession of faith. Please pray for us that we can see it through to completion, and that it will open some eyes to the truth!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We'll write the Governor— "obedience"! What texts did you send him?

103.

Sunday of All Saints of Russia

All Saints of Mt. Athos, 1972

[June 3/16, 1972]

Dear Father Neketas.

Evlogeite!

Yesterday's mail brought the second issue of The True Vine and a letter from Alexey Young telling of your proposal to print Nikodemos as a supplement to your Newsletter. (Alexey says were supposed to get a copy of your letter—?) Somehow in our minds these two events seem to be related; but at any rate we'd like to make a few comments.

The new True Vine is technically improved over the first, from the printing point of view very impressive, and of course almost all of the articles are good, even irreproachable. To be sure, the "ecology" article, and especially the illustration, give a worldly tone that is not pleasant, and Vladika Vitaly seems to make a point of insisting on Dore (and the engraving seems to have been ordered especially for The True Vine, as it's too large to have been printed in his Russian magazine), and in this he reveals much more about himself than one could infer from the articles! But that's perhaps not a major point. Again, one does not sense that anyone on the editorial staff, except for Dr. Johnstone, had anything to do with this issue.

More importantly, the deliberate blackout on Jordanville continues (at least two articles are reprints from Jordanville without acknowledgement, although the word "Jordanville" does appear in one or two articles). But still more importantly, one wonders: what place is this periodical supposed to have among the already existing Synod English publications? It seems not to be trying to find its "place" among the others, but rather to be encroaching on the others, and especially on your publications. Again the thought occurs to us: is The True Vine trying to put the rest of us out of business? We have a definite feeling that something is going on, some "plan" we don't know about, and it makes us uneasy. We will welcome The True Vine as long as it has a definite function in the "common task" of all of us. It would certainly not harm your work, for example, if you could know for sure that when you comment on something like Solzhenitsyn's letter in your Newsletter, you could refer readers to the full text which would appear in the next True Vine. But we doubt very much that such cooperation will ever exist. A little duplication among our periodicals is not harmful (even so, we ourselves have needlessly duplicated your

work once or twice through miscalculation),—but a systematic process of duplication (amounting to some 3/4 if the new issue of The True Vine) raises some fundamental questions. Our Synodal publications are too few and limited to require a "readers digest" of them. (By the way, the Reader's Digest is Vladika Vitaly's secret ideal—when you come we'll show you his early Russian publications which are a direct copy of it.)

Hopefully, we can discuss all this when, God willing (we always say this too!), you visit us next month. In the meantime, we fear that you may be in a discouraged and uncertain state. Specifically we don't know what you might be thinking—whether to revise or rethink the Newsletter or whatever. But please believe us: your continued existence as an independent voice within the Church Abroad is extremely important, and perhaps much more important than you may realize. It may be that some will try to persuade you that your Newsletter has already "served it function" and can be absorbed into The True Vine. But I think we do not exaggerate in telling you that it probably has not even begun to serve its main function.

I will be more specific—all of this is strictly between us, you and Fr. Panteleimon. We can say frankly that we do not trust Vladika Vitaly to give the "one thing needful." So far his basic attitudes as revealed in English are "correct"—but there are certain things in which he has not yet revealed himself (which are evident in his Russian publications) But first of all there is lacking in his "correctness" a certain spark, a certain indefinable Orthodox "fragrance" which may be, when the time comes, the only thing that will enable us to discern and cling to Orthodoxy. It is the "spark," and not correctness, which draws the converts, and when we sense its absence in Vlad. Vit. we become uneasy. ("Sergianism" also seems to be bound up with the loss of this spark.)

Second, more tangibly, there is in the Synod a "dogmatic" issue which is potentially not only explosive, but absolutely catastrophic. We would rather not even hint at what it is until we can explain it more fully from the materials we have and from the opinion of bishops we know. We have wanted for some time to write Fr. Panteleimon a long explanation of it, but that will take some time and concentration. We will tell you about it when you come. For now the important thing is: Vladika Vitaly is on the wrong side of this issue, a side that has not been accepted by the best Synod theologians living and dead; and if, as seems quite possible, the Synod s enemies grab hold of this issue, and Vlad. Vit. is called on to defend the Synod—his "defense" (if he follows what he has printed in Russian) will be disastrous for the Synod.

This is only one "small" issue about which we know something, and which convinces us that in the perilous days ahead there must be not only an "official" Synod press, but also an "independent" Synod press.

Please forgive us for being so cryptic and alarming, but I think you well realize that not everything in the Synod is the same quality of gold, and for our own sake and the sake of those who trust and listen to us we must find out and cling to only the best quality. All of us who have the "one thing needful" at heart should become even closer together in the dangerous days ahead. Right now there are indications that Jordanville (again) is in danger. Probably you have heard the tragedy there last month when one seminarian stabbed another to death (both on marijuana). This

has caused a great scandal, police investigations, etc.—so much so that the last issue of Orthodox Russia brings the whole thing out in print, apparently in an effort to defend the monastery's reputation. Our Vladika Anthony (who basically is a very good man, but is subject to "political" pressures) was sent to investigate, and when he went to the Synod Vladika Vitaly launched into such a violent attack against Vladika Averky (who was absent) that the cell-attendant of Vladika Laurus (through whom we heard about it) was absolutely sick about it. Fortunately our Vladika Anthony came to Vlad. Averky's defense. It's well known that for years Vlad. Vit. has wanted to move the seminary away from Jordanville to Mahopac (where presumably he would be in charge), but he's never been able to make it sound practical.

Alexey tells us that after much prayer he declined your offer, based partly on advice we had given him some months ago concerning the necessity to remain "independent" in case he should be offered a "Nikodemos page" in The True Vine (which however won't likely happen, and Vladika Vitaly does not like small unofficial projects). As a general principle we still think you both have more to gain by remaining independent. But of course we don't know the details of the present case, and there are certainly conditions which make such "mergers" sometimes wise also.

If you are already discouraged, I hope this all doesn't add to your discouragement! Our own attitude is that all this should not discourage us but make us sober and ready for battle. In the end, the one question that matters is the purity of Orthodoxy.

Please pray for us, and also especially for Vladika Averky and Vladika Nektary.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

104.

June 5/18, 1972

St. Abba Dorotheus

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that Susan has returned safely and that this finds you well and in the grace of our Saviour. I will start right out with our comments on the material for Nikodemos No. 4.

1. Editorial: By now you should have received our "charismatic" issue, where in part 6 we bring up some of the signs of the end of the world, emphasizing the great deception which will then occur. From further reading in Pentecostal "prophecies," I would say that this deception may be even worse than we imagine, and that there will be "miracles" that will cause most "Christians" to believe that Antichrist actually is coming from the sky, together with the sign of the Cross—in a word, that his imitation of Christ will be almost "perfect." Therefore, this whole question is one about which we should be extremely careful.

Your editorial on the whole is good, but one thing bothers us about it: the quote from C. S. Lewis. In itself there is nothing wrong with quoting a heterodox writer if it makes a point which

such a writer is competent to make. But from the language of this quote it doesn't seem entirely clear whether he's referring to the coming of Christ, or actually to the coming of Antichrist. "Land in force, invade": this sounds a little like the "Messiah" of Herbert J. Armstrong (Plain Truth) and others, who rules the world with a "rod of iron" from Jerusalem. "The play is over"—this, even as an image, is anathema—Orthodox Fathers such as St. John of Kronstadt have spoken of drama as the opposite and parody of the Liturgy and the whole Christian world-view. All images taken from the stage: "drama," "role," "scene," etc., should be avoided in a church context. "Melting away like a dream"— even if this is not meant literally, it could tempt some to be reminded of the Hindu cosmology. Of course, his point is right—that the end is something absolutely spectacular; but the images are taken from the wrong catalog, so to speak, and it's better to leave him out of it entirely.

Beyond this, while you are on the subject of "watchfulness," there seems to be one emphasis you are missing. In the middle of the apocalyptic chapter of Matthew (24:32; also Mark 13:28), the Saviour takes a parable from the fig tree and says: "Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that it is nigh." In other words, we must "watch" for the signs of the times so we will not be deceived. Therefore it is not precisely true that "The King of Glory may arrive at any moment"—it is only those who have not discerned the signs of the times who will be totally taken by surprise; but watchful Christians will know ahead of time "that it is nigh," having recognized the signs and seen through the deception of Antichrist, with whose coming the end is but a few years away—the exact day is not known until it comes, but its approach becomes ever more obvious, just in the way we see the fig tree leafing out.

The rest of the article is good; we only hope these comments haven't thrown a wrench into the whole conception!

2. St. Symeon: fine, and the point of presenting the Fathers should sink more deeply in with each installment.

3. The Righteous Eucharistus and Mary: Superb, and we are very happy to see the beginning of a fruitful collaboration with Mrs. Vagin.

4. The letter from Ron Pryzbylski and your response are an illustration of the point of the "Righteous Eucharistus," and perhaps "say" more than anything you've printed so far. This is where the whole mission of Nikodemos becomes evident. We rejoice to see the seed of genuine Orthodoxy taking root and bearing sprouts, opening up a "dimension" of Orthodox life that has not been too much seen yet in America: lay Orthodoxy that is not "worldly," that searches for deeper roots and feels that it cannot "fit it" with the world; that is not satisfied to be like everyone else only with an "Orthodox point of view" on everything; that looks to the Fathers for answers, not on academic questions or theology, but on how to live. There is a glimpse here of an Orthodoxy not merely "added to" the American way of life and then apologized for and made understandable to non-Orthodox, "fitting in" as a fourth major faith—but something rather that transforms life, makes Orthodox people something of a scandal to the world, that grows up on its own principles quite apart from the world around it, and yet that is quite sound and normal in itself. Your reply and citations from the Fathers are very much to the point. If you can keep up

the tone of this exchange (and evoke other people like that to write)—you've justified your existence!

5. Letters: fine.

6. "In this dark time": good, and timely.

The whole issue looks good, and the only changes we would recommend would be in the first article, in the interests of greater precision.

————-

We haven't heard anything yet from Fr. Neketas about his proposal to you, and we don't quite know what he had in mind. Of course, there are sometimes special conditions which would make such an amalgamation logical and fruitful; but in the absence of such condition we would still think that you are both better off working independently. You both have your own distinct approach and point of view, which, while they are mutually complementary, are still probably better nourished "autonomously."

In the new True Vine we notice that Archbishop Amvrossy's Statement is printed for the fourth time! It looks about time that we retreated from this realm about completely and stuck to those things that aren't being taken care of quite adequately elsewhere!

Our summer season is beginning, and just two days ago our "baby" deer gave birth to twin fawns, apparently right in front of our church! They were under 12 hours old when we first saw them, but already running (and stumbling) around. To our surpirse, we note that "Baby" has no nest or anything or the sort, but just moves the fawns about from place to place, letting them sleep wherever they fall, and then taking up her station some distance away. This is the third day, and they haven't departed yet from the monastery area—which shows we are "trusted." We look around once in a while, and once we found one fawn curled up under our "St. Gerasim tree" with an icon looking over her. A very touching sight.

Please pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

105.

June 12/25, 1972

Dear Fr. Neketas,

Evlogeite! Thank you for the Xerox of the letter of the man in Texas—we are sending him a few things. We are always grateful for your Xeroxes, even if we may not always mention them.

Please forgive us, but here are some more observations on a sad trend!

We visited San Francisco on Friday (June 10/23) to attend Liturgy in Vladika John's Sepulchre; because June 19/July 2 falls on Sunday this year, Vladika Anthony decided to have the one Liturgy that he allows each year on Vladika John's namesday instead. This is a little strange, as once before when July 2 fell on Sunday there was a Liturgy—without a panikhida following, since it was Sunday, but nonetheless there was a Liturgy to mark the anniversary. Rumor has it, and it's quite plausible, that Vlad. Anthony was acting on advice of the cathedral clergy, who have been opposed to veneration of Vladika John from the first, and used the excuse of its being Sunday to obliterate the "competition" this year.

Being ourselves somewhat upset in general over the sad direction in which Russian Orthodoxy Abroad seems to be going, this seemingly small transference of the day of Vladika Johns veneration led us into further reflections. It is now 6 years since Vladika Johns repose. The spark of Orthodoxy in the Russian diaspora has continued to decline in those years—and yet here is a God-given fuel to ignite and spread the spark! We thought: why such efforts to limit veneration of an obvious wonderworker and saint for our times? Why not more than one Liturgy a year in his Sepulchre (as there was before Vladika Anthony came, when Vlad. Nektary was temporary ruling bishop)? Why are not regular pilgrimages arranged?

Well, of course there are some definite reasons why not, and these were confirmed for us by our visit to Vlad. Anthony after the Liturgy. He spent most of the time pointing out 3 or 4 places in our Russian Life of Vladika John which people had complained about. Well, it's true that these points could have been expressed or presented better; but in back of these somewhat technical points, we sensed that—just as you mentioned when speaking to Vlad. Vitaly—that we weren't speaking the same language, that Vlad. Anthony was somehow just pushing aside the main point about Vlad. John. He kept saying: the whole thing is too fresh, too controversial; we always wait at least 50 years before talking about sanctity (by which time, of course, our Russians will have forgotten) etc. At this Fr. Herman finally had to say: But Vladika John is a saint, a wonderworker! Vladika Anthony's reply: Well, you and I can talk like this among ourselves, but not in public! We left feeling that our ruling hierarch had given us the advice (although he hadn't expressed it in so many words): Your devotion and love are commendable, but don't be so enthusiastic, not so much zeal, don't make Vlad. John such a hero, let his small group of venerators keep it pretty much to themselves.

What to say? We don't judge Vlad. Anthony. Obviously he is in an unenviable position and subject to many pressures and responsible for keeping peace among a difficult flock; and we can think of a bishop or two who probably wouldn't have allowed a Liturgy ever to be served in the Sepulchre. But this is the path to the dying out of Orthodoxy, making it something "non-controversial" and not at all attractive to the younger generation. It's precisely the Orthodox "heroism" of someone like Vladika John that can inflame the youth with fervor for Orthodoxy; but in San Francisco it's obvious that the veneration of Vladika John is going to be allowed to die out if possible.

We left completely discouraged about the possibility of presenting the "Orthodox Word" to Russians. It just happens that a number of the needful topics today are "controversial," but are we therefore supposed to sit back and let the kill-spirits triumph and dampen everyone's spirits?

We dread to think of where we would be now if The Orthodox Word had been appearing in Russian all these years—in fact, there aren't many bishops besides Vladika John who would have encouraged us. In our early issues when we began to get complaints about being so outspoken about Athenagoras, about comparing the Pope to Antichrist, etc., we went to Vladika John in some doubt—perhaps we really shouldn't be so outspoken? But glory be to God, Vladika John fully supported us and blessed us to continue in the same spirit.

June 18/July 1, 1972

Martyr Leontius

The new Logos arrived, revealing the latest stage of Fr. Eusebius' pitiful march into sectarianism. Hopefully he is becoming so absurd that only a few will follow him so far; but who knows?

The same issue has Fr. Michael Azkoul's actual attack on Fr. George Lewis. Are we out of step, or do we correctly diagnose a completely wrong attitude there? One may question the effectiveness of some of Fr. George's observations, because those who are not already sympathetic to what he's saying will try to dismiss it as being in the nature of a "personal attack." But there's no hint of innuendo or slander—everything he says is true and symptomatic. Certainly it is no secret that Metropolia bishops eat meat (we used to know a cook at St. Tikhon's, who prepared meat even—to our surprise—for Shakhovskoy) and that no one expects them not to; and this really reveals their attitude toward podvig and church tradition. But unfortunately the Metropolia mentality is such that if they found even one of our monks eating meat it would offset their whole Sobor of Bishops and justify their calling us "pharisees" for bringing up the issue.

Fr. Michael seems to be writing from a point of view "above" the whole battle (and indeed, writing for a Protestant charismatic journal). No one in his right mind, surely, wants "peace" with the Metropolia now—unless, of course, there were a miracle and the Metropolia would confess and repent of its autocephaly, modernism, laxness, and everything else. And from the Synod side the controversy has been on a high level. Official statements have been very restrained and if anything understated; and unofficial statements such as Fr. George's and yours have correctly grasped the main points and zealously pursued them. This is not a "jurisdictional" dispute; it is a case of galloping, apostasy vs. preserving oneself from it and awakening others to it. The soundest Synod opinion has always said: thank God the Metropolia has left, the unsound member has been cut off and will thus not affect the rest of us. We are simply baffled and cannot understand with what Fr. Michael wants to make "peace"? This doesn't seem to be the "fighting" Orthodoxy we need today.

But even high circles are indifferent to the "fighting" Orthodoxy that we want. It sometimes occurs to us that we are really all "fools" who are doing the fighting; hopelessly outnumbered, we march into battle with the full expectation of being cut down—if not from in front, then from behind, which is worse. But glory be to God, let us fight while it is day and we have the chance; truly it is not for an earthly kingdom that we are fighting, and if we have to stop for "politics" we are not going to do much fighting. We are very much inspired by the new "Catacomb"

documents which we will start setting up next week—which give probably the best insight yet into true Orthodox life in the USSR, with sharp observations on the use of "obedience" and "humility" for political ends. These weapons are used not only in the USSR!

We are being visited this weekend by Vladika Derugin, a young zealot of Orthodoxy (who is responsible for the note in the Talantov articles about opinion in Russia about the autocephaly—we gave somehow a misleading impression that he is from the Metropolia, but he is not, even though most of his family is and he's even related to Shahovskoy). He's written a good reply to Shahovskoy's underhanded article on Solzhenitsyn's Lenten Letter, where Shahovskoy by flattering it attempts to neutralize. Hopefully this letter will appear in some Russian newspapers. Unfortunately almost all the Russian newspapers are rotten. The best one is the weekly Nasha Strana in Argentina, which is the only one to print the Talantov manuscripts which we sent in Russian to several newspapers. Its monarchist, but on a rather high ideological level, and the only newspaper that dares to be openly for the Church Abroad.

We look forward to your visit, and will welcome whoever comes with you! (Melchisedek [Russell] mentioned he also might want to come then.) We have a couple more cots this year and can put up whoever comes, somehow. We have twin fawns and hot weather right now.

Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

106.

June 13/26,1972

Martyr Aquilina

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel,

Many thanks for your letter and the Xerox of St. Nil. The Christian "magic" booklet is also interesting and typical of the whole tone of this kind of "Christianity," which I think differs from the charismatic movement only quantitively, not qualitatively. Many of the "signs of the end" which he and others give are not really very convincing—for example, the earthquakes, famines, signs in the sky, etc., will surely be much more spectacular than they've been up until now. It would seem that we are now still in a "preparatory" time—i.e., a time when for the first time many of the signs of the end become conceivable and possible, but have not yet been fully revealed. And of course, these people miss one of the biggest signs of all: themselves and their apostasy, which also leads them to completely misinterpret Antichrist, seeing him as a dictator with magical powers rather than a true spiritual tempter who could deceive even the elect.

The editor of The Celtic Cross visited us on Memorial Day weekend (for the second time and we tried to give him what advice we could. Fr. Neketas also advises him. Melchisedek is a zealous young (23 years old) convert, received by Fr. Neketas several years ago from the Latins. He's married with a child (Adam Melchisedekovitch!) and seems aware of many of the problems in

such a project. Of course, without Vladika John such a project wouldn't really have been possible, or would have ended up being just another fancy of some crazy convert. But at least now the principle of Western pre-schism saints is accepted by the Synod, one list of them exists as a beginning, and two seemingly solid mission Churches (Dutch and French) continue to grow, so the whole thing is not academic. Of course, there are many possible pitfalls ahead. We hear that the St. George Information Service is compiling some kind of list of English saints—but alas, they're doubtful of St. Augustine of Canterbury (apparently because he came from Rome), and they reject St. Cuthbert of Lindesfarne because he was a "turncoat and a traitor to the Celtic cause"! If ever there was a trap for converts, it's the "Celtic cause," which seems perilously close to a kind of Old Believerism (although I don't think it ever caused a schism). In the central issue (the date of Pascha) Rome was on the Orthodox side, besides which the whole dispute never involved any dogmatic or really substantial issue. Also, the St. Seraphim Brotherhood (or at least Father Mark [Wakingham], who perhaps is the only brother left?!) has proclaimed the Sunday after All Saints the "Sunday of All Saints of Britain"—a good idea, but it would seem to be quite premature, especially if one doesn't know which saints are to be included! Hopefully The Celtic Cross will not be leaping on to these bandwagons.

As regards the "millennium," unfortunately Vladika Averky does not give specific references in the Fathers. Perhaps some of these can be found in the indexes to English editions of some of these Fathers; besides the ones mentioned in our footnote, Vladika Averky mentions as anti-chiliasts Dionysius of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea (Church History), Epiphanius, Jerome. One definite reference is the Second Ecumenical Council, which specifically condemned the chiliast Apolonarius and introduced into the Creed the phrase "and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" specifically to combat the idea of the millennium. Also, Blessed Augustine has a good account of the Orthodox view in the City of God, Book XX, 7-9 (Modern Library edition, pp. 718-728). The Protestant view, which is based upon a literal, "common sense" reading of the Apocalypse involves one in so much confusion that it becomes ridiculous: there is not one Last Judgment, but two: one for believers, and the "White Throne Judgment" exclusively for unbelievers; the devil is let loose not once but twice (first the apostasy and Antichrist come, then the millennium, which is a strange half-way state where death still exists and everything becomes only "almost" perfect; then the devil is let loose again; but there is only one binding of the devil, which is the same as John 12:31: "now shall the Prince of this world be cast out"—i.e., at the time when the Church was established; and there are not two but three comings of Christ according to the chiliastic view. (The Second Coming of Christ is supposedly in the clouds, all believers being "zipped" up into the sky (we have a picture in a Protestant booklet showing this!) from where they watch the "tribulation" period and Antichrist below, and then apparently everyone comes down to earth for the millennium. And then, "Christ" apparently is not strong enough to prevent the whole millennium dissolving in the final war with the devil, after which the scene is changed and everybody tries all over again in a new kingdom.)

Laurence knows the whole story of the Jordanville tragedy. Apparently it was more in the nature of a tragic accident rather than any outright murder. Fr. Neketas Palassis expects many worse things to come in the days ahead to tempt us, and indeed both the world and Church situation do not give many grounds for optimism. Of course, the saddest thing is when an attitude of

pessimism and discouragement begins to creep into the Church—making it all the more important for those who can to preserve centers and islands of true spiritual striving and inspiration.

We attended the Liturgy at Vladika John's Sepulchre last Friday, which was well attended. Unfortunately, I think the lack of Liturgy on July 2 is a subtle revelation that the veneration of Vladika John is not going to be encouraged among Russians—he's too "controversial" and our booklet on him was not well received in some places. Apparently he is to be a prophet more for those without—the converts, who have spontaneously taken to him and are already glorifying God in him in many languages.

The True Vine seems satisfactory as far as it goes (except for a few things like the illustrations!)—but we're still waiting for a certain "spark" to shine through, so we'll know that Orthodoxy is not just "correctness" but something more.

Fr. Herman's goddaughter's brother, a 17-year-old boy [Gregory Petrochko] from New York (3rd generation and speaks little Russian, but has gone to Jordanville for years)—is now here to spend part of the summer with us, so hopefully we'll get some building done.;

We look forward to your visit and help on the calendar—we already have 101 orders (100 from Fr. Neketas). We hope to receive soon from Boston the additional Greek saints for each day, which may complicate things; and the whole list of saints has to be checked more closely, as there are a number of mistakes. About the left side of the calendar: perhaps in your spare time (?!) you could put it together (perhaps with scissors and paste?) in a form from which the type could be set up? We have the lead now, and I also discovered the principle by which multiple castings can be made (a very simply principle which only a dunce could miss!), so things should be much simpler this year, and even easy next year, God willing.

By the way, concerning one point on the millennium: I believe Augustine mentions that the millennium lasts through the reign of Antichrist, for the Church does not cease to exist even then; and thus the unloosing of the devil occurs during the last years of the millennium, and not after its end.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. "Afosya" still eats from our hands, and now she has twin sisters, born a week ago right in front of our church.

107.

July 20/Aug. 2,1972

Holy Glorious Prophet Elias

Dear Father Panteleimon,

Evlogeite!

Please forgive our long silence, but it seems we just don't get around to correspondence until it's absolutely necessary. It would be so nice to have a good talk with you. Father Neketas tells us you will be coming out West in November, and perhaps will be able to come to see us then. We certainly hope that you can, and please know that we eagerly look forward to your visit. Alexey Young would also like very much to meet you and hopefully he can arrange a visit at the same time. Although Northern California is still quite a desert from the Orthodox point of view, there nonetheless are still a few tiny settlements of the devout, separated by rugged mountains but united in spirit.

Glory be to God, we are surviving and thanking God that our trials are not impossible ones and that through them we are learning much. At the present time we are in a state of peace with the ruling bishop, but we find it somewhat sad that this peace is sometimes a real struggle and requires of us a certain degree of just plain "stubbornness," in which two bishops have encouraged us and which is just about the only thing about us that the ruling bishop seems to understand (at least at times it seems that way). On his last visit to us he proclaimed us "old monks," which seems to supersede certain of his earlier comments. We proceed in the belief that we are free and independent and so far Vladika John's blessing protects us and guides us in a very definite way. We are somewhat saddened by Vladika Anthony s "cool" attitude toward Vladika John (he's too "controversial" in S.F.), but Vladika Nektary's warm devotion to him more than makes up for it. Several weeks ago, after the Divine Liturgy which he served here, Vladika Nektary led us in singing the "Magnification" to Vladika John and then had us sing the stikhera from your service (for which we rejoice and thank God!), and he asked us to translate them into Slavonic. This is strictly confidential; but if we correctly sense the difficult road ahead for us Synodal "zealots" there may well come a day when we will have great joy and consolation in remembering that one of our bishops "canonized" Vladika John! (The date was July 12/25.)

We have been blessed with the presence of a 17-year-old "laborer" from New York (a Russian, related by baptism to Fr. Herman) who has helped us greatly in putting a little more order into the external appearance of our humble monastery, which is however still far from complete. In a few weeks Daniel Olson is supposed to arrive to help put out the Calendar—he aided greatly last year. This year our illustrations will be of Mt. Athos monasteries (mostly from Cavarnos' book). It would be nice to have a short article or some comments on Mt. Athos to accompany the calendar—if you have anything appropriate we would greatly appreciate having it. We should start on the calendar before the end of the month, however.

Fr. David Black wants to visit us this month. Do you know anything about his present orientation? Our last letter to him in 1971 was so devastating that we really didn't expect to hear from him again, so perhaps something is up.

Something strictly confidential: I believe that in one of our "suffering" letters to you last year we mentioned Fr. Alexey Poluektov, who has had a difficult time with the ruling hierarch. We haven't mentioned him for some time, but just yesterday we received an urgent letter from ЬІщ begging our prayers and if possible yours also in a very difficult crisis which he sums up by

saying that the local bishop is about to "strangle his soul," and he is desperate. I don't know how much our comments to you and to Fr. Neketas also in the past have communicated concerning the extremely difficult position that some of our Russian priests are in under certain of our bishops; perhaps one must first get fully involved (trapped?) in the Russian psychology of the Synod to really appreciate it. However that may be, we urgently ask your prayers at Liturgy for Fr. Alexey and his family (list of names enclosed). Also for Vladimir Anderson and his family, who are going through the ultimately blessed but at the same time extremely difficult experience of watching their 8-year-old daughter Margaret die of an incurable brain disease. (They all visited us yesterday.) (List of names also enclosed.)

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

108.

Sunday of All Saints, 1972

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! Thank you for the letter and the Sorrowful Epistles, which arrived safely. Our new issue has a 1-page notice about the latter.

Melchisedek was here for Pentecost weekend, and unlike his last visit he talked quite a bit, which seems to be good for him. Nonetheless, he's obviously the iceberg type, with a great deal more inside than ever comes out, and capable of acting in surprising and unexpected ways—this is our opinion from reading "between the lines," as nothing he said would lead to such a conclusion. He seems to have the genuine spark of Orthodox fervor, and also the determination to be really Orthodox and sober. The first Celtic Cross is not bad, but we tried to point him more in the direction of early sources, so as to give more of the atmosphere and "feel" of early Orthodoxy in the West instead of his own retelling of it. Of course, some of the latter element is inevitable, but if it is the sole or predominant element it just isn't as convincing, at least until there is substantial basis (a number of issues, with sufficient original sources in them) to trust him as a reteller. And there are a number of early lives by contemporaries who are themselves irreproachable (say, the Life of St. Germanus of Auxerre by St. Hilary of Poitiers(?), which can at least be quoted from, and several collections of shorter lives which might be taken in toto—St. Gregory the Dialogist, St. Gregory of Tours. Melchisedek said nothing about having us as "chief" advisors so we advised him to continue his procedure of the first issue and have you be his prepublication critic. (He didn't show us any of the material in the first issue until he arrived with the printed version.) May God bless this fragile but hopeful beginning!

Our "charismatic" issue is almost finished, and we are relieved that we have said it all (40 pages, thinly spaced), even though we have no idea what the reaction will be—apart from the undying hatred of the Orthodox "charismatics." One feels sorry for most of them, for they certainly have no idea what they're getting into (perhaps one could better say: they have no idea what they're getting away from, for the whole question seems to be lack of knowledge and "feel" about Orthodoxy). The time is obviously at hand when only those deeply rooted in Orthodoxy and the

Fathers will be able to stand against the temptations to come. Eusebius and Co. have gone astray concerning the doctrine and action of the Holy Spirit, but the key for us seems after all to be the doctrine of the Church. If we know what and where the Church is, and also of course something of how the devil works, then all the "miracles" in a "Christian" context will not unbalance us as it did Eusebius—and he probably hasn't even heard of the most spectacular "miracles," such as those coming from Indonesia.

Frankly, the time ahead looks so dark, that one only marvels that we still have the freedom to speak out (how much longer?). Obviously, everything that can be said must be said soon. And the brightest spot in the whole picture is the New Martyrs and the Catacomb Church—after all, one does not have to sell one's soul!

Have you received a copy of "The Russian Synod Deceivers"? (if you haven't, we'll send you ours.)—a cheap attack which really doesn't merit a reply, especially as it seems to be anonymous (some Ukrainian names are given, but no return address—perhaps a front for someone in the Metropolia?) That's probably only a sample of what's in store for us, and the problem is that of course they will be able to find all kinds of plausible "inconsistencies" and worse among us, which will be convincing to anyone who stops at the surface and doesn't care to go deeper. To this day seemingly sophisticated people like Fr. David Black still think that were picking on individual, isolated cases in order to promote a case of "jurisdictional triumphalism," and it seems impossible to get such people to see that what is involved is mutually irreconcilable views of what Orthodoxy is.

I just read I Was an NKVD Agent by Anatoli Granovsky—a frightfully revealing expose of the Soviet system (in comparison with which Hider s Nazism was only a romantic daydream). One revealing chapter tells how he was offered the assignment of the "priesthood" (in 1944), but even apart from that, from his testimony it is absolutely inconceivable in Soviet conditions that Nikodim and the younger hierarchs could be anything but NKVD agents who have been assigned the "episcopacy."

Were pleased to hear that Jerry Norman has been attending Liturgy. We haven't seen, and scarcely heard from him for years. When I knew him he was quite sound and conservatively oriented, both politically and ecclesiastically. Even then he had just about given up on the Catholic church with its reforms, but where he stands now we don't know.

Please forgive the rambling letter, and pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

109.

August 16/29,1972

Image of Our Saviour not Made with Hands

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Congratulations on the feast of the Image of Our Saviour. May the grace of our Saviour be with you now and always.

Thank you for your very frank letter, in which your deep concern is very evident.

Please forgive us if we ourselves have added to your confusion (on the question of the cover), but I sincerely hope you won't be confused just on our account! I believe (and hope) I presented the matter not in any arbitrary fashion but solely for your consideration, simply to let you know that such an attitude does exist, at least among pious Russians, who don't feel quite right when they see anything that looks like an icon (that's why it's being on the cover is important, because it's seen) placed under or beside other ordinary objects on a table or wherever, when by its appearance it seems to belong rather in an icon corner. As I think I said (though I believe I wrote in a rush and may not have expressed myself very clearly), it's a rather fine point and is not subject to a categorical judgment. You've correctly observed that we ourselves have violated this "rule" to some degree. I would say, in sum, that where a 100% full-fledged icon is concerned—say, a color icon-reproduction with a large figure, which looks as if it belonged in an icon corner—it would definitely be best and most sensitive not to use it on a cover. Where anything less of an icon than this is used—something more like a line-drawing or simple illustration (such as will in fact appear on the new cover of The Orthodox Word) then it's a matter of Orthodox taste and feeling. If were the only ones who mentioned the matter to you, then by all means don't give it any more thought, it's "passed." In case we didn't mention it, we also thought that the illustration is a very good one and very effective, and we certainly don't think it disrespectful or anything of the sort, and we won't give you any more trouble about it!

Concerning your being "forbidden" by Fr. Lev not to print on certain subjects: I trust you realize that he's not in any position to "forbid" you to do anything whatsoever; and it's only sad that he wants to make himself think so! Vladimir also mentioned on his visit last weekend his being upset at hearing about some intra-Synod personal quarrels about which numerous carbon copies of private letters are circulated via the "grapevine." Thanks be to God, we are mostly out of this "grapevine" and only seldom get one of these carbon copies; but having received a couple of them in the last few days, we certainly appreciate your distress, because all they do is instil in one a peculiar and frustrating sense of uneasiness about which one really can't do anything, because the "issues" involved are so bound up with personal attitudes and emotions (and sometimes fantasies) that ther just isn't anything to grasp hold of. We've heard several accounts in particular, of the Ischie-Puhalo fight, in which both are evidently demanding that the other be defrocked, and all we can say is: let's stay as far as possible away from such things. We frankly aren't interested in what the "truth" of this case might be; it really looks as if they're both unbalanced, but one would hope that thereby they would have more compassion for each other! The atmosphere of a large part of the "grapevine" is surely unsound, and your distress over it is a healthy reaction.

Thanks be to God, in the Church Abroad we have much freedom and independence to do and speak as we think is right. Even if there may be some who abuse this right and cause scandal, we would certainly rather weather through such small scandals rather than force everything through some kind of forced higher "censorship," as some people seem to think or imply. Anyway, let's

just do what we can while there is time, and not get drawn into side issues. You with Nikodemos should by all means treasure your independence, of course drawing on sound counsel wherever it might come from, but never feeling bound to "obey" anyone who pops out of the woodwork and claims to "know more" than you or to be some kind of "authority."

Concerning the "Shroud," we poor ignorant ones are not even informed on the subject because we've been too busy and lazy to read about it! We're favorably disposed to the subject and wonder what possible proof there can be that it's a "fraud"—one might be uncertain or dubious, but to call it a "fraud" one must be quite definite and have proof. And even if one did have "proof," I wonder what benefit there will be in exposing the "fraud." It will certainly confuse the readers of Orthodox Life, that's for sure!

As for evolution, which is a hoax and fraud if ever anything was, we have long wanted to have a good objective expos; (because of its devastating anti-Christian religious overtones and even foundation), but have never had the chance to go into it ourselves. The statements of Fr. Lev's which you quoted on it sound naive in the extreme. Over a year ago Fr. Neketas mentioned he was going to print an article on the subject by Kalomiros, but we assumed it would be entirely critical and expose the whole fraud of it. We know of no conceivable watering down or modification of the evolutionary hypothesis which would make it acceptable either to theology, philosophy, or science—certainly the more sophisticated scientists today no longer take it seriously, and recognize that it became popular solely by an act of faith and highly rigged evidence!

Well, I think it's beyond us to start "interfering" with other fellow Orthodox publications and argue over what we think they should print, unless of course we have some facts or information they don't have, or unless they ask us to give our opinion. But surely we have the right to accept or reject what they do say, and even (if we feel it is necessary) to publish something that contradicts it—without, of course, publicly "fighting" with them. I guess we'll just have to wait and see (there's usually more noise that ever comes out of the "grapevine" into public view). We can't imagine that Fr. Neketas or Fr. Panteleimon would publish anything really pro-evolution, but even a vague middle of the road article would be harmful enough, in view of the fact that evolution seems to be such a key in the whole program of anti-Christianity.

We pray that all these "temptations" won't get you down or swerve you from your path— which is obviously the devil's object in working to send them to you! Basically, such temptations are trivial—but that's precisely one reason why they're so frustrating! If there were some great attack or error we would find out how to arm ourselves and reply; but rumors and gossip and unsolicited advice and "grapevines" can be so unsettling because one doesn't know quite what to believe or where one stands in the whole picture. There is a type of unstable converts who delight in all this, and that only feeds the whole fire; may God have mercy on them and enlighten them. Certainly we don't need to judge them, but we shouldn't allow them to interfere with the honest and good labors that God has blessed us weak ones to perform.

Above all, we are all human and weak and subject to mistakes and hasty judgments ourselves. We should always keep in mind that we don't "know better" about Orthodoxy than anyone else

and we aren't "experts" in anything at all (much less the "instant experts" that some converts seem tempted to become), but we only follow the path that we firmly believe leads to salvation, spending our whole life in learning and growing, never really progressing beyond the state of infants in the Faith, and bound by bonds of love and respect with our fellow learners.

We sympathize with you in your family's misfortunes. Such things only remind us the more forcibly that life isn't a matter of "knowing better" at all, but of suffering through whatever God sends us in His wisdom, by means of the grace which He also sends.

We hope you'll be able to visit us again before winter and talk over some of these things. Melchisedek informs us that he probably won't be coming this summer after all.

Pray for us. Our regards to Susan and Ian.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

110.

Aug. 23/Sept. 5, 1972

Apodosis of the Dormition

Dear Brother in Christ, Nicholas [Eastman],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were happy to hear from you again, and please forgive our very hasty replies to your previous letters. As you see, the Orthodox Christian life is full of trials and temptations, usually of a seemingly very trivial nature. By this the devil tries to weaken our resolve and keep us on a very low level of battle—until he's ready to put a real temptation in our way. Our answer is to try our best to keep on an even, sober path, using the weapons which Christ's Church gives us—the Church services and sacraments, regular evening and morning prayer, spiritual reading, prayer-rope, etc., and in everything trusting not in our own strength but in God's power and grace. Fight as well as you can against all temptations—laxness, impurity, overeating, idleness, judging others. Do not be alarmed if at times your prayer seems dry and unfeeling; that often happens, but feeling will return if you remain constant in your rule of prayer.

Keep the thought of monasticism in your heart, but don't be too concerned about it now. Be resolved to serve God in your life as He wills, and God will soon enough open the path to you to fulfill this resolve, whether as a monk or in the world. Both monasticism and living in the world have their own advantages and trials, and in neither place can one escape the responsibility of striving to live a God-pleasing life. God will show you His will for you.

Of the three books you mention, Unseen Warfare would be the best for you to buy and read now; it is a good guide to the Orthodox Christian life, which is a warfare with the devils and our own passions. The Rudder is dangerous for beginners, because most of the canons concern Church

administration and are meant for the clergy who are in charge of this and who know how the canons should be interpreted and applied.

Some of Blessed Augustine's books are better not to read, by the City of God is good, Of course, now with school beginning again you probably won't have much time for reading, and what time you do have is better spent on spiritual reading such as Unseen Warfare.

College life will doubtless give you many temptations. But remember that learning in itself is useful and can be used later in a Christian way. Try to avoid the idle activities and temptations you will meet that serve no useful purpose, so that even in a godless atmosphere you can "redeem the time," as the Apostle Paul says, and make maximum use of the opportunities you are given for learning. What subjects will you be taking?

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1973

111.

Jan. 7/20,1973

Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite!

We received the plane tickets, and also noted the urgent tone of your brief letters. Apparently there is nothing to do but obey.

However, it is really impossible for both of us to be away from here for more than 24 hours, and the more now when my 12-year-old godson [Tommy Anderson?] is staying with us. Father Herman insists that I go, and he makes it as urgent a matter as your letter sounds.

Accordingly, we are sending you back the ticket made out to both of us. If you wish to trade it for a single ticket for me, then may Gods will be done, I will bow to the obedience, trusting in Vladika Johns prayers that I will travel safely (never having travelled in an airplane before).

We "feel" that there is much that should be "said" between us, you and Father Panteleimon (and Father Ephraim), but not at all on the level of logic, projects, etc. How do you hold a "conference" based on what can't really be "said"? Nonetheless, may God help us to do it—in the days ahead we sense spiritual shipwreck or prosperity for many, hanging precisely on this intangible thing. I think you also feel something of this.

Many, many thanks to you and your parish for your kind gift of $50. May God reward your kindness and grant us to bring better and more fruits.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

112.

Jan. 31/Feb. 13,1973

St. Nicetas of Novgorod

Sts. Cyrus and John, Unmercenaries

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Please forgive our usual long silence, but we've really been overwhelmed with happenings of late. I've just returned from three days in Seattle, at Fr. Neketas' request, in order to have a good talk with Fr. Panteleimon—about which more below.

The new Nikodemos arrived and looks good; the Freud article in particular should evoke some interesting response.

The "Evolution" article for the next issue looks very good to us, quite comprehensive and to the point, and also I don't think there's anything there to which Fr. Panteleimon and others could object (I'll tell you what I gathered from them below). However, the article could be improved by expanding a little on several points:

1. At the bottom of p. 1 you mention "any farm of evolution? and at the end of that paragraph you specify: "atheistic physical evolution, or theistic physical evolution, or spiritual evolution." However, your article is really addressed almost entirely against atheistic physical evolution and its absurdities, and some people might take advantage of this to say you haven't really considered more "refined" forms of theistic or spiritual evolution. In such as short article, of course, it's really not possible to go into them, but perhaps a sentence or two more on them will show why they can't be taken seriously either and are not at all more "refined" (just more vague and confused!). Thus, "theistic" evolution, as I understand its motives, is the invention of men who, being afraid that physical evolution is really "scientific," stick "God" in at various points of the evolutionary process in order not to be left out, in order to conform "theology" to the "latest scientific discoveries." But his form of artificial thinking is satisfactory only to the most vague and confused minds (for whom, apparently, "God" supplies the energy and order that can't be explained according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics): it is satisfactory neither for theology nor for science, but just mixes the two realms up. Again, "spiritual" evolution applies the "conclusions" of atheistic physical evolution to the "spiritual" realm and comes to results which are monstrous and unacceptable either from the scientific or the theological point of view: a mixup and confusion which can only disguise itself in fantastic jargon a la Teilhard de Chardin. Both these kinds of evolution depend entirely on acceptance of physical evolution, and if that is shown to be unsound they fall; and in addition they are self-contradictory because the whole

purpose and intent of the theory of physical evolution is to find an explanation of the world without God·, i.e., physical evolution is by its nature atheistic, and it's only ridiculous when "theologians" run after the latest "scientific" theory in order not to be left behind by the times.

I'm afraid I'm wasting too many words on this point, but you really should tell the reader a little more as to why other kinds of evolution are no more satisfactory. The central point, of course, is that evolution is not at all "scientific, but rather a kind of science-fiction theology, the product of faith (an atheistic faith, but nonetheless faith). That it is still so widely accepted surely shows how low not only theology, but just plain common-sense thinking have fallen today. (I still remember my freshman professor of zoology expatiating on the "great ideas of man": for him the greatest idea man ever invented was the idea of evolution; much greater, he believed than the "idea of God.")

2. On Piltdown, Peking, Java Man, etc. on p. 3: Isn't Piltdown the only one that is universally accepted as a fraud? If so, it would be wisest to emphasize it (citing the book on the subject, if you have the reference at hand) and mention the great doubts and questions surrounding the others, so as not to be accused of racing ahead of the evidence!

3. The Second Law of Thermodynamics: you'd better give a brief definition at the beginning (see also the enclosed clipping, showing what brought a Soviet scientist to God).

4. You end with a reference to the "Gospel of foolishness"—which might inadvertently lead some readers to think that, after all, you admit that evolution somehow makes sense and you have to be higher and more spiritual to see that it doesn't. No—on every level, from common sense on up, evolution is nonsense! Behold what real, unredeemed foolishness they fall into who try to do without God!

The article, though short, is excellent, with a very good use of quotes from Darwin and others. Probably you will get lots of discussion on this. Perhaps one day you could put together a longer, more detailed article on evolution, with ample citations both from evolutionists (showing their naive faith and sloppy thinking) and their sound critics (I recall a good book I read some years ago by an ornithologist: Francis Dewar, Some Difficulties of the Evolutionary Theory), to serve as a reference source for those who care to think seriously on the subject. In general, people are so afraid of challenging scientists "on their own ground" that they're afraid to get into this subject; a little clear thinking such as your short article reveals can dispel a lot of this fear and the fog that surround the question.

The other two articles are good, and we have no comments, except that it might be wise to mention with each installment the date of St. Juliana's commemoration (Jan. 2); and in the editorial it's really unfair (to the Soviets) to mention "depraved Nazis" without throwing in the Soviets too, who even today continue "horrendous experiments" on their millions of prisoners. Nazism was really but a pale imitation, often greatly tempered by a remnant of still human feelings, of the .Soviet experiment; and its depravity was small compared to the systematic depravity and inhumanity which the Soviet torturers still practice. I'm not defending the Nazis!—but by making the word "Nazi" almost synonymous with 20th-century inhumanity, we can lose sight of the frightful reality of today's Soviet system. It's doubtful that the Nazis had

any depraved tortures that the Soviets didn't try first and are still performing. By the way, in the article on Marx it would be good to get some examples of systematic Soviet inhumanity to show Marxism in practice: what the "new man" of Marx actually is, once all Christian and religious "superstition" has been abolished. Do you have quotes from Marx on his idea of "violence" and its role in forming the "new man"? Or Lenin's quote on the whole world becoming a single factory, with no escape, and all dissenters will be crushed like vermin? Are you going to mention the question of chiliasm, which is what Marxism really is? Marxism is different from your two earlier installments in that in it we can see plainly what "modern ideas," the "wolves" you are discussing (even with a picture of them!) mean when they are put into systematic practice.

—

I was in Seattle for three days and had good frank talks with Frs. Panteleimon, Ephraim, and Neketas. I left completely reassured that we are all on the same side of the great battle of our times, that our spirit and emphases are basically the same, and that our occasional differences in attitudes or approaches to some questions do not at all detract from our spiritual unanimity. Fr. Panteleimon is a very strong personality and holds strong views also about some things which seem of secondary importance (for example, the Shroud of Turin), which could understandably cause some friction and conflict. But it Would be a crime if any of us allowed such secondary differences to destroy our unanimity on basic points, especially in view of the great armies of pseudo- and anti-Orthodoxy that surrounds us, and also the great weight of inertia and ignorance which exist even within our Church Abroad. I found Fr. P. just the same as the last time I saw him several years ago, and there was not so much as a hint from him that we should print or think otherwise than we already do. When he or Fr. Neketas make suggestions to you, I am sure it is done not at all with any idea of "pressuring" you, but solely as sincere and well-meant advice, which you should take as such and not as an attempt to pressure or command you. [letter ends]

113.

Feb. 3/16. 1973

Righteous Simeon and Anna

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite!

Father Herman returned safely Wednesday from Edmonton with his mission accomplished, thanks be to God. (It turns out that Vladika Savva himself left the money for Father Herman's trip.) We had so many obstacles in the way beforehand—3 cars in the ditch, ruined transmission, dead battery—that we began to doubt whether he should go; but once he got off everything went well and more than well, even to the obtaining of those things of Vladika John which Fr. Panteleimon told us about, and so we saw that all the diffculties were only "iskushiniye." Fr. Herman was sorry not to see you on the way back, but he had only time for a talk with Vladika Nektary (11 p.m. to 4 a. m.!) before his plane left Wednesday morning. God willing, we will be

seeing you more often in future. Fr. Herman was able to visit Vladika Savva's grave at the convent also and have a good talk with Mother Amvrossia.

Again, we thank you very much for this opportunity of seeing you and Frs. Panteleimon and Ephraim, and we are more than ever persuaded of the importance of such contacts. It would seem that in just about everything we are in the same "boat" with you—not only in the confession of True Orthodoxy, but even in our uncertain acceptance by some of the Church leadership.

More than once you have mentioned your concern for getting the True Orthodox message to the Russians. After these last two weeks we are more convinced than ever that we should really begin something in this direction (no one else is going to); but also, we are more than ever convinced that our ruling bishop will not only disapprove, but will squash our attempt. However, Vladika Nektary suggested to Fr. Herman an idea which now won't give us rest until we do something about it: that he, as Bishop of Seattle, revive Vladika Johns Blagovestnik (Good Tidings), of which Fr. Herman was once editor, as his own publication, but entrusting it entirely to us. (Vladika Anthony several years ago deliberately ceased publication of this, starting an insignificant publication of his own, and told us that we could not use the name—for reasons which now become more and more evident!) Previously Blagovestnik was devoted almost entirely to lives and services of saints, ascetics, and new martyrs, but now we would definitely add contemporary editorials, speaking explicitly about Constantinople, telling about Fr. Panteleimon and old calendarists, etc. (Some of our people in Canada whom Fr. Herman met have no idea who Fr. Panteleimon is.) We are of course short of hands and time, but 16 pages or so every 2 months I think we could handle.

Now: could you help us by taking charge of the address stencils, sending us the stickers for each mailing? We make bold to ask you this in the belief that with the typing being done outside it would not place too much of a burden on you (?), also because of your interest in presenting Russian materials, and also because anyone who wanted to come and search our skete would not find the names and addresses of subscribers (enough said!). It would also emphasize that this is the work of Vladika Nektary and the Seattle Diocese. Such a file, of course, would be kept quite distinct from True Vine or any other file, and need not be shown to anyone (even a bishop) without the blessing of Vladika Nektary.

Please tell us your response to all this. As you see, we are trying to be "wise as serpents," but even so it's obvious that this will be interpreted in at least one circle as tantamount to an open declaration of war (which is, of course, not our intention, but if that is the result of speaking the free Orthodox word, then let it be so!). Vladika Nektary, however, is willing to take the brunt of the attack upon himself, and that makes us bold. We ourselves feel that the pressure will increase on us also now that it is seen that Vladika Savva's trust and blessing rested upon us and not upon any of his fellow hierarchs (except, of course, Vladikas Averky and Nektary, and perhaps one or two other of the older bishops). We haven't told you the whole story, but the treatment of Vladika Savva by his fellow hierarchs at the Sobor was simply a disgrace. When asked later why he had to endure such treatment, Vladika Savva only pointed his finger heavenward, and at the end he was very peaceful in soul. He wrote us that he received this because he helped Vladika John (probably as much in a spiritual as in a literal sense). Sadly, in one of his letters to us he

wrote that he had given up the idea of printing Vladika John's life in Russian (he wished to print something in Serbian) for fear that the Synod would ban it, although in his last letter he indicated he was going to print something in Russian anyway. But at the present time we, thanks be to God, have a freedom he didn't have, and we won't stop until were really squashed or it should become evident that we are not doing God's will. Our boldness, it may be, is born of the utter hopelesness of our situation—having no "princes or sons of men" to trust in, we have to trust in God and in Vladika Johns prayers. We strongly suspect that Vladika John will be the "stumbling block" against which some who trust in politics and dead formalism will finally fall—and, hopefully, learn a "lesson."

The new issue of Nasha Strana from Buenos Aires has a necrolog of Vladika Savva by Archbishop Afanasy, which dares to mention that "he did not fear or hesitate to accuse unjustness or lying," and even that "he was a great venerator of Archbishop John Maximovitch of San Francisco." We've just learned that Vladika Afanasy himself, and also Vladika Savva of Australia, also supported Vladika John. Of course, we don't want to divide everyone into sides or parties because of Vladika John! and also we have no bitter feelings against anyone—it's just that he seems to be a touchstone of Orthodoxy in our days, and those who go against him seem to be off in their whole approach to the critical issues of today.

Needless to say, all this is in strict confidence—between you and Fr. Panteleimon. I haven't the strength or time to write Fr. Panteleimon a long letter, so perhaps you could just send him a copy of this. We've just been warned by the Post Office that we have until July 1 to get The Orthodox Word out on time, so for a while we will be concentrating on that. But, God willing, we would hope to start the Russian publication by the 7th anniversary of Vladika Johns repose—and the first issue, needless to say, must come as an absolute surprise, without any warning beforehand!

Pray for us and especially for Vlad. Nektary, and let us hear your response to all this.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We would probably have a list of several hundred names for the first issue, and over 1000 names in a short time. We would doubtless get enough contributions to pay for the cost of stencils (30 cents apiece?) and paper. What kind of 2nd class permit do you have? — "controlled circulation"?

114.

Feb. 4/17,1973

St. Cyril of New Lake

Dear Brother in Christ, Nicholas [Eastman],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We were glad to hear from you again and are happy to try to answer some of your questions.

Your mixed feelings lately, especially at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, doubtless reveal several things. One of them, as you yourself must realize, is your own immaturity! Clearly, you do not yet know your own mind, and so you should not hurry to make any decision regarding something so important as the monastic life. A decision pleasing to God and which is for your own salvation should not be accompanied by feelings of confusion. If your feelings are confused, stop for a while and let them "settle" and see where your heart really is or wants to be. In the meantime, keep your regular life of spiritual discipline, church services, etc., as well as you can, also doing your duty in the place where you happen to be. In your case, this certainly means applying yourself to study, so as not to lose this opportunity. Do not fall into the trap of thinking (mostly idly!) about "spiritual" things so much that you neglect the humble "worldly" things right in front of your nose. Any learning you can get now, even if it seems very boring or worldly, can be very valuable to you later. Do not waste the opportunity you have and incur judgment later for this! When and if God leads you to the monastic life— then will be time enough to concentrate on "spiritual" things, under proper guidance.

Another cause of your confusion has some substance to it, and about this you should have the right ideas. This is the difference between "Russian" and "Greek" Orthodoxy. Most of the differences are not really substantial, such as the difference in music, details of church services, etc. But a few of them are important and could get you unnecessarily confused. One of these is the practice of confession and receiving Holy Communion: the "Russian" practice is usually not to receive Communion without confession, while the Greeks receive Communion a number of times without confession. Basically, this question is solved for one by one's own spiritual father, and the only confusion arises when someone from "Russian" practice enters a "Greek" church or vice versa. Our own rule (which I practiced, for example, when I visited Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Neketas in Seattle last week) is always to receive confession before receiving Communion the first time in a "Greek" church, but after that to receive Communion for several days in a row without going to confession again, provided that one keeps the full "Russian" rule of prayer before receiving Holy Communion and that nothing has come up that disturbs one's conscience. This is also the usual "Russian" practice in Passion Week, when those who have confessed on Great Thursday may receive Communion without confession on Great Saturday and on Pascha. The important thing is that one has a regular discipline of confession (which should be rather frequent) and not receiving Holy Communion carelessly or with an unclean conscience. There is no problem at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, since there the novices and monks confess their thoughts daily to their elder and receive sacramental absolution at least once a week, as I have heard. In your case, you should ask your spiritual father what to do, and not change to "Greek" practice until you should be under a "Greek" spiritual father. There is much more that can be said on this subject, but basically I would say that if frequent Holy Communion is a good thing, then frequent confession is also good!

Most other differences between the "Greek" and "Russian" traditions are of minor importance, and one can find that in some respects the "Russians" are closer to more ancient and traditional practice (as I discovered last week in Seattle when I asked Fr. Ephraim of Holy Transfiguration Monastery about the way they performed the services), and in some respects the "Greeks" are closer. In music, the "Greeks" have preserved the more ancient practice, as 4-part harmony

certainly does come from the West. In our Hermitage we try to stay to 2-part harmony, which is closer to "Greek" practice. (Fr. Neketas, the Greek priest from Seattle, found this quite satisfactory when he visited us some time ago.)

You notice that I put "Greek" and "Russian" in quotations marks—because we are one in Christ, and we should by no means let differences of nationality or custom cause rivalries among us. We have much to learn from each other, but both of us must learn first of all from Christ our Saviour and the pure tradition of His Church! Both "Greeks" and "Russians" have faults and have introduced some minor "innovations" into church practice; but if we love each other in Christ, these faults are tolerable, and it is far preferable to tolerate them than to go about "reforming" other people and being overly critical. Each parish and monastery is free to preserve the Orthodox tradition as fully as it wishes and can, preserving all humility and love.

Concerning your parents, pray to God and do not despair over them. Even if they were to die outside the Faith, you can pray for them privately, even though the Church cannot pray for them as for her own children.

Since Father James would like you to visit us, why don't you come for the summer or part of the summer?—not as a novice, but as a "laborer." Of course, you will find that we are very primitive and disorganized, as we are certainly not well established as is Holy Transfiguration Monastery, and all we have are some shacks and an unfinished church. Nonetheless, we are remote from the world and quiet, and there should be no more than one or two other people with us this summer, so one of us would have time to talk with you. Also, there is lots of physical work! Please know that you are welcome.

Please pray for us, and write again. Please ask Father James to pray at Liturgy for the newly reposed Bishop Savva and for Elena (Lopeshanskaya, a friend of ours).

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

115.

Feb. 7/20,1973

Sts. Parthenius and Luke

Dear Brother in Christ, Igor [Kapral],

Greetings in our lord Jesus Christ. We are well and thanking God for His mercies to us, and trust you are also well.

We were very glad to have even a brief letter from you, for somehow we feel even more kin to you now with the repose of Vladika Savva. We were most moved when we found out that Vladika Savva had willed us his books and papers, and had even left money for Father Herman to come as soon as possible and take care of them. (It would be best not to go into some of the reasons for that!) Thanks be to God, Fr. Herman did so last week, distributing some of the books also to Elizabeth Mandick and another lady in Edmonton in accordance with Vladika Savva's

last wishes. When, God willing, we have our Skete library built, it will be in Vladika Savva's memory.

Among Vladika's papers, of course, were the materials for his book on Archbishop John. As we already suspected from our correspondence with him, there is not too much of this material that has not already been printed in Prav. Rus. (He complained to us that people in San Francisco and elsewhere just didn't send material when asked.) We will certainly try to get more of it printed in Russian, although it is too early for us to think specifically about a book yet. Vladika Savva himself has now become a part of the whole story of Archbp. John: his concern for his memory and his unashamed acknowledgement of his sanctity are an encouragement for the rest of us who sometimes become dejected over the blindly negative attitude towards him in some places. We plan to tell about Vladika Savva in the new Orthodox Word and to begin translating some of his material on Vladika John, together with his own valuable comments. We feel ourselves to be spiritual heirs and debtors of Vladika Savva, and we will certainly do all we can, with God's help, to collect all his material on Archbishop John into one book.

How true that in Vladika Savva we have lost a spiritual and righteous bishop, and I fear to say, one of the last of them. In the last two weeks both Fr. Herman and I were in Seattle and spoke both with Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas and with Vladika Nektary. No one is optimistic about the future! In Vladika Savva's righteous and patient enduring of the injustice which fell to him in his last moths on earth, there seems to be an example and pattern for the rest of us who wish to remain honest and upright Orthodox Christians. Let us make a covenant among ourselves, that wherever we may happen to be in Christ's Church, that we will not be anything but honest and upright, whatever Church politics may say or what we might have to sacrifice for it!

I hope you understand! With Vladika John's repose we were orphaned; but now with the passing of Vladikas Leonty and Savva, and with Vladikas Averky and Nektary in such a frail condition, who will we have left to whom we can speak our hearts?

We are very concerned about Jordanville, hearing the widespread rumors about great demoralization there. Are things really as bad as they are reported to be, or as hopeless?

Let us hear from you. Please pray for us, and especially for Vladika Nektary.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s., the cliches for Blessed Xenia are going out in today's mail.

116.

Feb. 13/26, 1973

St. Simeon the Myrrh-gusher of Serbia

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Just a brief note—since you mentioned that you might be printing Sarah's article on the Shroud of Turin separately. I read it yesterday at last, rather quickly but enough to see that it shouldn't be printed as it is, for several reasons:

(1) The most compelling reason: it was obviously written for Roman Catholics and contains a number of purely Latin phenomena and expressions: The "Stations of the Cross," "merits" of the Cross, etc. In such a form it would evoke a furor among many Orthodox and perhaps dose their minds completely to any possibility that the Shroud might after all be Orthodox!

(2) Secondly, I would question the very large emphasis given to the Shroud in the article as a scientific proof, such phrases as "the most important verification of Christianity outside of Holy Scripture," and "It can establish that Jesus Christ is true God and true man." How can science establish such a non-scientific truth?! As secondary evidence it might corroborate the fact of Christ's Resurrection, true—but not unless we have other then scientific grounds to accept the Shroud. "Scientific" knowledge by its nature is the least reliable form of human knowledge, very subject to revision and deception; not to mention the very real possibility of demonic counterfeits. Also, Sarah seems to be much more certain about such points as the dating of the Shroud than I recall the Walsh book as being (which only said, as I recall, that such cloth was used in the Near East around the time of Christ but not in Medieval Europe).

(3) Almost no attention is given in the article to what from the Orthodox point of view is crucial: actually identifying the Shroud as an Orthodox holy object. Page 6 of the article from this point of view is crucial: each one of these references should be carefully researched and documented, and more found. Where, for example, does the reference from St. Nina come from? Its known that she was involved with the Lord's Tunic, but not (as far as I know) the Shroud. It's extremely important that the Orthodox history of the Shroud be made quite certain; then the scientific corroboration becomes stunning. But to build almost the whole argument on the scientific evidence is extremely risky.

All this is said not to throw any cold water!—but just to emphasize that to make the Shroud convincing to many Orthodox people much more than the scientific evidence is needed—the whole Orthodox context must be established. There must be found, for example, a sufficient answer for those who argue that it couldn't be genuine because there is no Orthodox feast day or service to it. All this requires thought and research, and a premature presentation of the issue will only harm the cause of its acceptance.

Pray for us—we are still in last year with the OW and the Post Office has given us until July 1 to get caught up!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

117.

Feb. 25/Mar. 10, 1973

St. Tarasius of Constantinople

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom rejoice!

Good heavens, we didn't mean for our poor letter to put you into such a state! Indeed, the evil one beset you. It is doubtless profitless to sort out all the reasons, both demonic and human, for such a trial; what is important is that you survive it and are able to go forward having safely passed through the depression and anxiety and trusting in God Who can bring us through every trial.

What to say further about the Shroud article? Fortunately, we had a visitor these past few days, a young convert who came from the Metropolia several years ago and is very sensitive to the mission of true Orthodoxy today (he likes Nikodemos very much, by the way). We "tested" his views:

1st, on the Shroud itself, about which he has read one or two books and accepts it as authentic;

2nd, on what he thinks of Fr. Panteleimon's outright rejection of it: although he gready respects Fr. Panteleimon, he suspects this might reflect more his strong anti-Latinism than anything else; he would like to see what arguments he has against it.

3rd, what he thinks of Sarah's ms, which he read here for the first time: he said he was quite sympathetic to the article and its approach, although he would prefer to see everything documented; and he noted that Sarah seemed to be just as certain about some secondary, questionable points (he mentioned the concept of "Basileus," for example) as about the stronger main points. In general, however, he said he would welcome its publication by an Orthodox publisher as a preliminary, tentative study—but he would definitely wince if he had to read about "Stations of the Cross" from an Orthodox publisher! When he was told it had already been printed, he wondered if it wasn't possible to reprint at least page 12, leaving out the "Stations." When asked about the idea that the main point about the Shroud was that it confirms itself—he said no, he couldn't accept science as that important to faith, it's too relative and open to change and it's very important that the Shroud's Orthodox history and status be documented.

Well, that's one man's opinion, and we give it to you (and we solicited it in the first place) because he is doubtless typical of the thoughtful Nikodemos reader. His ideas are rather close to our own. I will only add a few more comments.

(1) As to publishing it as is: that, of course, is up to your conscience. We gave you advice, but certainly not a command. It would be nice to have the whole presentation stronger and with as few points as possible that are open to doubt and legitimate criticism. But, like our friend—and as I noted in my last letter—we find the strongest thing against it to be the R.C. references.

(2) Why are the RC references so objectionable? Not so much because some people will "pick" on this point (that's secondary) as because these references help to "pollute" the Orthodox atmosphere of the reader and either make him cringe and perhaps even doubt because of them (if he is aware of such things), or (if he isn't aware) helps him to accept some purely RC "traditions" as though they were authentic—which is worse, as the poor Orthodox people are

already “Latinized” enough! Concerning the “Stations of the Cross,” our friend couldn’t see any compelling reason why they were put in in the first place, and indeed the testimony of a certain number of falls certainly is not a part of the primary testimony of the Shroud. The “Stations” are a late Latin innovation, and to speak of them being sanctioned by “Holy Tradition” and “authority” is to do a disservice to the Orthodox reader (which is who your reader is!). On one point, indeed, (“Veronica”) the Latins actually have a “countertradition,” since that is their equivalent of the Orthodox tradition of the Holy Face given to King Agbar.

Another point on Latin influence in the article (which I skipped over in my first letter) is brought out by Fr. Grabbe’s letter to you: indeed, Orthodox tradition is quite certain about the four nails, i.e., the feet of the Saviour were nailed separately, and the RC crossed feet is definitely a later innovation (13th century, I believe). This point, by the way, is also emphasized in the Jordanville [article] on the Shroud. Evidently the Shroud itself does not give proof one way or the other on this point. To overthrow or cast doubt on this quite firm and certain Orthodox tradition, although it might seem like a “small point,” would be very bad. For the Shroud to be Orthodox (i.e., authentic), it cannot contradict firm Orthodox tradition in any respect. Otherwise science is placed before tradition, and the gates are opened! (By the way, I don’t think such as point as the nails through the wrists and not through the palms can be criticized on this ground; there has been no actual tradition about the palms, only a general conception, which is not infallible.)

If these distinct Latin elements could be omitted, or those pages reprinted without them, the article would be much more easily accepted by Orthodox. Otherwise the Shroud is placed in a pretty distinctly Latin context, which is the chief criticism that some people already have against it: that it is not only physically in a Latin land (as are the relics of St. Nicholas; this of course is no argument), but is actually a Latin holy object (however it might be explained), and therefore questionable. If you send it out with such Latin references, your preface would have to do a lot, and you would doubtless have to emphasize that it was written in an RC context and has to be “corrected” by the Orthodox mind.

(3) There are many small criticisms, which are however not really crucial as long as the article is understood as preliminary and tentative. In particular, one reason why we emphasize the need to document its history is that the reference to St. Nina seems to be a mistake, in that her Life contains much material on the Lord’s Tunic, but not a word, as far as we recall, on the Shroud. I haven’t read the whole life recently so can’t be absolutely certain, but one mistake like that would indicate that whoever documented the history wasn’t always careful. A detailed documentation, with full references, and quotes showing how the historical evidence does or doesn’t point to the Shroud of Turin (for example, what precisely are the measurements made by Arculphus—can they be identified in modern measure and do they correspond rather exactly to the Shroud; that would be an important corroboration)—would probably be a long article in itself, but one day it should be done, and by an Orthodox Christian! Research should also be done on the history and texts of the services of Great Friday, the background of the bringing out of the Winding Sheet at Great Friday Vespers, etc. I admit that it rather looks as though all of this material will fit soundly and stunningly together—but until this is done, i.e., as I said before, the Orthodox context of the Shroud is fully established, it will still remain in the realm of private

opinion and not something generally and wholeheartedly accepted (or reaccepted!) by the Church.

(4) Agreeing with our friend, we must repeat that we are not impressed with the scientific evidence of the Shroud in itself, it needs confirmation from Church tradition. 75 years ago a new scientific discovery unlocked the truly remarkable secret of the Shroud; but what if a new scientific discovery tomorrow would reveal (to make just one out of many possible speculations!) that a body could separate from such a Shroud and leave the markings intact without being resurrected? Science restored faith, and then took it away!? No—science is only the handmaid of higher knowledge and must be kept in its place. I really think the idea of the Shroud as chiefly self-authenticating is onesided and insecure.

As a conclusion: whatever you choose to do, the question of the Shroud and its acceptance among Orthodox Christians is of course not finished. It is doubtless true that almost anything you could write would not convince Fr. Panteleimon (although conceivably a thorough investigation of church services and history might convince him—he has changed his mind before on such things). Sarah's article has many good, and some not so good, points; use it as your conscience.tells you. Do not do anything about it as long as your conscience is disturbed or you have gnawing doubts one way or the other—let everything settle down first so you can think and act clearly. Of course, one can always act "wrong" even on a clear conscience!—but even that is not a fatal mistake as long as one's mind and heart remain open and one keeps first things first.

Please be assured, by the way, that you're welcome at our humble skete in no way depends on your attitude toward the Shroud or the points of your defense of it! We are all human and fallible and there are many points here that are subject to personal interpretation. We are inclined to agree with you on its authenticity (although we are waiting for the articles on the services and history!)—but if we disagreed we wouldn't "excommunicate" you—we would just gather our strongest evidence and present it to you.

We hadn't heard of Vladika John's attitude toward the Shroud, though of course it's very likely that he accepted it; where did you hear this?

Tomorrow is Forgiveness Sunday and the beginning of our lenten labor. Father Herman and I both bow before you and Susan (and Ian also) and beg your forgiveness if we have sinned against you in any way, in word, deed or thought. May God forgive and have mercy on us all!

We look forward to your visit.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

118.

March 1/14, 1973

Third Day of Great Lent

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! We are very glad to hear your positive reply to the proposed periodical. We are very grateful for your offer to print it for us. However, the printing itself would be the least of our labors, as we would plan to print 4 pages at a time (smaller than Orth. Word), 16-24 pages, and probably only 1000 copies to begin with—so the printing would entail only a fraction (10% or so) of the labor in printing OW.

At any rate, we still have to talk the whole project over again with Vladika Nektary, who at times can be very timid about such things. It may be better to begin not quite so soon, only remembering that no matter what happens, Vladika Nektary did give us his blessing to revive Vladika Johns periodical.

Still, we would like very much to print something for the 7th anniversary of Vladika Johns repose. We would also like to do something for Vladika Savva's memory. In reading over his papers and also his articles in Orthodox Russia, we see that he had a definite message for the Russian people, which will probably be forgotten now if we don't do something about it. His articles on Vladika John speak more strongly than any of us on the fact that he is a saint who is not yet properly valued and who is of great significance for the Orthodox people. His testament to us is, clearly, to continue speaking this truth, even if the "organization" mentality doesn't like to hear it.

In reading the papers of Bishop Savva, we find addressed to him the usual complaints against Vladika John (these are the worst things they can find about him!): that he is irritable, crude, unthinking of others, (for example because he comes late to services), disrupts the usual order of things, is a poor administrator, can't be understood, mumbles and falls asleep in the midst of the most important (worldly) discussions, that the clergy of the S.F. Cathedral consider it a holiday when he isn't present. I myself had occasion to witness most of these phenomena, and I can testify, for example, that on the several occasions when he was "crude" with me I was extremely grateful and saw only spiritual benefit in it. In all of this I think there is hidden a significant fact about Vladika which hasn't been brought out much: that he refused to allow the Church to become a habit, and by his seeming crudeness, he tried to jolt people out of the spiritual rut into which it can be so easy to fall. As soon as Vladika was gone, everything became "smooth" in the Cathedral and the clergy were content—because now they could and did make the Church a habit, incapable of inspiring anyone except on the capital of the past which has not yet been used up (but will be before long!).

But to come to the point: we would like to print, before July 2, Vladika Savva's articles on Vladika John in book-form. This would mean about 100 pages of offset material from Orthodox Russia, and a little more material and some pictures which we could print ourselves. How realistic is the possibility of your printing these 100 pages (i.e., 50 printings of 8 1/2 x 11 paper, 2000 copies)? At what rate can the work be done and how much, for example, could be done if one of us (or possibly both) were to come and help for up to the better part of a week? If this proposal doesn't overwhelm you completely, please let us know something of the technical and time factors involved. What is the biggest sheet your machine can take or your plate-maker make? (If it was 11×17 it would speed things up, but we doubt it.)

As you see, we would very much like to come out with something now which would be both for the glory of Vladika John and the memory of Vladika Savva, and to do it as joint tribute from both you and us would please us all the more.

All this, of course, is "secret," and we haven't even mentioned it to Vladika Nektary. It's probably better for him if he's kept "uninvolved" anyway! Although our ruling bishop will probably not be pleased with it, we don't think he'll say anything, since after all its only a "reprint." (If he were informed in advance, of course, he would insist on advising, discouraging, etc., and in the end destroying the whole idea.)

We look forward, again, to your response to all this. Please pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. In regard to our other project: how do you have a 2nd class permit without needing paid subscribers? Does the "non-profit" label obliterate that rule?

119.

March 4/17,1973

St. Gerasimus of the Jordan

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. This will be mainly replies to your questions.

We have no immediate plans to reprint the "charismatic" article, so Fr. Neketas is certainly welcome to do so. If no one does reprint it, later we might collect that series of articles on non-Chris- tian religions and have it reprinted by offset, but now we're too overwhelmed with other things. We get the Logos and have noted with decreasing interest its progress from worse to worser.

Yes, the repose of Vladika Savva was a loss for all of us, and as usual, it is only now that we begin really to value him. We have an article on him in the new (;;;-Dec) OW and will be printing regularly some of his material on Vladika John. Unfortunately, there is not too much beyond what he already published in Orthodox Russia, but some of it is very valuable (for example, a letter from Vladika Johns younger brother describing his childhood). We haven't started going through Vlad. Savva's norebooks yet, but they seem at first glance to be full of nothing but Holy Fathers (handwritten!). Certainly you are welcome to have the icon of the Forerunner as a remembrance of him.

Concerning the Panagia and Cross of Vladika John, I wrote a hasty scribbled note to Fr. Panteleimon when Fr. Herman returned from Edmonton, but probably it was too unclear or cryptic. In a word: after hearing about them from Fr. Panteleimon in Seattle, Fr. Herman asked about them in Edmonton: the Panagia, with inscription on the back from Archbishop Gabriel, he got and we have here. However, no one knew about a Cross with particles of the True Cross;

there was only a Cross with many relics inside, of which we have a list. This we also have. Is it the same one, or is it absolutely certain that it has particles of the True Cross and not relics? By the way, don't spread it (beyond

Fr. Panteleimon) that we have these, as we have them "unofficially" and would never have asked for them if Fr. Panteleimon hadn't spoken. Vladika Nektary knows, but his ruling Vlad, doesn't, and we have yet to hear his response to all this. Unfortunately, he is not well disposed to the glorification of Vladika Johns memory, and besides he seems to stand in mortal fear of Vlad. Vit. We belong to the "other" tradition: do as your conscience says and speak out, and if they persecute you or "retire" you for it, well and good. (Did you ever hear of a "retired" monk? Maybe you will!)

We have no copies left of the original St. Herman Life. One day we'll print a better one!

The Skete at Inverness Park has long since folded. It was never more than Fr. Dimitry and one or two hopefuls, but there was no attempt to introduce a rule of life, so the candidates soon moved on. There were picnics there in the summer. Now it is a "retreat center" for the SF parish with its "young, intellectual" (Schmemannized) priest, and a convert (Daniel Everiss) stays there as caretaker. Fr. Dimitry now lives in Santa Rosa where he is parish priest. We are told that Daniel bought a set of bells for the "Skete" from Sears Roebuck, I guess to tickle the ears of the "retreatants."

We'll be interested in the Hilandar checklist. The 1794 Paisius Life is probably the original version of the Life we are now printing—very beautiful, and we hope it will move our readers as much as it has moved us. It will take 4 issues to complete, and then God willing we'll print it as a book. Between this and our other projects we are kept quite busy. This spring we must also finish the outside of the chapel and demolish several cabins in Platina (we've been offered the lumber). There's also our "Vladika Savva Memorial Library" to start building, not to mention other construction projects! And the Post Office has given us until July 1 to be caught up on OW "or else." Pray for us.! It looks as though we might have several more hands shortly, but that might be a trail too!

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

120.

April 5/18, 1973

St. Mark the Anchorite of Athens

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! We hasten to reply to your letter regarding Alexey Young and Nikodemos, which frankly caused us some astonishment. Concerning some of the points you raise we can set your mind at rest, for Alexey is quite innocent with regard to some to your fears, but I'm afraid regarding some other points there are some basic disagreements which your letter points to and

which we simply did not know existed up to now. As always we will state frankly our opinions and trust that bringing such things into the open will serve good purpose.

1. Concerning Alexey's "teaching" like a "convert" and retaining his "Roman perspective": We know Alexey rather well and can testify that he is by no means an "unstable convert" who rushes to put his own fancies into print. Perhaps you will be shocked to learn that from the beginning of Nikodemos, Alexey has submitted all the material in it to us for prior approval and criticism, and every one of our suggestions he has taken with extreme seriousness, to the extent of changing, omitting or adding whole passages, and also of not printing some things altogether. With regard to himself as a "teacher" of Orthodoxy we have found him to be most humble, reasonable, and anxious to learn and not to project any Latin or other non-Orthodox attitudes into his printed material. To say that we have "approved" the content of Nikodemos is not to say that we would have printed such articles ourselves, or if we did, in the way or with the tone of Nikodemor, it is only to say that we did not find them objectionable, but, in most cases, useful. But I will say frankly that our "censorship" never took the form of a command, but always of advice, even though sometimes expressed in no uncertain terms. Vladika John taught us that laborers in the missionary field are to be guided and inspired, but not pushed or forced; therefore we have never tried to force on Alexey our own points of view in matters of opinion, encouraging him rather to mature his own points of view in full accord with Church tradition and with a constant awareness of how much he has to learn about this. We believe he is maturing in this way soundly and normally, and that his particular outlook is reaching and benefiting people who do not find that the present Orthodox publications exhaust all one has to know about Orthodoxy or the present situation of Orthodox believers.

2. With regard to Father Ephraim's letter and the advice of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in general: We have advised Alexey to accept with utmost seriousness any advice the Fathers may offer, not as "infallible" of course, but as well-meant and in all likelihood sound counsel. He was most anxious, in particular, to avoid legitimate criticism from the Monastery on the subject of evolution, and therefore he made a real effort to avoid even the appearance of the pitfalls that Fr. Ephraim brought out in his letter. As I recall, we told him that we think he did indeed avoid those pitfalls—specifically, the possible charge of "fundamentalism" (which I seriously doubt that he ever held). And indeed, rereading the evolution article, we do not find that it can seriously be criticized on the grounds of "fundamentalism" by any but a biased or uninformed reader. It is true that he gets into the realm of science—but evolution precisely claims to be "scientific" (which it certainly is not, it is religious philosophy masquerading as science), and it is quite impossible to discuss it at all without examining its scientific evidence (which simply does not exist—and why should we be afraid to say so, just to avoid being called obscurantists who think the earth is flat?). But more on evolution below.

I must say, as I think I already wrote you, that we found Fr. Ephraim's letter not very satisfactory on several points, and in particular because it did not really answer Alexeys real concerns, but instead projected on to him some fundamentalist viewpoints which he doesn't hold. I think this must be because Fr. Ephraim doesn't know Alexey and somehow didn't get what was bothering him; but in any case what I say in no way diminishes our respect for Fr. Ephraim, it only

convinces us that no one is perfect, least of all we ourselves, and if we in the battle for true Orthodoxy do not have tolerance for each other's weaknesses and mistakes (even those expressed in print!), there is no hope for any of us or for the Orthodox mission today. As I recall, Kalomiros made this same point in Against False Union, and we have impressed it on Alexey and others many times. From this point of view, it is certainly very unfortunate that The Old Calendarist printed Fr. Ephraim's letter in full and with names given— for what? to call to a debate among laborers in the mission field? There must be more caution and tact here!

3. Regarding Alexey and "lay saints" etc.: I must say frankly that your idea that he has a "soft-sell" approach to Orthodoxy is unjust to him. We have discussed often with him the tone, content, orientation, etc., of Nikodemos, and he and we are quite agreed that Nikodemos is in full harmony with other Synod publications as complementing them, and not as repeating their stands. You have probably noticed that our Orthodox Word, also has had of late much less concerning contemporary subjects, anti-ecumenism, etc.—not at all because we've changed our mind about these things of have changed our orientation, but solely because your publications (and a few others) are now doing this work for us. We have no reason to doubt Alexey's Orthodoxy or his awareness of the dangers of Latin-type thinking, etc.—it's just that he doesn't feel it's his mission to go into that. And on another point: he's certainly not weak on monasticism, and in fact the reason he was so interested in printing the Life of St. Juliana is because it shows the monastic spirit in a lay person, hence points out that lay life too must be penetrated by monastic ideals. We agree with him that such lives can be very inspiring in just the right way—more directly so than the lives of monk saints (of which, by the way, The Orthodox Word has had nothing but for a long time now!).

4. The most important point, regarding evolution:

a. First of all, let us shock you right off by saying that we read the article before publication, made many suggestions (which were all incorporated into the article), and fully approved it; and now rereading it after receiving your letter we find nothing seriously wrong with it—except that it is much too short and concise. Of course, now with your letter it becomes obvious also that the approach was perhaps too abrupt and direct for many Orthodox readers today, and more preparation of them should perhaps be made.

b. Therefore, there is obviously some deep disagreement between your views and ours on this subject. I have always regarded evolution, in all its ramifications, as an important part of the "American modern" intellectual baggage which I left behind when I became Orthodox, and it never before occurred to me that any aware Orthodox Christian would regard it as an unimportant, especially now when may scientists have abandoned it (purely on scientific grounds), when the pseudo-religious presuppositions of its supporters are so evident, and when it is so much bound up with masonry-ecumenism and the whole pseudo-religious modern outlook.

We were frankly astonished at your objection to the article, and have been thinking long and hard to try to find your thinking on this subject. Then it occurred to us: apparently you regard "modern" ideas as being of two types: those that directly attack the Church, which must be

confronted and uprooted mercilessly (masonry, ecumenism); and those which do not directly attack the Church and are not directly theological (evolution).

Is this true? Nonetheless, I don't see how it can be denied that "modern" ideas are after all one whole: they are formed first outside the Church, develop in atheist-agnostic minds, and then move through the whole of society until they reach the Church, changing form in the meantime to fit in with each current of ideas. "Evolution" is one such idea (but it's not really an "idea"—see below) that has not yet directly attacked Orthodoxy. But look what it has already done to papism: is it not true that the whole dissolution of papism in the past decade is directly bound up with the "unleashing" of Teilhardism (whose books were more or less banned up to then) in that same period, a process which was presented for popular consumption 10 years ago in a rather cheap but symptomatic novel, The Shoes of the Fisherman? By this I do not mean that a certain number of Teilhardian theses were opposed to so many papist theses and conquered them: for his evolution is not really a "heresy" (we will agree that this term applied to him, especially from the Orthodox side, is imprecise!), but rather a whole rival thought-pattern offering a whole different approach to life (and, consequently, religion); and being already so much a part of the "spirit of the age," its approach was persuasive not by argument but by fitting in with unconscious attitudes of people who were outwardly papist.

We were rather surprised when you (and Fr. Ephraim too, as I recall) mentioned that you haven't read Teilhard and weren't familiar with his ideas; i.e., you are waiting for the wave to hit Orthodoxy before you start thinking of the subject. But really, Teilhardism is the "Christianity" (and "Orthodoxy") of the future, or rather its metaphysical foundation (it fits very nicely in with "charismatic" phenomena), and it is by no means too early to find out what is hitting us! Here it may well be that Alexeys position (as a layman in the midst of the world, and coming from outside of Orthodoxy which has already been completely captured by "evolutionary" spirituality and philosophy) has enabled him to be aware of something that the more "sheltered" Orthodox (clergy, monks, life-long Orthodox) simply don't see yet. How overjoyed I myself was to find this "shelteredness" when I became Orthodox, because I saw that in this "world-to-itself" I would be able to change completely my mental orientation (not to mention spiritual) and no longer think at all in terms of the reigning despotism of ideas (in which evolution has a key place). I did notice, however, that other converts didn't seem to grasp this point, and some of them began to discuss how this or that modern current can be understood or accepted or criticized in terms of Orthodoxy—a false outlook, because there are two quite separate mental worlds involved, and the difference is rather greater than that between two totally unrelated languages. But the Russian Church Abroad, of course, is the only place I found where this separate mental approach was kept intact; in the other "jurisdictions" one would have to keep all this intellectual baggage. But all this is becoming too philosophical. This, by the way, explains why some Synod priests are blissfully unaware of those issues which bother the rest of us!

We fully agree with Alexey that "evolution is one of the most dangerous concepts that faces the Orthodox Christian today"— perhaps it is the very key (intellectual) to the assault upon the Church, to the very "philosophy" (and there is such a thing!) of the coming Antichrist. If we understand you and Father Ephraim aright, you regard it as merely an "idea" which one can take

or leave, and which can involve one in endless modernist-fundamentalist discussions which are totally pointless (how many "hours" in the first "seven days"? etc.) We certainly agree on the pointlessness of such discussions, but now the issue is much deeper than that; "evolution" is a whole mind-set that is quite incompatible with Orthodoxy. But that is a treatise in itself. Alexey's article, as I said, is much too brief, but perhaps it will have the good effect of inspiring a thorough treatment of the subject (not a "modernist-fundamentalist" fight, but also not what Fr. Ephraim apparently wants to do, to stand so far above the issue that one can't even discern that evolution is a crucial question, and destructive of Orthodoxy not so much because of its theses as because of its intellectual-spiritual orientation.).

Significantly, the same mail that brought your letter brought also Concern, with the article of Theodosius Dobzhansky (who just received a Doctorate honoris causae from St. Vladimir s Seminary) on "Evolution: God's Method of Creation." Well, here are the arguments of an "Orthodox evolutionist," and they are the same as all other evolutionary arguments, emotional faith with not one shred of genuine evidence to support it (although he presents material that looks very formidable and "scientific"). But more important: read between the lines and answer: does this man believe in God as a true Orthodox Christian believes in Him? He does not! He believes in Him as "modern" man believes; he is a deist. And very revealing is his conclusion: "One of the great thinkers of our age, Teilhard de Chardin, wrote the following: 'Is evolution a theory, a system, or a hypothesis? It is much more—it is a general postulate to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must henceforward bow and which they must satisfy in order to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light which illuminates all facts, a trajectory which all lines of thought must follow—this is what evolution is.'"

This indeed is Teilhardism, and by "all theories and systems" he means in particular theology and spirituality, as being part of the highest evolutionary layer, the "noosphere," which is just now converging in the evolutionary apex called the "Omega Point" or "Super Christ." I hate to appear "fundamentalist," but his mammoth structure rests on just a few little "fundamental" facts (or fabrications), which most people seem afraid to get near because they seem so "scientific," beginning with the transition of one species into another and so up the ladder.

To sum up: Whatever weaknesses Alexey's article on evolution may have, it is an attempt to answer a real problem which we cannot avoid: that ideological orientation and value-system which is taught in all public schools as fact and which poisons and stupefies Orthodox minds without ever attacking Orthodoxy as such. Alexey's response is sound, even if it is not (of course) perfect. We Orthodox are not afraid to be "narrow" on the question of ecumenism; why should we be afraid to be "narrow" on the question of evolution? The two issues, after all, are very closely bound up with each other.

Regarding Alexey and "lay thinking" in general, we continue to regard him and it as very positive and healthy—provided, of course, that it does not try to proceed on its own opinion alone but always looks for and receives counsel from within the more "official" part of the Church. Under this condition, we are not even afraid of his possible "mistakes" on matters open to personal opinion (i.e., not involving heresy, attacks against bishops, etc.)—for he is not an "authority" who must always come out with some "official" or impeccable statement of Church

teaching but rather a struggler in an intellectual jungle whose dangers and real problems are not always too apparent to us formal "ecclesiastical" people—but this is precisely the world in which our Orthodox Christians live today.

Enough for this for now. Please forgive my longwordiness. Regarding our printing projects in Russian: We will not think about the periodical until after we've caught up with OW and gotten the 1974 Calendar out, but maybe by the first of the year we will be ready to start, depending also on Vladika Nektary. Please keep it quiet, however. The book of Vladika Savva is also not too easy because we will have to add quite a few pages ourselves that were not in Orthodox Russia. I doubt if we can do it before July 2. We have also just gotten the address of a place in Taiwan that offers to print offset books and hardbind them for hardly more than the cost of the paper in the US., and we are of course looking into this also.

Please pray for us, and be assured of our love and respect for you and the Fathers. However, I think there are some issues we should all be thinking seriously about!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

121.

April 5/18,1973

St. Mark the Anchorite of Athens

Dear Alexey,

Just a note. We received Monday a rather shocking letter from Father Neketas expressing extreme displeasure with your "evolution" article. He apparently sent you a letter too, a copy of which he said he was enclosing in his letter to us (but he didn't).

After reading his letter, we read your article together once again—and neither of us find anything wrong with it, except that it is much too short and concise. After looking in vain for any other source of Fr. Neketas' displeasure, we can only conclude that Fr. Neketas and Fr. Ephraim apparently are just not aware of the whole issue of evolution, whether in its scientific side or in its religious-theological implications. Obviously your article has touched something very deep (frankly we are astonished that people so keen on ecclesiastical matters, ecumenism, etc., should seem never to have given much thought to such an important thing as evolution; apparently it is because it seems to be outside the Church sphere).

However, now it is very important for all of us to approach this "disagreement" very carefully. We are sending Fr. Neketas (hopefully with today's mail also) a long letter expressing our surprise at his letter and giving something of our own views, also, incidentally, removing the illusions he seems to have formed about you as a self-willed convert who takes no one's advice and has never thrown off his Latinism. We have frankly no idea what his response will be when he reads that we approved the article before publication and continue to approve it. Maybe we will get thrown in the "fundamentalist" boat too, I don't know. We certainly hope not, but rather

that he and the Fathers in Boston will start to do some thinking about their own "American-modern" baggage which they seem to have dragged with them this far.

We must be "wise as serpents and gentle as doves" in what we do and say now, and by no means must we allow ourselves to be dragged into an argument on "modernist-fundamentalist" lines. Maybe they are "modernists," I don't know; but we certainly are not fundamentalists. The truth lies much deeper than either of these merely rational positions, and it will not be easy to present it so that it will be properly understood, judging from Fr. Neketas' first response. I don't think either you or we should "argue" at all, but prepare for a more thorough presentation of the whole subject. Frankly, we want to really persuade them, and the way to do that is to go into the subject deeply, especially the spiritual implications.

What we must keep in mind and get across, I think, is not really evolution as a heresy or wrong idea, on the same level with other ideas, and therefore go out fighting with the ordinary weapons of polemics. Evolution is not that kind of idea—but rather a kind of deep-seated primordial force which seems to capture people quite apart from their conscious attitudes and reasoning. (There's a good reason for that: it's been drilled into everyone from the cradle, and therefore is very hard to bring out and look at rationally.) It's a rival thought-pattern to Orthodoxy, not just another idea.

Your article, beyond any doubt, is going to make you "unpopular" in places. Do not let this discourage you, or force you into a "defensive" posture. Your article is probably going to do something very painful at first but ultimately positive: bring out into the open some attitudes which have long been hiding in the shadows.

Do you get Concern? In the same mail with Fr. Neketas' letter (surely more than coincidence!) we also received the latest issue with an article by Theodosius Dobzhansky (who just was given an honorary Doctor's Degree by St. Vladimir's Seminary) called "Evolution: Gods Method of Creation"—a rather supercilious ridiculing of anti-evolutionism concluding with a fantastic quote (which we are sending to Fr. Neketas) from the "great thinker" Teilhard de Chardin. We'll make a copy of it for you if you didn't get it.

May God guide us all aright so that we may speak the truth in love—not to be "right," but to enlighten and save souls.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Have you thought about the icon for the chapel?

122.

April 8/21,1973

Lazarus Saturday

Dear Father Johnikios,

Blagoslovite!

Thank you for remembering us poor sinners. The subscription has been entered for the slave of God Constantine. May God hear his prayer and grant him the true grace of repentance!

We feel deficient in our desire to keep in closer contact with you in your very difficult path. It seems there are many who do not appreciate the labors of the fathers at Jordanville and "know better" how they should labor. May God guard us all in fruitful labors wherever we may be, but not to intrude on the good labors of others!

Apparently Fr. Lev is more or less in charge of Orthodox Life? Is anyone in Jordanville watching closely what he prints? We have in mind in particular the possibility of Metr. Anthony's unacceptable ideas on the "Dogma of Redemption" being included in the series of articles by him. Hopefully they will not be. I made a report on this subject to Fr. Panteleimon in Seattle recently, and he at least saw some of the difficulties and said he didn't have any chance to print anything like this anyway in the conceivable future (despite the fact that The Old Calendarist says so!). But Fr. Lev seems to be a rather independent operator. May God grant him good fruits—but we doubt that he's aware of this issue!

What do you think of Nikodemos? Did the article on "evolution" bother you in the last issue? It didn't us, but our Greeks seem a little upset over it. May God grant that there will not be unnecessary quarrels over points open to some personal opinion, among laborers in the true Orthodox mission field today! We try to be in harmony with everyone as best we can, but are frank when we feel it necessary. Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas don't much like Tsar Constantine and Blessed Augustine in the calendar, but thanks be to God, they are peaceful about it and I hope got the point that we don't want to take the authority of dropping anyone until we have good reason from the Russian sources to do so.

We are supposed to be helping Vladimir Anderson prepare for the priesthood. But please tell us precisely what it is that he can get by going to Jordanville for the summer or part of the summer. Is there some regular course now or tutoring in English language? (which we doubt.) Or is he supposed to go there only to pass tests on the books in Russian you indicated to him? (which his daughter can't translate). In any case, we have started giving him some lessons (beginning with liturgies) and will proceed depending on what we hear from you. We will be glad to take quite a bit of rime with him. We have a feeling that Vladika Anthony's idea of "sending him to Jordanville" is a little vague—?

Laurence Campbell has just joined us and asks that you send the remaining number of Orthodox Life on his subscription to our address. Please pray for us, that we may be able to proceed truly in the spirit of Blessed Paisius! You are the first to comment on our printing his Life—but it is time, isn't it?

We greet you in advance with the Paschal greeting and beg your prayers. Please give our greetings to Father Vladimir, who has gladdened us with his recent letters.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

with greetings from Father Herman and Brother Laurence

123.

Palm Sunday, [April 9/22], 1973

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite!

My dear, my dear, what to say now?! In the same mail with your latest letter came a letter from Alexey about the "news" which he is sure will be greeted by us with "sighs and sadness"—that he decided to send out the "Shroud" article over our objections, and how much he regrets it now! We haven't received the printed version yet, so have no idea what he said in his preface, which we assured him could not make up for the blatant Latinisms in the text. (By the way, he didn't submit this preface to us for criticism, if indeed he wrote one.)

Well, is this supposed to one of those "mistakes" which we just wrote you we weren't afraid of his making?! I hope you don't think this is one of the articles we "approved"!)

However, let us shock you again by saying that we aren't afraid of an article on the Shroud itself; but such an article isn't the one! It doubtless will do exactly what we told Alexey: (1) Cause a great furor; (2) do so justly because an article written for Latins is given as Orthodox (and the text speaks more strongly than anything he could have said in his preface), and therefore the true case for the Shroud (if there is one—see below) will be rejected outright by many because of the papist trappings; and (3) in general the article "pollutes" the spiritual atmosphere with papist attitudes and outright errors, from which the poor Orthodox people have already suffered so much. Not to mention (4) what will happen to Nikodemos as an Orthodox voice after this?

But what about the Shroud itself. Until very recently we have never been the slightest bit interested in it and could not even bring ourselves to read the Jordanville pamphlet on it or anything else pro or contra. Finally, however, we saw that in view of all the controversy (our Russians as a whole certainly accept it, and by no means are they all papophiles, and we knew that Fr. Panteleimon was strongly against it) we reluctantly decided that we would have to at least become informed on the subject, to the extent of reading a few works on it. This task was assigned to me, and I must confess my initial repugnance at approaching a sacred object by means of laboratory experiments on cadavers and the like. But I swallowed that and read on to get the whole picture.

Well, I got a pretty good picture of the whole and presented the leading points of it to Father Herman. Now brace yourself: we think it extremely likely that it is genuine. We are not entirely convinced as yet, as we told Alexey the absolutely crucial point for Orthodox believers will be the thorough documentation of its history and the evidence for the Church's veneration of it.

Where is the service to it? —the Vespers of Great Friday and the Matins of Great Saturday! (This startling idea, by the way, has occurred to several people we've asked quite

independently.) When is its feast day—Great Friday and every Friday, if we are to believe the 11th century testimony (I don't recall if Sarah's article or the Jordanville article mention it or not) that it was brought out for veneration by the faithful every Friday (in the Blachernae Temple, I believe).

Well, that's enough to suggest that we think there might be a case for it—but were not going to "defend" it for you, because we haven't gone into any sources. We are completely open on the subject, but frankly sympathetic toward it. The "bloody detail" of the Shroud itself does not bother us— if it is what it is claimed to be, then of course it is full of bloodstains! How one should write about it if it is genuine—that, of course, is another question.

However, to get back to the article—as I said, this is not the article with which to defend it, if it is genuine, and we agree with you on the points you raised, all of which (and others) we made to Alexey. We emphasized the importance of the four nails (not three) even though he thought it at first an unimportant "detail"—but the Jordanville article precisely mentions the four nails and the lateness of the Latin tradition of three, because there is no evidence from the marks of the Shroud one way Or the other. We told him that the Lord's Tunic has an important part in the Life of St. Nina, but we don't recall a single reference to the Shroud there, which makes us not convinced by the other references either, until they are checked and others found. We told him that the article places disproportionate emphasis on the scientific side, which by no means can prove that the God-man rose from the dead or that this is His Winding-shroud, but at most can be a startling confirmation of these facts to the extent that scientific knowledge can "confirm" anything—and we specifically warned him against trusting scientific knowledge so much, as it is the lowest and least stable form of knowledge). (By the way, in case I didn't make it clear in my last letter, the argument against the supposed "scientific" theory of evolution is not itself scientific, for "science" itself can neither prove nor disprove it, for science its only guesswork: the argument against it is theological, that it involves implications which are entirely unacceptable for Orthodoxy, and these implications can't be escaped, and every propounder of evolution uses them, the theists and spiritualists being worse that the atheists.) We warned him that Sarah speaks with equal confidence about some dubious speculations (the Roman "Basileus," etc.), outright errors (the three nails), and the more important points of evidence which the Shroud seems to give, which will make it easy for someone to tear the whole thing apart by pounding on her errors; etc., etc.

Unfortunately, we didn't read Sarah's article (it's 100% hers!) until just before Great Lent, when Alexey told us he was thinking of distributing it during Lent, and by the time we read it and got our comments to him he had already sent it to the printer. Our letter made him abandon for a while the idea of sending it out (despite the considerable sum it must have cost him), and we thought he had really abandoned it for good. But alas, temptation overcame him and for the first time he did something directly against our counsel to him—and of course, at the worst possible moment, when a hornet's nest has erupted over "evolution" (which in our view is a completely different matter, as you already know). We are sending him a good scolding—but one with love and genuine concern over what he should do now. Of course, he hasn't gotten rid of all his Latin background (and has now proclaimed it to the world) (although in articles he writes himself he's

cautious and always asks), but he's trying and learning, as we said in our last letter, and this mistake (if he survives it!) will help him on that path.

I say, "if he survives it," and doubtless you are already rather certain that another "crazy convert" has gone off the deep end. But with this we can't agree—not unless he does go wild or collapse completely now under this trial which his own blunder has caused him. He still respects and trusts us, and we will do our best to keep him from going off that "deep end" right now. Should he abandon Nikodemos? We don't see why he should—Orthodox Life printed a Shroud article (admittedly a better one) and survived, and you still advertise it, having passed that article over with benign oblivion. Nikodemos also can survive, we think. And you already know our approval of this kind of "lay periodical," although we didn't give you all our thinking on this subject.

Well, now at the end of a second long epistle this week you probably have some conclusions about our attitudes and approaches. Specifically, you are perhaps thinking that inexperienced people like Alexey should be "taken in hand" and not simply "counseled," as we have tried to do. To this we will disagree, for two reasons: (1) Vladika John gave us the path which we are following in this respect, and he is our guiding star, and we see pretty clearly the meaning of his approach to missionary labor and why he chose it; and (2) what is the alternative? We were frankly horrified when we heard that Fr. Panteleimon had suggested a year or so ago that Vladika Vitaly be somehow placed "in charge" of converts or convert priests, to avoid the "mistakes" of the past. Well, yes, that might mean the end of the "mistakes" of the past (but somehow we doubt even that), but it would also mean the end of the Orthodox missionary movement in the Church Abroad, period. (And it wouldn't help to have someone better in charge—the principle itself is the dangerous thing.)

But speaking of Vlad. Vitaly (can I speak more frankly, now?)—do you see now something of what this alternative to Nikodemos and a reasonably free missionary movement is? We could have told you two years ago everything you now know about him and his approaches and more besides, but we deliberately refrained from this, not because of his high rank (which we respect, but we still speak the truth when it is called for), but chiefly for fear of causing any kind of hindrance to the possible good that might come out of the "missionary committee" (or whatever it was called) of which he was head. We do not believe in discouraging any kind of missionary labors which seem to be heading in the right direction. We even gave a notice to The True Vine after this first tentative issue when its full orientation was not yet visible—and not as a duty to an Archbishop, but as a duty to the missionary movement. (We would be glad to give such a notice to The Celtic Cross, by the way, but we have been waiting for another issue or two to test its stability first.)

Now we've just received the fourth (Jan.) issue, and there at last is Vlad. Vitaly in full color: a sub-mediocre sermon that reveals him as a disciple of the worst ("literary-sentimental") side of Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky—and such discipleship will only serve to discredit someone who in other respects was a great hierarch; a Protestant "childrens legend" which, Fr. Herman urges me to say, is an absolute mockery of Orthodox Russians, who do not believe in German "Christmas trees" (and Jordanville is so strict on the subject that the fathers won't even allow greens inside

the church during the feast days around Christmas); an endorsement of "Schmemannism' (p. 11) which reveals to our dismay that Fr. Michael doesn't get the point about Schmemann—which is not his "incorrect views" in this or that subject, but this whole hothouse approach to theology, which our simple Russian priests grasp immediately from their genuine Orthodox instinct without needing a theological degree; a Vasnetsov "icon" (how much we've fought in the Russian Church over him) which is a blasphemy against the saints; a mediocre article on holiness (apparently revealing Vlad. Vitaly's apologetic approach) over the signatures of one who is the leading public scandal of the Church Abroad; etc., etc.

This publication is a disgrace; it is not merely off the beam and completely unaware of what is needed today, it is positively harmful, and it presents our Church's official stand!?? Whatever is good in it is swallowed up and given the tone of the rest. Well, I won't rub in the fact that you are on the "editorial staff" and still advertize it, especially since we know how much you must be suffering over it yourself (to the extent to using it for kindling, so we hear!) But Alexey's efforts result in a much purer Orthodoxy than it, and even the blunder of the Shroud article (which at least is not part of the periodical) can be forgiven as the mistake of a young struggler, and not simply swallowed as the "official" statement of our Church.

Well, you already have our defense of Alexey, and we don't defend him for sending out the Shroud article—for which he will have to suffer—but, God willing, for his own good and the good of Nikodemos, which we really hope will not collapse because of this trial. Please pray for him.

Laurence Campbell has finally joined us for good, and you can probably imagine some of the adjustments that are now going on. So far all is peaceful, and we trust in God to bring a harmonious coenobia out of our previous "middle path," which incidentally is described (on a much higher level, of course!) in the installment of Elder Paisius' Life.

At the same time, Daniel Olson made his final decision to go to Fr. Panteleimon for good, and two weeks ago he came here to bid us a tearful farewell. His final decision was inspired by a long talk with Fr. Herman on his last visit, and we really feel that he is our "offering" to the Monastery and a part of the indissoluble tie that must always bind together us true laborers in Christ s harvest, whatever minor differences (or even seemingly major) in views we may have. Forgive us, Father, and pray for us. [Letter ends.]

124.

Passion Tuesday, 1973 [Apr. 11/24]

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom rejoice always! We received your new letter with the sad news, and in the same mail installment no. 2 of Fr. Neketas' displeasure, for which I'm afraid you have given him cause (he hadn't received our first letter yet.). We've written him a new letter making clear our own connection with the Shroud article, but also shocking him anew by saying we regard the Shroud as "extremely likely" genuine. In his letter he doesn't mention a single point that we didn't already give you as an objection to printing Sarah's article the way it

is—see what happens when you trust yourself? I'm afraid what will happen is just what we told you—that Sarahs Latinisms will just give ammunition to those who are violently against the Shroud and make it more difficult for Orthodox to accept it. Also, it gives all the "proof" needed for anyone disposed to believe that you are hopelessly in bondage to your Latin background. You should not have sent it out!!!

Well, that being said, what is done is done, and spiritually it could be quite good for you if you don't now act like a "crazy convert" (as I'm sure some are expecting you to). In strongest fashion we now urge you: DO NOT ENTER INTO ANY ARGUMENT WHATEVER WITH ANYONE OVER EVOLUTION OR THE SHROUD AT THIS TIME. If someone wants to provoke you into an argument, give him a reply such as you gave to Fr. Ephraim's letter, BUT DO NOT ARGUE. No letters to bishops or anyone else either! The dust is too thick and arguing will only make it thicker, no matter who is right or wrong, and it will be spiritually very harmful for you. Don't even think about these two subjects until the dust settles, if you can help it.

Concerning the issue of evolution—yes, your question about "heresy" is a semantic question, about which I hope to speak more in detail a little later—no time right now. The issue is a little complex, which explains why some people don't seem to grasp it, but is also a danger point in that violent arguments can take place between people who aren't even talking about the same aspect of "evolution." I'm going to ask Fr. Neketas to tell us exactly what Kalomiros said about some kind of "evolution" of which he "approves," so we won't be at all uncertain about this.

Do not be upset about this whole furor; learn humility from this trial, but do not think of abandoning Nikodemos, go right ahead with the next issue as if nothing had happened and don't even hint at anything there.

Always and ever regard yourself as a struggler and learner, and beware of thinking you know the whole answer on anything. We frankly think you are wrong that the case for the Shroud is secure just because of the scientific evidence—science simply cannot give that kind of secure knowledge. More emphasis must be placed on evidence of its tradition in the Church.

Pray for us. May Christ our God grant you to meet His Resurrection with joy and peace and in His grace.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. You are correct that the "Holy Family" is not an Orthodox icon or idea. The Latins in this have overemphasized the earthly side, while the Orthodox see clearly that this is not a family at all—a Virgin Mother and a seeming father who is only the guardian of Her virginity, and a Child Who is God! The Mother of God is often depicted rather as an Abbess, but never in any way as an ordinary mother or part of the earthly institution, the family.

125.

Bright Wednesday, 1973 [Apr. 19/May 2]

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

CHRIST IS RISEN! We trust that you and your family spent a spiritually profitable Pascha. We had a peaceful and quiet day here, after going to the "world" earlier in the week to receive Holy Communion and being there impressed by the deep spiritual bond which unites us supposed "desert- dwellers" with the simple Russian faithful, the sincere and striving converts, and with all the true Orthodox people today.

We received from Fr. Neketas copies of two letter which he sent to you, but no letter from him as yet. The letters to you were very disappointing to us; he wrote the second one surely after receiving our detailed defense of you. We have always looked upon Frs. Neketas and Panteleimon and their views with maximum sympathy, as you well know. But we believe we must look on all sincere and striving Orthodox people with the same sympathy and join no "camp" or "clique." And the fact remains, as we see it, that apart from printing a text without removing from it the somewhat scandalous Latin references (and we understand the temptation of having this text on hand after printing it doubtless at considerable expense), you have done nothing at all worthy of such a severe upbraiding (and that isn't what he's unbraiding you for!), whose effect, whatever the intention, can only be to cause you great discouragement.

Let those who wish accept every opinion of Fr. Panteleimon; that is their right and we do not dispute it. But to take these opinions (and both "evolution" and the "Shroud" are surely questions where opinion has a large place, concerning their importance, the approach to them, etc.) and beat someone over the head with them because he doesn't agree—seems to us totally uncalled for.

Concerning evolution: they regard it as unimportant and obviously haven't thought much about it (and this is why Sarah was wrong to get so excited and accuse them of "heresy"; they obviously haven't thought enough about it to form any kind of "heresy" on the subject; whatever views they have on evolution as a scientific "hypothesis" are doubtless quite vague and they don't seem to think there's any connection between that and anything theological). You, on the other hand, find that the whole question of evolution is quite deep and important and involves implications which are dangerous to purity of faith, even though no one in the Orthodox Church right now is explicitly trying to overthrow any specific dogma on the basis of evolution. We think you are right, and the question is very largely a philosophical one (with theological implications) that cannot be decided simply on the experience of being "40-years-0rthodox." But even assuming that you have overemphasized the importance of evolution—even then we are simply shocked by Fr. Neketas' violent response (all the way to the implied threat of "exposing" you in print for future transgressions!), which seems all out of proportion to any possible fault of your article.

Concerning the Shroud: obviously, here again is a matter very open to differing emphases, evaluation, etc. Fr. Neketas has raised a few questions which should really be answered in a thorough defense of the Shroud (nonetheless, they are still questions raised by common sense and logic, not by "revelation"); but he has by no means presented a case against it. Indeed, there are many more questions from the other side which I rather think he can't answer. As you know, we are wary of relying too much on scientific evidence; nonetheless, the scientific evidence in

the case of the Shroud is so striking that it cannot be avoided, and it is not sound simply to dismiss the Shroud with no better evidence against it than Fr. Neketas gives (which, like all negative evidence, is quite inconclusive) and without even examining the scientific evidence. According to such an approach, we should all cease thinking altogether and just follow whatever the "leader" says—the only problem being that whoever the "leader" might be, he is also human, with passions and prejudices very similar to the ones the rest of us have!

But let me get to the point: Obviously, the violence of Fr. Neketas' reaction means that something deeper than either "evolution" or the "Shroud" is involved, and we think we see what it is: authority. Obviously, for Fr. Neketas, Fr. Panteleimon is the authority, and we see now that he expects everyone else to agree. You were worried about this question last year, and we rather tried to talk you out of your fears, based on our own experience; for it is indeed true that Fr. Panteleimon has never tried to influence our views in any way that we could detect (save for a fairly mild protest after the Zeytoon article). Of course, it is also true that our Brotherhood was established and we were printing The Orthodox Word before he joined the Russian Church Outside of Russia, and in that respect we are his seniors. Also, Fr. Herman knew him several years before even that, when he was still quite young and inexperienced (to say the least) in questions of "jurisdictions," etc. But apparently his relation (or perhaps it is chiefly that of his followers? we don't know) to the young convert movement today is somewhat different.

Alas, it now becomes pretty clear why Fr. Neketas wanted to merge his Witness with Nikodemos some time back! As I recall, at that time we repeated our earlier advice to you to preserve your independence, and we can only continue to repeat it now. If you had succumbed to that temptation then, I'm afraid you would be so discouraged by this time that you would be ready to quit entirely. Fr. Neketas' approach to Nikodemos as a part of the Orthodox mission of the printed word is wrong, and we say this with great pain, because we both love Fr. Neketas and Fr. Panteleimon very dearly and respect their labors for Orthodoxy, which otherwise seem to us rather sound, even though none of us is perfect. We do not need an infallible "authority" on questions such as the "Shroud" and "evolution," but rather much more love and mutual understanding; there is too much mind here and too little heart. We should not have to fight or threaten over such questions, but precisely "speak the truth in love," if indeed God has enabled us to see the truth more clearly than our fellow Orthodox on some point or other. We would gladly listen with open mind to any genuine arguments against the Shroud; but there is no point just sitting and being beaten over the head with someone else's opinions (and probably emotions) about it.

The "anti-Latinism" of our Greeks is simply overdone. It seems that just about everyone except themselves is under "Latin influence," almost the whole of Russian and Greek theology and spirituality for the last several centuries is rotten—all this is too much. Of course there are Latin influences visible here and there—but unless the Orthodox tradition itself has been preserved intact up to now, then there is no Orthodoxy left, and Protestantism triumphs. Fr. Panteleimon does not speak with the theological authority of some other people in our Church, and he simply cannot be made the universal standard.

Fr. Neketas is of course right on some of his points, such as the danger of getting involved with 17th-century Western mystics—but we wonder if he isn't quoting your words back to you out of context or at second or third hand? At any rate, what's the point of trying to build up a case against you as an unregerate Latin?! We all have our faults, theological and otherwise (the fathers in Boston also!); therefore, why not rather try to inspire and guide in the right direction by positive means and examples? Alas, his sympathy for you has been overcome by his disappointment that you do not bow down to the authority of Fr. Panteleimon; that seems to be the whole story!

We are unimpressed with the "40 years Orthodox" argument which he also uses against you—there are 40 and even 80-year Orthodox who disagree with him on a number of issues!

This whole outbreak makes us very sad, but we are still rather glad that it came out now rather than later. Fr. Neketas will probably not try to "help" you any more, now that you have declared your independence by writing on "forbidden subjects" (say, isn't the Index a Latin institution!?), but you will have to keep him in mind as one of the "occupational hazards" of being an editor in the Church Abroad. By no means should any of us "fight" him and the fathers in Boston, nor form a "camp" against them. Let us all keep up our own independent labors, relying on the counsel of others in cases of doubt, and trusting in God's grace and the prayers of His God-pleasers to help us. How well Vladika John knew how to inspire and guide without crushing anyone's spirit or dictating his personal opinions to anyone (and yet he was more a theologian that any 100 of the fathers in Boston!). Let us pray for everyone and continue our path.

About Fr. Ischie: apparently the Greeks think he is part of a "conspiracy" against them. We have no idea about that, but would only caution you not to join "sides" with him if he wants to start a fight. We have the impression also that he is a lonely man, but probably for that very reason he has a tendency to get involved in controversies which only detract from the larger mission from which we should not be distracted.

We will be interested to hear what response you have gotten on "evolution" and the "Shroud." We told Fr. Neketas (before the Shroud article) that for us the cause of a free Orthodox missionary movement is so dear that we are not afraid of the "mistakes" that you might make. The "Shroud" article with its Latinisms was a mistake in that form, but I really doubt that it will do any harm ultimately to the cause of defending the Shroud, whose acceptance or rejection within Orthodoxy must be decided, ultimately, in a free and objective manner. Whether or not the Latins venerate it, and no matter with what kind of piety they have surrounded it—makes no difference whatever to us, one way or the other.

Your letter to Andrew Bond, by the way, seems calm and reasonable enough. You are right not to demand "equal time" or start a fight over it. Let us keep our attention on the important issues, and all these petty mistakes and misunderstandings will die out by themselves.

If I can somehow remember where I put it, I will try to get out the Concern article in today's mail, and also the reprint of your article on page 1 of the Serbian newspaper, which perhaps you've already seen. These Serbs are very well-meaning, anti-Communist, but alas, pretty far gone down the road of worldliness (roast pig during lent, dances with the bishop present on

Saturday nights, etc). We know several of their priests, but Vladika John told us quite definitely that they are uncanonical and not priests at all. You can keep the newspaper, but we'd like the Concern back after you've read or copied it.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

126.

St. Thomas Sunday, 1973 [Apr. 23/May 6],

Dear Fr. Neketas,

In truth Christ is risen!

Thank you for your letter and the advice concerning "spiritual" vs. "polemical" orientation. I think on this point we are quite in agreement.

We have nothing to add to our earlier letters, but we are very concerned that we have not gotten across to you the very important point concerning Vladika John's attitude toward missionary labors. Of course, to a large extent this point must be "felt" rather than explained, but please try to realize that Vladika John was not at all "mistaken" on this matter, but on the contrary it was one of the most important aspects of his inspiring and holy life. One might disagree with him on some specific "economies," but his basic approach was right and is indispensible for us today. His point was, as I think I said, previously to guide and inspire, not to push and force. He did not at all leave converts without guidance; he rather knew exactly how and when to give the guidance, so that it would inspire and not crush the spirit. Some people point to the "mistake" of the French Church—but the fact remains that there is a healthy French mission within the Church Abroad today, and without him it is hardly likely that there would be. Which is better, to inspire and let the tree grow and then collect fruits from only half the limbs, or, out of "strictness," to stomp on the plant in the first place and get no tree at all?

Father, look at yourself and Fr. Panteleimon. You came to the Church Abroad as "converts" of sorts, surely, and you yourselves tell us how un-Orthodox was the body from which you came. Do you not realize there were and are people in the Church who think you should have been stomped on, whether for your mistakes (and surely you have made them, being human) or for those practices which you have which seem strange to the "normal Russian" standard? Do you think you would have been accepted in the Church Abroad if the spirit (and direct participation, in the case of Fr. Panteleimon) of Vladika John has not prevailed? Don't you realize that your very existence in the Church Abroad is an "economy" of which some "strict" observers do not approve?

Father, let us not introduce that kind of "strictness" into the Church Abroad. Let us thank God that you and Fr. Panteleimon have been allowed to exist freely and mature in your own rhythm within the Church Abroad; then let others do do also, particularly if in general their approach

seems sound and if they are getting sound counsel. There does not have to be absolute agreement on all issues—by which I mean specifically such things as the relation between Confession and Communion, the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin, the attitude toward contemporary ideology—for us to be part of the same true Orthodox Church and its mission.

We have grounds to believe we know Alexey Young much better than you, and the person you have been talking about does not seem like the same person to us. We can only conclude that you are "reading into" him certain impressions and fears of your own, and also expecting him to conform to certain of your opinions which are not by any means shared by the whole Church. And please do not dismiss all who disagree with you as being under "Latin influence." That is just a guess, and in many cases it is circle [?] of the work. An example: How could a saint who wrote so strongly about the "grace-less Papists" (Vladika John) also sing the service to Blessed Augustine? Probably for the same reason that the latter s name was introduced into the Russian Calendar in the 19th century on the authority of St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain! Was he a Uniate too? or is it after all possible to have a difference of opinon on this subject? [Letter ends, handwritten, possibly never sent.]

127.

St. Thomas Sunday, 1973B [Apr. 23/May 6],

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

In truth Christ is risen!

My letter crossed yours in the mail, but even so I think I answered most of your letter in mine already. Please forgive me if I somehow offended you in my previous hasty letter. The comment on "no letters to bishops" was written rather tongue in cheek, and with no real idea that you might do so, but I did want to mention all possibilities of wrong actions, knowing how upset Fr. Neketas' uncalled- for letter must have made you.

However, now that the dust has settled a little, it really looks as though it is Fr. Neketas who has acted rather like "crazy convert," whereas you in your restraint have been quite level-headed. Perhaps we've all done a little too much talking about "converts"—the pitfalls into which they fall are really the same ones that any believer can and does fall into!

We had a brief letter from Fr. Neketas yesterday. He does not write about evolution, the Shroud, or Nikodemos, evidently because the differences between us on these points are so great, but raises two other points which show that whatever we tried to get across to him did not get across. Truly, as you wrote to him, "grave misunderstandings" exist between us. We sense something is deeply wrong there, but I'm afraid not much can be done or said about it, at least now. For your own peace of soul we would advise you not to worry about "getting through" to him, and in fact for the future to pay as little attention as possible to him*(By that I don't mean to encourage a harsh or unfeeling attitude toward him, but just to stay as detached as possible from the situation where there seems no hope for "dialogue" right now!) If the Greeks are really trying to "take over" and dictate their ideology to the rest of us, they have simply fallen into the biggest "convert" trap of all, and there is danger for everyone from this. If this is so, their folly will

doubtless be exposed sooner or later; but meanwhile, let the rest of us stay as uninvolved with them as possible. Fr. Neketas in the new Witness writes about "converts"; it would be tragic if he and the Boston fathers did not apply all those words first of all to themselves. This is what we must all do when presuming to "teach" (which some of us, surely, are called to do, but in utmost humility).

Concerning "theologians": some of the fathers in Boston have been to the (apostate) Greek seminary in Brookline, which they admit does not teach Orthodox theology. Orthodox theology they got for themselves by reading books, and I'm afraid they sometimes reveal themselves as amateurs. Fr. Michael Pomazansky (see his article in OW, 1970, no. 6) and others at Jordanville are genuine theologians, with a school and tradition underneath their feet. The Boston fathers are "self-made," and we've already seen several examples (particularly when they try to get into the Russian sphere, in which they are totally lost) of how they jump on some points purely on the basis of impression and whim, owing precisely to their lack of a thorough theological background. They do not trust their Russian elders (and we rather doubt that they have any Greek elders to take counsel of either), because they are under "Latin influence"—this is an extremely dangerous sign. We ourselves, not being "theologians," follow the Jordanville school, which is in the best Orthodox tradition (and is being much and unjustly slandered today), and we frequently take counsel from Fr. Michael Pomazansky and others, whose judgment we trust and respect, knowing that thus we are in a good tradition and do not have to trust our own faulty judgment for all the answers. Fr. Michael in particular is quite aware of the problem of "Latin influence" and where it exists he explains very soberly why it is not Orthodox, but he has none of the emotional animus which, I'm afraid, clouds the judgment of the Boston fathers on this question.

We see no reason to sit in fear and trembling over Fr. Neketas' threats. Let's wait and see if he or the Boston fathers come up with something on "evolution" or the "Shroud," and if they do let's examine it objectively for what it's worth. Whatever any of us says about these subjects later on should be quite calm and with no sense of being part of a noisy controversy. Anything written on evolution, I think, should be quite extensive, with much reference to sources, and treating thoroughly the questions which "evolution" raises for faith and which people seem afraid to bring up. On the theological implications we should by all means ask counsel of Fr. Michael and perhaps others, so as to make any presentation as precise as possible. An important thing also is the approach to be made to readers, for any presentation must be made in a way that is somehow "in their language." (This probably explains Fr. N s violent reaction—he simply wasn't prepared for such a straightforward approach.) What do your readers write about "evolution"? Do they indeed find it a problem, no problem, or what, and how did they respond to the article?

On the Shroud, any future article should take into consideration the whole argument of the Greeks against it, and also involve more thorough research into the evidence for Orthodox veneration of it. Unless the Greeks come up with some extremely convincing arguments, the case for the Shroud would seem to be fairly secure, and there is no need for anyone to rush in to "defend' it as if it were a controversial issue.

We have accepted in the past, and can continue to accept, the Greeks as fellow strugglers on the true Orthodox missionary path. A "struggler" is one who does not trust his own opinion and no one else's; who does not "know better" on everything, who does not set himself up as an ultimate authority, who does not form cliques and try to crush anyone outside the clique. But if they are not strugglers, but only "experts," all their good labors will come to ruin, sooner or later. Our Church Abroad has had much experience of this, has had much patience, and has survived those who have gone astray.

You have had quite a few trials in your first year and a few months of missionary labors. Know that God sends these to test and strengthen you, and also to know one day how to help others in a similar situation. We trust that by this time you are not feeling yourself as being so much in the midst of a "storm," as hopefully the Greeks will relax for a while the pressure that seems to be causing it.

In connection with all that has been happening, we would like to do much more translating of some basic texts. We have a cassette tape recorder now, and now that Laurence has joined us we have set him to work typing out some texts that I read into the recorder, translating orally from Russian so as to save all the time I usually have to spend transcribing and typing. There is a very good text of Fr. Michael Pomazansky on Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, 200 pages long and a very good introduction and background to this whole important sphere. Assuming that it hasn't already been translated (which we will find out shortly), I would like to start translating it orally. Would you or Susan be able to help out on the transcribing of it?

We've also obtained a cassette of the Akathist to the Mother of God sung in the San Francisco cathedral with Vladika John serving. Hardly a word of his is understandable, but the dear familiar voice is there! You are welcome to make a copy for yourself on one of your visits.

We notice, by the way, that Ashanin seems to be talking about you in the new Logos (March-April), apparently paying you back for what you said about him but not mentioning you by name (it's always easier to discourse beautifully on extremely general themes!).

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Risen Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

128.

May 8/21 1973

St. John the Theologian

Dear Sister in Christ, Sylvia,

Christ is risen!

It's Sunday and apparently Vladimir isn't coming this weekend. The new Orthodox Word is out, so I'm able to think straight for a while (we have that problem too!) so I'll write these comments on your letter.

Yes, you have problems, but they aren't necessarily as bad as the immediate tensions which they cause might make you think. A few days out of the tense atmosphere (which will probably be possible once school is out) should let the muddy waters settle enough to see more clearly the real problems that are there—and that's already half the solution.

Organization is important, but of course, first you have to have a pretty good idea of what you're organizing—that is, what you're doing and want to be doing, and how you can best do it. Sometimes this becomes much clearer just by talking about it with someone from outside the situation, which we'll be glad to help on whenever you come.

The aching thoughts of Maggie are natural—but that's the side that belongs to earth. Her soul is with God, and the trial which you underwent with her was God's visitation to you, and the proof that in everything that has been happening there is something deeper than human logic and feelings can fathom.

Some people seem to have an "easy" and uncomplicated path in life—or so it seems from outside; while for others like you everything seems complicated and difficult. Don't let that bother you. Actually, from the spiritual point of view, those who really have an "easy" time are probably in danger!—precisely because without the element of suffering through whatever God sends, there is no spiritual profit or advancement. God knows each of us better than we know ourselves, and He sends what is needful for us, whatever we may think!

Maggie's grave is a source of great joy for us. On the Tuesday after Pascha week, when the dead are commemorated again for the first time, we went there and sang, mingling the funeral hymns with Paschal hymns, then breaking and eating eggs, symbols of the resurrection, over the grave. Truly the living and the dead are one in Christ, and it's only our blindness that makes us sometimes forget it!

We will be glad to see you whenever you can come. Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

129.

May 14/27,1973

St. Isodore of Chios

Dear Irina Constantinovna [Vagin],

Christ is risen! Enclosed are two recent articles of Fr. Theodoritos, which we hope you will be able to tell us something about. The printed article is evidently directed against some "uncanonical activities" of Fr. Panteleimon concerning the Old Calendarist situation (Fr.

Theodoritos supports one group of Old Calendarists, Fr. Panteleimon the other group). We hear that it is already being translated into English, so perhaps you could give us just a brief summary of what it is all about.

The typed manuscript is an article Fr. Theodoritos has sent for The Orthodox Word. If we do print it, it will not be right away; rather than translate the whole article now, perhaps you could give us also just a brief summary of it together with your comments on its tone and spirit. The two canons which are quoted in English make us a little apprehensive that the article may be too "strong" for us— i.e., that it will try to "prove" that all Christians must receive Holy Communion at every Divine Liturgy, without taking into consideration the questions of local customs, the general spiritual state of today's flocks, church "economy," etc. We hope we are wrong, and that the article is after all very sober, well-balanced, and truly pastoral in orientation, in which case we could nicely print it with an introduction of our own concerning the Russian situation. This is a rather sensitive question, taking into consideration the differences between the Russian and Greek Churches today on the questions of confession before Communion, preparation before Communion, etc. Of course, we would like to encourage more frequent reception of Holy Communion, but not just as an end in itself, but rather as part of a renewal of the whole of spiritual life, and also in such a way as not to cause unnecessary quarrels over "fanaticism" and the like. Please give us your frank comments on the article in view of all this.

Unfortunately, the harmony between the "Greek" and "Russian" parts of our Russian Church Abroad has been somewhat upset lately, as perhaps you have heard. For some reason Fr. Neketas reacted violently against the articles on "Freud" and "Evolution" in Nikodemos and sent us a letter indicating that he was "withdrawing his support" from Nikodemos because Alexey was a hopeless Roman Catholic, was propagating "lay saints" as opposed to monastic saints, etc. We were rather startled by this and wrote him a reply defending Alexey, telling him we basically agreed with the articles on Freud and Evolution (although, of course there might be different opinions on how these questions should be approached, what emphasis should be given them, etc.) and that we viewed the articles on "lay saints" very positively, inasmuch as they present basically monastic values as applied in a lay situation, which seems to us extremely appropriate and important today. But then, alas, Alexey sent out (just at the wrong time) the article on the "Holy Shroud," which was originally printed for Roman Catholics, and for Fr. Neketas that was all he needed to prove that Alexey is really an unrepentant Catholic. We had told Alexey that he should not send out that article without "cleaning it up" of Catholic references, but unfortunately he had already printed it and so sent it out anyway. Of course, the Greeks would be against it in any form, because they think that the Holy Shroud is some kind of "demonic counterfeit" (?!), even though so far they haven't given any substantial evidence to prove this. Holy Transfiguration Monastery is now apparently working on a long article against the Holy Shroud, which we fear may be a tragic mistake, both because it will introduce an element of "controversy" into a realm where up to now there has been no real problem, and because (as we suspect) they are so full of anti-Catholic emotions that they might not properly distinguish between the Shroud itself and its place in Roman Catholic piety, between which of course there is no necessary connection at all. We ourselves hadn't read anything on the Shroud until very recently, but from what we have read now we find ourselves very disposed to accept it as

authentic, as indeed many of our Russian clergy do; in fact, it seems to explain the very existence of our plaschanitsa with the image of the Saviour on it.

Of course, the tragic thing in all this is not that there are different opinions on such matters, but rather that the "Greeks" seem to have a certain narrow approach to such questions, a certain insistence that their opinions are right and everyone else is wrong, and from such an attitude we really are afraid that there is danger ahead. Also, there seems to be a question of "authority" involved: Fr. Neketas told Alexey some time ago: "Don't print anything on evolution or the Shroud." Alexey asked us about this and we told him that there is no reason we could see why these should be "forbidden subjects," as long as they were handled well. Probably Fr. Neketas was upset, more than anything else, precisely because Alexey seemed to be "defying the authority" of Fr. Panteleimon. The result right now is that Fr. Neketas is telling everyone not to trust Alexey because he is a "Catholic"—but we, knowing Alexey much better than Fr. Neketas does, know that this is not true, that actually he is learning and struggling very diligently to be a true Orthodox Christian, that he is always ready to be corrected when he makes a mistake, and that on some points he is probably more aware of the needs of contemporary laymen than Fr. Neketas is! We ourselves respect Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas very much, but we simply disagree that everyone must accept their "authority" as final, especially as they have been wrong a number of times in the past (8 or 10 years ago they were writing us letters defending the Moscow Patriarchate, saying the Weeping Icons were "demonic," etc., and since then they've changed their minds on these points and probably others.).

Somehow, all of this makes us very sad, and we only pray that it will not mean deeper disagreements later. We would be very glad to hear your own comments on some of these matters.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Thank you very much for the comments on the Greek books. We really don't need any more on the Abbess' book, and some very brief resumes from the book on "Eucharistical Communion" should be sufficient for us, if you have time.

130.

May 27/June 9, 1973

St. John the Russian

Your Grace, Dear Vladika Laurus,

Blagoslovite!

Please forgive us for disturbing you once again with a "problem," but this "problem" is fortunately not one that concerns us personally, but is rather something more general, about which we think you are probably well aware already. We are rather upset by it, and we beg your advice and a word of encouragement.

As you know, from the beginning we have given full support to our "Greeks" in the Synod, Frs. Panteleimon, Neketas, and others, because we have seen them to be "zealots" of true Orthodoxy and an inspiration for others to follow. Occasionally, it is true, we have noted in Fr. Neketas' Orthodox Christian Witness some statements that seem rather "narrow," and a few completely unnecessary comments that do more harm than good (such as his comments on the Metropolia's Mexican bishop). However, we have always excused these failings, recognizing that no one is perfect and that all of us in the missionary field within our Russian Church Abroad must always be willing to forgive and defend each other and not make big issues out of points which are of secondary importance. And so we have never mentioned these things to the "Greeks" or tried to correct them.

However, in the last few months we have become increasingly disturbed over some of the things which our "Greeks" have been doing and saying. At first our good friend Alexey Young began to tell us that he was very disturbed by the fact that Fr. Neketas was trying to "pressure" him to join his parish in Seattle (instead of going to the Russian Cathedral in San Francisco) and to tell him what he should not be printing in his periodical Nikodemos. Here I should say that from the beginning of Nikodemos Alexey has asked our advice and has even submitted articles for us to correct, and he has always (except once—which I will mention below) taken our advice. Unfortunately, he reacted rather emotionally and hastily to some things which Fr. Neketas said about "evolution," and this led him to give material to his friend Sarah Hoffman, which she used in the letter which she sent to all our bishops, accusing Fr. Panteleimon, on very flimsy evidence, of "heresy." This was unfortunate and due to his inexperience. Then, however, Fr. Ephraim wrote a reply to Alexey which was chiefly an excuse for him to express some of his own (or Fr. Panteleimon's) theological speculations, but he 'did not at all answer Alexey's questions, and besides that he even dragged in Metr. Anthony's "Dogma of Redemption," showing that he did not at all understand the errors and dangers of the "Dogma."

When we heard that the "Dogma" had been mentioned, we wrote Fr. Panteleimon a letter warning him about this controversial issue, and when Fr. Panteleimon was in Seattle several months ago I went there and gave to him, with the approval of Vladika Nektary, a "report" on the "Dogma," telling him of the errors in it which have been pointed out by Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, and others. At the end of my "report," Fr. Panteleimon acknowledged that he had not known about some of these points, but that anyway he was not really thinking of publishing anything on the subject. I went away encouraged, and from my personal contact with Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas I did not feel that they were trying to "pressure" anyone or "take over the convert movement," as some people have been telling us.

Not long after that, however, Fr. Neketas became very upset with Alexey for publishing an article on "Evolution" and then the pamphlet on the "Holy Shroud," and since then he has been telling everyone that Alexey is "still a Catholic" and should not be supported or trusted. This has made us very sad, because we know Alexey very well and he is very willing to accept correction and to learn when he is wrong. We did not find anything wrong with the article on evolution, although of course it was much too short to say much about such a complicated subject, and it is possible to have different opinions on some aspects of the question—nonetheless we thought his

approach was basically right, more so than the approach of Fr. Neketas, who seems to be more under the influence of "modern ideas." Nonetheless, even here we should all be meek and forgiving of each other, so we think, and we were simply amazed that Fr. Neketas should react so violently against the article.

As for the pamphlet on the "Holy Shroud," we warned Alexey that he should not print it without removing all the Roman Catholic references ("Stations of the Cross," etc.) but unfortunately he had already printed it before he received our letter, and of course it had a violent effect on Fr. Neketas. We ourselves do not claim to know absolutely that the Holy Shroud is genuine, but from all the evidence it seems very likely to be so, and we respect the opinion of Archimandrite Constantine and others who have accepted it; but when the Greeks shout to us that it is some kind of demons' work, we feel very uneasy, especially because so far they do not give any definite evidence to prove the fact. It seems, in fact, that their reaction is very largely emotional, based on their violent anti-Catholicism.

From all that has happened in the last few months we have discovered several facts which disturb us:

(1) Fr. Neketas has said that there are "great theologians" in Holy Transfiguration Monastery and that the converts should trust them and not anyone else, and certainly not anyone from the "Jordanville school," which Fr. Panteleimon finds to be not very Orthodox. (We suspect he is rather under the influence of Vladika Vitaly in this respect.) This point disturbs us very much, both because of the disdainful attitude which the "Greeks" thus show to such a truly great theologian as Fr. Michael Pomazansky, and because the "theology" of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, as shown in Fr. Ephraim's letter to Alexey, does not at all seem to us to be sound, but rather fidl of self-importance, exaggerated arguments, and a very bad light-minded tone. Nonetheless, Fr. Neketas has now printed this letter for everyone to see!

(2) The "Greeks" find "Catholic influence" to be everywhere, even in our great Russian Fathers such as Metr. Philaret of Moscow. But they do not know the Russian language, and their convert-translators are not at all familiar with the Russian theological tradition, and when they begin to tell the rest of us what is right and wrong in Russian theology, they are going to make terrible mistakes, such as they have already made regarding the "Dogma of Redemption," Further, they seem to be so fanatical concerning "Catholic influence" that they are not capable of distinguishing between small failings such as any great theologian might have, and great theological errors. To deny the importance of Metr. Philaret of Moscow, who was exactly a great champion against "Catholic influence," just because of some small points which may (or may not) be influenced by Catholicism—is a terrible error and a sign of a theologically unbalanced outlook, so we believe.

We already know that not all Greek "zealots" think like Fr. Panteleimon. For example, Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas have been trying to persuade us to throw Blessed Augustine out of the Orthodox Calendar. We told them we do not have the authority to do this, and besides, we know that Vladika John has great veneration for him and celebrated the service to him every year. Nonetheless, Fr. Neketas says that he is in the Russian Calendar because of "Uniate influence."

However, we investigated and found out that he was introduced into the Russian Calendar in the 19th century on the authority of St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, a Greek anti-Latin zealot! We asked Fr. Theodoritos of Mt. Athos about this, and he wrote back: "Yes, I think Augustine must be a Saint, because St. Nikodemos placed him in the Synaxarion." Of course, we all know that Blessed Augustine had theological errors or at least wrong emphases, but that does not prevent us from paying the due reverence to him. Therefore, the "fanaticism" of our "Greeks" on this point seems entirely unnecessary and a cause of vain disputes.

(3) Most of all we are disturbed because it does indeed seem to be true that our "Greeks" wish to "take over the converts"—and now even our Russians too! We have known Fr. Panteleimon for many years and greatly respect him and his labors, but we know that he has faults, make many errors, and also that in many respects our Russian tradition (especially the Typicon of Divine Services) is much more complete than the tradition Fr. Panteleimon follows. Also, they are "Americans" and have many of the typical symptoms of "converts." We feel strongly that they cannot be made the only standard for the whole Russian Church and not even for all converts. That would be very dangerous for them and for everyone. We have already noted that their "authoritative" atittude has been very discouraging for a number of converts whom we know,—that is, for those who do not want to have Fr. Panteleimon for their "starets." (We also are very much afraid of the possibility of "false stachestvo" in him, because we have seen several suspicious cases of people who have been under his influence.) Our "Greeks" are very "intellectual," but we feel that they do not understand much of the "wisdom of the heart" which some of our simple Russian batiushkas have, even though they may not be "great theologians."

Please forgive this long letter, dear Vladika. We very much hope to receive from you a letter telling us what you think of all this. We feel that some kind of disaster may be coming in the future because of these things, which would effect not only our converts but Russians also. Please tell us what you think.

By God's grace we are well and working hard and peacefully. Br. Laurence has been with us for two months now and is struggling.

We beg again your blessing and prayers.

With respect and love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

131.

May 29/June 11, 1973

St. John, Fool for Christ of Ustiug

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Both Fr. Herman and I read the article on Humanism and received about the same impression from it: that each point taken by itself makes sense, but that the whole article is too long, tries to

include too many different citations and strands of thought, and that as a whole it is not sufficiently functional: i.e., at the end one is left with a lot of different thoughts but with no real resolution of them—one's mind has been rather clouded by the diverse strands of humanist philosophy, and in the end these thoughts are not sufficiently dispelled by a clear, forceful, and serene conclusion.

With this in mind I read the article again and began to think of ways to add clarification: I rearranged several paragraphs, added some suggestions for giving some "punch" to the beginning, and then thought of suggesting that you greatly abridge the whole central portion where you discuss the different strands of humanism, making it more into an outline or series of highlights. But somehow this too wasn't enough, and so I went back and read the first two articles in the series, on Freud and Evolution, and went from there straight into "Humanism." From all this I came to the conclusion that this installment is quite different from the two earlier installments: the earlier installments treat specific questions with rather clear and definite conclusions that don't leave any loose strands of thought; but the new article goes into a rather complex phenomenon which has many diverse strands and repeats some things from the earlier installments. Further, looking at the introduction to installment no. 1, it is clear that this is really an introduction to "humanism" in general, and both installments are themselves chapters in a study of "humanism" understood as the philosophy that underlies the whole attack of the "wolves" today. Therefore, "Humanism" should not be simply installment no. 3 (which is to be followed by other installments apparently on other aspects of humanism), but rather a kind of summing up and placing in perspective of all the earlier installments.

Therefore, we would strongly advise putting aside the "Humanism" article altogether for now, and give instead another installment on a specific topic, such as the "educational philosophy" which you've promised for the next issue. You should still be early enough for the July-August issue to do this, I hope. And then when you've finished all the specific articles you want to give—then give "Humanism" as a summing up and overview of the whole—only not so long as it is here. As I said, we have some suggestions of putting more "punch" into the article, and we think the whole middle part should be greatly abridged and presented rather as a summary-outline. We've always had an unwritten rule for The Orthodox Word—that "controversial" or polemical subjects should never take up more than 50% of one issue if possible, so as to preserve a certain necessary balance and prevent us, even unconsciously, from going "overboard" on something which we might feel very strongly about.

Another point: We've heard one or two comments on the first two installments, something like: "What he says about these things is true enough, but is he really giving us an answer?" Of course, part of the "answer" you are giving so far is: be aware and protect yourselves and your children from these ideas. However, that alone is not enough, and if that's all there's going to be for an "answer" some people will end by saying you're just crying "wolf, wolf!" and they won't take with sufficient seriousness what you're saying. Therefore we think the conclusion to the whole series should be quite clear and forceful, which perhaps you already have in mind: either at the end of the last installment, or as a separate final installment (though it probably doesn't really need to be more than a paragraph or a page), you should definitely give the "answer": that

Orthodox Christians, surrounded by and already swimming in a sea of humanist-worldly philosophy and practice, must do everything possible to create their own islands in that sea of other-worldly, God-oriented thought and practice, and then tell some of the ways how. reading, services, etc. We are planning an article in the 1974 Calendar somewhat on this line, which hopefully will be out before you come to the conclusion of the series (Sept.-Oct.).

Well, such are our ideas; let us know what you think of them. We can talk about this and some other things when you come, God willing, on Pentecost. Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. In connection with our earlier discussion on "bishops," we wonder if the last sentence in the quote on the last page of the May-June issue isn't placing some unnecessary emphasis on a point you've already made well enough? We are already in the age of "impious bishops' which St. Seraphim prophesied, and already in many places (most notably Russia) a degree of "hiding" from or even outright disobedience to bishops has already become a spiritual necessity, and one which it is by no means easy to justify always on dogmatic or canonical grounds. This by no means changes the "rule" which you cite, but alas, there are people (also in our Russian Church Abroad!) who are only too anxious to take advantage of such "rules," not for the good of the Church or the bishops, but for their own private purposes. And after all, everything depends on the "interpretation" of such rules: whether broadly and with the heart, or narrowly and coldly and calculatingly. Let's not give any ammunition to certain pharisees! Enough said?

132.

June 29/July 12, 1973

Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We received Fr. Ephraim's "Open Letter" today, together with your note. Yes, we found too that he completely missed the point, and all the very nice quotes from the Fathers on the different degrees of knowledge mean nothing when one stops to realize that you are not at all attacking scientific knowledge, but only pseudo-scientific pseudo-religious philosophy masquerading as science, and you are using scientific knowledge not to defend theology but only to destroy the self-contradictory theories of the pseudo-scientists. Are these points really so difficult to understand or impossible to defend?

Unless we are crazy, Fr. Ephraim has gone off somewhere in the clouds and is not at all in contact with what is going on in the world today, intellectually—which is very much of concern to Orthodox Christians who live in this world. Fr. Ephraim, in trying to stand so far "above" the whole question, does not give the impression that he speaks from the heights of the third degree of knowledge (which seems to be what he is trying to hint at?), but rather uses such exalted

knowledge for rather rationalistic purposes. We are very disappointed to see such narrowness. And the reply of the mother to the Orthodox "high school youth" (p. 17—this apparently sums up his "answer" to the whole problem of evolution!)—how naive and spineless! Can Fr. E. really be so unaware of the anti- Christian purposes of such "scientific" education? His reply is an open invitation to the youth to accept whatever the school teaches him—because we poor Orthodox Christians, alas, having such high knowledge, cant "know any better." I'll tell you frankly (but don't quote me!)—this isn't theology, its hogwash. There's a real and pressing problem here, and you've attacked it honestly, freshly, and well (considering the short space you had); if there are deficiencies or mistakes in what you've said, they can be talked about in a friendly manner. But alas, his only aim is to discredit you and put you in your place. This is wrong and sick. Forgive my strong language.

Our first thought was—a reply is pointless. However, if you are writing one, we would be glad to read it for an "objective" (or at least third person) evaluation. However, a point by point answer is really pointless. Despite Fr. E's avowals, he obviously has no sympathy for you and has no particular desire to find out what you're trying to say—he already "knows better," and everything you say will be interpreted in the light of this "knowledge." Every good point you can make in reply will be "picked on" and torn to pieces so as to prove that you are an unreliable convert and theologically unsound. I don't think this is deliberate on his part—he just has a preconceived idea and isn't going to change it.

Unfortunately, the overt Catholic references in the "Shroud article" give Fr. E. all the ammunition he needs to prove you're still a "Catholic," and he'll interpret everything you say in this light. Your chief other weak point on which he capitalizes is the overemphasis (so it seems to us) on science in the "Shroud" article. Apart from these points, we don't see that he has any legitimate cause for such a hostile and public letter—in fact, in any case there's no cause for anything more than a friendly and concerned note.

It is rather frustrating to get Kalomiros thrown at one again,—still without knowing what he says about evolution! I strongly suspect that he doesn't really say anything to which any of us would particularly object and that he doesn't at all believe in the "evolution" you're attacking. We get the impression that Fr. E. isn't aware enough about any kind of evolution to tell the difference, but is only using Kalomiros as a handy weapon against you.

After reading Fr. E's epistle, we begin to despair about the "Greek wisdom" of our own day, which seems to have all too much in common with the ancient variety! What will happen when they really begin to find out how simple and unconcerned about all those things that excite them we "Russians" are? One basic element seems lacking in all their "wisdom," one which the Holy Fathers emphasize is essential for genuine Orthodox life: suffering. The "wisdom" born of leisure and idle disputes is not worth having; but the wisdom born of deep suffering (such as God has given above all to the Russians in our day) is alone truly balanced and sound, even if it can not give a glib answer to every mocking question. Let us try to enter more deeply into this suffering, God giving us His grace to do so!

A revealing point: the use of "royal jelly" in a supposedly serious theological article is unpardonable levity. A Russian theologian might occasionally bring home some polemical point with humor—but with a sober humor, not just plain levity.

Already you are somewhat entering into this suffering through being unjustly mocked. May God give you the strength to endure and not fight back with the same weapons, but rather continue to look freshly (and not abstractly) at the real problems facing those today who wish to be Orthodox in a world gone mad.

Any reply you make to Fr. E. should be brief and to the point. He has obviously taken unfair advantage of you in order thoroughly to discredit you, based on the reputation of the monastery as against you, a "nobody." He is riding on a current of intellectual fashion, and this will pass, and it will not be for the good of the monastery that it has allowed itself to do this and not face the real intellectual problems of the day. Pray to Vladika John for guidance. Know that not everything depends on what some people "think" of you, and also that at the proper time others will speak up for you.

You are welcome to visit us next weekend, or whenever you can come.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

P.S. It would doubtless be best not to tell Fr. Ephraim that you are working on a longer study of evolution—let it come as a complete surprise, or else he will try his best to undermine it before it ever comes out.

It will not be easy to get the point of your longer study on evolution across to people who think like Fr. Ephraim, but with God's help it can be done. There is something deep and important here—a rather "academic" approach to theology that does not come to grips with the anti-theology of our day.

133.

July 4/17, 73

Royal New Martyrs of Russia

Dear Father Johnikios,

Blagoslovite!

We have talked with Vladika Anthony about Vladimir Anderson, and indeed it turns out that Vladika had in mind only that Vladimir go to Jordanville to be tested, and perhaps to spend a few days there, meet the seminary instructors, etc. And so, apparently we will be mostly conducting his "course," and on his last visit he already began reading on the cliros. Unfortunately, he has had almost no time for study in the past months, so we don't know how long it will take him to get prepared. He plans to visit us several more times this summer.

Fr. Alexander Lebedev repied to us that he has had no time to begin translating Fr. Michael's Dogmatic Theology, and so, God willing, we will soon undertake this ourselves, after we hear

from Fr. Michael concerning any corrections, etc. Vladika Anthony also thought it would be very good to translate Vladika Averky's two volumes on the Gospels and Epistles, and even though this is beyond us right now, perhaps you could inform us if anyone has started or thought of such a translation?

We have just received the new "Open Letter" of Holy Transfiguration Monastery to Alexey Young, which was obviously written with the intention to discredit him completely and wipe him off the face of the map. We certainly hope Alexey will not reply in the same spirit, and hopefully the letter will not receive too wide a circulation. With grief we must say that there are so many half-truths, innuendos, and dubious theology in this letter, that in any case there is almost sure to be trouble later on when this is used as a starting point for more speculations. Well, we will be calm and careful, as Vladika Laurus recently advised us, but also we are prepared for the worst. Wherefore, could you tell us whether, in your study of Metr. Philaret of Moscow, you came across any definite views of his concerning the validity or lack thereof of Latin sacraments? If, as the "Greeks" say, there is evidence to indicate that he accepted their validity (which we rather doubt), have you found any plausible explanation or justification for it?

We greatly hope that there will be no vain and useless "theological" disputes in our poor small flock, but nonetheless there are some points on which our Russian theological tradition must be defended, if need arises. (Cautiously!)

Our Brotherhood is temporarily four in number with Daniel Olson's arrival several weeks ago. Please pray for us feeble strugglers, especially at the Divine Liturgy, that we may bring forth a few small fruits while there is still the opportunity.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

134.

July 4/17,1973

Royal New Martyrs of Russia

Dear Alexey—

Just a short note, Fr. E s letter has sunk in a little deeper, and it makes us even more disturbed than at first. This is not an answer to anything, and is a disservice to English-speaking Orthodox Christians. Such "theology" we do not need. We thought of writing a note to him ourselves, but there is no point, since he already has read our letters to Fr. Neketas defending you and speaking of the need for all of us to get rid of our "American modern" intellectual baggage re: evolution, etc.

Without entering into a public debate with him, we should by all means try to present sound Orthodox views on those points where he is obviously off the beam. Your "evolution" booklet will be very important from this point of view, and we are writing out a number of points which we hope to see treated or mentioned there, and also some suggestions on how to avoid being

placed into certain stereotyped categories, by which people can be persuaded not even to listen to what you say. Do you have a general outline of the article yet?

We've written Dr. Kalomiros a letter, and hope to receive confirmation of our suspicion that he is quite wrongly used as virtually a proponent of evolution.

How are you? Not frightfully discouraged, we hope?—With love in Christ.

Seraphim, monk

135.

Transfiguration of the Lord, 1973

[August 6/19]

Dear Father Johnikios,

Blagoslovite! We send you greetings on the glorious feast of our Lord s Transfiguration.

Thank you for your letters and the copy of your letter to Alexey Young. We are very glad to see your sound counsel to Alexey, which I think is basically what we also have tried to tell him. Alexey was here last Sunday and was very encouraged by an earlier letter you had written him. Of late he has been rather abandoned (to say the least) by many who supported him in the beginning, and this of course has been discouraging for him, but he seems to be holding up well and not losing his zeal. The whole experience is doubtless very sobering and ultimately very good for him, but he needs our prayers. He is also having financial difficulties right now, and that also is discouraging for him. We so much hope and pray that, in a time of such indifference and discouragement, this one little candle of zeal will not go out, but will continue to burn and give hope and encouragement to others, as we think Nikodemos has done so far.

Please forgive us for scaring you about a possible "major conflict" ahead. We truly hope and pray that there will be no such thing, and we certainly aren't going to start one! Even if our fears come true, and attempts will be made to discredit some of our great Orthodox teachers, we certainly do not intend to answer by means of open letters, counter-accusations, and that whole useless polemical approach among missionary laborers who should always be brothers—but our only "answer" would be to present these Orthodox teachers in the true and inspiring light in which they should be presented, insofar as God gives us strength.

But still I will tell you our sorrow: we have been extremely shocked and discouraged by the attack of Fr. Neketas and the Boston fathers on Alexey. Fr. Neketas wrote us that he was "withdrawing all support" from Alexey, and we have had visitors direct from Seattle who were astonished that we approved of Nikodemos, since Fr. Neketas had just old them that Alexey was a "catholic" and can't be trusted. We wrote two long letters to Fr. Neketas in defense of Alexey (while admitting his mistakes) and begging him to apply Vladika John's principle of trusting and encouraging missionary laborers and not trying to make them fit into a preconceived pattern or forcing them to submit to some standard "authority." To our grief Fr. Neketas replied that on this point Vladika John was wrong, and converts must at times be "stomped on." Well, Fr. Neketas'

attitude and Fr. Ephraim's letter constitute a "stomping on," no doubt of that, with the distinct impression that anyone else will also be "stomped on" if he doesn't accept our "Greeks" as the one and only Orthodox authority.

May God forgive us and keep us from judging anyone—but we don't like this whole tone and attitude, and we feel extremely uneasy about it. The whole ideal for which we have tried to labor for these many years is precisely one of mutual trust and encouragement, not one of forcing our "authority" on someone else.

For these many years we have seen in Fr. Panteleimon and our "Greeks" nothing but the best kind of Orthodoxy and a source of inspiration for others. When we visited the Fathers in Seatde last February, both Fr. Herman and I left with a feeling of renewed and strengthened ties of brotherly love and _____. And then, behold, because Alexey has a different view of evolution and the

"Shroud," such a merciless attack is directed against him! Fr. Neketas wrote him that he was refraining from a public denunciation of Nikodemos at this time (Fr. Neketas underlined it); but actually Fr. Ephraim's letter, although couched in kind terms, amounts virtually to this threatened denunciation.

Whenever we think of Fr. Panteleimon and our meetings with him, which have always left the warmest impression on us, we are simply in perplexity: Fr. Neketas' attitude and Fr. Ephraim's letter just do not fit in with this impression.

May God forgive us all and renew the ties of love among us, and may this whole thing be indeed some kind of superficial misunderstanding. And if, as we do not cease to fear, this is all the sign of some deeper disagreement—then may this trial at least be for the benefit and enlightenment of all of us, and not for open warfare.

We have seen the draft of Alexey's reply to Fr. Ephraim, and it seems to us to be written with meekness, heartfelt sincerity, and attention to causes and not to personalities, without any element of bickering or bitterness at all. We breathed a sigh of relief when we read it. May it lead to peace and better understanding on all sides!

Concerning the translation of Fr. Michael's Dogmatics: We've just received his (and Vladika Averky's) blessing to start the translation, together with Fr. Michael's revisions. Will you really have time to help on the translation? We are making first a preliminary translation (by means of tape recorder, which saves the translator much time, since it can be typed out by others) which we will keep in a looseleaf notebook (8 1/2 x 11 paper) until the whole text can be gone over for a final version. If you will really able to help, we can divide the text up with you. I notice that the section beginning on the bottom of p. 26) (_____), through p. 36 inclusive, a little over 10 pages, has almost no revisions in the text, so you could translate it straight from the printed text and send it to us as is. But please let us know if you really have the time for this.

Brs. Laurence and Daniel are becoming acclimated. Please pray for us all, and also for the repose of newly-departed Tatiana (Kursell), the sister of my godmother, who died suddenly on July

10/23, the day of the Konevits Icon of the Mother of God! We don't know the meaning of this, but we know that God is close!

Sept. 3/16, 1973

St. Theoctistus

This letter has been a long time in getting out! Since I started it, Michael Farnsworth has joined us, and we ask your prayers for him. We have also received another letter from Fr. Neketas, repeating his previous opinions about Alexey and recommending as an "objective Orthodox presentation on evolution" a Greek Archdiocese article which we found to be a typically simple-minded "liberal" presentation, even to the recommending of the evolutionary views of T. de Chardin. We told him as much in reply, but added that we haven't the time to engage in debate on such a complicated question, that we are not upset about his opinions on evolution or the Shroud, and we entreated him not to allow any such differences of opinion to introduce any feeling of coldness or hostility between any of us laborers in the missionary field. We also urged him to look at Alexey's positive qualities and not exaggerate his supposed faults, and above all not to publish "open letters" against him (which he mentioned he was still thinking of), reminding him that this is not in the spirit of Vladika John, whom we all revere. May God grant that peace and mutual love and respect may reign always in our midst!

Asking your prayers, with love in Christ our Saviour,

136.

Aug. 19/Sept. 1, 1973

St. Andrew Stratelates

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite! Please forgive our long silence. This summer has been an extremely busy one for us, and our two new brothers have only increased the work we have taken on. But I will be frank and add this: your letters and attitude regarding Alexey Young have left us so shocked that we have been just about speechless.

Thank you for your new letter. On "evolution": what can we say in reply? We will tell you just what we think: the articles of "exetastes" by no means is an "objective Orthodox presentation on evolution"—it is rather a simple-minded "liberal" presentation, in no way different from what any Protestant or Catholic magazine might publish, and is exactly what one would expect of the Greek Archdiocese, in harmony with its general "liberal" orientation. The article does not even raise the most serious questions which "evolution" poses, much less answer them. It is an absolutely typical product of the "spirit of the times."

Apparently you think rather differently. But Father, let there be peace among us! "Evolution" is an extremely complicated question, all aspects of it considered, and not one of us is in a position to know "all about it" and give a definitive judgment on all its aspects. Calling it a "heresy," of course is a great simplification, for it is much more complex than that, and it is evident that

different people have quite different things in mind when they hear the word "evolution," which complicates matters even more. Alexey's article was intended not for theologians but for simple people, and therefore its tone and presentation are admittedly somewhat simplistic and sharp. There are disadvantages to this, the first of which is that it obviously didn't say anything to you and apparently others of a similar outlook. Obviously, for such people a much more thorough presentation should be made, and I think this would make it much easier for you to see how inadequate the "Exetastes" article is, as we think. If you had read the grotesque, satanic "theology" of Teilhard de Chardin, you would certainly get a funny feeling from an article in which he is held up as an example of a reasonable approach to this question. But who has time to write thoroughly on this subject? We don't, certainly not now.

Incidentally, the "sharpness" of Alexey's article we liked—and it is exactly the same "sharpness" ("here's the truth and you others are all wrong") which we have recognized in your publications quite often, and for which many have also criticized you. It is refreshing to see such simplicity going boldly in the face of the "generally accepted" errors of the times, even at the risk of being called "unsophisticated," "behind the times," etc. Alexey's article is not perfect, but it certainly makes much more sense than "Exetastes." But THIS DISAGREEMENT SHOULD NOT CAUSE US TO START FIGHTING EACH OTHER!

I will mention one more point before getting to the main purpose of this letter. The "Shroud" article, as you already know, we regard as unfortunate because of its Latinisms, and it was unwise of Alexey to send it out in this form. (But so that you will feel better: he has no copies left and has no intention of distributing anything else on the subject.) Nonetheless, the articles is really not so terrible as your reaction would seem to indicate, and it is really too much for you (and Fr. Ephraim in his letter) to accuse Alexey of spreading "heresies" in it (you're doing the same thing to him that you accuse him of doing!). You use the term "heretical Anselmian theology" rather too loosely. (By the way, here again: wasn't it you who criticized Alexey for saying that T. de Chardin was a "heretic"—because he is obviously a heretic, being a Catholic? In the same way, you call Anselm a "heretic" when there's no need, because he is obviously a heretic, being a Catholic. This reinforces a suspicion we have that one reason for this sharp conflict between you and Alexey is that deep down you are very similar, in a good sense: both full of zealot spirit, even though you might sometimes have disagreements or make mistakes. I say this trying to urge you to find the good points in Alexey and not concentrate on what seem his faults.) The complete Anselmian doctrine on redemption is not held even by the Catholic Church, much less by those recent Orthodox Fathers whom you think are in the "Latin captivity." Is everyone who writes of "satisfaction" a heretic? Then you will have to decanonize St. Nectarios and throw out many excellent Greek and Russian Fathers. And what of those who were in communion with these "heretics," or those zealots (such as Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky and Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch) who indisputably have more theology in their little fingers than any of you or us put together—who did not protest or break communion with those who openly taught "satisfaction"? Father, you have gone a little overboard on this point. The same applies to "merits"—certainly our Orthodox Fathers who use the word do so in a very general sense, and by no means have in mind purgatory, indulgences, and the rest of the strictly Latin context. We will agree with you that it might be preferable to use

a different vocabulary so as to avoid any possibility of confusion with Latin legalism—BUT THE ISSUE IS SIMPLY NOT THAT IMPORTANT, and when used by recent Orthodox Fathers these words do not constitute a "heresy," but are just one possible way of talking about a subject which NO WORDS CAN POSSIBLY DO JUSTICE TO. Let us be milder and more circumspect in the way we speak of such things!

Further on "Latin (and/or Protestant) influence": must we decanonize St. Makarios of Corinth because he used the Catechism of Metropolitan Platon? What of St. Nikodemos, who redid several Latin books on spiritual life (!) and included Blessed Augustine in his Synaxarion? Don't you see, Father, that with such zealotry you are undermining your own foundations by casting doubt on virtually all the Fathers and Saints of the past several centuries, and proclaiming to the world that you (and those who believe as you do) "know better" than these holy men, many of whom were great theologians?! Logically speaking, this points you in the direction of a kind of Protestantism, by placing a gap in the Orthodox theological tradition which only your group manages to span by skipping the interval of Latin captivity" and getting back to the "original sources." You wrote some time back that if Blessed Augustine is in the Russian Calendar, it must be due to the "Uniate influence" of recent times. Well, we investigated and found that Blessed Augustine was introduced into the Russian Calendar in the 19th century SOLELY ON THE AUTHORITY OF ST. NIKODEMOS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN—i.e., because the Russian Church was so concerned to be in harmony with the best tradition of the Greek Church! Isn't this a good thing? Do you see how far off you can get by making vast generalizations about "Catholic influence" or "Latin captivity"? The very notion of "Latin captivity" is played up by Schmemann and his kind precisely with the aim of destroying the idea of the continuity of Orthodox tradition throughout the centuries. DO NOT FALL INTO THAT TRAP! There are great theologians of the past several centuries who used expressions which one might like to see improved; but that does not mean that they are in "Latin captivity" or should be discredited. They just do not use these expressions in the same context as the Latins, and therefore the issue is not a very important one. We ourselves have great respect for Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, despite the inadequacy of some of his theological expressions, and despite the thorough ridiculousness (forgive the crude expression) of his extreme Westernized views (or rather, taste) in iconography, for example (considering Vasnetsov and Nesterov as the pinnacle of "Byzantine iconography"!!!). Orthodox zealots can live in peace with each other without agreeing on all possible subjects.

But enough on these points. I told you we were shocked by your attitude: we are not particularly shocked by anything you may happen to believe about "evolution" or the "Shroud." We can live with you in complete mutual confidence, respect, and love without agreeing entirely on such things. But we are shocked that you seriously think of publishing "open letters" against Alexey's articles, and that you have "withdrawn all support" from him and tell people he is "still a Catholic" and can't be trusted. Have you lost all awareness of the common task to which all we missionary laborers in the Church Abroad are committed? Vladika John would rap your knuckles for that. It is not Vladikas attitude toward missionary labors that is wrong, but yours, on this point. Alexey is an extremely sympathetic, open, and humble person, and there is no justifiable reason why there should be conflict between you and him; your violent reaction has produced an

entirely unnecessary alienation between you. Please do not confuse Alexey with Sarah Hoffmann, who is indeed way off in this respect (and who now, by the way, has also abandoned Alexey as being just as "un-Orthodox" as Fr. Panteleimon, you, and us). You are apparently being misled by the sharp tone of some of Alexey's articles into thinking that he is a "narrow fanatic," which is certainly not the case; and even now, after the quite unjust letter of Fr. Ephraim (who obviously misunderstands Alexey completely), Alexey does not have any hard feelings against you and is quite anxious that there be peace between you. Your attitude has caused him quite some pain, but he is taking it all quite in the Orthodox spirit and not harboring any ill feelings. Perhaps you yourself are not aware, Father, how some people are "afraid" of you before they meet you in person, believing from some of the things you print that you are ready to "bite the head off" of anyone who approaches; and they are always pleasantly surprised to meet you and find that such is not the case at all. A good dose of "compassionate love" on all sides would certainly improve the general situation!

Father, I have been as frank as possible, and we pray that this will be for the common good of all. Please show this letter to Father Panteleimon. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, GOD GIVING US STRENGTH, WILL WE ALLOW THERE TO BE ANY FIGHTING OR HOSTILITY BETWEEN US. You and Fr. Panteleimon have a somewhat different approach from ours—for which, glory be to God! We do not need to be carbon copies of each other, and different people find help and inspiration in different approaches within the one and same zealot tradition. Our own labors and ideals are so in harmony with those of Fr. Panteleimon that we feel a definite support just by the fact of his existence. You and he both are a help to the Russian Church (though sometimes this isn't recognized in our midst), but in order to continue a sound and faultless path you will have to be circumspect about how you express certain things, so as not to cause unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings. In particular, we strongly urge you not to let certain disagreements cause you to make sweeping judgments, such as that Alexey is an "unrepentant Catholic," or that Russian theologians with whom you disagree are under "Latin influence." Such judgments prevent you from seeing the deep agreement which you actually have with such people on the basic issues of Orthodox zealotry, and they reduce theological questions to some kind of personal level, making discussion impossible. (Obviously, nothing that someone who is under "Latin influence" may say will be acceptable to you, since you think he's "tainted" and apparently can't say anything without this sinister "influence" making itself felt. But do you think you yourself are entirely free of some "influences" or other? Being brought up in and being at home in an entirely "Western" environment, have you really entirely escaped this influence? I can tell you frankly our experience from living in the wilderness: if you go to a supermarket or listen to radio or television, or read newspapers—you are certainly not going to escape some kind of "modern" influences, in ways you are probably unaware of. And what if some ill-wishers begin to find a sinister "Greek-Archdiocese influence" in you?) All this talk of "influence" is extremely shaky and probably useless; let us attack the issues directly instead, and let the differences come out and be resolved (if possible) by reasonably objective criteria, rather than just dismissing someone because we fancy him to be under some "influence" or other.

Regarding Jordanville: we ourselves can recall a few articles which the monastery printed which didn't seem to us to be very useful, but we certainly don't recall any "Protestant sectarian

literature concerning the 'Anti-Christ' and the 'last days'"! Is this real, or an exaggeration? PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF ANY EXAGGERATIONS WHATEVER IN THIS RESPECT: the common zealot cause for which our Church Abroad, despite the human failings and intellectual incompetence of all of us her members, stands almost alone today, is too precious to allow it to be damaged by such unsympathetic judgments of our fellow laborers. Much can be forgiven, if only the basic Orthodox orientation is present; and even if that be lacking, silence is usually the wisest policy (with regard to the printed word).

After all this I bow down to the ground and beg your forgiveness if I have offended you in any way by this letter or anything else, and Father Herman does likewise. Let peace and mutual love and respect always prevail between us!

We thank you for your prayers and beg you to continue them. Yes, our Brotherhood seems to be growing, and we only pray God that we will be able to use rightly the gifts which He showers upon us and the souls He sends us.

With heartfelt love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

with the blessing of Father Herman

P.s. We are not sending any copy of this letter anywhere. Let it be strictly between us, you, and Fr. Panteleimon.

137.

Sept. 8/21, 1973

Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ on the Feast of the Glorious Nativity of His Most Holy Mother! This is just a note to acknowledge your letters and clippings. We haven't read the "Secret Gospel" clipping yet, so have no comments on it.

Your projected "prisons" series sounds promising and certainly doesn't conflict with anything we have in mind. On Soviet prisons you should also read some other material if possible—for example, Anatoly Marchenko's My Testimony, which is in English (in paperback, I believe), a ghastly account of today's prisons in the USSR. He's not a believer, but his description of the systematic dehumanization in Soviet prisons shows anti-Christianity clearly in practice.

We received, after a long absence of communication, another letter from Fr. Neketas (written apparently before he got your reply to Fr. Ephraim), and he repeats his former statements to the effect that anyone who is against evolution and for the Shroud is in a bad way; so we wrote a reply telling him we quite disagree, but also begging that he will not allow disagreements on such questions, which after all are rather complicated and on which none of us is an absolute

"expert," to cause him to lose sight of the larger Orthodox zealot cause of which we all strive to be a part.

Then yesterday we finally received a reply from Alexander Kalomiros to our letter inquiring as to his views on evolution—and he promises soon to send a detailed reply in English, with quotes from the Holy Fathers. We look forward to this with open mind and some expectation!

Michael Farnsworth has been with us for a month now, and it appears there will be five of us to struggle through the winter here. We will have enough to do preparing for it, not to mention the constant pressure of printing (which is good for us!).

By the way, Vladika Nektary's visit to us with the Kursk Icon on Oct. 2 (which Laurence mentioned in his note to you) is quite indefinite—i.e., it could occur any hour of the day or night, and it might not occur at all, in view of the fact that Vladika must catch a plane the next morning going to the Holy Land!

I've finally begun the translation of Fr. Michael Pomazansky's Dogmatic Theology and hope to get the first tape (10-12 pages) to you before long. Fr. Michael has just printed an article defending the 19th-century theologian, Metropolitan Makarios, and in particular his use of the terms "satisfaction" and "merits," as precisely a way of combatting the false Latin views involved with these terms,— defeating the heretics with their own language, as it were. We will probably translate part of this and make a note out of it for the book.

We pray you are all well, and that Barbara and the children are learning to suffer and endure for Christ in their difficult trials. Pray for us all.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Congratulations on the new Nikodemos. May God grant you to continue in the same sober and inspiring tone! Can we have another three copies?

138.

Oct. 25/Nov. 7,1973

Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius

Dear Brother in Christ, Daniel [Olson],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are glad to hear you are safe.

Your letter states again your "position," which is exactly as we understood it to be when you left. My words now, on the other hand, are intended once again, quite deliberately, to "avoid the question" and "to talk about something else." Why? Because you wish to talk logically, to discuss a "problem," whereas we can only speak from the heart, where this "problem" does not exist. Dear Daniel, because we love you dearly, I am going to bawl you out and tell you once again that the real "problem" does not exist. Dear Daniel, because we love you early, I am going to bawl you out and tell you once again that the real "problem" is something quite different from

what your "wisdom" tells you; I beg you to read what I will say with your heart, and then act with your heart.

In your letter you have lectured us, accused us, judged us, and from your "position" it must indeed seem ridiculous and amazing that we cannot understand the Church's teaching and practice as well as you can. The main point of your accusation is that we have "felt ourselves competent to decide a matter which according to Church practice can be decided only by a bishop," and that therefore we are saying that we "know better than the Church." Child Daniel, how stupid do you think we are?! And how proud and unfeeling you must be to accuse us of such stupidity! Do you really think we are acting with the same soulless calculation which set off your fit? Your letter in effect offers us to work out some kind of "compromise" with you and your Church "principles." Father Herman was quite correct in telling you that you are setting yourself against the central idea which we follow—because we will not involve ourselves on that level of soulless calculation, where everything in the Church which inspires and guides us becomes "correct" or "incorrect," "proper" or "improper."

However, to answer your question: did we "canonize a Saint"? We did not! That is the work of bishops. We rather nourished our own piety, which is constantly in danger of being extinguished in present conditions, and we did so in a way which is by no means foreign to the history of the Church and is approved by present-day Fathers whom we trust, such as Vladika Nektary and Father Panteleimon. Must we call a council of bishops to nourish our piety, six forest-dwellers in a remote cabin, whom any sensible worldly person already regards as crazy? How spoiled rotten you must be, by thinking you know so much about Church history and the "rights" of bishops, in order to think like that!

If you wish to understand under what "category" our actions fall and may be understood, I will tell you by giving an example from the act of a bishop whom you have respected up to now. You know the "secret" which we share with Bishop Nektary, precisely because he did here just what you accuse us of doing. He did not do it in his capacity of bishop, because he does not have episcopal jurisdiction over this piece of land. He did it solely out of love for a Saint, and out of grief over the realization that political and other worldly considerations have made cold the hearts of those, including bishops, who should already be glorifying this Saint; and in doing it he likewise followed the apparently "uncanonical" act of Father Panteleimon, which he applauded. (You must realize, by the way, that by your present behavior you have fallen out of oneness of mind not only with us, but also with Fr. Panteleimon and Vladika Nektary, because you know better what the Church teaches than any of us, and you have judged us all.

And now I must shock your "principles" even more, in order that you will finally understand what is at stake: Vladika Nektary's act (or rather, acts, for he has repeated it) was done with full knowledge that his own ruling bishop would certainly not approve if he knew of it, but on the contrary would give him great trouble if he heard of it. What?! Does Vladika Nektary, whom you have regarded as "holy," know so much less of Church "principles" than Daniel Olson, that he would dare to usurp the "competence" of his own ruling bishop? Or does he place himself "above" Church principles?! O you fool, if you dare to think like this! He acted "secretly"—precisely because those who should be shouting the praises of a newly-revealed Saint are silent

due to the political considerations and cold hearts that reign in our midst; and if it were not for such loving hearts which beat with holy Orthodoxy, the fire of true Orthodoxy would be completely absent from our midst today. In future, we trust in God, the loving zealous acts of such men (which of course are not at all "uncanonical" because they have nothing to do with any canons whatever) whether they be hierarchs or priests or monks or simple laymen, will be praised and lauded by the whole Church, because throughout the Church's history these are the stuff of which Orthodoxy is made in practice.

If you wish to know the "principle" on which Vladika Nektary (and others who practice living Orthodoxy) have acted, and that which inspires even us poor ones just to go on under an extremely difficult and unfavorable spiritual climate (which you cold heart does not even see)—it is the principle of catacombness, of nourishing in secret those sprouts of true Orthodoxy which are not being encouraged in official Orthodox circles.

(Even if you do not understand all this, nonetheless I must strictly forbid you to speak to anyone of anything I have said in connection with Vladika Nektary, which is a strict secret among those who think as he; if you speak of it to anyone, you are his and our betrayer.)

Our dear brother: yes, we fervently desire the return to us of you, our lost sheep, because we really do believe that this place was given to you to work out your salvation, and that your salvation in the world, especially with your cold heart and calculating mind, and with ;; one to humble you in love, is dubious. But you yourself must make the effort to return to the oneness of soul with us which you left with your calculating "principles." But you must have trust in us, with entire resolution and commitment—not with your mind, as you seem to think, but with your heart. The trust of the mind is merely calculation ("do they really know better than I do, or not?"); but the trust of the heart is self- sacrificing devotion, that path of commitment upon which you entered some months ago, and which you now wish so easily to abandon, without having offered yourself as a sacrifice to God.

You say that you wish to "work out your differences" with us. I will give you an example of how that is done—with the heart and not with the mind. Four years ago Fr. Panteleimon visited us, before the canonization of St. Herman. We asked him to serve a panikhida for him, and he replied that he simply couldn't serve a panikhida for someone to whom his community prays as a Saint. Behold, a "difference" between us and Fr. Panteleimon—and we rejoiced! And how did we work out our "difference," even as we were rejoicing over it? Fr. Panteleimon served a panikhida for "Monk Herman"—but he prayed for the newly-reposed Jordanville Monk Herman, while we prayed for Fr. Herman of Alaska—to whom for a long time we had already sung the troparion, magnification, and akathist. (How inconsistent" of us!) And how "inconsistent" for Vladika John to end his panikhidas for Fr. Herman with the magnification to him! And how "inconsistent" that we both glorify Elder Nazarius and pray for his Repose! What kind of "canonization" is that?!

Come to your senses, child Daniel! You have trapped yourself in a satanic net of "principles" which you are too cold and stupid to know how to apply; and yet you think yourself smart and worthy enough to do so.

If your heart responds to this that I have said, then return to us with tears and repentance that you fell away from unity with us through your accursed calculating logic, which is not at all based on "principles" but on pride, and which does not at all join you to the mind of the Church, but on the contrary separates you from it. However, we must tell you straight: we can give you no "answer" to the "problem" you imagine you have with us; you will simply have to trust us and wholeheartedly accept our judgment—or else there is no hope that you will ever attain humility, or even desire it. There can be no "compromise" on the petty point you raised, because we simply refuse to think in those terms, and we will continue to follow our heart right up to the time we are persecuted and banished for it; and if we ever did agree to begin thinking in those terms and "calculating" together with you, we would precisely then lose just what attracted you to us in the first place, about which you are evidently not very much aware.

If you return to us, it must not be a "gentlemen's agreement" or "concordat" whereby each of us jealously guards his opinions, but rather by a wholehearted commitment to travel the path of humbleness and oneness of soul with us. Out of love for Christ we must continue to try to humble you, according to your strength, which so far has been very little. You are very proud, and up to now you have set a limit and condition to your humility: you will accept being humbled only if it can be proved to you that you are "wrong" of have done something "improper." Now you must strive harder to enter into true humility and not think you "know better" about the conditions of collecting firewood or transporting ladders, or whether you should be bawled out for your transgressions immediately or later: in fact, it is because you would not give up your own will and understanding on such petty points that you were caught in the devils nets on the "principles" which caused you to grow cold, judge us, and walk away from us. It is this pride also which allowed tne devil to get into your heart when the Kursk Icon came and reduce you to a state of total unfeelingness.

Daniel, God gave us to you to help fight your pride; come to us in repentance and let us help you. By yourself you will only spend your whole life trying to preserve your soul, under the pretext of your understanding of Church "principles" and the like; and he who would preserve his soul will lose it. Only if you try to lose your soul for Christ, by really committing yourself, will you finally gain it.

I pray that these words will get through your stupid cold mind and speak to your heart, for despite their seemingly harsh tone, I assure you they are written from the heart. You have fallen into an extremely elementary trap of the devil, which has been repeated a million times in the history of Orthodoxy and monasticism. And the only way you can get out of this trap is humbly to recognize your own stupidity and trust in God and your brothers.

I close with a quote from St. Barsanuphius, in answer to a question of Abba Dorotheus (when he was a novice), which I copied out this morning:

Q: The thoughts which arise in me say: Go to a different place and there you will be saved.

A: Brother! May he be cursed who has sowed in your heart such thought of leaving this place because of the transgression of commandments here. This is the devil. He presents this to you

under an appearance of truth, so that, having mocked you, he might make you an object of scandal for many, so that you might bear condemnation for them also.

You are being subjected to this for your negligence and vainglory. You say: “If I go away to a different place, there I will endure dishonor.” But why is it that now, just as soon as you hear that your brother has said something against you, your heart is disturbed, and you do not wish that anyone should know of your transgression? To negligence and vainglory the demons also join their nets so as to cause your soul to perish. Be assured in the Lord, that if it were not for the help of God and the prayers of the true slaves of God who are in this place, you could remain even a year in the monastery. But just as a blind man sees nothing, so also you do not see the benefactions which God has shown you and continues to show by the prayers and the Saints. Beorhwe! Pay careful heed to yourself; labor against thoughts so as not to fall into negligence and vainglory, not to do anything according to your own will, and not to accept the thoughts and self-justification which arise in you: otherwise you will be subjected to a powerful fall. Know for sure, that wherever you might go, though you might go over the whole earth from end to end, nowhere will you receive such benefit as in this place. What an anchor is for a boat, such will be for you the prayers of the Fathers here. Acquire firmness, and it will remove from you familiarity in your relation with your near ones, which is the cause of all evils in a man. Leave off all outward care, and then you will freely serve God.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. This reply has been delayed by a week of rain, and a little snow.

139.

Week of Nov. 6, 1973

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for the new Nikodemos, which was full of spiritual food from first to last, including the “fillers.” May God give you the strength to continue giving this spiritual food to those who are starved for it (often without knowing it).

We received two days ago, with a sigh, Fr. Ephraim’s third letter to you. Before reading it we wondered, “is this really necessary?” And after reading it, of course, we saw that it is not. And. now (after starting this letter) we have received your new letter expressing your being “shaken” over Fr. E s -epistle. This I think I understand, although not perhaps too rationally, and I will try to express something of what I feel you might be going through.

Of course, the sometimes flippant tone disturbs you, especially as coming from a monastery which is supposed to give precisely the right, serious, (but not pompously solemn) tone. Again, there is much that is totally irrelevant in the letter, as though you are to be awed by the very fact that Lives of Saints and Holy Fathers are thrown at you, quite apart from whether they are relevant or not. Then, the patronizing tone toward St. Nikodemos and St. Nectarius, as much as to say: “we know better than our own Saints; they are not as sophisticated in theology as we are.”

Yet again, the citing of Metr. Anthony and Bolotov, which means the authors think they are in the full Russian tradition, and therefore you have no ground to stand on at all (more on this below). Again, the letter contains much quibbling over words, in a rather "scholastic" spirit. And perhaps most of all: their approach and assumptions are so different from yours (and ours) that you probably just don't know what to say in reply. Their use of Anselm is a variation on the standard joke: "Have you stopped beating your wife?"—i.e., if you enter into a discussion on their terms, you will never get out of the swamp, but will have to force yourself to be "defensive" about something that is actually quite unimportant.

Here I will set down a few impressions which this letter produced on me:

(1) Positively, it would seem that the Fathers are no longer, as in the second letter, intent on annihilating Nikodemos, but have apparently accepted the fact that you will continue to exist, outside their control. If so, glory be to God for such a measure of peace, at least.

(2) The whole letter is written in what seems to us an idle, sometimes frivolous tone, and it would really be a waste of your time and energy to make any substantial reply to it. We do not need "debates" on this level. Obviously, they have certain set ideas which are not going to be changed by any "point-by-point" reply. Your best "reply" is to continue publishing Nikodemos without letting this static interfere with you.

(3) It has now become rather obvious that Holy Transfiguration Monastery is quite limited in its theological and philosophical understanding. It is apparently not capable of understanding in full Orthodox context what is happening in the world today (intellectually [or] philosophically), nor of placing in proper perspective the theological writers of the last two centuries.

(4) The reasons for this, it would seem, lie: (a) in the poverty of the recent Greek theological-intellectual tradition, which must really have been thoroughly paralysed and devastated by the Turkish experience (in a way that the Russian tradition certainly was not). If this is so, then such Fathers as Sts. Nikodemos, Makarios, and Nectarius are evidently rare exceptions who do not really form a continuous tradition (and notice that Fr. E. disowns the theology of even these Fathers!).

(b) In the consequent unrootedness of the Fathers of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in any Orthodox theological tradition—they have to "do it themselves," with no one and no stable tradition to correct them. Their "roots" are rather in 20th-century America, which accounts for the "modern" tone of their epistles, their failure to understand the whole significance and religious origin and context of "evolution," the utter ridiculousness of dilettantism of their dabbling in Russian sources. To say that Metr. Philaret of Moscow is not in the Orthodox theological tradition, whereas the academic scholar Bolotov is, and that virtually all our great recent theologians and Saints teach "anselmism"— means that as theologians they are irresponsible and unaware, and their convert translators from the Russian cannot give them the whole context of Russian theological thought which might straighten them out.

(5) Therefore, let us thank God that Holy Transfiguration is raising up monks in the genuine Orthodox discipline of monasticism, inspiring zealot parishes, and translating and spreading

some patristic texts and Lives of Saints. But let us not expect more of the Fathers than they can give; they are not capable of giving the Orthodox theology and philosophy which is needed for our times. (Not unless they change their outlook, that is.)

(6) This Orthodox theology and philosophy must obviously come from the Russian tradition of the last two centuries, in particular the tradition inspired by Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky. Therefore, there is much for us to do who love this tradition and want to be formed in it!

(7) Concerning evolution: Fr. E. is quibbling over words, because he simply does not understand the whole question. He obviously misunderstands both St. Nectarius (who certainly is not trying to make a "scientific" statement, but is only, quite properly, ridiculing the pseudo-scientists who find man's origins in the ape-kingdom) and St. Basil (who is scientifically correct in his statement on pines and oaks, and he certainly did not intend to say that the seed of one produces the other, since the whole Hexaemeron emphasizes that each kind of creature reproduces only according to its kind). But it is futile to make an answer to these points: rather, the whole discussion must be placed in a different, more serious context. Hopefully, this will be what your future article on evolution will do (whenever God wills!).

Above all: what we need now are persistent, independent labors, such as you and we are trying to make; and not useless debates.

The new Orthodox Life, by the way, has an article by Fr. Lev Puhalo which apparently comes from the same theological "school," and which we found very unsatisfactory. Not only is such frequent and open discussion of the "sex act" distasteful and unnecessary, but the whole context of the discussion is rather pagan-modern than Orthodox. True, marriage is sacred, but the "sex act" among fallen humans certainly is not, but should always be bound up with repentance, awareness of sin (as in Psalm 50), and a humble awareness of how short married life falls of the perfect Christian life. (Likewise, one who lives in virginity should be constantly reproaching himself for the vileness of his thoughts; in no state of Christian life is there room for smug self-satisfaction.) Fr. Lev's "positive view of sex" would seem to be rather a 20th-century reaction against Victorian prudery than anything patristic or Orthodox.

A very important point: it is not enough to talk about a "return to patristic sources"—that can be just another intellectual fashion, which I'm afraid it is to some extent among some of our new theological "experts." There are some tell-tale signs by which these academic theologians reveal their own inadequate patristic foundation, one of the most obvious of which is the attitude: we know what is right and everyone else is wrong, under foreign influence, etc. (including great Saints and theologians). Fr. E. is telling you that he and his group (who are graduates of the pseudo-Orthodox seminaries of Holy Cross and St. Vladimir's) know more about Orthodox theology than: St. Nikodemos, St. Nectarios, Metr. Philaret of Moscow, Bishop Theophanes the Recluse, St. John of Kronstadt (who also talks about "merits" of Christ), Archbishop John Maximovitch (who sang the service every year to Blessed Augustine, and in fact commissioned the writing of it!), and also the Elders of Optina! Such presumption can only do harm to the real cause of renewing Orthodox life by drawing from the fresh springs of Orthodox tradition.

The best advice we can give you is this: do not enter into any further discussion with Fr. Ephraim on his level. You are entirely correct that a public apology for the Shroud article would complicate rather than simplify matters. Indeed, if you were to apologize for publishing a heresy (which you certainly did not do), you would thereby publicly accuse many Saints of heresy, as well as the whole Russian Church (which uses Metr. Philaret's catechism as an official statement of faith). Fr. E. has gone quite overboard on this subject, thereby revealing the academic amateurish level of his "theology"; do not allow yourself even to think in the same terms he does. Neither you nor we are "experts" in theology, and it is not for us to enter into debates with those who think they are. Let us rather follow the stable path which our recent Fathers have trodden before us, and not get excited over issues which did not bother them.

By the way, it cannot be doubted that the issue of "Latin influence" is real—our own recent Fathers tell us of this; but Fr. E. does not have the proper, balanced and sober, approach to it.

We just received the O.C. Witness with the article on "intellectual converts." I don't know what use such an article can have. Everyone when reading it will think of his own favorite "crazy convert"; the first one that came to our mind was Fr. Lev Puhalo! But let us rather be patient with each other and help each other with love and encouragement to overcome our faults and ever strive to enter more fully into the Church's true spirit.

It does look as though the winter will be longer and severer than usual. We had snow flurries several times, but with no more than an inch of snow so far; however, the first real snow looks to be close (27° this morning, and probably colder down in Platina). We had two solid weeks of rain, which makes one place in our road (very close to us) quite difficult, but so far we've managed to get up and down safely. We have almost all our winter supplies, and need just two more trips for paper and gasoline.

Yes, Daniel left us, which saddened us and makes us realize all the more how strongly the devil is fighting us (for Daniel really belongs here). Our Catechumen John also left last week, without yet receiving what he came for—another attack of the devil. But we try to learn through our trials, and we have many consolations also. Last Tuesday Fr. Spiridon came and served Divine Liturgy on his namesday, and we all received Holy Communion.

We will be glad to talk to David, whenever you can bring him. St. Seraphim tells us to sow the seed of the Word whenever and wherever we can.

Trust in Vladika John's prayer. Pray for us all.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

S. M.

P.S. I am enclosing (or maybe sending separately) two cassettes, which you might try to type out. One is the life of St. Simeon of Verkhoturye which I mentioned to you before, which is almost complete on the two sides (there's a little more on another tape, which we'll type out). This tape (and the other as well) were translated "live" and so will need some correction before being

printed as a whole; but if you want to abridge it yourself you might be able to do so from this preliminary version.

The second cassette is part of a booklet we may be printing: Vladika Averky s commentary on the Apocalypse, which comes from Vol. 2 of his New Testament Commentary. Vladimir Anderson asked about the Orthodox interpretation of the Apocalypse recently, so we re doing this, which might be able to be printed much sooner than the Orthodox Dogmatics. (40-50 pp.) If they aren't too difficult to transcribe (I'm doing the Dogmatics with puctuation marks, erasing my mistakes, etc., so it's easier to follow), then please send us one copy of the complete text of both tapes (8 1/2×11 paper, doublespaced) so we can make corrections.

140.

Nov. 10/23, 1973

Apostles Herodion and others

Dear Father Lev,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We received your note and learn with astonishment that doe Acquisition of the Holy Spirit of I. M. Kontzevitch is being printed in English, it would seem, without the widow of the author (who actually wrote half of it) even being informed of it, despite the clear notice in the beginning of the book about all rights being reserved to the author (and his heirs). Vladika Nektary, the authors brother, will also not be pleased. This is not merely a lack of elementary courtesy, but also an extremely incompetent approach to the book, in view of the corrections and additions which should be made in it. Mrs. Kontzevitch will certainly not approve of any translation of her husband's books without her first examining them, both for mistakes and for quality of translation (she knows English well). Both she and her husband have entrusted to our Brotherhood the work of editing, translating, and correcting the writings of I. M. Kontzevitch and have given us instructions concerning this. This is all the more important, by the way, in the case\of the book Optina and Its Era of which Fr. Herman was co-editor with Mrs. Kontzevitch, and which will require much revision before being presented in English. We ourselves are by no means against others laboring in the translation of Prof. Kontzevitch's works; we only ask, in view of the desire of the author and his widow, that we see the manuscripts before publication so they can be properly revised. As long as she is alive, Mrs. Kontzevitch also must certainly see all translations before publication.

If it is really true the Acquisition is already being printed, it is truly unfortunate, especially if the book is as haphazardly done as was the "New Martyrs." Mrs. Kontzevitch is very outspoken and will probably send an indignant letter to the Metropolitan if this is done. But even if bishops may do more or less as they please, let the rest of us laborers in Christ's vineyard be humble and sensible and not undertake projects without knowing their full background.

Please forgive the straightforward language, but we have known the Kontzevitches for a long time and know how careful and precise they are with regard to their writings, and how much they detest literary amateurishness.

With love in Christ our Savior,

Seraphim, monk

141.

Nov. 10/23, 1973b

Apostles Herodion and others

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have an extraordinary request to make of you—if it is possible and if things turn out as expected. For twenty years Fr. Herman has known a female convert to our Church on the East Coast, Nina Seco. (I've known her, chiefly by correspondence, for over half that long.) She went through all the trials of the earliest "convert period" in connection with Jordanville, and was actually Fr. Herman's "spiritual daughter." (She is about our age.) Then she discovered Fr. Panteleimon in Boston and continued under his spiritual direction. Together with her friend Margaret, she laid the foundation for Holy Nativity Convent, which in the beginning was just the two of them, praying and laboring together in an upstairs apartment in Boston. The Convent grew, and a year of two ago Fr. Panteleimon imported an Abbess for it, which gave somewhat a different emphasis to the convent. Then, after Pascha of this year, Nina left the convent—she says it's because of her own temperament and her lack of confidability in the Abbess. She's been back to visit several times since then, and has finally come to see quite definitely that she doesn't belong there. People tell her she should go to a Russian convent, but she has no inclination for this, being extremely devoted to the whole labor and dream of presenting Orthodoxy in the English language. Right now she's staying with a Russian priest in New Jersey but cannot stay there beyond Russian Christmas, and she wants to come to California for a while, perhaps on the way to our Convent in Bluffton, Alberta. She doesn't really know anyone out here except us, and she's been inquiring as to whom she might stay with in San Francisco. (She thought of coming to visit us on St. Herman's day Dec. 12/25, but access to us then already looks dubious, and also Father Herman has been asked to come to Jordanville just/at that time to give a talk to a Youth Pilgrimage at the Monastery (which he hasn't seen for 12 years, after being spiritually reborn in it.).

And so the thought came to us: If she comes to California, perhaps she could spend a week or several weeks with you? (Assuming you have room, of course.) Somehow we think this would be very good both for her and for you, both of you being so devoted to the English-speaking mission. There is, however, a possible complication in that she might be coming (although it doesn't look like it now) with a like-minded younger convert-friend Barbara.

Please let us know frankly what you think of all this, so we can know what advice to give her on her proposed trip.

We've had an inch or two of snow every day for 3 days, and today it looks like more snow—quite an unusual mid-November weather pattern for us, looking more and more like a preparation for a severe winter. Indeed, you had better come to us as soon as you can, and not wait for St. Herman's day in December (where Father Herman probably won't be here, also) If Nina will be staying with you for a while, we can arrange her visit to us by telephone (whether with one of your visits, or separately by Greyhound).

Hoping to hear from you soon,

With love in Christ our Savior

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We've just received the first of Alexander Kalomiros' promised epistles to us—a long one on the Old Calendarist situation, and extremely revealing, about which we'll speak when you come.

142.

Dec. 20, 1973

St. John of Kronstadt

Dear Alexey—

Greetings on the feast of our 20th-century wonderworker!

I've been finding more patristic citations, and the "patristic notes" I sent should really be expanded into a little treatise on the Orthodox view of the creation, including the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge—but how can you keep the whole article within manageable size if that's done?

By the way, according to St. Gregory of Sinai, the incorruption of the first creation was a somewhat modified one, which means you probably shouldn't be so bold as I was in saying "no fossils"—the main point remaining that in any case it is unknowable to present-day science. With thorough documentation of each point you make, the whole article can be even understated and still turn out extremely powerful.

Father Herman returns tomorrow morning. According to the account of his talk at Jordanville in "Orthodox Russia," it left a powerful impression—with 150 people present.

Pray for us—with love in Christ,

Seraphim, m.

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1974

143.

January 9/22, 1974

St. Philip of Moscow

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, our mountain was rather drenched with rain also, and all that snow that Nina and Barbara trudged through was washed away in less than two days! For a day or so all the bridges between us and the Sacramento Valley were under water, and I think the road to Redding is still closed, but the Red Bluff road is apparently open, as the mail comes through all right. There are some very deep ruts (2 feet!) in our road, but with caution the road is still usable, and it is now open all the way to us.

We rejoice at the life of your little Orthodox community—you should give great thanks to God for having such an opportunity to live remotely and independently, where Orthodoxy can readily enter into your daily life. You have just about everything you need—and what you don't have God will provide when the time comes!

The Elder in the photograph is Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel.

Interestingly, just before receiving your letter I was reading and thinking about Khomiakovs close friend Kireyevsky, who thought very similarly and is even better because of his close connection with Optina and the Holy Fathers. We'll be interested to see what you've compiled of Khomiakov. Kireyevsky's thoughts on the difference between the Catholic-Wes tern mentality and Orthodoxy might well serve as an article or pamphlet also, which would be very instructive especially for converts today. The answer to Medieval Scholasticism, he says, is the great Orthodox Fathers who lived at the same time—namely, St. Simeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory the Sinaite, St. Gregory Palamas.

And speaking of this contrast, my research into the Fathers concerning evolution has turned up something remarkable—the Catholic and Orthodox doctrines of Adam and creation are significantly different, and "evolution" can be fitted rather nicely precisely into the Catholic doctrine, but not at all into the Orthodox! This point can be made pretty well by comparing several passages of the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas (I always wondered why I kept that book!) with the passage from St. Simeon which you have, and another from St. Gregory the Sinaite. The whole discussion of "evolution," if it is presented just right, can be very important for giving our genuine Orthodox outlook on contemporary science and "wisdom."

I've also found commentaries on Genesis by St. Ephraim the Syrian and St. John Chrysostom, and some more isolated statements in other Fathers. There can be no doubt at all how the Fathers understood Genesis—quite "literally"! I was at first a little uncertain about a quote from St. Gregory the Theologian, showing that he regarded the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a symbol; and some Fathers, such as St. Gregory of Nyssa, are full of such symbols, leading a scholar like Florovsky to ask: does he understand the account of creation as entirely symbolic or

not? And then, to resolve my uncertainty, leafing through a French translation we have of St. Gregory Palamas, I found that, in opposing those who say that the Uncreated Light of Mt. Tabor is only a "symbol," he cites the very passage from St. Gregory the Theologian about the tree of knowledge, and says that of course he also accepted it as having an existence of its own! All of these quotes put together should do much to give our Orthodox people the sound Orthodox approach to Genesis and creation, which I think many are now afraid of, due to the prestige of "science."

The "Orthodox" disciple of Teilhard de Chardin is a little disappointing—he is so naive and simple-minded! Nonetheless, there are some things there that can be used in the "philosophical" part of your study.

About becoming principal, there's not much we can advise you. It seems a logical step, and it comes to you without asking on your part—but you alone can measure what it will mean in practical terms for your life. How is the present principal surviving it? Is he under great pressure and tension or not?

Don't be upset about Nina's ideas on evolution and the like. As Fr. Herman says, she's been "Panteleimonized," which means: in general, the right attitudes, but a little "too-intellectual," too sophisticated tone, with thinking a little divorced from reality. She's also "been around" a little too much; it's really much better to sit quietly in a corner such as God has given you! Hopefully, she will change a little in Vladika John's diocese!

How was the transcription of the Apocalypse tape? We've finished the text in 14 more sides, including the first side or two which has already been transcribed. But we don't want to overburden you. We would rather like to print a little book of 50-60 pages including this and other apocalyptic passages from the New Testament in Vladika Averky's commentary—to give the Orthodox view of the last things and refute the heretical views on the millennium, tribulation period, rapture, etc. This would be rather a complement to your study of evolution and the patristic view of the first things, creation. In general, it seems that no one has really thought through the whole question of evolution, and many Russian priests are satisfied just not to think about the "species" and the "six days," as long as Adam is kept as an historical person who lived about 7500 years ago. But "evolution" will hardly tolerate such a concession to theology in any case! It might be good, by the way, to give a brief resume somewhere in your study on the response of Catholic theology to evolution—how they gave way point by point, ending in the Rahner "theology" we sent you.

The idea has come to us to pay you a visit this Sunday, Jan. 14/27. What do you think of that? Will you be home? About what time do you read the hours in the morning? We would come about mid-morning, 10 or so. Let us know.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

144.

Jan. 24/Feb. 6, 1974

Blessed Xenia of Petersburg

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ in Whom rejoice!

Here are some more notes on evolution, specifically your chapters which we are returning herewith.

II. Chapter on the "context": too broad, and in the wrong place. The study should begin with a "bang" (after the Preface, which should be written last), and most logical is to start with "Early Man" itself, so the reader can see what is being talked about. The "Context" offers a history of different strands of Humanism whose importance to the subject of evolution is not clear at the beginning. In any case these pages are too broad and general, and distract the reader's attention from the central point.

III. "Science as a Fetish" and "Early Man": the points are good (we'll have more detailed criticism later when we see how they fit into the whole study); but here we'll give a word of advice: try as much as possible not to "play your hand" too much or too soon. The Preface will already make it clear enough that you are against evolution: but all the way through, and especially in the "scientific" chapters, you should be as "objective" and serene as possible, omitting in particular any comments that might show how you "feel" about what you are presenting or criticizing (such as the "heavens no" on p. 5 which I've marked)—such comments will have an adverse effect on those who aren't convinced yet, giving them the impressions that you are just hostilely disposed to evolution from the beginning, and therefore you are not open to whatever "truth" it might contain. Remember that from the beginning (that being the character of our times and its mentality) the burden of proof is on you, and the majority of readers will not sympathize with any disparaging comments. Your basic tone in these chapters should not be: "I'm going to show you how ridiculous evolution is," but rather: "Let's look at this question seriously and soberly, one point at a time, being as fair as possible to evolutionists, and see just what they believe and how much sense it makes." Actually, there are probably very few "convinced evolutionists" among Orthodox believers, but very many who just "go along" with the intellectual current, but still do have some nagging doubts about evolution which they just can't explain to themselves. For them you should be making the greatest possible clarification of this whole issue.

III. B.: Further study of "Early Man" seems the logical next step. Presumably your conclusion at the end of this chapter will not be: "Evolution is proved false and special creation true," but rather: evolution, presented popularly as "fact" and "truth," has no coercive scientific evidence whatever to support it. All the supposed "proofs" of evolution can equally be used to "prove" another theory, depending on your presuppositions. Here you should set down in summary form all the major "proofs" of evolution (preferably quoting some major evolution textbook, or perhaps Encyclopedia Britannica—the 11th edition lists 8 evidences), showing that they presuppose a whole philosophy of nature which is not at all derived from "proofs" but from the

intellectual climate of the age. (See, for example, the enclosed booklet, p. 67.) Here you should also have some quotes from evolutionists themselves showing how they realize that there is no actual coercive proof of evolution; but that it "makes more sense," or "the alternative is unthinkable"—i.e. God's creation; or other similar quotes. And when you thus quote evolutionists "against themselves," as it were, you should be careful not to "pounce" on them and say "Aha, they disprove themselves"—but rather continue in a serene tone, not taking maximum advantage of their admissions—because you are going to let all their self-incriminating evidence speak for itself, until it piles up and at the end becomes absolutely self-evident, and then your own summation of this evidence will be very powerful!

And then, here is where you should give the intellectual "context" of evolution, but much more specific than your ch. II. It is too much for most readers to understand the whole movement of Humanism, etc.; besides which, they are still not disposed to think you are giving them the real story about it. It would be good to quote an authoritative, objective source at this point. So: enclosed find 5 pp. of quotes from a good textbook on modern "intellectual history." The author is himself "modern" and believes in evolution, and so does not have your "prejudices"; yet he is quite precise and aware on the whole. These excerpts show accurately the change from the Newtonian mechanistic universe to, the evolutionary universe of our times. Some quotes like these, perhaps with a few comments in between, may be all you need to establish the "intellectual climate" in which evolution developed.

Now you are ready to enter the area of philosophy and theology: for the lack of strict scientific proof of evolution means that these questions basically are not scientific, but come from faith. At the same time you disengage yourself from the dead-end of trying to "disprove" evolution: by science it can be neither proved nor disproved; it is a question of a different order than science.

IV, V: I don't know what or how much you planned to write on "Orthodox evolutionists" and Teilhard, but I think it might be possible to combine them in a single chapter called "Christian evolutionism." (Rather in the same way that, in our "charismatic" article, we combined testimony from Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox charismatics—both because the testimony of all groups reinforce each other, and because there is really no difference between them; so also, "Orthodox evolutionism" is exactly the same as "Catholic evolutionism.") This also would give more punch to the section which I am compiling to follow the Patristic quotes, and which might be called, effectively I hope: "Latin Scholasticism: the Theological Foundation of 'Christian Evolutionism'."

In such a chapter on "Christian evolutionism," a basic thing to show will be that adding "God" to evolution does not at all change its basic philosophical-theological outlook and intent. God becomes a deus ex machina for saving evolution when the absurdity of believing in it without God, as a pure chance process, becomes too evident. Thus, quoting Dobzhansky and others, you can show how they believe in the same naturalistic universe, without God's interference, as do the atheistic evolutionists: the denial of God's Providence, etc.

As to the climax to this section: Teilhard de Chardin as extremely symptomatic of the "spirit of the age"—a "religious" thinker has come into fashion, favored even by Julian Huxley and the

Soviet Union! (I'll send some material from Russia on Teilhard.) You might look at Lecomte DuNo;y also, since the Greek Archdiocese article mentions him together with T. de C.; I have a feeling it will be easier to find good quotes from him!

An important part of this "Christian evolutionism" chapter: quote T. de C. (the passage quoted by Dobzhansky at the end of his article) on evolution as absolutely "universal"—by this time the mere quoting of this passage will already show the reader how much such a view is dependent on simply absorbing the "spirit of the times." This quote shows the blind faith of some "religious" figures in the latest current of scientific faith; and it offers an exact parallel (which you should by all means take advantage of!) to the blind faith of Alexander Pope in a different scientific faith: his adoration of Newton and his mechanical-deist universe of perfect order, which was mocked a century later by Voltaire in Candiele, a satire on the "best of all possible worlds" (the phrase is Leibniz', but it sums up the faith of the whole 17th and 18th century philosophical "establishment"). Popes words are "jingly" and will catch your readers unawares and perhaps make them begin to see that one should not place so much faith in any scientific philosophy-faith.

Alexander Pope, "Essay on Man":

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,

Whose body Nature is, and God the soul,…

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;

All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;

All discord, harmony not understood;

All partial evil, universal good:

And, spite of pride, in erring reasons spite,

One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.

And in another place in Popes works:

Nature and Natures laws lay hid in night:

God said, Let Newton be! and all was Light.

Voltaire mocked this philosophy because it had become out of date·, and thus your reader is warned, the suggestion is made: maybe evolution too is such a passing faith that will become out of date one day, or is already becoming so! And this inevitably happens if Christian philosophy accepts the philosophy of the "spirit of the age," which comes and goes. In general it will be a good idea to contrast the Newtonian universe with the evolutionary: this contrast will give the reader probably all the intellectual "context" of evolution he needs, and in a very painless way, without forcing him to understand the whole history of modern thought. Many people simply aren't aware that there has ever been a "science" that wasn't "evolutionary," and the contrast between Newton and evolution shows how one scientific theory gives way to the next. Thus you

will undermine the scientific "faith" of your readers! (In our theological section, we will also be quoting St. Basil the Great and Fr. Michael Pomazansky on this subject.)

By the way, the thought occurs to me that the spiritual tone of Fundamentalism's opposition to evolution is actually based more on the Newtonian universe than Christianity! Undoubtedly Archbishop Ussher was a convinced Newtonian!—you should look into that. The climax of the whole article will then be in presenting the Orthodox theology of creation—Adam, which is totally independent of all scientific fashions.

For Orthodoxy DOES NOT FOLLOW THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE AGE, rather Orthodoxy has its own philosophy based on Revelation. (The Holy Fathers have a complete theology of the origin of man and creation which) This Revelation is not bound up with any intellectual fashion that passes away. It is a doctrine not modified with every passing philosophy, not bound up with either the static universe of perfect harmony of Newton (which departed from Orthodoxy by making the universe purely naturalistic—and evolution is actually just the present philosophy of the naturalized universe divorced from God and His action), nor with the "developing" universe of T. de C. and other fashionable thinkers today. Orthodox philosophy is NOT OF THIS WORLD; but it is THE ANSWER to the vain speculations of modern man, and certainly the answer to a mankind filled with the "spiritual malaise" D. [Dostoyevsky] perceives.

Above all, the whole study should be as simple and as much to the point and as "objective" as possible. If one accepts the principle of objectivity, and believes in the Holy Fathers—then the whole study, even in a very low key, should gradually build itself up to a devastating and convincing conclusion.

By the way, in your "scientific" chapters I hope you have a good account of the "carbon dating system" and whatever "evidence" there is for "millions of years"; also, you must be prepared for answers in several points of the "history of mankind"—how do you explain Neanderthal Man, for example? (I've just found an Orthodox pamphlet on this subject, written 25 years ago, which views him as the descendant of Cain.)

We've received Fr. Neketas' newest comments on evolution, where he tries to identify antievolutionism with the sectarian fringe. Why such pointless comments? One senses that he somehow feels unsafe on evolution, is somehow threatened by anti-evolutionism. Actually, he only confuses more those people who are already uncertain enough what to believe about evolution.

And then yesterday we received from the "Zion Orthodox Hermitage" a copy of the letter to Fr. Neketas which you had already showed us, together with an article which we hadn't seen, called "The Creation Narrative." Seeing the quote from St. Hippolytus on page 1, we looked forward to some patristic documentation. But alas, the author doesn't come through with this, and he turns out to be quite vague on the whole subject himself! In the next to last paragraph of p. 2 he quite losses himself in wild "speculations" which are not only unscriptural (I've never heard of anyone who threw dinosaurs in before the six days of creation) but are also doctrinally unsound (the suggestion that there could have been evil in the visible creation before Adam's transgression). In a word, the author is quite naive, and in his fear that "science might be right" about the

"millions of years" he already has quite a lot in common with many present-day evolutionists. (Same viewpoint is in the enclosed booklet.) We look forward to your objective presentation of the proof or lack of it concerning the "age of the earth" and man.

It is time to get this out. Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.S. Why don't you think of printing in a format something like the enclosed booklet? It could be "popular"! We could make the cover and give some other help.

145.

Feb. 2/15, 1974

Meeting of the Lord

Dear Alexey—

Just a note to go with the Teilhard article—I think it was Sarah who sent it to us, but maybe it was you; in any case you might as well keep it in your "evolution" file. It is well done but, of course, "unpublishable," as she says. Most people will just stop listening when they hear "fraud," "conspiracy," or anything like that. If you mention "fraud" in connection with Teilhard de Ch. it should be no more than a hint. Likewise Vatican II should be mentioned as little as possible in the "Christian evolution" section, as there are those who will leap at the opportunity to believe that you are of a "pre-Vatican II" mentality.

I suspect also that Sarah is overestimating Teilhard's direct influence on the "New Christianity." That phrase was coined (I think) by St. Simon 150 years ago, and much preparation was made for it before Teilhard. Probably T. appeared at just the right time to take advantage of the modernist current and make everyone start to think of it in connection with his name.

There are some good points for the "Christian philosophy" section on pp. 39-41.

Concerning your chapter on "Early Man"—very good! We will send it back shortly with a few comments. This is most of the "scientific" raw material you will need to support your conclusions on the "scientific" side of evolution. Only—where is the "fluorine dating system"? Isn't that in fashion now?

This whole "book" on evolution seems to be piecing itself together very well—and its doubtless better this way than it would have been starting from a pre-conceived plan. Frankly, we had never even thought of some of the theological aspects which we have been uncovering now.

It would be good to have a quote from Charles Lyell or someone else from the period when the "immense antiquity" of man and the earth first "dawned" on men, to show precisely why they started thinking that way.

We look forward to your visit on March 1. Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

146.

Monday, Feb. 19, 1974

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the sound of your letters, you are in need of an "epistle." I really can't give it, but being a like-minded American Orthodox dreamer, I must give you at least a paragraph or two.

Yes, the Church situation in San Francisco is gloomy, and you can't even pretend that you "fit" into it. You can't help but feel discouraged by this—and so here is where your virtue begins to be tested. You're not about to relapse into being a "moody, immature convert"—but how strong is your positive attitude? You know that it is not "chance" that you are where you are, even though it may not be so much by deliberate plan, either. Perhaps you begin to think that deep down the whole thing is "crazy" after all? When such ideas arise, my favorite question is: What's the alternative? Does anything else make sense? It doesn't seem to. Then endure, and thank God that you are being tested.

In order not to be submerged by the petty "Church" world, YOU MUST BE LIVING IN A WORLD OF YOUR OWN—and that is the real Church world of ascetics, desert-dwellers, and all those "queer birds" who inspire and keep the spark alive inside us. Especially the desert-dwellers speak to us today, when the desert has all but been banished from the Church. Does that mean we think we can be like them? No, it just means that we love them and more than anything else we want to have even the tiniest reflection of their kind of life, if only God will have mercy on us and not destroy us in our sins, our self-opinion, and the rest of our darkness.

Thursday, Feb. 22

Since this letter was started we received your letter of joy on seeing a little light in your seemingly dark situation. Glory be to God for that! But don't let it make you light-headed, as many trials are yet in store for you! Spiritually rejoice, and use God's gifts to you for spiritual profit; but be prepared for whatever the devil will send you next. And rejoice also that you have trials, which prove that spiritual life still exists and that there is hope even for the wildest dream, if it is dreamed with real hope in God!

On Tuesday morning VI. A. himself paid us a surprise visit, together with our starets, Fr. Spyridon, and Deacon Nicholas Porshnikov. Glory be to God, we received Holy Communion, for which we are grateful to VI. But afterwards we had a talk—which revealed, despite our almost tearful entreaty, that he does not understand not only us, but any of the young idealistic priests or monks, and talks a totally different language, fitting everything into a set "Synodal" pattern. Alas, he will be presiding over empty parishes without priests in a very short time. How many of the young zealots will survive if such attitudes continue at the top? Nonetheless, precisely

because the situation seems so hopeless, let us hope in the Lord and continue on the path God has given us—to love the desert- dwellers and keep the desert in our hearts.

Different subject: so you are a "peacemaker?" Where do you get your license? Don't you realize that in such a role you will begin to get answers that the other party thinks you "expect"? If there are misunderstandings, it is better not to think you can "patch them up," but rather just don't get involved in them yourself. About the "Shroud," Alexey just plain made a mistake, and he got it pretty hard from us for it too. The "Greeks" also made a mistake, however, in making such a big issue of this and beating people over the head just because they don't agree with a certain opinion. That hurt Alexey, but it was also extremely good for him spiritually. At present he seems to be at peace with everyone as far as we can see. As for the angry exchange of letters with John Johnstone some months ago, we cant comment, not having seen them, but we know Alexey is upset at having written in this tone, but after all it is Dr. Johnstone who refuses to continue the correspondence, and not Alexey, who deep down is a very loving and meek and forgiving person. In the time ahead the devil will be using every chance to get true Orthodox Christians upset at each other over matter big and (mostly) small. We must firmly try not to take the bait, but [page ends]

This is already becoming too much of an "epistle" and much too "teachy." Forgive me. Fr. Ephraim sends us the Troparia, and we already have Feb. and March. In his last letter Fr. E. asks if Alexey would be interested in receiving the service material from the Monastery, and I wrote back, definitely yes. We are sending Alexey Feb. and March, and presumably he will receive the rest from Boston.

Do you ever get to the UC Berkeley library? We have some research projects which we would love to give you!

Pray for us miserable sinners, who have the name of monks without the deeds.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.S. Marina the Starosta's wife is my god-daughter, and in fact she married her husband with my blessing! Until a year or two ago we were on the best and closest terms, but since then something seems to have happened, as I haven't heard a word from her, even in answer to my namesday greetings to her and her son Alexander, also my godson. Apparently something is cooking, very likely in connection with the fact that she is (or at least was) quite close to Sarah Hoffman. Speaking of whom, as a principle one must be very kind and forgiving of all converts, but at the same time one must realize that some of them can be "dangerous," so watch out! Sarah seems to belong to this category—she is very friendly with you until she discovers that you hold some "dangerous" view, when she quite suddenly drops you with never a word, and what she says to others who can say? First she dropped Fr. Panteleimon, then when we defended him she dropped us, then when Alexey defended us she dropped him, etc. She also dragged Alexey's name into her "heresy" epistle, which I'm afraid for the Boston Fathers to thinking Alexey was part of a plot against them, which he certainly wasn't. All of this is supposed, not to make us upset, but to

keep us sober and not to spread tales and rumors ourselves, or believe them. We suspect the tales about us in S.F. are something fantastic, and we are only thankful that we don't hear most of them.

147.

Jan. or Feb. 74

[Fragment of letter to Alexey Young, p. 3 only]:

Fr. P. mentioned a little the question of evolution (I didn't mention your forthcoming article on the subject), enough for me to see his basic attitude and fears, I think. His concern about "fundamentalism" seems to stem from a fear that the Orthodox battle against evolutionism might get bogged down on the same level as the "supposed" scientific arguments for it, and there thus might be endless arguments on fossil evidence, the precise meaning of the "Six Days," etc. He is of course right that our Orthodox approach to the subject should not be on the scientific but rather on the theological level; but I also gathered that he is not fully aware of the flimsiness of the "scientific" evidence in favor of evolutionism, which makes him perhaps over-cautious and fearful on the whole subject. Yes, we should keep our basic approach high and theological; but we can also blow up that "scientific" evidence which just doesn't make sense and which is really the result of blind prejudice and false theologizing in the guise of science.

Just as we thought, Fr. P. does not read Deacon Levs mail and has been having difficulties being accused of holding views which Deacon Lev writes from the monastery!

Fr. Neketas announced in a recent bulletin that he was printing a letter on "evolution"—part of Fr. Ephraim's letter to you! That really wouldn't be wise, and Fr. P. when he heard of it put a stop to it. In general I found Fr. Panteleimon quite willing to listen on subjects about which he's not fully informed, and open to changing his mind.

By this time you are probably a father again! May God bless the child's first days and prosper him (her) all the days of his life. Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

148.

Feb. 25/March 10, 1974

Second Sunday of Lent

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We received yesterday the long-awaited epistle of Dr. Kalomiros on "evolution"—40 pages long! I must confess that it is shocking beyond our expectations—giving the "evolutionary" teaching quite unadorned and unqualified, complete with the "evolved beast Adam" and "he who

denies evolution denies the Sacred Scriptures." In a way, however, we are rather glad of this—because now for the first time we have found a reputable Orthodox "evolutionist" who is willing to be quite frank about matters which others, I believe, are afraid to speak up about for fear of offending "weak consciences" which are under "Western influences."

I have written him a short letter saying I wish to make a long and detailed reply to him and to start a "dialogue" with him on this subject. I believe that if we can answer him point by point, and raise the points he doesn't mention, we can make the forthcoming publication a very powerful one.

I must confess to being rather disappointed in the tone of his letter, which is somewhat in the "elevated" tone of Fr. Ephraim, with repeated comments about "Western rationalists," etc. However, he ends very nicely and begs us to tell him where he is wrong—so we must do this. Frankly, I would like to "convert" him completely. But God only knows what is possible, and how much his mind is still open. The most encouraging thing is that he, like us, regards the matter as extremely important, as opposed to those who think it's unimportant and that everyone can believe as he wishes. With Dr. Kalomiros at last the real battle begins.

You can read the letter on your next visit (I'm beginning now on my reply to it, but in general this is my feeling about it (Father Herman hasn't read it yet):

1. Patristically it is very weak. Very few Fathers are quoted, and the only really "evolutionary" quote is a passage from St. Gregory of Nyssa—a passage which I noted a few weeks ago, by the way, and thought at the time: "I'd better use this and explain it, because one who already believes in evolution will be sure to think it 'proves evolution.'" It does not, of course—it is merely a general statement of the orderly progression of God's creation from the lowest to the highest, with the most perfect creature, man, coming last. Nothing is said about man or any creature "evolving," and in another part of the same book ("On the Creation of Man") St. Gregory says explicitly that Adam was ««generated, but was created directly by Christ.

2. There is a long "theological" discourse on man's nature, which is very partial and one-sided, but will require a solid answer with quotes from Holy Fathers—for evolution above all involves a false anthropology, doctrine of man.

3. It is quite obvious that Kalomiros has gone to the Fathers already knowing that evolution is a "fact." He obviously has not given deep thought to examining the presuppositions of the "fact" of evolution, so we will have to challenge him to start thinking and not bring to the Holy Fathers his preconceptions based on modern Western "wisdom."

4. He is very imprecise on the very meaning of the word "evolution"—he thinks the development from embryo to mature man is "evolution," and that the existence of different races of men is due to "evolution." Very naive.

5. The man is not a theologian, but reads the Fathers by hit and miss.

We are almost forced to a painful conclusion: the Greeks have lost the patristic tradition, and all their shouting about "Latin influence," etc., is only an expression of their own uncertainty. They

try to “reconstruct” the patristic tradition, but they have no living Fathers to guide them. Perhaps Father Theodoritos of Mt. Athos is more in the patristic tradition, but the impression becomes ever stronger that modern “Orthodox Greece” is theologically corrupt and disjointed, whereas the so- maligned Russian tradition kept the theological tradition intact.

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We rejoice to hear the news of Felicity. May God ever protect her.

About the baptism: it is out of the question to get a priest to go anywhere on a weekend of Lent. Our priest was here last Tuesday (with Vladika Anthony), but cannot come again unto (hopefully) Pascha week. You would do best to go ahead with the plans for the baptism, and then leave it in God’s hands whether you can go to S.F. for Pascha also. If you cannot make it to S.F. for Pascha, you are welcome (all of you) to spend it with us here—we will be having services off and on from 2 a.m. Saturday morning to 2 a.m. Sunday morning. However, please don’t mention this possibility to anyone in S.F., as we have trouble enough already from people (who don’t know the Orthodox skete tradition) who call us “priesdess,” and if we invite people to share our “priestlessness,” it must be twice as bad! It would obviously be best for you to be able to receive Holy Communion at Pascha, but we will be here in case you can’t. (We ourselves follow the tradition of Russian desert-dwellers, which is not to leave the desert at Pascha, but either to have a priest come, or else go to the world shortly before or after the feast, when there are few people in church.)

Don’t be discouraged if the response to Nikodemos seems to diminish. That is “natural” once it ceases to be a novelty. Of course it’s difficult to know what the readers are thinking—but just go on giving what you think they need. We thought the issue was good, and the Kourdakov quotes indeed added a “punch.” I think we “explain” Sergei K. sufficiently in the new Orthodox Word (sent out yesterday); tell us what you think of it.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

p.s. From Kalomiros’ letter it is obvious that as a part of the “scientific” part of our “evolution book” (as it now seems to become) there should be a discussion of what evolution is and what it isn’t. In the patristic quotes I gave you there are good points from St. Basil on this—but it would be best to keep them in the final, theological section, and have a separate discussion of the same subject in the scientific section.

149.

Feb. 25,1974B

Second Sunday of Great Lent

St. Gregory Palamas

Dear Dr. Kalomiros,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have received your letter concerning "evolution," for which we thank you very much. I have read it, trying, as you said, to remove all Western conceptions from my mind. I hope, if God gives me the strength, to study your points carefully and write you a very long and detailed reply before too long, but for the present I wish to say only a few things.

I myself have been searching the Holy Fathers for some time seeking to find out their teaching on the questions which are raised by "evolution." I have been compiling a great many passages from their writings, including most of the passages which you quote in your letter. I have tried very hard not to project into these passages any "preconceived" opinions of my own, but I must acknowledge that my conclusions regarding the teaching of the Holy Fathers are quite different from yours. I believe that I can show you that some of your interpretations of the Holy Fathers are incomplete— that is, that you have presented only a part of their teaching and have overlooked other parts that are quite essential to the question. I would also like to present to you patristic texts on questions which you do not raise in your letter, but which I believe are also quite essential for understanding the questions raised by evolution.

I note also in your letter that your use of the term "evolution" is somewhat imprecise, and I would like to discuss this question also in some detail.

I agree with you that this subject is vital and extremely important. We have found very few people who are willing or able to think clearly in this subject, with the result that there is much confusion in the minds of Orthodox faithful concerning it. We are therefore very grateful to you for writing your views so clearly and outspokenly.

Like you, we also do not want to have merely "our own opinion" on this subject, but only wish to accept the teaching of the Holy Fathers. So far we have not found any "evolutionist" or "antievolutionist" who sets forth the real Orthodox teaching on this subject, and that is why we ourselves have been making research on it. The Protestant Fundamentalist objections to evolution are mostly superficial and rationalistic (as you yourself have noted), being based on an interpretation of the book of Genesis that comes from "common sense," and not from the Holy Fathers.

We are not theologians (and I will tell you frankly that we distrust people who call themselves "theologians," for almost all of them seem to us to be just academic rationalists) but we dearly love the Holy Fathers and wish to live by their teaching, and we sense that you do also. May it be that by this love, with the help of God and by the prayers of these Holy Fathers, we may now begin a "dialogue" with you that will bring us all to the true Patristic teaching and be of help also to others.

Everything that I write will be read and criticized by my co-laborer Father Herman, to whom I am in obedience, and we will try also to obtain the opinions of some of our Russian theologians whom we respect.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk .

150.

March 2/15, 1974

Reigning Mother of God

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray this has found you successfully laboring after three weeks of the fast. After the labor of fasting, what joy in the week of Pascha! (The services are also very short—how wise the Church is with our fallen nature!)

I have almost finished my "reply" to Dr. Kalomiros, and I think God has helped me to put all the Patristic material (or almost all) I have been collecting into a coherent presentation, and much more effectively than if I had gone ahead with the "sober and objective" presentation I had planned on. One of the Egyptian Elders once said to St. John Cassian (roughly!): "I'm glad you expressed this question so stupidly, because now I can clearly set forth the true doctrine." Kalomiros has expressed "stupid evolutionism" so well (which other Greeks are afraid to do openly), that the reply to him almost writes itself. Although I know the Fathers only poorly, still their doctrine touching on "evolution" is so clear once one puts it all together, that I am simply amazed at the power "evolution" has over even educated Orthodox minds. Such is the power of this world and its fashionable ideas. I will send you a copy of my letter and Kalomiros' letter also when I finish typing it—it is almost twice as long as Kalomiros' letter to us and will probably be 40 printed pages!

Of course, now that I've done this I don't quite know what relation this letter has to our projected book—which is absolutely necessary to get out! It may be that the book might be most effective precisely in this letter form, only somewhat revised and divided up into chapters, and with all your scientific and philosophical material entered at the appropriate places. (You will notice that I mention this material at various points of the letter without going into it, as the letter is almost entirely patristic.) Anyway, see what you think once you read the letter, and we will also see what Kalomiros replies—the letter is intended to really shake him up!

Of course, many people will be upset that the evolution question is "raised" again and not kept quiet—but we agree with Kalomiros that it should be raised and the true Patristic teaching set forth. There is something very unsound about wishing to keep "quiet" about a question which remains so confused in most Orthodox minds.

It may be that this "evolution book" may be the most controversial issue to erupt on the English-speaking Orthodox scene in many years, (but maybe not, I'm not a prophet). Therefore, and also because for maximum effectiveness it should come as a surprise and shock in the midst of our Orthodox complacency, please don't mention my letter or the book to anyone. We haven't mentioned them to anyone at all. Let it be our "secret" until we know better just how to attack.

And now other questions: Father Herman has written a letter today, which is going out in the same mail with this letter, to Vladika Anthony conveying your request to have the Baptism on

Monday or Tuesday of Passion Week because of the fuel shortage. I don't see why that couldn't be done, as those days are not at all as busy for the priests as the last days of the week, and the Liturgy (Presanctified) is also celebrated on those days. But we'll see what Vladika says. As I recall he is quite insistent that baptisms be performed in the morning, however, so that one receives Communion right after being baptized.

About Leslie [Salas] and the Jesus Prayer, we'll try to collect our thoughts and give some suggestions before too long.

About Fr. Theodoritos' attack on Fr. Panteleimon—since Fr. Ephraim has asked you for a copy, I suppose the decent thing is to make one for him. This whole quarrel among the Greek Old Calendarists is very unfortunate; besides involving personalities, which only clouds the issues, the real issues involved and very subtle and delicate ones which require much tact and patience and love, not theological and canonical tirades. It seems to us that much can be said for both sides, and both sides have made mistakes.

Pray for us. Today I hope to finish the last and most important section of the letter to Kalomiros, concerning the nature of man—on which Kalomiros has expressed something perilously close to Augustinianism, based on a very wrong interpretation of the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.S. It will probably be a week before I have the letter typed.

151.

Fifth Week of Lent, 1974

[Mar. 2-9, approx.]

Dear Dr. Kalomiros,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

At last I am writing my reply to your letter on "evolution." This reply expresses the view of our Brotherhood on this question. I will repeat to you that I have written this reply not as an "expert" on the Holy Fathers, but as a "lover" of the Holy Fathers, which I believe you are also. Most of the citations I have made here from the Holy Fathers I have translated from the Russian Patristic translations of the 19th century, with some also from the English translations of the 19th century which are printed in the "Eerdmans" Nicene Fathers Series. I have given the sources as fully as possible so that you can read them in Greek. I you have any questions about these or any other Patristic citations I will be glad to discuss them further with you. I am not at all concerned merely to find citations that "prove my point," and in fact you will notice that I have also included some citations which do not seem to "prove my point"—for I am interested first and only in finding how the Holy Fathers thought on these questions, for I believe that is the way we should think also. May Christ our God bless me to speak truthfully.

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The question of "evolution" is an extremely important one for Orthodox Christians, for in it are involved many questions which directly affect our Orthodox doctrine and outlook: the relative worth of science and theology, of modern philosophy and» Patristic teaching; the doctrine of man (anthropology); our attitude toward the writings of the Holy Fathers (do we really take seriously their writings and try to live by them, or do we believe first of all in modern "wisdom," the wisdom of this world, and accept the teaching of the Holy Fathers only if it harmonizes with this "wisdom"?); our interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and especially the book of Genesis. In what follows I will touch on all these subjects.

Before one begins to discuss the question of evolution, one must have a dear idea of what he is talking about. I say this because I have had very surprising experiences with very learned people who speak as if they knew all about this subject and yet they make very elementary mistakes which reveal that there is much that they do not know about it. In particular, almost everyone who writes about evolution assumes that he knows what "evolution" is—and yet what he says reveals that he has a very confused idea of it. The question of evolution is by no means a simple one, and there is so much confusion in people's minds about it—including the minds of most Orthodox Christians—that we cannot even talk about it until we are quite sure that we know what we are talking about.

You have asked us to "clear your mind very carefully of all Western conceptions, whether these are theological, philosophical, or scientific." I assure you that I have tried to do this, and throughout this letter I will constantly be on the watch not to think in terms of Western conceptions, because I agree with you that these conceptions falsify the subject matter, and by means of them one cannot understand the question of evolution. But in turn I ask you to try very carefully to cleanse your mind of whatever preconceptions about the question of evolution you may have—what you have learned in school, what you have read in scientific books, what you may think about "anti-evolutionists," what Greek theologians may have said about the subject. Let us try to reason together, not in the manner of Western rationalists, but as Orthodox Christians who love the Holy Fathers and wish to understand their teaching, and also as rational beings who do not accept the teaching of any modern "wise men," whether they be theologians or philosophers or scientists, unless that teaching accords with the Scriptural and Patristic teaching and does not come from some foreign philosophy.

1. First of all, I agree entirely with you when you say (p. 4): "You must not confuse pure science with the "different philosophical theories written to explain the facts discovered by science. Facts are one thing (pure science) and explanations of facts is another (philosophy)."

I must tell you first of all that at one time I believed entirely in evolution. I believed not because I had thought very much about this question, but simply because "everyone believes it," because it is a "fact," and how can one deny "facts"? But then I began to think more deeply on this question. I began to see that very often what calls itself "science" is not fact at all, but philosophy, and I began very carefully to distinguish between scientific facts and scientific philosophy. After many years I came to the following conclusions:

a. Evolution is not “scientific fact” at all, but philosophy.

b. It is a false philosophy which was invented in the West as a reaction against Roman Catholic-Protestant theology, and which disguised itself as “science” in order to make itself respectable and deceive people who are willing to accept scientific fact. (In the West almost all modern errors do this same thing; even “Christian Science” claims to be “scientific,” so also Spiritism, various Hindu cults, etc.)

c. It is contrary to the teaching of the Holy Fathers on very many points.

I have deliberately given you my conclusions before explaining them to you, in order to make you stop and think: are you sure that you have put away all your preconceptions about evolution and are prepared to think clearly and dispassionately on this subject? Are you willing to admit that there may be some truth in what I will now have to say on this subject? I must tell you frankly that most “evolutionists” will stop at this point and say: this man is crazy, he is denying facts. I am trusting that your mind is at least open enough to read the rest of what I will say, which I try to base entirely on the Holy Fathers. If I make mistakes, I hope that you will tell me.

2. Many of the arguments between “evolutionists” and “anti-evolutionists” are useless, for one basic reason: they are usually not arguing about the same thing. Each one of them means one thing when he hears the word “evolution,” and the other means something else·, and they argue in vain because they are not even talking about the same thing. Therefore, in order to be precise, I will tell you exactly what I mean by the word “evolution,” which is the meaning it has in all textbooks of evolution. But first I must show you that in your letter you have used the word “evolution” to mean two entirely different things, but you write as it they were the same thing. You have failed here to distinguish between scientific fact and philosophy.

a. You write (p. 2): “The first chapters of the Holy Bible are nothing else but the history of creation progressing and being completed in time… Creation did not come into being instantly, but followed a sequence of appearances, a development in six different ‘days.’ How can we call this progress of Creation in time if not evolution?”

I answer: all that you say is true, and if you wish you can call this process of creation “evolution”—but this is not what the controversy over evolution is about. All scientific textbooks define evolution as a specific theory concerning HOW creatures came to be in time: BY MEANS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF ONE KIND OF CREATURE INTO ANOTHER, “COMPLEX FORMS BEING DERIVED FROM SIMPLER FORMS” IN A NATURAL PROCESS TAKING COUNTLESS MILLIONS OF YEARS (Storer, General Zoology). Later on, when you talk about the “evolved beast” Adam, you reveal that you believe in this specific scientific theory also., I hope to show you that the Holy Fathers did not believe in this specific scientific theory, even though this is certainly not the most important aspect of the doctrine of evolution, which more fundamentally is in error concerning the nature of man, as I will show below.

b. You say (p. 4): “We all came into being by evolution in time. In our mothers uterus each one of us was at first one single cell organism…and finally a perfect man.” Of course everyone

believes this, whether he is an "evolutionist" or an "anti-evolutionist." But this has nothing to do with the doctrine of evolution which is being disputed.

c. Again you say (p. 27): "Adam was of which race, white, negro, red, or yellow? How did we become so different from one another when we are descendants of one single couple? Is this differentiation of man in different races not a product of evolution?"

I answer again: No, this is not what the word "evolution" means! There are very many books in the English language which discuss the question of evolution from a scientific point of view. Perhaps you do not know that many scientists deny the fact of evolution (meaning the derivation of all existing creatures by transformation from other creatures), and very many scientists state that it is impossible to know by science whether evolution is true or not, because there is no evidence whatever that can conclusively prove or disprove it. If you wish, in another letter I can discuss with you the "scientific evidence" for evolution. I assure you that if you look at this evidence objectively, without any preconceptions about what you will find in it, you will discover that there is not one piece of evidence for evolution that cannot be explained by a theory of "special creation."

Please by very clear that I am not telling you that I can disprove the theory of evolution by science; I am only telling you that the theory of evolution can neither be proved not disproved by science. Those scientists who say that evolution is a "fact" are actually interpreting the scientific facts in accordance with a philosophical theory, those who say that evolution is not a fact are likewise interpreting the evidence in accordance with a different philosophical theory. By pure science alone it is not possible conclusively to prove or disprove the "fact" of evolution.

You should also know that many books have likewise been written about "the difficulties of the evolutionary theory." If you wish, I will be glad to discuss with you some of these difficulties, which seem to be totally unexplainable if evolution is a "fact."

3. I wish to make very clear to you: I do not at all deny the fact of change and development in nature. That a full-grown man grows from an embryo; that a great tree grows from a small acorn; that new varieties of organisms are developed, whether the "races" of men or different kind of cats and dogs and fruit trees—but all of this is not evolution·, it is only variation within a definite kind of species; it does not prove or even suggest (unless you already believe this for non-scientific reasons) that one kind or species develops into another and that all present creatures are the product of such a development from one or a few primitive organisms). I believe that this is clearly the teaching of St. Basil the Great in the Hexaemeron, as I will now point out.

In Homily V:7 of the Hexaemeron, St. Basil writes: "Let no one, therefore, who is living in vice despair of himself, knowing that, as agriculture changes the properties of plants, so the diligence of the soul in the pursuit of virtue can triumph over all sorts of infirmities." No one, "evolutionist" or "anti-evolutionist," will deny that the "properties" of creatures can be changed; but this is not a proof of evolution unless it can be shown that one kind of species can be changed into another, and even more, that every species changes into another in an uninterrupted chain back to the most primitive organism. I will show below what St. Basil says on this subject.

Again St. Basil writes (Hexaemeron, V, 5):

"How then, they say, does the earth bring forth seeds of the particular kind, when, after sowing grain, we frequently gather this black wheat? This is not a change to another kind, but as it were some disease and defect of the seed. It has not ceased to be wheat, but has been made black by burning." This passage would seem to indicate that St. Basil does not believe in a "change to another kind"—but I do not accept this as conclusive proof, since I wish to know what St. Basil really teaches, and not make my own arbitrary interpretation of his words. All that can really be said of this passage is that St. Basil recognizes some kind of a "change" in the wheat which is not a "change to another kind." This kind of change is not evolution.

Again, St. Basil writes (Hexaemeron, V, 7): "Certain men have already observed that, if pines are cut down or burned, they are changed into oak forests." This quote really proves nothing, and I use it only because it has been used by others to show that St. Basil believed (1) that one kind of creature actually changes into another (but I will show below what St. Basil actually teaches on this subject); and (2) that St. Basil made scientific mistakes, since this statement is untrue. Here I should state an elementary truth: modern science, when it deals with scientific facts, does indeed usually know more than the Holy Fathers, and the Holy Fathers can easily make mistakes of scientific facts; it is not scientific facts which we look for in the Holy Fathers, but true theology and the true philosophy which is based on theology. Yet in this particular case it happens that St. Basil is scientifically correct, because it often in fact happens that in a pine forest there is strong undergrowth of oak (the forest in which we live, in fact, is a similar kind of mixed pine-oak forest), and when the pine is removed by burning the oak grows rapidly and produces the change from a pine to an oak forest in 10 or 15 years. This is not evolution, but a different kind of change, and I will now show that St. Basil could not have believed that the pine is actually transformed or evolved into an oak.

Let us see now what St. Basil believed about the "evolution" or "fixity" of species. He writes:

"There is nothing truer than this, that each plant either has seed or there exists in it some generative power. And this accounts for the expression 'of its own kind.' For the shoot of the reed is not productive of an olive tree, but from the reed comes another reed; and from seeds spring plants related to the seeds sown. Thus, what was put forth by the earth in its first generation has been preserved until the present time, since the species persisted through constant reproduction." (Hexaemeron, V, 2.)

Again, St. Basil writes:

"The nature of existing objects, set in motion by one command, passes through creation without change, by generation and destruction, preserving the succession of the species through resemblance, until it reaches the very end. It begets a horse as the successor of a horse, a lion of a lion, and an eagle of an eagle; and it continues to preserve each of the animals by uninterrupted successions until the consummation of the universe. No length of time causes the specific characteristics of the animals to be corrupted or extinct, but, as if established just recently, nature, ever fresh, moves along with time." (Hexaemeron, DC, 2.)

It seems quite clear that St. Basil did not believe that one kind of creature is transformed into another, much less that every creature now existing was evolved from some other creature, and so on back to the most primitive organism. This is a modern philosophical idea.

I should tell you that I do not regard this question as being of particular importance in itself; I shall discuss below other much more important questions. If it were really a scientific fact that one kind of creatures can be transformed into another kind, I would have no difficulty believing it, since God can do anything, and the transformations and developments we can see now in nature (an embryo becoming a man, an acorn becoming an oak tree, a caterpillar becoming a butterfly) are so astonishing that one could easily believe that one species could "evolve" into another. But there is no conclusive scientific proof that such a thing has ever happened, much less that this is the law of the universe, and everything now living derives ultimately from some primitive organism. The Holy Fathers quite clearly did not believe in any such theory—because the theory of evolution was not invented until modem times. It is a product of the modern Western mentality, and if you wish I can show you later how this theory developed together with the course of modern philosophy from Descartes onward, long before there was any "scientific proof" for it. The idea of evolution is entirely absent from the text of Genesis, according to which each creature is generated "according to its kind," not "one changing into another." And the Holy Fathers, as I will show below in detail, accepted the text of Genesis quite simply, without reading into it any "scientific theories" or allegories.

Now you will understand why I do not accept your quotations from St. Gregory of Nyssa about the "ascent of nature from the least to the perfect" as a proof of evolution. I believe, as the sacred Scripture of Genesis relates, that there was indeed an orderly creation in steps; but nowhere in Genesis or in the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa is it stated that one kind of creature was transformed into another kind, and that all creatures came to be in this manner! I quite disagree with you when you say: "Creation is described in the first chapter of Genesis exactly as modern science describes it" (p. 4). If by "modern science" you mean evolutionary science, then I believe you are mistaken, as I have indicated. You have made a mistake by assuming that the kind of development described in Genesis, in St. Gregory of Nyssa and in other Fathers, is the same as that described by the doctrine of evolution; but such a thing cannot be assumed or taken for granted—you must prove it, and I will gladly discuss with you later the "scientific proof" for and against evolution, if you wish. The development of creation according to God's plan is one thing; the modern scientific (but actually philosophical) theory which explains this development by the transformation of one kind of creature into another, starting from one or a few primitive organisms, is quite a different thing. The Holy Fathers did not hold this modern theory; if you can show me that they did hold such a theory, I will be glad to listen to you.

If, on the other hand, by "modern science" you mean science which does not bind itself to the philosophical theory of evolution, I still disagree with you; and I will show below why I believe, according to the Holy Fathers, that modern science cannot attain to any knowledge at all of the Six Days of Creation. In any case, it is very arbitrary to identify the geological strata with "periods of creation." There are numerous difficulties in the way of this naive correspondence between Genesis and science. Does "modern science" really believe that the grass and trees of

the earth existed in a long geological period before the existence of the sun, which was created only on the Fourth Day? I believe you are making a serious mistake in binding up your interpretation of Holy Scripture with a particular scientific theory (not at all a "fact"). I believe that our interpretation of Holy Scripture should be bound up with no scientific theory, neither "evolutionary" nor any other. Let us rather accept the Holy Scriptures as the Holy Fathers teach us (about which I will write below), and let us not speculate about the how of creation. The doctrine of evolution is a modern speculation about the how of creation, and in many respects it contradicts the teaching of the Holy Fathers, as I shall show below.

Of course I accept your quotations from St. Gregory of Nyssa; I have found others similar to them in other Holy Fathers. I will certainly not deny that our nature is partly an animal nature, nor that we are bound up with the whole of creation, which is indeed a marvelous unity. But all this has nothing whatever to do with the doctrine of evolution, that doctrine which is defined in all textbooks as the derivation of all presently-existing creatures from one or more primitive creatures through a process of the transformation of one kind of species into another.

Further, you should realize (and now I begin to approach the important teachings of the Holy Fathers on this subject) that St. Gregory of Nyssa himself quite explicitly did not believe in anything like the modern doctrine of evolution, for he teaches that the first man Adam was indeed created directly by God and was not generated like all other men. In his book Against Eunomius he writes:

"The first man, and the man born from him, received their being in a different way; the latter by copulation, the former from the molding of Christ Himself, and yet, though they are thus believed to be two, they are inseparable in the definition of their being, and are not considered as two beings…. The idea of humanity in Adam and Abel does not vary with the difference of their origin, neither the order nor the manner of their coming into existence making any difference in their nature." (Against Eunomius, I, 34)

And again:

"That which reasons, and is mortal, and is capable of thought and knowledge, is called 'man' equally in the case of Adam and Abel, and this name of the nature is not altered either by the fact that Abel passed into existence by generation, or by the fact that Adam did so without generation" (Answer to Eunomius, Second Book, p. 299 in the English "Eerdmans" edition.)

Of course I agree with the teaching of St. Athanasius which you quote (p. 35), that "the first-created man was made of dust like everyone, and the hand which created Adam then, is creating now also and always those who come after him." How can anyone deny this obvious truth of Gods continuous creative activity? But this general truth does not at all contradict the specific truth that the first man was made in a way different from all other men, as other Fathers also clearly teach. Thus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem calls Adam "God's first-formed man," but Cain "the first -born man" (Catechetical Lectures, 7). Again, he teaches clearly, discussing the creation of Adam, that Adam was not conceived of another body. "That of bodies bodies should be conceived, even if wonderful, is nevertheless possible; but that the dust of the earth should become a man, this is more wonderful" (Catechetical Lectures, XII, 30).

Yet, again, the divine Gregory the Theologian writes:

"They who make 'Unbegotten and 'Begotten natures of equivocal Gods would perhaps make Adam and Seth differ in nature, since the former was not born of flesh (for he was created), but the latter was born of Adam and Eve." (Oration on the Holy Lights, XII).

And the same Father says even more explicitly:

"What of Adam? Was he not alone the direct creature of Go ей Yes, you will say. Was he then the only human being? By no means. And why, but because humanity does not consist in direct creation? For that which is begotten is also human." (Third Theological Oration, "On the Son," ch. XI.)

And St. John Damascene, whose theology gives concisely the teaching of all the early Fathers writes:

"The earliest formation (of man) is called 'creation and not 'generation.' For 'creation is the original formation at God's hands, while 'generation is the succession from each other made necessary by the sentence of death imposed on us on account of the transgression." (On the Orthodox Faith, II, 30.)

And what of Eve? Do you not believe that, as the Scripture and Holy Fathers teach, she was made from Adam's rib and was not born of some other creature? But St. Cyril writes:

"Eve was begotten of Adam, and not conceived of a mother, but as it were brought forth of man alone." (Catechetical Lectures, XII, 29.)

And St. John Damascene, comparing the Most Holy Mother of God with Eve, writes:

"Just as the latter was formed from Adam without connection, so also did the former bring forth the new Adam, who was brought forth in accordance with the laws of parturition and above the nature of generation." (On the Orthodox Faith, IV, 14.)

It would be possible to quote other Holy Fathers on this subject, but I will not do so unless you question this point. But with all of this discussion I have not yet come to the most important questions raised by the theory of evolution, and so I shall now turn to some of them.

4. In what I have written about Adam and Eve, you will note that I quoted Holy Fathers who interpret the text of Genesis in a way that might be called rather "literal." Am I correct in supposing that you would like to interpret the text more "allegorically" when you say (p. 34) that to believe in the immediate creation of Adam by God is "a very narrow conception of the Sacred Scriptures"? This is an extremely important point, and I am truly astonished to find that "Orthodox evolutionists" do not at all know how the Holy Fathers interpret the book of Genesis. I am sure you will agree with me that we are not free to interpret the Holy Scriptures as we please, but we must interpret them as the Holy Fathers teach us. I am afraid that not all who speak about Genesis and evolution pay attention to this principle. Some people are so concerned to combat Protestant Fundamentalism that they go to extreme lengths to refute anyone who wishes to interpret the sacred text of Genesis "literally"; but in so doing they never refer to St.

Basil or other commentators on the book of Genesis, who state quite clearly the principles we are to follow in interpreting the sacred text. I am afraid that many of us who profess to follow the Patristic tradition are sometimes careless, and easily fall into accepting our own "wisdom" in place of the teaching of the Holy Fathers. I firmly believe that the whole world outlook and philosophy of life for an Orthodox Christian may be found in the Holy Fathers', if we will listen to their teaching instead of thinking we are wise enough to teach others from our own "wisdom," we will not go astray.

And now I ask you to examine with me the very important and fundamental question: how do the Holy Fathers teach us to interpret the book of Genesis? Let us put away our preconceptions about "literal" or allegorical" interpretations, and let us see what the Holy Fathers teach us about reading the text of Genesis.

We cannot do better than to begin with St. Basil himself, who has written so inspiringly of the Six Days of Creation. In the Hexaemeron he writes:

"Those who do not admit the common meaning of the Scriptures say that water is not water, but some other nature, and they explain a plant and a fish according to their opinion. They describe also the production of reptiles and wild animals, changing it according to their own notions, just like the dream interpreters, who interpret for their own ends the appearances seen in their dreams. When I hear 'grass,' I think of grass, and in the same manner I understand everything as it is said, a plant, a fish, a wild animal, and an ox. "Indeed, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel'…. Since Moses left unsaid, ' as useless for us, things in no way pertaining to us, shall we for this reason believe that the words of the Spirit are of less value than the foolish wisdom (of those who have written about the world)? Or shall I rather give glory to Him Who has not kept our mind occupied with vanities but has ordained that all things be written for the edification and guidance of our souls? This is a thing of which they seem to me to have been unaware, who have attempted by false arguments and allegorical interpretations to bestow on the Scripture a dignity of their own imagining. But theirs is the attitude of one who considers himself wiser than the revelations of the Spirit and introduces his own ideas in pretense of an explanation. Therefore, let it be understood as it has been written." (Hexaemeron, DC, 1).

Clearly, St. Basil is warning us to beware of "explaining away" things in Genesis which are difficult for our common sense to understand; it is very easy for the "enlightened" modem man to do this, even if he is an Orthodox Christian. Let us therefore try all the harder to understand the sacred Scripture as the Fathers understand it, and not according to our modern "wisdom." And let us not be satisfied with the views of one Holy Father; let us examine the views of other Holy Fathers as well.

One of the standard Patristic commentaries on the book of Genesis is that of St. Ephraim the Syrian. His views are all the more important for us in that he was an "Easterner" and knew the Hebrew language well. Modern scholars tell us that "Easterners" are given to "allegorical" interpretations, and that the book of Genesis likewise must be understood in this way. But let us see what St. Ephraim says in his commentary on Genesis:

"No one should think that the Creation of Six Days is an allegory; it is likewise impermissible to say that what seems, according to the account, to have been created in the course of six days, was created in a single instant, and likewise that certain names presented in this account either signify nothing, or signify something else. On the contrary, one must know that just as the heaven and the earth which were created in the beginning are actually the heaven and the earth and not something else understood under the names of heaven and earth, so also everything else that is spoken of as being created and brought into order after the creation of heaven and earth is not empty names, but the very essence of the created natures corresponds to the force of these names." (Commentary on Genesis, ch. I.)

These are still, of course, general principles; let us look now at several specific applications by St. Ephraim of these principles.

"Although both the light and the clouds were created in the twinkling of an eye, still both the day and the night of the first day continued for 12 hours each." (Ibid.)

Again:

"When in the twinkling of an eye (Adams) rib was taken out and likewise in an instant the flesh took its place, and the bare rib took on the complete form and all the beauty of a woman, then God led her and presented her to Adam." (Ibid.)

It is quite clear that St. Ephraim reads the book of Genesis "as it is written"; when he hears "the rib of Adam" he understands "the rib of Adam," and does not understand this as an allegorical way of saying something else altogether. Likewise he quite explicitly understands the Six Days of Creation to be just six days, each with 24 hours, which he divides into an "evening" and "morning" of 12 hours each.

I have deliberately taken the "simple" commentary on Genesis of St. Ephraim the Syrian, before quoting other more "mystical" commentaries, because this "simple" understanding of Genesis is the most offensive to the "enlightened" modern mind. I suspect that most Orthodox Christians who are not well read in the Holy Fathers will immediately say: "This is too simple! We know more than that now. Give us more sophisticated Fathers." Alas for our modern "wisdom"—there are no more "sophisticated" Fathers, for even the most "mystical" Fathers understand the text of Genesis in just the ''simple" way St. Ephraim does! Those who wish more "sophistication" in the Holy Fathers are under the influence of modern Western ideas which are entirely foreign to the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church. But I will have to show this by quoting many Holy Fathers.

Let us examine now specifically the question of the "length" of the Six Days of Creation. I believe that this is still a question of secondary importance among those raised by the theory of evolution, but it certainly will not hurt us to know what the Holy Fathers thought of this, all the more so because here we will begin to glimpse the great difference which exists between the modern Western I idea of creation, and the Patristic idea of creation. No matter how we understand them, these "Days" are quite beyond the comprehension of us who know only the corrupt "days" of our fallen world; how can we even imagine those Days when God's creative

power was mightily at work? Blessed Augustine well says (unless you refuse to accept anything he wrote!): "What kind of days these were is very difficult for us to conceive, or even completely impossible; and all the more impossible is it to speak of this." (City of God, XI, 6).

The Holy Fathers themselves do not seem to speak much about this question, doubtless because for them it was not a problem. It is a problem for modern men chiefly because they try to understand God's creation by means of the laws of nature of our fallen world. It seems to be assumed by the Fathers that those Days, in duration, were not unlike the days we know, and some of them indeed specify that they were 24 hours in length, as does St. Ephraim. But there is one thing about these Days which it is most important for us to understand, and that concerns what you have written about whether God created "instantly."

You write (p. 33): "Since God created time, to create something 'instantly' would be an act contrary to His own decision and will…. When we speak about the creation of stars, plants, animals and man we do not speak about miracles—we do not speak about the extraordinary interventions of God in creation but about the 'natural' course of creation." I wonder if you are not substituting here some "modern wisdom" for the teaching of the Holy Fathers? What is the beginning of all things but a miracle? I have already showed you that St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St·, Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Damascene (and indeed all the Fathers) teach that the first man Adam appeared in a way different from the natural generation of all other men·, likewise the first creatures, according to the sacred text of Genesis, appeared in a way different from all their descendants: they appeared not by natural generation but by the word of God The modern theory of evolution denies this, because the theory of evolution was invented by unbelievers who wished to deny God's action in creation and explain the creation by "natural" means alone. Do you not see what philosophy is behind the theory of evolution?

What do the Holy Fathers say about this? I have already quoted St. Ephraim the Syrian whose whole Commentary on Genesis describes how all God's creative acts are done in an instant, even though the whole "Days" of creation last for 24 hours each. Let us now see what St. Basil the Great says about God's creative acts in the Six Days.

In speaking of the Third Day of Creation, St. Basil says:

"At this saying all the dense woods appeared; all the trees shot up…. Likewise, all the shrubs were immediately thick with leaf and bushy; and the so-called garland plants…all came into existence in a moment of time, although they were not previously upon the earth." (.Hexaemeron, V, 6.)

Again, he says:

'"Let the earth bring forth.' This brief command was immediately mighty nature and an elaborate system which brought to perfection more swiftly than our thought the countless properties of plants." (Hexaemeron, V, 10.)

Again, on the Fifth Day:

“The command came. Immediately rivers were productive and marshy lakes were fruitful of species proper and natural to each.” (Hexaemeron, VII, 1.)

Likewise, St. John Chrysostom, in his commentary on Genesis, teaches:

“Today God goes over to the waters and shows us that from them, by His word and command, there proceeded animate creatures. What mind, tell me, can understand this miracle? What tongue will be able worthily to glorify the Creator? He said only: ‘Let the earth bring forth’—and immediately He aroused it to bear fruit… As of the earth He said only: ‘Let it bring forth’—and there appeared a great variety of flowers, grasses, and seeds, and everything occurred by His word alone·, so also here He said: ‘Let the waters bring forth’… and suddenly there appeared so many kinds of creeping things, such a variety of birds, that it is impossible even to enumerate them with words.” (Homilies on Genesis, VII, 3.)

Here I will repeat: I believe that modern science in most cases knows more than St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ephraim, and other Fathers about the properties of fishes and such specific scientific facts; no one will deny this. But who knows more about the way in which God acts: modern science, which is not even sure that God exists, and in any case tries to explain everything without Him; or these God-bearing Holy Fathers? When you say that God does not create instantly, I believe that you are giving the teaching of modern “wisdom,” not the teaching of the Holy Fathers.

Of course, there is a sense in which it is true that God’s creation is not the work of an instant; but here also the Fathers are quite precise in their teaching. I have quoted St. Ephraim, who says: “It is likewise impermissible to say that what seems, according to the account, to have been created in the course of six days, was created in a single instant.” With this in mind, let us look at the passage you have quoted from St. Gregory of Nyssa: “Man was created last after the plants and animals because nature follows a path which leads gradually to perfection.” “It is as if by steps that nature makes its ascent in life properties from the least to the perfect.” In quoting these passages, you have tried to understand them in the sense of the modern doctrine of evolution. But certainly it is not proper to read into these ancient texts the conclusions of modern philosophy! Here St. Gregory of Nyssa is surely teaching nothing different from what many other Fathers taught, based on a very “literal” understanding of Genesis.

Thus, St. Gregory the Theologian teaches, when he, like St. Ephraim also states that the creation is not “instantaneous”:

“To the days (of creation) is added a certain firstness, secondness, thirdness, and so on to the seventh day of rest of works, and by these days is divided all that is created, being brought into order by unutterable laws, but not produced in an instant by the Almighty Word, for Whom to think or to speak means already to perform the deed. If man appeared in the world last, honored by the handiwork and image of God, this is not in the least surprising; since for him, as for a king, the royal dwelling had to be prepared and only then was the king to be led in, accompanied by all creatures.” (Homily 44, “On New Week, Spring, and the Commemoration of the Martyr Mamas.”)

Again, St. John Chrysostom teaches:

"The Almighty right hand of God and His limitless wisdom would have had no difficulty in creating everything in a single day. And what do I say, in a single day?—in a single instant. But since He created everything that exists not for His own benefit, because He needs nothing, being All-sufficient unto Himself, on the contrary He created everything in His love of mankind and goodness, and so He creates in parts and offers us by the mouth of the blessed Prophet a clear teaching of what is created so that we, having found out about this in detail, would not fall under the influence of those who are drawn away by human reasoning's…. And why, you will say, was man created afterwards, if he surpassed all these creatures? For a good reason. When a king intends to enter a city, his armsbearers and others must go ahead, so that the king might enter chambers already prepared for him. Precisely thus did God now, intending to place as it were a king and master over everything earthly, at first arrange all this adornment, and only then did He create the master." (Homilies on Genesis, III, 3; VIII, 2)

Thus the Patristic teaching is clearly that God, although He could have created everything instantly, chose instead to create it in stages of increasing perfection, each stage being the work of an instant or a very short time, culminating in the creation of man, the king of creation; and the whole work is completed, neither in an instant not in an indefinitely long time, but as it were a mean between these two extremes, precisely in six days.

St. Ephraim and St. John Chrysostom, in their commentaries on Genesis, clearly regard God's creation as being the work of six "literal" days, on each one of which God creates "immediately" and "instantly." And St. Basil the Great also, contrary to a widespread belief of "Christian evolutionists," viewing God's creations as "immediate" and "sudden," regarded the Six Days as being precisely of 24 hours duration; for he says, regarding the First Day:

"'There was evening and morning.' This means the space of a day and a night…. 'And there was evening and morning, one day.' Why did he say 'one' and not 'first'?… He said one' because he was defining the measure of day and night and combining the time of a night and a day, since the 24 hours fill up the interval of one day, if, of course, night is understood with day." (Hexaemeron, II, 8.)

But even St. Gregory the Theologian, this most "contemplative" of Fathers, believed precisely the same thing, for he says:

"Just as the first creation begins with Sunday (and this is evident from the fact that the seventh day after it is Saturday, because it is the day of repose from works), so also the second creation begins again with the same day," i.e., the day of Resurrection (Homily 44, "On New Week…")

And again the Theologian says, giving the Patristic view of the kind of world into which Adam was placed:

"The Word, having taken a part of the newly-created earth, with His Immortal hands formed my image…" (Homily 7, "On the Soul.")

As I have said, I do not regard this question as one of the first importance in discussing the question of evolution; but it is nevertheless quite symptomatic of the influence of modern philosophy on them, that "Christian evolutionists" are so anxious to reinterpret these Six Days so as not to appear foolish before the "wise men" of this world, who have "proved scientifically" that whatever "creation" there was took place over coundess millions of years. Most importantly, the reason why "Christian evolutionists" have such difficulty believing in the Six Days of creation, which gave no problem to the Holy Fathers, is because they do not understand what happened in those Six Days: they believe that long natural processes of development were going on, according to the laws of our present corrupt world: but in actual fact, according to the Holy Fathers, the nature of that first-created world was quite different from our world, as I will show below.

Let us look now more closely at another basic Patristic commentary on the book of Genesis, that of St. John Chrysostom. You will note that I am not quoting obscure or dubious Fathers, but only the very pillars of Orthodoxy, in whom our whole Orthodox teaching is the most clearly and divinely expressed. In him once again we find no "allegory" at all, but only the strict interpretation of the text as it is written. Like the other Fathers, he tells us that Adam was formed literally from dust, and Eve literally from Adams rib. He writes:

"If the enemies of truth will insist that it is impossible to produce something from what is non-existent, we will ask them: Was the first man created from earth, or not? Without doubt they will agree with us and say, Yes, from earth. Then let them tell us, how was flesh formed from earth? From earth there can be dirt, bricks, clay, tile: but how was flesh produced? How were bones, nerves, sinews, fat, skin, nails, hair (produced)? How, from the single material at hand, are there so many things of different qualities? To this they cannot even open their mouths (to reply)." (.Homilies on Genesis, XV, 4.)

And again, St. Chrysostom writes:

"God took a single rib, it is said: but how from this single rib did He form a whole creature? Tell me, how did the taking of the rib occur? How did Adam not feel this taking? You can say nothing about this; this is known by Him Who created…. God did not produce a new creation, but taking from an already existing creation a certain small part, from this part He made a whole creature. What power the Highest Artist God has, to produce from this small part (a rib) the composition of so many members, make so many organs of sense, and form a whole, perfect, and complete being." (Homilies on Genesis, XV, 2-3.)

If you wish, I can quote many other passages from this work, showing that St. John Chrysostom—is he not the chief Orthodox interpreter of Sacred Scripture?—everywhere interprets the sacred text of Genesis as it is written, believing that it was nothing else than an actual serpent (through whom the devil spoke) who tempted our first parents in Paradise, that God actually brought all the animals before Adam for him to name, and "the names which Adam gave them remain even until now" (Homily XIV, 5). (But according to evolutionary doctrine, many animals were extinct by the time of Adam—must we then believe that Adam did not name

"all the wild beasts" (Gen. 2:19) but only the remnant of them?) St. Chrysostom says, when speaking of the rivers of Paradise:

"Perhaps one who loves to speak from his own wisdom here also will not allow that the rivers are actually rivers, nor that the waters are precisely waters, but will instil in those who allow themselves to listen to them, that they (under the names of rivers and waters) represented something else. But I entreat you, let us not pay heed to these people, let us stop up our hearing against them, and let us believe the Divine Scripture, and following what is written in it, let us strive to preserve in our souls sound dogmas." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 4.)

Is there need to quote more from this divine Father? Like St. Basil and St. Ephraim he warns us:

"Not to believe what is contained in the Divine Scripture, but to introduce something else from one's own mind—this, I believe, subjects those who hazard such a thing great danger." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 3.)

Before going on I will briefly answer one question which I have heard from those who defend evolution: they say that if one reads all the Scripture "as it is written" one will only make oneself ridiculous. They say that if we must believe that Adam was actually made from dust and Eve from Adam's rib, then must we not believe that God has "hands," that He "walks" in Paradise, and the like absurdities? Such an objection could not be made by anyone who has read even a single commentary of the Holy Fathers on the book of Genesis. All the Holy Fathers distinguish between what is said about creation, which must be taken "as it is written" (unless it is an obvious metaphor or other figure of speech, such as "the sun knoweth his going down" of the Psalms; but this surely does not need to be explained to any but children), and what is said about God, which must be understood, as St. John Chrysostom says repeatedly, "in a God-befitting manner." For example, St. Chrysostom writes:

"When you hear, beloved, that 'God planted Paradise in Eden in the East,' understand the word 'planted' befittingly of God: that is, that He commanded: but concerning the words that follow, believe precisely that Paradise was created and in that very place where the Scripture has assigned it" (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 3.)

St. John of Damascus explicitly describes the allegorical interpretation of Paradise to be part of a heresy, that of the Origenians:

"They explain paradise, the heaven, and everything else in an allegorical sense. (On Heresies, 64.)

But what, then, are we to understand of those Holy Fathers of profound spiritual life who interpret the book of Genesis and other Holy Scriptures in a spiritual or mystical sense? If we ourselves had not gone so far away from the Patristic understanding of Scripture, this would present no problem whatever to us. The same text of Holy Scripture is true "as it is written," and it also has a spiritual interpretation. Behold what the great Father of the desert, St. Makarios the Great, a clairvoyant Saint who raised the dead, says:

"That Paradise was closed and that a Cherubim was commanded to prevent man from entering it by a flaming sword: of this we believe that in visible fashion it was indeed just as it is written, and at the same time we find that this occurs mystically in every soul." (Seven Homilies, IV, 5.)

Our modern "Patristic scholars," who approach the Holy Fathers not as living founts of tradition but only as dead "academic sources," invariably misunderstand this very important point. Any Orthodox Christian who lives in the tradition of the Holy Fathers knows that when a Holy Father interprets a passage of Holy Scripture spiritually or allegorically, he is not thereby denying its literal meaning, which he assumes the reader knows enough to accept. I will give a clear example of this.

The divine Gregory the Theologian, in his Homily on the Theophany, writes concerning the Tree of Knowledge:

"The tree was, according to my view, Contemplation, upon which it is only safe for those who have reached maturity of habit to enter." (Homily on the Theophany, XII.)

This is a profound spiritual interpretation, and I do not know of any passage in this Fathers writings where he say explicitly that this tree was also a literal tree, "as it is written." Is it therefore an "open question," as our academic scholars might tell us, whether he completely "allegorized' the story of Adam and Paradise?

Of course, we know from other writings of St. Gregory that he did not allegorize Adam and Paradise. But even more important, we have the direct testimony of another great Father concerning the very question of St. Gregory's interpretation of the Tree of Knowledge.

But before I give this testimony I must make sure you agree with me on a basic principle of interpreting the writings of the Holy Fathers. When they are giving the teaching of the Church, the Holy Fathers (if only they are genuine Holy Fathers and not merely ecclesiastical writers of uncertain authority) do not contradict each other, even if to our feeble understanding there seem to be contradictions between them. It is academic rationalism that pits one Father against another, traces their "influence" on each other, divides them into "schools" and "factions," and finds "contradictions" between them. All of this is foreign to the Orthodox Christian understanding of the Holy Fathers. For us the Orthodox teaching of the Holy Fathers is one single whole, and since the whole of Orthodox teaching is obviously not contained in any one Father (for all the Fathers are human and thus limited), we find parts of it in one Father and other parts in another Father, and one Father explains what is obscure in another Father; and it is not even of primary importance for us who said what, as long as it is Orthodox and in harmony with the whole Patristic teaching. I am sure that you agree with me on this principle and that you will not be surprised that I am now going to present an interpretation of the words of St. Gregory the Theologian by a great Holy Father who lived a thousand years after him: St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica.

Against St. Gregory Palamas and the other hesychast Fathers who taught the true Orthodox doctrine of the "Uncreated Light" of Mt. Tabor, there rose up the Western rationalist Barlaam. Taking advantage of the fact that St. Maximus the Confessor in one passage had called this Light

of the Transfiguration a "symbol of theology," Barlaam taught that this Light was not a manifestation of the Divinity, but only something bodily, not "literally" Divine Light, but only a "symbol" of it. This led St. Gregory Palamas to make a reply which illuminates for us the relation between the "symbolical" and "literal" interpretation of Holy Scripture, particularly with regard to the passage from St. Gregory the Theologian which I have quoted above. He writes that Barlaam and others

"do not see that Maximus, wise in Divine matters, has called the Light of the Lord's Transfiguration a 'symbol of theology' only by analogy and in a spiritual sense. In fact, in a theology which is analogical and intended to elevate us, objects which have an existence of their own become themselves, in fact and in words, symbols and homonymy; it is in this sense that Maximus calls this Light a 'symbol'… Similarly, Gregory the Theologian has called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil 'contemplation,' having in his contemplation considered it as a symbol of this 'contemplation,' which is intended to elevate us; but it does not follow that what is involved is an illusion or a symbol without existence of its own. For the divine Maximus also makes Moses the symbol of judgment, and Elijah the symbol of foresight! Are they too then supposed not to have really existed, but to have been invented 'symbolically? And could not Peter, for one who would wish to elevate himself in contemplation, become a symbol of faith, James of hope, and John of love?" (Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Triad II, 3:21-22.)

It would be possible to multiply such quotations which show what the Holy Fathers actually taught about the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and in particular of the book of Genesis; but I have already presented enough to show that the genuine Patristic teaching on this subject presents grave difficulties for one who would like to interpret the book of Genesis in accordance with modern ideas and "wisdom," and indeed the Patristic interpretation makes it quite impossible to harmonize the account of Genesis with the theory of evolution, which requires an entirely "allegorical" interpretation of the text in many places where the Patristic interpretation will not allow this. The doctrine that Adam was created, not from the dust, but by development from some other creature, is a novel teaching which is entirely foreign to Orthodox Christianity.

At this point the "Orthodox evolutionist" might try to salvage his position (of believing both in the modern theory of evolution and in the teaching of the Holy Fathers) in one of two ways.

a. He may try to say that we now know more than the Holy Fathers about nature and therefore we really can interpret the book of Genesis better than they. But even the "Orthodox evolutionist" knows that the book of Genesis is not a scientific treatise, but a Divinely-inspired work of cosmogony and theology. The interpretation of the Divinely-inspired Scripture is clearly the work of God-bearing theologians, not of natural scientists, who ordinarily do not know the very first principles of such interpretation. It is true that in the book of Genesis many "facts" of nature are presented. But it must be carefully noted that these facts are not facts such as we can observe now, but an entirely special kind of facts: the creation of the heaven and the earth, of all animals and plants, of the first man. I have already pointed out that the Holy Fathers teach quite clearly that the creation of the first man Adam, for example, is quite different from the generation of men today; it is only the latter that science can observe, and about the creation of Adam it offers only philosophical speculations, not scientific knowledge.

According to the Holy Fathers, it is possible for us to know something of this first-created world, but this knowledge is not accessible to natural science. I will discuss this question further below.

b. Or again, the "Orthodox evolutionist," in order to preserve the unquestioned Patristic interpretation of at least some of the facts described in Genesis, may begin to make arbitrary modifications of the theory of evolution itself, in order to make it "fit" the text of Genesis. Thus, one "Orthodox evolutionist" might decide that the creation of the first man must be a "special creation" which does not fit into the general pattern of the rest of creation, and thus he can believe the Scriptural account of the creation of Adam more or less "as it is written," while believing in the rest of the Six Days' Creation in accordance with "evolutionary science"; while another "Orthodox evolutionist" might accept the "evolution" of man himself from lower creatures, while specifying that Adam, the "first-evolved man," appeared only in very recent times (in the evolutionary time-scale of "millions of years"), thus preserving at least the historical reality of Adam and the other Patriarchs as well as the universally-held Patristic opinion (about which I can speak in another letter, if you wish) that Adam was created about 7500 years ago. I am sure you will agree with me that such rationalistic devices are quite foolish and futile. If the universe "evolves," as modern philosophy teaches, then man "evolves" with it, and we must accept whatever all-knowing "science" tells us about the age of man; but if the Patristic teaching is correct, it is correct regarding both man and the rest of creation.

If you can explain to me how one can accept the Patristic interpretation of the book of Genesis and still believe in evolution, I will be glad to listen to you; but you will also have to give me better scientific evidence for evolution than that which so far exists, for to the objective and dispassionate observer the "scientific evidence" for evolution is extremely weak.

5. Now I come at last to the two most important questions which are raised by the theory of evolution: the nature of the first-created world, and the nature of the first-created man Adam.

I believe you express correctly the Patristic teaching when you say (p. 36): "The animals became corrupted because of man; the law of the jungle is a consequence of the fall of man." I also agree with you, as I have already said, that man, on the side of his body, is bound together with and is an organic part of the whole of the visible creation, and this helps make it understandable how the whole creation fell together with him into death and corruption. But you think that this is a proof of evolution, a proof that man's body evolved from some other creature! Surely if this is the case, the God-inspired Fathers would have known about it, and we would not have had to wait for the atheist philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries to discover this and tell us about it!!

No, the Holy Fathers believed that the whole creation fell with Adam, but they did not believe that Adam "evolved" from some other creature; why should I believe differently from the Holy Fathers?

Now I come to a very important point. You ask: "How is it that the fall of Adam brought corruption and the law of the jungle to the animals, since animals have been created before Adam? We know that animals died, killed, and devoured one another since their first appearance on earth and not only after the appearance of man."

How do you know this? Are you sure that this is what the Holy Fathers teach? You explain your point, not by quoting any Holy Fathers, but by giving a philosophy of "time." I certainly agree with you that God is outside of time; to Him everything is present. But this fact is not a proof that animals, who died because of Adam, died before he fell. What do the Holy Fathers say?

It is true, of course, that most Holy Fathers speak about animals as already corruptible and mortal; but they are speaking about their fallen state. What about their state before the transgression of Adam?

There is a very significant hint about this in the Commentary on Genesis of St. Ephraim the Syrian. When speaking of the "skins" which God made for Adam and Eve after their transgression, St. Ephraim writes:

"One may suppose that the first parents, touching their waists with their hands, found that they were clothed with garments made of animal skins—killed, it may be, before their very eyes, so that they might eat their meat, cover their nakedness with the skins, and in their very death might see the death of their own body." (Commentary on Genesis, ch. 3.)

I will discuss below the Patristic teaching of the immorality of Adam before his transgression, but here I am only interested in the question of whether animals died before the Fall. Why should St. Ephraim suggest that Adam would learn about death by seeing the death of animals—if he had already seen the death of animals before his transgression (which he certainly had according to the evolutionary view)? But this is only a suggestion; there are other Holy Fathers who speak quite definitely on this subject, as I will show in a moment.

But first I must ask you: if it is true as you say that animals died and the creation was corrupted before the transgression of Adam, then how can it be that God looked at His creation after every one of the Days of Creation and "saw that it was good," and after creating the animals on the Fifth and Sixth Days He "saw that they were good," and at the end of the Six Days, after the creation of man, "God saw all the things that He had made, and behold, they were very good." How could they be "good" if they were already mortal and corruptible, contrary to God's plan for them? The Divine services of the Orthodox Church contain many moving passages of lamentation about the "corrupted creation," as well as expressions of joy that Christ by His Resurrection has "recalled the corrupted creation." How could God see this lamentable condition of the creation and say that it was "very good. "?

And again, we read in the sacred text of Genesis: "And God said, Behold I have given to you every seed-bearing herb sowing seed which is upon all the earth, and every tree which has in itself the fruit of seed that is sown, to you it shall be for food. And to all the wild beasts of the earth, and to all the flying creatures of heaven, and to every reptile creeping on the earth, which has in itself the breath of life, even every green plant for food, and it was so" (Gen. 1:29-30). Why, if the animals devoured each other before the Fall, as you say, did God give them, even "all the wild beasts and every reptile" (many of which are now strictly carnivorous) only "green plants for food"? Only long after the transgression of Adam did God say to Noah: "And every reptile which is living shall be to you for meat; I have given all things to you as the green herbs" (Gen 9:3). Do you not sense here the presence of a mystery which so far has escaped you

because you insist on interpreting the sacred text of Genesis by means of modern evolutionary philosophy, which will not admit that animals could ever have been of a nature different from that which they now possess?

But the Holy Fathers clearly teach that the animals (as well as man) were different before the transgression of Adam! Thus St. John Chrysostom writes:

"It is clear that man in the beginning had complete authority over the animals… But that now we are afraid and terrified of beasts and do not have authority over them, this I do not deny… In the beginning it was not so, but the beasts feared and trembled and submitted to their master. But when through disobedience he lost boldness, then also his authority was diminished. That all animals were subject to man, hear what the Scripture says: He brought the beasts and all irrational creatures 'to Adam to see what he would call them' (Gen. 2:19). And he, seeing the beasts near him, did not run away, but like another lord he gives names to the slaves which are subject to him, since he gave names to all animals…. This is already sufficient as proof that beasts in the beginning were not frightful for man. But there is another proof not less powerful and even clearer. Which? The conversation of the serpent with the woman. If the beasts had been frightful to man, then seeing the serpent the woman would not have stopped, would not have taken his advice, would not have conversed with him with such fearlessness, but immediately on seeing him would have been terrified and run away. But behold, she converses and is not afraid; there was not yet then any fear." (Homilies on Genesis, IX, 4.)

Is it not clear that St. John Chrysostom reads the first part of the text of Genesis "as it is written," as an historical account of the state of man and creation before the transgression of Adam, when both man and animals were different from what they now are? Similarly, St. John Damascene tells us that

"at that time the earth brought forth of itself fruits for the use of the animals that were subject to man, and there were neither violent rains upon the earth nor wintry storms. But after the fall, 'when he was compared to senseless beasts and was become like to them\..then the creation subject to him rose up against this ruler appointed by the Creator(On the Orthodox Faith, Book II, ch. 10.)

Perhaps you will object that in the same place St. John Damascene also says, speaking of the creation of animals, "Everything was for the suitable use of man. Of the animals, some were for food, such as deer, sheep, gazelles, and the like." But you must read this passage in context·, for at the end of this paragraph we read (just as you have noted that God created man male and female foreknowing Adam's transgression):

"God knew all things before they were made and He saw that man in his freedom would fall and be given over to corruption·, yet for man's suitable use He made all the things that are in the sky and on the earth and in the water." (Ibid.)

Do you not see from the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers that God creates creatures so that they will be useful to man even in his corrupted state·, but He does not create them already corrupted, and they were not corrupted until Adam sinned.

But let us turn now to a Holy Father who speaks quite explicitly about the incorruption of the creation before Adams disobedience: St. Gregory the Sinaite. He is as Holy Father of the highest spiritual life and theological soundness, who attained to the heights of Divine vision. In the Russian Philocalia he writes:

" The presently-existing creation was not originally created corruptible; but afterwards it fell under corruption, 'being made subject to vanity,' according to the Scripture, 'not willingly, but by reason of him,' Adam, 'who hath subjected it in hope' of the renewal of Adam who had become subject to corruption (Rom. 8:20). He who renewed and sanctified Adam has renewed the creation also, but He has not yet delivered it from corruption." ("Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas," 11.)

Further, the same Father gives us remarkable details about the state of the creation (in particular, Paradise) before Adam's transgression:

"Eden is a place in which there was planted by God every kind of fragrant plant. It is neither completely incorruptible nor entirely corruptible. Placed between corruption and incorruption, it is always both abundant in fruits and blossoming with flowers, both mature and immature. The mature trees and fruits are converted into fragrant earth which does not give off any odor of corruption, as do the trees of this world. This is from the abundance of the grace of sanctification which is constantly poured forth there. (Ibid., 10) (This passage is expressed in the present tense—because the Paradise in which Adam was placed is still in existence, but it is not visible to our normal sense organs.)

What will you say of these passages? Will you still be so certain, as "uniformitarian" evolutionary philosophy teaches, that the creation before the fall was just the same as it is now after the fall? The Holy Scripture teaches that "God made not death' (Wisdom 1:13), and St. John Chrysostom teaches that

"Just as the creature became corruptible when your body became corruptible, so also when you body will be incorrupt, the creature also will follow after it and become corresponding to it." (.Homilies on Romans, XIV, 5.)

And St. Makarios the Great says:

"Adam was placed as the lord and king of all creatures… But after his captivity, there was taken captive together with him the creation which served him and submitted to him, because through him death came to reign over every soul." (Homily 11.)

The teaching of the Holy Fathers, if we accept it "as it is written" and do not try to reinterpret it by means of our human wisdom, is clearly that the state of creatures before the transgression of Adam was quite different from their present state. I am not trying to tell you that I know precisely what this state was; this state between corruption and incorruption is very mysterious to us who live entirely in corruption. Another great Orthodox Father, St. Simeon the New Theologian, teaches that the law of nature we now know is different from the law of nature before Adams transgression. He writes:

“The words and decrees of God become the law of nature. Therefore also the decree of God, uttered by Him as a result of the disobedience of the first Adam—that is, the decree to him of death and corruption—became the law of nature, eternal and unalterable.” (Homily 38, Russian edition.)

What the “law of nature” was before Adam’s transgression, which of us sinful men can define? Certainly natural science, bound up entirely with its observation of the present state of creation, cannot investigate it.

Then how do we know anything at all about it? Obviously, because God has revealed something of it to us through the Sacred Scripture. But we know also, from the writings of St. Gregory the Sinaite (and other writings which I shall quote below), that God has revealed something besides what is in the Scriptures. And this brings me to another extremely important question raised by evolution.

6. What is the source of our true knowledge of the first-created world and how is it different from science? How can St. Gregory the Sinaite know what happens to, the ripe fruits of Paradise, and why can natural science not discover such a thing? Since you are a lover of the Holy Fathers, I believe you already know the answer to this question. Still, I will set forth the answer, based not on my own reasoning but on the unquestionable authority of a Holy Father of the highest spiritual life, St. Isaac the Syrian, who spoke of the souls ascent to God based on his own experience of it. In describing how the soul is enraptured at the thought of the future age of incorruption, St. Isaac writes:

“And from this one is already exalted in his mind to that which preceded the composition of the world, when there was no creature, nor heaven, nor earth, nor Angels, nothing of that which was brought into being, and to how God, solely by His good will, suddenly brought everything from non- being into being, and everything stood before Him in perfection.” (Homily 21, Russian edition; Homily 85, Greek edition.)

Do you see that St. Gregory the Sinaite and other Holy Fathers of the highest spiritual life beheld the first-created world in the state of Divine vision, which is beyond all natural knowledge? St. Gregory the Sinaite himself states that the “eight primary visions” of the state of perfect prayer are: (1) God, (2) the Angelic powers, (3) “the composition of visible things,” (4) the condescension of the Word (the Incarnation), (5) the universal resurrection, (6) the Second Coming of Christ, (7) eternal torments, (8) the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. (Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas, 130, in the Russian Phtlokalia.) Why should the “composition of visible things” be included together with the other objects of Divine vision which are all within the sphere of theological knowledge alone, and not scientific knowledge? Is it not because there is an aspect and state of creatures beyond the sphere of scientific knowledge, which can only be seen, as St. Isaac himself saw Gods creation, in vision by God’s grace? The objects of these visions, St. Gregory teaches, “are clearly beheld and known by those who have attained by grace complete purity of mind.” (Ibid.)

In another place St. Isaac the Syrian clearly describes the difference between natural knowledge and faith, which leads to vision.

"Knowledge is a rule of nature, and this rule preserves it in all its steps. But faith performs its journey above nature. Knowledge does not attempt to permit anything to come to it which is subversive to nature, but avoids this; but faith permits this and says: 'Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample on the lion and dragon (Ps. 90:13)…. Many by faith have entered flames, bridled the burning power of fire and passed unharmed through its midst, and walked on the surface of the sea as on dry land. But all this is above nature, contrary to the capabilities of knowledge, and it is shown that the latter is vain in all its capabilities and laws. Do you see how knowledge preserves the bounds of nature*. Do you see how faith goes above nature and there traces the steps of its path? The capabilities of knowledge for 5000 years, or a little more or less than this, governed the world, and man in no way could raise his head from the earth and acknowledge his Creator, until our faith shone forth and delivered us from the darkness of earthly doing and vain submission to the empty soaring of the mind. And even now, when we have found an imperturbable sea and an inexhaustible treasure, again we desire to turn away toward tiny springs. There is no knowledge that would not be poor, no matter now much it might be enriched. But the treasures of faith can be contained neither by the heaven nor by the earth." (Homily 25, Russian edition; Homily 62, Greek edition.)

Do you now see what is at stake in the argument between the Patristic understanding of Genesis and the doctrine of evolution? The doctrine of evolution attempts to understand the mysteries of God s creation by means of natural knowledge and worldly philosophy, not even allowing the possibility that there is something in these mysteries which places them beyond its capabilities of knowing; while the book of Genesis is an account of God s creation as seen in Divine vision by the God-seer Moses, and this vision is confirmed also by the experience of later Holy Fathers. Now, even though revealed knowledge is higher than natural knowledge, still we know that there can be no conflict between true revelation and true natural knowledge. But there can be conflict between revelation and human philosophy, which is often in error. There is thus no conflict between the knowledge of creation contained in Genesis, as interpreted for us by the Holy Fathers, and the true knowledge of creatures which modern science has acquired by observation; but there most certainly is an irreconcilable conflict between the knowledge contained in Genesis and the vain philosophical speculations of modem scientists, unenlightened by faith, about the state of the world in the Six Days of Creation. Where there is a genuine conflict between Genesis and modern philosophy, if we wish to know the truth we must accept the teaching of the Holy Fathers and reject the false opinions of scientific philosophers. The world has not become so infected by vain modern philosophy posing as science that very few, even among Orthodox Christians, are willing or able to examine this question dispassionately and discover what the Holy Fathers really taught, and then accept the Patristic teaching even if it seems utter foolishness to the vain wisdom of this world.

Concerning the true Patristic view of the first-created world, already I think I have indicated enough to you of the Patristic views which at first sight seem "surprising" to an Orthodox Christian whose understanding of Genesis has been obscured by modern scientific philosophy. Most "surprising" of all, perhaps, is the fact that the Holy Fathers understood the text of Genesis "as it is written," and do not allow us to interpret it "freely" or allegorically. Many Orthodox Christians with a "modern education" have become accustomed to associate such an

interpretation with Protestant Fundamentalism, and they are afraid of being considered "naive" by sophisticated scientific philosophers; but it is clear how much more profound is the true Patristic interpretation than that of the Fundamentalists, on the one hand, who have never even heard of Divine vision and whose interpretation sometimes coincides with that of the Holy Fathers only accident, as it were; and on the other hand, how much more profound is the Patristic interpretation than that of those who uncritically accept the speculations of modern philosophy as if they were true knowledge.

It may help the "modern" Orthodox Christian to understand how the incorruption of the first-created world is beyond the competence of science to investigate, if he would examine the fact of incorruption as it has been manifested by God's action even in our present corrupted world. We can find no higher manifestation of this incorruption than in the Most Holy Mother of God, of Whom we sing: "Thee Who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, true Mother of God, we magnify." The Theotokia of our Orthodox Divine services are full of this doctrine. St. John Damascene points out that in two respects this "incorruption" is beyond the laws of nature. "So far as He had no father, (Christ's) birth was above the nature of generation," and "in that His birth was painless, it was above the laws of generation" (On the Orthodox Faith, IV, 14). What does the Orthodox Christian say when a modern unbeliever, under the influence of modern naturalistic philosophy, insists that such "incorruption" is "impossible," and demands that Christians believe only what can be proved or observed by science? Does he not hold to his faith, which is a revealed knowledge, in spite of "science" and its philosophy? Does he not indeed tell this pseudo-scientist that he cannot possibly know or understand this fact of incorruption, inasmuch as the works of God are above nature? Then why should we hesitate to believe the truth about the creation before Adams fall, if we become convinced that the Holy Fathers indeed teach us that it is something quite beyond the competence of science to investigate or know? One who accepts the evolutionary philosophy of the creation before Adam's transgression, and thus rejects the Patristic teaching, only prepares the way in his own soul, and in the souls of others, to accept an evolutionary or other pseudo-scientific view of many other Orthodox doctrines also. We hear today many Orthodox priests who tell us, "Our faith in Christ does not depend on how we interpret Genesis. You can believe as you wish." But how can it be that our negligence in understanding one part of Gods revelation (which, by the way, is indeed closely bound up with Christ, the Second Adam, Who became incarnate in order to restore us to our original state) 'will not lead to negligence in understanding the whole doctrine of the Orthodox Church? It is not for nothing that St. John Chrysostom closely binds together the correct and strict interpretation of Scripture (specifically Genesis) and the correct dogmas which are essential for our SALVATION. Speaking of those who interpret the book of Genesis allegorically, he says:

"Let us not pay heed to these people, let us stop up our hearing against them, and let us believe the Divine Scripture, and following what is said in it, let us strive to preserve in our souls sound dogmas, and at the same time to lead also a right life, so that our life would both testify of the dogmas, and the dogmas would give firmness to our life…. If we live well but will be negligent over right dogmas, we can acquire nothing for our salvation. If we wish to be delivered from Gehenna and receive the Kingdom, we must be adorned both with the one and with the other—both with rightness of dogmas, and strictness of life." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 4)

There is one other question regarding the state of the first-created world about which you may wonder: what about the "millions of years" of the world's existence which science "knows to be a fact"? This letter is already too long and I cannot discuss this question here. But if you wish, in another letter I can discuss this question also, including the "radio-carbon" and other "absolute" dating systems, giving you the views of reputable scientists about them and showing you how these "millions of years" also are not at all a fact but only more "philosophy." This very idea was never even thought of until men, under the influence of naturalistic philosophy, began already to believe in evolution and saw that if evolution is true, then the world must be millions of years old (since evolution has never been observed, it is conceivable only under the supposition of coundess millions of years which can bring about those processes which are too "minute" for contemporary scientists to see). If you will examine this question objectively and dispassionately, separating genuine evidence from suppositions and philosophy, you will see, I believe, that there is no genuine factual evidence which requires us to believe that the earth is more than 7500 years old. What one believes about this is entirely dependent on his philosophy of the creation.

To sum up the Patristic teaching of the first-created world I can do no better than to copy out the divine words of a Holy Father who so shone forth in mental prayer that he was only the third Father to be called by the entire Orthodox Church "Theologian": I mean St. Simeon the New Theologian. In his 45th Homily (Russian edition), speaking from Patristic tradition and probably also from his own experience, he says:

"God, in the beginning, before He planted Paradise and gave it over to the first-created ones, in five days established the earth and what is in it, and the heaven and what is in it, and on the Sixth Day He created Adam and placed him as lord and king of the whole visible creation. Paradise then did not yet exist. But this world was from God as a kind of Paradise, although it was material and sensual. God gave it over into the authority of Adam and all his descendants…. And God planted Paradise in Eden in the East. And God made to spring up also out of the earth every tree beautiful to the eye and good for food' (Gen. 2:9), with various fruits which never spoiled and never ceased, but were always fresh and sweet and afforded a great satisfaction and pleasantness for the first-created ones. For it was necessary that an incorruptible delight be furnished for those bodies of the first-created ones, which were incorrupt… Adam was created with a body that was incorrupt, even though material and not yet spiritual, and he was placed by the Creator God as an immortal king over an incorrupt world, not only over Paradise, but also over the whole creation which was under the heavens…."

(After Adam's transgression) "God did not curse Paradise…but he cursed only the whole rest of the earth, which was also incorrupt and produced everything by itself…. He who had become corrupt and mortal by reason of the transgression of the commandment, in all justice had to live also on a corruptible earth and eat corruptible food…. Then also all creatures, when they saw that Adam was banished from Paradise, no longer wished to submit to him the transgressor…. But God restrained all these creatures by His power, and in His compassion and goodness He did not allow them immediately to rush against man, and He commanded that the creation should remain in submission to him and, having become corruptible, should serve corruptible man for whom it

was created, with the intention that when man should again be renewed and become spiritual, incorrupt, and immortal, and the whole creation, which had been subjected by God to man in bondage to him, should be delivered from this bondage, it would be renewed together with him and become incorrupt and as it were spiritual….

"It is not fitting for the bodies of men to be clothed in the glory of resurrection and become incorrupt before the renewal of all creatures. But as in the beginning, first the whole creation was created incorrupt, and then from it was taken and created man, so also it is fitting that first the whole creation should become incorrupt, and then the corrupt bodies of men should be renewed and become incorrupt, that again the whole man might be incorrupt and spiritual and that he might dwell in an incorrupt, eternal and spiritual dwelling…. Do you see that this whole creation in the beginning was incorrupt and created by God in the order of Paradise? But afterwards it was subjected by God to corruption and submitted to the vanity of men.

"You should know likewise that kind of glorification and bright-shining the creation will have in the future also. For when it will be renewed it will not be again the same as it was when it was created in the beginning. But it will be such as, according to the word of the divine Paul, our body will be…. The whole creation, by God's command, after the general resurrection is to be not such as it was created—material and sensual—but it will be re-created and will become a certain immaterial and spiritual dwelling, far above every organ of sense."

Could there be any clearer teaching of the state of the first-created world before the transgression of Adam?

7. And now I come to the final and most important question which is raised for Orthodox theology by the modern theory of evolution: the nature of man, and in particular the nature of the first-created man Adam. I say that this is the "most important question raised by evolution because the doctrine of man, anthropology, touches most closely upon theology, and here, perhaps, it becomes most possible to identify theologically the error of evolutionism. It is well known that Orthodoxy teaches quite differently from Roman Catholicism regarding man's nature and Divine grace, and now I shall attempt to show that the theological view of man's nature which is implied in the theory of evolution, and which you have explicitly set forth in your letter, is not the Orthodox view of man, but is much closer to the Roman Catholic view; and this is only a confirmation of the fact that the theory of evolution, far from being taught by any Orthodox Father, is simply a product of the Western apostate mentality and even, despite the fact that it originally was a "reaction" against Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, has deep roots in the Papist scholastic tradition.

The view of human nature and the creation of Adam which you set forth in your letter is very much influenced by your opinion that Adam, in his body, was an "evolved beast." This opinion you have obtained, not from the Holy Fathers (for you cannot find one Father who believed this, and I have already showed you that the Fathers indeed believe quite "literally" that Adam was created from the dust and not from any other creature), but from modern science. Let us then look, first of all, at the Orthodox Patristic view of the nature and value of secular, scientific knowledge, particularly in relation to revealed, theological knowledge.

The Patristic view is very well set forth by the great hesychast Father, St. Gregory Palamas, who was forced to defend Orthodox theology and spiritual experience precisely against a Western rationalist, Barlaam, who wished to reduce the spiritual experience and knowledge of hesychasm to something attainable by science and philosophy. In answering him, St. Gregory set forth general principles which are well applicable in our own day when scientists and philosophers think they can understand the mysteries of creation and mans nature better than Orthodox theology. He writes:

"The beginning of wisdom is to be sufficiently wise to distinguish and prefer to the wisdom which is low, terrestrial and vain, that which is truly useful, heavenly, and spiritual, that which comes from God and conducts toward Him and which renders conformable to God those who acquire it." (.Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Triad I, 2.)

He teaches that the latter wisdom alone is good in itself, while the former is both good and evil:

"The practice of the graces of different languages, the power of rhetoric, historical knowledge, the discovery of the mysteries of nature, the various methods of logic…all these things are at the same time good and evil, not only because they are manifested according to the idea of those who use them and easily take the form which is given them by the point of view of those who possess them, but also because the study of them is a good thing only to the degree that it develops in the eye of the soul a penetrating view. But it is bad for one who gives himself over to this study in order to remain in it until old age." (Ibid., Triad I, 6.)

Further, even

"If one of the Fathers says the same thing as do those from without, the concordance is only verbal, the thought being quite different. The former, in fact, have, according to Paul, 'the mind of Christ' (I Cor. 2:16), while the latter express at best a human reasoning. 'As the heaven is distant from the earth, so is My thought distant from your thoughts' (Is. 55:9), saith the Lord,' Besides, even if the thinking of these men were at times the same as that of Moses, Solomon, or their imitators, what would it benefit them? What man of sound spirit and belonging to the Church could from this draw the conclusion that their teaching comes from God?" (Ibid, Triad I, 11.)

From secular knowledge, St. Gregory writes,

"we absolutely forbid to expect any precision whatever in the knowledge of Divine things; for it is not possible to draw from it any certain teaching on the subject of God. For 'God hath made it foolish'." (Ibid., Triad 1,12.)

And this knowledge can also be harmful and fight against true theology:

"The power of this reason which has been made foolish and non-existent enters into battle against those who accept the traditions in simplicity of heart; it despises the writings of the Spirit, after the example of men who have treated them carelessly and have set up the creation against the Creator,:" (Ibid., Triad I, 15.)

There could hardly be a better account than this of what modern "Christian evolutionists" have tried to do by thinking themselves wiser than the Holy Fathers, using secular knowledge to reinterpret the teaching of the Sacred Scripture and the Holy Fathers. Who can fail to see that the rationalistic, naturalistic spirit of Barlaam is quite close to that of modern evolutionism?

But notice that St. Gregory is speaking of scientific knowledge which, on its own level, is true: it becomes false only by warring against the higher knowledge of theology. Is the theory of evolution even true scientifically?

I have already spoken in this letter of the dubious nature of the scientific evidence for evolution in general, about which I would be glad to write you in another letter. Here I must say a word specifically about the scientific evidence for human evolution, since here we already begin to touch on the realm of Orthodox theology.

You say in your letter that you are happy not to have read the writings of Teilhard de Chardin and other exponents of evolution in the West; you approach this whole question "simply." But I am afraid that this is where you have made a mistake. It is well and good to accept the writings of the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers simply·, that is the way they should be accepted, and that is the way I try to accept them. But why should we accept the writings of modern scientists and philosophers "simply," merely taking their word when they tell us that something is true—even if this acceptance forces us to change our theological views? On the contrary, we must be very critical when modern wise men tell us how we should interpret the Holy Scriptures. We must be critical not only with regard to their philosophy, but also with regard to the "scientific evidence" which they think supports this philosophy; for often this "scientific evidence" is itself philosophy.

This is especially true of the Jesuit scientist Teilhard de Chardin; for not only has he written the most thorough and influential philosophy and theology based on evolution, but he was also closely connected with the discovery and interpretation of almost all the fossil evidence for the "evolution of man" that was discovered in his lifetime.

And now I must ask you a very elementary scientific question: what is the evidence for the "evolution of man"? This question too I cannot go into in detail in this letter, but I will discuss it briefly. I can write more in detail later, if you wish.

The scientific fossil evidence for the "evolution of man" consists of: Neanderthal Man (many specimens); Peking Man (several skulls); the "men" called Java, Heidelberg, Piltdown (until 20 years ago), and the recent finds in Africa: all extremely fragmentary, and a few other fragments.' The total fossil evidence for the "evolution of man" could be contained in a box the size of a small coffin, and it is from widely separated parts of the earth, with no reliable indication of even relative (much less "absolute") age, and with no indication whatever of how these different "men" were connected with each other, whether by descent or kinship.

Further, one of these "evolutionary ancestors of man," "Piltdown Man," was discovered 20 years ago to have been a deliberate fraud. Now it is an interesting fact that Teilhard de Chardin was one of the "discoverers" of "Piltdown Man"—a fact which you will not find in most textbooks or

in biographies of him. He "discovered" the canine tooth of this fabricated creature—a tooth which had already been dyed with the intent to cause deception regarding its age when he found it! I do not have the evidence to say that Teilhard de Chardin consciously participated in fraud; I think it more likely that he was the victim of the actual perpetrator of the fraud, and that he was so anxious to find proof for the "evolution of man" in which he already believed that he simply did not pay any attention to the anatomical difficulties which this crudely fabricated "man" presented to any objective observer. And yet in evolutionary textbooks printed before the discovery of the fraud, Piltdown Man is accepted as an evolutionary ancestor of man without question; his "skull" is even illustrated (even though only fragments of a cranium had been discovered); and it is confidently stated that "he combines human characteristics with others far retarded" (Tracy L. Storer, General Zoology, N.Y., 1951). This, of course, is just what is required for a "missing link" between man and ape; and that is why the Piltdown fraud was composed precisely of a mixture of human and ape bones.

Some time later this same Teilhard de Chardin participated in the discovery, and above all in the "interpretation," of "Peking Man." Several skulls were found of this creature, and it was the best candidate that had been found until then as the "missing link" between modern man and the apes. Thanks to his "interpretation" (for by then he had established a reputation as one of the world's leading paleontologists), "Peking Man" also entered evolutionary textbooks as an ancestor of man—in utter disdain of the uncontested fact modem human bones were found in the same deposit, and to anyone without "evolutionary" prejudices it was clear that this "Peking Ape" had been used for food by human beings (for there was a hole in the base of every skull of "Peking Man" by which the brains had been drawn out).

Teilhard de Chardin was also connected with the discovery and above all the interpretation of some of the finds of "Java Man," which were fragmentary. In fact, everywhere he went he found "evidence which exactly matched his expectations—namely, that man has "evolved" from ape-like creatures.

If you will examine objectively all the fossil evidence for the "evolution of man," I believe you will find that there is no conclusive or even remotely reasonable evidence whatever for this 'evolution." The evidence is believed to be proof for human evolution because men want to believe this; they believe in a philosophy that requires that man evolved from ape-like creatures. Of all the fossil "men" only Neanderthal Man (and of course Cro-Magnon Man, which is simply modern man) seems to be genuine; and he is simply "Homo Sapiens," no different from modern man than modern men are different from each other, a variation within one definite kind or species. Please note that the pictures of Neanderthal Man in evolutionary textbooks are the invention of artists who have a preconceived idea of what "primitive man" must have looked like, based on evolutionary philosophy!

I have said enough, I believe, not to show that I can "disprove" the "evolution of man" for who can prove or disprove anything with such fragmentary evidence?!), but to indicate that we must be very critical indeed of the biassed interpretations of such scanty evidence. Let us leave it to our modern pagans and their philosophers to become excited with the discovery of every new skull, bone, or even a single tooth, about which newspaper headlines declare: "New Ancestor of

Man Found." This is not even the realm of vain knowledge; it is the realm of modern fables and fairy tales, of a wisdom which truly has become astonishingly foolish.

Where does the Orthodox Christian turn if he wishes to learn the true doctrine of the creation of the world and man? St. Basil tells us clearly:

"Whence shall I begin my narration? Shall I refute the vanity of the heathens? Or shall I proclaim our truth? The wise men of the Greeks wrote many works about nature, but not . one account among them remained unaltered and firmly established, for the later account always overthrew the preceding one. As a consequence, there is no need for us to refute their words; they avail mutually for their own undoing? (Hexaemeron, I, 2.)

Like St. Basil,

"let us leave the accounts of outsiders to those outside, and turn back to the explanation of the Church," (Hexaemeron, III, 3.)

Let us, like him,

"examine the structure of the world and contemplate the whole universe, beginning, not from the wisdom of the world, but from what God taught His servant when He spoke to him in person and without riddles." (Hexaemeron, VI, 1.)

Now we shall see that the evolutionary view of man's origin not only teaches us nothing in reality of man's origin, but rather teaches a false doctrine of man, as you yourself prove when you are forced to express this doctrine in order to defend the idea of evolution.

When setting forth your view of man's nature, based on your acceptance of the idea of evolution, you write, (p. 22): "Man is not naturally the image of God. Naturally he is an animal, an evolved beast, dust from the ground. He is the image of God supernaturally." And again (p. 25): "We see that by himself man is nothing, and let us not be scandalized for his natural origin." "God's breath of life transformed the animal to man without changing a single anatomical feature of his body, without changing a single cell. I would not be surprised if Adam's body had been in all aspects the body of an ape" (p. 26). Again (p. 27): "Man is what he is not because of his nature, which is dust from the ground, but because of the supernatural grace given to him by the breath of God."

Now, before examining the Patristic teaching of man's nature, I will admit that this word "nature" can be a little ambiguous, and that one can find passages where the Holy Fathers use the expression "human nature" in the way it is used in common discourse, as referring to this fallen human nature whose effects we observe every day. But there is a higher Patristic teaching of human nature, a specific doctrine of human nature, given by Divine revelation, which cannot be understood or accepted by one who believes in evolution. The evolutionary doctrine of human nature, based on a "common sense" view of fallen human nature, is the Roman Catholic, not the Orthodox teaching.

The Orthodox doctrine of human nature is set forth most concisely in the Spiritual Instructions of Abba Dorotheus. This book is accepted in the Orthodox Church as the "ABC," the basic

textbook of Orthodox spirituality; it is the first spiritual reading which an Orthodox monk is given, and it remains his constant companion for the rest of his life, to be read and re-read. It is most significant that the Orthodox doctrine of human nature is set forth in the very first page of this book, because this doctrine is the foundation of the entire Orthodox spiritual life.

What is this doctrine? Abba Dorotheus writes in the very first words of his First Instruction:

"In the beginning, when God created man (Gen. 2:20), He placed him in Paradise and adorned him with every virtue, giving him the commandment not to taste of the tree which was in the midst of Paradise. And thus he remained there in the enjoyment of Paradise; in prayer, in vision, in every glory and honor, having sound senses and being in the same natural condition in which he was created. For God created man according to His own image, that is, immortal, master of himself, and adorned with every virtue. But when he transgressed the commandment, eating the fruit of the tree of which God had commanded him not to taste, then he was banished from Paradise (Gen. Ъ), fell away from the natural condition, and fell into a condition against nature, and then he remained in sin, in love of glory, in love for the enjoyments of this age and of other passions, and he was mastered by them, for he became himself their slave through the transgression."

(The Lord Jesus Christ) "accepted our very nature, the essence of our constitution, and became a new Adam in the image of God Who created the first Adam; He renewed the natural condition and made the senses again sound as they were in the beginning."

"The children of humility of wisdom are: self-reproach, not trusting one's own mind, hatred of one's own will; for through them a man is enabled to come to himself and return to the natural condition through purifying himself by the holy commandments of Christ."

The same doctrine is set forth by other ascetic Fathers. Thus Abba Isaiah teaches:

"In the beginning, when God created man, He placed him in Paradise, and he had then sound senses, which stood in their natural order, but when he obeyed the one who deceived him, all his senses were changed into an unnatural state, and he was then cast out from his glory." ("On the Natural Law," Russian Philokalia, II, 1.)

And the same Father continues:

"And so, let him who desires to come into his natural condition cut off all his fleshly desires, so as to place himself in the condition according to the nature of the (spiritual) mind." (Ibid., II, 2.)

The Holy Fathers clearly teach that, when Adam sinned, man did not merely lose something which has been added to his nature, but rather human nature itself was changed, corrupted, at the same time that man lost God's grace. The Divine services of the Orthodox Church also, which are a foundation of our Orthodox dogmatic teaching and spiritual life, clearly teach that the human nature which we now observe is not natural to us, but has been corrupted:

"Healing human nature, which had become corrupted by the ancient transgression, without corruption a child is born anew." (Menaion, Dec. 22, Matins, Theotokion of 6th Canticle of the Canon.)

And again:

"The Creator and Lord, desiring to save from corruption the corrupted human nature, having come to dwell in a womb cleansed by the Holy Spirit, is unutterably formed," (Menaion, Jan. 23, Theotokion of the 6th Canticle of the Canon of Matins.)

It can be noted in such hymns also that our whole Orthodox conception of the Incarnation of Christ and our salvation through Him is bound up with a proper understanding of human nature as it was in the beginning, to which Christ has restored us. We believe that we will one day live with Him in a world very much like the world that existed, here on this earth, before the fall of Adam, and that our nature will then be the nature of Adam—only even higher, because everything material and changeable will then be left behind, as the quote already given from St. Simeon the New Theologian clearly indicates.

And now I must show you further that even your doctrine of human nature as it is now in this fallen world, is incorrect, is not according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers. Perhaps it is a result of careless expression on your part—but I believe it is probably precisely because you have been led into error by believing the theory of evolution—that you write (p. 24): "Apart from God man is from his nature nothing at all, because his nature is the dust from the ground, like the nature of the animals." Because you believe in the philosophy of evolution, you are forced either to believe that human nature is only a low, animal nature, as you indeed express by saying that "man is not naturally the image of God" or at best (since I think that you do not really believe this, being Orthodox) you divide human nature artificially into two parts: that which is from "nature" and that which is from God. But the true Orthodox anthropology teaches that human nature is one, it is that which we have from God; we do not have some nature "from the animals" or "from the dust'' which is different from the nature with which God created us. And therefore, even the fallen, corrupted human nature which we have now is not "nothing at all," as you say, but it still preserves in some degree the "goodness" in which God create it. Behold what Abba Dorotheus writes of this doctrine:

"We have naturally the virtues given to us by God. For when God created man, He sowed virtues in him, as also He said: 'Let us create man in our image and likeness' (Gen. 2:26). It is said: 'In our image,' inasmuch as God created the soul immortal and with authority over itself, and 'in our likeness,' referring to virtues… By nature God gave us virtues. But passions do not belong to us by nature, for they do not even have any substance or composition… But the soul in its love of pleasure, having inclined away from virtues, instills the passions in itself and strengthens them against itself." (Instruction XII, "On the Fear of Future Torment.")

Further, these God-given virtues still exercise themselves even in our fallen state. This is the extremely important Orthodox teaching of St. John Cassian, who thus refuted the error of Blessed Augustine, who indeed believed that man apart from God's grace was "nothing at all." St. Cassian teaches in his Thirteenth Conference:

"That the human race after the fall actually did not lose the knowledge of good is affirmed by the Apostle, who says: 'When the gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, these who have not the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law

written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14-16). "And again: "To the Pharisees He said that they can know the truth: 'Why even of yourselves do ye not judge that which is just?' (Luke 12:57). He would not have said this if they could not have discerned what is just by their natural reason. Therefore one should not think that human nature is capable only of evil." (Thirteenth Conference, 12.)

Likewise, with regard to the righteous Job, St. Cassian asks whether "he conquered the various snares of the enemy in this battle apart from his own virtue, but only with the assistance of God's grace," and he answers:

"Job conquered him by his own power. However, the grace of God also did not abandon Job; lest the tempter burden him with temptations above his strength, it (God's grace) allowed him to be tempted as much as the virtue of the tempted one could bear." (Conference XIII, 14.)

Again, with regard to the Patriarch Abraham,

"God's righteousness wished to test the faith of Abraham, not that which the Lord had instilled in him, but that which he showed by his own freedom." (Ibid.)

Of course, the reason why Augustine (and Roman Catholicism and Protestantism after him) believed that man was nothing without grace, was because he had an incorrect conception of human nature, based on a naturalistic view of man. The Orthodox doctrine, on the other hand, of human nature as it was created in the beginning by God and is even now preserved in part in our fallen state, prevents us from falling into any such false dualism between what is "man's" and what is "God's". To be sure, everything good that man has is from God, not the least his very nature, for the Scripture says, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive" (I Cor. 4:7). Man has no "animal nature" as such and never did have; he has only the fully human nature which God gave him in the beginning, and which he has not entirely lost even now.

Is it necessary to quote for you the multitude of clear Patristic evidence that the "image of God," which is to be found in the soul, refers to man's nature and is not something added from without? Let it suffice to quote the marvelous testimony of St. Gregory the Theologian, showing how man by his constitution stands between two worlds, and is free to follow whichever side of his nature he will:

"I do not understand how I became joined to the body and how, being the image of God, I became mixed with dirt…. What wisdom is revealed in me, and what a great mystery! Was it not for this that God led us into this warfare and battle with the body, that we, being a part of Divinity," (how boldly the Theologian speaks of man's nature, so boldly that we cannot take his words absolutely literally!) "and proceeding from above, might not be haughty and exalt ourselves because of our dignity, and might not disdain the Creator, but might always direct our gaze toward Him, and so that our dignity might keep within bounds the infirmity joined to us?—So that we might know that at the same time we are both immensely great and immensely low, earthly and heavenly, temporal and immortal, inheritors of light and inheritors of fire or darkness, depending upon which side we incline towards? So was our constitution established, and this, as far as I can see, was in order that the earthly dust might humble us if we should imagine to exalt ourselves because of the image of God." (Homily 14, "On Love for the Poor.")

This image of God which man possesses by his nature was not completely lost even among the pagans, as St. John Cassian teaches; it has not been lost even today, when man, under the influence of modern philosophy and evolutionism, is trying to turn himself into a sub-human beast—for even now God awaits man's conversion, awaits his awakening to the true human nature which he has within him.

And this brings me to the very important point of your interpretation of the teaching of the God-bearing Father of almost our own times, St. Seraphim of Sarov, contained in his famous "Conversation with Motovilov."

St. Seraphim is my own patron Saint, and it was our Brotherhood of St. Herman that first published the complete text of this "Conversation" in the Russian language in which it was spoken (for the pre-revolutionary edition was incomplete), as well as other of his genuine words which had hitherto been unpublished. So you may be sure that we do not believe that he taught a false doctrine of the nature of man, one that contradicts that of other Holy Fathers. But let us examine what St. Seraphim himself says.

As you correctly quote him, St. Seraphim says:

"Many explain that when it says in the Bible 'God breathed the breath of life' into the face of Adam the first-created, who was created by Him from the dust of the ground, it must mean that until then there was neither human soul nor spirit in Adam, but only the flesh created from the dust of the ground. This interpretation is wrong, for the Lord created Adam from the dust of the ground with the constitution which our dear little father, the holy Apostle Paul describes: 'May your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 5:23). And all these parts of our nature were created from the dust of the ground, and Adam was not created dead, but an active being like all the other animate creatures of God living on earth. The point is that if the Lord God had not breathed afterwards into his face the breath of life (that is, the grace of our Lord God the Holy Spirit…), Adam would have remained without having within him the Holy Spirit Who raises him to God-like dignity. However perfect he had been created and superior to all the other creatures of God, as the crown of creation on earth, he would have been just like all the other creatures, which, though they have a body, soul and spirit, each according to its kind, yet have not the Holy Spirit within them. But when the Lord God breathed into Adam's face the breath of life, then, according to Moses' word, Adam became a living soul' (Gen. 2:7), that is, completely and in every way like God, and, like Him, forever immortal."

This is the one Patristic quote you give which seems to support your view that man was first a beast, and then (later in time) received the image of God and became man. This is indeed what you must believe if you accept the theory of evolution, and I am glad to see that you have the courage to express clearly what all "Orthodox evolutionists" actually believe (even if in a rather confused manner) but are often afraid to express openly for fear of offending other Orthodox believers who are "naive" and in their "simplicity" refuse to believe that man in actual fact is "descended from apes" or ape-like creatures.

But here let us remember the words of St. Gregory Palamas which I have already quoted:

"If one of the Fathers says the same thing as do those from without, the concordance is only verbal, the thought being quite different. The former, in fact, have, according to Paul, 'the mind of Christ' (I Cor. 2:16), while the latter express at best a human reasoning…. What man of sound spirit and belonging to the Church could from this conclude that their teaching comes from God?" (Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, Triad I, 11.)

And in fact, I must tell you that you have completely misunderstood the teaching of St. Seraphim, who is not at all teaching what the doctrine of evolution teaches. This I can show by quoting both the clear teaching of other Holy Fathers and that of St. Seraphim himself.

But first I must explain what might seem to a rationalist to be a "contradiction" between the teaching of St. Seraphim and that of other Fathers. First, we should be clear that when St. Seraphim speaks of man as being composed of "spirit and soul and body" he is not contradicting those many other Holy Fathers who speak of human nature as merely "soul and body"; he is merely making a distinction between different aspects of the soul and speaking of them separately, as many Holy Fathers also speak. Second, in saying that the "breath of life" which God breathed into the face of Adam is the grace of the Holy Spirit, he is not contradicting the very many Holy Fathers who teach that the "breath of life" is the soul, but is only giving a perhaps more profound and precise interpretation of this passage from Scripture. But is he actually making the rationalistic distinction which you make between the nature of man which existed "before" this breathing, and the grace which was communicated by it? Does Orthodox theology accept the rigid dichotomy which Roman Catholic teaching makes between "nature" and "grace," as though men knew everything there is to know about these two great mysteries?

No; Orthodox theology does not know such a rigid dichotomy, and that is why rationalist scholars find so many "contradictions" between different Orthodox Fathers on this subject, as will be clear from a single example: Does immortality belong to the human soul by nature or by grace? Different Orthodox Fathers who are of equal authority answer differently on this question, not because they teach differently about man and thus "contradict" each other, but because they approach the question from different sides. Those who approach the question of man's nature more from the side of the present corrupted human nature say that man's soul is immortal by grace; while those (especially the ascetic and mystical Fathers) who begin with the view of man's nature as it was in the beginning, view the soul rather as immortal by nature. It may be that one and the same Father views the question now from one and now from the other side, as does St. Gregory of Nyssa when he says in one place (Answer to Eunomius, Second Book): "That which reasons, and is mortal, and is capable of thought and knowledge, is called 'man'"; but in another place he says: "Man did not in the course of his first production have united to the very essence of his nature the liability to passion and to death." ("On Virginity," ch. XII.) Does this great Father "contradict" himself? Of course he does not.

What belongs to first-created Adam by nature and what by grace} Let us not make false rationalistic distinctions, but let us admit that we do not fully understand this mystery. Nature and grace both come from God. The nature of first-created Adam was so exalted that we can only faintly understand it now by our own experience of grace, which has been given to us by the Second Adam, Our Lord Jesus Christ; but Adam's state was also higher than anything we can

imagine even from our own experience of grace, for even his high nature was made you more perfect by grace, and he was, as St. Seraphim [says], "completely and in every way like God, and, like Him, forever immortal."

What is absolutely clear, and what is sufficient for us to know, is that the creation of man—of his spirit and soul and body, and of the Divine grace which perfected his nature—is a single act of creation, and it cannot be artificially divided up, as though one part of it came "first," and another part "later." God created man in grace, but neither the Holy Scriptures nor the Holy Fathers teach us that this grace came later in time than the creation of man's nature. This teaching belongs to Medieval Latin scholasticism, as I will show below.

St. Seraphim only appears to teach this doctrine, because he speaks in terms of the simple narrative of the sacred text of Genesis. But it is clear enough, as St. Gregory Palamas says, that "the concordance is only verbal, the thought being quite different." To be convinced of this we have only to examine how the Holy Fathers instruct us to interpret the sacred narrative of Genesis at this point.

Fortunately for us, this very question was raised and answered by the Holy Fathers. This answer is summed up for us by St. John Damascene:

"From the earth (God) formed his body and by His own inbreathing gave him a rational and understanding soul, which last we say is the divine image…. The body and the soul were formed at the same time—not one before and the other afterwards, and the ravings of Origen would have it." (On the Orthodox Faith, II, 12.)

Here let us be sure again that we understand that although St. John speaks of the inbreathing of God as the soul, he does not teach a doctrine different from St. Seraphim, who speaks of this inbreathing as the grace of the Holy Spirit. St. John in fact hardly speaks of grace at all in the creation of man, for it is understood as being present in the whole process of creation, above all in the creation of the image of God, the soul, which he teaches is part of our nature. St. Gregory of Nyssa likewise speaks of the creation of man without paying special attention to what comes from "nature" and what from "grace," only ending his whole treatise with the words:

"May we all return to that Divine grace in which God at the first created man, when He said, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness.'" (On the Creation of Man, XXX, 34.)

St. John Damascene and others who speak of the inbreathing of God as the soul view this matter from an aspect slightly different from that of St. Seraphim; but clearly the teaching of all these Fathers regarding the whole creation of man, and in particular regarding the question of whether the narrative of Genesis indicates a difference in time between the "forming" and "inbreathing" of man—is the same. St. John Damascene speaks for all the Holy Fathers when he says that they occurred "at the same time—not one before and the other afterwards."

In saying this, St. John Damascene was refuting in particular the Origenist heresy of the "pre-existence of souls." But there was also a heresy opposed to this, which taught the ''pre-existence" of the human body, just as it is taught by modern "Christian evolutionists." This heresy was specifically refuted by St. Gregory of Nyssa, whom I shall now quote.

After discussing the Origenist error of the "pre-existence of souls," St. Gregory continues:

"Others, on the contrary, marking the order of the creation of man as stated by Moses, say that the soul is second to the body in order of time, since God first took dust from the earth and formed man, and then animated the being thus formed by His breath: and by this argument they prove that the flesh is more noble than the soul, that which was previously formed than that which was afterwards infused into it: for they say that the soul was made for the body, that the thing formed might not be without breath and motion, and that everything that is made for something else is surely less precious than that for which it is made…. The doctrine of both is equally to be rejected." (On the Creation of Man, XXVIII, 1, 8.)

Specifically refuting the doctrine of the "pre-existence of the body." St. Gregory says:

"Nor again are we in our doctrine to begin by making up man like a clay figure, and to say that the soul came into being for the sake of this; for surely in that case the intellectual nature would be shown to be less precious than the clay figure. But as man is one, the being consisting of soul and body, we are to suppose that the beginning of his existence is one, common to both parts, so that he should not be found to be antecedent and posterior to himself, if the bodily element were first in point of time, and the other were a later addition…. For as our nature is conceived as twofold, according to the apostolic teaching, made up of the visible man and the hidden man, if the one came first and the other supervened, the power of Him that made us will be shown to be in some way imperfect, as not being completely sufficient for the whole task at once, but dividing the work, and busying itself with each of the halves in turn." (Ibid. XXIX, 1, 2.)

Do I need to point out that the "God" of "Christian evolution" is precisely this kind of God who is not "completely sufficient for the whole task at once"; and the very reason why the doctrine of evolution was invented was to account for the universe on the assumption that God either does not exist or is incapable of creating in six days or bringing the world into existence by His mere word?. EVOLUTION WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN THOUGHT OF BY MEN WHO BELIEVE IN THE GOD WHOM ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WORSHIP.

The account of the creation of man in the book of Genesis must be understood in a "God-befitting manner." Here you had made the mistake of accepting a literal interpretation of the text precisely where the Holy Fathers do not allow this\ How important it is for us to read the Holy Scriptures as the Holy Fathers instruct us, and not according to our own understanding!

It is quite clear that St. Seraphim did not understand the text of Genesis in the way in which you have interpreted it. Indeed, there are other passages in the same "Conversation with Motovilov" which reveal that St. Seraphim viewed the creation and nature of Adam in precisely the same way as the whole Patristic tradition.

Thus, immediately after the passage which you quote, and which I have reproduced above, there follow these words which you did not quote (the English translation here is not precise, and so I am translating from the Russian original):

"Adam was created to such an extent immune to the action of every one of the elements created by God, that neither could water drown him, nor fire burn him, nor could the earth swallow him

up in its abysses, nor could the air harm him by its action in any way whatsoever. Everything was subject to him….” »

This is precisely a description of the incorruption of Adams body in a creation subject to laws quite different from todays “laws of nature”—in which as an “evolutionist” you cannot believe, since you must believe with modern philosophy that the material creation was “natural, ” that is, corrupted, even before the fall of Adam!

Again, shortly after this passage, St. Seraphim says:

“To Eve also the Lord God gave the same wisdom, strength, and unlimited power, and all the other good and holy qualities. And He created her not from the dust of the ground but from Adams rib in the Eden of delight, in the Paradise which He had planted in the midst of the earth.”

Do you believe in this creation of Eve from Adam’s rib as an historical fact, as all the Holy Fathers do? No, you cannot, because from the point of view of evolutionary philosophy it is quite absurd: why should “God” evolve Adam’s body from beasts “naturally,” and then create Eve miraculously? The “God” of evolution does not preform such miracles!

Let us look now specifically at the Orthodox Patristic view of the body of first-created Adam, which according to the evolutionary doctrine had to be corruptible like the corruptible world from which it “evolved,” and might even have been, as you state, entirely that of an ape.

The Holy Scripture explicitly teaches: “God created man incorruptible’’ (Wisdom 2:23).

St. Gregory the Sinaite teaches:

” The body, theologians say, was created incorruptible, which is how it will arise, just as the soul was created passionless, but just as the soul had the freedom to sin, so the body had the possibility to become subject to corruption.” (“Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas,” 82.)

And again:

“The incorruptible body will be earthly, but without moisture and coarseness, having been unutterably changed from animate to spiritual, so that it will be both of the dust and heavenly. Just as it was created in the beginning so also will it arise, that it may be conformable to the image of the Son of Man by entire participation in deification.” (Ibid., 46.)

Notice here that the body in the future age will still be “of the dust.” When looking at the corruptible dust of this fallen world, we are humbled to think of this side of our nature; but when we think of that incorruptible dust of the first-created world out of which God made Adam, how exalted we are by the grandeur of even this, the lowest part of God’s unutterable creation!

St. Gregory the Theologian suggests giving a symbolical interpretation of the “garments of skins” with which God clothed Adam and Eve after their transgression, that the flesh of our present human body is different from the flesh of first-created Adam·.

Adam “is clothed in garments of skin (perhaps a coarser, mortal, and antagonistic flesh” (Homily 38, “On the Nativity of the Saviour.”)

Again, St. Gregory the Sinaite says:

"Man was created incorruptible, as also he will arise; but not unchangeable, nor yet changeable, but having the power at his own desire to change or not." "Corruption is the offspring of flesh. To eat food and excrete the excess, to hold the head proudly, and to lie down to sleep—are the natural attributes of beasts and cattle, into which we also, having become like to the cattle through the transgression, fell away from the God-given good things natural to us, and became from rational cattle-like, and from divine bestial." ("Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas," 8, 9.)

Concerning Adam's state in Paradise, St. John Chrysostom teaches:

"Man lived on earth like an Angel; he was in the body, but he had no bodily needs; like a king, adorned with purple and a diadem and clothed in royal garb, he took delight in the dwelling of Paradise, having an abundance in everything…. Before the fall men lived in Paradise like Angels; they were not inflamed with lust, were not kindled by other passions either, were not burdened with bodily needs; but, being created entirely incorruptible and immortal, they did not even need the covering of clothing." (Homilies on Genesis, XIII, 4; XV, 4.)

St. Simeon the New Theologian likewise speaks clearly of first-created Adam in Paradise, and his final state in the future age:

"If now, after we transgressed the commandment and were condemned to die, people have multiplied so much, just imagine how many of them there would have been if all who have been born from the creation of the world had not died? And what a life they would have lived, being immortal and incorrupt, strangers to sin, sorrows, and cares and serious needs?! And how, having advanced in the keeping of the commandments and in the good ordering of the dispositions of the heart, in time they would have ascended to the most perfect glory and, having been changed, would have drawn near to God, and the soul of each would have become as it were light-shining by reason of the illuminations which would have been poured out upon it from the Godhead! And this sensual and crudely- material body would have become as it were immaterial and spiritual, above every organ of sense; and the joy and rejoicing with which we would then have been filled from contact one with another in truth would have been unutterable and beyond the thought of man…. Their life in Paradise was not weighed down by labors and was not made difficult by misfortunes. Adam was created with a body incorruptible, even though material and not yet spiritual…. Concerning our body the Apostle says: 'It is sowed a natural body, it will arise' not such as the body of the first-created one was before the transgression of the commandment—that is, material, sensual, changeable, having need of sensual food— but 'it will arise a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:44), and unchangeable, such as was the body, after His Resurrection, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the first-born from among the dead, which is incomparably more excellent than the body of the first-created Adam." (Homily 45.).

From our experience of our own corruptible body it is not possible for us to understand the state of the incorruptible body of Adam, which had no natural needs as we know them, which ate of "every tree" of Paradise without excreting any excess, and which did not know sleep (until God's direct action caused him to sleep, so that Eve might be created from his rib). And how much less

are we able to understand the even more exalted state of our bodies in the future age! But we know enough from the Church's teaching to refute those who think they can understand these mysteries by scientific knowledge and philosophy. The state of Adam and the first-created world has been placed forever beyond the knowledge of science by the barrier of Adam's transgression, which changed the very nature of Adam and the creation, and indeed the nature of knowledge itself. Modern science knows only what it observes and what may be reasonably inferred from observation; its guesses about the earliest creation have no more and no less validity than the myths and fables of the ancient pagans. The true knowledge of Adam and the first-created world—as much as is useful for us to know—is accessible only in God's revelation and in the Divine vision of the Saints.

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All that I have said in this letter, derived strictly from the Holy Fathers, will come as a surprise to many Orthodox Christians. Those who have read some of the Holy Fathers will perhaps wonder why they "haven't heard it before." The answer is simple: if they have read many of the Holy Fathers, they have encountered the Orthodox doctrine of Adam and the creation; but they have been interpreting the Patristic texts hitherto through the eyes of modern science and philosophy, and therefore they have been blinded to the true Patristic teaching. It is also true that the doctrine of the body of Adam and the material nature of the first-created world is taught most clearly and explicitly in the later Fathers of exalted spiritual life such as St. Simeon the New Theologian and St. Gregory the Sinaite, and the writings of these Fathers are not widely read even today in Greek or Russian, and hardly any of them exist at all in other languages. (In fact, several of the passages I have quoted from St. Gregory the Sinaite have been mistranslated in the English Philokalia.)

I was very interested to read in your letter (p. 16) that you set forth the correct Patristic teaching that "The creation of God, even the angelic nature, has always, in comparison with God, something material. Angels are incorporeal in comparison with us, biological men. But in comparison with God they are also material and bodily creatures." This teaching, which is set forth most clearly in the ascetic Fathers such as St. Makarios the Great and St. Gregory the Sinaite, helps us to understand the "spiritual body" with which we shall be clothed in the fixture age, which is in some way of the dust, earthly, but has no moisture or coarseness, as St. Gregory the Sinaite teaches; and it also helps us to understand that third state of our body, that which first-created Adam had before his transgression. Likewise, this doctrine is essential in our understanding of the activity of spiritual beings, Angels and demons, even in the present corruptible world. The great Russian Orthodox Father of the 19th century, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, devotes an entire volume of his collected works (volume 3) to this subject, and to comparing the authentic Orthodox Patristic doctrine with the modern Roman Catholic doctrine, as set forth in 19th century Latin sources. His conclusion is that the Orthodox doctrine on these matters—on Angels and demons, heaven and hell, Paradise—even though it is given to us by sacred tradition only in part, nonetheless is quite precise in that part which we can know; but the Roman Catholic teaching is extremely indefinite and imprecise. The reason for this indefiniteness is not far to seek: from the time Papalism began to abandon the Patristic teaching,

it gradually gave itself over to the influence of worldly knowledge and philosophy, first that of such philosophers as Barlaam, and then of modern science. Even by the 19th century Roman Catholicism no longer had a certain teaching of its own on these subjects, but had grown accustomed to accept whatever "science" and its philosophy say.

Alas, our present-day Orthodox Christians, and not least those who have been educated in "theological academies," have followed the Roman Catholics in this and have come to a similar state of ignorance of the Patristic teaching. This is why even Orthodox priests are extremely vague about the Orthodox teaching of Adam and the first-created world and blindly accept whatever science says about these things. It may be that the Holy Trinity Seminary at Jordanville, N.Y., is the only remaining Orthodox school where the attempt is made to teach the Holy Fathers not "academically" but as living parts of a whole tradition; and it is significant that a Professor of this seminary, Dr. I. M. Andreyev, who is also Doctor of Medicine and Psychology, has expressed in print the very idea I have tried to communicate above, and which seems beyond the understanding of those who approach the Holy Fathers from the wisdom of this world instead of vice versa. Dr. Andreyev writes:

"Christianity has always viewed the present state of matter as being the result of a fall into sin… The Fall of man changed the whole of nature, including the nature of matter itself, which was cursed by God (Gen. 3:17)." ("Scientific Knowledge and Christian Truth," in St. Vladimir National Calendar for 1974, N.Y., p. 69.)

Prof. Andreyev finds that Bergson and Poincare have glimpsed this idea in modern times— but of course it is only our Orthodox Holy Fathers who have spoken clearly and authoritatively about it.

The vague teaching of Paradise and creation of Roman Catholicism—and of those Orthodox Christians who are under Western influence in this matter—has deep roots in the past of Western Europe. The Roman Catholic scholastic tradition, even at the height of its Medieval glory, already taught a false doctrine of man, and one which doubtless paved the way for the later acceptance of evolutionism, first in the apostate West, and then in the minds of Orthodox Christians who are insufficiently aware of their Patristic tradition and so have fallen under foreign influences. In fact the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, unlike the Orthodox Patristic teaching, in its doctrine of man is quite compatible with the idea of evolution which you advocate.

Thomas Aquinas teaches that

"In the state of innocence, the human body was in itself corruptible, but it could be preserved from corruption by the soul." Again: "It belongs to man to beget offspring, because of his naturally corruptible body t" (Summa Theologica, I, Quest. 98, Art. 1.)

Again:

"In Paradise man would have been like an angel in his spirituality of mind, yet with an animal life in his body." (Ibid., I 98, 2.) "Man's body was indissoluble, not by reason of any intrinsic vigor of immortality, but by reason of a supernatural force given by God to the soul, whereby it

was enabled to preserve the body from all corruption so long as it itself remained subject to God…. This power of preserving the body from corruption was not natural to the soul, but the gift of grace." (Ibid. I, 97, 2.) "Now it is clear that such a subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason (as Adam had in Paradise) was not from nature, or otherwise it would have remained after sin." (Ibid, I, 95, 1.)

This last quote show clearly that Thomas Aquinas does not know that mans nature was changed after the transgression. Again:

"The immortality of the first state was based on a supernatural force in the soul, and not on any intrinsic disposition of the body." (Ibid., I, 97,.)

So far is Thomas Aquinas from the true Orthodox vision of the first-created world that he understands it, as do modern "Christian evolutionists," solely from the viewpoint of this fallen world; and thus he is forced to believe, against the testimony of Orthodox Holy Fathers, that Adam naturally slept in Paradise (Ibid., I, 97, 3.) and that he voided faecal matter, a sign of corruption:

"Some say that in the state of innocence man would not have taken more than necessary food, so that there would have been nothing superfluous. This, however, is unreasonable to suppose, as implying that there would have been no faecal matter. Therefore there was need for voiding the surplus, yet so disposed by God as not to be unbefitting." (Ibid., I, 97, 4.)

How low is the view of those who try to understand God's creation and Paradise when their starting point is the everyday observation of this present fallen world! As against St. Seraphim's splendid vision of man's invulnerability to the elements in Paradise, behold Thomas Aquinas' purely mechanistic explanation of the rationalistic question: what happened when a hard body came into contact with the soft body of Adam?

"In the state of innocence, man's body could be preserved from suffering injury from a hard body, partly by the use of his reason, whereby he could avoid what was harmful; and partly also by divine providence, which so preserved him, that nothing of a harmful nature could come upon him unawares." (Ibid., I, 97, 3.)

Finally, Thomas Aquinas himself does not teach, but other Medieval scholastics (William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure) did teach, the very foundation of present-day "Christian evolutionary" views of man's creation:

"Man was not created in grace, but grace was bestowed on him subsequently, before sin." (See Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, 85, 1.)

In a word: according to Orthodox doctrine, which comes from Divine vision, Adams nature in Paradise was different from present human nature, both in body and soul, and this exalted nature was perfected by God s grace; but according to Latin doctrine, which is based on rationalistic deductions from the present fallen creation, man is naturally corruptible and mortal, just as he is now, and his state in Paradise was a special, supernatural gift.

I have quoted all these passages from a heterodox authority, not in order to argue over details of Adams life in Paradise, but merely to show how far one corrupts the marvelous Patristic vision of Adam and the first-created world when one approaches it with the wisdom of this fallen world. Neither science nor logic can tell us a thing about Paradise·, and yet many Orthodox Christians are so cowed by modern science and its rationalistic philosophy that they are actually afraid to read seriously the first chapters of Genesis, knowing that modern "wise men" find so many things there that are "dubious" of "confused" or need to be "reinterpreted," or that one may obtain the reputation of being a "Fundamentalist" if one dares to read the text simply, "as it is written," as all the Holy Fathers read it.

The instinct of the simple Orthodox Christian is sound when he recoils from the "sophisticated, " fashionable view that man is descended from an ape or any other lower creature, or even (as you say) that Adam might have had the very body of an ape. St. Nectarios of Pentapolis rightly expressed his righteous anger against those who try to "prove that man is an ape, from which they boast that they are descended." That is the view of Orthodox holiness, which knows that creation is not as modern wise men describe it by their vain philosophy, but as God revealed it to Moses "not in riddles," and as the Holy Fathers have seen it in vision. Man's nature is different from ape nature and has never been mixed with it. If God, for the sake of our humility, had wished to make such a mixture, the Holy Fathers, who say the very "composition of visible things" in Divine vision, would have known it.

HOW LONG WILL ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS REMAIN IN CAPTIVITY TO THIS VAIN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY? Much is said about the "Western captivity" of Orthodox theology in recent centuries; when will we realize that it is a far more drastic "Western captivity" in which every Orthodox Christian finds himself today, a helpless prisoner of the "spirit of the times," of the dominating current of worldly philosophy which is absorbed in the very air we breathe in an apostate, God-hating society? An Orthodox Christian who is not consciously fighting against the vain philosophy of this age simply accepts it into himself, and is at peace with it because his own understanding of Orthodoxy is distorted, does not conform to the Patristic standard.

The sophisticated, worldly-wise laugh at those who call evolution a "heresy." True, evolution is not strictly speaking a heresy; neither is Hinduism, strictly speaking, a heresy: but like Hinduism (with which it is indeed related, and which probably had an influence on its development) evolutionism is an ideology that is profoundly foreign to the teaching of Orthodox Christianity, and it involves one in so many wrong doctrines and attitudes that it would be far better if it were simply a heresy and could thus be easily identified and combatted. Evolutionism is closely bound up with the whole apostate mentality of the rotten "Christianity" of the West; it is a vehicle of the whole "new spirituality" and "new Christianity" in, which the devil is now striving to submerge the last true Christians. It offers an alternative explanation of creation to that of the Holy Fathers; it allows an Orthodox Christian under its influence to read the Holy Scriptures and not understand them, automatically "adjusting" the text to fit his preconceived philosophy of nature. Its acceptance cannot but involve the acceptance also of alternative explanations of other parts of Divine revelation, of an automatic "adjustment" of other Scriptural and Patristic texts to fit in with modern "wisdom."

I believe that in your feeling fir Gods creation, as you describe it in your letter, you are Orthodox, but why do you feel that you must corrupt this feeling with modern wisdom, and justify this new ideology which is so foreign to Orthodoxy? You have written most movingly "against false union"; how we wish that you would now become just as great a zealot "against false wisdom." and tell the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians who have accepted this new doctrine much too uncritically that our only wisdom comes from the Holy Fathers, and all that contradicts it is a lie, even if it calls itself "science."

I beg your forgiveness is anything the I have said seems harsh; I have tried only to speak the truth as I see it in the Holy Fathers. If I have made any mistakes in my citations from the Holy Fathers, I beg you to correct them, but not to let any small mistakes keep you from seeing what I have tried to say. There is much else that I could say on this subject, but I will wait for your reply before doing so. Above all, I have the heartfelt wish that both you and we might see the true Patristic teaching on this subject, which is so important for our whole Orthodox world-view. I ask your prayers for myself and our Brotherhood.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

152.

March 9/22, 1974

Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ,

We have started the new Orthodox Word, so typing on my letter to Kalomiros is just beginning. We just spent four evenings, after evening trapeza, listening to the whole Kalomiros letter and then my reply. I can safely say that the whole Brotherhood was deeply shocked by the doctrine of Kalomiros, and also astonished at the low level both of its science and its theology. My reply was approved.

It is clear, however, that my reply is not the "last word." To be of general benefit it will have to have additions of those points I didn't discuss either because Kalomiros doesn't question them (such as Patristic testimony of the Divine inspiration of Genesis) or because there just wasn't room (Patristic testimony of the age of the world, etc.). Some points might be cut down too, and Kalomiros' reply will also give us farther indications of what is most needed.

But more important: your scientific and philosophical chapters are absolutely indispensable. An approach solely from the Holy Fathers will be really convincing to a few people (it remains to be seen if it will be convincing to Kalomiros, who says he wants to give nothing but the teaching of the Holy Fathers!), and it also runs the risk of making us a little ostrich-like, taking refuge in our Fathers and not living in the "real world," where "science" reigns.

So the objective scientific approach is very necessary—not enough to get bogged down in "scientific proofs"—but just enough to show that the scientific proofs cancel each other out, as it were, leaving the question of evolution in its real sphere of philosophy and theology. What you've done on "early Man" is good. You'll notice that my letter, in contrast to the "objective" tone we've urged you to have, comes down rather heavy against evolution with no pretense of "not knowing" what's what. We'll have to weigh the whole book and judge just when we should be "objective" and when we should push our point across; I have a feeling that the first chapters should be "objective," allowing the reader to convince himself more or less, and the last part should indeed be a forceful statement of the Patristic position. This should become clearer as we come to the end.

Your "Christian evolution" section is also essential to show how Christians hitherto have "reconciled" themselves to evolution. The weakness of evolution as science and philosophy will only serve to emphasize the importance of the Patristic view, which is so definite and really powerful.

We've received your "Christian evolution" chapters and I've started writing some suggestions, but probably won't [be] finished until I've sent the Kalomiros letter. Your chapters are good (and don't feel timid about suggesting changes in anything I send) and the basic idea is shining through clearer and clearer. The polishing now will be in the direction of giving the maximum "punch" to every section and tying it all together. You'll see in my letter to Kalomiros how much some of my points depend on basic scientific-philosophical preparation of the reader in earlier chapters. For instance, it will have almost no effect at all to say that the world can't be "millions of years" old because the Fathers say it is 7500 year old—the "modern" reader is already used to "adjusting" his view on the Fathers when they talk about "science." But if this is preceded by a good exposition of "radio-carbon" etc., and the whole philosophy of how we view the age of the earth—then the seed of the Patristic teaching, cast into this soil, should bear fruit.

By the way, I begin to see that I myself have been harboring some "modern ideas" on the Six Days of Creation. It's true that this is not the most important question involved with evolution, but it's not really a matter of indifference either, but there is a profound Patristic teaching in this, as I indicate in my letter to Kalomiros. But it would be good to have further Patristic testimony on this—so please say if you know of any. We will continue to collect Patristic material for the final version of the book.

Spring seems to be here in earnest, as it almost invariably is just at the time of the Forty Martyrs—in fact, every year since we've been here, the first lizards always come out within a few days of this feast; this year they were three days early (the first day our temperature got close to 65 degrees).

The new Orthodox Word will have a shocking Life, which is supposed to inspire!

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

153.

Monday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent 1974

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Rejoice in the Lord! Will try to answer your questions one at a time.

Concerning particular questions like job, people problems—individually they aren't important and they really can't be solved one at a time. Instead, try to keep the whole picture in mind. Where is your heart? If it is in the desert, as it seems, then deep down make the resolve that you're going to go to the desert, if it is pleasing to God and He will open the way, and let everything else fall into place around that resolve. When it comes to helping people, especially our poor converts, don't turn down what God sends, but don't go seeking for ways to get involved, either. If your desire for the desert is real and God-pleasing, you will be of much more help to people there than in their midst—not because you are anything or will become a wonderworking hermitess (if you thought that you'd better stop right now!), but because there is something very natural about the desert for Orthodox Christians, and God sees the heart of even the feeblest sinner in the desert and sends His help.

The second thing to keep clearly in mind is this: the world is your enemy, and that included the "church world, " that is, the worldliness of church people. We don't know any clergy in S. F. who, if they heard of your "desert desire," wouldn't begin immediately thinking and talking about "prelest," "crazy converts," and the like. In principle they are "correct," of course, and it's quite fine to talk like that in "normal" times when there are hundred of convents and sketes to go to in order to escape the pitfalls of trusting oneself (but the tapes we'll send you are of "crazy" ones who ran away even from all that!). BUT IN OUR POOR DAYS THIS ATTITUDE HAS NO REAL FUNCTION EXCEPT TO EXTINGUISH SPIRITUAL ZEAL. And the church world is not only pretty much against the desert—any kind of spiritual life is in danger from this "correctness." We are immensely relieved, for example, to hear from Alexey that the baptisms will be in S.F. after all—for to call special attention to his "secret" is just asking for danger. Do you know that some of our good priests think that a layman has no "right" to burn incense in his own home?

So: keep your "secret," live in peace with everyone, help those who ask for it (and beware of "helping" when you're not asked!), and BEG GOD AND VLADIKA JOHN TO SHOW YOU THE WAY OUT OF THE WORLD AS FAST AS POSSIBLE! About the last point, it isn't essential yet to have a concrete "plan" in mind; it's enough right now to nourish the desert seed in the heart, with which we'll try to help. We're sending shortly the first tapes of "Neonilla," which you can start transcribing as soon as you get your machine. The next one, "Maria," is still more inspiring. Send us the Xerox of her life (and all the other Xeroxes you have) as soon as possible—but not the books. We've been reading these lives at noon trapeza, and they are very inspiring.

From Boston we are getting just the daily troparia and kontakia. We haven't received the Little Compline. We mentioned to Fr. Panteleimon several years ago that we would like to print a

Horologion, but were not too certain right now. In case you didn't realize it, printing (at least under our conditions) is not an easy thing even ordinarily, and besides that numerous additional difficulties constantly arise to tempt us. Of late the Linotype has given the most difficulty, and the last part of the last issue was completed with myself supplying complicated manual movements for each line of type to make up for a piece that broke in the back of the machine. You will therefore understand why your nonchalant request to "type up" your ad was met rather coolly in the printing dept. Consider yourself hit over the head, and remember: what comes easy does not help get one to or keep one in the desert. Your request has been tabled until we can get the new issue out, which we would very much like to do by Pascha, despite the long services. If it is very difficult to mimeograph it or otherwise do it "easy" yourself, then implore us to help you and we'll try. We are struggling from first to last, and you should start thinking in those terms too. Recently our tank of gas for the Linotype was stuck with the truck in a ditch for a week; fortunately the old tank barely finished the issue, or we were prepared to take ropes and drag the tank up 1/2 mile through the snow.

Another question: the reading of the Sunday night Passion Gospels during Lent is a custom of many centuries in Western Russia. And don't start thinking about "Latin influence"—the custom was good enough for Vladika John (which is perhaps why it is still continued in SF) and is also very moving.

In Berkeley: we need a Xerox of a book by St. Gregory of Tours; I think it's called Historia Sanctorum, Histoire des Saints, with text in Latin and French on opposite pages (we'd like both), giving lives of Western Saints. If you know French, perhaps you could also check and see if St., Gregory has information on other Saints of the West in his other works, such as History of the Franks (which is in English), which is not in these Lives.

Also, if you have a little time (!) in Berkeley, you might look at art books of Medieval and pre-Medieval illustrations of Western Saints—Sts. Martin of Tours, Benedict, Paulinus of Nola, Ambrose, English Saints, etc. You probably won't find many icons, but it would help just to have any illustration of how the Saints were pictured before 13th century or so.

Fr. Herman's wrist is improving. Br. Laurence is in good spirits.

About your rule: what's wrong with the one you've been using? Is it too difficult? If not, start it again and may God bless your labors.

Please get us a box of charcoal (enclosed label). Enclosed check for charcoal (which costs $10) and Xeroxing.

Spring is upon us, though no oak leaves have come out yet. Everything is bright, and one feels expansive and wonders why these whole mountains aren't peopled with ascetics in caves. But God sends us just what we need, and it's not for us to question the "state of humanity" too much, just to save our souls. Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

154.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

St. Thomas Sunday, 1974

April 9

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Here I promised you an "epistle" in Bright Week, and I'm sending you instead half an epistle the next week. Please forgive my negligence and pray for me and us all so that we won't be entirely fruitless servants of Christ our risen Saviour.

Glory be to God, the last days of Passion Week and Pascha itself were good for us and joyous. Soon, of course, Misha's "problems" began to make themselves felt, and even I am beginning to despair for him. May God have mercy on us all.

Thursday of Bright Week I was approached in the Redding Library by a young bearded "seeker" who felt moved to give me a sack of bananas which someone had given him in Safeway. (I later learned he had almost no money when he did this.) We left, but then returned in five minutes, wondering if he could find out what religion I practiced. After talking with him for a while, I saw he was sincere, and finding that he had no home but was just passing through California as part of his vain search for something to believe in, I invited him to come and stay with us for a while and find out about Orthodoxy, which he had heard of only through Dostoyevsky. For 3 days he attended our services, read and worked, and listened in some kind of open-mouthed amazement as we tried to open up Orthodoxy to him. Having come in despair, he left in hope and with tears, still not knowing what had hit him, on St. Thomas Sunday—the significance of which was apparent even to him. Somehow I have a very good feeling about him, and he seems to me to be part of that "normal America" which is thirsting for Orthodoxy without knowing. (He's all mixed up, but from his life story I can see that he's a very "normal" person and probably won't be a "crazy convert." Pray for him—Gary. We gave him the addresses of Fr. Neketas and the Russian churches in Seattle and Vancouver (he'll be working for a while north of Seattle). Seeing an "outsider" like this who is absolutely stunned on encountering Orthodoxy, one clings all the more tightly to the precious treasure which we unworthy ones have, and which is not for us alone.

"New" Sunday has come and now we begin the spiritual year renewed and fresh, ready for apostolic labors as God gives us strength.

You wish a rule? The let it begin simply and according to your strength: In the morning: 6 300-knot prayer ropes silently (half of what you have been doing), followed by one kathisma of the Psalter (start with the first Kathisma and go to the next one every day; if you find this fruitful, later a way can be found to join your reading to the Church's rhythm of reading the Psalter). This assumes you have a copy of the Boston Psalter; if not, continue the 12 prayer ropes until you get one.

In the evening: Little Compline, with the Akathist to the Mother of God in place of the canon. Then 100 Jesus Prayers with bows (slow, Optina style—that is, one prayer for each bow, with the sign of the Cross each time). Then, if you have strength, the Akathist to St. Seraphim (or on the bus in the morning). No prostrations until Pentecost.

On Saturday night-Sunday morning, and on vigils and days of great feasts, no Rule required (if you go to church), but you can do whatever you feel like.

This rule shouldn't be too demanding; but don't worry if it seems too small. See what it feels like first. If there are questions or problems, say so. Remember that you are not a great ascetic, and hardly even a feebler struggler. Do a little bit regularly, according to your strength, and God will show what more you are ready for.

And what will you do all day in the wilderness, you ask? —if God is so merciful as to grant you this dream? Well, you'd better not imagine that you will be praying all day, or you'll fall flat on your face. You'll weave baskets—"baskets" like ours, "missionary baskets," which in our case will probably have something to do with Orthodox texts in English. God will show. Also, you will have to live self-sufficiently, which means some kind of practical hard work. God will also show this. And prayer according to your strength and thirst. In our days it's all an "impossible dream," and therefore practical and hopeful. Is that logic clear?

Forgive me. Pray for us all.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

155.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

St. Thomas Tuesday, 1974

April 10, 1974

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

We were glad to hear of your joyous Pascha and the spiritual profit from these holy days for the Etna Orthodox community. Do not worry about the increased responsibilities and new souls that come your way; God will not send you more burdens than you can bear, and what can we poor Christians do if we don't help at least a little those who are thirsting for the truth? Let us labor a little for others, who often have nowhere else to turn to in this wasteland of modern life, and let us look forward to the repose of the next life, when the spiritual harvest will be in and secure from harm! And even in all our trials and sorrow—for which constantly be prepared!—what joy our loving God sends to us unworthy ones!

We are happy to hear about the new David and his simple acceptance of Holy Orthodoxy. May God bring him safely into His fold. We also had a very moving "missionary experience" this Bright Week. Michael returned and we had a joyous and peaceful Pascha, getting back ;; work

suffi- ciendy to send out the new issue of The Orthodox Word on Thursday. The same afternoon Michael and I went to Redding on business and to visit the Harveys, and in the Redding library I was approached by a young bearded "seeker" who offered me a bag of bananas which someone had given him in Safeway— "for your community, or whatever it is." He went away and in five minutes returned to find out of what religion we were. After talking for a few minutes with him I could see he was sincere, and after finding out that he lived "nowhere" (all his worldly possessions were in his knapsack in the Greyhound depot, and he was on his way from Mexico to Washington on another leg of a 5-year fruitless "search for the meaning of life"), I invited him to come and stay with us for a while and find out about Orthodoxy. He instantly accepted, and he was with us until Sunday, attending all our services, reading and working, and sitting in a kind of wide-eyed stupefaction as we tried to open up Orthodoxy to him, about which he had never heard except through Dostoyevsky. He left in tears and was evidently overwhelmed in a way he doesn't yet understand. What will happen in the future we don't know, but we had a very good feeling about him—he is a very normal and good- hearted boy of 23 (not a slouchy hippy type at all) who has been miserable and mixed up because he has been deprived of knowing the meaning of life (he comes from a very weak Catholic family). His encounter with us was certainly providential, as it came at a critical time for him—just 10 minutes before he saw me he had put his head on a table in the library in despair at finding that everything he read about philosophy and religion was absolutely empty and there was no answer to the questions he was asking. He left without knowing fully what had happened to him, but at least he knew that "a ray of light has dawned." He left on the Sunday of "Doubting Thomas"—the significance of which he got. May God grant that, as I told him, in exchange for a bag of bananas he may receive the Kingdom of Heaven!

All of this somehow reminds me forcibly that—just as our Saviour could say of Nathaniel that "here is a true Israelite, there is no guile in him"—so too there is such a thing as a "true American": an honest, forthright, normal person for whom Holy Orthodoxy is quite "natural"; and the harvest of these "true Americans" is only beginning. Doubtless the "Orthodox Americans" will be few in number, but it is precisely the best part of America which is waiting (without knowing it) to hear the glad tidings of Orthodoxy.

Our encounter with a receptive outsider like Gary (please pray for him—he's promised to write us when he's settled) is quite inspiring, because it shows us clearly that treasure which we have that such outsiders can't even dream of. It also helps to offset the troubles and sorrows we have "inside" our Orthodox family, since we are all so human. The "kind but distant" attitude of the Hoffmanns is painful; and again it seems so important—never to regard ourselves as "experts" who have "authoritative answers" and regard everyone else with some kind of suspicion. We certainly hope that Daniel does not get mixed up with this kind of attitude.

I must apologize again for not having any comments ready on the two parts of the "evolution" study you sent. Hopefully in a week or so I will have some comments, and also another book for you and the Dobzhansky article (which I finally found in the Paschal cleanup which, fortunately, Father Herman forces us to make). The more I think of it, the more I see how important it is for us to keep chipping away at every chapter until we get just the right tone in which to talk about

the question. We agree that the word "evolution" should be only in a sub-title (although I wrote Vladimir that we simply don't have the necessary information for this year's "Books in Print" and it would be better to list it next year when, hopefully, it will be a reality). In general, we must work at it until the whole study will have such a "calm and objective" tone that the ordinary open-minded yet somewhat brainwashed person will at least consent to read it. Thus it will not be an "anti-evolution" study, but rather a Patristic study with calm Orthodox reflections on evolution.

For my own background I checked out two books in the Redding library: Raymond Dart's In Search of the Missing Link, which looks to be too popular to be of much use; and Leakey's Adams Ancestors, to which I find myself, after a few chapters, rather sympathetic, inasmuch as it seems to be rather careful and precise scientifically (of course, if one discounts the attempt to fit all the evidence into an "evolutionary" framework, which does indeed seem to be a philosophical intrusion). There are so many possible pitfalls in this study (and other imaginary ones which we must also avoid!) that it is good to proceed slowly and carefully in getting the whole text together. I have a pretty good idea of how I want to revise and rearrange the letter to Kalomiros, but I hope to get a reply from him before starting this. Your comments too will be welcome. Some of his statements should definitely be quoted in the final version, but probably anonymously; and probably in the preface it should be mentioned that there was an exchange of correspondence with him on the subject. What do you think?

The general outline of the study seems clear now, and I think you've made at least a first draft of everything except the general "proofs of evolution"—i.e., that "irrefutable evidence" which can be interpreted in so many different ways (the "evidence" from embryology, homology of living structures, similarity of blood types, etc.). It would be good to have a paragraph or so discussing each of these points which seem so convincing to evolutionists. Also, I've come across several references to the "fluorine dating system," but no thorough discussion of it—Leakey mentions it as being in its infancy in the 1940's. It has to do apparently with the rate of absorption of fluorine, which seems to be vastly variant depending on moisture, etc. It would be good for us to give a kind of "philosophy" of the dating systems—i.e., showing that we do not reject them outright, but that their significance is relative and limited, somewhat helpful in the genuine study of paleontology (which we should also emphasize is a legitimate science), but not any absolute answer to anything. In general, we should communicate a very "friendly feeling" toward genuine science.

Spring barely arrived with Pascha here, and even on "New" Sunday (St. Thomas) there were barely green leaves on the oaks. Our garden is finally growing a little, such as it is, after a battle with mice, who ate up everything the instant it came up. Have you ever heard of a garden full of mouse traps?

We will be glad to see you (and David) whenever you can come. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

156.

June 7/20, 1974

Hieromartyr Theodotus

Dear Dr. Kalomiros,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We haven't heard from you since we sent our letter to you on Evolution. Did you receive it? Please let us know. We would very much like to hear your comments, either on the whole letter or on individual points. Since writing it, I have looked into one or two other points of the Patristic philosophy on this question, which I could write about later, if you wish. But I would very much like to know what you think of the points I have already discussed.

Is there anything new in the situation of the Old Calendarist Churches in Greece?

Asking your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

157.

June 24/July 7, 1974

Nativity of St. John the Forerunner

Dear Brother in Christ, Luke [Walmsley],

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ!

This will be brief, as our summer season is on and we are busier that ever—19 pilgrims in one day! Still, we thank God, as so far all our pilgrims come for spiritual reasons and there are no "tourists."

Even though you did not finish your last letter to us, the gist of it is clear. The want of spiritual guides, as indeed of Orthodox Christians who just care about others, is acute. Do you have the Arena of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov? If not I'll try to get you a copy. Although it's written for monks, it applies to everyone who wants to lead a serious Orthodox life in today's conditions. We are no longer given the way of obedience to a Staretz, he says (even though he wrote when there were remarkable Startsi living); our present way of Orthodox life must be according to the Holy Scriptures and Holy Fathers and by counsel from living Orthodox Christians (i.e., those who give advice but not commands). You will have to be a wise bee, storing up whatever counsels you can get, and not ceasing to read Scriptures and Fathers, whose teaching is for all times, even if applied differently in different times. It would not be bad for you to keep a spiritual diary (if you don't already), putting there your spiritual questionings and struggles, and

also answers and light you get from Orthodox sources. The difficulty of your situation is for the good—those who have never been in hopeless situations have little to give others.

Perhaps you do not know "what next"? —after you get your degree? Get the degree first, and then trust in God to open the way. The political-economic situation in U.S., as evidently everywhere in the West, is rapidly deteriorating. Worse, the church situation becomes very bad (your situation is not unique!). In San Francisco suddenly some parishes are becoming empty, as the old priests die and there are no young ones to replace them; and it's doubtful if more than a few see the cause: that Orthodoxy has too long been "taken for granted," and it does not preserve itself "automatically"! But all of this only prepares us for catacomb times when our opportunities are perhaps greater than ever. We can't see the future—but know this, that if you love God and His Orthodox Church and your fellow men—God can and will use you. Only Stay in contact with fellow Orthodox strugglers (they do exist).

Blessed Archbishop John is with us. We attended Liturgy in his Sepulchre on June 19/July 2, and Fr. Mitrophan gave a marvelous sermon, to wit that what a shame for us Russians to be lukewarm about a genuine wonderworker of our times, when the Greeks have printed his icon and venerate him as a saint!

Forgive the haste. Have you heard of Hieromonk Eulogius (a convert) and several parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in Italy who want to come to our Synod (Milan, I think)? By the way, have you read Gulag or anything recent of Solzhenitsyn?—very important, a voice of truth. We're sending you a copy of Gulag, by air. Pray for us, and write.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

158.

June 24/July 7, 1974b

Nativity of St. John the Forerunner

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We (at least I) have still not recovered from the events of the last two weeks or so. Wednesday Vladika Nektary came to us with the Kursk Icon, a moving experience for us all; and then I accompanied the Icon to Etna, where it was well received and everyone sang in English. Little by little, it seems, this barren American land is being sanctified.

It's obvious that Vlad. Anthony's chief concern these days is the "priest shortage." Is it possible that some people now will begin to think of why? It is not merely because "the salary is low"!—that affects only those who haven't much interest in the priesthood anyway. The better candidates are repelled precisely because the "priesthood" is presented as such a boring thing—as "filling a hole" in the church organization wherein everyone, from hierarchy to laymen, takes the Church and the sources of spiritual life for granted. Get yourself inspired by the lives of

Saints, try to be a zealot, express your veneration for the Wonderworker of San Francisco—and see how soon you will be squashed! Everything that rises above the "norm" of unconsciousness is labelled "prelest." Who with any spiritual vitality is interested in such a "church career."

The situation seems really desperate. Perhaps it is no accident that the "clergy crisis" seems to be striking S. F. most severely. Fr. Mitrophan well said in his sermon that "it is a shame to us Russians to be so lukewarm to our Wonderworker, Archbishop John, when the Greeks have printed his icon and glorified him!" (Such words haven't been spoken publicly before!) Here we have such a source of inspiration and grace, and those who revere him are virtual outcasts. No wonder grace is being taken away from this diocese!

Forgive the bluntness. We ourselves are peaceful and are quite resolved to keep our fragile little foothold of spiritual life against the attacks and temptations which will doubtless get worse. "Wasting their time," "pleasing themselves," "prelest." Glory be to God for everything!

The congregation of "ex-novices" in the Sepulchre was also not a very gratifying sight. What an abyss between the older generation which is trying so hard (literally killing themselves) just to "keep the ship running," and the young ones who are not so interested in the Church that they will abandon the pleasure of pleasing themselves and leading fruitless lives. The approaching Sobor comes at a critical time, but who really sees what the crisis is? Perhaps near-anarchy is ahead, when Church life will be restricted to small cells of believers.

V. Derugin left a very bad impression—pompous, vain, empty, an intellectual shell with no spiritual content. But Vlad. Danilevich is just the opposite! May God preserve those who, through suffering, have learned the great secret that Orthodoxy is in the heart or not at all!

Don't worry if Gulag deprives you of "peace" for a while. "Spiritual" life in modern conditions without a sober awareness of this other side of 20th-century life—is prelest! An awareness of this is a part of the suffering which is so necessary for real spiritual life. In any case, the overall impression of Gulag, once all the harrowing moments have been passed—is inspiring. The devil has done his worst with human nature—but now the truth is being told about it, and it turns out that Orthodoxy is not irrelevant to 20th-century life after all.

Concerning reading of the Gospel: the Optina-Sarov rule is: every day when the cell rule is performed (i.e., except eves of Sundays and great feasts, and Nativity and Pascha weeks), read one chapter of the Gospels and 2 chapters of the Epistles, beginning with Matthew and the Acts. If the last 8 chapters or so of the Apocalypse are read 1 a day instead of 2, the Gospels and Epistles will be finished the same day. We read them here aloud after Compline (as Starets Leonid did—usually the reading is individual, in the cell), although in the last 6 months or so we have cut the reading in half, which means we hardly get through the New Testament more than once a year.

Doubtless it would be good for you to write Matushka Lambros, if you can give her a word of consolation.

Concerning the Arena, p. 52, the "moral, hidden obedience, performed in the soul" seems to refer to our obedient orientation to God in general, which we should not think is satisfied if we are

merely outwardly obedient to monastic or church authorities. It can happen that outward obedience is so over-emphasized that it becomes a mechanical substitute for the genuine voluntary inward giving up of one's own will and understanding* The distinction can be felt in the heart: sooner or later an unsound, mechanical obedience will produce a feeling of oppression and tenseness, which are signs that something is wrong. Genuine inward obedience is accompanied by the joy of being relieved of trusting only oneself. This subject is extremely deep and is closely bound up with the whole subject of genuine vs. false Orthodoxy in the 20th century, most acutely in "Sergianism," where obedience indeed becomes slavery to men and the human church organization. True obedience is accompanied by inward freedom, without which there is no Church life.

Yes, Vlad. Anderson has had difficult times with discouragement; pray for him. Pray for us all.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

I. M. Kontzevitch has written well on this subject in ch. 1 of the Optina book.

159.

June 30/July 13, 1974

12 Apostles; St. Sophronius of Irkutsk

Dear Brother in Christ Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God, we spent the feast days well, joined by a pilgrim Fr. Neketas sent us, in addition to Thomas and John Kraft. (That boy has problems; what he will be in 6 years we dread to think.)

We've looked at the material for the new Nikodemos, and it all looks good. But, as you anticipated, we do have some comments on Khomiakov, and in fact the material you sentvgives us the chance to say basic things and, God willing, inspire you to begin a very important project.

1. Khomiakov himself, of course, is sound enough in his views (as far as they go). But his significance has been rather over-emphasized in some circles (partly owing to the fact that he is Fr. George Grabbe's great-grandfather!), as is evident in the material you sent:

a. The phrase "Khomiakov and his disciples" establishes a context which is misleading: as though a lay philosophical school arose to transmit the true Orthodox teaching when the Church's own "theologians" had gone astray. Actually, Khomiakov was one of a number of thinkers who, under sound Orthodox influence, came to similar conclusions about the influences from the West; and on the whole he is less important in this respect than his friend Ivan Kireyevsky, who was in close contact with the Optina Elders and the Patristic tradition (which Khomiakov was not—he is a more worldly figure, actually more remarkable as a poet than a theologian, who never found it necessary even to go to Optina!). As the founder of a "school" (the Slavophiles), with "disciples," Khomiakov is not very important—because that school got itself mixed up with many purely romantic notions, based on German idealism, Russian folk-

lore, etc. The conclusion of Samarin (who is not a very church-minded thinker) that "it was Khomiakov who first looked upon Latinism and Protestantism from the Church's point of view— "is vastly overdone; if that were true, then the Church was really in "captivity," and was saved only by lay philosophers. There were actually many before him (who are not so well known because they didn't enter directly into the big disputes of 19th-century Russian "intellectual history"), most notably the whole Paisian-Optina tradition.

b. A better perspective on this whole question is this: the "school" tradition of Orthodox theology—one might say the Russian Church "establishment" of Synod, seminaries, big-city monasteries, etc.—was indeed subject to a foreign influence from the West: not in teaching any new doctrine (for its doctrine always remained Orthodox), but in accommodating itself to Western ways of thinking and church organization (the Synod itself in place of the Patriarch; the large monasteries viewed as "official institutions" whose abbots were often transferred, instead of an intimate community under an elder; etc.). To some extent these developments were inevitable consequences of modern conditions (either intellectual, as when attempts are made to convert Roman Catholics or Protestants to Orthodoxy by using their own language; or physical: the sheer numbers of monks and monasteries made it inevitable that only a few of them would be able to preserve themselves as intimate spiritual communities).

BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE PUREST TRADITION OF ORTHODOXY REMAINED INTACT IN RUSSIA, out of sight or semi-underground, as it were. Even before the disciples of Elder Paisius brought back the authentic ancient monastic tradition in the early 19th century, even during the outright persecution of Orthodoxy under Peter and Catherine—the genuine monastic tradition continued to exist in Russia under the Elders of Sarov (before St. Seraphim), Blessed Theodore of Sanaxar, and others. It was their influence, together with that of Blessed Paisius, that led to the celebrated "Orthodox revival" of the 19th century in Russia—in which Khomiakov took only an external part.

c. The comments of Samarin which you quote show that he is not aware of this pure current of Orthodoxy which never died out in Russia—in fact, he is himself under "Western influence" in not realizing the importance precisely of the post-schism theologians of the East (whom Kireyevsky emphasizes). The decline of Orthodox theology comes only with the fall of Byzantium in the 15th century.

2. The soundest approach top this whole question is, while acknowledging the existence of the Western influences in church life, NOT TO GIVE THEM UNDUE EMPHASIS and thereby establish a "negative" school of criticism; but rather to emphasize the positive tradition of Russian Orthodoxy, and in fact to see in it the main current of Orthodoxy which gives us our standard for today. Almost no one today sees this, and the whole question of "Western influence" is therefore somewhat unbalanced and subject to the conflicting opinions of various "schools"; we should belong to none of these "schools" (even if their opinions might be correct), but should rather rejoin the age-old current of pure Orthodoxy.

3. Conclusion: it would be more fruitful for you to have a series of articles on KIREYEVSKY rather than Khomiakov—he is much more important, and a member of the main stream of pure Orthodox tradition, not a member of some modern "school" as is Khomiakov.

We're sending you separately a biography of Kireyevsky, which is good enough on the external events of his life (we'll send you a few corrections on his and his wife's relationship to the Elders). You could have a very instructive series on him; for example:

a. Biography: the conversion from "Westernism" (German idealism) to Orthodoxy by coming into contact with pure Orthodoxy through his wife, a spiritual daughter of St. Seraphim. His life as a layman under spiritual discipline.

b. His discussion of the differences between Western and Orthodox mentalities; his whole concept of the distinction between Western "spiritual self-satisfaction" and Orthodox repentance is extremely important for converts.

c. The return to the Fathers as the answer to Western "philosophy" and its dead end. His work in translating the Fathers. The importance of the late Fathers (St. Simeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory the Sinaite, St. Gregory Palamas, etc.).

d. His notion of the need for an Orthodox philosophy—not just theology and dogma, but a whole philosophy of life and thought based on the Fathers. (The absence or deficiency of this is precisely what has mixed some people up about evolution and such questions "which the Fathers didn't talk about."

Look at the book we're sending, and read our review of it in OW#52, and let us know your thoughts. We can supply all the texts you need on tapes.

Another thought on why Kireyevsky is not only more Patristic, but also more relevant for us today, than Khomiakov: Khomiakov, being not at all close to the monastic patristic tradition, derived his inspiration more from the Russian national tradition (which, of course, embodied Orthodoxy, but also had its purely nationalistic side, which is not of primary relevance to other Orthodox peoples), and indeed from Pushkin. Thus, he is part of the Slavophile movement (=a somewhat romantic nationalism). But Kireyevsky, as the Kontzevitches have constantly emphasized to us, is first of all a "Byzantinist," i.e., a disciple of Patristic Orthodoxy and the monastic tradition in which it was handed down; and he emphasizes that it is not the Russian embodiment of Orthodoxy, but the Orthodox seed itself that is of primary importance. Kireyevsky is not a Slavophile—however much his biographer would like to place him in this convenient category!

Khomiakov's ideas are mostly correct, but he is more in the intellectual, academic tradition of Russian theology—actually, in the same tradition as those who were under "Western influence," only he took the opposite intellectual point of view. But Kireyevsky was in the Patristic tradition, and his writings are therefore much more valuable, as being not those simply of one modern "school of thought" (even if its views might be correct). Kireyevsky was a real "convert," and therefore more aware and profound; but he was also still a layman (with such mundane problems

as chess-playing and smoking!), and so can probably persuade many sincere laymen today of the relevance of Patristic Orthodoxy.

—

About the spiritual treatise you gave us to look at: we haven't had a chance to look at it yet.

About Fr. Alexey's press: no you don't need a truck with a hydraulic lift to transport it. (We found only one place in Northern California that rents such trucks.) From what Fr. Alexey told us, the press when broken down is light enough to be moved and transported in a station-wagon or light truck such as ours. But even is it were too heavy to lift into a truck, there is still no problem—because his printshop is up several steps from where the truck must be parked, and it is only a question of accurately rolling it down into the truck; the same thing when you get to Etna. If the press is really heavy and can't be lifted by two people, you will have to arrange for a scaffolding of boards to roll it off the truck. Ask Fr. Alexey what the weight of the press is, or of its component parts when broken down, and how easy it is to handle (whether two people can lift it), and on that basis we can figure out what will have to be done before you go down.

Pray for us. Let us know your thoughts.

With love in Christ,

P.s. Most of the comments in the margins of the Kireyevsky biography are Mrs. Kontzevitchs—some of them very valuable. Thus, on p. 262 she writes: "Kireyevsky stood for Byzantinism; Khomiakov had no understanding of mystical theology."

160.

St. Michael of Pelotius?

July 11/24, 1974

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Rejoice in the Lord!

Forgive our silence. Things have been very busy. How did you know we were in San Francisco? Actually, it was just Tommy and myself, and we did nothing but pick up the printing press which some Russians gave us (mysterious people, some kind of private detective), seeing no one. As it turned out, transporting it was more difficult than I had thought, and it took the whole afternoon just to load it, and then the Hertz truck had a flat tire on the road (fortunately the back tires were double, but we still had to saw off the tire with a hacksaw to get it out of the way, with the help of a friendly service-station attendant). We got back at 6 a.m. after sleeping for a while in a rest stop (the best invention of highway science!). The press is still in pieces and we are still building the wing to house it.

About carnal warfare when bodily labors are impossible or difficult, St. Abba Barsanuphius says: "Flee quickly to the Prayer of Jesus, and you will find repose"; "pray ceaselessly, saying: Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from shameful passions."

Brother Gregory is probably leaving today. He couldn't take it here for the same reason he couldn't stay in Boston: he wants to trust himself, and he can't accept obedience as anything more than outward. I fear he is a classical case of prelest, and I don't know how he will survive. He received his income tax refund and now will go on the road: either to Monterey or Jerusalem, or wherever the next day's thought leads him. He helped us much by transcribing most of the remainder of Abba Dorotheus, and we will soon be ready to undertake a new book.

Last Saturday arrived the last of the expected novices of the summer: Christopher, from Hawaii, 20 years old, not yet baptized. Too early to say how he will be; he needs lots of milk before getting spiritual hard food (he's never been away from his parents before!) Pray for him.

One other candidate didn't show up (just as well!)—decided to "save the world" by staying in it instead of "becoming a hermit."

Were finally getting hot weather and suffering a little, 90 degrees (probably 110 or more in Redding)—but the tomato blossoms are producing tiny fruits, and we rejoice! Blackberry season is on, and we've picked several gallons, but eat them before we can make jam of them!

Pray for us all.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

161.

July 24/Aug. 6, 1974

Dear Michael [Farnsworth],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

My child, you are deceiving yourself and going the way of perdition. I will not be falsely "kind" and hide this fact from you. You talk about helping others, but you are leading them to perdition. Do you know how much John d'Anci wept when he came to us and realized that of course you would not be here to help him? And what an added temptation you were to him by being in the world and offering him a chance to escape commitment together with you? And do you know that by "preaching the faith" to Bradford and then sinning with him, you have inoculated him against Christ? And now you think you are going to save Stefan?

Wake up, my child, if you still can. You have detected a "distance" between us that you do not understand. That is the distance you yourself have placed by choosing your own way and rejecting everyone who has tried to guide you. It is the same "distance" which later on, or even now, you will feel with Vladika Nektary and with all true Orthodox Christians, and then with Holy Orthodoxy itself. You justify yourself to yourself with the argument that you are somehow "special." Your human problems are too much for you and must be allowed to develop themselves out before you can really choose Christ. No, my child, you are not "special"—a thousand "crazy converts" have already gone that way, and you are joining them.

Forgive my harsh words. I speak them because I really love you and do not wish you to be lost. I do not cease to pray for my erring child, but I cannot be a father to you unless you come to me and obey me. I will gladly suffer with you and for you, but it will do you no good unless you give up your own understanding of how to live.

This last weekend we were visited by a zealous priest from the East Coast. What a deep fellow-feeling between us, based on commitment and zeal and deep suffering—to all of which you will remain a stranger as long as you trust yourself.

May God save you from perdition.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

I am praying for the unenlightened Stefan. Do not deceive him further.

162.

July 30/Aug. 12, 1974

St. Herman of Solovki

Dear Dr. Johnstone,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Concerning Luke Walmsley, we have received from Fr. Neketas two letters (copies) which Luke has recently written him, which are probably similar to the ones you have received. Yes, he writes of experiences which are quite "unusual"—but alas! they are quite true. I will give you a brief outline of what we know, so as to fill in the gaps in your own picture of him. Since he himself has chosen to speak to you about them, I trust that I am not breaking any confidence with him in giving you the "whole picture" which, in his present state, he probably would have difficulty in giving.

We have known Luke since just before he was received into our Russian Church Abroad in San Francisco, some ten years ago or so. He married a Russian woman, a student of medicine, and several years after this became Orthodox (from Catholicism, to which he had been a convert from Protestantism). For long he had dreamed of being a physician, but for some reason he could not go to medical school in the U.S., and very late (in his 30's) he began studies in Italian medical 'schools. This was always very difficult for him—he would be in Italy the whole school year (coming back for Christmas, as I recall), and then would work all summer as a lab technician in San Francisco day and night. His wife stayed with her family, which earned many problems—they are "unconscious Orthodox" and he was always a foreigner to them. His wife in the early years supported his struggle and urged him to continue.

We would see him several times on his visits to S. F., but after our move to Platina we more or less lost contact with him. Then, one fall day several years ago, he suddenly appeared at our Skete and laid his problem before us: for two years he had not been back to Italy but had worked

solidly (on 24- hour call) as a lab technician, in order to get the money to set up his wife in her private practice of eye-medicine and provide a place in the country (Russian River, north of S. F.) for his two children to escape the corrupting city influences. This, of course, set him back in his studies, and many told him that his career in medicine was finished. Now he had to decide—to go back to Italy or not? His wife still approved, but everyone else had given up on him, as he was now over 40. We tried to encourage him as best we could—and soon he went again to Italy to resume his studies, which still required several years.

Then the devil struck in earnest. In his kindheartedness Luke took into his house a Russian priest from Australia, one of a rather roving disposition who had no church assignment; he had studied eye-medicine (supposedly) and hoped somehow to finish his studies here. His own wife and children were with him, but this did not prevent him from entering into an adulterous relation with Luke's wife. Luke's wife's letters became colder and more infrequent, and finally, on his summer trip to America, Luke found out the whole story. He contacted the spiritual authorities in S.F., and somehow the priest was persuaded to return to Australia with his family. But as soon as Luke went back to Italy the priest returned and Luke's wife sued him for divorce; his attorneys informed him it was useless to contest it, and of course he was in a despondent condition. He has somehow continued his studies in Italy for the year or more after that, receiving a small stipend from his wife (who at least did not ask him for alimony). Last year there was to be a spiritual trial of the Russian priest, but we do not know whether he was defrocked and is now living with Luke's wife, or whether he repented, or what.

Luke apparently has less than a year to go to finish his MD, but he is understandably in a low condition. In addition to everything else, the Russian priest in Rome does not understand him and has sided against him, and church life there is very discouraging. Knowing church life in some other places, nothing he has told us about this has surprised us, and we have every reason to believe him. He has visited Lesna and Mt. Athos in the last year, but spiritually he is very much alone, as indeed he has pretty much been ever since he became Orthodox. Because of this he still has some "convert" problems, but I think it is safe to say that the one thing still holding him together is his devotion to true Orthodoxy, according to his strength and understanding. In recent months he has apparently come very close to desperation, and his letters to us have become very fragmentary. His physical condition also is probably not good, as he has never been in good health.

As for his future, we know only one thing: if he does not finish his medical studies, he will be a broken man; this is what he has lived for all these years. If he does finish them, at least there is some hope that he will come out of his tragic experiences whole and able to help others. He has a very idealistic goal of practicing medicine not "soullessly," as he has seen it practiced so much today, but together with the human and spiritual side; his dream had always been to be a physician-priest. God alone knows what he might become; but certainly he won't be anything at all unless he can finish his studies.

We do not know how desperate his financial condition is right now, but it has always been very precarious.

What more to say? His is a very suffering soul, and any word of encouragement you could give him will help.

Many thanks for your other comments. We too look forward to more Greek-Russian cooperation for the good of Orthodoxy in America. We haven't heard from Dr. Cavarnos—but I'm afraid we've owed him a letter for some time. Please express to Father Michael our regrets for the delay in getting him the little material we've been translating on Bulgakov; God willing, it will be finished soon. (Too many visitors!) Please pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

163.

Aug. 2/15, 1974

Archdeacon and First-Martyr Stephen

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Enclosed finally is my re-doing of the chapter on "Christian Evolutionism," incorporating come suggestions of Father Herman. I think we have finally come to the "next-to-last" version of this part. I think the whole flow of what we want to say is here, with comprehensible transitions; probably all that is left is small points, repetitions, minor additions, etc. When you've finished looking at it and perhaps doing a little more smoothing up, let Susan read it again and see if it all makes sense and flows smoothly. We certainly hope to get the points across to those who are not "experts" in this realm, and it may be that it could be simplified a little more.

I have written corrections and suggestions right in the text itself, up to page 13; beginning there I completely rearranged the material from Teilhard, trying to make the main ideas clearer. Thus, my pages 13A to 18 completely replace your pages 13 (from the middle) to 20, joining your text again on line 9 of p. 20.

I will be working on the final, Patristic, section this fall, and God willing the whole study will be complete by the time Kalomiros sends his promised reply, which should give us all the "patristic arguments" of the supporters of evolution, making our study as complete as possible. I think the impact of this study will be considerable. I do not think most conscious Orthodox Christians are terribly prejudiced in favor of evolution; but they are somewhat confused as to what or how much to believe of what "science says." Our study is supposed to give the "complete" picture, which hopefully will clarify many minds. It's certainly clarified my own mind, since previously I hadn't thought in detail on many aspects of the question.

I haven't yet looked over again the section "How Evolution Came to Be," but will hope to do so shortly.

The fast has begun, and nightly we are singing the Supplicatory Canon to the Mother of God, as Archbishop John did.

Pray for us. Pray for Melchisedek and Maria Russell, who it seems are still quite strongly in "Latin Captivity."

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P. S. You never sent us the tape of Fr. Panteleimon on evolution!

164.

Sept. 5/18, 1974 ,

Righteous Zacharias and Elizabeth

St. Athanasius of Brest

Dear Sister in Christ, Nina,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the approaching feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Rejoice!

We don't know Maria [Kraft] well, and don't know what you've been going through with her. But: unless you are very strong and know very well what you are doing, you'd better not get involved any more. I talked with her several times when she was here, enough to see that her problems are deeper than mere "crazy convertism." Her salvation is through suffering, if she can take it. If she is relieved of the "problem" of her children and allowed to think about "spiritual life," her perdition is almost guaranteed. Words and good intentions aren't going to help her. WATCH OUT: If you've already been so upset by her, better humble yourself and not think you can help at all, which you probably can't.

You've been having Boston temptations? Does that come from telephone conversations with Boston? Are you trying to be in two places at once? Better choose your place and then stick to it and stop tickling the devil. Otherwise, not only will you have no peace, but disaster may be ahead. If you're "through with Boston," then be through with it!

Is the transcription of Maria finished? Can we have it? Are you using it as a spiritual "lightning rod"?

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

165.

Sept. 21/Oct. 4, 1974

Holy Apostle Quadratus

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We received the two sections on Evolution. "Christian Evolutionism" I read over hastily, and it looks good—probably we can leave any final revisions until the whole article is ready for final form. The "scientific" part, however, Father Herman and I read together and found problems. Basically, everything we want to say is there, and the tone is good (it's even a little too understated at times!); but the meaning doesn't come through simple and clear, there being so many side questions—or rather, the side questions are not yet welded into the whole so as to leave one single, convincing impression: that evolution is philosophy, and science had nothing to do with it—with a strong hint (which comes from just presenting the evidence itself) that the scientific evidence of anything is against evolution. Therefore, I will try to rethink and re-outline and re-arrange the material and see if the meaning can be made somehow more transparent.

As for the final Patristic section: I am still compiling citations and making notes, hoping to get as broad an attack as possible on the question. I seem to recall that in Fr. Panteleimon's tape he mentions the fact that the Saviour's genealogy back to Adam might contain some "symbolical" names?— i.e., that there might be whole gaps of hundreds or thousands of years? That's an important point. There is no doubt that the Holy Fathers regarded these names precisely as a list of fathers, but since no one ever doubted this before they don't have many explicit statements on the subject. Incidentally, the Fathers were very concerned to reconcile the genealogy in Luke with that of Matthew, and the answer of St. Gregory the Theologian and other Fathers is that the few differences in the two stem from the practice of the younger brother taking the older brother's wife to raise up offspring for him, if he was childless—and one genealogy calls the father the one who was the real father, and the other takes the one for whom he was a father, so to speak. You might look in the Scriptural index of any Fathers you have and see if anyone comments on Luke 3:24ff.

We are eagerly awaiting Dr. Kalomiros' new reply, which should contain the last of the "Patristic proofs of evolution" which we will have to tackle.

There have been 7 of us here for several weeks now. Over the weekend we had an eighth—a wanderer who knew Fr. Herman years ago and whose "spirit" told him to come here (his "spirit" also grants healings and levitations). He left a little wiser, realizing that his spirit is a demon and that Orthodoxy is probably the truth—but what will happen to him from now on we can't predict. Incidentally, he confirmed for us the validity of most of our "charismatic" article—he said it was the most reasonable account of his own experience that he had read. He acquired his "talent" in a standard mediumistic way—immediately on coming into contact with a Bible his grandmother (a tongues-speaker) gave him! When he told his grandmother about his experiences, she immediately "praised God" and burst out in a tongue. Such as world we live in, and such temptations.

Br. Michael is back again—pray for him. And we have a Russian wanderer, Constantine, who landed here out of a fog of unbelief. Christopher will be baptized, God willing, on Tuesday Sept. 25/ Oct. 8, in our creek by Fr. Alexey [Poluektov], and then return to Hawaii. Please pray for him especially; the devil is trying to work him over.

The new Nikodemos is wonderful—an excellent use of "monastic" sources to benefit people in the world. Is there any response yet? I have been looking over Kireyevsky on the Western vs. Orthodox mentality theme and will try to get a tape to you fairly [soon.]

The summer is fading only very gradually, but already we feel the approaching, winter. Firewood is started, and the Calendar begins in a week or so, hopefully. Hunting season is on, and our deer are staying close to us—in fact, as I type this outdoors I am surrounded by five deer, three of them drinking out of our "spring."

Our "guesthouse" is nearing completion, and if we can find a stove to put in it, there will be overnight accommodations for hardy souls this winter.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

166.

Nov. 21, 1974

Entry into the Temple

Dear Father Ephraim,

Evologeite! Greetings on the Feast of the Most Holy Theotokos.

We read with joy your recent letter to us, and pray that the Elder is recovering well. May God preserve him for many years of fruitful labors in Christ's vineyard.

What we've been hearing about the recent Sobor doesn't strike us too well: Metropolia, Old Believers, etc. A step backward instead of to forward? Let us know your impressions. We hope to talk to Vlad. Nektary soon about it—so far all we've heard from him is that it was a "pale" (i.e., gray) Sobor.

Our friend Paul Bartlett, who will be visiting you shortly and hopefully baptized there, has asked us to write you a short note confirming that he spent two weeks with us this fall and is not an entire newcomer to Orthodox life. Yes, he spent two weeks with us and this helped him make the decision to seek baptism. He still has much to learn, and still has quite an intellectualized approach (more from Protestant rationalist background than Roman Catholicism, in which he spent several years); hopefully, his stay with you will mellow him further. I hope you or one of the Fathers will have time to talk a little with him from time to time ("have conferences" is the way he puts it!). May God grant him the wisdom and humility to accept true Orthodoxy with his whole heart and soul. He worked hard while he was here—in fact a little too hard, as he was still recovering from an operation.

Two translation questions: have you made or do you have a translation of the whole Life of St. Simeon the New Theologian by Nicetas Stethatos (100 pages long)? And 2: We've heard you

have something of St. Theodore Studite in English. What and how much? Is it from his Great Catechesis? If you have these things, can we get a copy?

Winter is at hand, and as usual we are unprepared; but hopefully from fools in the wilderness nothing here is expected. We ask your and the Elders prayers.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1975

167.

Jan. 4/17, 1975

Holy Seventy Apostles

Dear Brother in Christ Alexey,

A brief note to accompany a new tape of Pomazansky—he just wrote us, by the way, that he's happy to hear we've begun the translation and would very much like to live to see it completed! May it be so, and may God give us the way to publish it! I'm already on p. 45 of the translation (the 4th tape), out of200 or so.

Enclosed is a letter of Kalomiros, which please return, showing another side of the "crisis" which you noted also in the Denver parish. I had written him briefly in answer to a recent inquiry of his, telling him that indeed our bishops are inclining dangerously now to the path of compromise—the last Sobor said nothing in support of the Zealots, even those suffering on Mt. Athos, and seems to want to be friends with everyone; Archbp. Anthony of Geneva especially is advocating "condescension" toward new calendar and everything that isn't "dogma." The letter of the Bishops to Metropolia was very weak and, as Archbp. Averky and Bp. Nektary told us, shouldn't have been sent in that form (without a call to return to the truth and step away from the world's ways). The sad thing is that our Synod has justification for separate existence only if it is zealot, gives an example to the other fallen or falling away "jurisdictions"—but to be wishy-washy and just dragging along behind the apostasy has no meaning at all. Your feeling at Denver was correct. But Christ our God is with us, and Vladika John has pushed us in the right direction (he told us to keep right on accusing Athenagoras, even if people didn't like it!), and all of our trials are only to strengthen us for the very difficult times ahead. God is with us!

Vladika Nikon understands English well enough for correspondence, and the fact that he was interested enough to write you and send his book (he did the same to us—in English) shows he still has his missionary fervor (even though in theological things our zealots do not always agree with him!).

We have purchased a truck—1953 pickup for $325, thanks to Br. Michael's friend in Eureka; but it's got a broken axle or something, so your truck is still our mainstay; we're able to get up and

down in it with chains, whereas the car is still parked at the bottom of the hill owing to the remaining patches of snow on the road.

For John we have hopes, but also fears. There were times when he was here, especially at night when I would talk to him, when he was completely natural and normal, and it is obvious that he is very intelligent and also well-read for his age—he's obviously far ahead of his class in almost everything, except perhaps for math, in which he doesn't seem too interested. At times he would even be humble—but then at other times, especially when exposed to our whole community life at refectory or in church, he would put on his "act" of stubbornness, disobedience, knowing better. We could see that deep down he doesn't even want to do this, but it's become a habit with him, reinforced by a rather deep streak of just plain pride. We told him that his future visits to us will depend on what reports we hear of his behavior in Etna. I told him straight out that it's a disgrace that he is failing school and has to have "special treatment" which he does not need at all, except for his willful stubbornness. Of course, it will require time and perhaps some shocks to get him out of his "escape mechanism" of dreaming, etc. May God teach us all how to help him, but primarily he must himself want to please others and not just himself. May Barbara learn patience and firmness! That's doubtless the best place for him now, and we will try to preserve our skete for him as a "reward" and something to look forward to—he seemed to like it here, even some of the difficulties. By the way, he seems to be quite mechanically minded, and while he was helping me put together our new press he was quite absorbed in the work and willing to do anything to help. Is there something mechanical there for him to get interested in?

Kireyevsky's remarks on the family, etc., are unfortunately not as clear-cut and applicable as the remarks I've already taped (partly because he contrasted Russian family with European upper-class family, with the daughters being sent for education to convents); he also has remarks on the European "party" system. But if you're already writing this chapter, perhaps we should see what you say first and then perhaps suggest some additions if needed. The main idea of his remarks on the family is that in Orthodox families no one lives for himself but gives up himself for the good of the others.

The book Scientific Creationism is very good; John read parts of it while he was here and seemed to understand (I think he's a secret evolutionist, so I deliberately gave him the book to read); in fact at times he almost caught me in my ignorance of which "layers" come after which in the geological time scale—he's read all about those things! We can add some things to Part One from this book; I hope to get about two days in "Valaam" before long to think about this. By the way, we should also have a good bibliography of objective books on evolution, of which there are now quite a few.

Pray for us. We wish you and all the community a joyous epiphany—store up all the blessings of this time of year for the struggles ahead! Do not be discouraged if the community is "fragile"—that's part of the testing we're all going through! We had here yesterday a young visitor who's staying for a few weeks with our Adventist neighbors—he's been through Yoga and worked "miracles," then found his goal in a state beyond all sects, in "Biblical" Christianity (literally interpreted). It turns out that the "Sabbath" is the chief of the commandments, and he demanded I show him in Scripture that it isn't so. The look in his eyes says he's in prelest and won't be

moved out of it—these people (including our Adventists) are opposed to the charismatic movement but spiritually are quite akin to it. It seems that few of them are capable of seeing the truth of Orthodoxy.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

168.

Jan. 7/20, 1975

St. John the Forerunner

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings on the Feast of our Lord's Epiphany! Many thanks for your letter and the tapes, and especially your transcription of the Dogmatic Theology. We've just glanced at the latter, and in general the idea of the footnotes is very good. Yes, such a book is very needed; I've just finished recording the chapter on the Filioque, and such a clear and simple presentation of it I've never read anywhere else. The only other such book in English we know of is Karmiris', a brief exposition by a contemporary Greek "systematic theology" teacher, but it's just for seminary students, and so abstractly presented that it's really of no use. Fr. Michael avoids the "academic" pitfall because he understands the whole of Orthodox theology so well that he can present it simply and clearly, and from just the right point of view (it's called the "Jordanville" ideology by its enemies—but it's just plain Orthodoxy, shorn of academic pretensions, down to earth).

About Elizabeth, don't reproach yourself too much, you've done what you could. I plan to write her a brief letter, not mentioning anything you've written, but only a general letter on the occasion of her moving away and the need to remain in contact with Orthodox souls if her faith is to grow and mature. More than this I don't know what any of us can do. The "humbling" experience is very good for you. Indeed, how we all must learn and relearn that our pretensions and ideas must be tested by reality and forged in suffering. If David comes to you, give him whatever you can; if not, leave well enough alone. Continue to do all you can with what God gives you, and leave the rest to Him. May God bless the additions to the chapel and house, and also the trip to London; if God gives these opportunities, by all means use them and make the most of them.

We ourselves have had a number of "sobering" experiences by now, especially with people in whom we had great trust or hopes. Daniel is one of them; he could have turned out a zealous and fruitful laborer in Christ's vineyard, but now…. On his two (lay visit to us just now we noticed that, while he is not "loose" as he was on his previous two visits, when he was out of work, still he has the same self-centered, self-satisfied view of reality; knowing so much about Orthodoxy, and having so many correct feelings about the Orthodox situation also, he probably will never bear fruit now that he has let his opportunity for commitment—first with Fr. Panteleimon, then with us—slip by. We fear he will even bring harm, quite without intending it, merely from being ‘‘correct" without being able to commit his heart to anything or anyone. Understandable? With

such a one you should be careful not to reveal the secrets of your heart—neither your hopes nor fears for the future, for an Orthodox community, etc.

We look forward to the new chapter on Kireyevsky, who perhaps is more important than we suspect for today, in Russian also. K. hoped that Orthodoxy could give the answer to the dead-end of the West; today the reawakening philosophy inside Russia is beginning to ask and answer this same question. We will be writing in the next few issues something on the views of Solzhenitsyn and the new Russian Religious philosophers—unfortunately they are mostly off, not taking their inspiration from the Holy Fathers but from modern wise men like Berdyaev. But something significant is happening in Russia. And deep down the situation of Russian Orthodoxy is not too different from that of American Orthodoxy; the same problems of surviving in a hostile world, of making Orthodoxy a way of life and not just a Sunday religion, of living by the Holy Fathers today. Some of these questions perhaps will come out in the last installment or two of Kireyevsky, after the chapter on the Holy Fathers.

Sometimes we find it discouraging that purely physical difficulties look so large—right now, the difficulty in getting the lead to melt in our linotype pot (a problem of insulation, I think, which I've only partially solved)—but again, that is to humble us, and really it is much better to learn patience and humility than it is to get everything as one wants and then discover (as the modern Orthodox intellectuals, Russian or Western, should be discovering) that inside they are empty. May God grant us to trust Him as He guides our daily lives better than we could. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

169.

Jan. 7/20, 1975B

St. John the Forerunner

Dear Sister in Christ, Barbara [Murray],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe we never thanked you for your Christmas gift. We opened it on Christmas day in the "Tsars Room" and immediately put it on the analogion in the corner; it is most beautiful.

Johns visit to us enabled us to get to know him fairly well, which we hadn't done before. The boy is much brighter than we suspected, and is obviously far ahead of his class in most subjects. He reads quite a bit, and in general knowledge is quite aware. At times with us, especially when talking with me at night, he "relaxed" and became quite a normal boy, interested in many things, anxious to please, happy to talk seriously about the things that interest him (which are many). But at other times, especially with everyone present, he would revert to his "old self": stubborn, disobedient or grudgingly obedient, putting on his act of "I'll do as I please." Obviously his whole home situation has deeply wounded him, and he is prepared to get his "revenge" on life by not cooperating with people. If he could "straighten out," he could be very good; if he doesn't, he will doubtless be very bad and will harm people in life.

Probably his being with you is the best thing for him right now. It is good that you are strict with him as much as you can be; I could tell that he had a proper fear and respect when you take away his "bicycle rights," and in general he seems to realize that you are fair with him. He seemed to enjoy it with us very much (he even got to chop down his first Christmas tree!) and already talked about his next visit; we told him that would depend on his behavior in Etna, and he promised to make some effort at improvement. I suspect this improvement, if it really comes, will be only gradual, or even in fits and starts; but if he does make some effort there is hope for him. If he has our Skete in mind as a kind of "reward" for his behavior, this idea may help him too. You are doing a very important thing in giving him a home at this important time of his life; may God reward you for your efforts and patience, and give you the wisdom to handle him.

By the way, Alexey has told us that you and he were shocked when Nina told you that we supposedly had told her that we were against John's staying with you in the first place; but this was a bad misunderstanding on her part. We had told her that Maria Kraft was making a bad mistake in thinking that once she is "rid" of her children she can then begin to think about a convent and real "spiritual life"—because if one does not recognize that one's spiritual struggle begins right now with whatever God has given us (and all the more if we ourselves have gotten into a difficult situation!), we will not begin the "spiritual life" later, either. And so, if Maria only knew, her salvation could lie in her suffering through the raising of her own children; but if she doesn't suffer this through, then later on, when she thinks to be starting real "spiritual life," she'll find she has nothing at all, and "spiritual life" which begins after we are rid of present problems is only an abstraction. I think all this is true—but the spiritual benefit of "suffering through" comes only if one voluntarily accepts it, and the fact remains that Maria really wants to be rid of John, which he knows or feels. For the good of the boy, it is obviously much better that he be with you; if he were to go back to his mother now, I think there would be no hope whatever for him to turn out good. The two younger boys, being so "extrovert," will be harmed much less than would John, who is already so turned in on himself.

Alexey has told us something of the difficulties and sufferings of your "fragile" Orthodox community. This suffering is the material of which a real Orthodox life is built! In general the feeling of being "abandoned" is present almost everywhere among true Orthodox Christians today; but our contact with each other is already a source of strength and encouragement.

Please pray for us. With love in Christ our Saviour, and may He grant you His grace.

S. M.

170.

Feb. 1/14, 1975

Martyr Tryphon

Dear Father Valery [Lukianov],

Blagoslovite!

Here at last is the letter you asked me to write. I will take the opportunity to write down a few other ideas also.

The more we hear of the Jordanville Sobor (or at least the Bishops' Sobor after everyone else left), the more discouraged we are. We still don't understand what was the purpose of the decree on the Old Believers? The question of the canonization of Blessed Xenia was postponed, evidently (from what Vladika Nektary tells us) because it is "unimportant." There was no support shown for the zealots of Mt. Athos who are suffering persecution for true Orthodoxy. (Our friends in Greece write us that the Old Calendarists were expecting help from us, and Patriarch Demetrius also waited to see whether our Bishops would speak out—if not, then the persecution can continue.) And the Epistles to the Paris and Metropolia groups—what feeble statements, as though the differences between us were nothing more than "jurisdictional squabbles" which can be ended with a few "negotiations"— instead of a question of confessing the truth as against going along with the spirit of the times.

Father Sergei Shukin writes us that in the decrees of the Bishops he feels the "influence of Solzhenitsyn." Yes, we feel this too; and I remember you mentioned something like this when you visited us also. Solzhenitsyn is important as a moral force, standing up boldly in the face of tyranny, encouraging people to stop lying. This is good, but very limited; and it is obvious that Solzhenitsyn himself does not have a very deep Church consciousness. He is a kind of "confessor"—but not like St. Maximus the Confessor or St. Mark of Ephesus. He wants Russians to be united—but he probably does not even see that truth must come before unity. (And even though he is against "living by lies"— he has not yet seen the terrible lie of Schmemann and that whole fake Orthodoxy.) Thus Solz. can be a great scandal today—and really, he seems to have exerted a great influence on our Bishops. How discouraging to see the Bishops running after the world, trying to keep in "fashion." In the 1971 Sobor Fr. Panteleimon of Boston was in "fashion"; then it was seen that due to his influence the Bishops made some mistakes at that Sobor (about the two different groups of Old Calendarists) and themselves to make the "Greek situation" worse. And so in 1974 there is a new "fashion"—Solzhenitsyn and the "spirit of reconciliation." Meanwhile, Fr. Panteleimon has gone "out of fashion," and Archbp. Anthony of Geneva even told him: "If you don't like the way we do things, get out of our Church." Of course, Fr. Panteleimon himself makes mistakes and also is a little subject to "fashions"—but at least he is sincerely trying to uphold a "zealot" position and so far has been very loyal to the Synod; he does not deserve to be "kicked out" just because he has gone out of fashion.

To sum up: the Bishops look very much like a worldly "Board of Directors" who are leading the Church according to their human understanding, not by the guidance of God. This means trouble ahead. Right now, Vlad. Anthony told us, Grabbe and Schmemann are "negotiating"—about what? About confessing the truth? Or about how to present a pleasing face to the world and look as though you are friends with everyone? If the "negotiations" succeed, are we supposed to accept the innovations and the whole false Orthodoxy of Schmemann & Co? This make us very uneasy—the ground is being dug away from beneath our feet.

And this is something like what I wanted to tell you in my little "sermon" when you visited us. One feels sorry for the Orthodox flock and wants to be as condescending as possible to their

weaknesses—but first one must lead them, tell them what is right and what is expected of them, always pulling them up higher, giving them the idea that they are Orthodox not because they were born that way or belong to an Orthodox "organization"—but only IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE CHURCH'S TEACHING. Orthodox shepherds today more than ever must beware of placing their hope in the "organization," but rather must be constantly looking upwards to the Chief Shepherd Christ, to the heavenly world of God's Truth and His Saints from which alone comes the inspiration to keep guiding the flock rightly. The shepherd cannot be just a filler of "treby" for people who are "automatically" Orthodox because the belong to the organization; but he must be warning them that THEY CAN LOSE THE SAVOR OF ORTHODOXY if they are not looking upward and struggling. Bishop Theophan the Recluse already foresaw this losing of the savor of Orthodoxy and was terribly upset that no one around him seemed to see this—that it was already happening in the 19th century, and how much more today!

We ourselves are blessed to have a quiet life and no "parish problems," and therefore we cherish all the more this ideal. If we had to live in San Francisco and adjust to the parish life there, I fear we should become terribly discouraged. But here we have the wilderness to inspire us, and as we look around us we can freely think of cave-dwellers and the magnificent freedom which is the true Orthodox life (within the framework of self-renunciation). It is much more difficult in the world to do this—and that is why we wish you to be constantly LIVING IN THE HEAVENLY WORLD, and only secondly to be "living the life of your flock."

We feel very much the dangers ahead of us: true Orthodoxy can be swallowed up by halfhearted Orthodoxy, which is actually only a stage on the path to fake Orthodoxy (Constantinople, Metropolia, etc.). The schism of Evlogy and the Metropolia was a blessing from God, because it cut off many rotten members, the fake intelligentsia that wants to make a new Orthodoxy. The talk now of "reconciliation" with these groups shows that within our Church true Orthodoxy is in danger of being lost.

About another subject: we have not forgotten about the idea of the Psalter. It is a good idea, and several converts to whom we have mentioned it are enthusiastic. But we still do not quite see how (practically speaking) to bring it about. The commentary, however, should be in English also (I think you mentioned only Russian?)—it will be more popular among converts than Russians. It may be that one of our California "convert publishers" (Nikodemos and Eastern Orthodox Books) will be able to help with publishing it, Can you send the commentary of Vladika Demetry? I could probably translate it on tape without too much difficulty and someone else could transcribe it. Do you have any new ideas about printing it? We can expect little support from Church groups—best to do it first and let them realize its importance later. Offset would be best, but for that we need copies of the texts of the right size. What do you think? (The English Psalter from Boston isn't ready yet—a few months more, they say.) The man who runs Eastern Orthodox Books (Vladimir Anderson, my godson) can get offset printing done very cheaply—we are sending you separately his edition of St. Makarios the Great, which is quite good except for the binding—but for a little more money we can have the book sewn instead of "perfect bound" (glued). In fact, if we could get the text ready for offset, he might even be able

to take the whole printing job himself, as one of his editions—but with your preface. Below is a sketch of how the pages might look. It's a good idea, but it won't go over at first—we must all push it, and then it might catch on.

Please forgive my "teachiness" and self-assurance. Please pray for us. We have had difficulties with our machines, as usual in winter. We had a warm January, and then suddenly 4 feet of snow, which has been a little difficult. But now spring looks close again.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

171.

Feb. 6/19, 1975

St. Photios the Great

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Evlogeite!

Here at last is the material I promised you on Bulgakov. Please forgive the long delay. I hope it is not too late for you to use it. Since you already have much material on Bulgakov, this material might be more in the nature of a footnote or an afterthought somewhere. Use it as you think fit.

We are very interested in your book—by the way, do you have a publisher for it? In connection with the contemporary revival of religio-philosophical thought in Russia, it is very important for a book like yours to come out. Too long has everyone bowed down to these sacred cows who are called Orthodox by a criminal misuse of language. Your book will be all the more welcome in that it comes from an "outsider," and "objective observer" who is not involved in the disputes and passions of Russian intellectual society.

We ourselves are planning a book on a similar theme (to be printed in installments in The Orthodox Word) in connection with the appearance of the new book from Russia which Solzhenitsyn is advertising so widely. —"Iz pod glyb" (From Under the Ruins, I think, is the English tide, to be out soon). This is a collection of articles by Solzhenitsyn and samizdat writers which Solzhenitsyn compares to Berdyaevs " Vekhi' of 1909. I've read it, and it's not really bad—only one article in the Berdyaev spirit—but it's obvious that the authors are not rooted in the real Orthodox tradition. And so we want to give a background for this and "Vekhi" by giving a kind of capsule survey of the Russian intelligentsia in the 20th century, as against the real Orthodox tradition in the past 75 years. There have been a number of sensitive genuinely Orthodox Russian thinkers in this century, and several excellent theologians—hardly any of whom are known in English and who are successfully drowned out by the "static" from the "Paris Orthodoxy"—that's the name N. Struve gives their movement in the new Vestnik of Paris. By the way, what do you think of Struve's statement in the same Vestnik: (in answer To Metr. Philaret's answer to Solzhenitsyn's Letter to the Sobor in Jordanville): "However paradoxical it is, it is precisely the part of the Russian Church in the diaspora that 'went over to the Greeks' or

'became American,' precisely it that has continued in the West the great Russian spiritual culture, has not hidden its talent in the earth, but has increased it. To the creativity of this Church the religious movement now being reborn in Russia turns, for there has not been any other religious-spiritual creativity in the Diaspora at all." (Vestnik, 112-113, ii-iii, *1974, pp. 5-6.) We hope to answer that self-important question, and hope to be able to refer to your book as already published.

Is there any chance of our seeing the manuscript of your book when it's finished? We might be able to make some suggestions based on Russian sources. There are excellent articles on Soloviev, for example; we haven't the time to translate them, but we could translate parts if we knew there was something in them worth adding to what you already have. At any rate, we look forward to a progress report on the manuscript.

We ask your prayers for us. We have had a difficult winter with heavy snowfalls, difficult machinery, etc. But somehow we prefer our poor struggling along to all the glory of the newly-discovered "Paris Orthodoxy."

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

172.

Feb. 18/March 3, 1975

St. Cosmas of Yakhromsk

St. Leo of Rome

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Enclosed is the tape on the new installment of Kireyevsky, on the Holy Fathers. The most important and difficult installment, of course, is the next and last one: on Kireyevsky's "new principles for philosophy," which has been valued by no one that we know of except Kontzevitch. We feel it is very appropriate precisely to the present-day "spiritual awakening" in Russia, which is not taking the Holy Fathers for its basis and will simply be another exercise in "Western influence" if it doesn't.

We've found out that there was a letter from our Bishops concerning the new calendar church of Greece—it was a private letter, and it seems that its wording was ambiguous enough to cause more disputes (I believe it says that the calendar dispute "caused a schism" instead of directly saying who the schismatics are). In general the Church questions today are just not as simple as they used to be, at least as they are in our comfortable historical perspective, and many submerged rocks lie ahead. An important key to the whole church situation seems to lie precisely in "Sergianism," which will become a sharper issue than ever now that the Catacomb Church of Russia begins to make itself known and felt again. The heart of Sergianism is bound up with the common problem of all the Orthodox Churches today—the losing of the savor of Orthodoxy, taking the Church for granted, taking the "organization" for the Body of Christ, trusting that

Grace and the Mysteries are somehow "automatic." Logic and reasonable behavior are not going to get us over these rocks; much suffering and experience are required, and few will understand.

Luke Walmsley was very much uplifted and encouraged by his visit to Etna, and evidently it was so arranged by God's Providence, which is unfathomable. He has suffered so much from people who took the Church cruelly for granted, simply did not value it—and the sight of strugglers living in the world was very good for him. Please pray especially for him; his path is still very difficult ahead.

Our road is finally open all the way, and Susan should be able to come up all the way if it doesn't rain in the next two days. We expect to see her on Wednesday with Paul? Apparently we will be seeing Nina this weekend. May God grant her the struggling and suffering through to bring forth real fruits, without getting bogged down in the mire of rational thinking and solutions. If only we do not think we know too much, there is hope for us; there are many signs that God is with His small flock even in these terrible times.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Many thanks for your kind hospitality. May God grant you prosperity in your "building" on all levels.

P.p.s. All the people we know in Greece are in the Auxentios Synod—Dr. Kalomiros, Father Theodoritos, Esphigmenou Monastery, etc., and the Russians we know on Mt. Athos warn us against the Matthewites. We should be very careful with regard to them, no matter what "reasonable explanations" we might hear about them. May God grant us to understand each other with the heart and not just the brain.

173.

March 1975

St. Herman of Solovki

Dear Maria [Kraft],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are glad to hear that John was somewhat better when he returned home, [word missing] you ask if he can stay with us for the whole school year. I will tell you right away that this is quite impossible and would do him no good at all. We could have someone so young stay with us longer than a week or two only on condition that he were extremely mature and could be trusted far beyond his years. We observed John closely when he was here, and he does not come up to this standard. Unfortunately, we do not have the possibility to be nursemaids for difficult children, and the conditions of the local school will not help him either. The only way we can help him is the way we told him before he left: if he strives to do better at home and school and

act more mature, it will be possible for him to visit us for a short time later on, and then we will observe his behavior again. For any child to obtain benefit from staying with us, he must look up to his visit as a reward for good behavior, and not something he can receive automatically. It is better that our monastery remain for John a place where he might one day receive help when he really needs it, rather than a place where he learned to take the Church for granted because we were too kind-hearted to deprive him of it for his misbehavior. Let John at least preserve the idea of our monastery as a "last hope" in the difficult years that lie ahead of him.

We realize that raising your three boys is very difficult for you. But that is the Cross God has given you, and I must tell you frankly that you can scarcely receive your salvation in any other way than by trying your best to raise them up well. Spiritual life begins when things seem absolutely "hopeless"—that is when one learns to turn to God and not to our own feeble efforts and ideas. Let the boys go to church in the Convent next door—the contact with the Church atmosphere has an unseen effect that is much more important than any outward deficiencies in icons, etc.

Please pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

174.

Annunciation of the Theotokos, 1975

[Mar. 25/April 7]

Dear Alexey,

Greetings on the Feast! Here are some notes on one or two points:

Fr. Panteleimon on birth control: He's off! And the reason for this is precisely what we are trying to get: he does not have that Orthodox philosophy that Kireyevsky strove for. "It isn't in the Scriptures or Fathers or canons"—therefore we are free to "rationalize" about it—which means, give way to worldly influences. He rationalizes a "middle path" between Augustinism and license; but why start ones reasoning from these false poles? Not having read Augustine, I can only say that from this summary of his position (that sexual union is permitted in marriage only when the partners have the conscious intention to have children therefrom) is, again, a rationalistic extreme which does not in the least invalidate what seems to us to be the quite obvious Orthodox teaching. Is such a conscious intention required of couples when the woman is beyond normal child-bearing age? That could hardly be—and yet many holy children have been born to pious couples beyond the normal child-bearing age! Of course there is something more to sexual union than the producing of children—but Orthodox teaching does not artificially separate different aspects of this question and allow a deliberate interference with the natural process, while preserving (as some Orthodox theologians are now saying) some "higher purpose" in sexual union while using contraceptives.» Even R.C. "rhythm" is a, rationalistic device and not without sin—though obviously of a lesser degree than "artificial" means.

The widespread confusion on this whole issue seems to come from a failure to understand the real Orthodox teaching on sexuality—it is not "holy," but neither is it evil. The Lives of Saints alone, without any Patristic treatises, should teach us the Orthodox position: that sexual union, while blessed by the Church and fulfilling a commandment of the Creator, is still a part of man's animal nature and is, in fallen humanity, inevitably bound up with sin. This should not shock us if we stop to think that such a necessary thing as eating is also almost invariably bound up with sin—who of us is perfectly continent in food and drink, the thorough master of his belly? Sin is not a category of specific acts such that, if we refrain from them, we become "sinless"—but rather a kind of web which ensnares us and from which we can never really get free in this life. The more deeply one lives Orthodoxy, the more sinful he feels himself to be—because he sees more clearly this web with which his life is intertwined; the person, thus, who commits fewer sins feels himself to be more sinful than one who commits more!

The Fathers state specifically, by the way, that Adam and Eve did not have sexual union (nor, of course, eat meat) in Paradise. I believe Thomas Aquinas says that they did—which would accord with the RC doctrine of human nature.

All of this should one day be written out and printed, with abundant illustrations from the Holy Fathers and Lives of Saints—together with the whole question of sexuality—abortion, natural and unnatural sins, pornography, homosexuality, etc. With Scriptural and Patristic sources, this could be done carefully and without offensiveness, but clearly. Frankly, you are the logical candidate to do it—but it should be allowed to ripen in you for a while before coming out.

Enough on this subject; you are correct, by the way, that it is better for such things to be printed by laymen than monks!

About John Kraft: we more or less agreed with him that we would take him for the summer, although we weren't absolutely definite yet, since we fear above all that he will learn to "take us for granted"—in which case he hasn't anywhere else to turn. I told him that if he comes he will have to go to "summer school"—to be held in Valaam. What I have in mind specifically is this: to give him a real "course" this summer in world history, in rather the way I learned it in high school—a notebook with outlines, maps, reports, etc. If he can get interested enough to do this mostly on his own, I think there is hope for him, and we could keep him longer; if not, I don't know what to do. In my time this was a tenth-grade course. Probably today's textbooks are a fright. Could you help look up some standard textbook or books on the high school level? I recall a good one (Bury? Mommsen?) on Greece and Rome, probably no longer used. Also: could you get some blank maps such as we used to use to fill in names of rivers and cities, national boundaries, etc.? —Mediterranean region, perhaps Egypt-Assyria, etc. and any other "aids" you can think of for a serious study especially of ancient history in the traditional sense (Egypt to Rome)? I have hope that he might respond to such a course—but only God knows.

It has been snowing again—just enough today to make a beautiful mantle for the Annunciation. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We've just received Metr. Philaret's final reply to the Metropolia—a superb statement with an incident from the Life of Blessed Xenia (suggested by Vladika Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo) that absolutely flabbergasted Metr. Ireney ("How could you print such a thing!?")—we won't have part with you until you get the dead rat out of the honey barrel! God willing, we will print it in the next issue.

175.

March 28/April 10, 1975

Dear Christopher,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please forgive our long silence, and this poor note. We've had very difficult times, with unbelievable snow falls (nearly 4 feet in one day the first week of Lent) and much pressure of work to get caught up. The enemy works full time, and so we must keep struggling too to make True Orthodoxy known. But we give thanks to God for everything, and deep down we are peaceful.

Enclosed are Thomas' pictures of your Baptism. At your request we also took some pictures in the snow and will send when ready. We have a picture of Thomas leaping from the roof into the snow also, but he sent it away and we'll have to get a copy.

We are all well after some winter flu. Paul Bartlett the new convert has been with us for a month in order to find out "what to do" with his life. If our converts will only keep the fear of God in their hearts and resolve to serve God no matter what—then all trials and temptations can be surmounted and they can save their souls.

We look forward to your visit this summer. Until then, go one step at a time and don't allow discouragement into the heart. God is with us, as we sing every night in our Lenten services.

Do you have the Ladder of St. John, or the Desert Fathers? You should be reading some such spiritual book during Lent—we are reading them during morning church services.

Our weather is still cold, but hopefully our garden will be started soon.

Forgive me and all us poor sinners, and pray for us. I'll write again sooner.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

[Note from Fr. Herman:] Beloved infant! Cheer up! You are a true Christian, remember that the Kingdom of God is yours if you'll endure a bit more. We are sending you the Ladder anyway. See to it you have it read before Pascha. Where are you going to be at Pascha? Can't you take a trip to S.F. for it? To receive Holy Communion?

176.

Monday of St. Thomas, 1975

[April 29, 1975]

Dear Dr. Kalomiros,

Please forgive our long delay in replying to your last letter, which we read with great interest. Yes, these are very dangerous times for all of us, and no "jurisdiction" can regard itself as "safe" from the many temptations which the devil is preparing for us. From the latest issue of The Orthodox Word (Nov.-Dee.) you will see the latest temptation which came to our Russian Church Abroad. Some of our bishops, being under the influence of Solzhenitsyn (who says many good things but is certainly not very aware of church matters), suddenly got the idea of "uniting" with the two schismatic groups in America and Paris. Several bishops have told us themselves that the epistle sent to these groups was very poorly and hastily done, without even mention of the necessity to be one in the Truth. As a result, the Metropolia in America jumped at the opportunity to seduce us into having communion with them, and we really feared (at the time we wrote the article on the Catacomb Church and Metropolitan Theodosius) there might be some kind of hasty "union," which would be disastrous for the cause of True Orthodoxy, and would have caused a schism, even if perhaps only a few would have been bold enough to separate from this "union." Now, glory be to God, our Metropolitan Philaret has come out with a strong statement that communion is impossible; but the Metropolia certainly won the propaganda battle in the Russian newspapers by showing how lacking in "love" we are for refusing to have communion with them—as if we hate Christ Himself? The ordinary Russian people are unaware enough to fall for that kind of propaganda; but alas, this whole thing was the fault of our well-meaning but unaware church figures who are very much under the influence of intellectual fashion. Others of our bishops are aware, however, and there was even one case where one bishop who was in favor of union with the Metropolia was not allowed to serve in the dioceses of another bishop.

We ourselves are greatly pained to see such unawareness of what is happening in the world and the Church. It would really be best for us if the Moscow Patriarchate would "excommunicate" us and the whole of "world Orthodoxy" would cut us off; then some of our people would fall into apostasy, but the rest would be stronger.

We are sending you separately our new publication, Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future. Soon we hope to have another book finished, and God willing we will be producing more in these critical times. We ask your prayers for us, and very much look forward to receiving your letter on "Evolution."

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

177.

May 16/29, 1975

St. Ephraim of Perekom

Dear Brother in Christ, Alexey,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Enclosed is a new letter from Alexander Kalomiros. The news that our "Greeks" have broken off contact with him is most distressing, though no longer unexpected. This breathes a most unhealthy "party spirit." Just the other day we received a "semi-open" letter of Fr. Mamas to Fr. George Grabbe, protesting Metr. Philaret's signature together «with Ireney and Iakovos on an appeal for help to "dissidents" in Russia. This didn't particularly disturb us, although we can see how it might be disturbing to some, especially in view of the vagueness of church awareness today—but the letter of Fr. Mamas has the same spirit as Fr. Ephraim's letter to you— "teachy," superior, condescending, "expert." Further, Fr. Panteleimon publicly "rebuked" Metr. Philaret (even though gently) at a banquet in the latter's honor, to which the Metropolitan (supposedly) humbly apologized. On sensitive questions like this which do not directly affect the purity of Orthodoxy, one would prefer to see less self-assurance and more humility. What of the time several years ago when Holy Transfiguration Monastery painted an icon of St. Gregory the Theologian and gave it to Billy Graham's magazine to print? Some were scandalized at this, but I'm sure Fr. Panteleimon was ready, not with a humble apology, but with an expert "You see, it's this way…." I'm afraid Dr. Kalomiros' words on "group pride" are very much to the point, and it spells danger ahead. We much prefer Dr. Kalomiros' own agonizing, suffering approach to the preservation of True Orthodoxy—it is not at all an easy, idle thing to stand for the truth, as the tone of the Boston "open letters" seems to indicate.

It seems we've aroused Dr. Kalomiros to write a book on Genesis! I certainly hope it is in a different spirit from his old epistle to us on evolution! Which again reminds us that our evolution book is dragging…

In general, we are most sympathetically disposed toward Dr. K. and his lonely, difficult struggle. The Russian situation is difficult enough, but the Greek is impossible!

Probably you have received the "semi-open" letter to us from Fr. Alexander Lebed. We plan a brief reply, mostly quoting Vladika Averky, whose idea (and not our own) itis to use the term "True Orthodox." What a relief it is not to have to dig up our own arguments, but to leave it to those older and wiser. I suppose we'll have to send copies to the people he sent his letter to, even though we don't much like the idea.

Christopher will probably be leaving shortly for Seattle. I'm afraid we can't help him much. He's not interested in studying at Jordanville at all, and in fact seems t6 have become "bored" and "tired" (!!!) of Orthodoxy—too much "struggle" for him. Paul, alas, has much the same problem, and even the tremendously inspiring translation work we gave him for the summer fails to interest him. (If only he has the guts to finish it anyway and set it up on the linotype, we will have a splendid new book!) How can one be bored when there's so much to learn and do that a lifetime isn't enough for it?!! If only God will give us a few more years to get out some more publications! We are getting many signs of response from readers, encouraging us to give as

much as possible while there is time. The fall of Saigon has hit us deeply—the ambiguity of the post-war period seems to be clearing up, and the Communist "wave of the future" is swelling up!

I glanced through Fr. George Lewis' article on "Sex Education" and found it not very interesting—probably because he begins with the world and never leaves off a very matter-of-fact, pedestrian approach to the question. On the contrary, we should begin with the Holy Fathers and raise the mind above the world before entering into battle.

Must get to work. Tomorrow, God willing, the last page of the new OW is finished.

With love in Christ,

178.

May 23/June 5, 1975

St. Leontius of Rostov

Dear Alexey-

Enclosed, at last, is my working over of Part I of the evolution [book] (which I read this morning to Fr. Herman, and he approved). (I finally got my "two days in Valaam,") This should be (once you revise the later sections) just about a "next-to last" version. All of this material (including the last section which I didn't send you, on "How Evolution Came to Be") should comprise Part I of the book, as in the enclosed outline. I want to revise "How Evolution Came to Be" and insert many of my own notes on Western intellectual history of the past several centuries, which I won't do for a little while, however. Then all that remains is the patristic section, for which I need at least a "week in Valaam"—hopefully at least part of it during the summer. Could you type your final version of Part I in 2 copies and keep one yourself for a while? We would hate for it to be lost in the mail when it's been worked on so much, and also I'd like to show it to someone else for comments—perhaps to Kalomiros, perhaps to a friend [Zavarin] of ours in S. F. with scientific training (who is pro-evolutionist).

Christopher left us two days ago for the first leg of his pilgrimage, to Canada. He got worse before he left, just plain defiantly lazy and self-willed, and I gave up on him; but Fr. Herman gave him a real talking-to, with the result that he got scared and now has asked us to help him get on the path to salvation. He is supposed to return in 3 weeks and undertake a "course" under Fr. Herman together with the new convert [Symeon Hill] from LA (whom Susan met here on her last visit). But God knows whether he'll return, or how much he really wants to struggle. Most of our converts seem so weak, almost ready to collapse at a moment's notice; which means the rest of us must struggle the harder, and when possible, drag some of the weaker ones along! We can see in John the same spiritual oudook which produces the older "weaklings," and in fact Christopher say himself in John. John has improved in many ways, but requires discipline in order to keep him for relapsing into total laziness.

I'm sending separately the Scientific Creationism book, from which you could profitably take a number of points and quotes, as indicated in my notes.

I'll try to get some Kireyevsky notes to you in a week. But please don't use the Starets Lev article yet—it undoubtedly requires some revision from other sources.

Pray for us. The summer looks to be busy, and keeping a community of 5 or 6 or more "weaklings" in order requires much energy. We keep hoping that out of all this "crop" of young converts there will turn out to be one or two with the possibility of developing his own backbone and being of use to others, but so far there isn't any such one.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

179.

July 17/30, 1975

Great Martyr Margaret

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Enclosed is the article on Kireyevsky—excellent! Just what is needed! We read it last night to the "New Valaam Theological Academy" (the name of our "summer school") and it came as a fitting conclusion to my own long series of talks (17 hours of tapes!) on the mainstream of Western thought, from Francis to Teilhard. Teilhard, by the way—for which I mostly read our article from "Christian evolutionism" was greeted with real repugnance by everyone, as the arch-villain of Western thought. The most popular talk was probably that on 19th-century conservatism, of which the heroes were Nicholas I, Dostoyevsky, and Constantine Pobedonostsev. The students seemed to have benefited greatly, especially Christopher, for whom this is a kind of substitute for a college education—he is positively inspired right now. It was very good for me to organize all my thoughts, also. Fr. Herman talked mostly on literature, very revealingly, and will give the summing-up lectures the next two days. Paul Bassett will be leaving then for Jordanville (with very vague thoughts about his future; until he came here he was never really told that "floating" isn't a good thing!), and Christopher also will depart for the Eastern U.S, though very likely he will return later this year. He is very sharp at getting the "feel" of real Orthodoxy, but it remains to be seen whether he will be able to train his will.

We're glad to hear of the progress on the chapel; don't worry about Vladika Anthony. He has to know, of course, when you are ready to open a "church," and if he is informed now he will assume that you are, indeed, opening a "church"—and that will be a trap, because you aren't ready for that yet. Just don't start calling your improved shed a "church" or start making big plans. You are just a very small group of Orthodox Christians far off in the sticks, not a "parish," i.e., something "officially registered" in the "Diocese." Right now Nina especially needs to be "unnoticed" and to grow slowly and naturally on the new soil. God knows what the future holds for all of you, but let it come as quietly and naturally as possible. This "quiet and "unnoticed" state could be very good for Barbara McCarthy too—if she will have the patience and

persistence to build the house of her soul gradually, and not give way to the fatal inclination to "go to the wilds, now."

The second article, on Freud, has a rather "anti-intellectual" tone which is going to put off some people who might be open to a critical but objective book on Freud. Even if the book itself might have something of the same tome, a little less "zealous" review might have more punch and get more sympathy for it. It would be good to "tone down" the review a little more, especially if you could look at the book yourself—but use your judgment of this. Monk Daniel, by the way is Br. Laurences ex-brother-in-law. He married Br. L's sister several years ago, both of them were studying to become Jewish converts, then Br. L's sister did become one, but he gave up, they separated, and somehow he found his way to our Church, without ever having contact with Br. L at all! Americans do find their way to the Truth, with God's help!

Enclosed is a newsletter from some Catholics who should be told more about Orthodoxy. (They are not far from Jordanville and know about it.) It would be good for you to send some copies of Nikodemos, and perhaps a note.

Br. Paul (Bartlett) will probably be taking the car to SF this weekend to meet a friend of his, and our blue truck is not terribly seaworthy yet (radiator-wise), so most likely we won't be visiting you on St. Elias' day—which is just as well, so you won't think anything "big" has happened just because you've added a few boards to your chapel. We'll have part of the services in our St. Elias' Skete and will be praying for you.

By the way, don't become impatient—The Northern Thebaid won't be ready for another month. The Religion of the Future is being reprinted at Shasta Printing in Redding, which seems to cost only a trifle more than Vladimir's printer in SF. This will make 1500 copies, of which 800 are already sold or ordered.

Our last letter to the Anglican community in Los Gatos was returned—which probably means they were evicted, as they feared. What this does to the community we don't know.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

180.

Aug. 13/26, 1975

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Your Grace, dear Vladika Laurus,

Blagoslovite! We send you our heartfelt greetings on the feast of the Transfiguration and of the approaching Dormition of the Theotokos.

We have just heard that Archimandrite Panteleimon of Boston has "broken off communion" with Archbishop Averky because Vladika Averky allowed Bishop Petros of Astoria to serve in the

Monastery on Transfiguration. Can you inform us for what reason he did this? Is there any reason why we should not be in communion with Bishop Petros? Dr. Kalomiros in Greece informs us that the Synod of Auxentios has, apparently, excommunicated Bishop Petros? What should be our attitude to Bishop Petros if this is true?

We should tell you frankly that we do not trust Fr. Panteleimon's "political" acts with regard to the Greek Old Calendarists; since he began interfering with the Greek Church situation (is this with the blessing of the Synod or his own Bishop?), he has only made things much worse. Things were much better when our Russian Bishops were ordaining Old Calendarist Bishops "uncanonically," but out of love, not for "politics." We have a long letter (in English) from Dr. Alexander Kalomiros in which he explains what Fr. Panteleimon has been doing in Greece with regard to the Mathewites, whom Dr. Kalomiros calls "fanatics" and "legalists." Would you like us to send you a copy of this letter? Incidentally, in this letter he says that Fr. Panteleimon is not a Greek in soul, but an American, and that is why he has so much influence on Americans and Greek-Americans, but not on real Greeks (nor on Russians). This confirms what we have thought for some time also.

We would very much like to receive a reply soon from you on the situation of Bishop Petros, and on the bad church situation which has been created by Fr. Panteleimon's act; this will only cause yet more confusion among our converts. Fr. Panteleimon is planning to visit us later this year, and we would like to know whether we can be in communion with him, since he is cutting himself off from at least one of our Bishops, for whom we hold the greatest respgct. Please help us to clarify our thoughts and position on this matter! Up until now, Fr. Panteleimon's attitude towards Bishop Petros seems to have been based on emotions and jealousy, and if that is why he has "broken communion," is it not time that a rebuke were given to him in order to humble-him a little? We greatly fear that he will repeat the history of so many of our "crazy converts," and when he is rebuked for being wrong he will just leave and take much of his flock with him, like Bishop Jacob of the Hague. May God preserve us from such a scandal—our poor American Orthodox converts are not prepared for such a shock!

With love and respect in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

181.

Aug. 15/28, 1975

Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

Dear Sister in Christ, Barbara,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ on the Feast of His Most Holy Mother!

Please do not think anyone is trying to "push" you, God forbid! It is already clear enough that there is no unity of mind and soul between you and Nina and there never will be. There has to be something closer to it in the beginning or it just never develops! There is no point in trying.

But that, of course, leaves you very much alone, which is spiritually dangerous. It would be far wiser for you to return to Rochester, where at least you have someone with whom you are spiritually close. You have done enough for Nina; now let her get settled in her own way. But you should not remain alone, separated from the Orthodox community for almost the whole week—you are just asking for spiritual trouble! The devil has had 7000 years of experience in spiritual warfare with mankind, and you—just a couple of years. You are a freshman, and he will twist you around his fingers. Even if you do not fall into a spectacular delusion, pride will develop in you, quite unnoticeably to you, until it attains unmanageable proportions, which neither you nor others will then be able to correct. Better to stay now with Barbara Rogers and lead a modest life in the city for a while than to tempt the devil by living by yourself before you are ready—and you aren't ready for it, even at five days a week!

But this is only advice; take it as you wish.

We ask for your prayers. May God preserve you in His grace—

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

182.

Aug. 24/Sept. 6, 1975

St. Peter of Moscow

Dear Alexey,

Greetings on your patronal feast. May the holy Martyrs be with you and help you in the difficult days ahead!

Your handling of Barbara McC. seems to be just right! In general, for her and for all of you in general: the less you think of "spiritual life" (in the abstract) and the more you are just struggling in the labors of daily life, praying "according to your strength" (i.e., no "vigils every day," as Barbara once expressed the desire!), the better for you. Orient yourself towards zealous Orthodoxy, and then just struggle from day to day, and God will give you wisdom. I'm glad if our letter gave B. a little "jolt," but one must be sober and not expect great "spiritual events." If she can settle down and live a quiet life this winter, not by herself, this is already an accomplishment. If she wants to share Nina's life later on, she will have to come to this of her own account.

About our trip to Etna: something else came up, and printing on Northern Thebaid still has not been finished, so it will probably be another two weeks. In the meantime, our local mechanic will be starting on our old green truck, for which we have located a cheap motor—if we had known such a motor could have been obtained, we would never have started the long and fruitless adventure with our "old blue," which still sits idle because it has not a GMC engine, but some rare old Chevrolet one for which parts can't be obtained.

Last Sunday we visited Phanourios Ingram in Castella. He left a very good impression—very much in our "Northern California Orthodox" spirit, cut off from everybody and trembling over his own salvation. His wife and two small children are all Orthodox. They were baptized in the Greek Archdiocese church in San Jose, but when he saw our S. F. Cathedral and its services for the first time, he felt his home was in "Russian Orthodoxy." Now, perhaps he has not written you yet?—he moved to Etna two days after our visit! Rather, he will be living 15 miles south on some guest ranch, where he will be a handyman and his wife a waitress. He seems very shy and may delay in making contact (his wife on the other hand, is very out-going!); but doubtless your contact with him will be profitable for both of you.

Gregory Moshnin and Fr. Sergius told us they would be coming here about Sept. 7, so it will be presumably be after their visit to you. (Wait—we just heard from them that they'll see us Mon. or Tues.)

About Fr. Panteleimon in Boston—alas, alas, alas, the calamity we have been fearing seems near at hand; Vladika Averky writes us a despairing letter about "this brazen young archimandrite" and his latest actions; we are awaiting news from Vladika Laurus before saying more. But be prepared for shocks! Fr. P. seems to be strengthening his "hold" over the "young Orthodox," based on his "charismatic" presence, from which few seem capable of recovering.

Please pray for the boy Sergius—the son of Fr. Valery Lukianov of N.J. He returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land on last Monday—being struck down with Meningitis on the return trip. He is in the hospital and may not live. He was an exceptionally pious boy. His father writes begging for prayers, with tears but saying— "Let Gods will be done." Please pray for him when you are all together—we sang the supplicatory canon to the Mother of God for him today.

With love in Christ,

S.M.

P.s. Little Gleb begs us not to send him home, and he is so obedient and eager that… velope to us) and giving him schooling mostly in various aspects of English. Could you obtain for us some 6th-grade mathematics book, or something to give an indication of what is expected in math? Anything else for 6th grade? He is very bright, but got all D's and F's last year, and they passed him anyway!

183.

Aug. 25/Sept. 7, 1975

Apostles Bartholomew and Titus

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Evlogeite!

Please forgive, again, my long delay in writing. I have finally finished the chapter on Soloviev and have a number of comments. Some small points and corrections (mostly typographical) I noted in the text, as you said I might. The bigger comments I shall give here.

First of all, I am very impressed with the chapter and the conception of the book as a whole; this is very needed. There just hasn't been this kind of serious, philosophical study of any of these "Russian Religious thinkers." The problem, of course, is that there will be few readers precisely because of the depth of the study and the need for some philosophical background to get through it. I'll say something about publishing ideas at the end of this letter.

Second, it is obvious that you are an "understater." This is good, because it gives an objective and fair tone to the whole presentation. But in a few places—I noted one or two—a few more words are perhaps needed to emphasize the difference between this anti-Christian philosophy and Orthodoxy.

Now some more specific comments:

I think you have too much underemphasized (just mentioning it only once or twice) Soloviev's chiliasm·. I have a feeling that this is the key to his whole philosophy, being that which he specifically shares with precisely the mainstream of 19th-century European thought (not just the official philosophers). The whole outburst of the Romantic-revolutionary movement at the end of the 18th century (visible even in art, in architectural plans, and in sectarian movements)—is it not precisely an outburst of chiliastic fervor, rather akin to the earlier Anabaptist movement, but now spreading to the whole of society and becoming the mainstream of European thought and life, the "answer" to Christianity, as it were? And I rather think that just about all the currents of 19th-century thought are in one way or another chiliastic currents, which offer different solutions to the one pressing question before the modern mind: how to bring about heaven on earth, make Christianity a thing of this world. The early Socialist "prophets," St.-Simon, Fourier, Owen, are certainly chiliasts, and Soloviev, in reacting against the later materialist phase of Socialism, seems very kin in basic chiliastic outlook to these "prophets"—to St.-Simon more than the rest, because he was the most "philosophical" of the three. There were other "crazy" 19th-century thinkers who have since been forgotten with whom Soloviev is also probably kin—for example, Fabre-d'Olivet with his theocractical speculations. In a word, I think it would be good to point out how much S. is of his time, is in the mainstream of 19th- century European thought in addition to being in the age-old gnostic tradition; and specifically, how his thought is another answer to the chiliastic problem which 19th century European thought put before all its thinkers.

This savor of chiliasm seems to run through all the thinkers you examine (Berdyaev being only the most explicit and spectacular of the chiliasts), popping up in such concepts (so central to todays "ecumenical" thought) of the "new religious consciousness," the "divinization of the world" (p. 64 of your MS), etc.

Bound up with chiliasm and the "new age" is the "superman," which I see that Florevsky explicitly endorses. Soloviev was against Nietzsche—but is not his "Godmanhood" a more "theological" form of the same idea?—as when on p. 25 of your MS he says that man ceases to be "merely human." (Cf. Dostoyevsky who correctly contrasted the Orthodox God-man with the new revolutionary mangod; thus The Possessed) Perhaps more emphasis could likewise be placed on this idea of man becoming a "god" in a new historical epoch, as opposed to becoming a god by grace in Orthodox.

A final point: on p. 3 you note that S. came under the influence of Kireyevsky. A paragraph or page here on the contrast between these two thinkers would be appropriate—they really represent the two major "paths" of 19th-century Russian religious thought, and both are major figures. Both of them tried to give a religious answer to the Western rationalism-secularism then invading Russia, but Kireyevsky found the answer in the Holy Fathers and a philosophy founded entirely in them; whereas S. rejected such a "narrow Orthodoxy" for the broader pan-Christian gnosticism. ;., while perfectly Orthodox, was out of harmony with his times, and his philosophy was largely forgotten; S. was precisely in harmony with his times, and that is why his philosophy finds so many disciples.

I.M. Kontzevitch has this to say about Kireyevsky and Soloviev (Optina Monastery and Its Epoch, Jordanville, 1970, p. 218):

"It might seem that V. Soloviev was a continuer of the work of Kireyevsky. And in fact, in his master's dissertation, 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy,' he took his world-outlook entirely from Kireyevsky: the synthesis of philosophy and religion, the view of Western philosophy as a development of rationalism, the idea of the wholeness of life, of metaphysical knowledge…. But to Western thought he opposed not Russian Orthodoxy, but rather the foggy speculations of the (non-Christian) East. And in his further creative work V. Soloviev remains not only outside the "philosophy of the Holy Fathers," but even outside Orthodoxy…. And Soloviev, thanks to his exceptional influence on his contemporaries, having at first made use of Kireyevsky's ideology, later led the awakening Russian religious thought from the path which the latter had shown to it."

You might note also that the tradition to which Kireyevsky joined himself continued right up to the Revolution and beyond—i.e., it is the "traditional" Orthodoxy represented today by the Russian Church Abroad, which stands with its whole philosophy and theology against the gnostic tradition of Soloviev-Florensky-Bulgakov, etc. There are no theses written on this traditionalist Orthodoxy, both because it is out of step with the times, and because its representatives-are almost all clerics (with the exception of a few thinkers like Constantine Leontiev).

Florensky and Bulgakov I am still reading, and by a most providential "accident" we have recently received the long-sought booklet of Archbishop John on Bulgakov's Sophiology. I haven't read it yet, but will give comments and quotes together with the MS when I return it, hopefully before too long!

As for a publisher—is it possible Nordland, the publisher of Florovsky and of John Dunlop's book, might be interested? At any rate, it would be very good to have some kind of synopsis of the whole book, "boiled down" to 50 pp. or less, for a more "popular" readership—any possibility for this? Also, will you have any comments, perhaps as a final chapter, on the Soloviev-gnostic tradition in Russia today? There is a series of articles just beginning in La Pens;e Russe (Paris) on "Soloviev as Read in Russia Today," Could we also see your chapter or pages on Vekhi? Our own proposed book on the Russian Religious Intelligentsia will hopefully be started after the first of the year, and your work will make our labors easier.

Please let us know of progress on the MS, publisher, etc.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

184.

Aug. 26/Sept. 8, 1975

Martyrs Adrian and Natalia

Dear Doctor Kalomiros,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were very glad to receive your last letter, even with its bad news about the church situation in Greece. It is very important for us to maintain contact with you, because apart from you we have almost no real contact with the True Orthodox Christians of Greece. We have only our friend Fr. Theodoritos of St. Anne's Skete, but our correspondence with him is brief owing to the language problem. He sent us a manuscript for publication, of 10 or 12 pages, two years ago, and the person to whom we gave it for translation still has not returned it. Our problem with Greeks also is complicated by the presence of Fr. Panteleimon of Boston in our Synod about which I will now speak to you very frankly

From many sources—from Fr. Theodoritos, from you, from people in this country (both Greeks and Americans, and also Russians), and from our own experience—we have how formed a rather complete picture of him, and this picture is a sad one. The man is very talented, very aware of contemporary Orthodox events, has the "right" view on most Orthodox matters, and has in general the correct "feeling" of Orthodoxy. From the beginning we have supported him, and our articles about him and his monastery in our Orthodox Word have undoubtedly helped him to grow and gain influence. It has therefore been with great sorrow that in the past two or three years we have begun to notice very dangerous characteristics in him. You wrote us in a letter two years ago that Fr. Panteleimon seems to want to have all Greek Orthodox in America under him; at about that same time we were noticing that he also wants to have all American Orthodox under him! He tried, for example, to ridicule and destroy our friend Alexey Young, whose small periodical Nikodemos is very helpful in inspiring Orthodox Americans and guiding them in the Faith—Fr. Panteleimon did not like it because it had one or two articles with which he disagreed. Fr. Neketas Palassis even threatened to attack Alexey publicly—a fellow Orthodox Christian and a sister periodical in the same Church!

Soon it became obvious why Fr. Panteleimon was doing this: he and his followers think that he alone is truly Orthodox in our Synod, that almost all the Russians are "backward," theologically naive, and under "Western influence"—and only Fr. Panteleimon and his followers are true theologians, sophisticated, free of all un-Orthodox influences and able to lead everyone else in true Orthodoxy. He never attacked our Brotherhood directly, but after a while it became apparent that he was waging a campaign against us in private, and now we have the testimony of several people that he "warns" people against us, apparently because we are "Russians," do not ask him

for advice, and do not even have a telephone (so he can call us up and "correct" us whenever he feels like it!).

But with whom does Fr. P. have close contact in our Synod? I tell you this in confidence: from the beginning Fr. P. began playing "politics" with our bishops, and he chose for his patron precisely the one bishop we have who is not Russian in spirit, who does not have the simple piety and faith of most of our Russian bishops and priests, but who prides himself on being better and more "sophisticated" than they, who would like to "reform" the Synod to make it more in harmony with his philosophy, who himself plays "politics" and now is the most powerful figure in the Synod (and who ten years ago was the leader in the persecution of our own Archbishop John Maximovitch, whom he disdained for his lack of "sophistication" and "administrative ability"), and who was educated in a Jesuit seminary and is a Jesuit through and through in spirit, even though outwardly he is very "traditionalist." This is Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal. We know him personally, and several venerable bishops have warned us about him. It was with some apprehension that we saw how Fr. P. tried to "use" Archbp. Vitaly to make himself important in the Synod, and in turn how Archbp. Vitaly tried to "use" Fr. P. claiming to the Russians that "great Greek theologians" (and not simple Russian priests) were his supporters and followers. By his attitude and actions Fr. P. revealed that he does not have the "feel" for true and simple Orthodox people, or if he once did have it, he has lost it by his indulging in "politics." Together, Archbp. Vitaly and Fr. P. produced several issues of The True Vine, an "official" Synod periodical, which was a lamentable failure—which we already predicted, knowing the publications of Archbp. Vitaly in Russian. He does not know what is desperately needed today, but only prints what he thinks is "fashionable," makes him look "sophisticated," and will give him success with "university graduates,"—but the result is only ridiculous, because the Roman Catholics can do this so much better. Incidentally, Archbp. Vitaly from the very beginning, even though he himself has written many times that Orthodox literature in English is desperately needed, has never once mentioned our Orthodox Word in print, as if our labors did not exist or were not Orthodox. Lately, also, we notice that Fr. Neketas Palassis' Witness has ceased to mention our publications, even the recent Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future, which is mentioned even in Greek in Orthodox Typos\ Why? Have we ceased to be Orthodox? No, I believe the reason is simply that Fr Panteleimon wishes to be the only teacher of Orthodoxy in the Synod, and we are therefore a competition to him. Fr. P. even goes so far as to think that he can teach the Russians, and because he has two or three American monks who have studied Russian, he thinks that he is competent in Russian-language matters also. But in this he has already made several bad mistakes, showing that his followers have no knowledge either of theology or of Russian "psychology," make themselves ridiculous when they try to write a pamphlet in Russian, and are simply not in contact with the authentic theological tradition of Russia. In-this he and his followers remind us very much of your chapter in Against False Union where you speak of the "converts" who immediately wish to "teach the Orthodox." Fr. Panteleimon's "convert translators" only make themselves ridiculous kindergarten children in their unawareness and incapacity in the face of a great and very refined theological tradition. But the fault is with Fr. P. himself, who encourages the idea that he and his followers alone are the real Orthodox and are competent to discuss theology.

From this attitude of Fr. Panteleimon's, which is very foreign to what our instructors in the Faith have handed down to us, we have great apprehension for the future. It seems already clear what is going to happen: Fr. P. is going to seize upon some situation in which he came show himself to be "correct" in order to break communion with our Synod, then he will have himself made bishop by the Mathewites and will be the "only Orthodox bishop in America," over Greeks and Americans and even over Russians. His position will not be entirely consistent, but many young Americans and Greek-Americans (and even some Russian-Americans) will follow him. Why? Because Fr. P. has a real "power" over a certain type of Orthodox Americans (not over real Greeks or Russians—I think you are right in this)—over those who are new or inexperienced or uncertain in the Faith, and need an "authority" to tell them what to do. We have long ago noticed that it is not possible to hold a "discussion" with Fr. Panteleimon—he is always "correct" no matter what he says or does, even though is actual fact we have found that he is quite innocent in some areas of knowledge of the Holy Fathers—ignorant not just of facts but of the very tradition of the handing down of the Patristic teaching. This is to be expected, since he went to a modernist Greek seminary and "taught himself the Holy Fathers—i.e., did not receive it in a continuous tradition from the past such as still exists in our Russian Church Abroad, even if our bishops and priests are not "sophisticated." Fr. P. laughs at the seminary education of Jordanville—but even if it might be very simple, still this education continues to breathe spirit of Orthodoxy, which Fr. Panteleimon does not entirely possess.

In view of all this, our contact with you is very precious, for you have come to similar conclusions, like us, through suffering and trials. There are few other people to whom we can speak so openly, because they simply would not understand us. Like you, we do not trust in a "brilliant" and "sophisticated" Orthodoxy, and we see that it will only be in the end another form of the betrayal of Orthodoxy and the deception of souls.

It would be very good if you could write an article for our Orthodox Word on how to keep alive the true savor of Orthodoxy in view of the many temptations besetting us today—without, however, mentioning as yet any names. If the worst does happen, and Fr. Panteleimon goes to the Mathewites, then we will probably have to publish an attack, against the Mathewites as an error "on the right hand," with True Orthodoxy standing between the modernists on the one hand and the legalist fanatics on the other hand. But if Fr. P. does leave the Synod, it will be very difficult for us zealots who remain, because as you know some of our bishops are trying to maintain communion with "ecumenical Orthodoxy," which is a disastrous and fatal path. But we trust that God allows all these difficult and bitter trials to come upon us for our salvation and so that we can be of help to others.

We ask your prayers, and look forward to your next letter.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

185.

12/25 сентября 1975 г.,

Отданіе праздника Рождества Богородицы.

Дорогой отецъ Георгій,

благослови!

Въ этомъ письм; мы по твоей просьб; посылаемъ короткіе св;д;нія о западныхъ святыхъ. Никого изъ нихъ, кажется, н;тъ въ православномъ календар;, но, возможно, за исключеніемъ одного (св. Каллиста, котораго сл;дуетъ бол;е полно изучить), они безъ сомн;нія подлинные православные святые Запада.

Мы сами постепенно накапливаемъ информацію о западныхъ святыхъ и приходимъ къ н;которымъ выводамъ о томъ, какъ можно отличать истинныхъ православныхъ святыхъ Запада (къ нимъ, конечно, относится большинство западныхъ святыхъ до раскола) отъ т;хъ немногихъ, которые по той или иной причин; сомнительны или даже опред;ленно не православные. Поскольку мы просто не можемъ дов;рять никакимъ западнымъ источникамъ посл;днихъ в;ковъ и фактически большинству западныхъ источниковъ, начиная съ 11-го в;ка (когда начали появляться рыцарскіе романы и легенды), то надо вернуться какъ можно ближе къ оригинальнымъ источникамъ и, когда возможно, связать ихъ съ достов;рными православными источниками и Востока, и Запада. Я постарался кратко сд;лать это во вложенномъ сообщеніи, и мы также пом;стимъ статью на эту тему въ календар; на 1976 годъ (на который записанъ твой заказъ), если Богъ благоизволитъ. Молись, пожалуйста, о насъ, чтобы мы смогли продолжить эту работу во исполненіе зав;та, который далъ намъ архіепископъ Іоаннъ.

Что касается почитанія святыхъ, которыхъ н;тъ въ православныхъ календаряхъ, то въ разные періоды православной исторіи и въ разныхъ м;стахъ подходы къ этому были разные, и н;тъ ни одного правила, которое бы это регулировало. Ждать оффиціальной “канонизаціи” вс;хъ этихъ святыхъ было бы безплодно и безнадежно (и очень печально для насъ, которые ихъ любятъ!), и фактически это никогда не д;лалось – обычно списки м;стныхъ святыхъ или святыхъ другихъ Православныхъ Церквей добавляются къ православному календарю гораздо мен;е формально. Но очевидно также, поскольку есть все-таки н;которые вопросы, касающіеся, по меньшей м;р;, н;сколькихъ западныхъ святыхъ до раскола, что намъ не сл;дуетъ быть слишкомъ вольными въ почитаніи просто т;хъ, кого мы хотимъ. Въ твоемъ случа;, чтобы ты не сомн;вался, что д;лаешь что-то неправильное или вводишь какую-то инновацію (и почти такъ же важно – чтобы изб;жать неосновательныхъ слуховъ, что ты такъ д;лаешь), мы бы посов;товали теб; представить этотъ списокъ съ объяснительнымъ письмомъ твоему епископу (кажется, архіепископъ Никонъ?) съ просьбой къ н;му дать благословеніе осуществлять почитаніе этихъ святыхъ въ твоей церкви (то есть, прикладываться къ мощамъ, им;ть ихъ иконы, праздновать имъ, п;ть службу имъ). Ты можешь представить ему наши зам;чанія, или, если хочешь, мы можемъ написать ему письмо на русскомъ язык; (мы хорошо его знаемъ), приводя свои доводы, почему этихъ святыхъ можно считать православными. (Но сл;дуетъ бол;е полно изучить Каллиста, прежде ч;мъ подавать его имя съ остальными.)

Есть ли у насъ какая-нибудь возможность получить какіе-либо мощи западныхъ святыхъ? Намъ бы особенно хот;лось им;ть частичку мощей святой Схоластики, и мы почли бы великой милостью Божіей, если бы смогли получить частичку мощей святителя Мартина Турскаго или святителя Григорія Турскаго, или другихъ галльскихъ святыхъ (или вообще любыхъ святыхъ Запада!).

Мы рады, что у васъ новое церковное зданіе. Да даруетъ Христосъ, Господь нашъ, процв;таніе твоему приходу въ истинномъ Православіи! Но будьте готовы къ грядущимъ суровымъ испытаніямъ и не дайте имъ сбить васъ съ ногъ!

Пожалуйста, молись о насъ, гр;шныхъ!

Съ любовью о Христ;,

монахъ Серафимъ.

Братство преподобнаго Германа Аляскинскаго,

Платина, Калифорнія,

отецъ Серафимъ.

СВ;Д;НІЯ О СЕМИ ПРАВОСЛАВНЫХЪ СВЯТЫХЪ ЗАПАДА, ИМЕНЪ КОТОРЫХЪ Н;ТЪ ВЪ ПРАВОСЛАВНОМЪ КАЛЕНДАР;.

1. Святой Клетъ, Папа Римскій, 26 апр;ля.

Свид;тельства. Древніе мартирологіи называютъ его “мученикъ”, чего уже достаточно, поскольку н;тъ никакихъ свид;тельствъ, что онъ былъ неправославнымъ, чтобы установить почитаніе его.

Прим;чаніе. Римская мартирологія считаетъ его третьимъ Папой (26 апр;ля), а Анаклета пятымъ Папой (13 іюля), но Евсевій думалъ, что это одинъ и тотъ же челов;къ, и современные ученые, кажется, склоняются къ этому мн;нію. Фактически ни объ одномъ изъ нихъ почти ничего не изв;стно, кром; того, что они были мученики.

2. Святой Каллистъ, Папа Римскій, с. 218-222. 14 октября (кажется, дата его погребенія, а мученичество, по Батлеру, 12 октября).

Свид;тельства. Древніе мартирологіи называютъ мученикомъ.

Трудности. Святой Ипполитъ Римскій сильно его критиковалъ (1) за то, что онъ въ вопросахъ покаянія слишкомъ снисходителенъ (что само по себ; не д;лаетъ его неправильнымъ), (2) за то, что онъ пропов;дуетъ патрипассіанскую ересь Ноэта (серьезное обвиненіе).

Выводъ. Сл;дуетъ бол;е полно изучить его, наприм;ръ, по церковнымъ исторіямъ Сократа и Созомена (въ серіи Эрдмана они есть на англійскомъ, но у насъ ихъ н;тъ) и Феодорета (возможно, есть на англійскомъ).

3. Святой Іулій, Папа Римскій, +352, 12 апр;ля.

Свид;тельства. Хорошо изв;стенъ въ исторіи Церкви какъ защитникъ святителя А;анасія Великаго отъ аріанъ, даже послалъ святителя А;анасія обратно въ Александрію съ документами, свид;тельствующими въ его пользу. Въ русскомъ с;нодальномъ житіи святителя А;анасія его называютъ “святой Іулій”. Кажется, н;тъ сомн;ній въ его православіи и святости.

4. Святая Схоластика, с. 543, 10 февраля.

Свид;тельства. “Діалоги” святителя Григорія Великаго, книга II (Жизнеописаніе преподобнаго Венедикта), гл. 33-34, гд; разсказывается о чуд;, когда она задержала отъ;здъ своего брата, вызвавъ молитвой штормъ, и что преподобный Венедиктъ самъ вид;лъ, какъ она посл; смерти восходила на Небо. Это почти все, что изв;стно о ней, но свид;тельства этихъ двухъ православныхъ святыхъ не оставляютъ никакихъ сомн;ній въ ея святости.

5. Святой Евгеній, епископъ Кар;агенскій, 505, 13 іюля.

Свид;тельства. Хорошо изв;стенъ въ церковной исторіи какъ защитникъ Православія отъ аріанства, страдалъ и былъ гонимъ при аріанскихъ вандалахъ. Геннадій приписываетъ ему пропов;ди противъ аріанъ, святитель Григорій Турскій (“Исторія франковъ”) цитируетъ письмо изъ изгнанія къ его паств;. Н;тъ сомн;ній въ его православіи и святости.

6. Святая Урсула, 3-й в;къ, 21 октября.

Свид;тельства. Въ Кельн; надъ ея останками (и другихъ д;въ-мученицъ) построена большая церковь, большая народная любовь въ 7-мъ в;к; и, возможно, раньше; надпись 4-го в;ка о д;вахъ-мученицахъ (безъ имени).

Трудности. Житіе ея написано поздно и включаетъ много выдумокъ и легендъ, и ея имя не встр;чается въ текстахъ до 9-го в;ка (хотя почитаніе д;въ-мучениць Кельнскихъ началось гораздо раньше).

Выводъ. Лучше не дов;рять ея житію, составленному по католическимъ источникамъ, но причинъ сомн;ваться въ томъ, что она была д;вой-мученицей древняго періода Церкви, о которой, возможно, ничего больше нельзя узнать, н;тъ.

7. Святой Элигій, епископъ Нуайона, 659, 1 декабря.

Свид;тельства. Обширное житіе, написанное его другомъ, святымъ Уэномъ, епископомъ Руанскимъ черезъ 13 л;тъ посл; его смерти (согласно другимъ источникамъ, черезъ 50). Много чудесъ, народное почитаніе. Никакихъ свид;тельствъ о неправославіи.

186.

Sept. 18/Oct. 1, 1975

St. Eumenes

Dear Father George,

Bless!

Just a further note on the list of Western Saints I sent you last week. In a Russian pre-Revolutionary theological encyclopedia I discovered the following about St. Callistus: "The name of saint was received by Callistus for the martyrs death he underwent during a popular uprising; his commemoration in the Roman Church is on Oct. 14. In the Orthodox Church his name is mentioned only in Appendix I (of the complete Menologion): 'Names of Saints which are not under the dates in the Menologion of all saints, but which are in Index I and in the Divine-service books:' and his commemoration is given as Cheese-Fare Saturday." Evidently he is mentioned in the Cheese-Fare Saturday Service to all who have labored in fasting, although I don't know if it's possible to assume that the one Callistus mentioned in the Canon on that day is he or not.

At any rate, there seems to be no difficulty in including St. Callistus among the Saints of the West. St. Hippolytus (and Tertullian too, in whose writings is contained just about all that is known about the Saint) was evidently exaggerating about his teaching, and in any case his martyrdom numbered him among the Saints.

Please let us know anything more you discover about Western Saints and their relics. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

187.

Sept. 21 /Oct. 4, 1975

St. Demetrius of Rostov

Dear Alexey,

Just a note to go with Daniel tonight. He seems to be in the best state we've seen him in two years. We discussed the "Fr. Panteleimon situation" with him, and he had already decided, when he just heard of the breaking of communion, that he himself would not even think of leaving the Synod if Fr. P., should. The "whole mess" which is supposedly cleared up now is, of coursed, 90% a "Fr. Panteleimon mess," and far from being cleared up, it bodes very ill for the future. About that we shall have to wait and see, remembering that Fr. P. is no authority in our Church and that his next "dramatic move" must be regarded with extreme suspicion. There is a strong smell of politics behind him, and one day he is going to make the fatal political mistake. Let us be sober and prepared.

About the Hudanish-Old Believer visit. Yes, you are blowing it up too much. It is not possible to have a "dialogue" with them. They are sectarians, and their spirit, not just their externals, separates them from Orthodoxy. If God can somehow draw one or many of them to Orthodoxy, very good, but the measures of "penitence" which John Hudanish describes would be simply a flattering of their sectarian pride. Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky was against receiving Old

Believers even if they asked nothing but to keep the two-fingered cross—not because of the small act, but because this revealed they still had the sectarian mentality. Of course, since then the Russian Church has allowed Old Believers to retain the two-fingered Cross and their service books, but as a gesture of economy rather than an admission that Patriarch Nikon was wrong. For an Old Believer to become Orthodox there must be an awareness that the externals they preserve are not of the essence of Orthodoxy. Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov, by the way, has visited them, or at least some O.B.'s in Oregon, and saw no hope for "dialogue."

As for the visit, let it be just a visit. Talk about what interests you and them, but don't be defensive about not living according to "rules" like theirs. If they want to dispute anything, have an answer, as the Apostle Peter says, to the best of your ability.

John Hudanish, from his letter, is an "idealistic" American full of unrealistic hopes. His talk of repentance and of learning from you does not seem to strike true. Be as simple and unpretentious as possible, and don't even think of being the representative of a "dialogue."

Our green truck runs fine. How should we arrange to get it to you for a weekend or more?

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. The Old Believer Pimen Sofronov (the iconographer), under the persuasion of Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov, received Holy Communion some months before he died, in one of our churches in the Holy Land. But, of course, he was not at all a "strict" Old Believer as the real sectarians are. I don't know if he was "in communion" with the Oregon "O.B.'s" or not, but if so, they would never believe that he had done such a thing!

188.

Sept. 29/Oct. 12, 1975

St. Cyriacus

Dear Father Igor [Kapral],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Forgive me, but we have another request for you, this one a more important one. Could you possibly go to Fr. Michael Pomazansky and obtain for us replies to the questions on the enclosed sheet? We've tried for a long time to get a brief biography of him, but to no avail—he's just too humble! Could you help us? It's not for his glory, but only to help us poor strugglers to keep contact with our Orthodox theological tradition.

Concerning books—could you tell us if the Vologda Patericon is in the library?

Now, something at last that is not a request, but an expression of our deep concern over our present-day Orthodox mission. Fr. Neketas Palassis in his latest Witness again makes a self-assured and quite unfounded attack on Blessed Augustine. Everyone knows of the erroneous doctrine of Blessed Augustine on grace—but why this "fundamentalist" attempt to destroy

entirely someone who has never in Orthodox tradition been denied a place among the Fathers of the Church? Fr. Theodoritos, doubtless speaking for other zealots in Greece and on the Holy Mountain, writes us that of course he accepts Augustine as a Saint, because St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain does. Our Vladika John had a service written to him and had great devotion for him. St. Nikodemos put him in our Eastern Calendar (much as Vladika John put St. Patrick there), and our Russian 19th-century Fathers followed him. The Fifth Ecumenical Council ranks Augustine as a theological authority on the same level as Sts. Basil, Gregory and John Chrysostom, with no qualification. The contemporaries of Augustine who disagreed with him (St. Vincent of Lerins, St. John Cassian) corrected his teaching without mentioning his name out of respect, far less calling him a "heretic." His other contemporaries, including great Fathers, always addressed him with the utmost respect. The universal Orthodox tradition accepts him as an undoubted Holy Father, although with a flaw in this teaching—rather like St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East. Whence, then, this strangely "Protestant" campaign to declare Blessed Augustine a heretic, and to utterly condemn anyone who disagrees with this? This greatly disturbs us, not so much for the sake of Blessed Augustine (who, after all, is a Father of less weight than many others), but because it reveals a very unhealthy "party" spirit which threatens the whole English- speaking Orthodox mission. Fr. Neketas as much as says: If you do not believe exactly as Fr. Panteleimon believes, you are not Orthodox! If you recommend a 19th-century catechism (as Vladika John always did to converts) you are a Larin; if you read Unseen Warfare you are under Latin influence; if you refuse to believe in evolution (!), you are under Western influence!!!

We share our concern with you, because we are really being discouraged by this unhealthy attitude, which is really pobocto pelo pazzny. [?] We and others have tried gently to communicate with Fr. Neketas and Fr. Panteleimon about such things, but the impression is that no communication is possible; on every subject they are "right," they are the "experts," and no other opinion is possible. You know how from the beginning we have supported the "Greeks" in our Synod, and it is really out of despair for the future that we tell you of our concern.

We are in correspondence with Dr. Alexander Kalomiros in Greece, who himself writes us despairing letters concerning the actions of Fr. Panteleimon in Greece (without the blessing or knowledge of his own bishop) in favor of the Mathewite schism, which Dr. Kalomiros calls real "fanaticism and legalism." Fr. Panteleimon has offended and made enemies of Archimandrite Kyprian and other zealots in Greece, and has entirely cut off Dr. Kalomiros who recently wrote us that we are the only ones in America who will even write to him. Dr. Kalomiros believes Fr. Panteleimon and those with him have fallen into "group pride," and he thinks the recent burning of their church in Boston is God's mercy to them, sent in order to wake them up for the sake of their good deeds for Orthodoxy in the past. He believes Fr. Panteleimon is very gifted and remarkable, although he does not have a Greek soul, but an American soul, which is why he is not able to have rapport with true Greeks, as opposed to Greek Americans. (I don't know for sure about all that, but that is what Dr. Kalomiros says, and he is quite sensitive about such things.)

We ourselves know at first hand how several years ago, Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Neketas put very cruel pressure on Alexey Young, evidently trying to stop him altogether from printing

Nikodemos, merely because of articles against evolution and for the Shroud of Turin, and also because Alexey resisted their pressures to force him to go through their censorship. Has our Orthodoxy in America become so narrow that we must be under the dictation of a "pope-expert" and we must accept a "party-line" on every conceivable subject? This is against everything Vladika John taught and did in missionary labors.

Already the rumor was spread through the Greek Archdiocese that Fr. Panteleimon is about to "go to some strange Old Calendar jurisdiction," and it does seem that the false zeal which Fr. Neketas sometimes reveals is already pointing in that direction. Fr. Panteleimon's recent act regarding Vladika Averky and Bishop Petros has already cost him some supporters of long standing, and we only pray that the stern but loving letter of our own Archbishop Anthony to him has cause him to stop and think where his path is leading. (Vladika Anthony forbade him to come to the San Francisco Archdiocese until he begs forgiveness of Archbishop Averky—not over the question of Bishop Petros, but over the crudeness and untraditional way of "breaking off communion.")

Please forgive us for burdening you with all this. We would very much like to know your thoughts with regard to any of this. Is there any way that our "Greeks" can be persuaded to be less reckless? There seems to be no one from the "Russians" for whom they have any respect,—everyone is under "Western influence." (This is Schmemannism!) How can they be made to see, before it is too late, that we should all be humble and not think much of our own "theology," that we are all perhaps under "Western influences" of various sorts (this is very evident in the case of Fr. Neketas himself), but that this should not exclude us from Orthodoxy, as long as we are struggling to understand the truth.

We ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ,

P.s. A final request: Is it possible to obtain a copy of part of the Russian manuscript of the book by Butakov on the Shroud of Turin—the one from which the Russian and English booklets were made? We have in mind not the scientific parts, but only the parts containing historical and iconographical evidence, which according to the introduction was much abridged or omitted in the printed version. We are very much interested in a sober and objective investigation of the Shroud according to Orthodox sources—until such a thing is done, we hesitate to give full acceptance to it, despite the impressive scientific argument. The argument of Fr. Neketas that it is "unknown" in Orthodox tradition seems not to be backed up by any investigation at all of even the traditional evidence that has been offered so far. The Shroud, if it is genuine, could have a very powerful influence on faith in the USSR—-precisely because the religious level there is so primitive and in need of some kind of "scientific evidence" to combat the influence of decades of "scientific atheism." See, for example, the new book [letter ends]

189.

Oct. 2/15, 1975

Sts. Kyprian and Justina

Dear Alexey,

Rejoice in the Lord!

We received your letter only today (Wednesday) Have you been suffering like that all the time since Friday?! Your state is very familiar to us—we've been going through attacks of the same "disease" for some time now! Fortunately, when I get the "rash," Fr. Herman is usually over his, and vice versa, and we are able to come out of the depths of despair and get on with the necessary work.

I think the cause of the "disease" is very simple: you, like us, are very trusting and always looking on the good side of people, no matter what they might do; and then, when their acts or words reveal that they have no such trust in return, but rather are spreading distrust everywhere, and then on top of it all accuse you of spreading distrust—it is truly enough to plunge one into discouragement.

The remedy is simple, and consists of exactly the same thing we told you several years ago when you were last attacked by the "Greeks": JUST PAY NO ATTENTION WHATEVER TO THEM. Don't answer them, don't justify yourself or anyone else before them, but also: don't trust a single word they say, and don't do anything they might demand.

We ourselves feel badly betrayed by our "Greeks." All these years we trusted that they were of one mind and soul with us, giving everything they had for the cause of the English-speaking mission. But really, it seems that all this time they were only building for their own glory, cruelly abusing the trust of our simple Russian bishops, priests, and laymen, in order finally to "take over" and proclaim themselves the sole Orthodox authorities and experts.

We still pray that we are mistaken in this, but let them prove it now by their acts and words—not by their long-winded self-justifications.

For years we have "excused" their excesses and mistakes, and in fact we have defended Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Neketas on numerous occasions—to you also, as you may recall. But now, in order to retain our sanity and continue fruitful in the Orthodox mission, we must face the truth squarely

THESE ARE COLLEGE BOYS PLAYING AT ORTHODOXY!

The last Witness of Fr. Neketas (On Blessed Augustine) is an outrage. He calls "untrained theologically" and "Latin-leaning" the following:

1. Fr. Theodoritos and other Greek zealots who say of course Blessed Augustine is a Saint, if St. Nikodemos thought so.

2. Archbishop John, who had a service written to him and had great devotion for him.

3. St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, who put him in the Calendar.

4. The Greek and Russian theological tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries, which accepted St. Nikodemos' judgment.

5. The Fifth Ecumenical Council, who ranked Augustine as a theological authority on the same level as Sts. Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom.

6. All the Holy Fathers contemporary with Augustine, not one (so far as we know) called him a heretic or denied him a place with the great teachers of the Church, even when they opposed his false teaching on grace.

The universal tradition of the Orthodox Church accepts Blessed Augustine as a Holy Father, albeit with a flaw—very much like St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East. Fr. Neketas' self-assured, authoritative proclamation is un-Orthodox and positively childish.

This is only one of many examples that reveal that our "Greeks" are, after all, incompetent to discuss theology—not because they are not smart or well-read enough—but because they are too passionately involved in showing how right they always are. This is not the spirit of Orthodox theology.

Concerning Nina: I had just written you a letter (superseded by this one) saying that "if Nina is being defensive about Fr. Panteleimon, it may well be that she has not quite cut the ties' after all. If she doesn't, she's going to have trouble ahead!" Well, the trouble seems to be here, and Nina will have no peace until she either does make a complete cut with Fr. P., or else joins his sect.

His sect. because the way they are going, our "Greeks" will not be long with us, and it is hardly conceivable that they will stay long with the Mathewites either, unless there is much politics (or money) involved behind the scenes.

We just received a long letter from Vladika Laurus. (By the way, talk about "sowing sinful dissension and mistrust in the Church"—what does one call what the "Greeks" have been doing about Vladika Laurus? Ask anyone under Fr. P.'s influence about Vladika Laurus—oh, him, we can't trust him, etc…) VI. Laurus wrote us a long letter on the Greek Old Calendar situation, and it corresponds very much to what Dr. Kalomiros has written us. Reading between the lines, it seems that the Synod's decision temporarily to have no communion with Bp. Petros (until he regularizes his relation to his own Synod) is only a means of "humoring" Fr. P. and keeping him from jumping jurisdictions right away. But if the Synod were now to treat Fr. Panteleimon equally, and ask him to have no communion with the Mathewites until they rejoin the Auxentios group, and not to do anything in Greece without the knowledge and blessing of his bishop—what do you think Fr. P. would say and do?

The end of our "Greek adventure" seems near! We only grieve for the scandal and divisions which the vainglory of our "Greeks" is causing. Our poor "American mission"! How the Metropolia and Greek Archdiocese will laugh!

But therefore: we who are left must continue exactly in the same sober path, without great dreams of being anybody: just saving our souls and trying to share the riches of Orthodoxy with others.

Do not even think of abandoning Nikodemos. It is more. valuable than you can imagine—not because you are a "great theologian" or "expert" of any kind (God preserve us from any more of

those!), but because you are naive and provincial enough to believe that Orthodoxy is really the Truth which brings freshness and inspiration into life, not something to be subjected to petty politics and passions.

Enclosed at last is the new OW—complete after very frustrating delays, culminating in the conking out of our generator. Fortunately we were able, but only after two full weeks, to obtain a good new one, and today we demonstrated its worth by printing both sides of the cover almost simultaneously on our two presses!

We had planned for a year, by the way, to have Vladika Averky on the cover—but the final push came just now! Let them think what they will—this is a real Orthodox archpastor and theologian without any fakery or politics whatever, and he has suffered greatly himself from "politics" in the Church. We find the cover very comforting—we've done our duty by this righteous man!

A quote from the Ancient Patericon, used by Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava to encourage us poor strugglers of the latter times:

The Holy Fathers of the Skete (of Egypt) prophesied about the last generation, saying: What did we do? And one of them, great in life, Iskharion by name, said: we fulfilled, the commandments of God. They asked again: Those who come after us, will they do anything? He said: They will achieve half of what we did. And after them, what? And Ishirion said: The men of that generation will have no deeds whatever; but there will come upon them temptation, and those who are worthy in this temptation will be higher than us and our fathers."

Other Fathers have said: the psychological trials of dwellers in the last times will equal the physical trials of the martyrs.

But in order to face these trials we must be LIVING IN A DIFFERENT WORLD. Do you have a notebook for taking down quotes from Holy Fathers in your reading? Do you always have a book of Holy Fathers that you are reading, and can turn to in a moment of gloom? START NOW—this is essential.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. John Shaw we know—he visited us with other seminarians at the time of St. Herman's canonization. He is a convert, an orphan brought up by Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov, and rather "touched" on the subject of Old Believers. He thinks they are "right" and the Orthodox "wrong," he crosses himself demonstratively with two fingers, etc.—which makes him a good match for Fr. Panteleimon and his followers, for whom he long ago developed some kind of distaste. He is Archbishop Nikon's secretary. Let them fight it out together, and we who have more important things to do can peacefully do them!

P.p.s. We are reading the book of talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, given last year in his parish (before he was arrested) in Moscow. Very inspiring! He's in the Moscow Patriarchate, and his

philosophy is sometimes imprecise—but how boldly he speaks against hypocrisy, atheism, church politics! The people he speaks to (he answers their questions) are on a very primitive level—and the thought keeps coming back to us (as Mrs. Kontzevitch has told us)—the Shroud of Turin is for them! It is precisely the "scientific" answer to a whole generation of people stupefied by "scientific atheism." But we would still like to see a better investigation into the evidence of it in Orthodox history and iconography. Fr. Panteleimon is so concerned about having a "right opinion" about the Shroud (for which he gives no evidence whatever), that he is, of course, totally insensitive to the needs of such believers.

p.p.p.s. Do you have any plans for getting Vladimir's press to you?

190.

Oct. 4/17,1975

St. Hierotheus of Athens

Dear Alexey,

Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice! You are being taught humility and not trusting you own corrupt mind!

The fact that you are having quoted against you letters that don't exist—should make you sober and realize that against that kind of attack you can't fight, if you are an honest man. Therefore, don't. Let them do and say what they will. They have their rope, and alas, they are now going to hang themselves with it, and there is nothing anyone can do about it. But you stay clear of it and have no contact whatever with them.

We are witnessing a classic case of prelest, brought about by vainglory and self-esteem. The end will be disastrous, but many will fall into the pit because they trusted this man more than God.

We are not surprised at the forged letters—if they exist anywhere except in Fr. P's mind. Do you remember what Dr. Kalomiros wrote us about the supposed letter of Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago— "translated" by Holy Transfiguration Monastery, and including a whole page vilifying certain Greek bishops which was not written by Archbishop Seraphim and horrified him?

Fr. Panteleimon told me in Seattle two years ago: for the sake of the "Church" anything is permissible—lying, stealing, anything; the end justifies the means. The meaning of this didn't really register on me then, for I did realize that sometimes, to avert a greater evil, it is necessary to commit a smaller sin, such as lying. But always one does this only under absolute necessity and with self- reproach and repentance before God for having to do something which is not right. But with Fr. Panteleimon this Jesuit principle becomes a basic principle of church life which the politically astute ones can put into practice with impunity. His idea of the Church is all wrong, which explains also why he built his monastery in the middle of a city (to give the thirsting people the maximum benefit of his "holiness") and immediately began interesting himself in the political affairs of the Church everywhere.

Even if you had written such a letter to Fr. Ischie—what business is it of Fr. P's, that he should keep it on file and use it to blacken you later? And actually, even if the letter existed there is nothing whatever wrong about it—your guilt lies only in the mind of Fr. P., for whom alone association with Fr. Ischie is some crime! But on top of this, the letter doesn't even exist! Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive! (A handy poet, Pope!) This is all politics of the lowest sort, Communist Party style. Our Greeks are just a bunch of "birchers" after all! (I don't mean to the judge the well-meaning people in the Birch Society, but I don't like their political approach!)

There is a spiritual law: a feeling of heaviness and desperation should not come from leaders in the Church; that cannot be the effect of grace. If this feeling does come from them, they are in deep trouble—something is wrong with them. It is easier for those who have to suffer it, for it does refine them spiritually.

All this will pass, like some horrible nightmare. Just remember that that is not the reality. Try to avoid entirely any thought of "who is right, who is wrong." Pray for Fr. Panteleimon, who is in deep trouble spiritually, but cut yourself off entirely from him. There is sickness, petty politics, and demonic activity coming from that direction. Deep down we are peaceful about all this, for we know the Church us stronger than any of those who have been deceived into thinking they are the Church, and they always fall away, making those who remain in the Church more sober thereby.

Today, God willing, the new OW goes out. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

S.M.

191.

Oct. 5/18,1975

Dear Fr. Valery,

Blagoslovite!

We rejoice in the recovery of Sergei, for whom we prayed fervently. May God preserve him for many years of true Christian life unto salvation!

Your article on Jeane Dixon did not disturb us, but we agree with you that the "polemical" nature of the response is disturbing. This is something which we have seen in our Greeks in the Synod, and often in Americans. It seems to come from some kind of inner lack of balance and discretion, requiring the need to tell everyone: "Look, I am right, and he is wrong." But it is most disturbing to find this quality now in young Russian priests, revealing that they have lost the oneness of mind and soul which should be uniting true zealots of Orthodoxy, and no longer have the calmness in Orthodoxy that characterizes those who carry the true tradition of Orthodoxy within them. This summer we received a letter from Fr. Alexander Lebed, criticizing our use of the term "True-Orthodox," which seems to have something of this self-righteous agitation in it.

Of late we have been very disturbed by precisely this quality in our "converts," led by rather Panteleimon and his Greeks. More and more our "Greeks" give a feeling of sectarianism combined with a kind of academic conceit, as if telling us all: "We are the only ones who really are Orthodox, we are experts and you know nothing. The Russians are really secret Catholics, are under 'Western influence'; only we are "pure." But in feet they are not at all pure—at every step they reveal how much they are (evidently quite unconsciously) under very Western, modern influences—even to belief in evolution. Fr. Neketas Palassis' latest attack against Blessed Augustine (where he says that only the "theologically uneducated" or "Latin-leaning" accept him as a Saint or a Holy Father) is simply childish—but these "children" think they are leading the Church of Christ! For years Fr. Panteleimon has been spreading distrust among the converts—toward Bishop Petros, toward Bishop Laurus, toward any convert priest who doesn't become his "follower," and lately toward us also, apparently because we are "Russians" who are under "Latin influence"— and at the same time he himself keeps a "file" with copies of private letters (at least two of them outright forgeries) proving that there is a "plot" against him, and that it is the others who are spreading distrust of him. Well, it is about time somebody started distrusting him—he is involved in precisely that "political" church atmosphere which so grieves Vladika Averky, and we begin to see him now as a "classic case" of prelest, brought about by self-esteem and vainglory.

We feel that our "Greeks" will not be with us much longer—you and others have felt this for a long time, sensing their foreign spirit; but we supported them for a long time, thinking they were really helping our converts to receive true Orthodoxy. Fr. Panteleimon in his self-deception does not realize how far out of harmony he is with our Church—he thinks that the bishops also think what the Greek-Americans and many converts tell him, that he is the only real voice of Orthodoxy in English. Dr. Kalomiros in Greece writes us that in his opinion Fr. Panteleimon and his followers have fallen into "group pride," thinking that they alone are the standard of Orthodoxy. Fr. P. has done much harm in Greece also, but siding against the majority of Old Calendarists and supporting the "Mathewites"—who are real fanatics and legalists. We feel that disaster is coming upon our poor- English-speaking mission, and the converts who trusted the "Greeks" too much will have a tragic fate.

But we are peaceful about all this, seeing that it only makes us more sober. We must simply struggle all the harder to give the real feeling for Orthodoxy. The number of True Orthodox Christians seems to diminish rather than increase, and the devil attacks always from some unexpected direction! Our own experience with converts (we had four new ones with us this summer) teaches us how difficult it is for them to absorb true Orthodoxy, and how easy it is for them (because of their self-opinion and soft life) to fall for some "faker."

By the way, we are very impressed by the book by Fr. Dimitry Dudko. We should not call him a "confessor" (as one of your critics does!) so as not to confuse people into thinking he is "the real thing" 100%, and also some of his ideas are a little off—but his voice comes through as very genuine, as spoken through suffering—which seems to be the dimension lacking in our poor "convert-Ortho- doxy." Have you read it?

I would like to write more—but no time. We think about the Psalter from time to time—but technically it seems an immense project; and we have just finished the May-June issue of the Orthodox Word!

We ask your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

192.

Oct. 8/21, 1975

St. Tryphon of Vyatka

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is to accompany the enclosed tape on Kireyevsky, out of which I hope you can make a coherent conclusion. Also enclosed is your article on Patriarch Tikhon—good, but remember, in case it should ever come up, that he had his weak points, both in America and as Patriarch (he approved the new Calendar for a time, until Metropolitan Anastassy and others showed how dangerous this was); his greatness is in his confession and martyrdom, suffering with and for the people.

Nina sent us the letters from Boston—"oily" and repulsive to us. This is entirely the wrong spiritual tone, and is besides rumor-mongering under the guise of virtue. The bishops to whom we have been close have never taught us this foreign, papalist idea that they and an "inner circle" of initiates are an elite who can freely discuss church matters, and the masses must not be allowed to do so. When it came to important events in the Church they were always free to communicate their views, without flattering us that we were part of the "elite" who can know about them. But quite apart from that, note the glaring contradiction: only the bishops and the elite, not the faithful, were supposed to know what Fr. P. did—but in the letter to Nina it says that the reason Fr. P. did it was "to demonstrate to the faithful under Synod and among the Old Calendarists in Greece some consistency, and that we have no contact with Bp. Peter" (I'm quoting from memory)—yes, to demonstrate to the faithful; the only reason this is now covered up by an elitist philosophy is because the demonstration didn't come off as planned—it had side effects! Fr. P. and his followers know better—this is the fatal convert syndrome. They obviously want to remain in our Church, because it is politically most beneficial to be "foreigners" and have maximum freedom, such as our Russian clergy don't have; but the reason we think they won't stay with us too long is—precisely that they don't correctly calculate the whole church atmosphere; that is, they think they know what the "Russians" are thinking, but really the Russians just aren't telling them. Enough on this boring subject.

About your trials: most of them are natural parts of life, and God allows several of them to pile up because you are capable of bearing them. The numbness, which comes chiefly from exposure to politics in a sacred place where it does belong, will pass. You must learn to suffer and bear—but do not view this as something "endless and dreary," here you are wrong: God also sends

many consolations, and you will know them again. You must learn to find joy in the midst of increasing doses of sorrow; thus you can save your soul and help others.

There is so much for you and us to do yet, so let's not give up. Yes, learn how to work the press, but don't take a "leave" from publishing—just keep plugging away at it. There's so much that's inspiring to print, after first absorbing it in your own soul and helping chew it for our converts. We also are anxious to get ready some of our bigger projects this winter.

Brother Paul returned to the world on Saturday, after finishing his project. Pray that we will be able to present it well in the new Calendar.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

193.

Oct. 9/22, 1975

St. James, son of Alpheus

Dear Nina,

We were glad to get your letter. Thanks also for the letters which give the "Boston version" of recent events. We didn't like the tone at all— "oily," self-justifying, and rumor-mongering. To spread to California rumors about the personal life of Fr. Augustine Whitfield is not very noble, to say the least—and yet the constant accusation that it is everybody else who is spreading rumors. (Are they really unaware that it's not proper to send out letters with such rumors in them? Do they really not see that they're doing exactly what they accuse others—often falsely—of doing? If so, things are bad.) We also don't like the "elitist" philosophy set forth— "only we and the bishops can discuss these things." Bishops we have known have always been very straightforward in telling what they thought of church events, without flattering us that we are part of some inner sanctum of the organization. And yet the "elitist" explanation is obviously a cover-up, for Fr. Alexis says (p. la, para. 2) that the purpose of Fr. Panteleimon's act was "IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE FAITHFUL UNDER SYNOD AND TO THE OLD CALENDARISTS IN GREECE some consistency, and the fact that we do not accept Bp. Peter…." Of course this is hidden now only because it backfired and gave much adverse publicity to Fr. P.

The attack on Alexey is also very low—of course they have been spreading rumors all the time about Alexey, just as much after as before the "friendship was sealed" with him. We have been astonished and grieved to hear these things—and we let the rumors stop with us, not telling you or Alexey or anyone else about them. Evidently, again, the "Greeks" do not consider that these are "rumors" or "slanders" that they are spreading—everyone else does that, but they are only "warning the faithful," "telling the truth," etc. Because they have a double standard, they cannot understand the opposition that is mounting against them. Out of self-importance, they do not see what they are doing, and so any warnings or advice to them will only be answered by another oily, self-justifying letter (or worse, an open letter).

We are frankly glad of the stink that was raised over the last episode. You cannot "explain" things to Fr. P., you cannot "persuade" him—he is a politician and listens only to a manifestation of power, even if it's just a big noise in our "Russian tradition."

It is our "Greeks" who have now introduced into our Church the spirit of party politics, false zealotry, and suspicion. If they can't see this, it's pointless to talk to them.

There is a certain down-to-earth basic honesty and straightforwardness that is lacking now in our Greeks, and that is what makes us despair for the future. They are blinding themselves. And this is not manifest just in their "controversial" acts and words. They sent us recently a copy of a letter to someone in Australia (obviously written with the idea of sending us a copy!), which includes these words: "It might be to your profit and edification to write to the Fathers at Platina…. We are sure that they would be rejoiced to have occasion to make confession of our true faith and instruct you so that you may come to a better understanding." This is spiritual fakery. We want out of this phoney atmosphere of "know-it-all," of "humble instruction" of the lower classes, of pretending to make a "confession" when all we are doing is giving our opinion. As Fr. Dimitry Dudko so well says (and for all his mistakes, he is more Orthodox than the Boston "Party"), this is the religion of the West: "Spirituality with comfort." Alas, this is what America is offering to Orthodoxy! But how many can see through this subtle trap?

Well, were going to forget all this (if they'll let us) and get on with our business; may God grant you all to do the same. Alexey will have to "forget the Greeks" completely if he's going to stay sane; the more you can do the same, the better, so as to avoid worse temptations later. It's futile for you to defend Alexey—or us, when the time comes—before Fr. Panteleimon; his views are not based on facts, but on political realities. You've been warned! No need to "take sides"—but be sober.

By the way, a sure sign that Fr. P., whatever his outward arguments, is spiritually wrong in this case: he terribly grieved one hierarch (Vladika Averky's letter to us is one of despondency, and if Fr. P. will say in self-justification that Vlad. A. "misunderstood" him, then it is Fr. P.'s fault for not communicating to him in a decent and understandable way), and he terribly upset at least two others; and yet not one word that Fr. P. is "sorry" or in any way is anything but "right." There is spiritual disaster ahead for this man; he has gone off the Orthodox track in so many ways of feeling and sensitivity that I once thought he understood.

By the way, the fact that we refuse to enter into the campaign of distrust of Vlad. Laurus or of any of those accused of "Western influence" (and those who use this accusation are clearly under Schmemann's influence), does not mean that we agree entirely with them on any given issue. We suspect, for example, that the most sober position with regard to the Old Calendarists lies somewhere between Vlad. Laurus' position and that of Dr. Kalomiros. But we continue on the best of relations with both, because we all realize that we are human and do not have all the answers, unlike Fr. P., who (like all "party men") sees plots against him everywhere.

With Fr. Panteleimon we would like to remain on the best of terms also, but I doubt that he will allow this. Dr. Kalomiros says that he "cuts off" anyone who disagrees with him, and we have already seen what this means in the case of Alexey, a fellow struggler in his own Church and for

the same Orthodox zealot cause. Also, Fr. P., playing "Synod politics" for so long, has himself become part of the boring, stifling "organization mentality," covered with a sticky layer of unctions "love" for everyone which is not borne out by his actions. In the end this will submerge his many qualities, in which we don't doubt, which could have been such an asset to our Church if he hadn't come to think himself so important.

There are, by the way, many undercurrent factors in Fr. P's whole position in the Church which I don't think he understands at all; these make any defense or attack of him of little value, if it is based only on what seems superficially to be involved. If I get the chance and time, I will try to sort these out some day and write about them to Dr. Kalomiros, who seems to be the most level-headed Greek we know. I don't think any Greek, for example, is aware of how the whole Old-Calendarist situation seems to Russians—their demands to "take sides" just don't make any sense to Russians. No one, least of all Fr. P. himself, has ever thought that our Synod is obliged to follow whatever the Synod of Auxentios decrees, particularly when the decree is based on a position which our Synod refuses to accept (declaring lack of grace of the New-Cal. Church). Therefore, it would have been absurd for Vlad. Averky to break off communion with Bp. Peter—it would have been simply a bowing to a political demand of some brazen young clergyman. Now that our Synod has done so, of course, the situation is at least superficially clearer—but the problems actually remain.

Again, Fr. P. doesn't seem to understand that his position in our Synod is a special one, something granted as a great favor to him. Vlad. John told us in the beginning that the logical place for the "Greeks" when they came over was under Bp. Peter. The decision to bring them under our Russian jurisdiction, thus creating two groups of Greek Old Calendarists in this country, was a risky one and was owing to the love and kindness and naivete of our bishops. But Fr. P. seems to think that this special favor is his right, and he thereby involves our Church directly in Greek disputes, which he thinks is normal, but our bishops certainly don't. I'm afraid the logical conclusion of all this, which will probably now be more and more impressed on our bishops, is that Fr. P. belongs in some Greek jurisdiction where he can do what he thinks is right without dragging Russians into it. If he doesn't want this, Fr. P. had better start being more quiet and meek, just like the rest of us.

Enough of all this. Symeon replied to you? We haven't heard from him since we warned him (and Fr. Alexander) about going too fast. He's not ready yet to be a deacon, as far as we can see, but probably he's already been ordained.

Glory be to God for all things! Alexey will just have to learn more about rejoicing in sorrows. All this will be good for him, if he survives—by God's grace and Vladika John's prayers, he will. May God preserve us all. Be prepared for really difficult trials ahead when you will have to defend the Faith. But don't think you can do it by "being right"—that's Fr. P's fata! mistake. You must be in the spirit and tradition of the Church, and then you will survive even if you might be "wrong" about something or other (even "ecclesiology"—we have so many "ecclesiological experts" nowadays!). This message has not yet sunk into Fr. P, even though he talks about it.

Seraphim, monk

194.

Oct. 10/23, 1975

Dear Fr. Michael [Azkoul],

Bless! Enclosed is the text of Bulgakov and Florensky; I have pencilled in a few comments. You show quite clearly their gnostic tradition. May God grant the work to be printed. We look forward to seeing the summary.

Enclosed also are the two quotes you wanted; I hope they are what you needed.

We hear that you have written a short article on Orthodox Monarchy, which Fr. Neketas Palassis doesn't care to print; could we see a copy of it? This is a subject little understood among American Orthodox—and an "American" presentation might be more comprehensible than our own "Russian" one.

We ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

1. Quote from Nikita Struve in his lead editorial in the Messenger of the Russian Christian Movement, 1974, II-III, pp. 5-6 (with reference to Metr. Philaret's reply to Solzhenitsyn's Letter to the Third All-Diaspora Council, 1974):

"And how proud sounds the completely incorrect assertion that without 'the Russian Church Outside of Russia' nothing Russian would have remained in the West! However paradoxical it might be, it is precisely that part of the Russian Church in the Diaspora which went to the Greeks' or 'became American'—precisely it that has continued in the West the great Russian spiritual culture, that has not buried its talent in the ground but has multiplied it. It is to the creativity of this Church that the religious movement now being reborn in Russia now turns, for there has been no other religious-spiritual creativity in the Diaspora."

(Another part of the same editorial, p. 4:)

"Paris was the place of the blossoming of the Russian religious-philosophical renaissance, and up to now it remains a significant center. To New York was transferred the more dynamic wing of Parisian Orthodoxy, and in the new conditions of a young, no longer Russian but American, Church, it actively applies to life the testament of Russian theology….

"The Messenger, in answer to the desires from Russia, at one and the same time broadens and defines its direction: leaning upon the glorious Parisian traditions, upon the dynamism of the American Church, it will reflect the spiritual rebirth in Russia, and, as far as it is able, will help it."

2. Quote from Archbishop John Maximovitch, "The Veneration of the Theotokos and John the Baptist and the New Direction of Russian Religio-philosophical Thought," in Church Life, 1936, no, 6, pp. 94-96: After refuting Bulgakovs quotes on the "sinlessness" of the Mother of God

from the Holy Fathers, he goes on to refute his quotes from Orthodox Divine services (I take this citation because it is doubtless impressive to the riot-completely-informed to hear: Bulgakov cites 50 passages from Divine services to prove his point—how deep into the Fathers and Divine services he is:)

"Archpriest Bulgakov says that the Holy Orthodox Church firmly and clearly teaches the sinlessness of Mary in her innumerable Divine services which are devoted to the Mother of God. As a proof he cites about fifty excerpts from hymns in honor of Her. However, not in a single one of these is She named either sinless or any other equivalent term. In them She is called holy; but, even though in the full sense only "One is holy, One is God, Jesus Christ," all the pleasers of God can also be called holy, relatively. In their ranks is such a number of great sinners who repented that there is no need to prove that the word 'holy does not signify 'sinless.'

"The Theotokos is called blameless, [as Bulgakov notes]. Blame is a growing hard in sin, devotion to sin, sinful habit. A man is called blameless if he leads a God-pleasing life without being enslaved to any passion. 'Go before Me and be blameless,' said God to Abraham (Gen. 17:1). In sacred Scripture Job is called blameless and considered himself such (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3, 9:21). Concerning the righteous Zachary and Elizabeth it is said that they 'walked in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord blameless' (Luke 1:6). Using the word 'blameless' many times in the Psalms, David understands by it a fulfiller of God's law. 'Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord' (Ps. 118:5). This expression is applied also to certain saints in the Church services.* (*For example, Dec. 6, Canticle 6; Dec. 12, Canticle 7; the canon to Martyrs Juliana and Eugenia.) Nevertheless, none of the Old or New Testament righteous ones are considered sinless, and in the accounts of the lives of those who are called blameless, their sins and temptations are not concealed. Thus, in calling the Theotokos Blameless, and even All-Blameless, Most Blameless, the Church indicates Her devotion to the law of the Lord and the absence in Her of any blame of any kind, but not at all the absence of sins in Her.

"Like wise, one cannot see indications of the sinless [ness] of the Theotokos in the words 'undefiled' (which is used of the Three Youths*) (*Irmos of the 8th Canticle of Great Monday.), 'Pure,' 'Incorrupt,' 'Faultless,' since here only Her exalted moral character is referred to, but not the absence of any sin whatever. The expression, 'the body did not receive the course of sin speaks of the chastity and inviolate virginity of Mary.

"The remaining expressions cited by Archpriest Bulgakov from church hymns have even less relation to the question of sinlessness. 'Sanctified' (Jer. 1:5), the One Foretold,' 'Full of Grace,' 'Blessed,' 'Dwelling of God,' 'Most Glorious'—all these are exalted names of the Mother of God, but they nevertheless give no answer to the present question. And it is totally incomprehensible why there are quoted various figurative expressions such as 'New Heaven,' 'Book sealed by the Divine Spirit,' 'Divine Ladder,' 'Great Throne,' and the like, which clearly depict the great dignity of the Mother of God without touching at all on the present question, not to mention the fact that expressions which must be understood in a metaphorical sense cannot be set against those in which the Church's teaching is expressed clearly and definitely.

"By his proofs' taken from the Divine services, Archpriest Bulgakov demonstrates only that he could find nothing which confirms his view in the Orthodox Divine services and prayers, in which it is only to God that it is said: 'There is no man who shall live and not sin; for Thou alone art without sin (Prayer after the Ectene for the Reposed); and 'Thou alone art sinless' (Prayer for the Rite of Confession and many other prayers). The doctrine of the sinlessness of the Theotokos is not only foreign to Orthodox doctrine, but is contrary to it. Having many testimonies against itself, it has none for itself. Therefore, in order to prove its Orthodoxy, Archpriest Bulgakov has to resort to a selection of fragmentary expressions which either prove nothing at all, to else give the impression that his teaching is really confirmed by them if only one does not [consider] as a whole the work from which the expression is taken."

CONCERNING BULGAKOV

(My comments always in parenthesis, outside quotes.)

I. From the article "Tri Obraza" (Three Images") by Archpriest Alexander Schmemann, in the Vestnik (Messenger) of the Russian Student Christian Movement, Paris, No. 101-102, III-IV, 1971, pp. 9-24.

"Let us even allow that his teaching is 'heretical' and worthy of condemnation. But men have written and continue to write about heretics also, and not one of them was condemned without a real and conscientious analysis of his teaching." (p. 10)

(Thus, your study of him should be welcome! Long overdue! Let's give him his due!)

"Of him (Bulgakov) men have written and said that he is a 'heretic.' But despite this, following after him, or, in the phrase of V. V. Weidle, 'delighting' in him, I felt with all my being: no, this man is not heretic, but on the contrary, he is shining with the most important, most authentic thing which is contained in Orthodoxy." (p. 12)

After describing Fr. Sergius Bulgakov serving at the All-night Vigil of Palm Sunday: "I will never forget his eyes, shining with some kind of quiet ecstasy, and his tears, and all this striving forwards and upwards, precisely to that 'upper room' where Christ is preparing the last Pascha with His disciples.

"Why do I remember this minute so well? Because, I think, the remembrance of it involuntarily returns to me every time I have read and heard accusations against Fr. Sergius of'pantheism' and gnosticism,' of obliterating the boundary between God and creature, of the divinization of the world, and so forth. I do not know to what extent one might objectively draw this out of the texts of Fr. Sergius; for, I repeat, a real, serious analysis of his writings has not yet been begun; but he himself rejected these accusations with disgust. I know, however, that this remembrance returned because these accusations so evidently contradicted that which, in all probability, then struck me and has always struck me most of all in Fr. Sergius: his 'eschatologism,' his constant, joyful, bright orientation towards the end. Of all the people whom I have happened to meet, only Fr. Sergius was 'eschatological' in the direct, simple, early-Christian sense of this word, meaning not only a teaching about the end, but also an expectation of the end." (pp. 16-17).

"I do not know of such an eschatological orientation as compatible with 'pantheism.' But with my whole being I feel that it is impossible without a personal, all-embracing love for Christ…. It was precisely this love for Christ that streamed from the image of Fr. Sergius and it, of course, struck me at that Palm Sunday Vigil…. Without understanding this, without feeling this penetration of the whole creative work of Fr. Sergius by eschatological expectation, it is impossible, I think, either to understand rightly or value rightly his theological thought." (p. 18)

(Schmemann sees in Bulgakov system of Sophiology a "fall"; his experience and ideas, he thinks, are richer than Bulgakov's system.)

"He himself, I do not doubt, will remain in the Church's memory what he actually was: a prophet and seer of mysteries, a leader into some exalted and splendid land, into which he has called us all by his countenance, his burning, his spiritual authenticity." (p. 22)

(Comments:)

(1. An interesting thought for a "theologian": that we are to understand someone's theology by how he felt (or how we feel). It may be Schmemann is right: Bulgakov is better than his theology; but then the answer is clear—see the end of our quote from Archbishop John below: "Then let him renounce what he has written….")

(2. A footnote on Schmemann: his whole defense of Bulgakov here is typical of his writings in Russian—he uses an emotionalism that plays on the feelings of Russians about certain Church customs or words, which allows him to be quite vague intellectually.)

(3. A deeper point: Bulgakov is probably worse and more dangerous than the icy-cold Berdyaev because he attracts to his heresies not only by logic and words, but also by his personality and "spirituality." So what if Bulgakov is "eschatological," is oriented toward the end—he was oriented toward the end in a chiliastic sense, was he not—and therefore not only his words, but his very feelings are heretical. He not only thinks, he also lives and feels his heresy!)

CONCERNING BULGAKOV

(Archbishop John)

II. Archbishop John Maximovitch: from his article "The Veneration of the Mother of God and John the Baptist and the New Current of Russian Religio-Philosophical Thought," (actually a review of two of Bulgakov's books: The Unburnt Bush, 1926; and Friend of the Bridegroom, 1927), in Church Life (Tserkovnaya Zhizri), Yugoslavia, 1936, nos. 6, 7, 8-9, 10-11, and 1937, no. 1. (This was written by Archbp. John when he was Hieromonk in Yugoslavia, and was first printed in Golos Vernopoddannago (Voice of the Loyal Subject, the newspaper of Count (later Protopresbyter George Grabbe, in 1928.)

(In the issue of 1937, no. 1, p. 134, after criticizing in detail Bulgakovs teaching and showing his many blunders in church knowledge—this fact by the way is proof that at least part of Bulgakovs teaching has certainly been subjected to close analysis, Schmemann notwithstanding—[Archbp. John] writes:)

"The teaching of Archpriest Bulgakov on the veneration of the Mother of God and John the Forerunner, which, as has been explained, can in no way be considered Orthodox, is dangerous not so much in itself as because, in the present case as in many others, the author appears as the mouthpiece of ideas which have taken possession of certain circles of Russian intellectual society. These ideas are bound up with the teaching of Sophia the Wisdom of God." (Here follows a brief discussion of Sophia, created vs. uncreated, which I omit because it is rather general and without quotes from Bulgakov, and you probably have something more specific—but if you want I can translated this paragraph also.)

p. 14: "One recalls the first centuries of Christianity, when as a result of a striving to obtain a precise knowledge of God, and the world there appeared the new, harmonious system of Valentinus, which presented fifteen pairs of Aeons, proceeding one from the other, where likewise in each pair there are sharply distinguished a masculine and feminine principle. The new philosophers (i.e. of today) have not gone as far as the conclusions of Valentinus; there are no grounds as yet, likewise, to affirm that they have borrowed their teaching from him. However, the same foundations have been placed both there and here—human reasoning being adjusted to oneself and not yielding before Divinely revealed truths. This is an effort to analyze and confuse what God has revealed and what man has found himself. Both before an now, similar results are obtained from this. Our philosophers as it were feel their closeness to the ancient heretics, not concealing their sympathies toward then and seeing in them preachers of the truth. (Thus, Karsavin, "The Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church.") The pridefid mind cannot be reconciled with the humble falling down before God. It is more pleasant to pluck the fruit oneself than to receive it from the Creator. This is what Vladimir Soloviev expressed in his speech in honor of Auguste Comte when he cried out that religion must become Divine-human, that more of the human should be fused into it, because now it is too Divine.

"Without concealing it, the partisans of the new philosophical current are striving to reform Orthodoxy. 'The Orthodox order of things must be remade. A new style is arising in Orthodoxy," writes Berdyaev. From the editor of their organ Put' is proclaimed: A new order of the Orthodox soul is being formed, one more active, creative, more manful, fearless.' (Put', Sept. 1925). Thus it is declared outright that Orthodoxy up until now has been unsatisfactory on all sides. The Fathers of the Church did not sufficiently understand Christian teaching, the holy Martyrs were not sufficiently fearless and manful, and probably Sts. Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Philip, and Hermogenes of Moscow, Sabbas of Serbia, and Peter Tsetinsky (d. 1830) were totally inactive, even though these enlighteners, while being spiritual shepherds, were also outstanding men of active life in public life. They wish to create a new Orthodoxy' with a new teaching, a new order of life, even a 'new soul.'

"But will this be Orthodoxy, or even Christianity at all? It is incomprehensible how this is not noticed by some people who are evidently sincerely devoted to Orthodoxy. It is incomprehensible how Archpriest Sergius Bulgakov, while zealously performing the Divine services, studying with love the Church hymns, can preach what is contrary to them. Perhaps in the depths of his soul he feels his incorrectness, and this explains the wavering in his conclusions, the blunders which do not suit his calling and position (note: Archbp. John had

pointed these out in detail in the earlier part of this article), things which one can fail to see only by closing ones eyes. But if so, then let him renounce what he has written and not lead into error those who read his works. Let those who desire to remake the Church, which is 'the pillar and ground of truth' (I Tim. 3:15), stop their work. Let us hope that they will hear, if not our voice, then the voice of the Apostle Paul: ; Timothy, keep the tradition, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge false so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the Faith' (I Tim. 6:20-21). But if, all the same, the seeking for a new faith and a new wisdom should continue, let the true sons of the Church remain unwavering in Orthodoxy, singing with one heart and one mouth: 'Not in wisdom and power and wealth shall we>boast, but in Thee, the Hypostatic Wisdom of the Father, O Christ; for there is none holy but Thee, O Lover of mankind,"' (end of article; this last quote is a 4th-tone Irmos; I can look up the exact reference if you need it.)

III. Archbishop John Maximovitch: summary and excerpts from the rest of the same article as above (If you need any of these specific points, I can translate them for you.)

1. Bulgakovs teaching on the perfect sinlessness of the Most Holy Theotokos. Archbishop John shows how Bulgakov's teaching is against the Holy Fathers, that all his patristic quotes are unconvincing, and quotes B. who ways that one of his sources is "the testimony of immediate feeling," which, Archbp. John notes, "without the testing of it by the positive Church teaching, has often led to heresy." Archbp. John refutes one by one Bulgakov's "sources" for this new teaching—several Holy Fathers whom he misunderstands, and fifty quotations from the Divine services. Archbp. John concludes: "The teaching of the sinlessness of the Mother of God is not only foreign to Orthodox teaching, it is contrary to it. Having many testimonies against itself, it has none for itself. Therefore, in order to prove its Orthodoxy, Archpriest Bulgakov has to resort to a selection of fragmentary expressions which either prove nothing at all, or else give the impression that his teaching is really confirmed by them if only one does not read as a whole the work from which the expression is taken." (Church Life, 1936, No. 6, pp. 95-96.) This whole passage takes up 5 pages in Archbishop John's Russian text.

2. Bulgakov identifies the Theotokos with Sophia and makes a parallel between Christ and the Theotokos. Here Archbp. John notes: "Making use of many Orthodox expressions, the author puts into them an entirely different meaning." (1936, no, 7, no page numbers visible in my Xerox copy.) Bulgakov declares that the nature of the Theotokos is no longer human nature, but a "creaturely revelation of the Holy Spirit": the Holy Spirit acts in the world through Mary. Here Archbp. John remarks: "According to him it turns out that the Holy Spirit cannot appear in the world without the intermediary of the Virgin Mary. From where did Archpriest Bulgakov take his teaching? In this part of his teaching he does not cite any works of the Holy Fathers or any Church prayers at all. Here he is philosophizing, reasoning, but he is not in the least setting forth or seeking for the teaching of the Church." (no. 7, no page no.) Again Archbp. John says: "Archpriest Bulgakov wished to depict the Virgin Mary as a link binding together the Deity and humanity. Finding it insufficient that 'there is one God and one Intermediary between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a redemption for all,' he wishes to find yet another intermediary, uniting the feminine principles in the Deity and in humanity. It need not be

said that in these searchings he no longer even tries to base his teaching on the Holy Fathers and Church prayers…" Here Archbp. John thoroughly sets forth the Church teaching on these subjects. (5 pages altogether on these subjects.)

3. St. John the Baptist. Archbp. John points out how Bulgakov exaggerates his importance, make him something "special" (as he has done to the Theotokos). B. teaches that in His Baptism Christ became perfect God-man, to which Archbp. John replies: "This thought is completely un-Orthodox and is a deviation toward the ancient Gnostic teaching that Jesus precisely in the Baptism became Christ." (1936, no. 8-9, p. 144) Archbp. John sets forth Bulgakovs and the Church's teaching thoroughly. Then Bulgakov's ideas of the "sinlessness" of the Forerunner etc. To emphasize specialness of the Forerunner, B. cites his "Synaxis" ("Sobor" in Russian) in service books, Jan. 7—to which Archbp. John answers in detail how "this view of the author testifies only of his complete ignorance of the Church books and the Typicon." (1936, no, 10-11, p. 167). Bulgakov then cites the Proskomedia to emphasize special position of the Forerunner—but Archbp. John shows he is mistaken in his facts and interpretations. This whole part is 6 pages long.

4. After all this Archbp. John remarks: "Perhaps it will seem that all these are such insignificant mistakes of Archpriest Bulgakov, that it would not be worthwhile to touch on them; but they show upon what fantastical and theologically unfounded proofs he builds his theories." (1937, no. 1, p. 10)

5. Next Archbishop John refutes, with some humor, Bulgakov's demonstration that the Forerunner has the nature of an angel, was an "angelman," and gives the Church's true teaching on the Forerunner. This part is 3 pages long. Then comes the conclusion which I have already translated in Part II above.)

(Comments: Bulgakov's many quotations from Holy Fathers and Divine services apparently create the impression in many readers that he is quite an "expert' in them, and our Brotherhood has been accused by Schmemann and Archbp. Silvester of base "slanders" against him by printing in Russian that he knew the Fathers very poorly. Against this common belief it might not be bad to quote one whole section from Archbp. John, where he refutes Bulgakovs quotations point by point and shows what a rank amateur he was in the study of the Church's sources; Archbp. John himself quotes many other sources with obvious broad and deep knowledge of them. If you want, I could translate any of the passages I have here summarized.)

195.

Oct. 22/Nov. 4, 1975

Kazan Mother of God

Equal to the Apostles Averky

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, and congratulations on the namesday of Vladika Averky! We just asked Fr. Michael Pomazansky: who is an authentic Orthodox theological guide for today,

and his reply: Archbishop Averky. Fr. Michael told us some other important things which we'll share with you when we see you. (When?)

Concerning the Old Believers: your observations (and Nina's) seem sober, and give about the picture of them that we expected. Certainly there's no harm in continued personal contact with them—but as you correctly see, don't even think of being any kind of intermediary between them and the Synod. If they want to become Orthodox, it will come up in due time; if they want you to adopt Old Believer customs, they should know it's a waste of time. John Hudanish seems to be the convert enthusiast type—who will easily fall into disillusionment when his dreams are punctured! With him it's best to be as open as possible, and not to let him keep illusions that will be exploded by everyday reality.

Br. Laurence returned safely and, after thinking it over, wants to "try again" to stay. What can we say? By now it's obvious that he just isn't after what we're striving for, but is just tagging along, and is emotionally attached to us; we hate simply to tell him to find someplace else where he can be of one mind and soul (knowing he will never find such a place), and we also hate just to "drag him along" with us, requiring him to act in a way which must be voluntary in order to work. His "fits" sometimes (as for example, this time) make an immense drain on me, and Fr. Herman also, for actually what he does is call into question our whole way of life, not seeing or valuing it; and this way of life is already so difficult, requiring great struggle and sensitivity, that it can be destroyed. He wants an "idiorhythmic" way—i.e., old-maidism—and he just can't see that this is ridiculous and tragic when we have someone like Fr. Herman who can lead us in oneness of soul and mind (something we poor Americans can't do, as long as Orthodoxy is so frail in us). All the other brothers who have stayed here for any length of time have seen this, at least to some extent; but Br. L. seems to remain closed to it. Probably he will stay for a while longer on "probation," to see if he can grasp at least a little of what we are after. I only pray that our "softness" does not bring harm to anyone. We especially regret that you have to be dragged into it, with all your problems already. Br. L. feels the warmth of your community, but again, would never be able to sacrifice himself enough to be a real part of such a community. If he ever wants to come and live with you—watch out, and don't make any "special conditions" for him. In general, you are going to have problems enough with people who "think they can fit in" but are not willing to do the hard work necessary for this.

We get the impression that Nina is upset with us for our "harsh words' about Fr. P. Does she really think this is some kind of "personal feud"? There seems little point in trying to "persuade" her that Fr. P. is "wrong" about anything. Your best insurance against any uneasiness she may cause you is your calm awareness that Fr. P. & Co. are no authority for you; you have your own work to do and he has nothing whatever to do with it. If she tries to get you involved in thinking about Fr. P. at all—just get across this idea, calmly and firmly. I don't think she knows what I mean when I say she had better "break" with him—I don't mean "personal ties," of course; I mean emotional dependence, the "convert fear" that if you aren't with him you might be "wrong."

Vladika Averky, by the way, replied to us, thanking us for our "moral support" in a very difficult time for him. [letter ends]

196.

Oct. 24/Nov. 6,1975

Joy of All Who Sorrow

Dear Christopher [Amerling],

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ!

We will be expecting you as per your letter on Nov. 14 n.s. at the Greyhound depot in Redding at 5 p.m. (or whatever time you said—I don't have your letter right here). So far our weather is all right, but there may be muddy or snowy weather by then; but we will get out anyway, although we may have to walk partway back up.

We are getting our firewood and other work done before real winter sets in, with mounds of work to do in the printshop this winter. So far God is merciful to us, and despite all trials and temptations we are cheerful and ready for more struggles according to our feeble strength.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

197.

Oct. 24, 1975B

Joy of All Who Sorrow

Dear Brother in Christ, Andrew [Bond],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for your letter, the Old Calendarists, and the list of British Saints, all of which were received safely. Have you sent something besides the list of Saints? If so, we haven't received it yet. We were very glad to see this, and look forward to other such projects. Have you thought of compiling a "source list"—i.e., a bibliography of the original Lives of British Saints which are already available in English? There are quite a few such sources which we have come across, but we Orthodox tend to overlook them and not value them properly since they are in heterodox editions. We will be trying to make a little introduction to this topic (more with regard to the Saints of Gaul) in our new Calendar.

Regarding your debt: we understand your difficulties, and your situation as a missionary rather than a commercial enterprise, and we are happy to give you literature at less than "commercial" rates. Let us say that you owe us altogether 100 pounds, including this year's Calendars (1976) and all the Orthodox Words for 1976. If you could send us 50 pounds soon, and another 50 sometime next year it would be fine with us. We have just sent you 19 copies (all we could scrape up right now— more will be sent later) of Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future, and will send you 50 (or more) Calendars when they are ready—alas not for about a month.

We welcome news of missionary labors in England. Why did Fr. Yves not come with his parish? Does he find our Church too "soft" on Constantinople? I fear there are problems for true zealots of Orthodoxy in our Church. On the one side Fr. Panteleimon of Boston is preaching a zeal not entirely according to knowledge and is setting a wrong tone of "expertness" in theology and superiority to the Russians who are all under "Western influence" (if only he understood what "Western influences" he himself is under and learned humility from it, as the rest of us have to do!)—and this only encourages an opposite reaction which wants to believe that everything is practically all right with Constantinople and even the Soviet Patriarchate. May God guide us in a true middle path between these unnecessary extremes. So much of interest is coming now from the Soviet Union that it would be tragic to misunderstand it by going to either extreme.

We ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

198.

Oct. 25/Nov. 7,1975

Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius

Dear Brother in Christ, Thomas,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for your letter, in which we see your sincere desire to serve Christ, God willing in the monastic life.

You are welcome to visit us for some time and see our life at first hand. After this we could talk about your staying to become a novice. I don't know what kind of tales you have heard of us, but actually our life is not too different from that in the other monasteries in our Russian Church Abroad, the main differences perhaps being in our isolation from the world, especially in the winter, and our somewhat primitive living conditions, which can be a little difficult in winter. Our winter is usually not terribly cold, but there is usually quite a bit of snow. Also, I should tell you that we do not have the Divine Liturgy often, as we have no priest living with us. Our confessor visits us several times a year, and occasionally some other priest or one of our two bishops on the West Coast will visit us and serve Liturgy; but sometimes we have to go out to receive Holy Communion at the nearest church (200 miles away).

The first and most important thing in monastic life is trust, which is acquired by experience. From your visit (if you still want to come) you will be able to see whether you can place your trust in us to guide you in monasticism, according to the teachings of the Holy Fathers.

You are welcome to bring your icons and books, but I don't know whether there will be a place for an icon shelf or not, as you might not have a regular cell are first.

To get to us you will have to go by Greyhound to Redding, 230 miles north of San Francisco and 40 miles from us. You will have to write us (or send a mailgram) several days in advance to

make sure we will know when you are coming (we have no telephone), and we will come to pick you up.

If after all this you still wish to visit us, it would be good for you to stop on the way to us at the Sepulchre of Archbishop John Maximovitch, a true holy place (in the basement of the San Francisco Cathedral on Geary Blvd.) and pray to him to guide you aright in the path of salvation. He is our powerful intercessor before God.

Please let us know your plans, and write of any questions you may have.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

199.

Nov. 7/20, 1975

St. Cyril of New Lake

Dear Brother in Christ, Phanourios [Ingram],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. We were glad to hear from you again. In answer to your two questions:

1. You should be allowed to receive Holy Communion in San Francisco after simply going to confession. There is no special rite for receiving people from the Greek Archdiocese, because our Russian Church Abroad has not made any declaration officially breaking off communion with them nor declaring that their sacraments are without grace; all that has been done was a statement strongly discouraging our people from being in communion with the Greek Archdiocese. Some people might even try to tell you that it is "all right" to receive communion again in the Greek Archdiocese, but you should not do so; you should strive to be in harmony with the spirit and not merely the letter of the decrees of our bishops, being aware that the Greek Archdiocese is going faster and faster into apostasy from Christ and Orthodoxy. In our Russian Church you must go to confession each time before receiving Holy Communion—except for some special times such as Holy Week, when you can go to confession on Great Thursday or Saturday and then receive communion without confession at the Pascha Liturgy (or even receive communion at all three Liturgies—Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday).

About receiving communion—we will write our Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco and inform him what we have told you, and if he says anything different we will write you again before January.

2. Concerning fast days, we will be printing some details in the 1976 Calendar. The precise rules of fasting are a little complicated, but in general: on Wednesdays and Fridays one eats no meat, eggs, dairy products, fish, or oil (such as fried foods), and also no wine; but if there are feast days on Wed. or Friday the fast is relaxed to allow the eating of oil and wine (lesser feasts) or fish (greater feasts—mostly the Twelve Great Feasts). During the Nativity Fast no meat, eggs, or dairy products are eaten for the whole fast, but on Tuesday and Thursday oil can be eaten even if

there is no feast day, and on Saturdays and Sundays fish can be eaten. If a lesser feast day falls on Wed. or Friday, oil can be eaten, and if on Mon, Tues, or Thursday, fish can be eaten. Of course, if you can't go to church every day and don't know just what kind of feast is being celebrated, it's difficult to keep up with this— that's why we will indicate it for every day in the new Calendar. Most people don't know all these rules, and for laymen who might be mixed up by them it's really enough to refrain from fish (and of course meat, eggs, and dairy products on Weds, and Fridays during the Nativity Fast. The Great Lent is stricter, allowing only oil and wine on Saturdays and Sundays.

Unfortunately, our 1976 Calendar won't be out for at least 3 weeks. Please pray for us so that we will finish it at least by then. We have many difficulties, and it begins to look like a hard winter ahead. Last night we had our third snow already (5 inches), and usually we don't have snow until the last days of November. But all this we accept for our humbling, and it is good for us.

Don't worry too much about how spiritually poor you are—God sees that, but for you it is expected to trust in God and pray to Him as best you can, never to fall into despair, and to struggle according to your strength. If you even begin to think you are spiritually "well off"— then you can know for sure that you aren't! True spiritual life, even on the most elementary level, is always accompanied by suffering and difficulties. Therefore you should rejoice in all your difficulties and sorrows.

Nina has written us that your wife is planning to go to New Jersey, either soon or in January, and she gave her the address of Father George Lewis. There is another church she might visit if she has the chance—I'll find the address and put it at the bottom of this page. The services there are in Slavonic, but the priest, who is a very good friend of ours, speaks good English and is very good and zealous. If she visits Fr. George Lewis' church, she should be sure to meet my godfather there, who is the choir director: Dimitry Andrault de Langeron. It would be good if she could visit his home also— which is like a little church. He has three children. I will write him also and tell him to expect her.

Please pray for us—the prayers of true Orthodox Christian for each other are very necessary in these terrible times.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

200.

Nov. 18/Dec. 1, 1975

Martyrs Platon and Romanus

Dear Brother in Christ, Macarios [Schaefer?],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm sorry to be so late answering your letter. We've been working day and night on The Northern Thebaid (which is now complete except for cover), and now the Calendar, and I just haven't answered any letters.

About becoming a novice: if Nicholas feels that he should, and the authorities bless it, then that seems to be the path for him. But if you don't feel any great urge to take this step, there's no need to rush it. Such a decision will mature in its own time. Your status as a seminarian is already definite enough to give you protection against many of the devil's wiles, and the decision to become a novice is something extra, which perhaps you don't need yet.

We are glad to hear of your progress in Russian and in general. May Christ our God keep you in His grace. But be always trembling before God, expecting temptation on any side, and trusting in God and His Most Holy Mother and the saints to get you through. The path of salvation is a narrow one, but with God's help we can stay on it, because that is what He has called us for!

Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

201.

Nov. 27/Dec. 10, 1975

Kursk Icon—St. Diodorus of Solovki

Dear Brother in Christ, Paul [Bartlett],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please forgive our long silence, which is especially reprehensible on our part, knowing the difficulty of your lone Orthodox struggle out there in the world. These last weeks have been so busy that we have scarcely been out of the printshop, day or night. Glory be to God, The Northern Thebaid was finished at last and some copies brought for binding to San Francisco (you'll get yours as soon as the cover is ready). Now the Calendar is in full production and perhaps in a week will be finished. The machines are working well—the generator is perfect, although it uses much propane, and the linotype works the best it has since summer, with the worst of its problems cleared up. The nicks in the matrices, I discovered, were caused by a worn-out screw in the vise cap, requiring only a slight adjustment; and the stick matrices were the fault of Typomite—now I use just the dry brush to clean the magazine. The heat and lead quality have been excellent for several weeks, glory to God. When in San Francisco I looked at the linotype Vladimir mentioned, which is not guaranteed in running condition, but I think I could put it into such—but we won't think about it until spring. Even at its best, our present machine is slow, and we keep thinking there isn't much time to do all that we should.

Br. Christopher has been with us for several weeks, but will be leaving for Hawaii next week, rather unprepared for an isolated life in the world.

You, of course, are better prepared, even though you may find the way discouraging right now. Fr. Dimitry Dudko has an answer for the new convert leading a lonely life in the world (I think we read this at trapeza after you left): Enter as much as possible into the Church's spirit and way of thought and life. (In Russian this is called "churchification"). Your loneliness, while difficult to bear, is good, because only out of suffering comes spiritual growth; it will pass as you get more and more into the Church spirit through continually nourishing yourself with it. Daily reading, even if little, is very important in this struggle.

About the priesthood: treasure the idea for now in your heart. The more experience you have in life, and in suffering (I know you don't like that word—but even if you don't go out and seek suffering, at least be prepared to accept what little God allows you, and accept it gladly)—the better prepared you will be for priesthood. In Jordanville they are trying to prepare an English reading list for correspondence courses (I believe), so technically this question might become easier before long. I don't know how Fr. Neketas might look on your hope—I rather think he might be discouraging about it. Actually, there is more reason in our day than ever before to wait for ordination until after the canonical age of 30. But this thought, and practical approaches to it, should be maturing in your mind and heart in the months ahead.

You will see in the Calendar our introduction to St. Gregory of Tours—actually used as an introduction to the whole question of Western saints. This should go in the Sept-Oct. issue of the OW. And then we need a last small introduction before beginning the Lives themselves. Perhaps, after finishing your "thesis," you could do this for us? What we need is just a brief life of St. Gregory himself—not hagiographic style, but more popular-scholarly, so as to place him in the history of his times, etc., with all details that put him in Orthodox light. I.e., his family background, turning points in his life (a miracle of St. Martin, I believe?), Gaul and the Church at his time, his governance of his flock, attitude toward princes, etc. Perhaps [letter ends]

202.

Dec. 1/14, 1975

St. Philaret the Almsgiver

Dear Father Hilarion [Igor Kapral],

Blagoslovite!

We have heard with joy of your tonsure and ordination. May Christ our God preserve you for many years of fruitful service in His Church!

Many thanks for your letter on Fr. Panteleimon, etc. Do not be overly grieved at the troubles that go on about us. It is actually good that you suffer and grieve, because only in this way can you gain the testing which is so needful today above all, in order to save your own soul and to be of help to others. Without deep grief, suffering, persecution, we will not be prepared for the extremely difficult days ahead, when "head-knowledge" will be of little benefit.

About Fr. Panteleimon we believe it is extremely important to be objective—i.e., not to treat him with special favoritism, to apply a different standard to him as a "non-Russian" than to all our

Russian clergy and faithful and the ordinary converts who are not under his wing. Perhaps a great part of the trouble that has arisen in recent years comes from this very favoritism—a treatment which is often given to converts in our Church, but which often leads to disaster if the convert is not gradually forced to have a more mature attitude and cease being a "spoiled child.'' If Fr. Panteleimon and his followers do not change some attitudes in the days ahead, they will inevitably go the way of all "crazy converts"—more Orthodox in appearance than many that so far have gone off the track, but still "crazy"—by which I mean: trusting no one but themselves, "knowing better" than everyone else, losing contact with the whole Church and its universal tradition. It is much better for Fr. Panteleimon to have some shocks and jolts now, even over seemingly insignificant or exaggerated things, than to continue his way peacefully until a real big shock comes and finds him unprepared and untested, and totally unaware of how bishops and others actually regard him.

I hope you will not interpret my words as an expression of some kind of "rivalry." We have our own faults and passions, but I sincerely believe that we are not "jealous" or have any feelings of "rivalry" for Fr. Panteleimon or any of our Greeks. We have had here as novices or laborers several exnovices of Fr. Panteleimon, and on the whole we could only confirm for them what they had already learned under Fr. Panteleimon, so close is his approach, in general, to ours. The very existence of Fr. Panteleimon has been a source of strength to us—in particular, his fresh approach to monasticism, spiritual life, the saints, as opposed to the deadness of "taking for granted" all these things that is so widespread today. This we regard as his strongest point, (not his theology), and it would be tragic for this to be lost to our Church; we ourselves would be the worse for it.

For an objective view of Fr. Panteleimon, we regard it as essential to be aware of two main points, knowledge of which, I think, will help us to keep our heads whenever the next "incident" flares up (which under present conditions is inevitable):

1. His attitude of mistrust and suspicion for those outside his circle of influence. This we have observed with increasing grief for five years, and leads him sometimes to ridiculous conclusions about "plots" against him. This encourages the party spirit in our Church—although he accuses others of this, I really doubt that anyone in our Church has promoted it as actively as he and his followers. He keeps "files" of private letters which have no relation to him or his monastery, solely in order to show who is associated with whom and is therefore "against" him. Several of these letters, we know quite certainly, are either forgeries or exist only in the mind of Fr. Panteleimon. This preoccupation with other people's business is a sickness, and if it is not stopped it will not have any good result. A result of this pre-occupation is the spreading of stories and slanders about others. We saw two letters from his monks, defending him in the recent troubles. Both of them accused others of spreading rumors, and both of them contained most unkind stories about others in the Church, "passed on" by the monastery for no good purpose. This is surely spiritual blindness: to accuse others of doing precisely what you yourself do, and in the very same letter! Why? I am not saying this to bring accusation against the monastery, for I do not believe the monks are any more "evil" than we or anyone else. They do such things precisely because of a want of objectivity—because Fr. Panteleimon and his followers have

become accustomed to live by a different standard from everyone else. They are supposed to be concerned about everyone's business (monks?! in a hesychast monastery?!!), but no one else is supposed to be permitted this. We must be objective about this, and at least recognize it for what it is, even if we may be in no position to correct it.

Forgive me, Father, but I believe I detect in your letter one small sign of the "double standard" we have grown used to applying when Fr. Panteleimon is concerned. Why do you speak of "Bishop" Petros? Is it really only because he is out of communion with his own Synod? Or is it because Fr. Panteleimon's feelings about him are so strong that you involuntarily reflect his feelings? Many of Fr. Panteleimon's spiritual children had an absolute hatred for Bishop Petros even when he was still in quite good standing with our Synod. Perhaps we are hopelessly naive (and certainly we are "out of things" and don't even hear most rumors)—but we know that Bishop Petros has a document from our Synod testifying to his valid ordination as bishop, and that he is out of communion with his own Synod solely (or at least chiefly) because he refused to state that the New Calendar Church no longer has grace—a statement which our own bishops refused to sign. Why this disdainful attitude toward Bishop Petros? By the way, our Archbishop John told us, when Fr. Panteleimon was about to join our church ten years ago, that he should probably be placed under the jurisdiction of Bishop Petros. As a special favor, he was not, but was allowed to form, in effect, a second jurisdiction of Old Calendar Greeks in America—obviously an occasion for scandal in future, which has since begun to occur. We strongly suspect "rivalry" plays at least some part in this whole situation, and until we are given very good cause we cannot but apply to Bishop Petros the same standard we must apply to Fr. Panteleimon and everyone else: we will not believe rumors about him. Of course, we must obey any directives of the Synod concerning him, but the directive itself is a conditional one: until his situation is rectified with his own Synod. Even if Bishop Petros is some kind of "monster" or "magician"—and several bishops of our Synod tell us he is not, in their opinion—our attitude toward him in any case should be objective, not based on feelings or on making him a special case for disfavoritism.

2. Father Panteleimon's theology. This would require derailed discussion to go into thoroughly, but let it suffice to apply the standard of objectivity to it also: It has strong points, and it has weak points. From what we have seen (in a number of open letters) I would say the weak points outweigh the strong points, and the "theological" reputation of Fr. Panteleimon is largely a creation of "public opinion," based on a few of the stronger points, but based even more on the tone of self-assurance with which all the theological opinions of Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Neketas are expressed. The "Open Letters" we have seen have far too much self-esteem, too much a "know-better" attitude, too much "expertness" and elitism—all of which are totally out of place in theological writing, but are especially unjustified when one considers the weakness or outright falseness of some of their positions. Differences of theological opinion are one thing—one can live with this in the church, as long as both sides are humble enough. But something else entirely is the offering of opinions as certain truth—which is where their "arrogance" and "harshness" which you mention are especially offensive. Whether it be "awful catechisms" (in the diocese of a bishop who would be horrified if he were informed of this expression) or "Augustine the heretic" (when Fr. Neketas knows, because we told him, that Archbishop John revered him as a

saint), or the doctrinaire opinions on the Holy Shroud or Weeping Icons (opinions which seem to change now and then, because Fr. Panteleimon several years ago told us personally that he now accepts them, while his spiritual children even now are fanatically against them)—their very attitude makes objective discussion of such matters (which is quite necessary in the Church) an impossibility. This especially makes us grieve, because we see no "escape-valve" for differences—if one disagrees with them, one is "attacking" them and will be regarded either as an enemy or a dunce who needs to be enlightened with an "Open Letter" (few of which actually attack the question that prompted them!). How can there be oneness of mind in the Church with such an immature attitude?

We will he very happy if Fr. Panteleimon has learned from the recent troubles and is prepared at least to present a meeker appearance, show more tolerance for the opinions of others on disputed questions, cease his disdainful attitude toward the Jordanville seminary (which he called to me personally "pitiful") and to members of the clergy (Vladika Laurus in particular, whom his spiritual children say "can't be trusted"), and withdraw his persecution of those who do not follow his "party-line." Here in California we have two meek laborers for Christ: Alexey Young and Nikodemos, and Vladimir Anderson and "Eastern Orthodox Books." If you only knew what real slaves of God they are, how they literally work out their salvation with trembling and make immense sacrifices for the cause of Orthodox missionary labors. Perhaps Alexey has made some mistakes (one rather big one, but a question of taste rather then dogma, and certainly nothing worse than the mistakes Fr. Neketas has made in print)—but have you noticed what a splendid little publication Nikodemos has become? The articles on Kireyevsky are priceless—he has really absorbed the message and spirit of Kireyevsky, which most Russians missed then and now, a message which is extremely important for our Orthodoxy and our theology today—and he, who has suffered so much from the cruel behavior and slanders of Fr. Neketas (to which we can bear witness) and the coldness of Fr. Panteleimon and all the tales which have been spread from Seattle and Boston, and yet does not attack back and is most kind and meek toward them—is regarded as an "enemy," and his valuable publications are not even mentioned. And such treasures Vladimir Anderson has published at great cost and sacrifice—and Fr. Neketas wont even mention that the Homilies of St. Makarios are again in print, in an excellent translation, after 50 years (not to mention other valuable publications)! Where is the sense of common missionary oneness of mind, forgiveness of others, distrust of one's own opinions?

Over all this we grieve and suffer—no less than you have suffered in these last months, I make bold to say. I write this all to you as an "exchange of opinions" which will perhaps help and protect both you and us in the days ahead. Please inform me if I haven't been as objective as I tried to be. In the days ahead—the last days left to us before what seems impending disaster for America—we intend to proceed in the same spirit as in the past, not joining any "party" or taking any "sides," but continuing our effort to give the truths of Orthodoxy for contemporary use. Perhaps the "static" of "interference" we now feel as coming from certain quarters has even helped us, in that it forces us to be more precise in what we say, knowing how some statements will be interpreted. We ask your prayers, and we beg you to be open with us in future when disagreements or disputes might arise.

With love in Christ,

S.

203.

Dec. 3/16, 1975

St. Sabbas of Zvenigorod

Dear Nina,

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ!

It was good to hear from you. For now—rejoice in your isolation, and learn to be somewhat "aloof" from that world out there—even the Orthodox world. Whatever is developing in your soul will come out better and straighter for being away from the tumult of the world. In fact, many of your "answers" will probably appear by themselves if you just sit patiently for a while and continue to let things settle in your soul. The big "problems" outside will mostly take care of themselves. Only keep yourself nourished on the sources, keep building an Orthodox world for yourself, which will survive when everything else may fail.

We heard from Barbara also, who seems fairly peaceful. She didn't mention anything to us about coming back to Etna.

Yes, it was Vladika Nektary's namesday. Fr. Herman talked to him by phone, about which he seemed happy, but weighed down by the world. ,

Our winter has begun not harshly at all, only a few small snowstorms, and the last snow is almost melted now. But we can't predict what will be for our feast. Christopher helped greatly in the printing dept., but just "had to" go home, and so we saw him off several days ago. His heart and mind function nicely (except when moods take over), but the will is totally undeveloped. He is terribly immature, and perhaps he will be all right when he grows up a little more—but in contemporary America it isn't easy to "grow up"!

What is "on time" for the Calendar mean? I thought we were already terribly late! If January first is what you mean, then God willing we will be on time—we would like to start mailing it by Saturday, but much much remains to be done. We're printing 1500 this year, and we are swamped with immense piles (39 of them, each over a foot deep) of paper. How this will ever be folded and put together and sent out—-well, God and the saints will have to help. Fortunately, our little Gleb has a passion for collating, and produces tremendously. I hope the Calendar will inspire some people; it certainly inspired us—between moments of fatigue.

God willing, will see you soon. Pray for us. We are cheerful, which is probably helped by being so cut off from the world especially in the last weeks, and having so much work. The machines work fine, but there is just so much to do—2500 copies of each issue of OW, which is quite a job. John Hudanish visited us, after wandering for hours over our snow-clad mountains. Obviously the man needs what all we Americans need—much suffering, endured with patience and thanksgiving!

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

204.

Dec. 3/16,1975B

St. Sabbas of Zvenigorod

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

John Hudanish was here and said you were busy on Nikodemos—I hope we'll see it soon? Which reminds me—must start getting to you the tapes on Sederholm. Hope to do so within a few weeks. How does Nikodemos feel right now? How about money?

John Hudanish—a "typical American convert"—may God grant him patience and gratitude in sufferings, there is no other way. The ones who go off don't want that and refuse to accept it. Our Christopher (who left Saturday) is one such, but perhaps as he grows up he will learn. He is terribly immature and just totally spoiled, more so than most.

We have been so busy on printing (about a week to go on the Calendar) that we haven't thought much about the outside world, but rumblings do get to us about the "big question" (which is a rather difficult one to define!) Our Vladika Averky cover seems definitely to have put us into a certain "category"—which is probably for the best. We feel now some indefinably "weight" resting on us, as if we are carrying the brunt of a "battle" whose front lines are not dear. Probably our isolation (in several senses) makes us better able to bear this weight, so we thank God. Around Fr. Panteleimon there seems to be some cloud that prevents even sober people from thinking too clearly or somehow "handling" the situation, and we have received several indications that the older generation expects us to say the right "word" when the time comes. May God give us strength. Vladika John blessed and named our Orthodox Word, so we go forward trusting in him. Basically we are peaceful, and very full of work.

We've had little snow, and the last bit is melting today; our road has been open most of the time. God willing, we will expect you for our feast. Pray for us.

With love in Christ.

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Enclosed one of John H's letters. The other Russian text is the Moscow Patriarchate text on Old Believers, which we haven't read yet.

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1976

205.

Jan. 3/16, 1976

St. Genevieve of Paris

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Just a brief note to return Vladimir's note and one letter of Kalomiros—the other, unfortunately, I've mislaid between my two cells and will have to search more for. Forgive me! I still haven't written Kalomiros, but hope to shortly.

I've read through and underlined most of the Sederholm book, and will try to get one tape on it done on Sunday; also a sermon of Vladika John then. I'll look for something on Lent, and then probably one on Pascha for the next issue? Looking through old issues of his diocesan bulletin in Shanghai—he was obviously penetrated with the idea of "enlightening the people," constantly teaching them. That's why the idea of a periodical is important—a constant giving of spiritual food, even if only a little at a time. Today the Church atmosphere has become so worldly, however, that it's next to impossible to do this effectively on a diocesan or even a parish level—better tiny groups, but with oneness of mind and soul.

Br. Laurence helped us get out the Calendar, and now he will probably be leaving before long. It's near the end of his third year, which is the standard period of monastic trial, and it's abundantly evident that he is not in harmony with our life here, does not want what we are after or can give. Fr. Herman and I allowed ourselves to reflect for a moment on what could have become of Br. L. if he had been able and willing to give up his self-insistence. He could have become extremely inspiring, inspired and fruitfvd in our conditions! But from first to last he didn't want it, and there's nothing more we can do for him. I think we did do him some good in his three years, at least in outward behavior, and that could even help him to survive in Jordanville if he goes there. We feel sorry for him, as he is psychologically so helpless and immature, and quite insecure in spite of all his demands and insistences. May God grant that he leave peacefully, without fits or hard feelings.

As for ourselves, we feel tremendously inspired by the new year, the conclusion of at least a big part of last year's work, and the great prospects ahead, if only God will continue to grant the present opportunity. The spring weather also helps! The new OW may be out, God willing, by the end of next week. There remains a little polishing of our presentation of Vladika Andrew (the second of our "living links")—please pray that we will be able to say about him (in our one-page introduction) what will be fruitful and inspiring for others.

I trust David got some benefit from being here, at least by attending the services. He is unsophisticated—but not really simple! He has the same complexes as our complicated converts and also will have to go on a path of humbling if he is to survive as Orthodox.

We got a long letter from John Hudanish, who wants to visit us with someone or other next month. Frankly, there is something very artificial and fake about his attitudes, which was only emphasized by the fact that he wrote in Russian, with some very artificial expressions. The battle of the Old Believers for the survival of their traditions (though of course one can't but sympathize with it) is not the same battle we Orthodox Christians are fighting to keep alive the

spirit of Orthodoxy! Everywhere the spirit is being quenched, and the preservation of old customs isn't going to help when the spirit is gone!

Our Brotherhood has been mercilessly attacked by N. Struve in the Paris Messenger for our article (which Vladika Averky published in Russian) on Solzhenitsyn and the Catacomb Church. We're glad they at least read what the "fanatics" are saying!

S.

206.

Jan. 18/31, 1976

Sts. Athanasius and Cyril of Alexanderia

Dear Alexey,

Rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I hope you aren't still upset over the Hudanish fit. You can accept it as "experience"—and really, such behavior is so outrageous, so out of the context of normal life, as it were, that one can't really believe it until one see it with one's own eyes. But how widespread is this kind of behavior among mankind! We've been getting a similar dose from Br. Laurence—his mood changed again (after beholding our beautiful nature on one of our Epiphany processions), and he thought he might not leave after all, and so he put down (at our request) in black and white a report of his three years here and his hopes for the future. The report turned out to be a thorough accusation of us as his "exploiters." My heavens. It would be useless to dispute with him, and as Fr. Herman told him, with such an attitude it's quite impossible for him to stay. His condition for staying, as it turns out, is that we reform ourselves and give up the coenobitic monastic ideal! (Although, of course, he himself wouldn't express it that way, since he has no idea that he doesn't understand monasticism.

The state of Hudanish and Br. Laurence is the state of prelest called by the Holy Fathers "fancy" or "opinion"—when a web of ideas is spun which has no real contact with reality, which is why when it comes out it seems so very "far out." A person then acts according to his passions, but thinks he is being logical according to the web of ideas he has spun. Usually the devil uses one little ideas to "catch" us, knowing that it will catch us in something we may be emotional about; and that "catch" is sufficient to get us to weave the whole spider web which trips us up. I suspect that your "smoking" was the trap that caught Hudanish—he knows its so obviously "wrong," and from his Old Believer contacts he has a "thing" about being "right"; and looking at the rest of what he has seen and heard of you in a new light, he sees many "wrong" things there also which he wouldn't have paid much attention to if he hadn't been "caught" by the smoking. Most likely his letters to you of late have come after long stewing and conversations with himself—and what the letters do is not to express any reality, but only different stages of his conversation with himself in his own spider web. We've seen several examples of this here, and it seems to account for many of the difficult "convert" phenomena. The answer seems only one thing: conscious spiritual life according to the Patristic teaching; there, are to be found the right way of thinking

which disperses all our "opinions." We've asked Vladika Averky to write an article on this subject.

We'll be interested in your reaction to the first Sederholm tape—is there anything there yet for you to grab ahold of? Perhaps you need some more tapes on him first, before writing a first installment. Let us know. ·

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

207.

Jan. 21/Feb. 3, 1976

St. Maximus the Confessor

Dear Dr. Kalomiros,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. I am sorry to be so late in answering your last letter. We have been working constantly at catching up on printing, and then I was sick with flu for several weeks. In general, our printing work is accomplished with great difficulty, and our helpers (both novices and laborers) often cost us as much labor (especially of soul) than they give in exchange—they are often so immature, so ready to accept and follow the most obvious temptations from the evil one. But we strongly feel that God and His saints are with us, and we go forward in faith. We sent you several weeks ago (by sea mail) a copy of our 1976 Calendar and The Northern Thebaid, which we finally finished very late. Today likewise we are sending you our latest Orthodox Word (July-August!); we hope to have the Sept-Oct. issue out in two weeks, God willing, although even then we will be far from caught up. Our winter weather has been very warm, with almost no snow, which has greatly aided our printing work—although with such a winter there is always danger of a shortage of water by the end of summer. But this is in God's hands.

The Fr. Panteleimon-Archbishop Averky incident has quieted down, after causing some disturbance in our Church. Apparently the incident itself was due to a misunderstanding, since Fr. Panteleimon apparently did not actually mean to break off communion. But the incident, "accidental" or not, is significant of deeper disagreements beneath the surface of our Church life, and as long as Fr. Panteleimon thinks (or at least gives the impression) that he is the Orthodox "expert" in our Church and knows better than all our bishops and theologians, there will be other such incidents in future. We have been told that Fr. Panteleimon has been humbled by this experience, but the one letter from his monastery that we have seen that explains his point of view does not seem at all humble, but rather was full of self-esteem and an "elitist" point of view—i.e., "no one but the bishops and a few of us chosen ones are supposed to know about all these things." This "know-better" outlook is very bad and harmful.

We ourselves cannot pass judgment on the question of Bishop Petros, because we have never received any actual evidence for or against him. You seem to think that our bishops have been against Bp. Petros for many years; but all the bishops whose opinion we know have been, on the

contrary, very favorable towards him. The campaign against him in our Church is Fr. Panteleimon's work, and it is solely Fr. Panteleimon's idea that our Russian Church Abroad is the "only canonical American jurisdiction" and that the Greeks therefore have no right to their own jurisdiction here. Our bishops are so much occupied with the cares of their own exiled flocks that they do not have the leisure to indulge in useless disputes over "canonical rights," and being very practical-minded, they are quite willing to live on friendly terms with a Greek jurisdiction of Old Calendarists in America. When Fr. Panteleimon was preparing to join our Synod in 1965, Archbishop John told me that the logical place for him was under Bishop Petros, whom Archbp. John greatly respected. When Fr. Panteleimon persuaded our bishops to accept him under the Synod, an act which could not help but cause troubles in future, as long as Fr. Panteleimon regarded himself as a rival with Bishop Petros for influence with the Greeks in America—which sadly, is just what he did, instead of remaining quietly in his monastery, as our bishops undoubtedly expected him to do.

But despite Fr. Panteleimon, Bp. Petros has been in communion with our Synod, and I think it is only a few bishops like Archbishop Vitaly who have taken sides with Fr. Panteleimon against Bp. Petros. With this background, I hope that you will be able to understand the position of Archbishop Averky. Archbp. Averky has allowed Bp. Petros to serve at Jordanville for many years, and he has not been informed (to our knowledge) of any accusations against Bp. Petros except that he refuses to deny the validity of New-Calendar Sacraments (which our bishops also refuse to deny). If any serious report of "ecumenical" activity on Bp. Petros' part had been reported to Archbishop Averky, he would certainly have taken it most seriously and investigated it. All Archbishop Averky can see is the private rivalry of Fr. Panteleimon with Bishop Petros and he quite rightly refuses to take sides in this political battle. Archbishop Averky, therefore, finds the insistence of the "brazen young Archimandrite" Panteleimon that he not let Bp. Petros serve at Jordanville to be an intolerable impudence—as if Russian bishops must be forced to "take sides" in a "Greek quarrel," which until now has seemed to be of a purely personal nature. Further, whether rightly or wrongly, our bishops do not feel the decisions of the Synod of Auxentios to be binding upon them; why, indeed, should Archbishop Averky not allow Bishop Petros to serve, when several of our bishops have allowed Bishop Callistos to serve—who is also not in communion with the Synod of Auxentios? Very likely our Synods dealings with the Mathewites at the 1971 Sobor were a mistake—but now the situation has become more complicated and it is difficult to see how a normal relation of our Church to yours can be restored. Perhaps all we can hope for is that at least communion will not be broken, despite many "irregularities" on both sides.

The situation with regard to Bishop Petros has been temporarily resolved by the decision of our Synod not to have communion with Bishop Petros until he is restored to communion with the Synod of Archbishop Auxentios. I'm afraid the followers of Fr. Panteleimon have taken this as a "victory" ("we made the Russian bishops back down!"), when actually it is obviously just a means for keeping Fr. Panteleimon quiet. Some of our bishops, in the absence of any concrete evidence against Bp. Petros, regard this decision as a mistake.

But all this, frankly, we find very uninteresting! The most important thing, and the greatest danger to our Orthodoxy, is occurring on another level—in the loss of conscious Orthodox life. Alexey Young let us read your two letters to him on the subject of an Orthodox community, as a means or help to preserving this conscious Orthodox life. We found them most interesting. We ourselves have given much thought to this question, and the new issue of The Orthodox Word has a little of our ideas on this (in the article on Archbishop Andrew). But it is not possible to express oneself fully on this subject in print, because the Orthodox people are simply too immature—the idea of an "Orthodox community" is very attractive, but almost no one is aware of or prepared for the difficulties and sacrifice involved in bringing it into reality, and the result is only hopeless experiments and disillusionment.

The monastic community is still possible even in bur days, but—as our experience has shown us clearly—it is very difficult and requires constant struggles to maintain. «But a lay community is much more difficult to establish and preserve, because laymen do not have the principle of obedience to an elder, which cuts off arguments and fighting, and also the family is the natural unit for lay people, and a group of families can never be as close as a monastic "family" under an elder.

But still, if one learns to be realistic and does not expect from a lay community as much as one does of a monastic community, this also is a possibility for our days—and actually a very important one. Life in an ordinary Orthodox parish today, in the abnormal big-city atmosphere and surrounded by unheard-of temptations—is not normal for Orthodoxy. We know a very zealous priest in New Jersey, with a very large flock and many young people. But he tells us that he is fighting a losing battle. He has the young people in church school for a few hours on Sunday, and perhaps Saturday night, and for an hour or two of church school on Saturday—and the whole rest of the week they are subject to the contrary influences of the public schools, television, etc. The desire to have an atmosphere where the Church can have more part in life and more influence on children—is a very natural Orthodox desire, and not something "odd"or a sign of "prelest," as many seem to think.

The basic spiritual principles of such a community we have tried to set forth in our article on Archbishop Andrew. The most apparent outward sign of this community seems to be the Divine services (even if only a minimum of them), whether with a priest or without—but daily, this being the point around which everything else revolves. In our present-day conditions, also, there must be a conscious effort to get away from involvement in the world—thus, small towns in preference to large cities, freedom (as much as possible) from television, newspapers, telephone, etc. And something more: there must be a getting away from the worldly spirit in the Church itself, this means getting away even from ordinary parish life, if possible, for this has become very worldly today.

The Etna community is by no means a highly "idealistic" or "experimental" community; it is rather a natural growth from special conditions which are exceptionally favorable for Orthodox self-preservation—provided, of course, that the basic Orthodox zeal and fervor are present to begin with. The greatest blessing for this community is, paradoxically enough, that they are far from an Orthodox parish—this has forced them to get out of the rut of so many Orthodox people

today who take for granted everything about the Church and assume that someone else is "in charge" of the Church and its services, etc. These people have been forced to do the services themselves, and therefore the services are much more dear to them; and the difficulties they must go through to get to a priest and receive Holy Communion are so great that they dearly treasure this privilege and are literally working out their salvation with fear and trembling. Of course, we Americans are also blessed because everything in Orthodoxy is so new to us and therefore precious—every new translation of a saint s life or service is a new discovery for us, all the more so if we can participate in it ourselves.

We ourselves have a feeling—based on nothing very definite as yet—that the best hope for preserving true Orthodoxy in the years ahead will lie in such small gatherings of believers, as much as possible "one in mind and soul." The history of the 20th century has already shown us that we cannot expect too much from the "Church organization"; there, even apart from heresies, the spirit of the world has become very strong. Archbishop Averky, and our own Bishop Nektary also, have warned us to prepare for catacomb times ahead, when the grace of God may even be taken away from the "Church organization" and only isolated groups of believers will remain. Soviet Russia already gives us an example of what we may expect—only worse, for the times do not get better.

But it is very difficult to plan for the difficult times ahead. There is much wilderness in our Northern California. Both Alexey Young and we ourselves live at the edge of wilderness areas where there is no dwelling for 30 or 40 miles. But with airplanes and other modern inventions, of course, there will be no "hiding" unless God covers us. From Russian experience we know that believers have been hidden both in large cities and in wildernesses (several forest monasteries were undiscovered for 20 years or more, as I recall). We trust that God will guide us in what to do when the time comes. Until then, we can only try to do our best in the conditions we have, trying to learn the principles of spiritual life, and cutting ourselves off from the world to the best of our ability. Our own skete is quite ideally situated in this regard, being two miles from the nearest human dwelling and totally without "conveniences" (perhaps our greatest blessing is the absence of a telephone, which has already saved us much grief). But as long as we are involved with printing (we have our own electric generator) and with correspondence, of course, our ties to the world remain very great. On feast days we feel the great blessing of the total absence of city noises, and even of country noises such as barking dogs—we are thus able to give ourselves entirely to the feast, with unhindered processions and singing all over our mountain.

The future, it is evident, is very dark. We ourselves do not know from one year to the next whether we will have another year of printing activity or not. We pray that God will give us at least a few more years, if only to print those patristic materials which will help us and others to survive in the dark days ahead. In America this is the "bicentennial" year—and we feel it as especially dark and ominous. Each nation has its guardian angel—thus also each pagan or masonic festival must have its special demon! We in America are grateful for our freedom, but we know the dark masonic origins of our American ideology and tremble for the future when the meaning of the occult symbols of our government (visible in our currency, for example—the unfinished pyramid, the all-seeing eye, the number 13 everywhere, the "novus ordo seclorum")

will begin to be fulfilled. Even without a Communist coup, our future is dark; "democracy," after all, only prepared the way for Communism, and spiritually they come from the same source and prepare for the same future.

Concerning the pamphlet by Archimandrite Constantine— "Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy before the Face of Antichrist"—it is expressed in such difficult, Germanic-style language that it is easy to see that it might be misunderstood. We know him well (he reposed, by the way, on Nov. 13/26 last, at the age of 88) and therefore are not misled by some phrases which apparently trouble your friend. His thought is not at all "ecumenical," but is rather abstractly speculative. His basic idea here, I believe, is this: True Orthodox Christians have a natural sympathy for the traditionalist Roman Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants who, even in error, at least stand against the times in their faithfulness to what truth they have; perhaps, in the approaching time of Antichrist, this faithfulness will somehow draw them nearer to the full truth, Orthodoxy; therefore we should increase our missionary labors so that they might become Orthodox. Fr. Constantine, as always, understates his position, assuming the reader knows his basic philosophy, which is uncompromisingly anti-ecumenist.

Our own experience leads us to think that only in a very few cases does the traditionalist papist or fundamentalist Protestant come to Orthodoxy; most remain7 "faithful" to their denomination—and go down together with the ship! Under Communist rule is seems to be no different, and humanly speaking we see little hope for even in a liberated Russian—but with God all is possible.

We are a little disturbed, however, to hear that your friend regards such a speculative article as cause for such great suspicion. We would much prefer to see among zealous Orthodox Christians tolerance even of outright mistakes, as long as the basic Orthodox attitude and orientation is present. But, as I said, the language of Fr. Constantine is difficult and might give one a wrong impression if one knew nothing of his whole Orthodox outlook.

One last word about Fr. Panteleimon—I believe now that we were mistaken that he was planning to go to the Mathewites; he seems after all sincere in his desire to stay with our Synod, which is really the most advantageous place for him, since he is not subject to the restrictions either of our Russian priests or of Greek priests in a Greek jurisdiction. But I still think he may be driven to the Mathewites in order to remain "consistent," unless he can be humbled enough not to think he is always "right" and "knows better" than anyone else. His positive qualities are very good, and it would be tragic if he destroyed them just for his "political" position. We notice that Fr. Neketas Palassis in his Witness, although he still occasionally mentions The Orthodox Word, has not once mentioned our publications of this last year—the Calendar, Northern Thebaid, and Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future. We suspect this is because of politics—we do not always follow their "party line," and therefore we are no longer to be much recommended, even it we do not say anything to which they object too much. They wish to "lead," and we are independent. We do not wish to have an opposing "party line," so we will try to be objective with regard to them and to missionary labors in general. The younger priests in America, both converts and Russians, we trust are mostly able to think for themselves and not just follow what

they are "told by the experts." In general, it seems that Orthodox Christians today must more and more be helped precisely to think for themselves.

We ask your prayers and look forward to your letter—and the evolution article!

With love in Christ,

208.

Jan. 28/Feb. 10, 1976

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Dear Alexey,

Enclosed is a new fruit—unfortunately mostly reprints, but we hope the cover is new and inspiring.

In our visit we didn't have a chance to ask you how Nina is getting along in the community. Is she getting a longing for big-city life? She told me that she and Barbara are not getting along, and she thinks it must be jealousy. Could it be that Barbara just can't stand Nina's "type"—outspoken, "intellectual," "always right," still reflecting something of the "hothouse" atmosphere of the "Boston" approach?

I've written and talked to Nina some about this "hothouse" approach to Orthodoxy—filled with gossip, knowing "what's going on," having the "right answer" to everything according to what the "experts" say. I begin to think that this is really her basic problem, and not Fr. Panteleimon directly.

An example: Nina is horrified that Fr. Herman's brother-in-law was received into the Church without baptism or chrismation; "that's wrong," she says. But we see nothing particularly wrong with it; that is for the priest and bishop to decide, and it is not our (or even more her) business. The rite by which has was received has long been approved by the Church out of economy, and probably in this case it was the best way, because Harvey might have hesitated much more at being baptized—the Church's condescension here was wise. But Nina would like someone "to read Vladika Anthony the decree of the Sobor…" My dear, he was there composing the decree, which explicitly gives the bishop permission to use economy when he wishes! We don't like this attitude at all, because it introduces totally unnecessary disturbance into the Church atmosphere; and if she is going to tell Harvey (Thomas) now that he is not really baptized or a member of the Orthodox Church, she could do untold harm to a soul.

Another example: Nina was very pleased that our Daniel was baptized in Jordanville; finally he did it "right"! (Our Laurence thinks the same thing.) But we are not pleased at all, seeing in this a sign of great spiritual immaturity on his part and a narrow fanaticism on the part of those who approve. St. Basil the Great refused to baptize a man who doubted the validity of his baptism, precisely because he had already received communion for many years and it was too late to doubt then that he was a member of Christ's Church! In the case of our converts it is obvious that those who insist or are talked into receiving baptism after already being members of the Church

are trying out of a feeling of insecurity, to receive something which the Sacrament does not give: psychological security, a making up for their past failures while already Orthodox, a belonging to the "club" of those who are "right," an automatic spiritual "correctness." But this act casts doubt on the Church and her ministers: if the priest or bishop who received such people were "wrong" (and so wrong that the whole act of reception must be done over again!), a sort of "Church within the Church" is created, a clique which, by contrast to "most bishops and priests" is always "right." And of course, that is our big problem today—and even more in the days ahead. It is very difficult to fight this, because they offer "clear and simple" answers to every question, and our insecure converts find this the answer to their needs.

I wonder if Phanourios will not have this problem? He is hesitant about just going to confession to be joined to our Church, especially after hearing that his friend Macarios was baptized in Jordanville. When I asked him whether he thought he had to be baptized too, he said no, just as long as he's given a clear answer as to what he should do. So we told him we would ask Vladika Anthony's blessing for him to be received and how. But frankly, no matter what anyone might think or say, our Church has never broken communion with the Greek Archdiocese, and in fact Metr. Philaret s latest epistle to the Bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople still addresses them as Orthodox bishops. I suspect that any priest in this diocese would be horrified at the idea of baptizing someone who comes from the Greek Archdiocese. But in this case let us see what Vladika Anthony says, and then pray that no one is coming to disturb Phanourios afterwards with tempting thoughts of solving all his problems by Baptism.

At times we would like to think that the whole "Fr. Panteleimon" problem in our Church is just a matter of differing emphases which, in the end, will not be so terribly important. But the more we observe, the more we come to think that it is much more serious than that, that in fact an "Orthodox sectarianism" is being formed at the expense of our simple people. Therefore, those who are aware of all this must be "zealots according to knowledge." The Church has survived worse temptations in the past; but we fear for our converts lest in their simplicity they be led into a sect and out of the Church.

God is with us! We must go forward in faith.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

209.

Feb. 14/27,1976

St. Cyril Equal-to-the-Apostles

Dear Alexey,

Just a note to accompany the (separately mailed) American Scientist and Xeroxes. Eugene Zavarin has sent his first general comments on the "scientific" part of our evolution study, to be followed by a detailed criticism. He has two main criticisms:

(1) He thinks the "author" (we didn't tell him who wrote it) is too harsh on the dating systems—he will comment more fully on this.

(2) In general, while the article is "well written and displays familiarity with scientific facts well above that of our average priest" etc., "at the same time his familiarity is below that of a college graduate in the field relating to some aspect of evolution," which leads to his second main criticism— "over-reliance on popular and high school texts. The high school graduates are commonly served over-doctored theories with holes neatly covered up. One should rely more on opinions of people having experimental experience with evolution. (Dobzhansky, thus, he approves.) Author is apparently unaware that teaching of evolution in high school was under criticism (Dr. Wenner—enclosed Xerox), and that evolution has a good chance of being separated from taxonomy (philosophically) (Sneath and Sokal—enclosed). Constance, in one of his papers (article also enclosed) thinks of relegating evolutionary schemes to poetry and metaphors. This does not say that authorities cited do not believe in evolution, only that their beliefs and thinking must be correctly assessed."

To me it looks as though Genya's viewpoint will suffer from exactly the opposite weakness which he finds in our paper—too much reliance of technical studies which (to judge from my brief glance at the material he sent, all of which I am passing on to you) make no difference at all in the main point, the philosophical approach which these scientists have.

I myself would say (before seeing his detailed criticism) that our basic framework of popular and high school texts is the right one—for that is how it is taught and understood and where the evolutionary philosophy comes through loud and clear. But it would be good to strengthen our position with more reference to "sophisticated" scientific sources—to show we are aware that scientists don't believe everything they give the high school student, and even realize that much there comes from "faith"—but still have the basic evolutionary faith that the universe "explains itself" and can be understood in "natural" terms. I don't recall if we have made it clear anywhere yet that our argument is only secondarily against the particular theory of evolution, and primarily against the larger idea of naturalism—that the universe explains itself. That will probably come out in the "philosophy" section which I hope to send you soon.

Anyway, maybe these articles will give you food for thought. Keep them in your "evolution file."

Pray for Paul Bartlett. He writes that he is about to "give up" on Orthodoxy and is "weary" from not having found what he has been searching for 16 years! Sadly, a typical convert story (one of the basic types)—emptiness inside, and he wants to get something from Orthodoxy without working on himself i.e., giving something to God. I'm writing him to read the Confessions of Bl. Augustine—a good "convert" book, although of course Bl. Augustine had very much inside to begin with! Interestingly, in Book 7 he describes how he and 10 of his friends wanted to start a commune—but then they thought how wives would fit in, and the whole plan collapsed!

The new Nikodemos is very inspiring. Please add to your subscription list (and send some back copies if you can) to: Peter Herrin, 1814 Ogden Dr., Burlingame, Ca 94010.

St. Gregory of Tours is tremendously inspiring! We've found a 10th-century Life of him taken mainly from his own works—one of the most moving Lives I've read.

Seraphim, monk

210.

Feb. 22/March 6, 1976

Cheese-fare Saturday

Dear Dr. Kalomiros,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We received your new letter on evolution. I have read it only once and it will be a long time before I will be able to answer it in detail. However, in general I will say this: I find it very helpful because I see that I have made some mistakes and expressed some things imprecisely, which you have corrected. I see also that you have made some mistakes, and you have accused me of saying things I did not say at all!—about these I will write later. Most of all, I am glad to see that you have expressed yourself in this letter much more clearly on some points than in you first letter, and therefore some of my criticisms do not apply to the kind of evolution in which you believe. But you did not express these points clearly in your first letter, and therefore I do not think I can be made entirely to blame for misunderstanding your position.

However, I am unhappy concerning the tone of your letter. You treat me as if I am your enemy, and say that I have been "dishonest" in my reply. I assure you that this is not so. My reply was very strongly worded, I admit, because there was nothing in your first letter to inform me that you did not share some of the worst errors of the evolutionists here in the West; and you spoke with such self- assurance that I did not know how to begin discussing the issue of evolution with you without expressing some things very strongly. I was not writing for publication, and therefore I was not afraid to make mistakes, trusting that you would correct these in a charitable spirit if you found them.

Now, however, I do not know if it is possible to continue this discussion or not. You have placed me in a "category": I am a "fundamentalist," a "literalist," I am "against science" and under "Western influence." I am afraid that anything I may now say, you will dismiss as of no value. If so, there is no point in my even replying to your letter; your mind is already make up about me and you will not listen to whatever I may say. I hope that this is not so, because you are the first Orthodox evolutionist I have found who is willing to discuss this question at all, and I think both of us could gain greatly by continuing this discussion. But I will have to tell you clearly that, despite your impression, I am not a fundamentalist, nor am I "against science"; quite the contrary.

But you are placing an impossible limitation to this discussion when you say (p. 12): "I would discuss evolution with you from the scientific point of view only if you had some diploma of one of the biological or geological branches of natural science." Since you wish it to be so, I of course can say nothing. But let me quote one of your scientific statements (p. 11): "The stages of

the embryo in the uterus are exactly the stages of life's evolution upon earth. This is so exact that even the gills of our ancient ancestors, the fishes, exist in the foetus of even the most perfected animals of the solid earth, the mammals." And now let me quote two statements made in scientific journals and textbooks by scientists possessing advanced degrees in their specialties:

1. "Haeckel's recapitulation theory (which is exactly what you have described to me as an unquestioned scientific fact) has been demonstrated to be wrong by numerous subsequent scholars." (Walter J. Boch, biologist of Columbia University, New York, in the article "Evolution by Orderly Law," in Science, Vol. 164, May 4, 1969, p. 684.)

2. "The type of analogical thinking that leads to theories that development is based on the recapitulation of ancestral stages or the like no longer seems at all "convincing or even very interesting to biologists." (Prof. C. H. Waddington, University of Edinburgh, in Principles of Embryology, 1965, p. 10.)

I do not bring these examples in order to debate this theory with you; I do so only in order to show you that something which you accept as undisputed scientific fact is not only disputed but even denied by reputable scientists, many of whom are themselves evolutionists! The same is true of some other "scientific facts" which you cite, and which you refuse to allow me to discuss with you.

Despite your accusation, I am not ‘‘against science. " I do not have an advanced degree in science, but I have taken college courses in zoology and done considerable reading in scientific sources on the theory and facts of evolution. I have read the Life book on Evolution and found it very disappointing, because I hoped to find in it demonstrations of facts (because I am sincerely interested to know whether evolution is true or not!), and instead I found only diagrams and pictures and descriptions which are not convincing to anyone with an open mind, but only to someone who already believes in evolution on other grounds. Your mind is evidently closed on this subject, and you seem to be unaware of the great mass of scientific literature in recent years which is highly critical of the evolutionary theory, which talks about relegating it to poetry and metaphors instead of scientific theory (Prof. Constance, professor of botany at the University of California, Berkeley), or even deny its validity altogether. If you wish (but it is quite pointless!), I could indeed compile a list of hundreds (if not thousands) of reputable scientists who now either disbelieve in evolution entirely or state that it is highly questionable as a scientific theory. Many of them state quite openly (evidently Greece is still behind the West in this regard) that a "literal" creation in six 24-hour days is one possible interpretation of the scientific facts which we now have. (Although you will recall that I wrote in my first letter that this question is not one of the first importance, in my opinion.) There is also now much scientific evidence that the world is no older than 8 to 10,000 years. (I do not say that this is "scientifically proved"—I say only what scientists themselves now say—that there are some undisputed scientific facts which make sense only if the world is very young.) Are you going to tell me that I am crazy or "against science" when I can quote doctors of geological and biological sciences (Many of whom are not "fundamentalists") who say things like this? If so, then there is no point discussing the issue further, because that would mean that you yourself are against science, are against an impartial

and objective examination of scientific facts. I pray that this is not so, for then your views on evolution would be worthless, being only the creation of your own imagination.

I do not wish to discuss in detail with you any of the scientific evidence for or against evolution—there are others who can do this much better than I. I only ask, to begin with, that you allow me to send you one book, written by a scientific specialist (in geology, I believe), who has given his views at lectures to geological societies here in America, that contains, in a rather balanced discussion, criticisms of the many weak points of the evolutionary theory. I do not agree with everything written there (it is on a somewhat popular, college-age level), but it does give us a beginning for possible further discussion. Religion is not mentioned in this book, which discusses only scientific evidence. If you are willing to read this book, or at least some chapters of it which interest you, with a reasonably open "scientific" mind—then it will be possible to continue our discussion.

Please be assured that I am not at all disrespectful of your views; if my previous letter seemed harsh to you, I sincerely ask your forgiveness and beg that we both can continue this discussion in a more moderate tone. From your other letters I see that we have much in common in our approach in Orthodoxy. We are both very interested in the evolutionary question, and the fact that we approach it in such different ways means that our discussion of it could be very fruitful. If we both approach it with an open mind, I am even persuaded that we can finally come to a basic agreement on it—assuming also, of course, that we are both willing to accept criticism and recognize and correct our errors, whether of theology or science or philosophy. Both of us are obviously under "Western influences" of various kinds—we can see it in you just as you can see it in me. But must we therefore cease to live and talk because of that and just accept what some "experts" are going to tell us is the Orthodox teaching? Who today is not under Western influence?—that is the air we breathe, and we can hardly help being influenced by it. But let us battle together against it and try to come to the truth.

I assure you of my utmost respect.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Alexey Young has informed me that you have sent him a copy of your letter to us. We have already discussed this question with him and were planning to show him your letter anyway. But I hope that you have sent a copy to no one else. Later we can share with others the results of our discussion; but to expose our preliminary writings to outsiders now would only cause many unnecessary comments and even "disputes"!

211.

March 17/30,1976

St. Patrick of Ireland

St. Alexis the Man of God

Dear Alexey,

Again, congratulations on your namesday. May Christ our God preserve you ever in His

grace.

We were encouraged by your dream of our "library"—at least it exists somewhere\ As a matter of fact, we've been thinking of it much of late, but a more urgent project is a small addition to our printshop in order to store our Paisius book, etc. Now that we've started printing in earnest, our several hundred pages of lead is turning into several tons of paper, and it's becoming a major problem! Also, the Religion of the Future must now be printed, and we were sobered to realize that with the new printing (which we hope to do through your printer in Oregon, which will save us at least $100, depending on how many we print) there will be between 4000 and 5000 copies in circulation, if one includes the original printing in The Orthodox Word. It is obvious that there is real interest in the real Orthodoxy. What is disappointing is to discover how little "follow-through" there is—i.e., the story of our numerous convert failures. We have not heard again from Paul Bartlett; most likely he will indeed try to find his "answers" from Boston et al, for he wants, first of all, some kind of "security" that does not touch or change or commit him too much. There does not seem to be much more hope for the other graduates of our "academy" last summer either. They've all stayed in contact with us, but it's obvious that Christopher is well on the way to becoming an "Orthodox floater," and Fr. Symeon is well on the way to making the rounds of the "disillusioned convert syndrome" who can find peace nowhere. We pray that they will survive, but their own background and the world atmosphere conspire strongly against them. Paul Bassett continues in his dreams, but at least he does stay in one place, Jordanville, and we just now received from him, and were much touched, a battery charger for our tape-recorder batteries!

Did you notice that you Were quoted in the Witness? Does that amount to the diplomatic recognition of a revolutionary government?

God willing, the last OW for 1976 [meaning 1975] will be out next week, and the first one for the new year should be out not too long after, but probably only after Pascha. We will be filling several issues with Orthodox Gaul, and of course there may be quibblers, considering the fact that these saints "aren't in the Calendar," and also that the shade of Blessed Augustine looms over several of the great figures of this time. Concerning the first point, we were greatly relieved by Vladika Nektary's reaction—he asked only one question: were they recognized as saints then by the Roman Church? If so, then of course they are Orthodox—with perhaps a very few exceptions who should be investigated separately. Concerning the second point we have been a little apprehensive over the "Boston reaction," purely from the point of view of the "static" that it could cause. It was therefore with immense relief that we received a few days ago Fr. Neketas' newest reprint, of Fr. George Grabbe's article on Orthodox education of children, where "Saint Prosper of Aquitaine" is favorably quoted! The one "fanatical" supported of Bl. Augustine's doctrine of grace in 5th century Gaul! He is the one figure of this time whom we would hesitate to call Saint without further research (which we will be doing soon)—but even then we would like to believe that he is simply "over-emphasizing" rather than giving a false teaching. Fr.

Michael Azkoul's brief article on Blessed Augustine in the new True Vine, by the way, is rather poor purely from the point of view of sources: he doesn't know where to look to find what the Orthodox view of him is.

But apart from static, the air of 5th and 6th century Gaul is extremely invigorating and inspiring, and purely Orthodox, even down to details of iconography (what we know of it, for the icons themselves have almost entirely disappeared), vestments, etc. St. Gregory of Tours is such a rich source that it is not necessary to "reconstruct" the Orthodox spirit of this time; it is as well known to us as the spirit of the East at the same time, and his books are really of the same caliber as the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, the Lausiac History, Spiritual Meadow, etc. If only God would give us a few more years of the golden opportunity we now have, we could use Gaul as a "beachhead" to give a powerful dose of Orthodox England and Ireland as well! Or perhaps you could do this! Let your trip this summer be for a beginning of an Orthodox awareness of the English past not only for you yourself, but for others as well; by the prayers of Vladika John may this trip be fruitful. I myself would love to sit here and translate the complete works of St. Gregory of Tours (which all exist in a very literal French version to aid my very feeble Latin), as well as several other basic texts of that time which we have in Russian. Sometimes we allow ourselves to dream, not only of a completed library, but of two or three brothers one in mind with us who could double or triple our translating and printing work; and then sober reality tells us that we are probably achieving maximum efficiency precisely by the "suffering through" which we are doing. I somehow have the feeling that we are "pre-digesting" the food for a number of seekers, and if we chewed too much they would begin to get sick!

I haven't gone back to Kalomiros' letter, and probably won't attempt a reply before summer. The letter, although I find its tone distasteful, is helpful, because it shows the reaction that our "evolution book" would have had in some quarters if it hadn't first been tested by this correspondence. This will help us to avoid "onesidedness." I have the impression Kalomiros demonstrates quite a bit of rationalism himself; he writes not as from within a tradition himself, But as one who is striving to get into the tradition. Our uninterrupted Russian tradition, for all its real and supposed Westernisms, has a strength and resiliency which the "rediscoverers of tradition" do not have. May God help us to express these things in a way that can be accepted and assimilated today.

Fr. Michael Pomazansky, by the way, in his recent articles (at the age of 86!), shows that he is quite aware of this problem.

God willing, Vladika Nektary will be serving the Pre-sanctified Liturgy the week after next; if so, we will call you as soon as it is definite.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

212.

March 17/30, 1976B

St. Patrick of Ireland

Dear Brother in Christ, Nicholas [Eastman?],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray you are faring well in the Fast and will be prepared to meet the Holy Passion and Resurrection of our Saviour. This is spiritually a very rich part of the year for us, with the long services, the special Lenten tone of life, the readings from the Holy Fathers. I imagine all the readings there are in Russian, but I hope that somehow you are able to get benefit from this practice of readings during the services. Here we have been reading the Ladder, the Lausiac History, Abba Dorotheus, and the Life of the Fathers of St. Gregory of Tours. Reading some of these books over again every year only puts them deeper into one's Orthodox consciousness, and there are always "new" things there no matter how often one has read them—which, of course, only shows how dense we are and how much we need such things.

I hope that in the midst of your learning (which we pray may be very fruitful!) you are also getting the feel for that which can't be directly taught—the tone of Orthodox life and thought which comes "between the lines" as it were, the respect for the older generation which is handing down the sacred treasure of Orthodoxy, the approach to the teaching of the Holy Fathers which should be not academic but practical, and should see beyond superficial "disputes" to the deeper meaning of the Patristic teaching. The Patristic "experts" of the newer school miss this, and this is a great temptation in our Church now also, since everyone is now affected to some degree or other by the soul-less academic air around us. Of late we have noticed how shallow has been the discussion of Blessed Augustine—a cold, calculating approach to him which would either condescendingly "accept" him or else "throw him out of the calendar" based solely on an abstract analysis of his teaching. But the true Orthodox perspective is, first of all, to distrust ones abstract "theological" outlook and ask: what do our elders think; what did recent Fathers think? And taking these opinions respectfully, one then begins to put together the picture for oneself. But the "new theologians," when they hear that our recent fathers such as St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain or our own Archbishop John had great respect for Blessed Augustine, can only say with disdain— "they were under Western influence"—and throw out their weighty opinions with a quite "Western" lack of feeling and understanding. Anyone who has read Bl. Augustine's Confessions with Sympathy will not readily want to "throw him out of the calendar"—for he will see in this book precisely that fiery zeal and love which is precisely what is so lacking in our Orthodox life today! Have you read this book, by the way?—you should. Archbishop Philaret of Chernigov, in his 19th century Patrology, while setting forth clearly Bl. Augustine's mistakes—or rather, overemphases—still highly praises this book for its warmth and piety. And perhaps Bl. Augustine's very "Westernness" makes him more relevant for us today who are submerged in the West and its way of thought; it is surely pride for us to think that we will read only the great "Eastern" and "mystical" books.

Well, I didn't really mean to digress so much on this subject. But at least you know that we are thinking of you and are very anxious for you to get the maximum from your seminary and monastery experience. Above all, keep your heart open to learn to be a little detached from the

many intellectual arguments and currents that buzz about our Church. Let us know how you are doing. Pray for us— we have started to print the book on the Life of Blessed Paisius, which is an immense project for us. (Tell that to Br. Makarios—he asked us about it and I don't think I've answered him yet.)

With love in Christ,

S. M.

213.

April 3/16, 1976

Friday the Sixth Week of Lent

Dear Nina,

David brought your note. Forgive my frankness—but why in the world do you want to send copies of Father John's letter anywhere? Fr. George [Grabbe] already knows from the Synod, if he is supposed to know; and please don't involve Fr. Panteleimon in anything to do with Etna. No matter what, that will mean disaster for Alexey—which I don't think you understand yet.

As for Fr. John and Etna—please do not even think of any "invitations." Quite apart from anything else, it is quite obvious that Vladika Anthony does not want him in his diocese at this time, and he will be extremely upset at any "negotiations" to this effect without his knowledge. (And we will probably be blamed for it.)

I hope that you are aware that you are now living in the diocese of Vladika Anthony, and that when it is a question of priests and parishes it is his will that is done and must be respected. One may disagree with bishops, and in extreme need even "fight" with them; but one is never to usurp their rights or try to "arrange" things without them, as though they were mere figureheads. One should be in fear and trembling before bishops, and never free or familiar. I fear that some of our "American Orthodoxy" in the Synod is doing just that—organizing psychological-spiritual dioceses of their own, and treating bishops as figureheads who "don't understand." God gave them to us, and if there are sometimes difficulties, that also is for our benefit and salvation, and we must approach them with spiritual means.

Please do not make Etna into parish and diocese business—didn't you go there to escape things like that? You've taken the busy-busy church world with you. Be patient. What you want will come in God's time, if it is truly His will; just don't think you are so wise.

This comes from me; Fr. Herman would probably say it stronger! As far as we know, he made his connections all right and is in Jordanville to say farewell to his Abba [Archbishop Averky]. This is a great, great loss to us. We thank God that we were able to present him as a "living link" while he was still alive rather than (as is usual) waiting until he is gone before starting to appreciate him.

Forgive me. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

214.

Apr. 3/16, 1976B

Friday of Sixth Week of Lent

Dear Alexey,

David brought us Nina's note saying that she wants to send copies of Fr. John's letter to Fr. George Grabbe and Fr. Panteleimon; and she is confused about whether to send also an "invitation" to Fr. John with the letters. Good heavens! If she is going to go on like this there is sure disaster ahead. How would you like Fr. Panteleimon as the "overseer" of your community?—that is what is coming if Fr. John comes. (Nina told us that Fr. Neketas is strongly agitating to get all the "American" parishes into a separate organization.)

I've sent her a letter bawling her out, and most of all for treating her own bishop as a mere figurehead who "doesn't understand" the needs of Americans, etc. Vladika Anthony does not want Fr. John in his diocese right now, and his reasons are better than Nina suspects. Don't let her get you embroiled in her "convert syndrome" with all its problems. I told her that she has no right to usurp the bishop's rights by "arranging" priests for his diocese—that is his affair and it should go only through him.

With Vladika Averky's repose, Laurence's departure (probably as soon as Fr. Herman comes back), and the three young converts (including David) who have visited us this week—I sigh and think, is it worth it to get across the real understanding of Orthodoxy, when there are so many now who "know better," and the ones who don't are as weak as spaghetti? Or maybe, as our young Thomas once brightly suggested: If everyone else thinks differently, then maybe we're really wrong? But then I think of Vladika Averky, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, and all that older generation that is now almost gone—and I want to weep for the young "know-it-alls" that have missed the point. But the understanding comes only through suffering, and how many can do that?

Pray for us. We trust in God and the prayers of Vladika John.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

215.

[April 12/25,1976]

Pascha 1976

Dear Christopher,

We will be expecting you in May. Only please write again shortly before you come to confirm the time and date.

Yes, the Sobor has daily Liturgy.

Archbishop Averky reposed on Tuesday before Palm Sunday and was buried on the eve of Lazarus Saturday. A righteous man, little valued. We must now present his teaching—please pray that we can do it fittingly. The burden becomes much heavier for us now.

Br. Laurence reached the end of his 3-year monastic trial and never attained the trust and oneness of soul and mind necessary for our way of life. So he left just before Pascha and will go to Jordanville. Pray for him. We are thus physically alone, but determined to continue and speak the truth until they come and shoot us down.

I don't know whether Vlad. Nektary will be back in San Francisco (from Seatde) by May 17 or not. You'll have to find out then. Father Herman went with him and Vladika Anthony for the funeral in Jordanville.

May God grant to you to grow in the Faith and bear fruit—many are falling away. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

216.

Bright Saturday, 1976

[April 18/May 1, 1976]

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Brother in Christ, Andrew [Bond],

Thank you for the copy of your "sorrowful epistle" to Vladika Nikodem. What you describe there is indeed but one case of a very widespread problem now in our Church, a diversion from the devil "on the right side," as it were, and it will require much patience and prayer and level-headedness to stay afloat in the stormy sea which it is causing. I will tell you something based on our own experience in America.

This "zeal not according to understanding," about which Archbishop Averky has warned in his sermons, is by no means limited to baptizing those coming from other Orthodox jurisdictions or (most shocking of all) re-baptizing those who have already been receiving Holy Communion in our Church for months or years—it is a whole mentality which insists on being "always right" and looking disdainfully on all who disagree as "not really Orthodox." This attitude is revealed, for example, in the recent totally pointless attacks made by some of our Greek priests in America against Blessed Augustine. It is well known in the Orthodox Church that Bl. Augustine made mistakes, went "too far" on some points—but the Church has never called him a heretic or denied him the name of Father, as is quite clear from the evidence of one Ecumenical Council (perhaps two, but I can't find the second reference yet), St. Photios the Great (who is repeating

explicit on this point), St. Mark of Ephesus, St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, and our own Archbishop John Maximovitch. Yet some now seek to prove "how Orthodox I am" by calling him heretic and various other evil names.

If this mentality were allowed to "take over" in our Church it would mean not merely isolation for us (about which, in itself, we are not very upset, because it is obvious that "world Orthodoxy" is crumbling, losing its identity), but also, much more importantly^^ losing of Orthodox tradition itself, losing the contact with those who have handed Orthodoxy down to us, for the sake of an abstract "Orthodoxy" which exists only in the minds of the "zealot party." The over-emphasis on the "Western captivity" of Orthodox theology in recent centuries is a symptom of the same mentality. Orthodox tradition was transmitted in those centuries, despite certain outward Westernisms, but our new "zealots" literally wish to throw out or at least regard with utmost disdain virtually all the great Fathers of those centuries—Metr. Philaret of Moscow, St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, Bp. Theophanes the Recluse, and others. (They haven't attacked Bp. Ignatius Brianchaninov yet, but only because they can't read Russian; but St. Makarios of Corinth will obviously have to go with St. Nikodemus, especially if—as I strongly suspect—his book on "Continual Communion" comes from Latin sources. A well-balanced Orthodoxy can easily take any foreign influences that come and straighten them out, make them Orthodox; but a one-sided "party-line" cuts itself off from the real mainstream of Orthodoxy.)

We have heard of a few mistaken "re-baptisms" in America and have asked several of our bishops about them. In every case, as it turns out, the diocesan bishop was not informed of the circumstances of the case. Recently some wished to see such a "rebaptism" performed in our Western American diocese, but our Archbishop Anthony wisely refused to allow it, in which we gave him our full support—for indeed, it would have been tantamount to an open declaration of the absence of Grace in the Greek Archdiocese. Our bishops, by the way (whether at the 1974 Sobor or later, I don't know) explicitly refused to make such a declaration when asked to do so by one of the Greek Old Calendar jurisdictions (the Auxentios group, unfortunately, which has recently joined the Mathewites in this opinion, although on less fanatical grounds).

This "zealot" mentality, in America at least (and largely in England too, I suspect), is almost entirely due to the influence of Fr. Panteleimon of Boston. In our personal meetings with Fr. Panteleimon we have not found him to be a "fanatic," but those under his influence are quite mercilessly so. Sadly, this group is now forming a kind of independent psychological "diocese" within our Church, and they have no respect whatever for the bishops who disagree with them. This means trouble ahead, and you are certainly right that we are sitting on a volcano.

However, let me tell you this: we know well a number of bishops and the views of most of the rest—and we don't know a single one who would approve of "re-baptisms" such as you describe. I very much doubt that Vladika Nikodem would approve either, if he were fully informed, and any problem you may have with him is more likely to be owing to the way your attitude has been presented to him as "insubordination," "undermining priestly authority," etc. In that case it is above all important for you to show yourself as meek and obedient and not insisting on "being right" for its own sake (in the new "zealot" sense)—without, of course, giving up your basic position—which is certainly in accord with what our bishops and soundest priests believe.

Regarding our Church as a whole, I do not think you need to fear an "extremist takeover." Our bishops are quite moderate, and I think it is safe to say that their earlier "fascination" (for bishops are also a little subject to "fashions"!) with Fr. Panteleimon (as at the 1971 Sobor) is a thing of the past. In general, Fr. Panteleimon has lost his influence almost everywhere (Greece and Mt. Athos also)—except in one place: over the young people, both converts and Western-born native Orthodox; for he offers them some "simple" answers to complex questions, and that is very attractive to those a little uncertain and shaky in their faith. (These are precisely the ones, by the way, who think they will "put everything right" by getting baptized all over again!) These young people are now the ones who are beginning to fill the places of the departing generation of Russians (in our Church), and this is a source of danger for the future of our Church.

I do not know what more to say of your specific "incident," but I do hope you will place it in the perspective of the whole Church situation today. One would like to avoid a direct "battle" with the "new-zealot" mentality, if possible, because there are many good people now under this influence who can eventually come back to a sounder Orthodoxy if only they aren't prematurely forced to "defend" their mistaken idea of Orthodoxy. Above all for us who have the printed word at our disposal, I think it is important to strive to inculcate respect both for our bishops and older priests, and for the whole theological tradition of recent centuries. In the name of "anti-scholasticism" the "zealots" are throwing out the whole baby together with the bath water! They virtually boast that they alone are "great theologians" who have just now re-discovered a lost theological tradition; but actually their theology is remarkably crude and simplistic, especially when put beside the writings of a truly great theologian in the unbroken Orthodox tradition—our own Father Michael Pomazansky of Jordanville, who is subtle, refined, deep—and totally overlooked by the "bright young theologians." Of course, the "language gap" is also an unfortunate factor here, as it is in the whole situation I have described here. We must strive all the harder to make the influence of the real Orthodoxy more deeply and widely felt—and then the emergence of sudden "know-it-alls" will be taken more in stride by the Church as a whole.

By the way, at the Synod you should be in contact first of all with the Secretary, Bishop Laurus (who now is being greatly slandered by the "zealots")—his position is quite moderate and sound, and he is doing superhuman work for the good of the Church in most difficult circumstances.

To all this I would only add: let us also beware of the temptations on the "left side." We do not need to declare fanatically that we are the "only Orthodox left," but let us also be aware of the process of apostasy that is taking possession of virtually all the Orthodox Churches now, and to which we too can fall if we are not sober and cautious. Our own Sobor of Bishops some years back already "discouraged" communion with the Greek Archdiocese, and our own Bishop Nektary of Seattle is for us a model of sound moderation when he warns us that some of our bishops are doing a little too much for the sake of being "recognized by world Orthodoxy." Perhaps the best description of our Church's status at the present time is something like "moderate, sober,—and aloof." But in practice this is a difficult path to follow.

We ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. We are sending you another parcel of Northern Thebaids. You can give away the damaged ones. We will also begin sending you one copy of The Orthodox Word by airmail, hoping to hear some response from you on the articles we will be printing in the months ahead.

217.

May 22/June 4, 1976

Martyr Basiliscus

Dear Brother in Christ, Andrew,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I was just preparing to answer your last letter, intending to venture the guess that you will soon be receiving a "friendly open letter" from Boston—when lo and behold, with yesterday's mail we received a copy of this very letter from Boston! Actually, it seems to be an open letter to the recipients of copies of your letter to Archbishop Nikodim, and it is there indicated that you are to receive also a private letter from them.

The content, style and tone of the letter are what we had expected, having already had several experiences of this "Boston approach" to church problems—and in particular of "getting rid" of someone like you who dares to disagree with the "Boston party line." I will tell you immediately our response to this letter.

The purpose of the letter is:

(1) To show how correct, sophisticated, sensitive, etc., are the fathers of Holy Transfiguration Monastery—they have all the answers for you, and in addition they are tremendously humble and spiritual. They are prepared to answer any church problem anywhere—and only they are so prepared.

(2) Thoroughly to discredit you, show how you are stupid and/or emotional, and totally incapable of discussing church questions. The only solution for you is to bow to the superior wisdom of the writers of the letter and then to get out of their way, perhaps by falling into a hole in the ground. About your spiritual welfare they couldn't care less.

The letter itself does not need an answer. They are experts in this tactic and would tear any reply of yours into shreds, knowing how to make it appear that whatever you say is wrong.

Of course, they are "correct" in much,—but not all—of what they say. I think they have established sufficiently a case that one may baptize in such circumstances, if the bishop approves; but that is not the most important question raised by the baptisms—and this they do not see at all, because they themselves are part of the problem.

If I am not mistaken, what most upset you about the Guildford baptisms was the "fanatical" tone it introduced into Orthodoxy in England: if this manner of reception from other jurisdictions is to become the norm, then our Church is in danger of falling into a Mathewite sectarianism. Our

young converts of today are very prone to this kind of sectarian mentality, and Fr. Panteleimon has an absolutely magnetic pull on them—they are afraid of being "incorrect" and hence "un-Orthodox" if they don't agree with his logic. In this respect you are correct, even if you can't establish a case for it from Fathers and canons; and they, for all their "proofs" on the purely technical question, are incorrect. But you can't argue this with them—it's like discussing the infallibility of the Pope with a diehard Catholic. And in fact there is much that is papalist and Jesuitical in the "Boston mentality."

On several points the Boston epistle is wrong, most notably when they try to interpret our bishops' attitude to Moscow and Constantinople. In this our bishops refuse to be "legalistic": to declare that these jurisdictions are "schismatic" and therefore devoid of grace. That is the Mathewite approach, which Fr. Panteleimon would apparently like to see prevail in our Church. Even today our bishops refuse to "define" in this manner and make everything "black and white"; and I am sure that, perhaps without exception, our bishops not only refuse to declare them without grace, but positively believe (at least by giving the benefit of any doubt) that they do have grace. Fr. P. would like to be their spokesman and tell the world what our bishops should be believing—but here he is going out on a limb which one day is going to break beneath him.

But now to the important question. The attitude revealed by the Boston epistle is far more dangerous than anything you have been experiencing in English, which is only aftershocks of the "Boston mentality." If there are those so uncertain about their status in Orthodoxy that they just have to be baptized, whether when coming to us from another jurisdiction or even after being in our Church for some time—well, let them do it if the bishop permits, as long as this is not seen to be the rule or standard for all, not a model of Pharisaic "correctness" but rather a concession to weak consciences. If the issue is thus localized, there can still be peace in the Church, and neither side need pride itself that it is "correct" and the other "incorrect" or somehow inferior.

But the "Boston mentality" which wants to legislate the standard of "correctness" for the Church—is wrong, but with a wrongness that can't be proved by Fathers and canons as much as it must be seen spiritually. The "Boston epistle" is a good example: an Orthodox response to your letter, if they believed that you were wrong, would have been to write a warm and heartfelt letter to you (all the more in that the author is your fellow-countryman), no longer than 2 or 3 pages (how much time and leisure they have!), perhaps quoting a few of the canons to show that such baptisms may be performed, and begging your indulgence for weak consciences so that there may be peace in the Church and no one will be lording it over others with the superiority of their "correctness." Instead, their open letter (and I dread to think of what they wrote to you privately) was a cold and calculating vehicle for their self-esteem, behind a mask of absolutely fake humility and "spirituality" (the Russians would call it "oily"), with the purpose of discrediting and squashing you thoroughly and establishing a "party line" of "correctness." This approach is Jesuitical, not Orthodox. Father Herman, who has a thoroughly Russian approach to such things, said after reading the letter: "the man who wrote this does not believe in God," which is to say: everything holy, spiritual, and canonical in it is used for some ulterior motive, and the letter is devoid of Orthodox heart and feeling. I do not know Fr. Alexis, but I suspect that

he is better than the letter—in fulfilling the "party line" of Fr. Panteleimon, he and other monks there put aside their own selves and become blind implements for the "cause."

We know from much bitter experience already that this "party spirit" is entirely the work of Fr. Panteleimon—he allows others to do the "dirty work" for him, but he supervises it all. The "dirty work" is sometimes so repulsive—discrediting and discouraging people like you, taking over Synod publications (you aren't the first one!), undermining the authority of our bishops and theologians (their oily talk of how they act only with the approval of bishops is a totally false front)—that we sometimes wonder if Fr. P. is even sincere, if all this "spirituality" and kindness and generosity aren't just an act. But we would prefer to believe as Dr. Kalomiros does (or did), that Fr. P. is a talented and sincere man who has been deceived by his own success and fallen into the fanatical mistake of believing he is always "right." However that may be, he is one of the big problems in our Church today, and his Jesuitical web is so sticky that there is almost' no chance that he can become unentangled from it. He seems to be heading toward the formation of his own "jurisdiction." Several of our bishops already openly speak of him as ready to follow the example of the Dutch Church—even though it is obviously to his advantage to remain in our Russian Church as long as he can set the "tone" for everyone else.

This whole episode has probably discouraged you immensely, perhaps even inspired thoughts of "what's the use of laboring in the Church if this is the outcome?" We have observed this response in others, and have even felt it a little ourselves, even though they haven't attacked us openly yet (they are still gathering their materials for the "open letter" to us and waiting to see if we might still remain "obedient" to them), and therefore we can tell you an antidote based on some experience: have as little contact with the Boston "party" as possible. Do not accept them as an authority, but also do not waste time arguing against them (in the eyes of their audience they will always defeat the "enemy," as always happens in party politics). Continue your labors as much as possible as if they did not exist. In other words, stay out of their web, don't be infected by their way of thinking, even to oppose. Think and labor independently from them.

They have built a church career for themselves on a false but attractive premise: that the chief danger to the Church today is lack of strictness. No—the chief danger is something much deeper— the loss of the savor of Orthodoxy, a movement in which they themselves are participating, even in their "strictness," To keep alive spiritually, we must be constantly striving to keep this savor—something which Dr. Kalomiros also talks about, although sometimes he seems to relapse into the "correctness" syndrome himself. It is he, by the way, who told us that the Synod of Auxentios has now declared the new-calendarist Sacraments invalid, although he emphasizes that this is for a different reason than the Mathewites have—the latter legalistically declaring them invalid because of "schism," but the former because the heresy of the N.C.'s has now become absolutely clear and open. I will look up his letter and quote what he says in a later letter—he wrote us this last fall, I believe, but I know that several bishops opposed it (including Bp. Petros in N.Y.), and perhaps they have now split up into two or more jurisdictions over this point. May God preserve our Synod from this path! This "rightness" which divides is probably largely responsible for the turn back to the "left" which Archbp. Anthony of Geneva seems to be making. The path of true moderation is therefore in danger.

Please tell us something of Archimandrite Kyprian of Phyle and his attitude to these matters. We have few contacts in Greece, and have not found there the balance which we see in the best representatives of our Russian tradition. Dr. Kalomiros writes us that Fr. P. went off the track when he saw that he knew better than the "simple Greeks" of the Old Calendar (and we see that he has the same attitude toward our "simple Russians"), but that thereby he lost contact with the living tradition of Orthodoxy, not receiving the tradition from those he loved and respected, but rather logically thinking it out himself. I think there is much truth in this—but let the rest of us struggle the harder to love those who hand down the tradition to us and don't let what they give us be taken away by "logic" and "correctness."

We ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

218.

Apodosis of Ascension, 1976

[May 29/June 11, 1976]

Dear Daniel,

We send you our heartfelt greetings on the Feast of our Lord's Ascension and on the Feast of Pentecost. May God preserve you in His grace!

Your question about "zealotry" comes at a time when we also have been giving much thought to such questions—and in fact, it is now becoming a basic question facing our Church. Especially with the passing of Archimandrite Constantine and Archbishop Averky one stops and wonders: who will now be our guides in the difficult days ahead, and give us the right tone and ideology? Bishop Laurus begged the monks at Archbp. Averky s funeral to promise, while giving him the farewell kiss, to be faithful to his teaching and to keep Jordanville as it was under him; but it may not be too easy to keep this promise in the storms ahead.

Such giants as Vlad. Averky and Vladika John have guided us up to now, and their teaching will remain a beacon in the days ahead; Vlad. Averky especially has given us some practical pointers which will help us over some difficult hurdles ahead. (We are trying to compile some of them presently from his many books.)

Before going ahead, we must stop and find out where we are. We wish to be zealots for true Orthodoxy, and our Church leaders have indicated clearly that we must have no contact with the Moscow Patriarchate and similarly enslaved Churches; must refrain from participating in ecumenist activities and must be aware that ecumenism is eating away the very Orthodox fiber of most of the Orthodox Churches, beginning with Constantinople; and must be zealously pursuing a path of true Orthodoxy ourselves, not only in outward acts but especially in spiritual life, but without falling into false zealotry "not according to knowledge"—a point that Vlad. Averky especially emphasized. About the latter danger we have been learning much of late from the situation of the Old Calendarists in Greece, which can help us to avoid some mistakes "on the right side."

Here, briefly, is the Greek Old Calendar situation as we have it from Dr. Kalomiros who seems the most moderate and sensible of the Old Calendarists with whom we have any contact, and as confirmed from a somewhat different point of view by our own Bp. Laurus:

The "Mathewites" preach absolute "strictness": since 1924 all New Calendarists and all those in communion with them are without grace; hence the "crisis" which caused Bp. Mathew to consecrate successors by himself—he and his followers believed that he was then the only Orthodox bishop remaining in the world. It is therefore astonishing that they could have been persuaded to have any contact with our Church at all, as at the Sobor of 1971, and Dr. Kalomiros tells us that this was because Fr. Panteleimon of Boston told them that our bishops had "repented" and now were willing to accept the Mathewite position. Once they saw that this was not so, the Mathewites resumed their attacks on our Church, and the last we heard they were almost resolved to give our Church over to anathema. Dr. Kalomiros calls this group extreme legalists and "scholastics," and this is our impression also from our small contacts with them. Obviously, if they are correct one must quit the Synod altogether and join them. But their "strictness" really seems a little too close to sectarianism to be the answer for us today.

The jurisdiction of Archbishop Auxentios, on the other hand, has been closer to our Church in its acceptance of "economy." But last year they also proclaimed the sacraments of New Calendarists invalid—not because they are legally and technically "schismatic" (which is the Mathewite thinking), but because now (in their view) ecumenism has become a conscious heresy, and therefore the New Calendarists are formal heretics. They asked our bishops to make the same decision, and our bishops refused, on the grounds that this is a question beyond their competence to judge. Bishop Petros of Astoria refused to accept the Auxentiite decision and was therefore excommunicated. Our bishops have not accepted this excommunication and continue to serve with him (as five of our bishops did at the funeral of Archbishop Averky). In February of this year, as Vlad. Nektary recently informed us, one of the Old Calendar groups solemnly anathematized our Church—I don't know which group, but doubtless both of them will be doing it soon. However, the Auxentiite group itself is in danger of splitting into several jurisdictions, chiefly over questions of pride and power (as Dr. Kalomiros himself tells us).

As if all this is not bad enough, there are zealots on Mt. Athos who are part of none of the existing Old Calendar jurisdictions, because of their particular views about "strictness" and "economy." Dr. Kalomiros tells us that our friend Fr. Theodoritos is now in communion only with his own group of four or five monks and is being considered as a candidate for bishop by one group of Auxentiites; although Fr. Theodoritos himself does not mention any of this to us in his letters to us. At any rate, the Mt. Athos zealots are themselves more and more divided and some of them pride themselves on not speaking to those of other shades of belief.

All of this should be sufficient warning of the danger of going overboard on the question of "strictness" and "zealotry." The danger of going astray on the "right" side has become so great now that Metropolitan Philaret, when counselling Fr. Alexei Poluektov two years ago in his publishing of Vera i Zhizn, cautioned him not to use the word "zelot" at all (the milder word "revnitel"' is sufficient).

I think the lesson of this is, first of all, to teach us not to be too certain of defining things (especially "strictness" and "economy"), and not to be too quick to "break communion."

Now we have a recent example in our own Church: Fr. Basile Sakkos of Geneva. Seeing that his own bishop had not broken all contact with the ''ecumenist" jurisdictions, he broke off communion with him and asked our 1974 Sobor to answer unambiguously two questions (he sent us a copy of his appeal): (1) Are ecumenists and new calendarists heretics? (2) Do we have communion with them or not? Our Sobor did not give him a satisfactory answer, and he apparently now is with the Mathewites.

We at first were sympathetic to his desire to have our bishops make matters "clear" and "consistent," especially realizing that Archbishop Anthony of Geneva is indeed probably too "liberal" in his views and contacts. But on further reflection we find several considerations which make the issue quite complex and not subject to an easy answer:

(1) Ecumenism itself is not a clear-cut heresy like Arianism, or a clearly-distinguishable body such as the Roman Catholic church. It is seldom preached boldly in so many words by its Orthodox participants, and even when outrageous statements are made by Patrs. Athenagoras and Demetrius, or by the new "Thyateira Confession," they are often accompanied by at least a verbal confession that Orthodoxy still is the one true Church of Christ. There is therefore some justification for those who refuse to break off with ecumenist hierarchs, or who do not know at what point they actually become "heretics."

(2) Ecumenism, rather than a formal heresy, is more like an elemental movement, an intellectual attitude which is "in the air" and takes possession of individuals and groups and whole Churches to the degree of their worldliness and openness to intellectual fashions. Thus, it is in our Church also, and even in our minds, unless we are waging a conscious warfare against the "spirit of the times." All the more difficult, then, is it to define it and know exactly where the battle-line is.

(3) Our own flocks, to the degree that they are worldly, don't understand these matters, and a decision to formally "break communion" with all ecumenist Orthodox Churches would simply not be understood by many.

(4) There is a fear, increased by knowledge of the Greek Old Calendarist situation, of falling into a sectarian mentality—that "we alone are pure."

What, then, should we do?

Let us first of all take guidance from our hierarchs who are most aware of the spiritual situation of the Church today and have spoken out. We have especially Metr. Philaret, who speaks rather about the spiritual essence of ecumenism than about its formally heretical nature, and warns other hierarchs and his own flock against participating in ecumenist activities and ideas; and Archbishop Averky, who viewed the whole matter also not in terms of formal heresy but rather as an elemental movement of apostasy, the answer to which is first of all a return to spiritual life.

In general, as long as our Church is one and united, let us trust the judgment of the local bishops; if something they do is disputable, let us be guided by the judgment of our most spiritual bishops

(and preferably not just one), but without making a "demonstration" if this disagrees with the local bishop. But let us beware of the conclusions of our own logic and "definitions." I'm afraid that Fr. Panteleimon of Boston has fallen into this latter trap, and is pursuing a course which none of our bishops approve, even while he tells others that our bishops' position is synonymous with what he thinks it should be (sometimes the politics of the Greek Old Calendarist situation apparently forces him to do such things in order to "save face"). He and the Greeks who follow him have formed a kind of autonomous psychological "diocese" within our Church, and it is obvious that they trust and respect none of our bishops; they look for their authority rather to Greece—and in Greece the situation becomes more confused every day, so it is Fr. Panteleimon's thinking alone that becomes their authority. This is a terribly dangerous situation, and it seems inevitable that unless our Greeks change the tone of their "zealotry," it is only a matter of time until they leave us, whether for the Mathewites or to form their own jurisdiction—which will only confuse matters more. Already Fr. Panteleimon practices "selective communion" with our Church, as when he refused to serve at the funeral of Archbishop Averky, but stood in the Altar with a group of his priests and monks. Fr. Panteleimon of Jordanville, when he saw this, told Fr. Herman (who was able to be present to bid farewell to his Abba): "Look what kind of monks we have now. They came here to make a demonstration. It must be the end of the world." That is typical of the attitude of our Church to the too-eager "zealots" of our day: without bitterness or indignation, but with a deep and calm awareness that this is not the answer. It is to us a bad sign that Fr. Panteleimon was in a state of "strained communion" with Vladika Averky in the latter s final months of life, and that for the same cause (Bishop Petros, which our bishops seem to view as merely a question of "competition") he would not serve at his funeral. Vladika Averky was the greatest pillar of our Church, and he wrote to us in his distress over Fr. Panteleimon a heartbreaking letter which shows how great the gulf is between the great elders of our Church and the younger generation which has not received its guidance from them and now thinks it "knows better" than they.

We do not wish to judge Fr. Panteleimon or any of the "zealots," including the Mathewites; but it is clear that our path cannot be with them. Their "strictness" forces them to become so involved in church politics that spiritual questions become quite secondary. I know for myself that if I would have to sit down and think out for myself exactly which shade of "zealotry" is the "correct" one today—I will lose all peace of mind and be constantly preoccupied with questions of breaking communion, of how this will seem to others, and "what will the Greeks think" (and which Greeks?), and "what will the Metropolitan think?" And I will not have time or inclination to become inspired by the wilderness, by the Holy Fathers, by the marvelous saints of ancient and modern times who lived in a higher world. In our times especially, it is not possible to be entirely detached from these questions, but let us place first things first: First comes spiritual life and striving for the Kingdom of Heaven; second come questions of jurisdiction and church politics. And let us approach these secondary questions from right direction: not first of all from the viewpoint of legalism, canons, "strictness," but rather spiritually. The chief danger of our times is not "lack of strictness," but loss of the savor of Orthodoxy·, "strictness" will not save us if we don't have any more the feeling and taste of Orthodoxy, and love it with our whole hearts.

Dr. Kalomiros has written, in a letter to Alexey Young a few months ago, something which gives us a clue:

"Father Panteleimon and Father Neketas and those who are around them may be of Greek origin, but they are not Greeks. They are Americans 100% with all the American characteristics. I do not calumniate them, for that is natural. What is sorrowful, however, with them, is that their being Americans and insisting on their being Americans has cut them off from the Orthodox Tradition, which is not something theoretical, but comes from father to son in a continuous man to man handing down which is possible only when one is united in soul and love with those who are handing him down the tradition. But the American Orthodox have no American ancestors in Orthodoxy. If they declare themselves Americans and want to cut themselves off from their national background…they cut themselves in reality from the possibility of receiving living Orthodox Tradition. This is why I who am Greek and who in certain point of theoretical discussions may disagree with the Fathers of Platina and agree with Father Panteleimon, do not sense in him the '"feeling of Orthodoxy, which makes the real Orthodox in spite of our many human errors, and I sense this "feeling" in your periodicals Orthodox Word and Nikodemos, and your practical tendencies are nearer to my heart than the whole atmosphere of The Orthodox Christian Witness, which is directed towards the world, and not from the world towards Eternity."

I fear that our new Orthodox Word, with its attempt (in the introduction to Metr. Philaret's epistle on the "Thyateira Confession") to give the actual thinking of our bishops on questions of "breaking communion"—will be another of those "theoretical" points with which Dr. Kalomiros will disagree. I am sure that our "Greeks" will blast us for it, because they do not want it even to be known that our bishops have never officially broken communion with Constantinople and do not want to. But we cannot insist that we know better than our bishops in a sphere which it is their business to know. If we still have the "feel" of Orthodoxy (and we pray that we will not lose it in the difficult days ahead of us)—it is because we have trusted and loved those bishops and older priests who have handed the faith down to us and have not thought that we can teach them. If on some points we have "theoretical" differences with some bishops, this has not broken the bond of trust and love, and we would not presume to publicly declare such differences. But Fr. Panteleimon, quite frankly, thinks that he is called to teach our bishops, even to the point of publicly rebuking our Metropolitan (as he did at a banquet in 1974). With this we cannot agree, and we would indeed fear to lose the savor of Orthodoxy if we believed we knew better than all our bishops and elders.

This letter is already too long, and we haven't yet "answered your question" about the Serbian hieromonk who serves in our church. On the question of the Serbian Church there has not been unanimity among our bishops. Archbp. Averky thought we should class them with the other Communist-dominated Patriarchates and have no communion with them; but most of our bishops haven't thought so, and in fact Bishop Savva was so firm on this point that he said he would go into retirement if we broke communion with the Serbian Patriarchate. Our bishops apparently have made no decision on the subject, which means Serbia is classed more or less with the "canonical" Churches of the free world (probably a little better than they, because it is Old

Calendar), with whom our relations were strained or discouraged but not entirely broken. In the absence of contrary advice from one of our bishops, we would advise you to accept whatever the local bishop allows, even including the reception of Holy Communion; however, if you feel uneasy about receiving Holy Communion from this priest, for personal spiritual reasons you could easily receive communion in some other of our churches there without being guilty of judging the bishop. It is of course not for you to "teach" the people there, which would only result in confusing them and probably yourself. We expect Vladika Nektary to visit us in the next week or so and will ask his opinion. This, of course, is not a "zealot" position—but none of our bishops has handed down to us a position of pure "zealotry," including Archbishop Averky, who always emphasized the spiritual aspect without insisting on the letter of the law, and whose chief worry about our Church was not our lack of "strictness" but rather the evaporation of spiritual life and allowing worldly and political considerations to dominate us.

Well, I have no time left to give you the information on the holy places of Switzerland and France—see how much "church politics" takes away from the spiritual side?! Forgive me. But I will write shortly with this information. Pray for us—and especially that we will finish on time our publications for the 10th anniversary of Vladika Johns repose. Let us ask him to help and guide us now!

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

219.

Pentecost Sunday, 1976

[May 31/June 13, 1976]

Dear Christopher,

We send you heartfelt greetings on the Feast. May God preserve you in His grace.

Sorry to be silent so long—as usual we have been busy, and still have too much to do before July 2, Vlad. Johns feast. Please pray for us especially in these weeks and on that day.

Church problems don't get any better. But there is hope if one struggles at least a little daily and tries to keep the heart clean. The test in the days ahead will be how much one has the "feel" for Orthodoxy and loves it.

May God preserve you. Never despair, but hope in God. Let us know how you are.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

220.

Third Day of Trinity, 1976

[June 2/15, 1976]

Dear Alexey,

We greet you on the Feast and pray this finds you well and in good spirits before your long pilgrimage.

The events and revelations of recent months have driven us to some sober thoughts, in particular about the future. In reading the new Boston epistle to Metr. Anthony Bloom (which is, of course, mostly "correct," as usual, but wrong in tone), only one thought stands out: this is a rehearsal for a very similar epistle to our own bishops! They feel themselves so strong and "sassy" now that it is obviously only a matter of time before they weary of the "incorrectness" and "inconsistency" of our bishops in not breaking off communion formally with all the Orthodox Churches. Doubtless they are already furious with us for revealing to the world in our new Orthodox Word that we have not broken with them—we will just have to get an Open Letter for that! "Zealotry" is definitely in the air now, has even become the fashion in the English-speaking wing of our Church, and the more moderate position of our bishops will now come to seem intolerable to those who think "logically." All of which raises questions for us: where do we stand now? Where do we go from here?

We cannot follow the line of "Boston Orthodoxy"—which is actually a kind of right wing of "Parisian Orthodoxy"—a "reformed" Orthodoxy which happens to be mosdy "correct," but is actually just as much outside the tradition of Orthodoxy as is Paris, just as much the creation of human logic. A terrible temptation for our times—but most of the converts will probably be drawn into it. The rest of us will remain with our "simple" and "unsophisticated" and "theologically inept" Russian bishops. We fear that all our articles about "zealotry" in the past years have helped to produce a monster! For the future we will have to emphasize the "feel" of Orthodoxy, without which zealotry is empty and even harmful.

The "right wing" of Orthodoxy will probably be divided into many small "jurisdictions" in future, most of them anathematizing and fighting with the others. If only our Russian Church Abroad can stay whole and on a sound path, not inclining to the "left" as a reaction against the "zealot" wing—it will be enough for us. We must keep up the living contact with the older Russian clergy, even if some of them may seem to us a little too "liberal"—otherwise we will become lost in the "zealot" jungle which is growing up around us! First of all, of course, our instructors must be the giants of that older generation: Vladika John, Vladika Averky, and those like them. Vladika Nektary is the most precious of that generation remaining to us—may God preserve him yet for many years! Vladika Laurus is also very precious to us—because, despite perhaps some "theoretical" shortcomings, he has several invaluable qualities: simplicity, honesty, "unpoliticalness" (despite being in the center of the Synod!), and being a little "not of this world." The Boston party hates him and laughs at him—but for all their "wisdom" and money, they will never have those qualities he has. By the way, Vladika Laurus was just elected Abbot at Jordanville; may God preserve him for many years and give him wisdom!

We who wish to remain in the true tradition of Orthodoxy will have to be zealous and firm in our Orthodoxy without being fanatics, and without presuming to teach our bishops what they should

do. Above all we must strive to preserve the true fragrance of Orthodoxy, being at least a little "not of this world," detached from all the cares and politics even of the Church, nourishing ourselves on the other-worldly food the Church gives us in such abundance. Elder Makarios well says in a letter (in his Life which we have just published—the copies arrived Saturday from Taiwan): "Fanaticism limits a man's way of thinking, but true faith gives him freedom. This freedom is revealed by the firmness of a man in all possible cases of happiness and unhappiness." That freedom is the sign of our Orthodoxy; that is precisely why the "Josephites" separated from Sergius in 1927: not for "incorrect ecclesiology" or violation of canons, but because he deprived the Church of the thing most precious to her: her internal freedom. But to see this one must have the savor of Orthodoxy—let us not lose it!

Please pray for us in the weeks ahead, and especially on the day of Vladika John's repose (especially during the Liturgy in the Sepulchre, between 6 and 8 a.m. our time). We feel very crucial times ahead for us and our whole Church, and we want to ask Vladika John very fervently now just what we should do, how we should proceed. By his prayers may we stay on the right path and stay firm in the midst of the temptations ahead!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Greetings to Susan on her approaching namesday!

P.p.s. We will be very interested in your impressions of your meeting with Andrew Bond. Perhaps you will have a chance to meet some other converts there too. There is Father Yves in London, and also a Hierodeacon Nikan Wilkans with a chapel of St. Alban somewhere. Of course you will have to be careful not to "take sides" in the argument there! We have written a letter to Andrew expressing approval of his anti-fanaticism and trying to console him for the "Boston encyclical" he received; but one would like to be friendly with the "zealots" also, hoping that they will not fall into a "party line." We are not fanatically against the "rebaptism" of those who insist on it, in cases where the bishop approves—but this should not be allowed to set a fanatical "tone" to our Orthodoxy, which is what shocked Andrew.

David arrived last night, and God willing will be helping us in our impossible task to finish our two publications before July 2. Frankly, we have been "putting him off" as long as possible, knowing that only great eagerness will be able to endure—not any superhuman struggles, but just the daily unglamorous round of monastic life.

221.

June 9/22, 1976

St. Cyril of White Lake

Dear Brother Makarios [Schaefer],

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Many thanks for the excellent photographs and the news.

We understand very well your situation as you describe it in your letter. Of course, what you say is "correct" as far as it goes. But you are allowing yourself to make one basic mistake: you are making yourself the judge of your own spiritual state. In your present stage of knowledge and experience, you are not able to see whether you need an aspirin or an operation—so try to humble yourself a little to the extent of seeing that you don't know what is best for you! But then what is the answer? To find a stricter place? Not now—if you do you will probably regret it; it is very doubtful that this will give you the spiritual growth that you need and are looking for. Neither "strictness" nor "freedom" is a guarantee of spiritual growth. Some people under "freedom" become spiritually loose and never grow, but we have also seen those trained under relative "strictness" who have also made no growth, but on the contrary have thought that they have grown while actually falling into the diseases of vainglory and pride, believing that their instructor was taking care of these problems for them. Under both forms of life one must walk in fear of God and with discernment.

Your answer—if I may be so bold as to tell you—is to be patient, enduring with good hope all the temptations that come your way, and withholding your judgment as to whether you-.need an aspirin or an operation—until you have acquired more knowledge and experience—which is why you went to Jordanville in the first place. Your opinion will be much more sound after several more years of seminary and experience in an Orthodox community. You are too young in Orthodoxy to be evaluating your spiritual growth—that is actually a sign of your pride. Be patient, endure, observe, learn— and when the time comes there will come ways of testing your real spiritual growth.

In a word, the temptation to leave Jordanville, after committing yourself to the seminary and the life of a novice, seems to come from the devil on the "right side"—to knock you off the path which will give you the best progress, for a seemingly good and plausible reason. Do you remember how today's Saint, Cyril of White Lake, thought that he would be more spiritually profited by sitting in his quiet cell than by laboring in the noisy kitchen? And that it did not turn out at all as his inexperienced judgment thought it would? Take that as your example and warning when these thoughts come to you from the "right side." The "noisy kitchen" can give you much valuable spiritual experience, even if it might not seem so at the time.

The feeling of emptiness, worldly vanity, helplessness against temptations—will pass; but you should accept all this now as your cross, struggling according to your strength, and not being so proud as to think that you should be above them.

Now, about an immediate concern: we have written to the new Abbot, Vladika Laurus, asking him to "lend" you to us for the summer, for a specific purpose: to help us finish printing the Life of Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky. This would be a tremendous help to us. By ourselves we simply cannot do it this summer or maybe even this year, and our summer helpers probably won't be much help. One of their biggest problems, by the way, is the opposite of what you say you want—they can hardly bear being told that they've done something wrong or being bawled out! Br. Nicholas has also offered to help us, but I doubt that Vladika would allow you both to come at the same time—so we're asking for you first!

Assuming that your offer still holds, and that Vladika Laurus will bless—do you have money for plane fare to get here, one-way? If not, we will manage it. We would want you to come straight here, without taking off your podrasnik—coming from one obedience to another.

We ask your prayers for us especially in the days ahead and on June 19/July 2, the tenth anniversary of Vladika Johns repose. With all the troubles and rumors in the Church, we wish to ask his help very fervently for our further labors. This is the post-Paschal "apostolic" time of the Church year, and there is much apostolic labor still to do in Christ's Church!

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

222.

June 10/23, 1976

St. John of Tobolsk

Dear Father Hilarion,

Blagoslovite!

We do not know how you are, but feel that it is perhaps difficult for you. Rejoice in the Lord! Our goal is in the heavens!

Ever darker clouds seem ahead of us in church life, and we pray God will give you the courage and wisdom not to lose sight of the goal in the midst of them. God is with us!

Just a word: if ever there seems "just no way out" for you and you desperately need "asylum"—come here and we will "hide" you, as long as God gives us strength and grace to inhabit these mountains.

Please pray for us, especially on the day of Archbishop Johns repose, June 19/July 2. We would be glad to hear a word from you.

With love in Christ our Saviour

Seraphim, monk

223.

June 10/23, 1976B

St. John of Tobolsk

Dear Brother Christopher,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were glad to hear that you are somehow surviving and struggling a little. May God be your help!

Do not be afraid to confess the fleshly sins. Do you think that you are so holy? God allows you to fall in order to humble you. Get up and walk in fear and trembling. Struggle against them, but do not despair, no matter what happens. Strength in Orthodox firmness comes very gradually; what you do every day helps build it up; and if you fall, humility and self-awareness build it up.

Thomas Reszke lives right at the cathedral on North Kedzie (in the basement, 1 think). He didn't seem to find what he was looking for with us.

We'll probably be having a few summer laborers, including a catechumen or two. We have three fawns already, although they haven't been officially "presented" to us yet—we saw them by accident, but Slim and Afosya haven't brought them into the monastery yet.

Please pray for us especially on the day of Archbishop John's repose, June 19/July 2. We need his help to keep going in the true path in the darkening atmosphere.

Keep in contact. The struggles of each of us may seem lonely, but if we share them a little, we begin to feel the warmth and love of God's Kingdom already on earth. Even a taste of that can keep us going.

With love Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

224.

June 10/23, 1976C

St. John of Tobolsk

Dear Father Alexis,

Evlogeite!

Thank you for the copies of the various letters. They help to clarify the picture somewhat.

Andrew's letter has one great virtue: it is straightforward and honest; he says what he thinks. With such a one one may argue or even fight, perhaps, without coming to disaster; and one has the impression that he will listen if one speaks to him from the heart. You fault him for rising up against the clergy—but really, that's not the basic problem here; he's afraid that "the fanatics are taking over," and whether real or imaginary, that's the fear that should be handled and calmed. I don't know if it' helps to show him "logically" that the ones he fears as somehow "fanatics" are really models of Orthodox correctness. We don't know any of these people, but we do know many converts who grasp at "correctness" like a baby's bottle, and I think they could save their souls better by being a little "incorrect," but humbler.

This is not an "argument"—just a few reflections to share with you.

As for you: yes, you plugged all the loopholes, except one: the one in your heart. Keep it open, and one day…

Father Herman instructs me to tell you: Orthodoxy is a mystery of God's love which cannot be defined; fear to lose it. If ever you should be in trouble, we will give you refuge.

With love and sympathy in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

225.

June 12/25, 1976

St. Arsenius of Konevitz

Dear Daniel,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a brief report on the holy places of France and Switzerland which we hope you may be able to visit. Information of these will be part of our introduction to St. Gregory's Life of the Fathers, but it is still in very fragmentary form. The whole of 5th and 6th century Gaul is extremely interesting and inspiring for us Orthodox Christians of the last times—probably most of all because spiritual struggle was then the center of attention for everyone in any way close to the Church, as opposed to our times when worldliness possesses everyone, including those most involved in the Church. If only God will give us the strength to complete and print this book!—please pray for this.

Our Russian book on Vladika John (200 pages) is finally printed, and we only hope we can get some copies sewn and bound in time for his feast, just a week away. We feel we have done our duty to Vladika John and Vladika Savva (whose book it actually is); but we rather expect to be persecuted for it. Vladika Savva told us that the difficulties of his last years were the devil's revenge on him for glorifying Vladika John. May God grant us strength to endure whatever comes and not grow fainthearted. Please pray for us. We feel that very difficult times are ahead for all who wish to stay in the true spirit of Orthodoxy. The church-political atmosphere now is such that we actually feel like some kind of criminals just for saying elementary things, such as that Vladika John heals the sick and works miracles; so we were especially encouraged when, of the several bishops we asked, Archbishop Nikon sent us his brief memoirs of Vlad. John in time to be printed at the end of the book, in which he says this very thing—that because of his love and struggle, Vlad. John was granted by God the grace-given gift of healing those who come to him with faith. Vladika Nikon will probably die soon—another of the older generation to depart, and who among the younger will take the tradition and hand it on?

Now a brief report:

The Jura Mountains in Eastern France bordering on Switzerland, are the "Thebaid of the Gauls," an area about 30 x 45 miles which in the 5th and 6th centuries and later abounded in monasteries and cells of monks and nuns. The monastery of Condat (or Condatiscum, now the town of St. Claude) was probably the next great monastic settlement in the West after St. Martin and Lerins, and was fully in their spirit. The Jura monasteries are especially interesting to us because they

are a forested desert, very close to the spirit of the Northern Thebaid (or to the American Thebaid that could be if there were souls to match the mountains!).

The founder of monastic life in the Jura is St. Romanus (died c. 460) and then his brother St. Lepucinus. St. Gregory writes briefly about them in the Life of the Fathers, but we have also their complete lives in a 6th century text.

St. Romanus was born in the Jura and received his monastic formation at a monastery in Lyons, where in the first half of the 5th century there were disciples both of St. Martin and of St. Honoratus of Lerins. The latter s disciple, St. Eucherius, was Bishop of Lyons; to him St. Cassian dedicated seven books of the Conferences. He wrote the "Praise of the Desert," which speaks of forested deserts. Inspired by such preceptors, St. Romanus at the age of 35 left Lyons and went into the mountains not far from his native village, taking with him St. Cassians Institutes and the Lives of the Egyptian Fathers, also some seeds and one tool for digging. After roaming the mountains he found a spot to his liking on a stream between two great cliffs—the present town of St. Claude. He lived at first in a fir tree whose branches reached to the ground and provided shelter against the deep snows of winter; then, after being joined by his brother and then two other desert lovers, separate wooden cabins began to be built for each—an Eastern Lavra in the forest. Only 70 years later, when fire destroyed the then numerous cabins which had become crowded together, was a barracks built and the coenobitic rule established.

Sts. Romanus and his brother St. Lepucinos (or Lupicinus) built three other main monasteries and a convent, and there were many sketes and cells attached to them—a veritable Athos of the mountains, with perhaps close to 1000 monks during their lifetimes. St. Romanus was abbot over all of them until his death, travelling from one to the other.

Of all these establishments there is not much left today, but for the Orthodox pilgrim the very mountains are holy, and probably there are many wild places left which look much as they did 1500 years ago. The following places would be of special interest:

(1) Condat: now the worldly town of St. Claude. (There is a long history of how the monastery became a wealthy landowner, the abbots were feudal princes; then came secularization of the holdings, etc.) The present cathedral (not too old, I think, though perhaps it does go back to 1400 or so, I don't recall—here were kept the relics of St. Claude, a 6th-century abbot, which were burned in the French Revolution.) is probably close to the original settlement of St. Romanus. It is probably still surrounded by forest, and around one of the two cliffs which loom up on both sides of the town there used to be a "St. Anne's Hermitage" which would be interesting to see if it still exists. What is the landscape like? Can you get photographs? What kind of forest? Can you get a cone and leaves of the firs or whatever tree predominates?—actually, we would like fir at any rate, because that was St. Romanus' original cell. What is the elevation?

(2) St. Lupicin: a village a few kilometers from St. Claude, I think on the same river Bienne (a tributary of the Rhone)—perhaps you could get a photo of this river? Here in the 19th century the relics of St. Lepucinus were still kept and the villagers still piously kept his feast day and memory. This was the site of one of the main monasteries (with 150 monks), over which St. Lepucinus was placed— it was built to provide food for the monks, as farming was difficult at

the original site. What is the countryside like here? Are the relics of the Saint still there? Can you get earth from near them, or anything else?

(3) St. Romain-de-Roche (St. Romanus of the Cliff)—5 km. southeast of St. Lupicin, further down the Bienne, site of the convent of La Balme (500 nuns), under the Saints' sister, St. Yole. The convent disappeared early, and now there seems to be a Catholic monastery on the site. This is a valley ending in cliffs which have caverns in them (I don't think there's a record of nuns living in them, however). St. Romanus' relics were once here—perhaps they still are? If so, please get earth or anything from nearby—in fact, it would be good to get a little earth even if the relics are no longer there.

(4) (Less important) Grandvaux, some miles of St. Lupitin, next to a lake—was one of the monastic settlements sent out after St. Romanus' time. Six miles from here, on lake Bonlieu, was another monastic settlement (6th century, I think) with 20 monks (in a valley called Combe d'Ain). Apparently there are a few ruins of these establishments left.

(5) Romainmoutier: "St. Romanus' Monastery." This is apparently 30 or 40 miles from St. Claude, in Switzerland; there seems to be some doubt as to its origin, but very likely it is one of the monasteries founded by St. Romanus. In any case, it is interesting because it is one of the few churches of Gaul surviving in large measure from the 7th century or so. Apparently it is in Protestant, or perhaps government, hands now—could you get photographs? Is there any evidence that there were originally frescoes inside?

(6) Agaunum: further on into Switzerland on the same road from St. Claude-Romainmoutier. I don't know if a monastery or anything survives there today, but this is the site of the martyrdom of St. Maurice and the Theban Legion, where there were monks' cells in the time of St. Romanus (he visited them), and in 515 the rule of the Constantinopolitan "Laus perennis"—constant singing of the Psalter—was established, with 100 monks being sent from Condat to help form the choir. There must be at least some kind of church left there now, probably called "St. Maurice d'Agaune."

Of course, there were many other early saints in this area and nearby, and probably there are still traces of some of them. But we would be most interested in the places I've mentioned. Just the "feel" of the mountains and forests, some photographs if possible, and especially information on relics, and at least a little memento of these places—earth and a fir cone!—would be very dear to us.

I must send this off. Pray for us. We look forward to hearing from you.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

226.

June 24/July 7, 1976

Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Dear Father Mark [Wakingham],

Bless!

First, we write to thank you warmly for the icons of St. Columba, which arrived safely several weeks ago. I'm not quite sure which issue they will fit into, but hopefully we will be using them soon. By the way, has there been any "official" approval (I.e., by the Archbishop) for the veneration of such saints who are not in the existing Russian and Greeks calendars? We ourselves have no problems accepting these saints who were certainly venerated by the Orthodox Church before the schism, but an official "stamp of approval" is helpful in quieting those for whom the Western saints still seem a little strange. If there exists an "officially approved list" of English saints, we would certainly like to add their names to our calendar.

Second, we have heard of the furor aroused by the Guildford "rebaptisms," and this troubles us—not for the sake of the baptisms themselves (for our Church has been quite broad in its acceptance of different degrees of economy and strictness) as because of the tone of over-zealous "correctness" with which some people, at least, have greeted them. We are familiar with this spirit of "correctness" here in America, and it does not have good results, leading rather to divisions, discouragement, strife, and the creation of a whole "party" in the Church which fancies that it knows better about these things than anyone else, including our bishops. Perhaps it will encourage you to know that our whole Church is by no means in agreement with those who are pushing their "correctness," and our bishops (probably unanimously) are against this "zeal not according to knowledge." No one is against true zeal, but when it becomes a "party line" and divides the Church into factions—then it is time to step back and proceed more soberly and moderately.

Perhaps you are discouraged in your own labors because of all the troubles. Please know that we are with you in prayer, and we ourselves derive encouragement knowing of your missionary labors preformed without great publicity and fanfare. Archbishop John taught us that each little Orthodox center is like a sprout whose normal Orthodox growth must be encouraged, without imposing a strait-jacket of conformity upon it. Even if for a time a "super-zealot" party may seem to have the approval of the Archbishop in England, you should know that this can surely only be due to a misunderstanding which will eventually be corrected, for it is quite out of harmony with the attitude of all our bishops. In any case, please persevere in your labors, which perhaps unknown to you help to encourage other solitary strugglers in our Church throughout the world. The devil is walking about like a lion in our midst, but by our patience and endurance of trials we can get the best of him, with God s help.

We would be glad to hear more from you and have a more regular contact with you, and we ask your holy prayers for our Brotherhood.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

227.

June 30/July 13, 1976

Twelve Apostles

Dear Father Panagiotes [Carras],

Evlogeite!

Thank you for your letter. Your words do not offend us, and in fact we are encouraged by the fact that, while differing so sharply with our article, you expressed yourself in so conciliatory a tone. We pray that, whatever disagreements may lie ahead, this tone will be preserved by all involved.

About the article: yes, part of the difficulty is a matter of expression, and if it is necessary to talk about these things in future we will try to express ourselves in a way less likely to cause unnecessary offense.

But the main problem is much deeper, and we were so bold as to stick our necks out in front of a visible axe, knowing that there would be disagreements and that later we would probably have to at least rephrase what we said there, solely because we see a frightful thing in front of us, of which very few seem to be aware: we see the formation of two distinct wings in our Church—our bishops, who are saying and thinking one thing (mostly in Russian), and a "Greek party," which is saying and thinking something completely different (in English and Greek). Your words only confirm this for us. Whoever is doing the "translation" between you and other Greek priests, and our Russian bishops, is certainly leaving much unsaid, to say the least. Apparently each party is interpreting the things unsaid in its own way.

I believe that the words in our article which you find so shocking express fairly well what most if not all of our Russian bishops think. Our Synod has not, nor ever said that it has, broken communion with any of the main "canonical" churches; only with Moscow is there an official break, and that for reasons which do not involve a question of heresy (it is rather the "dead rat" in Blessed Xenia's barrel) and which look to the eventual restoration of communion when the political situation changes (it being understood, and expressed by various of our hierarchs, that when the Communist regime falls the betraying hierarchs will be appropriately handled). (The giving of communion to Catholics is a new element in the Moscow situation which our bishops haven't drawn final conclusions about as yet.) Whether we like it or not our Synod has used precisely the term "avoiding communion" with regard to the Metropolia—meaning, for all intents and purposes, a break in communion, but without any proclamation of them as "schismatics. The thinking behind our Synod's actions in recent years seems to be in reality quite different from what you have been told, namely: Fr. George Lewis was allowed to be baptized and ordained solely because he was not received in the Metropolia by a bishop, but only by a priest—thus he was not considered ordained or properly received and was received by us like a Catholic (not one of our bishops, I am sure, would dream of ordaining anyone already correctly ordained by the Metropolia); the establishment of multi-national parishes is a missionary answer, in the midst of a chaos of jurisdictions, to an urgent demand on the part of these groups, with no opinion expressed or implied about the Mysteries of other jurisdictions of the same nationality;

the reception of Greek clergy without canonical release from the Greek Archdiocese is a case of economy, because they have been accepted for reasons of conscience but without our bishops officially breaking communion with the hierarchs from whom they have separated (this is the explanation given us directly by an Archbishop who has received two such priests); only very recently (if then) have any of our bishops begun seriously to question the validity of the Mysteries in the "canonical jurisdictions," and probably all of our bishops still believe that the Mysteries of at least most of the jurisdictions are valid (just recently our bishops refused the request of the Synod of Archbishop Auxentios to agree with it on the non-validity of new-calendarist Mysteries, and it was not until a year or so ago that this Old-Calendarist Synod ceased to believe that the new-calendarist Mysteries are indeed valid); our Church has open communion with the Serbian Church, Jerusalem, and probably others, and leaves separate hierarchs free to serve even with Constantinople if they wish. Indeed, even on the "right" side there is a glaring enough "inconsistency," in that we continue to have communion (as long as they will allow it) with two groups of Old Calendarists who have no communion with each other.

We ourselves at times have wished to see a little more "consistency" in the positions of the Synod, but for the time being we have to be satisfied with the basic Synod position, which seems to be: individual members and communities of the Russian Church Abroad are free to have no communion with any of the "canonical jurisdictions," but the bishops themselves are not willing to break communion with these jurisdictions as yet. We spoke just a week ago with one of the leading Archbishops of our Synod, whose views are undoubtedly typical of our Synod, and he made it quiet clear that officially we have broken only with Moscow, and our official responsibility at this time, as far as breaking communion, does not extend beyond the Russian Church situation; about the other jurisdictions we do not yet have to define things so precisely. Like it or not, that seems to be the position of our Church as reflected in the views of individual hierarchs and in the decrees of Sobors and the Synod (and also by the lack of such decrees on some points). In future the Synod or Sobor may change this position; but we must be aware of what their position is now.

Judging from your letter, you will receive these words with unbelief; if nothing else, then, our article will have served to bring into the open something which has been too long covered up. Apparently some people in our Synod prefer not to "upset" people by telling them what the bishops really think; but we cannot see anything but trouble ahead from such a pretense. Better to know the truth in the beginning, even if it is unpleasant, than to be confronted with it later and find that one has been acting on false presumptions for months or years. Judging from the "Open Letters" of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Fr. Panteleimon is well enough aware of what our bishops really think—but apparently one can read those letters with a different set of presuppositions in mind and not see this.

Even the letter of our Metropolitan on the "Thyateira Confession" does not indicate that we have broken communion with Constantinople; the distinct implication, I would say, is that it threatens a final break in communion if the rest of the bishops of Constantinople do not condemn the document.

We ourselves follow the confessing stand of Archbishop Averky, who based his stand, however, much less on canons and dogmas than on discernment of the spiritual substance of the apostasy of the "canonical jurisdictions"; the break of our Church and the Catacomb Church with Sergius in 1927 was also not primarily a question of canons or dogmas, but a rather more subtle question which the Catacomb hierarchs expressed most frequently as the loss of "freedom" (that is, inward freedom). We as much as you wish to be separate from the "canonical jurisdictions"; but we wonder how adequate is the stand that this separateness must be defined on canonical and dogmatic grounds. The Old Believers to this day defend their separation from the Orthodox Church precisely on canonical and dogmatic grounds; and our hierarchs, in what you probably regard as their excessive caution in breaking formally with the "canonical jurisdictions," have very much in mind our Russian experience with a tragic mistake made on the "right" side out of immoderate zeal. Dr. Kalomiros and others in Greece who follow the Old Calendar have written to us of the "legalism" and "fanaticism" of some of the Old Calendarists; are we supposed only to praise such people even though we see that they are sowing distrust and discord in the name of "correctness"?

It does not seem appropriate to discuss such things in print, and perhaps even what we printed was a little too much, especially it if is interpreted as a condemnation of many zealot fathers, as you say (although Fr. Theodoritos of St. Anne's Skete did not tell us in his recent letter on this subject that he was at all offended by the article). But you should know that some of the words and actions of those on the "right" side (we don't know how else to say it!) are indeed causing trouble among us, and in particular there is good reason to suspect that some of the recent actions towards the "left" of a few of our bishops are a direct reaction to what they regard as a dangerous fanaticism. We fear that if our bishops are going to be told (without asking them) that they regard all the "canonical jurisdictions" as "heretical" and "without grace"—that they may regard it necessary to go a little overboard on the other side. Let's not force them to that! That danger is greater than you might think.

This is enough to give you our reasons for raising such a controversial point in The Orthodox Word. We fear that the future for true Orthodoxy may be indeed as dismal as Dr. Kalomiros paints it, with isolated groups of believers cut off from each other and even anathematizing each other over points of "strictness" and "correctness." While we have our free Russian Church Outside of Russia we should treasure it, even while we may have disagreements among ourselves over questions such as breaking communion. If some in our Church are going to insist that their opinions on such questions must prevail—there will be discord and possibly schism, which indeed would do more harm than any possible good, for it would prove to "canonical Orthodoxy" that "true Orthodoxy" is only a conglomeration of fighting sects. May God preserve us from this—this is what made us write the article. Our "correctness" must always be accompanied by humility, and with sufficient doubt in our own opinions as to listen to what those who differ may say, without calling them betrayers or heretics. Thus far the circle of betrayers and heretics is fairly clear, and we should not cease to denounce their path and remain separate from them; but with those who sincerely wish to remain in the tradition of Orthodoxy we must have a spirit of conciliation and openness to listen.

Pray for us, and please keep in contact with us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

228.

July 4/17, 1976

Royal Martyrs of Russia

Dear Brother in Christ, Andrew,

Greetings on our Lord Jesus Christ. We were saddened to hear of the developments in England, and especially distressed to learn that you have been deprived of Holy Communion.

You, of course, are now in a very bad position: both by being identified as a "rebel" against your own Archbishop and clergy, and much more by being cut off from the very Mysteries of the Church. In such a situation, nothing that you can say or do will have any good effect as regards the issues involved; whatever you say, it will be the words of a "rebel," which may be disregarded. Therefore, it is quite essential for you to remove this label from yourself. This can be done in a very simple way which does not involve the acceptance of opinions repugnant to you. We urge you to put aside, for the present, all thoughts of "right and wrong," "just and unjust," and first put right the spiritual side—that is, do what is necessary to be restored to Holy Communion.

We strongly urge you to do what your Archbishop asks of you: namely, to write a letter to each of the clergymen to whom you are accused of being disrespectful, begging their forgiveness for any crudeness, disrespect, or improper words or actions you may have shown to them. This is important both because it is in obedience you your Archbishop (to whose judgment you should be respectful even when you think it is unjust or wrong), and even more because it is a spiritual approach to the question, which in itself does not involve the question of who is right and who wrong regarding the issues. Your Archbishop has asked you to "ask forgiveness and be at peace" and "to have reverence and respect" to clergy—but he does not actually tell you what opinions you are to have. This is the proper course even supposing that you are "right" in every respect, for the unjust suffering of wrongs is of great spiritual benefit; but it should be easy enough in any case to accuse yourself of crudeness, wrong tone, etc., which creep into all of us even when we are defending the truth.

Then you should write to Vladika Nikodem himself, likewise asking his forgiveness in similar words, and adding that you have asked forgiveness (in written form) of all the clergymen as he directed you to do. If you wish you could add here that you are sorry that because of your crudeness you were not able to express adequately your concern over something which not only you, but others also, have been troubled over—but that this can perhaps be done in a more fitting way at some other time.

We suspect that deep down Vladika Nikodem himself is not entirely satisfied With the position in which he finds himself, and that his actions are due more to "political" circumstances than anything else; in which case your expression of humility and forgiveness will help him later when it may be more opportune to change positions.

The attitude which you are against (and rightly so) is such a "sick point" in our Church now that it cannot be approached by a direct "fight," and it is actually rather unimportant if it seems to gain some local "victories." The circle of those who are becoming concerned about "zeal not according to knowledge" in our Church, is steadily increasing, and at the proper time this unsound current will be put in its place. But these things take time and patience, and often require a temporary "retreat from battle"; if it comes to that, let us remember Napoleon and Russia in 1812!

As I said, we strongly urge you at this time to make peace as the Archbishop has asked you (no matter what you may have written to him in the meantime), on the spiritual level; this will help not only you but others outside England also. When we talk to our bishops about this, we know well that they will not be inclined to act where it involves someone who has been "excommunicated," however unjustly. Please help us out in this!

May God be your help and consolation in your difficult trial, which requires of you now an effort of humility and peace—which will have greater results than you might think.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

229.

July 13/26, 1976

Archangel Gabriel

Dear Father Kyprian,

Evolgeite!

We received and read your letter with great joy, feeling in [it] the fragrance of true Orthodoxy which is so much threatened now both on the left side and the right. We hope that there will be frequent contact between us in the future, for we also feel at times somewhat isolated in our position, especially with the fanatical tone which is now spreading among the American members of our Church through the influence of Fr. Panteleimon. This fanatical tone is causing discord and distrust between Greeks and Russians in our Church and is making it much more difficult for our bishops to stay on the royal path, without inclining to left or right. We believe our Russian Church Outside Russia is in an exceptionally good position to stay on this royal path, speaking boldly against the apostasy of the left without making unnecessary "definitions" about the status of their Sacraments, and at the same time not being under pressure of a strong "fanatical" group such as you have in Greece. We fully sympathize with your situation and

certainly approve of your decision not to break communion with hierarchs with whom you are in basic accord in questions of faith, apart from this unfortunate "political" decree.

For some time we have intended to write you asking for perhaps a small article about your monastery, and your letter now gives us an occasion to do this. I believe that your experience could be of help to us in America. Would it be possible for someone to write for us a brief account of your monastery, with a special emphasis on the principles and point of view which you try to follow? It would be especially valuable if you could give us a description or some examples of the harmful consequences of the "correctness" disease (which we also call "knowing better"). I realize that this is a very sensitive topic and one would not like to mention names or express oneself in a way that might offend some of our well-meaning zealots who err out of inexperience, more than anything else. But with proper caution I believe that this could be done in a way that would not be offensive and would be a warning to those who are not yet thoroughly infected with the "correctness" disease. So far in America this disease has not struck too deeply, and we do not have any real examples of people who have gone far astray because of it; we would rather warn them now on the basis of your more thorough experience than to simply wait for the catastrophes to happen to us here in America—and we see clearly that they are going to happen.

We would be very grateful to you if you could help us in this way, and also send a few photographs of your monastery and new church, and of you and your monks—and also with account of your Typicon, especially venerated saints, etc.

We were very touched to hear once more of your devotion to our dear Vladika John. Could you write to us briefly of how you celebrated this day?—what kind of services, sermon, etc.—for our records? We also celebrated his memorial with deep feeling, and a few days before it our monastery was saved from a terrible forest fire by his prayers. We have printed a book in Russian for this 10th anniversary, and soon we will be finished with a special issue of The Orthodox Word dedicated to him, which we will send you as soon as it is finished.

We ask for your holy prayers and blessing.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. Do you have any particular comments on our recent "Metropolitan Philaret" issue of The Orthodox Word—especially our introduction to his epistle?

230.

July 14/27, 1976

St. Nikodemus the Hagiorite

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Barbara arrived safely with the icon and relics and your /letter, for all of which many thanks. We look forward to the accounts of your pilgrimage, which should be a great inspiration to English-speaking Orthodox—it is indeed an easy thing simply to take for granted even the greatest treasures which are so close at hand. We see this in Russians and Greeks who possess such Patristic treasures which we just dream of seeing in English, and now in the English converts—who hopefully now will be roused to greater fervor for their own Orthodox Saints.

We have not heard anything from England in several weeks. Fr. John Marks wrote us a good letter inquiring if Fr. Panteleimon and fanaticism were really an accurate expression of the Synod outlook (one of the Guildford baptizees is pestering him with "apocalyptic warnings" about his damnation if he dies outside the Synod, etc.); and we replied, telling him no. (Did you meet him?) Andrew sent us a copy of Archbishop Nikodem's epistle to him asking for his repentance. The hand of Fr. Panteleimon seems evident in this incident, and Archbishop Nikodem seems to have been placed in the unfortunate "political" situation of having to accept as his "defender" someone with whose views I really doubt he is in full accord. However, in that situation nothing further is possible for the good unless Andrew does what the Archbishop wants—ask forgiveness of the clergy whom he has "offended." We strongly urged Andrew to do this, in written form, emphasizing to him that this does not mean changing his opinions about "rebaptism," but only apologizing for any crudeness, etc., which he may have shown (which, judging from his letters to us, he probably has shown!) We haven't heard further from him yet.

As for our Metr. Philaret issue: the little response so far has been mostly favorable. The enclosed letter was written before Archimandrite Kyprian saw the issue, but I think he would approve of our comments—save, perhaps, for the implied fact that to some extent our Church is still in actual communion with Constantinople. Fr. Theodoritos of Mt. Athos (who has never told us himself of his "jurisdictional problems") wrote in approval of the issue, only adding that he is sorry that we are "still in communion with Demetrios."

Frs. Panteleimon and Neketas are conspicuously silent, though undoubtedly the phone lines are buzzing! But we did hear from two Greek-American priests, Frs. Anthony Gavalas and Panagiotes Carras—their letters were very sincere and without bad feeling, but they are obviously extremely naive about "what the Synod believes," and they simply have no idea that there can be any such thing as a "temptation on the right side." We have tried to prepare them a little for the shock ahead of them when they discover how "liberal" our bishops are in most places. In general there seems to be not much awareness of this problem we are raising, but the letter from Archimandrite Kyprian (you can keep the copy) persuades us more than ever that it is a very deep and important one.

Out of all this we see the necessity for the formulation of a sound "moderate" stand that will emphasize true Orthodoxy, firmly oppose ecumenism and modernism, but not go overboard in "defining" such things as the presence or absence of grace, or practicing "rebaptism" of those already Orthodox. (We accept that in some cases this might be allowable with the bishop's approval—but beyond a few isolated cases this practice itself introduces a fanatical tone and a spirit of discord and distrust in the Church. This will be extremely difficult to do, especially with the presence among us of a politically-powerful "fanatic"; but with God's help and the prayers of

our patron saints we will try our best to do our little bit. We have little hope that our bishops (in view of the passions it would arouse in some quarters) will give us some "simple solution" to work with—such as, especially in view of the "Thyateira Confession," announcing that we will have no communion with Constantinople whatever, but will also not rebaptize those who come to us from them. For us personally there is no problem: in view of the ever-increasing apostasy and bearing in mind especially Vladika Averky's strong words on the subject, we ourselves have no communion with non-Synod jurisdictions, but without any animosity or demonstrations and without judging those bishops who continue to allow such communion. This allows us freedom to be occupied and inspired by non-polemical matters, without which church life becomes intolerably stifling. The more all of us can give spiritual food and inspiration, the better for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you. Our Vladika John issue in English is still far from finished—pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

231.

July 16/29, 1976

Dear Fr. Neketas,

Evlogeite!

Thank you for your letter, which we accepted in the spirit of love and concern with which it was written.

Father, for you everything seems simple; but many even of the points you raise in this letter are by no means as simple as you would make them. And this is not our personal opinion, but the opinion of many bishops, priests, monks and laymen with whom we have discussed them, both here and in Greece. The need to speak against the dangerous temptation on the "right side" (which you don't seem to understand at all) has been impressed upon us above all by highly respected clergy and faithful (respected by you also) in Greece who follow the Old Calendar; I am surprised that you either do not know what they have been saying or choose to take no notice of it. If Father Panteleimon would not be making so many enemies in Greece (which may be the reason why these people no longer speak openly to you), I am sure it would help you and all of us.

We are certainly willing to admit that part of the difficulty here is our inadequate expression of some of the things to which you so strongly object. But the misunderstanding cannot be entirely our fault. It is surely unjust of you, in the context of our past work, of this issue, and of this very article to which you object—to say that this article gives "ecumenical orientation and support." We will try to express ourselves better in future—but you should also try to see things a little less narrowly, as though it were not possible for your position to be incorrect or imprecise in even the smallest point.

We have not spoken of a "right wing" or a "left wing," much less of a branch theory. You have read that into the article. Father, we are hurt; in this you are slandering us! We spoke only of the Patristic dictum of the "danger on the right side"—of being too correct and too precise, without the saving medicine of profound humility, which causes discord and division and only helps the work of the devil. Surely you are familiar with what the Mathewites are doing in Greece? And of how they led Fr. Basile Sakkos to his disaster? You must know that you and we are no longer in communion with the Mathewites, since they have broken communion with our Church precisely over the question which we raise in this article—the deliberate refusal of our bishops to declare the new-calendar Mysteries to be without grace?

You ask us: "Are Fr. Neketas and Fr. Panagiotes priests or are they not?" We answer: we believe you are—not because this is our personal opinion or the result of our own logic but because our bishops accept this, and we see no reason to challenge them on this. But if you ask us further, "Does Constantinople then have grace?"—we will give you the same answer: we accept what our bishops tell us, which is—we cannot say that they do not, and there certainly has been no official breach of communion. (Separate hierarchs, as we mention in the article, have warned against and broken communion, but not our whole Church.) If you do not approve of this, you should direct your complaint to our bishops, not to us who are only reporting what they say. We can easily see how this "inconsistency" would make you personally feel uneasy, if you really did not know whether you are "defrocked" or not. I do not know any defense against this feeling (at least until our bishops shall declare an official break with Constantinople) except your own trust of our bishops: if you trust that they are true bishops and know what they are doing (even though your own logic should tell you otherwise for a time)—then you need have no doubts. Certainly, precedents in Orthodox history may be found where the Mysteries of a Church have been recognized and the anathemas of the same Church have not been recognized (as in the troubles between the Churches of Constantinople and Greece in the 19th century). There are often such mitigating circumstances that make the strict application of canons impossible, and likewise strict "consistency"—that we should be very cautious when we think we know better than our bishops how to apply the canons.

Father, we have not become "ecumenical"; this is a slander caused by your insistence on pushing your own (and not our bishops') point of view on every point. If our words will be interpreted in an "ecumenical" light we will certainly express ourselves more clearly in future, hoping that the church atmosphere will be such that faulty expressions or puzzling statements will not be leaped upon to "prove" we are really ecumaniacs. Unfortunately, the healthy church atmosphere in which even mistakes can be made without causing schisms and charges of heresy—seems to be vanishing, largely under influence from Greece, and you yourself are participating in putting this unnecessary "tenseness" and suspicion into the air. In your well-meaning zeal you are sometimes expressing yourself too strongly; in particular, you are giving your opinions as though they were those of our bishops. I will tell you frankly that a number of our bishops do not like this, and you are in danger of pushing them to a more radical position than they would like solely as a reaction to your "pushing too hard." (We are reasonably sure that this is a chief reason why Vladika Laurus chose to serve on Mt. Athos.) Be zealous and express yourself strongly—but do not tell everyone what our Church or our bishops think unless you have discussed it thoroughly with

them yourself. I realize that communications for non-Russians are a little difficult with our bishops, and that it is very easy to leave some things unsaid on both sides—but this will not excuse you for letting vague general impressions dictate what you think (and even print) about the views of our bishops. We know one high-ranking bishop of our Synod who was very upset when he read in the Witness that (approximately) "Our Church has no communion whatever with the canonical jurisdictions." The idea had never entered the head of this bishop that we have no communion with any of these jurisdictions—and yet here it is presented as a authoritative fact in the Witness. Do not blame this lack of mutual understanding solely on our bishops—they also suffer from the fact that "one can't talk with our Greeks—they won't listen to any other point of view."

We have always been sure that Fr. Panteleimon knew such elementary facts of life in our Synod and would have told you about them; but he is either misinterpreting things himself, or simply hiding things from you. Please do not judge us too harshly if we are the first to tell you of them. We do not blindly believe anything just because some or most of our bishops believe it; but we treat their opinions with the utmost respect and try to understand why they think that way. Perhaps in future, and especially after the "Thyateira Confession," our bishops will find it necessary to issue more precise statements and to formally break communion with Constantinople (and perhaps other Patriarchates); but up to now they have not done this.

You may ask, Why are our bishops so slow in doing this, when the progress of apostasy seems so clearly to be destroying these Churches? Without pretending to speak for the bishops, I can give you several reasons which should make you less insistent that they should have broken communion by now: (1) the abnormal, often anarchic conditions of our times, which tend to make the bishops think more in terms of maximum "economy" rather than emphasize "strictness"; (2) the "temporary" nature of the Russian Church Abroad, which makes it disinclined to make sharp or final decisions about Pan-Orthodox questions; (3) problems of language, psychology, etc.—including the presence in Greece of a group which has been identified by other Old Calendarists themselves as "fanatics," "legalists," and as giving justification for the comparison of the Old Calendar Churches in Greece with the Russian Old Believers. (These are not our words.) You seem to be constantly preoccupied with "what they will think in Greece" of the words or acts of our Synod or some bishops. But since you are in our Russian Church, you must at least try to realize that our bishops do not act on such a basis, but on the basis of the needs of their own flocks.

Father, it is your and our duty to remain in and hand down the spirit of true Orthodox doctrine and piety; but it is not for either of us to usurp the position of our bishops and speak our opinions in their name. If we think their position should be stronger (and we sometimes think so also), we will bring this about much better by not "pushing" them. We should be tolerant and patient when we think they are not strong enough in their statements, realizing how we also can be guilty of errors in the many complex questions that beset us today. We should be aware of how much more difficult their position is from ours and yours: we are free to have no communion with the "canonical jurisdictions" on our local level; but the bishops must examine the repercussions of such an act on the whole Church, where it is much more difficult to make such "simple"

decisions. If you are going to insist that only your position is Orthodox, and everyone who falls short of your logic and preciseness is "ecumenical"—then it seems only a matter of time until you follow Fr. Basile Sakkos in his unfortunate "consistency" (unless, of course, you can force the decrees you need from our bishops, which is highly unlikely). The very fact that you did not follow Fr. Basile is already a sign that you are not totally "consistent" yourself (for our bishops would not give him precisely that which you regard as so necessary: a statement that all new-calendarists are heretics and that we have no communion with them).

Once again, we are not preaching to you "blind obedience to bishops"—but we are asking you to be a little less sure of yourself when you see that no less zealous Orthodox (including some of your own bishops), while in substantial agreement about the state of Orthodoxy today, advocate a humbler path. The position of our bishops, which I believe we have accurately described in the article to which you object, while of course "inconsistent" from the point of view of absolute "strictness," seems to us to be a good enough starting point, out of which a stricter and more precise position can come later with the minimum of divisiveness which the pressing of yoixr view would cause at the present time. Again, please learn humility from the example of Greece today: does not each one of the bickering parties there believe that it is "correct" and the others wrong? (I speak of the Old Calendar parties). Do you seriously think to impose the views of one group of Old Calendarists on our Church, when this group cannot prevail over the Old Calendarists even in Greece? And surely you know that the question of the grace of new-calendarist Mysteries is still much disputed by Old Calendarists themselves, and that the decision of the Auxentiite Synod in 1974, being prompted by political motives, has not at all brought peace or resolved the question? (Many of the bishops have since changed their mind about it.)

By the way, with regard to Moscow, you should realize that the cause for the break in 1927 was not for any of the reasons you mention, but was a much subtler thing. "Sergianism" in 1927 was not a question of ecumenism, modernism, the new calendar, the acceptance of non-Orthodox Mysteries, violation of canons, or teaching of new dogmas; and it was not of course a question only of politics, either. What then is left?—something very difficult to define and which the Catacomb hierarchs of 1927 in their epistles usually identified as the "loss of inner freedom." (To be sure, new factors have entered the situation in recent years.) Before such a subtle temptation it is precisely a feeling for the spirit behind the phenomena which is the decisive factor, and not merely "correctness" in canons or dogmas. Several highly-respected Old Calendarists in Greece have written us that it is precisely the "fatal disease of correctness" which has caused such anarchy there now in the church situation—a "disease" which they place second only to ecumenism itself as a destroyer of souls. Do you have any idea what this means? If you don't, there is something very much lacking in your awareness of the Orthodox situation today, and this should make you all the more humble and cautious and unsure that everything you say and think is right. You must try to see things as other sincere zealots of Orthodoxy see them, or else your godly zeal will only end in causing divisions and strife and you yourself will be helping the devil's work of destroying Orthodoxy. We all (we as much as you) must be ready to see that we do not have "all the answers," that we are sometimes wrong or express ourselves poorly. Let me give you a few examples.

(1) Bishop Petros. You think it is a terrible scandal and inconsistency that he is allowed to serve with us, and in your ignorance you blame this all on Vladika Laurus. Have you even tried to understand what others think of this? Fr. Panteleimon says he presented his "evidence" on Bishop Petros to our bishops; well, our bishops were not convinced by this "evidence," and frankly they have good reason to believe, as many Old Calendarists in Greece believe and say, that this is primarily a matter of mutual jealousy and power politics. You insist that our bishops choose your side—but why? Bishop Petros was in close contact with our Synod before you and Fr. Panteleimon were, and Vladika John himself told us in 1965 that logically you and Fr. Panteleimon should be under him; you were granted an exception by our Synod—in order to form a second group of "Old Calendar Greeks" in America, a very dangerous thing—and yet you continue to insist that we "get rid" of Bishop Petros. I'm not saying who is right or wrong here—I'm only sayijig that you must view things logically and reasonably and try to understand things as other see them, and if necessary reconcile yourself to the fact that you cannot always have your way.

In 1974 Bishop Petros was cut off from the Synod of Archbishop Auxentios, and our bishops have been given no proof that this was for anything else than his refusal to declare the new-calendarist Mysteries to be without grace. Our bishops likewise refused to do this—are we then to cut him off because of his agreement with us? Does church politics require such stabs in the back? You say that we must be "canonical" and accept the decrees of the Auxentiite Synod—but did Fr. Panteleimon think that in 1971 when he dealt with the Mathewites behind the back of the Auxentiite Synod and thus aroused tremendous anger and resentment in Greece? This turned out to be a bad blow against our Church. Who is being "consistent" here? You blame Bp. Laurus for letting Bp. Petros serve—but we know that many of our bishops are weary of this "Greek fighting" and want no part in "taking sides" in it, and we know for certain that it was Metropolitan Philaret himself who made the final decision to allow Bishop Petros to serve at the funeral of Archbishop Averky.

We ourselves are not "taking sides" in this matter—but since no one else seems to do so, we must tell you that your over-zealousness on such points is giving you many enemies in our Church and among Old Calendarists in Greece. If your objections against Bishop Petros are indeed sound, then we and many others would be much more inclined to believe you if you acted with more sense and moderation. Your very violence and "demonstrations" on this subject make it indeed look like a battle over "who is to rule the Greeks in America"; our bishops don't want any part of such a battle, and if they sometimes "back down" before your demands, it is solely because they treat you as spoiled children who might get violent if you don't get your way. Is that the role you want for yourselves? Is that true zeal? Be humbler!

(2) Your comments on "awful catechisms," the "heretic" Augustine, etc. show very poor taste, great immaturity, an insult to the very bishops under whom you are placed (who think differently, and you did not even think of asking their opinion, did you?), and a work of undermining the authority of the great Fathers of recent and even ancient centuries with whom you are not in agreement. Father, there are usually kernels of truth in your comments—but you take those kernels and blow them up with violent language that totally misses the point. Our

Russian theologians of the past two centuries have handled the question of Augustine (with all his errors) very soberly—but you don't think of asking their opinion, because you regard them all as "polluted" and in "Western captivity." Be humble enough to see that your zeal is not always godly, but is sometimes the result of your personal prejudices and faulty points of view and a "Western captivity" of your own. If you can't see this, your Orthodoxy will become narrow fanaticism, with disastrous results; you will destroy many souls.

Believe me, Father, this letter is written with blood. There is time for you to step back from the path of fanaticism, and we will be 100% with you if you do; we ourselves will willingly accept correction from others who are on the same path with us, together with our bishops. But if all this letter tells you is that we are "misguided" and totally off the right path—then may God help our poor American Orthodoxy, for the future is dim!

I don't know what more to say at this time. We will continue to be outspokenly anti-ecumenist. But we pray that you too will begin to realize some of the more subtle temptations that lie before us. On basic points concerning ecumenism and the apostasy we do not disagree with you; our emphasis and desire not to lose contact with our more cautious bishops is different, but no more. You say: "All the Patriarchates have lapsed into heresy"; we would prefer to say" "Are lapsing and let the bishops decide the moment when the lapse is irremediable.

Please forgive our frankness if it is in any way offensive to you. We know no other way to make you see things more objectively before it is too late.

With love and respect in Christ our God,

Seraphim, monk

232.

July 27/Aug. 9, 1976Canonization of St. Herman

Dear Father Johnikios,

Blagoslovite!

Thank you for the "blunt letter." For all that we said and did to produce this reaction in you, we sincerely ask your forgiveness. However, I must also say that not all that you wrote is entirely just. But let there be peace between us!

Please do not make any special efforts to send us anyone. We asked to "borrow" Makarios, not first of all because we are short-handed, but as a special case, in answer to the offer he made to us. Since you think this is unwise, the case is closed for us, and we are not looking for "extra hands" anywhere. As it is, you have two of our former "hands" in Br. Laurence, who I trust is showing himself as hard a worker as he was for us. If anyone expresses interest in us, it is enough for you to give them a reasonably objective picture, without emphasizing that we need hands. We are content with whatever God sends us.

About Metropolitan Philaret we have had a moderate response, more pro than con. The "con" response reveals a surprising lack of information as to what our bishops think, which perhaps in

itself justifies bringing the matter up. Of course you are right that discretion is called for in this area.

Enclosed is a letter that is self-explanatory. We have replied briefly to him for ourselves.

We ask your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

233.

July 29/Aug. 11, 1976

St. Bogolep of Cherny-Yar

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We expect to be here all the time for the next several weeks, and will be expecting you sometime in this period. And Phanourios too. I would not have a difficult time choosing between Reno and Etna, but of course one's heart has to be in it.

We have heard nothing from Fr. Neketas and frankly have no hope that he will have the slightest willingness to see things differently. He has "group security" of a very powerful kind, and it would take a tremendous shock to jolt him out of it, not just an "apostasy" from people whose Orthodoxy he seems to have been doubting for some time anyway. I suspect that this article gave him just the opportunity he needed to "know for sure" that we are not reliable. We've received no "open letter" either, and in fact we never received the one that was promised on the Western Saints—we're piling so many obligations on their letter-writers! Things are probably further complicated by the fact that in our correspondence with Fr. Alexis of Boston concerning Andrew Bond (which on our side consisted only of a few brief notes which "hinted" rather than said anything controversial, but on their side was a barrage meant to convince us of the absolute rightness of Fr. Panteleimon, including his private letters to Archbishop Averky and Archbishop Anthony—which shocked us and probably did more than anything else to make us see what he is), we inadvertently hit a "sick point" of Fr. Alexis', and in his hasty reply (in the absence of Fr. P.) he very clearly revealed a deep spiritual insecurity which I don't think would have passed Fr. Panteleimon's censorship. Well, we'll have to wait and see what comes from them. But it is already clear that we have passed "out of fashion" in that circle, and our labors at least for a while will have less visible support than in the past. This is sad, because in these last ten years or so it is obvious that a real interest and desire has been aroused in America in the real Orthodoxy, and this using it for a party line will only do harm to the real Orthodox mission.

By the way, in reading Prosper of Aquitaine's attack on St. Cassian (which is not really an offensive work, just narrow) I am distinctly reminded of the Boston school and its "open letters"! His objection to Cassian is: "We've squashed Pelagius through Augustine, and here you are trying to tell us that things aren't as simple as Augustine thinks either! Whose side are you on?

Isn't it all perfectly logical and clear? You're really a crypto-Pelagianist!" Substitute "ecumenism" for "Pelagianism"—and you may have the next "open letter" of Boston!

We've received some new talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko—and he really does have much of what is necessary not only in the Soviet Union, but here also. He speaks to the point against making "popes" out of our bishops and spiritual fathers, of everyone thinking for himself instead of leaving it to others. His is one of the soundest and freshest voices in Orthodoxy today (despite some "theoretical" errors), and gives great hope for the future of Orthodoxy in Russia. With this in mind, we must be "open" rather than "closed" with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate. The whole question of ecumenism and apostasy cannot be placed simply on the canonical-dogmatic-formal level, but must be viewed first spiritually. Fr. Dimitry also speaks forcefully against letting a purely formal approach to the canons bind us spiritually and actually strangle church life—thus allowing the Protestants to take over with their fresher approach. It's obvious that Fr. Panteleimon's approach has nothing to say to Russia today.

Barbara is well and is writing a letter to her mother. Of course, it is a little "dangerous" (politically) for her to remain so long close to us. "Officially," if there is any question, our position in regard to her is: we are moderating her enthusiasm by giving her a little taste of wilderness life while restraining her from just going off to the woods by herself. Fr. Herman has blessed her to be totally by herself for no more than three days at a time, and we knew where she was. God knows what will come of her desire for the desert, but we don't want to quench it or apply a "formula" to it either. As things have worked out, we are totally alone during this part of the summer, so there are no younger ones to suffer unnecessary temptations by her nearness. Historically (as we know from 19th-century Russian example) those who encourage such "crazy ones" usually end up being persecuted themselves, but that is already nothing new!

Hopefully we will be able to give you at last our new OW (Vladika John issue), which has suffered numerous delays, including a week lost due to generator repairs (not serious, but we have no electrician). Fortunately, with God's help I became enough of an "electrician" myself so that when the generator began acting up a few days after we got it back I was able to remember that it was the "points" that were replaced this time, and remembering what "points" look like in an automobile, I looked all over the generator until I found them under a special cap—and discovered that the screw holding them to the machine had come loose, thus saving a trip to town. That was rather a consolation!

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

234.

August 10/23, 1976

Archdeacon Laurence

Dear Father Panagiotes,

Evlogeite!

Thank you for your letter of July 6/19, and please forgive this belated reply. About the letter I can only say that we agree with virtually everything you say there. I would only point out that there is an important distinction between (1) identifying apostasy, warning about it, separating oneself from it—something which all Orthodox Christians must be doing; and (2) making formal declarations as to who precisely is a heretic or schismatic, as to when everyone in a given Local Church becomes responsible for the heresy of a church leader or leaders, breaking communion (on the whole-Church level), stating who is without grace, defining the precise relationship of our Synod to other "jurisdictions"—which is the business of bishops and councils (whether on a local or universal level).

In our Church our bishops and many others have made many statements and acts which fall under heading (1); but our bishops have made very few statements or acts regarding heading (2). We are not troubled by this; we do not see that it is necessary for anyone in our Church to become less zealous for true Orthodoxy if he knows that his bishops, while being clearly against the apostasy, prefer not to break off all communion with whole churches and jurisdictions until this becomes absolutely unavoidable. If you understand this, I see that there is no serious disagreement between us; and that is basically what we tried to communicate in our article.

We continue to regard the danger from the "right side"—which is a Patristic dictum and not an expression of party politics—to be quite real and menacing, and this opinion has been reinforced for us by recent communications we have received from respected members of the Old Calendar Church in Greece, who tell us that "correctness" has become a "disease" in Greece second in its spiritual harm only to the apostasy of ecumenism. What they refer to primarily, of course, is the Mathewites, who have now broken all communion with our Synod precisely because our bishops refuse to declare New-Calendar Mysteries to be without grace. But we see this harm also clearly in our own experience with converts, who only with great difficulty come to that loving trust of our bishops which is so necessary for healthy spiritual life. I do not believe our warning about this peril was untimely; but of course, perhaps it could have been better expressed.

We ask your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

235.

Aug. 10/23, 1976B

Archdeacon Laurence

Dear Brother in Christ, Nicholas,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for your letter. I appreciate the seriousness of what you have written, and I will reply with the same seriousness.

I must tell you first of all that, to the best of our knowledge, there are no startsi today—that is, truly God-bearing elders (in the spirit of the Optina Elders) who could guide you not by their

own wisdom and understanding of the Holy Fathers, but by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This kind of guidance is not given to our times—and frankly, we in our weakness and corruption and sins do not deserve it.

To our times is given a more humble kind of spiritual life, which Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov in his excellent book The Arena (do you have it?) calls "life by counsel" that is, life according to the commandments of God as learned in the Holy Scriptures and Holy Fathers and helped by those who are elder and more experienced. A "Starets" can give commands; but a "counsellor" gives advice, which you must test in experience.

We do not know of anyone in particular who would be especially able to counsel you in the English language. If this is really needful for you, God will send it to you in His own time, according to your faith and need, and without your making too deliberate a search for it.

Since you have written me, I will venture to give you a word or two of general advice, based on what you have said in your letters, as derived from the experience of our small monastic community and our reading of the Holy Fathers.

(1) Learn first of all to be at peace with the spiritual situation which has been given you, and to make the most of it. If your situation is spiritually barren, do not let that discourage you, but work all the harder at what you yourself can do for your spiritual life. It is already something very important to have access to the Sacraments and regular church services. Beyond this you should have regular morning and evening prayers with your family, and spiritual reading—all according to your strength and the possibilities afforded by your circumstances.

(2) Among spiritual writings you should read especially those addressed to people living in the world, or which give the "ABC's" of spiritual life—such as St. John of Kronstadt's My Life in Christ, St. Nikodemos' Unseen Warfare, the Lives of Saints in general, and Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov's The Arena (this book, while addressed to novices, is also suitable for laymen in so far as it gives in general the "ABC's" of spiritual life as applied to modern times.)

(3) To help your spiritual growth and remind you of spiritual truths, it would be good to keep a journal (the hard-bound "record" books sold in stationery stores are good), which would include excerpts from the writings of spiritual books which you find especially valuable or applicable to you, and perhaps comments of your own inspired by your reading and reflection, including brief comments on your own shortcomings which you need to correct. St. John of Kronstadt found this especially valuable, as can be seen in his My Life in Christ.

(4) Don't criticize or judge other people—regard everyone else as an angel, justify their mistakes and weaknesses, and condemn only yourself as the worst sinner. This is step one in any kind of spiritual life.

I offer this for whatever help it may be to you. I would be glad to try to answer any specific questions you might have, especially on the teaching of the Holy Fathers, almost all of which we have access to in Russian-language editions.

Asking your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

236.

Aug. 13/26, 1976

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Dear Alexey,

Thank you for the "message" from Fr. Neketas. We are rather puzzled as to why he should be so agitated. Perhaps there is a personal element in it, but it seems to have more to do with fears and suspicions on a general church level, which would also explain why the fathers at Boston were so upset with his letter. (The letter, by the way, didn't really disturb us at all, since we were expecting it, and in our exchange with him we were able to express things which had been until then tensely covered up.) Perhaps they suspect that we are "joining the Russian bishops" and are about to betray the Old-Calendar cause, join the ecumenist bandwagon, etc. (If they do think this, I wish they would say so!) Or perhaps the real root is, once more, the old question of "authority"—we've made it pretty clear that we don't accept the authority of Fr. Panteleimon, and to some people that seems to be a terrible blow. Well, we will write Fr. N. in a few days and try to allay some of his possible fears.

I trust Barbara and David arrived safely. Vladika Anthony stayed overnight with us for the first time, and in general had his best visit with us. We talked at length with him on questions of "rebaptism" etc., and found ourselves in complete agreement with him. We translated for him all the "controversial" passages in our Metr. Philaret article, after hearing which he crossed himself and thanked us for writing it. It is obvious that the "zeal not according to knowledge" is becoming a matter of some concern for him and many of our bishops, and I'm afraid the solution to it, if any, will not be easy. As long as Fr. Panteleimon has his own "psychological diocese" within our Church, there will be a constant source of friction and misunderstanding. "Two or three days" with Fr. Panteleimon will not resolve it, either! I think probably the basic quality needed is a certain deep humility of mind that enables one to accept other ways of looking at things, other emphases—as equally Orthodox with one's own. On their side, that would involve ceasing to protest against catechisms, accept Blessed Augustine for his good side, ceasing to be terribly upset about the Shroud, etc. If they could do this, I think the tension on our side would cease to exist. On the whole, it is probably good that they have gotten upset, because this might give them a better chance to see things as others see them, and rethink things a little for themselves. But we shall see.

As for the rest of us—we should just keep on the same independent path, with no particular thought of being "for or against" Fr. Panteleimon. He has much to offer himself, and there is much others can give that he can't.

We send you greetings for the Dormition. I'll try to get you the new chapter on Sederholm before long. Also a new sermon of Vladika John.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

237.

Aug. 16/29, 1976

The Image not Made with Hands

Dear Brother in Christ, Seraphim,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We rejoice to hear of your baptism and of your desire for monasticism and the desert. May God bring this desire to fruition in your life!

As for our skete—since you know of our poverty and labors, I won't mention them. However, you should also be aware that we are by no means idyllic "desert dwellers" either. We have fairly frequent contact with the world, particularly in connection with our printing activities, and we live a life which would not be regarded as very strict at all by the ancient Fathers, but which in our weakness is the best we can manage.

We accept novices, but since we do not know you we would ask you to share our way of life for a while first before being accepted as a novice and given the cassock. (After that, the period of novitiate before being tonsured is normally at least three years.) There are two basic attitudes which are essential if you wish to join us: obedience, which means more than mere outward submission or asking a blessing before undertaking anything, but is bound up with a willingness to distrust your own judgment and trust your elders; and openness as to your spiritual state and struggle. Neither of these is acquired overnight, particularly for our cold and hard American temperament, but involve a growth in mutual trust between you and your elder.

If all this doesn't discourage you, then write us again and tell us your plans. If you have no worldly obligations, you could join us at any time. We would have to pick you up at the Redding Greyhound Depot 40 miles away.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

238.

Aug. 22/Sept. 4, 1976

Martyr Agathonicus

Dear Father Neketas,

Evlogeite!

Alexey Young has passed on your message to us. I would like to assure you that we were not offended or disturbed by your letter to us; we saw there nothing but a sincere and concerned expression of your opinion. But perhaps you thought that my letter to you was written in anger or disturbance? I assure you that it was not—it was merely an attempt to reply just as frankly as you had written to us. I really think that such frank exchanges are worth more than any number of merely polite and correct letters.

What to do?—there is a "disagreement" between us! Really, this "disagreement" is deeper than both of us, and it will not go away with just a pleasant or even a frank talk between us. It can be lived through and surmounted in time, but it will take a good dose of basic humility on all sides, which in practical terms means a willingness to admit that not one of us, or any group of us, has "all the answers" or is some kind of "infallible expert." The big questions facing Orthodoxy today, from ecumenism on down, are often complex and with subtle overtones or ramifications for which sledgehammer tactics don't give sufficient answers. I suspect the basic problem among us today is less one of specific disagreements than it is one of different "psychologies" and approaches to the questions of the day.

Let us all try to be a little "aloof" and not quite so passionately involved in defining the details of the big disputes of the day. Who precisely is a heretic? (Demetrios—that's one question. Patriarch German of Serbia—another question. Fr. Justin Popovich—still another question.) When precisely does responsibility for the heresy of a chief hierarch spread to the whole church body? Where are the precise lines between simply not having communion with a hierarch or jurisdiction, regarding them as schismatics, and recognizing that they have no grace? Must we take a "definite stand" on all these questions, even if Orthodox zealots themselves disagree on them? If we do, it will mean schisms and church disturbances without end.

We welcome a further frank exchange of views and concerns, and ask your prayers for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Seraphim, monk

239.

Aug. 22/Sept. 4, 1976B

Martyr Agathonicus

Dear Christopher,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please forgive our long silence. We have had a quiet summer as far as people is concerned (no one has come for more than a few weeks, and we've been mostly alone for the past month), but several outward events have caused us trouble. First there was our forest fire (have I written since then?), which came within two miles and forced us to pack up all our rare manuscripts and books in preparation for evacuation (by Vladika John's prayers the fire was turned back by a strong wind at the last minute); then two weeks of the most unseasonable rain, beginning

precisely on the feast of St. Elias, with thunder and lightning, and which laid both Fr. Herman and myself low with colds or flu. The tenth anniversary of Vladika Johns repose (described in the latest OW) gave us a new bit of inspiration; and last week Vladikas Anthony and Nektary visited us and served Liturgy, together with the new Deacon Andrew of the S.F. Cathedral. All the time the "Greeks" are rumbling in the background, and already there are strong hints that we (and our bishops) aren't Orthodox enough for them. More than ever we need to keep in view the ABCs of Orthodox survival, which more and more seems to us less a matter of doctrinal purity than of a basically sober and other-worldly attitude and orientation.

Your futile excursions into "worldliness" are not at all unusual or untypical in our days. Orthodox, by remaining unchanged, has become so out of harmony with the world, and the world itself has become so "glamorous" and "magical" (a symptom of chiliasm!)—that those who wish to be true Orthodox Christians today must suffer in their own souls the power of this disharmony between true and false life before emerging into a relatively stable Orthodox way of life. Be patient—your suffering-through of this painful state, without losing the deep-down desire to be Orthodox in spite of everything, will do you much good. By the way, your experience is not really so different from that of Blessed Augustine especially in the last months of his conversion when he saw clearly the truth of Christianity but just couldn't commit himself to it. You should read his Confessions—a good book for our days. (There's a readable translation in the Penguin Classics.)

The other graduates of our "Academy" are going through experiences analogous to your own. Paul Bartlett has already gone through a period of "renouncing Christianity" and thinking of raking up Buddhism, then returning to Orthodoxy, and now (from his last letter) seems again to be in some strange "mood." Simeon has already been ordained priest, has spent over half a year in Boston and Jordanville picking up the outward aspect of Orthodox life, and is preparing soon to begin his "missionary parish" in Los Angeles—with what seems to us from here to be very little inward preparation. Paul Bassett has gotten married (to Barbara Rogers of Rochester) and continues to dream of an ideal Orthodox family life, missionary labors in Ireland, etc.—and perhaps his basic "foolishness" and lack of contact with ordinary life will give him the best chance of all not to get knocked off the Orthodox path. But it really is a miracle of God if any survive at all.

Thomas Reszke wrote us briefly of his "personality conflict" with you—probably more a product of his own inner conflict than anything else. (He seems very disappointed at not "finding his place" in life and doesn't seem to realize that he must first change himself.) You shouldn't let it disturb you—let this also be for your experience in "survival."

We have much to do before what seems like an early winter. Pray for us, and let us hear more of your struggles, such as they are. God is with us!

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

240.

Oct. 1/14, 1976 Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

Dear Mr. Graves,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were glad indeed to hear from you and were encouraged by your interest in something so dear to us as the Orthodox saints of the West, as well as by your offer to help us with translations from Latin.

About the phenomenon of Orthodox saints of the West in general, it is primarily the zeal and interest of Archbishop John Maximovitch which has inspired us and many others to do what we can to speak of and glorify them. I think this is of value not only to Orthodox of Western background, but to all Orthodox, for Russians and Greeks in the full "Eastern" tradition find many of the lives of the early Western saints to be entirely authentic and in the full Orthodox tradition, and thus an unexpected wealth is added to the already rich Eastern tradition.

Of course, there are grounds for your "mixed feelings" about entering the sphere of "Latin" Orthodoxy, for the Latin West did indeed fall away into a spiritual outlook quite foreign to Orthodoxy. I would not blame the language for this, however—such pillars of Eastern Orthodoxy in our own times as Archbishop Averky of Jordanville have found Latin to be a very rich and expressive language for Orthodox use. The limitation of the Latin West is probably best described as the Russian philosopher Kireyevsky described it over a century ago, as an intellectual narrowness which, being no more than a tendency as long as it had the whole Orthodox atmosphere to correct it, became the predominant modern-Western trait of rationalism when Orthodoxy was lost through the pretensions of the later Roman popes.

Blessed Augustine shares in this "Western" limitation by his over-logicalness (I will enclose Kireyevsky's quote on this if I can find the issue of Nikodemos in which it was translated), which led him into several mistakes which the East did not fall into, most notably regarding predestination. In general, Augustine was not much read in the East, but there was never any doubt whatever that he was regarded as one of the great teachers of the Orthodox Church, although not without his flaws. (In the East we have St. Gregory of Nyssa, who taught a doctrine rather worse than any of Augustine's errors!) St. Photios the Great in the 9th century was extremely insistent that Augustine, despite his errors, was "not to be cast out of the rank of the Fathers"; St. Mark of Ephesus did not question his status as a Father, calling him "Blessed"; St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain put him in the Eastern Calendar (together with many other saints of East and West), and the Orthodox tradition since then, both Greek and Russian, has been universal in accepting him as an Orthodox teacher, albeit of lesser authority than the great Eastern Fathers and also several other Western Fathers, especially St. Ambrose. Our own Archbp. John Maximovitch greatly venerated him and had a church service composed in his honor. Our recent and contemporary Fathers seem to see his greatest value not in his dogmatic writings but in his writings on piety, such as the Confessions, which do indeed have a warmth and love which we can certainly learn from today.

The term "Blessed" in the Orthodox Church is rather a comprehensive term which takes in many classes of holy men, some "canonized" and some not. In the case of Augustine, it is used because of his theological flaws which give him a rank something less than that of St. Ambrose, for example.

With Blessed Jerome the case is a little different, since he does not have the theological flaws of Augustine. Apparently his one-time contact with Origenism has given him a slight "taint" in Eastern eyes, which would account for the "Blessed" by which he is usually called—but not always, for he is sometimes called by the term appropriate for all monastic saints. THe Orthodox attitude to these two saints is perhaps best indicated by a Western Father who was fully in the Eastern tradition and was contemporary with both saints—St. John Cassian (who taught the Orthodox doctrine of grace as against Augustine's overemphases), in his book against Nestorius, quotes as authorities in the West both "Jerome, the teacher of the Catholics, whose writings shine like divine lamps throughout the whole world," and "Augustine, bishop of Hippo." That is, Jerome is highly praised, and Augustine is not—but Augustine is still quoted as an Orthodox authority, as sharply contrasted with someone like Pelagius, whom St. Cassian calls a "wicked heretic."

Well, this is enough on a subject not very important in itself. I am afraid that some of our Orthodox people, in their anxiety to protect themselves against "Western influences," are going a little overboard on "throwing our Augustine"—that is not the attitude of the Orthodox Fathers throughout history, who never called him heretic or denied him the rank of Father; to this day he is in all Orthodox Calendars (including those of the Old Calendar jurisdictions of Greece) under the date of June 16—actually, he would more appropriately be placed under the day of his repose, Aug. 28, but perhaps St. Nikodemos wished simply to place him together with Jerome.

It is also an unnecessary exaggeration to blame him for the errors of Calvinism. The Reformers took some "seeds" from Augustine, but their full-blown doctrine of predestination and "salvation by faith alone" was not taught by Augustine. It should also be noted that the Orthodox West itself corrected Augustine in his chief error—the Council of Orange in 529 anathematized (but without mentioning Augustine, the rest of whose teaching on grace it approved) the doctrine of predestination to damnation, which Augustine had indeed expressed several times.

Concerning your offer of help with translations: we have the translation of St. Gregory's Life of the Fathers. It was done basically from a rather literal French translation of the 19th century, with comparison of the Latin for consistency in monastic and technical vocabulary. However, there are some translations which we would like done. First of all, the "Praise of the Desert" ("Laus eremi" I believe, in Latin) of St. Eucherius of Lyons (a contemporary of St. Cassian and a disciple of the "Eastern" monastery of Lerins). We have heard of no translation at all of this work, except for a 17th-century French translation which is unavailable to us. I think this work is short, no more than 30 or 40 pages and probably less. I have seen a few excerpts from it in French and it is of interest to us especially for its joining of the ideas of the "desert" with the forest (of Gaul—as in later Russian "deserts"), and also as an early document of the monastic movement in the West. If you would be able to translate this work (perhaps we could include it

as an appendix to The Life of the Fathers), I could make a Xerox copy of whatever Latin text is available at the University of California in Berkeley.

We are also interested in some of the works of St. Faustus of Rhegium (Riez), a 5th-century defender of St. Cassian who seems to be also something of an "Eastern" Father in the West, and who seems to be totally untranslated as yet. But about this we could write later.

We would be very glad if Constantine Desrosiers would join you in this project. We have known him since before his conversion to Orthodoxy.

Please let us know when you might be able to work on the text of St. Eucherius, which would be of great value to us. (One of the Lives of St. Gregory's work is of a monk who was in a monastery in Lyons at about the time St. Eucherius was bishop there.) Please remember us in your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

P.s. The 1977 Calendar is only being printed now, and will be sent our around the end of the month.

241.

Nov. 4/17, 1976

St. Johnichius the Great

Dear Father Johnikios,

Bless! We send you our heartfelt congratulations on your namesday. May God grant you many years of fruitful labors, and the salvation of your soul. Save, O Christ God!

We were glad to receive your communication of some weeks ago, and pray that many such frank communications will be exchanged between us. Yes, we realize that our Greeks are dissatisfied with some of the things we have written, and in our letters to them we deliberately said some of the things which perhaps too long already have been left unspoken. I think in the end this will be better both for them and for us. In general our church atmosphere seems to have been suffering from a certain lack of objectivity, sometimes even amounting to a "double standard," and it really seems that if some attempt is not made to "speak out" the unspoken differences, this may end up as two distinct camps instead of a mere double standard. If this is not to happen, then our Greeks will just have to begin to face the reality of how things seem to others, even things which to them are absolutely simple and unambiguous. We ourselves were a little shocked to see how Mathewitely "simple" the whole question of ecumenism and the New Calendar is for several of our Greek priests—certainly the soundest representatives of the Old Calendarists in Greece (Dr. Kalomiros, Archimandrite Kyprian, Father Theodoritos, etc.) do not agree with them here and are much closer to the position of our bishops. This narrowness prevents our Greeks from seeing some rather obvious things and making some elementary distinctions which are rather important for us all now and in the days ahead. Anyway, we stuck our heads out and told them some of

these things, and perhaps when their displeasure dies down this will help the development of the more "objective" atmosphere in our Church which seems to us so necessary. Despite our differences, we are by no means "against" Father Panteleimon, and it would be a tragedy if two artificial "camps" were created in our Church. Fr. Panteleimon has some good and fresh emphases which could enrich our Church; but the attitude that "we are right and every other view must be crushed" which some of his followers are projecting, can only lead to trouble and disaster. The real differences in our Church today are not based on "liberal" vs. "strict" attitudes to ecumenism—that is an artificial distinction. The real difference is between an anti-ecumenism with humility, love and discretion (which also means "flexibility" without compromise), and anti-ecumenism which is narrow and rigid and in real danger of falling into fanaticism. One really does get the idea that those who come from the Greek Archdiocese are "protesting too much"—their positions often seem based more on the need to protest their own past than to face the present and future soberly and with balance.

May God be our help. We recently exchanged friendly communications with Fr. Panteleimon and pray that our relations will never become hardened. We see many signs of late that the missionary movement of true Orthodoxy in America is growing and deepening, and we would like to think that some of the recent shocks and conflicts are perhaps "growing pains" rather than signs of deep disagreements. May God grant us all the humility and love to grow and not to fight!

We have been struggling with winter firewood and such things, and our Calendar is still not ready—God willing we will start to send it out around Thanksgiving. Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

242.

Nov. 16/29, 1976

Holy Apostle Matthew

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. Enclosed are the articles for Nikodemos. Both are very good and lively. I've made some comments in the text. We look forward to the next installments on Christianity in Britain—it looks to be a very interesting series.

Many thanks for the offer of the jeep—were expecting David today or tomorrow. Also for the printing job which you sent with Hudanish. How much did Susan write the check for?

We've had so many visitors this past week that we're still dizzy. We had a good visit with John Hudanish, who is quite capable of understanding the finer points of today's Orthodox "problems"; but he needs his feet a little more firmly on the earth if he is to withstand some of his temptations. Barbara McCarthy visited us for a week (her first visit for several months) and took an active part in helping with our visitors, especially the two young ladies, with whom she

stayed up all night in the guest house talking! She had a long talk with Hudanish also, but wouldn't tell him where she's living now, and I think she even asked him not to mention that he had seen her here, so perhaps he didn't mention her to you on his return. (By the way, because Barbara doesn't seem to "have an address," you may get some mail there addressed to her—if so, please just forward it to us in an envelope with our name on the outside.)

But the brightest part of the week was Mary Mansur and her friend Solomonia (a converted Jewess). We had more or less accepted Nina's diagnosis that she was already virtually "lost to the Protestants," and so we were totally unprepared for the reality. She's wonderful! She's very much in Barbara McCarthy's spirit, brimming with life, not satisfied with "correctness," wanting to give herself entirely to serving God—but not capable of fitting into the "ordinary" Orthodox situations of today. She became involved with a Protestant group partly out of youthful confusion, partly out of dissatisfaction with the luke-warm Orthodoxy she has seen. She visited Seattle (where she was told she would find a real and vital Orthodoxy community)—and she found Fr. Neketas just as dissatisfying with his "letter of the law." Outwardly she has much to learn, but her heart is deeply Orthodox—it's just a matter of her finding her place to bear fruit. She and her friend have been more and more troubled by their involvement with Protestants, and now after visiting Vladika Andrew they are preparing to leave for New Diveyevo, where they will live outside the convent under Vladika. That's probably not the final answer for them, but hopefully they can get there a firmer grounding in Orthodoxy before their next step. (Salomonia had only two weeks' exposure to Orthodoxy before being baptized at Jordanville, just two months ago I believe.)

They may be visiting you before they leave in the next few weeks—and by all means you should encourage them to do so if they contact you. To us they seem another proof that a "new generation" of Orthodox is springing up—the Sergei Kourdakov generation (she is much inspired by him). She is already one step beyond Kourdakov in that she has seemingly overcome the fascination with Protestant "activity" and is aware that there is something deeper in Orthodoxy if only she can get into it. Pray for them.

With love in Christ,

Seraphim, monk

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1977

243.

Jan. 27/Feb. 9, 1977

St. John Chrysostom

Dear Father Kyprian,

Evlogeite!

Please forgive our long delay in answering your letters. We have been even more overwhelmed with work than usual in these several months, and besides all that, just about a month ago Father Herman was ordained to the priesthood and I to the diaconate, so that now we have also the regular celebration of the Divine Liturgy, as well as the care of the few Orthodox Christians in this part of California. (We have the only church within 200 miles.)

We have finished the translation from Russian of the Life of Sts. Kyprian and Justina, and have just given it to a typesetter in the city 40 miles from us (our own typesetting equipment being just now in poor condition, and there being little time anyway for us to do it). Unfortunately, our work conditions are so pressed that there was simply no opportunity for us to send you a copy of the text before it was set up. However, I have read your comments on the Life in The Old Calendarist and can tell you that the confusions that seem to exist in the Greek Life are absent in the Russian—apparently any confusions were taken care of by research before the printing of the Synodal version of the Lives of Saints at the beginning of this century. The Life we have translated is very similar to yours except in small details, and there is no confusion at all with St. Kyprian of Carthage (even though the Life states that this St. Kyprian was born in Carthage). In any case, we will state clearly at the beginning that this Life has been translated from the Russian text.

However, it now turns out that since we first intended to print this Life, our subscribers have increased by many hundreds, and we are now about 500 short of the colored icons of Sts. Kyprian and Justina which you so kindly sent us some time ago. Is it possible for you to send them to us (i.e., 500 extra icons?), We will have just about enough to send out to our immediate subscribers, but we always make about 500 extra copies, and will need icons for those. We now print about 2700 copies.

We received safely the photographs of your monastery and plan to print also an article on it together with the Life. The article will be taken chiefly from your words—with, of course, the personal or controversial references removed. We have heard little from Father Panteleimon of late, but there have been several indications that perhaps he will step back from a too-"fanatical" position. Several of the Greek priests in our Church were upset with our article on Metropolitan Philaret, but I think they may be beginning to realize at last that this is how our bishops really think. We pray that God will grant peace to his small flock, and that small differences of opinion will not destroy the unity of all who should be fighting against the real apostasy of our times—that represented by the frightful "Eighth Ecumenical Council," which seems to be drawing closer. In a way, we welcome this robber-council, for it will perhaps be so obviously anti-Orthodox that some will see it and withdraw from that ruinous path. That is another reason for the True Orthodox Christians to be not fanatical but moderate, holding a path of true Orthodoxy and not sectarianism in the face of such temptations.

We ask your blessing and prayers for us, and look forward to continued contact with you.

With love in Christ our Saviour,

Unworthy Hierodeacon Seraphim

244.

Jan. 28/Feb. 10, 1977

St. Ephraim of Syria

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm sorry to be so long in writing. It really seems that these last weeks and months have been our busiest ever. I haven't forgotten the last installment for the Sederholm series (by the way, did I mention that we have received a Xerox copy of Fr. Clement's translation of St. Theodore the Studite, the Optina edition of 1872?)—I will try my best to have it done before the beginning of Lent.

If you plan to come on one of the next two weekends, could you bring with you all the tapes of our summer course (both Fr. Herman's and my lectures)? If you aren't coming that soon, could you mail them? We have a use for them.

The Orthodox Word for July-August is almost finished! We feel as though we are dragging a heavy load through a swamp—but there is hope that the new issues will follow very quickly thereafter.

David finally left on Tuesday. All his efforts to repair our truck were to no avail, and he finally towed me in the truck to Redding, where a mechanic had it running in two hours! David now begins his mechanical course in Willits, but whether he has what it takes even to finish it, I don't know. He has "fits" of wanting to carry something through to the end, but they don't last long; inside there seems to be some kind of vacuum. We've given him all we can until he himself shows some signs of walking on his own feet.

The consecration of the Cathedral in S. F. seems to have been quite triumphant. As it turns out, our truck wasn't running and we were a little sick—and so we fortunately remained in our wilderness—and apparently had the only Liturgy in the whole Diocese outside of San Francisco! Yesterday Bishop Nikander of Brazil paid us a surprise visit before his departure for home, and he impressed us very favorably—simple and humble, and totally without pretense or politics. Father Herman had a good talk with him.

Concerning preparation for Holy Communion: the standard preparation is to read the Three Canons and Akathist, as stated in the Jordanville Prayer Book, usually the night before (in monasteries these are often read at Compline for the whole community, after the Creed), and in the morning the Canon before Communion and the Pre-Communion Prayers. If for some reason one can't read this whole rule, one repents and reproaches oneself and does as much as one can; if need be, the Akathist and/or canons could be read in the afternoon or evening after receiving Communion. As for fasting, the general Russian custom is to fast for three days beforehand, but this is actually a custom which arose with the practice of infrequent communion, and Vladika John once told a woman who wanted to receive Holy Communion but hadn't fasted the day before: "But it wasn't a fast day. If you are keeping the Church's regular fast days, it is sufficient

to guard against over-eating, or eating especially tasty foods, for several days before receiving Holy Communion, and especially the day before, but without making a special point of avoiding all non-fast foods, unless you feel the need for it. As for frequency of communion: in your case you should receive as frequendy as you can, i.e., just about every time you attend Liturgy. The pre-communion prayers are read aloud in our skete, as in many Russian churches, during the priest s communion.

Our life here has more or less returned to normal, and of course we now have the special consolation of the Divine Liturgy, which is truly a heaven on earth. On the days when Barbara has visited us, I have been able to serve as deacon instead of just being on the kliros; and then indeed one forgets everything else.

How would you like to start a series on Bishop Theophan the Recluse and his message for today?

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hierodeacon Seraphim

245.

April 13/26, 1977

Hieromartyr Artemon

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Brother in Christ, Christopher,

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Yes, I was ordained priest on Sunday, and I begin to feel the weight of the cross. Please pray for me harder than ever, that I may truly be able to help souls to salvation. The priesthood is not for me alone—I am supposed to pull those around me to heaven! But such a calling and responsibility!

We had about 30 pilgrims for the Liturgy, and all went with exceptional fervor and oneness of soul. Everybody received Holy Communion. Alexey Young was tonsured reader the same day. Grace still is being poured out on us for the difficult days ahead. Prepare yourself!

Yes, write about your thoughts and problems. Don’t be alarmed when the Paschal joy fades and passions start to invade—stand firm and pray to God. God expects our struggle, and He will send His grace as we need it.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Priest-monk Seraphim

246.

June 16/29,1977

St. Tikhon of Kaluga

Your Grace, Dear Vladika Nektary,

Bless us!

On your visit to us in April you informed us that you had been assigned, by the Sobor of Bishops and Archbishop Anthony, the duty of raising with us a question regarding our St. Herman Calendar, namely the commemorations (in italics) of recent hierarchs, ascetics, and martyrs, in accordance with the decree of the Synod of Bishops of Sept. 29/Oct. 12, 1976 (no. 873), that "in the Calendar they should note the dates of death of various hierarchs and ascetics not by their own judgment alone, but in agreement with the general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church."

We were very glad in reading the decree of the Synod, to see that the Hierarchs have noticed and valued our labors in the compiling and printing of the St. Herman Calendar, and in particular our inclusion of the dates of death of various hierarchs and ascetics. This latter feature, incidentally, has been one of the most popular features of the Calendar, there have been very many comments on it, and we know that our priests serve pannikhidas for a number of the hierarchs and ascetics mentioned there, and in some places every single one of these names is commemorated at every Liturgy. Further, there has never been a single unfavorable comment from anyone regarding our inclusion of these names, which has persuaded us that the idea itself of including these names is indeed "in agreement with the general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church." This idea is not original with us but was taken from the Diocesan Bulletin of the Diocese of Shanghai when our Archbishop John was there. In the Calendar of this Bulletin such names were included (after the listing of the saints of the day) as the Royal Martyrs (July 4), Archbishop Meletius of Kharkov (Feb. 12), St. Herman of Alaska (Dec. 13— this was long before his canonization), and Metropolitan Peter Mogila (Dec. 31).

In the selection of names to be commemorated, we have also tried to act not "by our own judgment alone," but have asked counsel of bishops, priests, and theologically educated laymen of our Church. In general we have followed the principles laid down by Bishop Nikodim of Belgorod in his 14-volume standard pre-Revolutionary work on "uncanonized saints," Ascetics of Piety of 18th and 19th Century Russia·, in fact, almost all of the names we have included from before the 20th century come from this book. As for the names of 20th century hierarchs and ascetics, we have included only a few of those renowned for ascetic life or missionary labors, as well as obvious miracle-workers. We have made a deliberate attempt to avoid "prejudice," and thus we did not include the name even of Archbishop Tikhon of San Francisco, despite our love for him and respect for his ascetic life, for fear of being thought partial to "local bishops," and we have not included the names of any recendy- deceased bishops with whom we had close personal relations.

With one exception (to be discussed below), we have never received a single complaint about our selection of 20th-century hierarchs and ascetics, and this has been a sign to us that our listing of these was also in accord with "the general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church." Indeed, many people have told us that the most impressive and inspiring part of the Calendar is precisely this list of 20th- century hierarchs and ascetics of holy life—something which, especially to non-

Russians (for whom the Calendar is chiefly intended) provides an impressive proof that the Russian Church is still alive and not simple a dead "fossil" that lives only in its past grandeur, with no spiritual vitality in our own times or in the Diaspora.

The one "complaint" we have received concerns the name of Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky. After our first St. Herman Calendar came out in 1972, Fr. George Grabbe wrote us a letter expressing his satisfaction with the Calendar, and especially with our listing of recent hierarchs and ascetics; however, he noted that the name of Metropolitan Anthony was missing. Later our own Archbishop Anthony made the same observation to us. We corrected this omission in the next Calendar, but since we were a little uncertain whether Metropolitan Anthony belonged in the category of "ascetics of piety" or would have been included in the volumes of Bishop Nikodim (if he had lived and continued them), we placed his name separately (together with several other names) in the Introduction to the Calendar, as "ecclesiastical figures of great historical importance" for whom panikhidas also should be served, and we distinguished them there from the "uncanonized saints" (that is, "ascetics of piety") whose names were included under their days of repose. This distinction, together with the phrase "uncanonized saints," has perhaps caused some of the bishops to think that we are "canonizing saints" or acting solely under our own personal judgment. To avoid such a misunderstanding we will avoid in future the phrase "uncanonized saints" and state in the Introduction to the Calendar simply that the names in italics are those of church figures of holy life or historical significance for whom it is appropriate to serve requiem or memorial services. If the bishops believe it to be appropriate, we can add the name of Metropolitan Anthony to the Calendar under the date of his repose (July 28).

On your visit to us you told us that Vladika Anthony had suggested that we simply exclude all post-1920 hierarchs (except for Vladika John) so as to avoid controversy over those who have been "left out." But we should repeat here that, apart from Metropolitan Anthony (and a few requests to put in the name of Archbishop Tikhon) we have not received a single comment about any name that has been left out of the Calendar. This to us is a clear sign that this listing is in accordance with the "general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church."

Further, such an act (omitting all post-1920 hierarchs) would be something immediately noticeable and would cause numerous comments, criticisms, and perplexity: "Why, after six years, are these names now left out? Is there perhaps some suspicion of their Orthodoxy? Or perhaps the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia are of dubious canonicity?" etc. etc. At the present time we have no problem with those who have been "left out"; but if we were to delete these names now, there would be much comment, especially among Americans and Greeks, unfavorable to our Synod of Bishops.

This brings me to a final and very important point with regard to this question; this concerns, not what "others" might think of us, but a problem within our own Russian Church Outside of Russia.

Of the young people in our Church, especially those who take active part in church life, Americans and Greeks, together with Russians who speak English as their first language, are

now coming to be the majority. It is to them that our publications are chiefly directed. More and more these young people—and now even some of the young Russian priests—are coming under the influence of Father Panteleimon of Boston, and more and more they are coming under a certain impression that everything "Greek" is something good and Orthodox, whereas "Russian" things are not as good or Orthodox, or are even un-Orthodox. Some of these people write and speak to us, and we know how they are thinking: "The Greeks are strict, while the Russians are lax; the Greeks are zealous, the Russians are lukewarm; everyone is talking about how the Russians are not strong enough about ecumenism," etc. We try to answer these people and make them understand things in a less one-sided manner, and in our publications, especially The Orthodox Word, we make a special effort to present Russian Orthodoxy at its best and to defend the position of our Metropolitan and Bishops. Perhaps you do not know that before our introductory article to Metropolitan Philarets epistle on the "Thyateira Confession" (Jan-Feb. 1976), many Greeks and Americans, even priests, believed that our Synod regarded the other Orthodox jurisdictions as without grace. And now our Brotherhood has become known among the Greeks and Americans for "defending the Russian bishops" and speaking against the fanaticism into which some of the followers of Fr. Panteleimon have fallen.

We ourselves have friendly relations with Fr. Panteleimon and we believe that the "fanatical" movement in our Church can be overcome; but to do this, it is essential that the prestige of Russian Orthodoxy be as high as possible—and in particular that everything holy and sound and truly Orthodox that is Russian should be made known to counteract the unbalanced "Grecophilism" that is dominant among so many young people. In these circumstances, if we hide our Russian hierarchs and ascetics of the recent past, it will only encourage those who believe that the "Russians" have nothing good; but worse, if we were to remove their names from the Calendar, it would amount to a totally unnecessary attack against what should be the boast of our Russian Orthodoxy in the 20th century; in the minds of the young Americans, Greeks, and Russians who read our Calendar, this would be a definite blow against the prestige of Russian Orthodoxy and our Russian Church Outside of Russia. These hierarchs, ascetics, and martyrs are a proof that our Russian Orthodoxy is still in the ancient tradition of Orthodoxy and still produces spiritual fruits. And after all, there is no question whatever of our "canonizing" them—we are only supplying these names so that Orthodox Christians might pray for the repose of the souls of those who have labored for Christ and His Church in our times, following the counsel of the Apostle: "Remember your instructors, who have spoken unto you the word of God." (Hebrews 13:7).

One final point: lest it be thought that the inclusion of such names in Orthodox calendars is something rare, we would direct the attention of our bishops to the more complete calendars of the non-Russian Churches, In particular, the complete Calendar of the Greek Church edited by monks of Mt. Athos includes the names of very many righteous men who are not in the calendar of saints; these are included at the end of each day's listing, just like our list; these names are within parentheses, while ours are in italics. Thus our listing, while not being an "innovation" even among Russian calendars, is fully in accord with the existing practice in other Orthodox calendars today.

From all that has been said above, we firmly believe that our practice of listing Orthodox hierarchs, ascetics, and martyrs of recent times in our St. Herman Calendar, clearly separating them from the calendar of saints by means of italic letters, and listing them solely for the purpose of encouraging prayer for the repose of their souls, is not only "in agreement with the general ecclesiastical attitude of our Church," as our bishops wish, but is also a part of our duty in obedience to the full Sobor of our Bishops who declared in their "Epistle to the God-Beloved Flock of the Diaspora" in 1976 that the "one thing needful" for us today is "the direction of the whole life of our flock according to a strictly churchly, strictly Orthodox path—in other words, making the Church the center of life." To increase the prayer of the faithful far our reposed instructors and exemplars in the Faith we regard as an important part of "making the Church the center of life," and we believe that our bishops will not think differently.

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Since writing the draft of this letter, you visited us and brought us further information that Vladika Seraphim of Chicago had raised at the Synod the question of Peter the Aleut Martyr, who is mentioned in our Calendar together with St. Herman, and whose icon has now been painted and reproduced by Holy Transfiguration Monastery and widely distributed. Concerning this we would like to say the following:

1. It is true that the only historical notice of the Aleut Martyr Peter is in the Life of St. Herman of Alaska. But we should note that the person who brought St. Herman the information concerning his martyrs death was himself a man of the highest integrity, first as Governor of Alaska, and later as a monk of righteous life who influenced almost his whole family to follow him into monasticism (Simeon Yanovsky, Schema-monk Sergius), and the person who proclaimed him Saint was none other than St. Herman himself: It should be noted that very often in the past this much has already been sufficient for the acknowledgement of sanctity in the Orthodox Church; among many saints canonized on as little information as this we may mention St. Mary of Egypt, whose life is known to us only from the account of the Monk Zossimas, and whose name was entered among the saints owing to the trust of St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, for Zossimas' words. The reform spirit in recent Roman Catholicism, which has begun to "throw out of the Calendar" such saints, because supposedly "we don't know whether they ever existed"—is totally foreign to our Orthodoxy, which is characterized rather by faith and trust in those who hand down the lives of saints, especially if they be of righteous and holy life themselves, as is certainly true in the case of the Aleut Martyr Peter and the one who "canonized" him, St. Herman.

2. In blessing the publication of The Orthodox Word, Archbishop John wrote the following words for publication·. "By the prayers of the Aleut Martyr Peter, who suffered martyrdom in San Francisco." By doing this he certainly gave his blessing for the veneration of the Aleut Martyr Peter, at least in the Western American Diocese where he suffered martyrdom.

3. In the service to St. Herman of Alaska, which was given its final form by Bishop (then Hegoumen) Alypy and officially approved by the Synod of Bishops in 1970, the following troparion occurs in the Canon (Canticle 6): "Aleut Peter's confession and martyrs blood, O Saint,

have sanctified and crowned thine and thy co-evangelizers' labors, and at his strong faith and patience thou wert amazed. Wherefore, following thee, let us cry out: Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us." Thus, the Synod of Bishops of our Russian Church Outside of Russia has officially approved the invocation of the Aleut Martyr Peter as a saint.

4. In the Service to St. Herman of Alaska composed by the Liturgical Commission of the "Orthodox Church in America" (American Metropolia) under the chairmanship of Father Alexander Schmemann and officially approved by the "Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America," a troparion of similar content occurs in the Canon (Canticle 6), also ending with St. Herman's words: "Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us." This Service was published at about the same time as our Service to St. Herman, and it does not seem that there was any copying from our Service; rather, the idea seems to have occurred naturally and independently to the Liturgical Commission of the Metropolia. Thus, the Synod of a second Orthodox Church (with which our Synod is not in communion, but the grace of whose Mysteries we do not deny) has given official approval to the invocation of Aleut Martyr Peter as a saint.

5. On the foundation of all this, a popular veneration of the Aleut Martyr Peter has grown up especially among our young Americans and Greeks (but also Russians). We know of at least five icons that have been painted of him, and there is scarcely a convert to our Church who does not have veneration for him. Never have we heard of any argument or dispute regarding this.

In view of all this: that the Aleut Martyr Peter was invoked as a saint by St. Herman of Alaska; that Archbishop John Maximovitch called publicly on his prayers; that our Synod of. Bishops gave official approval to a Service containing an invocation of St. Peter as a saint; and that the Synod of the American Metropolia did likewise; and that he is popularly venerated as a saint, with no dispute arising because of this; and finally, in yiew of the fact that the veneration of martyrs has always been accepted in the Orthodox Church with a minimum of official investigation, the very fact of their martyrdom already testifying to their sanctity—we did not believe that there was any controversy or dispute whatever involving the placing of the name of the Aleut Martyr Peter in the Orthodox Calendar. But even so, we were careful to place of the name of the Aleut Martyr Peter in our St. Herman Calendar only with the qualifying words: "who is mentioned in the Service to St. Herman," thus showing that we were trusting not our own judgment, but were relying on the judgment of the Church Authority (the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia) which officially approved the Service.

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And now, after giving our "defense" of ourselves, we would like to add a word, based on what we feel to be the reason why some of our hierarchs have raised these questions.

Evidently, these hierarchs feel that there is danger of "zeal not according to knowledge" and relying on one's own judgment, especially among the younger clergy, and that it should be kept in mind by those who labor for the Church that it is the bishops who are the ultimate authority with regard to such questions as the placing of the names of saints in the Calendar. We would like our bishops to know that we agree entirely with them in this·, and in fact, in the past we have

had several arguments with some of our younger clergy on precisely this point. I will give only one example, one that concerns precisely our St. Herman Calendar.

After our first St. Herman Calendar-was published in 1971, one of the younger Greek priests in our Church protested to us that the names of Blessed Augustine (June 16) and Blessed Constantine XII, last of the Byzantine Emperors (May 30), should be deleted from our Calendar because "they are not saints and were only placed in the Russian Calendar owing to Western influence." We replied to this priest that it was not within our authority to delete names from the Calendar, nor to add names on our own authority, but that such a thing required the approval of the bishops; and since the names of Blessed Augustine and Blessed Emperor Constantine were in the standard Russian Calendars which were our primary sources, they would have to remain in the Calendar until the Russian bishops should order them deleted.

Then, for our own information, we conducted research on this question. Concerning Blessed Augustine, we discovered that his name is included in all Russian and Greek Calendars, that our Synod approved the Service to him, and that throughout the history of the Orthodox Church he has always been regarded as a Holy Father and a Saint in West and East alike, even though his errors have been criticized. Therefore, there can be no question of his right to be in the Calendar, and this young priests objection was based on his own ignorance.

Concerning the second name, that of the Blessed Emperor Constantine, we did not have at hand the materials necessary for an investigation of our own, and therefore we appealed to Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, both to Hieromonk Johnikios, who would have the time to make such an investigation, and to Archbishop Averky for an authoritative judgement on the question. Fr. Johnikios found that the name of Blessed Constantine does indeed appear in the best Russian Calendar sources (such as the Calendar of Bishop Sergius), and Archbishop Averky gave as his judgement that his name should by all means remain in the Calendar.

I give this information in order to show on what principles we have acted in compiling our St. Herman Calendar and in settling any disputed questions with regard to it. We can assure you that we have always tried to act in accordance with the "general ecclesiastical attitude" of our Church and not "by our own judgment alone." Even in our listing of commemorations in italics, where we have made our own selection (since this is not a part of the official calendar of saints, but a separate listing), we have made a deliberate attempt (as we have noted above) not to choose names solely out of our own "zeal," but on the basis of the principles set forth in the Ascetics of Piety of Bishop Nikodim, and on the common church opinion.

We ourselves have had several disagreements with Fr. Panteleimon and some of this followers over the "zeal not according to knowledge" which they have occasionally shown. Sometimes this "zeal" can be dangerous, indeed, especially when it introduces general discord into the Church over such questions of church discipline as "rebaptism," etc. But we have found, from our experience among young Americans, Greeks, and Russians, that their zeal for glorifying saints, even if it sometimes goes beyond what our Synod of Bishops has officially approved or what we ourselves would print, still is not a cause of controversy or dispute; those who disapprove this "zeal" simply can dismiss it as the "personal opinion of the Greeks" which is not obligatory for

anyone else. This "zeal" is pursued out of love for saints and righteous ones, and therefore even when it might seem a little excessive, it can surely be forgiven, and we ourselves would fear to criticize or restrain it for fear of arousing totally unnecessary disputes in the Church, and above all for fear of sinning against these righteous ones themselves. When the general level of church piety is so low, and ordinary Orthodox people give so little veneration or heed even to canonized saints, would not our discouragement of any genuine piety toward saints and righteous ones be indeed a sin?

I only hope that these explanations have been sufficient to clear up any questions that may have arisen in regard to our St. Herman Calendar, and in particular with regard to our listing in italics of the ascetics of piety of recent centuries.

Asking your blessing and prayers,

With love and respect in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

By assignment from the Superior,

Hieromonk Herman

247.

July 3/16, 1977

St. Nicodemus of Kozhe Lake

Dear Father Johnikios,

Christ is in our midst!

Glory be to God, Brother Makarios arrived safely and is getting into the rhythm of our life here. Please pray that his summer stay will be fruitful—for him and us.

About "evolution"—we were glad to have your comments. If you really want to see them so much, and Dr. Kalomiros has already distributed his letters, we could sent you copies, after we've made our reply to his second letter. But really, this correspondence has not been very fruitful at all. At first we were encouraged by the fact that he was willing to discuss the matter at all (which few Orthodox seem to want to do), and we responded to him in a tone that we thought was roughly the same as his own, not fearing to be corrected on any mistakes we might make, but hoping that— although starting almost poles apart—we might in the end "work out" this question in friendly debate and come rather close together by the end of it. But we see now that our reply seems only to have offended him (perhaps most of all he disliked our strong implication that he is probably just as much under "Western influence" as the rest of us poor mortals!), and his second letter offers almost no chance for an extension of the debate. Our reply will probably be short (whenever we get a chance even for that!) and will have to begin by pointing out some of the contradictions he had fallen into himself, with little hope of even getting

him interested in some of the more basic questions which (as I recall) haven't even been mentioned yet by either of us.

But for now (leaping at the chance to chew this question a little more!) I will only give you a few of my own observations, not on "evolution" itself, but on the approach to it, which seems so difficult but is so essential.

First of all, we were very disappointed in all the three Boston letters on the subject which we have seen. There is very little there that we would disagree with—save for the flippant tone in some places—but they never really get to the question of evolution at all, and they are certainly not the Orthodox answer or approach to the question which Fr. Ephraim had promised to give. In fact, these letters reveal a distinct attempt not to approach the question at all, but rather to stay above it, with a rather superior air. Symptomatic is Fr. Ephraim's confession (either there or elsewhere) that he has never read T. de Chardin and doesn't need to, as also his evident ignorance of the whole scientific side of the question. (The "funny cartoon" he included has nothing to do with any "new findings," for example, but was old news 80 years ago.) Likewise with Dr. Kalomiros: he prides himself on knowing nothing at all of Western teachings on evolution (apart from what he regards as "scientific facts") and insists that we pay attention only to what he teaches on the subject, which is "patristic."

1. This brings us to Axiom no. 1 in our approach to the question (not the most important one, but first in order of discussion): the question of evolution can't be discussed at all if one doesn't have a basic grasp of the scientific side of it (the "scientific proofs" of evolution) as well as the broader philosophy of evolution based on it (T. de Chardin, etc.). This is precisely what the Boston Fathers seem to be afraid of, and in general our Orthodox theologians also (including Fr. Michael Pomazansky if I'm not mistaken): once you get into "science," the theologian is out of his depth, there are endless fruitless debates, etc. I think this is why Dr. Kalomiros' evolution articles in the Greek religious press stirred up uneasiness but no distinct protests: because "theologians" in general just don't know how to handle the scientific side.

By this I don't mean that one has to be a scientific specialist in order to discuss the scientific side of the question—the scientific side is not the most important one, and specialists usually trip themselves up by concentrating too much on it; but if one isn't sufficiently aware of the scientific side one won't be able to grasp the question in its full scope. One can't say with assurance, for example, whether man has been on earth some seven or eight thousand years ("more or less," as the Fathers often say) if one is totally ignorant of the principle of radiometric dating, geologic strata, etc., which "prove" that man is "millions of years" old. And such knowledge is not esoteric at all—the basic principles of radiometric dating (enough to know its strong and weak points) can be explained in a rather short article. And the question of whether man has been on earth for some thousands of years or some millions of years is one that certainly touches on some basic Orthodox questions—whether the genealogies of the Scripture are actually genealogies (as all the Fathers certainly believed) or just sketchy lists with many long blanks in them; whether some of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament (if these are not genealogies) might not be "symbols" instead of concrete people; whether Adam himself ever existed (especially in view of what seems the prevailing theory now among evolutionists—"polygenism," that new species

begin in many pairs simultaneously); etc. This is just a sample to show that to get anywhere in this question one must have a basic, layman's awareness of the scientific evidences for and against evolution. If one is reasonably objective and not out to "prove ones point" at any cost, such questions need not arouse passionate debates. As a basic principle, of course, we must assume that scientific truth (as opposed to various opinions and prejudices) can not contradict revealed truth, if only we understand them both correctly.

Your point—to start with basic theological principles—I think is good, and these should always be fundamental. And one must always be well aware of the different modes of knowledge and not mix them up. The trouble is, the question of evolution is so complex that one isn't always aware which aspect of it has ceased to be scientific and has intruded on theology or philosophy, or exactly where the real conflicts arise. There, I think it is very important, as a second axiom:

2. To be aware of the basic philosophies underlying or derived from evolutionism and various other views of origins. The evolutionary philosophy of "up from the beasts" certainly seems irreconcilable with the Christian view of "fall from paradise," and our whole view of history will certainly be determined by which why we believe! The Catholics used to solve this problem with a deus ex machina: when the body had evolved sufficiently, God "specially created" a soul for it—there evolution is correct, and so is Genesis, broadly interpreted. Kalomiros has basically the same view, though he has more patristic vocabulary to describe it—but such views are very artificial and contrived: the Christians wait for the latest evolutionary hypothesis and twist the text of Genesis to fit in with it. This won't do! An awareness of how evolutionary philosophers (such as T. de Chardin) view the whole question of evolution, while it may not solve any specific question, will still give a broader view of the whole intellectual background behind evolution.

Axiom 3: The whole question of Genesis can not be well approached by Orthodox people without appealing to the basic Orthodox sources: the Holy Fathers. Especially valuable: the Hexaemera of St. Basil and St. Ambrose; commentaries on Genesis by St. John Chrysostom and (perhaps less important because they are more "fundamentalistic" and easier to "dismiss") St. Ephraim the Syrian; Homilies on Adam, paradise, and the first-created world by St. Simeon the New Theologian (especially homily 45 in the Theophan the Recluse edition of 1894 or so), St. Gregory the Sinaite (in the Russian Philocalia), St. Abba Dorotheus (Instruction I); commentaries of various Fathers on related passages of Scripture (for example, Romans 8:19-22 concerning the "vanity" or "corruption" of the post-Adamic world) or St. Gregory the Theologian on the Genealogies of Christ); Homilies on the subject of the Resurrection, or whenever the question of "seed" or "growth" is discussed; treatises on the origin of man (St. Gregory of Nyssa); patristic discussions on reincarnation and the pre-existence of souls (which are philosophically related to the question of evolution); etc.

About Dr. Kalomiros: our second reply to him will point out where we think he went astray in his patristic interpretations. But our general impression of his two letters (which we won't write him directly for fear of offending him again) is this:

1. He is very unprepared to discuss the question either scientifically or philosophically. He is unaware of Western discussions of the subject and is only concerned to stand "superior" to

them— which one can't do if one isn't aware of them. It is abundantly obvious from his two letters that he (and probably Greek scientists in general) is far behind the West, and he is holding to scientific and philosophical positions long abandoned or in process of revision by Western scientists themselves. As one example: his defense of Haeckel's "recapitulation" theory of the human embryo: today's evolutionary textbooks of embryology dismiss it as a 19th century fantasy, but Kalomiros not only clings to it as an "obvious proof" of evolution, but even forbids us to discuss any scientific questions with him until we get advanced degrees in the physical sciences (a typical refuge of someone who doesn't want a free discussion of the subject)! He is not aware, either, of the less dogmatic spirit which many evolutionary scientists now have, nor of the immense number of scientists (with advanced degrees!) who now have abandoned evolution entirely or are skeptical of it.

2. He is theologically unprepared for such a discussion—something which surprised us most of all. Even after promising us that he was going to reply only after reading all the basic patristic texts on the subject, he still bases his whole argument on two or three patristic texts, very one-sidedly interpreted, and does not even answer a number of our patristic citations (which are only a small part of the patristic passages we have found). His St. Gregory of Nyssa quote says nothing whatever of evolution unless you read it into the passage; and the St. Seraphim quote certainly does not sustain his interpretation, wherein he does precisely what he accused us of doing—taking "chronologically" words which are "ontological" in reference.

When I say that Dr. Kalomiros is "unprepared," I do not of course mean that he is incapable of discussing the question—merely that he is so prejudiced in advance (with a complex about being "inferior" to "Western wisdom") that he does not view the question at all objectively.

Still, despite all this, we are not at all pessimistic of the possibility of viewing the question of evolution fairly objectively. I would say that a good Orthodox approach to the subject is that of I. M. Andreyev—a man well-equipped scientifically, as well as philosophically, who is not afraid of coming to conclusions that most scientists (being in step with the intellectual fashions that generally govern science) might not agree with. But he has said only a few things on the subject (in his Apologetics)— that mankind can not be more than 8000 years old, that the laws of nature before the fall were different than those now in force, and therefore are not subject to Reliable scientific interpretation, etc. I would say that his simple equation of "day" with "periods," however, is too loose—in fact, this question of "days" seems to be deeper than either fundamentalists or liberals have made it, and unfortunately it is one of the evolutionary questions that is still emotionally charged for some people (you mean 6 24-hour days!?—I quoted St. Ephraim's very "fundamentalistic" view of this question to Dr. Kalomiros, without precisely agreeing with him—and Dr. Kalomiros dismissed it by saying "he was using the science of his time." But since the science of St. Ephraim's time most certainly did not teach that the world was created in six 24-hour days (with 12 hours between each creative "moment"), I can only assume that Dr. Kalomiros is not prepared to examine patristic evidence very objectively, using any excuse to dismiss whatever doesn't agree with his one views.)

I would strongly suspect that Fr. Michael Pomazansky would prefer not to make any general comments on the question of evolution—however, if you gave him specific questions touching

on theology, you might get answers. But then again, he might be so afraid of the scientific side that he might hesitate even here.

This letter is already too long. Unfortunately, I just won't have time for some while to set down the patristic quotes I have found up to now. But some time perhaps I will get the time. You might be interested in some of the publications of the "Institute for Creation Research" in San Diego, especially books like Scientific Creationism (public school—i.e. non-religious edition) which present only scientific evidence without reference to religion. Their presentation of the "Creation Model" is a promising approach to a more objective view of the whole question. Their religious views, of course, suffer from the general short-sightedness of fundamentalism (in particular, their unawareness of the whole patristic field of commentary on Genesis—but most Orthodox people have a similar lack of awareness!). I'm enclosing two of their pamphlets, with their address so you can order some of their books if you want.

I would like to keep up this discussion, a little at a time, if you wish to.

Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

248.

August 8/21,1977

St. Gregory of Sinai

Dear Father Johnikios,

Christ is in our midst!

A few notes on our continuing "dialogues on evolution" many thanks for your two letters (one to Br. Makarios).

1. Concerning "day-age"—I agree entirely with the proposal to measure them "not chronologically but theologically." I only suggest we be consistent in doing so. Dr. Kalomiros and others, when they say that "day-age" or "a thousand years in the sight of God is as one day" immediately conclude that the way is open to accepting the "geologic ages" with their fabulous millions of years as compatible with the Genesis "days." They thus measure the "ages" quite "chronologically"—which makes not one bit more sense than the fundamentalists' "24 hour days." The best position, I think, on this point is that of Blessed Augustine: "What kind of days these were it is extremely difficult or perhaps impossible for us to conceive, and how much more to say!" (City of God, XI, 6.) The eight "day," we know, is to be without end; the seventh "day" is a definite duration of at least some thousands of years; the first six "days," if they could be measured chronologically at all (and we shouldn't say they absolutely couldn't be, since such Fathers as St. Ephraim of Syria say they could), might be 24-hours long, or perhaps of some other duration. We should only be aware of the mystery of those first "days" which eludes our precise apprehension.

2. The question of the "age of the earth" is a different question, raised by science (which cannot give it a completely satisfactory answer) and touching on Revelation and certain theological questions. From the point of view of Biblical interpretation, this question is dependent on a more fundamental one: "the age of mankind." Here the text of Genesis does not need to fear the evidence of science; and since modern science does talk about this, we have to have an intelligent answer to the opinion concerning the "millions of years" which, supposedly, not merely "galaxies" existed, but even man himself and his near "ancestors" have been walking on earth. One cannot escape the question of the existence of man in chronological time (since both Genesis with its patristic interpreters and science seem to be talking about the same kind of "years" we know) by reference to the formation of galaxies and the relativity of time—the "primordial galaxies" themselves are a product of the scientific speculations of modern thinkers, and neither more or less deserving of credence than ancient Greek speculations concerning the origin of the world.

3. This raises another fundamental question: how much should we use science in a commentary on Genesis? I would say, as a very minimum: we must know enough about science and its modern speculations to have an answer to those who use it to "disprove Genesis." Thus its chief function today is perhaps negative. But beyond that, I think that our attitude should be that of St. Basil in his Hexaemeron: the legitimate conclusions of science should be used whenever they help the task of interpreting the sacred text. The "science-phobia" which has been caused among some Orthodox Christians by the false use of science on the part of anti-Christians should be overcome. In the case of evolution, I don't see how the question can be discussed at all without a basic knowledge of the "scientific proofs" for and against. I don't mean we should become passionately attached to them or place them on the same level as theology—we should just be aware of them and know how to assess their relative value. The "scientific creationists" are very helpful in this regard, because they have hunted up evidence which had been selectively disregarded by pre-disposed evolutionists (for example, the remarkable evidence of an earth "under 10,000 years old," which must definitely be weighted against the evidence for an earth much older; the overlapping human and dinosaur tracks in Texas, etc.)

4. But is the question of the age of the human race (some 7000 or 8000 years vs. a million or more years) really theological, or important? You doubt whether it is. I offer two observations:

a. The Holy Fathers (probably unanimously) certainly have no doubt that the chronology of the Old Testament, from Adam onwards, is to be accepted "literally." They did not have the fundamentalist's over-concern for chronological precision, but even the most mystical Fathers (St. Isaac the Syrian, St. Gregory Palamas, etc.) were quite certain that Adam lived literally 900 years, that there were some 5500 years ("more or less") between the creation and the Birth of Christ, etc. (Blessed Augustine has a good discussion as to the differences between the Greek and Hebrew chronologies— the thousand years "more or less" didn't bother him any more than it did the other Fathers—but the assertion that Adam lived a million or more years ago, and that thus the Old (and New) Testament chronology is quite arbitrary or fanciful, could not but have evoked numerous patristic discussions.) Can we be so trusting of the conclusions of modern science (especially if we have a basic knowledge of radiometric dating procedures and the

philosophy underlying them!) as to totally overturn the Patristic opinion? Dr. Kalomiros and other Orthodox evolutionists say we should, without a second thought—I would say this is dangerous presumption, and an intrusion of dubious science into the realm of revealed truth. When Dr. K. dismisses the patristic interpretation of the OT chronology as "Jewish rationalism," I even begin to wonder what his basic attitude to the Fathers is? It seems to have an element of disrespect, to say the least.

b. More important (more theological): one's picture of reality, of the world, definitely influences one's view of God. I offer you (very briefly) two pictures ("models") of man and his world:

(1) Man created some 7000-8000 years ago, separately from other creatures (not descended from others), dispassionate by nature (in soul and body), with Eve miraculously created from his rib (in a way we can not describe with scientific precision, as St. John Chrysostom indicates), in a world of creatures with natures basically stable and not in process of becoming other natures. Much could be said on separate details of this picture, and knowledge of many of the details can never be precise, but basically: it does not contradict the text of Genesis and is harmonious with the Orthodox view of God.

(2) Man descended from lower creatures, passionate by his origin and nature, becoming dispassionate in paradise (when grace brought him out of his bestial state, according to Kalomiros) at a moment very hazy chronologically and theologically (today Roman Catholic evolutionists deny paradise altogether because they can't reconcile it with evolutionary philosophy), existing in his fallen state perhaps a million or more years, during which time he gradually came up from savagery to civilization, the record of him in the OT being extremely sketchy and not to be taken seriously when it speaks of "years"; the world around man being in a constant state of change and ascent from one nature to another, and this whole process being explainable ("more or less") by science, except for the original impulse of creation itself (which produced a rather undifferentiated mass with the "potentiality" of all future developments). (Kalomiros insists there is nothing "miraculous" about the Six Days of creation—they all proceeded according to scientific laws!). This picture, that of "theistic" or "God- guided" evolution, can be reconciled with the text of Genesis and its patristic interpretation only by means of many jumps and improvisations and wholesale disregard of patristic evidence. The chief reason, I suspect, why it does not give the horrors to Orthodox believers in "God-guided evolution" (as, for example, Fr. Neketas Palassis professes himself to be)—is simply because they put their heads in the sand and don't bother to think about it at all, because of a very unhealthy science-phobia. But my point here is: is not one's view of God basically affected by such a picture of the world? For example, the view of an "Orthodox evolutionist" like Theodosius Dobzhansky (in his address on receiving an honorary doctorate from St. Vladimir's Seminary!) utterly denies the Providence of God in the world; his "God" is the Deist God. St. John Damascene (following St. Gregory of Nyssa and others) states that it is unworthy of God to believe that He created man's body and soul in separate moments, as if He did not have power for the whole act at once; this act of creation was simultaneous; here the text of Genesis is not to be interpreted literally or "chronologically" (Kalomiros specifically denies this—his interpretation of St. Seraphim's words would collapse otherwise!). How much less worthy of

God, then, to believe that He created only some kind of material ocean of potentiality and left everything to "evolve by itself" according to natural laws!

All this, as you can see, is an informal discussion presented for your reflection—precise citations will have to be given when I have time.

5. A different point, from your letter to Br. Makarios. On the "coats of skin"—yes, I recall that St. Gregory the Theologian also gives the interpretation (as his personal opinion) that these could signify the "coarse flesh" of Adam after his fall. A very important point, bound up with the curse and the change in the nature of the world and man, as opposed to the "very good" (i.e. incorrupt) state in the beginning. Dr. Kalomiros says: the world was obviously corrupt and mortal before Adam's fall; it was only incorrupt in God's idea of it before the actual creation, the "first creation" as opposed to the "second creation" of St. Gregory of Nyssa. As opposed to this, one could collect patristic evidence (for example, St. Simeon the New Theol., Homily 45, where it is very explicit) that shows, the material creation (and not just paradise) before Adam's fall to be incorrupt and without death. But here I think we should beware taking the opposite side from Kalomiros and thinking we know with "scientific certainty" (as he thinks he does) what the nature of material reality was before the fall. Bishop Theophan the Recluse (in his commentary on Rom. 8:21) has a word of caution on this. I think it is enough to point out the different state of the world before the fall, its rather mysterious nature (to us who never saw it), and the inappropriateness of applying the law of scientific "uniformitarianism" to it. (Andreyev makes this point.)

6. A final point for now: it seems to me that in the "intellectual space" where science and theology overlap (a good description!) in the question of evolution, there are two quite different spheres of conflict and/or agreement between them:

a. Everything related to the "Six Days" and in general the state of the world before Adam: this is shrouded in some mystery (because of the different state of the world then) and it would be foolish for us to try to be "scientifically precise" about it. This is the biggest mistake of Kalomiros (and also of many fundamentalists). The creation of Adam from the dust is a mystery (for example); we can't picture it. But still we can know enough of it from the Fathers to avoid unworthy opinions about it. (It was instantaneous; Adam came from no other creature; etc.) The evolutionists remove the mystery from it—all is according to scientifically-known natural processes; from an Orthodox person, this is inexcusable rationalism.

b. Everything related to Adam after his fall—i.e., human history as a whole—is much more accessible to us according to our present knowledge. Thus, a discussion of the "chronology" of the Six Days is useless; but the "chronology" of mankind from Adam on down is accessible to us, limited only by physical factors (documents, paleontology, archeology). Here we should apply our God-given minds to find the most worthy explanations of the supposed "conflicts" between Genesis and paleontology. And this means: reading the patristic commentaries, and understanding the scientific evidence.

I've already used up my time. I look forward to your next comments.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

249.

How to Survive as an Orth Chr. in the World

Lect. 10.30.77

A. Introd.: pilgrims will go back to world—here we are protected, have our rhythm, segregated community, oneness of mind, services, Lit. to inspire and recharge—but how to continue inspired in world and remain Orth (w ones children)?

B. This question arises bee. our way of life is so diff. from worlds. Not just a matter of evils + temptations in world, esp. for children, but diff. fr. everyday consciousness. Our aim and way of life totally diff from world's. Forming Orth corns no answer either—no com. can help but feel pressure of surrounding world. Bec. of times, impression is created that "real world" is everyday pagan world, and Orth, world fights losing battle against it. Then how can one survive as Ortho Chr.?

C. Let us take a warning fr. a characteristic phen of our times—fruitless fig trees. Person can be very zealous as Orth Chr., read much, go to sem. or mon.— + then cool off, get bored, + even when he remains as Ortho Chr., is in a state of constant dissatisfaction or boredom. Same th. can happen to a person who was never too zealous, but has simply learned to take Chr ty for granted. This is t. sickness of one who has becomes too familiar w. t. Faith, + bee. of outward familiarity loses inward meaning of it. Such people are worldly, self-satisfied, and "know better"—they have been conquered by world around them, are formally Orth but without t fruits of true Chr'ty. This is quenched spirit of wh Apostle Paul speaks, symbolizing absence of H. Sp.

D. How do we avoid this pitfall and remain zealous Chrs.?

1. It helps, of course, to have spir. fr. for confession + guidance, regular attendance at ch. services, reception of Holy Mysteries, regular prayer at home. But one can do all this + still be fruitless.

2. A hint: St. John Chry.: "He who doesn't read spir. bks. can't save his soul."

3. What is function of reading spir. bks? They put us in contact w age-old spir. trad., give us spir. formation of cons., develop our mind in Chr. path. Attraction of surrounding world is one of different consciousness, that wh "everyone believes"—we must be in constant contact w. what Ch. believes.

4. Once one gets used to spir. reading, new world opens up—one is constantly learning, no room for boredom (that is only for those who already "know everyth").

a. Lives of Sts.—constantly new discoveries in how men have pleased God. We meet those w. whom we hope to be in paradise. Vlad. John encouraged knowl + ven. of W. Sts.—as source of inspir. Sts. Romulus and Lepucinus—spir. of Rus. Thebaid in 5th c. Gaul.

b. Spir. writings—to learn ABC's of spir. life wh. we constantly forget. Can be read again + again as we gain in exper. If we are always learning, these bks are always fresh.

1. St. John of Kron.

2. Unseen Warfare, + others of Bp. Theophan (most not in Engl.)

3. Desert Frs.—among monks, but t passions + virtues described are universally Chr., Lausiac Hist. Para, Dialogues

3a. St. Macar. Great.

4. Ladder—esp. for Lent.

5. Coms, on Scriptures.—St. Greg. Diog has excellent ones. Vlad. Aver.

6. Many more not transl.—but these are beg.

A person reading such bks, preferably keeping journal of extracts fr. them, is bldg a world of his own—not private world, but t real world of Orth Chr'ty thru t ages. This perhaps our main weapon against worldliness wh surrounds us.

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1978

250.

Theophany, 1978

Dear Brother in Christ, Andrew,

Many thanks for your letter and the informative "jottings." The situation indeed is not healthy, but if Vladimir and Olga are indeed going to go "off the deep end," it might make others stop and think, especially Fr. Alexis. We certainly hope that the responsibility and the practical needs of his position will tone down his "zeal," which certainly, in the cases you have mentioned, goes beyond anything necessary or proper. Our Church as a whole (and certainly almost all bishops and priests, apart from the Boston wing) does not believe Moscow and New Calendarists to be without grace. Those who wish to believe this as their personal opinion are not persecuted for it, but they certainly cannot make such an opinion obligatory on others. The two cases you mention would have cased no problem among any non-Boston clergy; our Church's policy of non-communion with Moscow is certainly not threatened by an occasional death-bed communion of someone who is unaware of the jurisdictional differences, and no issue need be made over it. Unfortunately, the whole Boston approach to such questions seems to remain very "academic."

However, I do hope our recent articles are not received as "broadsides." We do feel it necessary to say some things clearly, so as to remove confusions for those who might think that "Boston" speaks for the whole Church; but we still do hope that Fr. Panteleimon (with whom we recently exchanged friendly letters) will come to see that there are valid viewpoints other than his own.

We need to pray more for this, or the whole meaning of the witness of the Church Abroad is in danger of being submerged.

We rejoice in you being restored to communion, and heartily approve of Fr. Marks thinking on the subject. Truly, the letter of the law is to be respected, but the spirit is what is essential.

Please pray for us. In case I didn't mention it before, we sent you 25 calendars about a week before Western Christmas.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Priest-monk Seraphim

P.s. We've just received your new letter on the subject of Metr. Philaret's ruling. Could you send us a copy of the English and Russian text, with signature of the Metropolitan? (If there is no such Russian text, I don't see how the ruling can be believed; the Metropolitan does not understand English.)

We agree with your comments on the situation, and indeed all sound elements in the Church think that way. The policy of our bishops has always been to speak the truth loudly for all to hear, but to leave the question of interjurisdictional relations to take care of itself on the local level. Some of our clergy have no contact with other jurisdictions, but others do, and this has caused no problem until now.

In any case, any ruling directed to clergy need not concern laymen, who certainly should be able to continue praying with those in other jurisdictions and to visit their churches.

We are in contact with several Greek Old-Calendar clergy, who tell us of the disastrous effects of their bishops' rulings made in the name of "strictness" which only produce discord, and we are as concerned as you about this. Please keep us informed.

251.

Jan. 22/Feb. 4, 1978

Apostle Timothy

Dear Father Hilarion,

Christ is in our midst!

Many thanks for your kind letters and Xeroxes of recent weeks. I think we never sent you a list of things we intend to publish, so here is a list of those we can think of now:

Life and Epistles of Bishop Damascene of Glukhov, new martyr.

Life of St. Andrew Fool for Christ.

Life of St. Paphnutius of Borovsk.

Life of St. Tikhon of Kaluga.

Bishop Simon of China (1933).

Bishop Iona of Manchuria (1925).

Letters of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and perhaps Episdes also.

Life of Sts. Boris and Gleb.

A series on Elders of Optina, one by one. Zosima is being translated.

Life of St. Photios of Constantinople.

Life of St. Theodore the Studite.

Life of St. Niphon of Cyprus.

Life of St. Brigit of Ireland.

Life of St. Columba of Ireland.

Life of St. John the Baptist.

Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

Glinsk Monastery Ascetics

How are you with the life of St. Maximus the Confessor? Is it coming out soon?

The article on angels in the new Orthodox Life—isn't it translated straight from Fr. Michael Pomazansky's Dogmatic Theology? That should be noted; but in any case we're working on the whole book and hope to have it out this year. We've also done Abba Dorotheus, but now hear that the Cistercians have published it, so will have to see what their translation looks like. Are there any special translation projects at the monastery now? Is anyone working on Vladika Averky's commentaries? on Father Constantine's Pastoral Theology?

Would you be able to come to visit us when you go to Alberta? We would love to see you.

Please pray for us. May Christ our God strengthen you in your labors and grant you courage and good-hearted struggle!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Priest-monk Seraphim

252.

March 22/April 4, 1978

St. Basil of Ancyra

Dear Andrew,

May the blessing of our Lord be with you! Please forgive us also for our offenses against you. May God forgive and enlighten us all!

Your letters, especially the last one (of Forgiveness Sunday), are saddening, as has been the whole course of church life in England recently. Actually, your situation is a reflection of a much larger ailment in the Church body.

When Fr. Herman identified the writer of the Boston epistle as "not believing in God," he was of course speaking a little strongly. Reduced to plain prose, this statement means: this was not written with love and pastoral concern, but with a coldly calculating mind that is smug in its own "correctness" and relishes the opportunity to spread this "party line" to others—with now already disastrous results. We do not know Fr. Alexis personally, but judging from the epistles of other Boston monks whom we do know, the writers of these cold documents are invariable themselves better (at least potentially) than their "message." The whole history of Fr. Panteleimon and his charismatic appeal to a certain kind of convert is a history of the immaturity of Orthodox Christians in our times, as well as of the anarchic church atmosphere, which is unable of itself to correct such exaggerations before they cause damage.

The wave that brought Fr. Panteleimon to the fore now seems to be subsiding (certainly his popularity among Russians is at a low ebb), and the events in England may well be his "waterloo" as a church "power." Of course, he will not just go away, and I doubt that he will start his own jurisdiction (though he or his followers might force him into that position); but the "problem" which he represents can and should be faced now without doing personal battle with him. Many people now have been awakened to Orthodoxy and to the need for a true Orthodoxy, without modernistic distortions; even those who are too "zealous" can yet mature and overcome the mistakes of youth. The number of eager ears willing to listen to the message of Orthodoxy in English has never been greater.

Your work has been and should continue to be one of the voices that point to sound Orthodoxy. Perhaps you think your contribution is very modest. But believe me, in these times of universal coldness and calculation, the mere existence of someone (and more so a printed organ) who cares (about saints, and monasteries, about the suffering people of Russia, etc.) is a great help to everyone who is struggling on the Orthodox path.

So much for the general situation. About you personally, of course, I can't give any definitive answer. However, I do know that in spiritual life it is often precisely in seemingly "impossible" conditions that one really begins to grow; then one has to become more sensitive, think less of getting one's own will and ask what is God's will, learn to see a little deeper into the reality around one—and all this through suffering, both one's own and that of others. I can well imagine what Fr. Marks move alone has caused you.

I have not seen Fr. Alexis' letter to you, but I can imagine its content, judging from his earlier epistles and having some idea of what goes on in the mind of an inexperienced person placed in a position of authority (the seeming conflict between the need to be "humble" and the need to "assert ones authority for the general good"). He probably has an exalted picture of the "oneness of mind" which everyone "should" have today, and little practical experience of getting along with those who disagree with you. Surely some kind of modus vivendi is possible? There is, after all, a certain difference between a real spiritual father—with whom one has a certain oneness of

mind and can be fully open—and the simple spiritual authorities who are placed over one in the Church but with whom one need not actually have much contact. As for a confessor, if you do not have a trusted spiritual father, then you can "make do" until God grants you one, I.e., confess (if need be) in rather general terms until you find someone to whom you can open your soul more fully.

Without judging Father Mark, I think you would make a bad mistake if you followed him. If you wish to continue speaking to Orthodox Christians through the printed word (especially about things in Russia), I think that you will feel a difference in your freedom, whether or not your ecclesiastical superiors would give you "advice" and "hints" as to how to express yourself. And as for Archbishop Athenagoras—well, Archimandrite Kyprian of Fili has well written that when the squabbles among the small flock of "true Orthodox" are set beside our differences with the modernists, there is no doubt which part we have to choose. Our Church Outside of Russia is in an ideal position to speak the truth freely to the world, at least a small portion of which is eager for the truth; how sad that our petty passions and squabbles so often ruin this great opportunity!

Still, the starting place should always be with me. the cause of my misfortunes is first of all my own sins and shortcomings, and often God heals me through the sufferings He allows me to endure.

May God give you strength in your trials and courage to continue your good work. I think in all of this, despite appearances, God is helping us to a deeper, truer Christianity. So much of our Orthodoxy today is so self-righteous and smug, or at least lukewarm and comfortable, that we need to be shaken up a little. May God only grant that His sheep not be lost!

Are you still planning to come to California for Pascha? Alexey says that you might come later. I was able to travel to Etna last week and serve the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts for the first time in their chapel. We will be happy to see you whenever you can come.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Priestmonk Seraphim

P.s. Is The Orthodox Word getting through to you? We sent out no. 76 early in Feb., and no. 77 a few days ago.

P.p.s. Regarding the question of Western saints in the Calendar. We would agree with what you say about the impossibility of including some few Western "saints" in Orthodox Calendars (Nicholas I, Charlemagne); but such ones are really very few. Why not a conciliatory attitude towards Augustine of Canterbury and Wilfred: By the way, the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad did give official approval to the veneration of St. Anschar of Hamburg—in the early 1950 s, I believe, as reported in The Orthodox Word, 1971, March-April.

253.

Palm Sunday, 1978

Dear Mr. Stamos,

May the blessing of our Lord be with you.

Thank you for your letter. Even though you express basic disagreements with us in it, we are glad that you have spoken frankly of your feelings, as in the long run this is the best path to mutual understanding and, if possible, agreement.

The questions you raise are very deep; the differences between our and your attitudes are the result of many years of apparently a quite different experience. I can understand how some of the statements in our articles might shock you coming "out of the blue," as it were; but if you were more familiar with what has been happening in the Orthodox world in the 20th century I think you would find our words rather milder and more moderate. As a matter of fact, we have deliberately taken a very moderate stand, in comparison with some of the positions both to the "left" and "right" of us. You grieve over the "division and alienation" which our publication seems to represent. I assure you that we grieve together with you over this—but this division and alienation have been in our Orthodox Church now for fifty years and more. It is not our doing; we are only commenting on it. I agree with you 100% that we all need more love—we must constantly force our cold hearts to this, both for our friends and our enemies, and also our persecutors, where such exist.

But the answer to this sad division and alienation is by no means simple. You yourself seem to express in your letter a certain disturbance over the fact that in the very act of your writing about our disagreements with some Orthodox Patriarchs, you yourself are expressing disagreement with us! I myself think we should not be very disturbed over these disagreements; they exist and we should frankly admit it and try to have the most Christian and Orthodox response to them.

The fact of, not merely disagreements, but actual schism is, alas, all to real in the 20th-century Orthodox Church. The Church of Greece since 1924 has been split in two. About one-fourth of the people of Greece, and probably over half of the monks and nuns, belong to the "Old Calendarist" jurisdictions which have refused to follow the innovations of the latest Patriarchs of Constantinople and have broken communion with them. For this they have suffered persecutions, imprisonments, even martyrdom at the hands of their Orthodox brothers—the Greek government, supported by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the State Church of Greece. The latter (the "New Calendarist" churches) have excommunicated the Old Calendarists, proclaiming their Holy Mysteries to be without grace; until very recently (and perhaps even now, I don't know) children born of Old Calendarists marriages were officially registered with the government as "illegitimate"—something even the Protestants do not suffer in Greece. In return, the Old Calendarists have excommunicated the New Calendarists, and some of them (but not all) have declared and believe their Mysteries to by without grace. There are entirely separate Orthodox hierarchies in Greece, neither thus having any communion with the other.

I give you this example for your reflection. Such a grievous state of division and alienation is a fact of today's Greek Orthodox Church. What is to be our Christian attitude to it? Shall we be silent,' or neutral?-—This is hardly possible, since every Orthodox Christian must receive the Holy Mysteries somewhere, and he cannot receive them in both of the divided Greek Churches. (In America, there are only a few Old Calendarist churches, so the question may seem remote to

most people here; but for the Greek people as a whole it is an urgent question.) What should a bishop or priest do? He must instruct the people; even if he says nothing at all, the very fact that he belongs to the "Old" or the "New" Calendarists places him in the position of either proclaiming loyalty to the "old" tradition of Orthodoxy, or else agreeing (to some degree) with the path of modernization and abandonment of the "old" ways.

A similar state of division exists in the Russian Church, although it has not taken the extreme forms of the Greek schism. The Patriarch of Moscow and the leading bishops openly preach communism (both in the political and in a religious sense) and brazenly lie to the world about "freedom of religion" in Russia. We know that most of them do so under compulsion, and therefore we do not judge them too harshly. We in the Russian Church Abroad have our own bishops and have no communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, leaving its final judgment to a future council of bishops in a free Russia (which we pray will one day exist). But priests and laymen in the Moscow Patriarchate in Russia itself are today loudly protesting the anti-Christian acts of their own bishops, and some even proclaim that the Church there is governed by communist agents in bishops' robes. At the same time there exists a Catacomb Church which for fifty years has had no communion with the Patriarchate and is mercilessly persecuted by the Soviet government (we have published much material on these new martyrs in The Orthodox Word). Again—a sad state of division and alienation. How can we be neutral, unless by retreating into the cowardly state of being "uncommitted" which is so common today?

The martyrs and confessors in Russia write to us that the best hope for them right now is the loud protest of free people against their persecutors. I personally would feel myself a betrayer of my brothers in Christ there if I were not to use the opportunity given me to speak the truth about them; but to do this I cannot help but contradict the lies of their bishops who say even now that "there is no persecution of religion in the USSR; those who suffer are only political criminals." I do not feel in the least that I am sinning against the commandment of loving my brethren by doing this. On the contrary, my silence would betray love, and would only help the deliberate campaign of the Moscow church representatives to silence and exert influence on the Orthodox Churches of the free world.

I would hope that you can understand all this, even if you may not agree with our position.

The fulfillment of Gods commandment of love is by no means an easy or a simple thing. There are many "hard sayings" in the Holy Scriptures which seem (superficially) a direct contradiction of love. To those who do not do good works our Lord Jesus Christ says: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Even to many who prophesy and work miracles in His name, our Lord shall say: "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). Our Saviour tells us sternly: "Suppose 4ye that I am come to bring peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three; the father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father," etc. (Luke 12:51-53). St. John, the Apostle of love, writes of those who have not right belief; "If anyone come to you and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting, for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (II John 10-11). St. Paul warns against new teachings: "If

any man preach to you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8).

I am sure you know these and other "hard sayings" of the Scriptures and have reflected on them; I only cite them here (without going into interpretations of them) in the hope that you will not be too ill-disposed towards some of the seemingly uncharitable statements you have found in our publications. In writing them I assure you that we are trying to follow the Gospel, to the best of our knowledge and in obedience to the teaching of many bishops, martyrs, and confessors of our own times, both in the Greek and Russian Churches, both abroad and in America.

In the history of the Orthodox Church there have been innumerable cases of "hard words" spoken by defenders of Christ's truth. I will give you only one example: In 1439, the Greek Church accepted Roman Catholicism at the false Council of Florence. One Greek bishop (St. Mark of Ephesus) refused to sign the decree of Union, accused those who accepted the Union, aroused the people against it, refused to allow the Patriarch of Constantinople even to be present at his funeral—all of these "negative" things he did out of love for Orthodoxy, and because of him the Greek people is still Orthodoxy today; if they had followed those who preached "peace" at that time, the Greek people would be Roman Catholics today and thus, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, deprived of the grace of God. (The Russian Church at that time refused to accept the Union, and broke off communion with the Greek Church until the Patriarch of Constantinople himself renounced the Union and returned to Orthodoxy.) Such champions of Orthodoxy are precisely the ones the Orthodox Church has canonized and accepts as her standard of how to act when the Faith is threatened.

There is no need to multiply such historical examples; I am sure you understand the point I am making. I am well aware, to be sure, that there can be a "fanatical" approach to this whole subject, and we condemn it as much as you. I only hope you can see the principles on the basis of which we try to speak.

I am sorry that our words have given you the impression that our attitude is "schismatic" and that we regard everyone but ourselves as un-Orthodox. That is certainly not what we have intended to convey. However, there is no benefit to any of us from hiding the truth: the hierarchy in Russia (and some other Communist countries) is indeed enslaved by the godless and does the will of the government; many people in Russia and in the Moscow Patriarchate itself have admitted it. And further, I don't see how it can be denied that those in the free world who fraternize with the atheist-controlled church leaders and thus aid the atheist purposes which they pursue in the free world—rare larking in seriousness and responsibility. Such people are acting according to the wisdom of this world, not the wisdom of Christ and His Church. We (and many others) say such things because we hope that Orthodox people (and even these leaders themselves, if possible) will see this and become serious about their Christian responsibility; if nothing is said, the false path which Orthodox leaders are now pursuing will continue without opposition until a new "union" is proclaimed, which will deprive Orthodox people of their birthright and inheritance and—unless by a miracle of God—of the very salvation of their souls. Our differences with those who are preparing the "Eighth Ecumenical Council" are very deep and will not improve by silence; they involve a whole different view of Christ, the Church, and salvation. In mentioning a

few of the leading Orthodox hierarchs by name we (following many of our bishops and confessors) are merely warning the Orthodox people whom not to follow. We say little of the priests who have to follow these leaders (we know that many of them do so with a disturbed conscience), and nothing about laymen, who generally are much less aware of what is going on and are much less responsible for it.

From your letter I understand that you are afraid that the tone of our publications and missionary work will cause—or already has caused—discord among the small number of Orthodox Christians in Redding. You mention specifically Mrs. Harvey and the Romingers. Let me say a word here about each of them.

I think it is possible that you are misinterpreting Mrs. Harvey's attitude. She has her own attitude (shared by most devout Russians) about church life, and I doubt that she would want to participate in church life based on some other attitude. Since you seem to have a different approach to church life, it is only natural that she would not be attracted by it. But this is certainly not a matter of her being any kind of "fanatic" or thinking herself "more Orthodox" than you or others; far from it. She, like many Russians in America, has suffered much: the godless took her homeland, her parents had to flee abroad under very difficult circumstances, she herself was born in exile in a totally strange land, then she was forced to flee even that refuge. Russians who go through such experiences and traumas, if they are religious, cling to their Faith as their dearest possession and are very closely attached to their bishops and priests. For them the question of church life is primarily based on trust and personal loving contact with their bishop or priest. Often church life takes place in the catacombs or near-catacombs; at best, in difficult immigrant circumstances. The question of church organization, church building, etc,—has a very secondary place in their oulook on Christian life, and they see that when there is enough peace and quiet for these questions to come to the fore, the same worldly influences, empty disputes and wrangling enter into Orthodox church life as in any other church organization, and so they most often are just not interested in these things, and will even flee the opportunity to take part in them. If she gives you the impression that she is "avoiding your fellowship," it is probably as a result of this attitude and nothing else.

As for the Romingers, they visited us today and both Fr. Herman and I discussed some church questions with them. They seem open to understanding our point of view on these questions, but they are level-headed people and the concern they have over these questions is a real one, proceeding from the questions themselves and not from any opinion we may have about them. They also wish not to sin against love, and not to judge anyone—but also not to adopt a misleading "peace and love" which merely hide problems that really exist and are urgent. We are not at all trying to "press" them into adopting our opinions on various questions; this is a matter of their free choice.

Whatever you may think of all this, I hope that you at least understand our point of view a little better. As for the situation in Redding, I will be frank with you. Our Archbishop has blessed us to open a mission station at Mrs. Harvey's, and we will have occasional services there. This will not be any "organized parish," but just a mission station to serve (to begin with) those people in Redding and outlying towns who already come occasionally to our monastery for services.

With regard to "jurisdictions," we are in full communion with the Greek Old-Calendarist jurisdiction of Archbishop Auxentios in Athens and with the Catacomb Church in Russia; with other jurisdictions our relations are strained, and in some cases broken altogether (owing to the sad history of 20th-century Orthodoxy, outlined above). Our Church as a whole simply refuses to accept the excommunications hurled by the various jurisdictions against each other under the heated circumstances of controversy; but on the other hand a state of free intercommunion does not exist between us. In our own case, we would not be able to concelebrate with the priests of any other jurisdiction; as for laymen (whose responsibility in these sad divisions is much less, but who still must be striving to be conscious and responsible Christians), those who wish to receive Holy Communion must go to confession first and must be prepared to accept instruction from the priest in preserving oneself in true Orthodoxy. Most Orthodox people today, at least in America, do not seem very open to taking such guidance, and would find our approach too "strict." To name but one problem that could arise: many decrees of the Greek and Russian Churches in the 20th century have forbidden the giving of Holy Communion to members of masonic lodges. In open disobedience to these decrees, many priests and even bishops of several jurisdictions do give Communion to them, our Church does not. We are no "fanatics" on this question, but we are required to explain to Orthodox Christians who in their ignorance have joined masonic lodges, that there are religious aspects to masonry which make it incompatible with membership in the Orthodox Church.

Judging from your letter, you will not find what I have said very consoling. The Romingers told us that you wish to have a "soft" (I don't recall their exact word) approach to Orthodox Christians in Redding so as not to frighten anyone away. I can tell you frankly that anyone who is easily "frightened" at such things as we have written will probably not be at home with us. In our experience, rather few of the Orthodox Christians in any given locality have much interest in the services of our Russian Church Abroad and in our attitude towards church questions; most find us indeed too "strict" and "hard." We understand this and try to keep quietly going our own way, at the same time warning our own faithful about what is happening in the Church. If you wish to have your own services or organized parish in the Greek Archdiocese, we will certainly not interfere or indulge in any "jurisdictional rivalry."

Now, after saying all this to you, I really have not told you what is in my heart. Why all this "strictness" and lack of full communion? Is it some kind of phariseeism? I pray that it is not, and believe it is not. We (and the bishops and confessors whose path we follow) fear more than anything else the loss of our eternal souls and those of the flock who follow us. Our times are critical; the devil is going about devouring the souls of Orthodox Christians; a false religion of "peace and harmony" is being spread in order to prepare for the reign of Antichrist, who, as the Gospel and whole new Testament clearly teaches, is to come before the end of the world and take by a subtle seduction—so subtle that "even the elect will be deceived, if it were possible"—all but the "little flock" which Christ our Saviour will find when He comes. With all this in mind, and with the experience of anti-Christianity in action which those of us in the Russian Church have had either directly or through our close ones—our whole tone and approach is and has to be urgent and uncompromising—although always within the bonds of love, "speaking the truth in love" as far as we are able. We do not expect many in America to understand or follow us—

sadly, because we believe that this is the authentic Christian Orthodoxy handed down to us by our Saviour through His Apostles and all His Saints.

Having said all this, I repeat that you are welcome to join us in any of our services. We will be reading the Twelve Gospels of the Passion (in English) on Thursday evening at about 7 p.m.; the bringing out of the epitaphion will be on Good Friday at 2 p.m. (but the Lamentations service will be not in the evening but only early in the morning, 2 a.m., following monastic tradition); Liturgy Great Saturday about 11 a.m., and midnight Matins and Liturgy on Pascha itself. If after all that I have written here, there remain differences in our approach to the Faith, these differences have not yet gone so far that it is impossible for us to pray together. The question of receiving Holy Communion is something deeper; this is a spiritual question which our Superior, Father Herman, decides individually in confession. In cases of the dying, of course we will not refuse Holy Communion to any baptized Orthodox Christian who desires it and repents of his sins.

No matter what you may think of all this, I hope that our relation will continue to be a friendly one.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

254.

May 19/June 1, 1978

St. Cornelius of Komel

Dear Father Chrysostomos,

In truth Christ is risen!

Thank you for your letter and kind gift. Regarding Fr. Theodore in Cleveland: I believe he is not a "fanatic" regarding Fr. Panteleimon, but still he has ties with him and your serving with him in any case would produce "complications." Sadly, this is the way it is with most of the English-speaking wing of our Church. There are only a few "fanatic" partisans of Fr. P., but few have as yet come to see the whole meaning of his "movement," in its negative as well as positive aspects. Those who see this are usually those who have suffered as a result of his political orientation, or have seen the suffering of others. To those who have not gone through something like this, it is difficult to speak directly about him. We have tried to set a different tone in our publications for several years now (that is, different from Fr. Panteleimon's), but this is seen only gradually. In the meantime, most of our convert priests are not capable of being very objective about the "Greek" question, and would probably be afraid of holding an opinion different from Fr. Ps. There is a further complication in that Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal has never been very well-disposed to Metropolitan Akakios. We hope and pray that with time and greater maturity all this will change for the better.

In the meantime, your friends in our Church will probably continue to be more or less "secret." But spiritually this is probably not bad. We feel the signs of the times point more and more to a coming "catacomb" existence, whatever form it may take, and the more we can prepare for it now the better. I think you should have no hesitation in having Sunday services in your own building, even temporary or unfinished; it would probably even be helpful to those who attend to participate in your struggles in establishing yourself.

You will probably go through many trials and difficulties in your new location, the devil's envy being what it is. May Christ our God strengthen you to bear them courageously. Every such monastery or community we look on as a part of the future catacomb "network" of strugglers for true Orthodoxy; probably in those times (if they will really be as critical as they look from here) the "jurisdictional" question will recede into the background. However, be assured that even now Fr. P. himself cannot deny that, at least theoretically, we are in full communion with the Synod of Archbishop Auxentios; the complications are owing to politics and rivalries, from which you do well to remove yourselves as far as possible.

If you are ever in need of help, please let us know.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

255.

June 16/29, 1978

St. Tikhon of Kaluga

Dear Father Chrysostomos,

Christ is in our midst!

From Fr. Auxentios we receive the impression that my last letter to you has caused a feeling of some hopelessness regarding any emergence from your state of isolation and any normal relationship with the priests and faithful of our Russian Church Abroad. I would like to correct the impression I seem to have given you, and at the same time give you a few words of encouragement as you prepare to begin your new life in Ohio.

In advising you to continue your "hidden" way of life, I did not really have in mind that you should always be as isolated as you are now. In fact, on the contrary, we would like to see you gradually enter into more contact with the members of our Church. My meaning was rather that you should always place first the leading of your own independent way of life, and let the relations with others develop gradually, take care of themselves so to speak. By the very nature of the situation in our Russian Church Abroad today, your very existence has a "political" significance, whether you wish it or not; but this need not be any overwhelming obstacle. Your existence is now becoming known in our Church, as we have recently heard, so you cannot really hide in any case.

———-

Now, some days after starting to write this letter, we received Fr. Auxentios' new letter, telling about your illness. May Christ our God heal and preserve you for many years of service in His Holy Church! We will be praying for you.

Thank you for the Xerox—we had not seen this document before, although we had seen another one of about the same time and with the same basic content. We had assumed that you were aware of such statements, and now we understand better how deep must be your sense of isolation. This document gives the general principle which governs the relationship of our Synod to yours; but in practice, of course, there may be local complications owing to the attitudes of the Greeks who are with us, who are unfortunately rather political-minded. This is why we have advised you to go slowly in your contacts with our clergy.

At the present time there is occurring something of a "reaction" in our Church against the over-zealousness (almost fanaticism) of some of our Greeks, and their political involvements. Several years ago one could say that Fr. Panteleimon was "setting the tone" for a large part of our Church; but today, his influence is restricted to a "political party" within the Church, and no longer is his position such a central one. We ourselves would like to see a quite different "tone" prevail in our Church, but without having to battle against our Greeks to do it. Our two-part article on Blessed Augustine is an attempt in this direction—to correct the onesidedness of some upstart "theological experts" without engaging in a battle over it, pointing rather to the ordinary Christian virtues of moderation, forgiveness, tolerance, etc.—which are often lost sight of when the emphasis is placed on "correctness."

As you begin to come into contact with more of our clergy (as I suppose you will in Ohio), you could help us in establishing a more moderate and normal Orthodox tone, especially among our converts who are still so immature and easily diverted from the path of a profounder Orthodoxy. Your very existence as "Greeks" who are not "fanatical," who do not follow the "party-line" of our own Greeks," but also do not engage in polemics with them—could help many to have a more balanced Orthodox outlook and place our "Greek party" in its proper place. Among many of our younger (especially Russian) priests there is already a good beginning in the direction of establishing such a tone.

I was planning to visit my mother in San Diego this summer, and had hoped to be able to come and visit you at the same time. Now, as it seems, my visit will be probably later in the summer. If by any chance you would be coming as far up the coast as Monterey (where a friend of ours says he saw you in church some time ago) before you leave, perhaps a meeting could still be arranged.

In any case, please know that our prayers and best wishes are with you. Your experience up to now has not been in vain; precisely such suffering and anguish gives understanding that is much needed in our days. Do not be afraid, by the way, to get into contact with Fr. Theodore in Cleveland; we would only advise not "involving" him to the extent of asking to use his church (for which he would have to ask his bishops permission in any case, which would further complicate matters).

Asking your prayers,

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. A problem that could conceivably arise concerning yours and our jurisdictions: Some of those who have been "fanaticised" by some of the attitudes of our Greeks have now been expressing dissatisfaction with our Synod as too weak, compromising, etc. In Geneva Fr. Basile Sakkos (Fr. Ps offspring) has left our Church (to join the Mathewites, I believe) and in England a new group of fresh converts has just joined the Mathewites. Fr. P. and the priests with him would not do such a thing, if I understand them righdy, but some of this followers might. Presently there is a very unstable follower of his in Canada, Deacon Lev Puhalo, who has been spreading tales of the supposed lack of strictness of most of our bishops; he is now being challenged on a ridiculous accusation he has made against the teaching of life after death as printed in Orthodox Life and The Orthodox Word, and it is entirely conceivable that he could suddenly decide to solve his problems by changing jurisdictions—in which case he might appeal to Metropolitan Akakios. Please keep this in mind, and if necessary warn His Eminence of the mentality of those who might want to make such a change—they will only bring him misery. A good and close cooperation between us would be the best answer to such problems, and with time we believe this could come about.

256.

Oct. 18/31, 1978

Holy Apostle Luke

Your Grace, dear Vladika Laurus,

Bless!

Thank you for your letters and the copy of Fr. Levs letter (which I am returning with this). Fr. Lev sent us none of the letters exchanged in this controversy, and we were sent a copy of his letter and Br. Isaac s reply by someone else. In general, Fr. Lev has not been in contact with us for over a year, I think, and his last letters to us were so strange and irrational that we did not even try to answer them. Some time ago he sent a letter to Alexey Young violently disagreeing with several of our articles (especially the article on Prof. Andreyev, for some reason) and saying that we, together with other "Russians," are in serious error and are making an "occult cult of 19th-century Russia." He has not tried to write us politely and charitably expressing his disagreement with us about these things; I think this is because his disagreement is primarily emotional and not theological, despite what he says about it.

Fr. Lev has long impressed us as being quite unbalanced emotionally; even Fr. Neketas has had trouble with him in this regard, even though he supports Fr. Lev's publications because they express the Boston "party-line." But we also do not have a high opinion of him as a "theologian." Several years ago Fr. Panteleimon of Boston told me that Fr. Lev apparently does not understand Russian very well; he simply re-works the translations of his friend Vassily, but is not able to translate for himself. I believe his knowledge of theology is of the same kind; he takes

the ideas of someone else (mostly Fr. Panteleimon) and expresses them in his own way, thereby shining in the reflected "glory" of Fr. Panteleimon, as it were, but he himself is not a theological thinker, and sometimes he makes astonishing errors, as in his recent letters on the state of souls after death. In general, I think he is like a "barometer" of the opinions of our "Greek convert" wing: some of the things which Fr. Panteleimon, Fr. Neketas, and others believe but would not say except within their own "party," Fr. Lev speaks out for everyone to hear.

What disturbs us most about the statements of Fr. Lev (and our "Greeks" in general) is not as much the opinions he expresses as the exalted, superior tone in which he expresses them, reflected in the name-calling he and our Greeks indulge in—accusing the rest of us ("Russians") of being under "Western influence," being "naive" and "untheological," believing in "moral fables," etc. This seems to us not a theological spirit at all, but just intellectual conceit.

I don't think Fr. Lev will be satisfied with any answer to his outrageous protests against the traditional Orthodox teaching on life after death. Some of the points he raises are treated in our articles on "The Soul After Death"—but not in a controversial way; most of the rest of these articles will be simply the teaching of Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov, especially on the "Toll-houses," and I think the subject is clearly enough presented by him to satisfy everyone except Fr. Lev and other "reformers."

Fr. Gregory of Boston visited us lately, and left a bad impression on us also. For him monasticism seems to be some kind of "formula," but without love or any real idea of struggle. The "training" that Fr. Panteleimon gives his monks seems to be bound up with a cold, calculating self-centeredness—far from the real monastic spirit as we understand it. Fr. George Cheremetiev also visited us— and, just the contrary, we felt very close to him. He also, just like we, finds that Fr. Dimitry Dudko has just the right spirit for us today. Fr. Gregory wants to start a monastery in California, but both our bishops are against it, and Fr. Herman spoke very sharply with him against it.

We are in contact with some people in the Old Calendar jurisdiction of Archbishop Auxentios in America (and Greece also), and they are horrified to learn that our Sobor of Bishops has "broken communion" with them. Is this really true? There are many good people with them, who are closer to our Russian spirit than Fr. Panteleimon (even though their bishops may sometimes act irresponsibly) and it would be heartbreaking if we were to abandon them now.

We are very grateful for your concern for us, and ask your prayers for us. Besides our printing, we now serve several mission points in California and Oregon with Divine Liturgy once every month or two. In a few days, God willing, we will be sending our book "Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky" to the binder, after several years of printing (this is the book Br. Makarios [was] working on last summer when he stayed with us).

With love and respect in Christ,

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1979

257.

Jan. 14/27, 1979

St. Nina of Georgia

Your Grace, dear Vladika Laurus,

Blagoslovite!

I hope you and the brethren spent the feast days peacefully and joyfully. For us these days went very well, both in the monastery and in our missions in Redding and Etna. Despite the troubles of the times and our sorrows over many "converts," there are still some people left, both Russians and converts, who are willing to give their hearts and sacrifice themselves for the Orthodox Faith, for which we thank God.

I am writing this letter in hope of receiving from you some advice (your personal opinion, and not any decision of the Synod) regarding one particular problem which has been presented to us: the reception of converts from the "non-canonical" Orthodox jurisdictions.

Last November we were visited by a priest from one of these jurisdictions. He is in his early 30 s, is married and has several children, and lives on a farm in Tennessee, where he has a very small flock. He is very poor and has deliberately chosen a path of "struggle."

After studying at an Anglican seminary, he became Orthodox in a "non-canonical" jurisdiction about 10 years ago and was ordained priest about five years ago, I believe, by a "Bishop Christopher" in Pennsylvania (who has since died). He is now under a "Bishop Trevor" in Pennsylvania, who is head of a very small jurisdiction of probably no more than six priests; this jurisdiction is one of many that trace their ancestry back to the Metropolia's "autocephaly" of 1927 (Bishop Eftimios).

The priest who visited us left on the whole a good impression on us (unlike some other "non-canonical" priests we have encountered); he seems not very different from many of the serious convert-priests in our own Synod. He realizes that he has much to learn about Orthodoxy, and that he really started learning only after becoming Orthodox and becoming a priest. He came to visit us because he is very much attracted to the kind of Orthodoxy he finds presented in The Orthodox Word (as opposed to the "Boston" emphasis on "zealotry" and "strictness" and "correctness," which he does not like). While he was with us (for nearly a week) he asked us if we could find out how he might be received into the Synod, and we told him we would inquire. We asked our Archbishop Anthony, but he seemed to indicate this was not his sphere, and so we are writing to you.

With all this in mind, could you give us your opinion on the following questions?

1. What is his present status in Orthodoxy, in the eyes of our Russian Church Abroad, and how might he be received into our Church? Is he simply without grace and should be baptized and start over again as Orthodox? I know our "Bostonites" would say this, and according to

"strictness" perhaps they are correct. But is a more "pastoral" approach not possible? I ask this for two reasons:

a. He himself sees his coming to the Synod as the culmination of a process of growth in Orthodoxy, and he would have a very difficult time totally denying his past Orthodox experience, as he would seem to be doing if he were to be baptized now. (And then would he not have to "rebaptize" those he has already baptized as a priest?) We tried to give him as his example the Orthodox Church of Eastern Africa, which began in a "non-canonical" jurisdiction but persevered until finding true Orthodoxy; but even there, I wonder how those first priests were received by the Patriarch of Alexandria—were they baptized and ordained, or received br cynzemr caht?

b. Our experience with converts of the "strict" school (the "Bostonites") has made us a little afraid of total "strictness," which sometimes seems to produce something like a "sectarian" mentality.

Therefore, our question is: if he could be a priest in our Synod, could he be accepted _____, in the manner that Roman Catholic priests are sometimes accepted? (As a matter of fact, he knows one Old-Catholic priest who was accepted by Vladika Nikon in this way—Fr. Augustine in Florida).

2. He is married to a widow, who has children from her first husband. I already told him that this would probably be the biggest obstacle to his being a priest in our Church. I realize .that he probably could not be ordained in our Church with such a canonical impediment; but is it at all possible for him to be received

3. Under what diocese does Tennessee come?—Chicago is by far the nearest diocesan see.

We ourselves would very much like to see him received into our Church, first because he seems to be a "normal American" (unlike some of our converts) who would be able to give Orthodoxy to some ordinary people who would never think of going to a "Russian" Church, and second because he is hungry for a deeper kind of Orthodoxy than the "OCA" and other jurisdictions are giving today. It grieves us to see so much of the American "missionary territory" occupied by the "OCA," which is becoming more and more spiritually empty (as we hear from people who are there), when there is the possibility for at least a few "strugglers" to give something deeper.

If it would be possible for him to be received into our Church, I am sure he would be willing to go to Jordanville for some time in order to increase his knowledge of Divine services, customs of our Church, general Orthodoxy, etc. He clearly indicated to us his desires to learn and be corrected.

I hope this letter has not burdened you too much, and it will not be too difficult for you to give at least a brief reply. Please pray for us.

With love and respect in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

258.

Jan. 20/Feb. 2, 1979

St. Euthymius the Great

Dear Fr. Johnikios,

Christ is in our midst!

Thank you for your letters. Regarding Fr. Lev: your letter is a study in restraint in the face of attacks which, from what we have seen of them, are simply outrageous. Until about a month ago, Fr. Lev had sent nothing whatever to us of all his letters on the subject of life after death, despite the fact that one of the letters (which we received from elsewhere) specifically said a copy was sent to us. The few letters of his we have seen strike us as simply immature struttings based on an obvious failure to have studied the question well or read many of the basic texts he wants to attack. Then a month ago or so he sent us his one and only communication with us on the subject: a copy of a letter addressed to an unnamed priest (perhaps this was the letter you were answering?) wherein he has various unkind words about the "Platina doctrine of the soul," the un-Orthodoxy of Jordanville publications, and the "ghastly" teaching of Archbishop John Maximovitch on life after death. Such things are inexcusable; they reveal not a love of truth or theology, but intellectual adventurism in search of new "victories" over anyone who disagrees with his whims. The recent Tlingit Heralds also, with their new "victories" over the Shroud of Turin, "after-death" experiences, etc., are just cheap and totally unobjective and unfair. How did he get the reputation of a "theologian"?!

Incidentally, if Fr. Lev has made any specific references to Egyptian sources concerning life after death, I'd be interested in seeing them, as a student of the question. The after-life "gates" and "mansions" of the Egyptian Book of the Dead certainly have nothing remotely to do with the Orthodox teaching, and if he is looking for "influence" on the toll-houses from there, he is a million miles off. It seems natural to suppose that the image of the toll-houses comes from nothing more complex than Roman civil law; but no one except Fr. Lev seems to mistake the image for the reality. The qualification that the toll-houses are not "dogma" is, it seems to me, unnecessary and rather dangerous; we believe and accept and hand down ourselves, as a full part of our Holy Orthodoxy, much that is not "dogma": the sign of the Cross, the way of performing the Mysteries, holy water, prosphora, the services of the Trebnik, our love for the Saints, etc. etc.—but if someone begins to take them away from us, or undermine the foundations for our acceptance of them, he is helping to destroy our faith as surely as one who challenges basic dogmas. This dissatisfaction with the way Orthodoxy has been handed down to us, this "reformism on the right," so to speak—seems very unhealthy to us.

Well, enough thoughts on an unpleasant subject. We ourselves don't plan to answer any attacks Fr. Lev may throw in the air around us; but of course if he would deign to write us personally and tell us of his disagreements we would try to write a polite reply. Our last attempts to communicate with him resulted in emotional replies which (in one case) even Fr. Neketas thought was too much.

A more pleasant subject: we are pleased with your tape-project on Vladika Averky's Gospels and will stop ours where we are (something like 60 or 70 pages). Actually, we had specifically in mind having something in English by the time our Br. Thomas is ready for that class, and your tapes will do that nicely. I have started the Apostol and will continue that. Fr. Michael's Dogmatic Theology, God willing, is to be out by this summer, if I can get all the transcripts corrected by then (the task I find hardest and slowest). Pray for this—the book is needed and overdue.

Thomas Delp has had rather a miraculous recovery, after receiving Unction on his deathbed; but spiritually, alas, he seems as bad as ever. He is in full possession of his faculties, but is an utter slave to his own passionate inclinations and self-justification. He is in a rest home in Redding now and we see him occasionally, but he is very displeased with our attempts to shake him out of his sleep of sin. He is an alcoholic, and quotes St. Paul on "wine for the stomachs sake" to justify it; and for the sake of a worse passion he even disagrees with the Orthodox teaching on sexual morality. We did get to meet his mother for the first time\because of all this; she is a pious Roman Catholic, and attended an Orthodox Liturgy for the first time when Fr. Herman served in Medford (where Thomas was in the hospital). She has given up on him and doesn't want him back in Florida. His future is grim if there is no change in his will; this whole trial was obviously sent him to wake him up, but up to now he resists God's call.

Please pray for us. We're struggling to print a few more things while we still have freedom, which seems short the way things are going. May God grant even us fat geese to exercise a little even if, alas, we just can't fly any more!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

259.

Jan. 28/Feb. 10, 1979

Sts. Ephraim and Isaac of Syria

Dear Fr. Donald,

Please forgive my long delay in answering your letters. I wanted to hear first from Bishop Laurus, and I wrote to him only after Christmas in order not to burden him at a busy time. I received his reply on the same day as your new letter this week, but now it has been nearly a week more before I am writing this, what with our printing, missionary trips, etc.

What Vladika Laurus writes will be difficult for you to accept, and I only ask you to receive it with prayer for God's guidance. Here I will simply quote his words, translated from Russian (parentheses added by me for clarity). I had mentioned to him your Bishops Christopher and Trevor, but had not mentioned you by name.

"Inasmuch as the one who called himself Bishop Christopher did not have a correct ordination, all (of this jurisdiction) are unordained. Consequently, their uniting people to their jurisdiction,

whether through baptism or however they receive them, is also without effect, for what they celebrate are not sacraments. Therefore, there can be no question of the reception (into our jurisdiction) of such (clergy) in their existing rank. (In the past) it has been allowed among us to receive Catholics and Uniates in their existing rank, on the ground that they have apostolic succession in their ordination. But in this (jurisdiction) there is no succession. If their "bishops" had been in schism (after being properly ordained and in communion with the Orthodox), this would have been a different question.

"With the person you mention there is another difficulty in that he is married to a widow. This is an impediment to ordination.

"I understand your feelings and, of course, it is sad that there are good people who are beginning to understand Orthodoxy correctly but by their previous actions have closed the way to priesthood. Of course, if he will sincerely approach and understand Orthodoxy, he should leave his priesthood' and become a good Orthodox layman, perhaps, with God's help, to raise up children who might themselves serve the Holy Church in priestly rank."

I have also spoken to Bishop Nektary of Seattle about you, and while he knew nothing of your jurisdiction, he did say that the canon forbidding marriage to a widow is one that is strictly kept and cannot be put aside.

What to say? These words are from bishops who are loving and understanding as well as strict, and I accept them as from God Himself. I believe Archbishop John would not have given a different opinion. It is not for me to advise you to abandon what you have thought was the priesthood; I will only tell you my thoughts on your alternative.

To join yourself to our church as a layman would be an act of courage and suffering, but would open up to you the possibility of spiritual fruitfulness in genuine Orthodoxy, which comes only with suffering. (To remain in our Church alone will require suffering.) To deny the grace of Christs Church on your previous ministry would be difficult, but would not mean denying God's guidance of you during this time. The character of your present mission, of course, would be different: there is no reason why you could not continue the mission of the printed word (avoiding the pitfall of trusting oneself too much, and listening to the advice of others), but it would be a "priestless" community, with daily common prayers and hopefully occasional visits for Liturgy by a priest like Fr. Theodore in Cleveland.

To remain as you are, on the other hand, would mean to remain outside of communion and deeper contact with us in the Church Outside of Russia, and probably stuck in the rut of "non-canonical" Orthodoxy. In the latter case there will not be much we can do to help you, though of course we would remain in contact with you.

May God guide you in His path, by the prayers of Archbishop John. Please pray for us also.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. We will continue to send you our publications as they come out—if we overlook you, please remind us. Please send us your publications also.

As for the title Living Orthodoxy, the idea is good, but Fr. Herman fears the word "living" is already "polluted" for us because of the "Living Church" in Russia and now has an overtone of "renovated."

260.

Feb. 9/22, 1979

Dear Rev. [Roy] Goodridge [Wales, UK],

Thank you for your letter, expressing your anguish over the present state of the Anglican Church. Fr. Herman has directed me to reply to [you.]

There is really only one answer to your situation: to be joined to the Orthodox Church. This, of course, will not solve all your problems, but at least it will put you in a place where you can face them with your feet on solid ground.

Our Orthodox Church too, alas, is suffering from the disorder of the times, and now most of the Orthodox jurisdictions are expressing their willingness to go along with the "spirit of the times." (although, compared with the Western confessions, they are still quite "backward," thanks to God). Our Russian Church Outside of Russia, however, has clearly taken its stand against compromises with the times, for which reason it is considered rather "backward" by the other Orthodox jurisdictions. It would be good for you to get in contact with one of our priests in London (a convert to Orthodoxy), who could discuss the whole Orthodox Church situation with you:

Fr. Yves Dubois

25 Emily Road

London W12 9TF

As long as you are in the Anglican Church there is not much we can do to guide you. I would only advise you to pray fervently to God to show you the way to be fruitful in His True Church. The prayers of a recent saint of our Church, Archbishop John Maximovitch, are also very helpful. I am sending you one of our recent publications about him. Please feel free to write any questions.

261.

Feb. 9/22.1979 b

St. Innocent of Irkutsk

Dear Timothy [Shell],

May the blessing of our Lord be with you!

We were glad to hear from you; thank you for the information on Russian periodicals.

About your personal problems: Fr. Basil Rhodes has also written us a letter, saying about the same things he wrote to you, but apologizing for calling our Church "schismatic" and a "fringe" group. He says he has no objection whatever to your being baptized here—he just doesn't want you marrying Anna if you are in the Russian Church Abroad!

I think he is being overly-dramatic about the whole matter. The question of "jurisdictions" (in one case of the OCA and our Church Abroad) is not such a crucial one that it would prevent marriage, even if the partners were to belong to different jurisdictions; to be sure, oneness of mind on this question is preferable, but in practice this is worked out by the couple themselves.

Neither the OCA nor the Russian Church Abroad deny the grace of the sacraments of the other. It is true that on the clergy level there is no communion between us; this is a matter of principle on the part of the Church Abroad, which will not compromise on the question of accepting the Soviet-dominated Patriarchate of Moscow (from which the OCA receives its "canonicity") as a normal Orthodox Church. Now, also, there is the question of the increasingly evident modernism and ecumenism of OCA pronouncement^ and practice, both official and unofficial. The recent publicity given to OCA bishops' travels to Moscow and Rome, with photographs taken of them with Patriarch Pimen and the Pope—underscore the path which the OCA is taking, following the path of the Greek Archdiocese and other modernist jurisdictions. Our Church stands deliberately apart from this path, and that is the reason for the tensions between us.

Father Basil wants you to have a "true vision of Orthodox Christianity in America"—I heartedly agree. Our Church Abroad stands for preserving the Faith handed down from Christ and the Apostles; the OCA goes along with the times—even though they are slower in this than the Greeks, and they camouflage it with high-sounding but very abstract words about Orthodox "mission." We are in contact with priests and laymen in the OCA (and some who have left it) who only confirm this diagnosis. Recently we ourselves were given a vivid illustration of this: the people in Medford for whom we served Divine Liturgy several times told me on my last visit that they were asking the OCA to come and serve them, because we are "too strict." Actually, we were very mild with them, and our "strictness" consisted of speaking about spiritual life during talks and sermons, and once refusing to bless a table of meat and cheese during a fast period (without, however, making a "scene" of it or expressing anger). Their understanding is that the OCA is not "too strict" in this way; and that indeed seems to be the case.

All this is something you will have to see for yourself, and probably already see. Laymen are generally less responsible for seeing the issues involved than are clergy, and in actual practice there is some "intercommunion" between the OCA and the Church Abroad on the lay level. We ourselves do not refuse communion to OCA members if we see that they simply can't understand the issues (which do, indeed, seem a little complicated to those who are not too close to church life). But Fr. Basil is right that he could not concelebrate with us, because that would imply that we approve of his Church's positions.

My advice to you now would be to concentrate on the most important personal questions before you: Baptism and marriage. If you understand the meaning of the position of the Russian Church

Abroad, I think you should prepare for Baptism here this summer. If you are sure Anna is the woman you want to marry, then that question will be next after Baptism. I think your confusion will disappear more or less by itself as you solve for yourself these two questions. Fr. Basil's seemingly irreconcilable attitude will probably change also.

Fr. Basil makes a point of the "immaturity" of both of you. Well, of course, you have both proved by your past actions that there is some truth to this; but maturity begins by realistically facing present problems and praying for God's help to grow into true and fruitful Orthodox Christians. May God help you in this task.

Please write if you have any more specific questions. We plan to have services (and Bible study) on the fourth Sunday of March (the 25th, I think) in Redding, and would be glad to see you then. (Right now we are deep in snow up here, with 3 feet falling this past week.)

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

262.

Feb. 14/27, 1979

St. Cyril, Equal to the Apostles

Dear Father Basil [Rhodes],

Thank you for your letter, and please forgive this delayed response, which is partly caused by our recent snowstorms and other winter difficulties.

I was glad to see the kind tone of your letter, and I hope that we will continue to be on friendly terms. There are at times some unkind words exchanged by various people in both our "jurisdictions," but the unfortunate phrases that sometimes come out in the heat of argument are best forgiven and forgotten. May God forgive us all for our careless acts of uncharity!

You know Anna much better than I know Timothy, and I am really not prepared to counsel him on his "maturity" or "immaturity" for marriage until I know him better; if he is to be baptized here by us, this counselling will come as he prepares for baptism and afterwards. The basic decision, of course, is up to them, and if they do choose to marry, they will probably come to a harmonious resolution of the "jurisdiction" question also.

The disharmony between our Church Abroad and your OCA is perhaps not as drastic as you may think. It is true that we (for the reasons I will mention below) would not consent to concelebrate, as things now are, with priests of your jurisdiction; but we do not deny the grace of your Sacraments any more than you deny ours, and we regard the giving of Holy Communion to lay members of the OCA as a pastoral rather than a "canonical" question. The issues that separate us are so complex (at least in our days when the general church consciousness is so low) that most laymen simply cant be expected to grasp them. Our own spiritual children, I will tell you frankly, we do discourage from receiving communion in OCA churches, trying to arouse in them a more conscious attitude to the Orthodox Church situation today.

What is this church situation that separates us? It has two aspects:

(1) Recognition or non-recognition of the Moscow Patriarchate as the normal and legitimate Orthodox Church of Russia. The Metropolias reception of "autocephaly" and "canonicity" from Moscow in 1970 (which is now the chief "official" reason for the strained relation between us) seems to us an example of crude "legalism": the reduction of Orthodoxy to a purely outward question of church forms, no matter what alien spirit might be using those forms. (This is the sin of "Sergianism.") The episcopate of the Moscow Patriarchate is the puppet of an atheist organization (the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) whose aim is the destruction of the Church; granting full and normal recognition to it (whatever ones aims in doing this) means giving aid to this alien organization and its purpose, and crushing the spirit of those in Russia itself who are trying to preserve the genuine Orthodox view of church life and organization (the "True Orthodox" or "Catacomb Church" of whose present existence we have many proofs). The over-abundant journeys of OCA clergy to the USSR are propaganda fodder for the enemies of Orthodoxy (religious enemies first, not political). Perhaps you may think this difficult to understand, or far-fetched; I am sending you some back copies of our Orthodox Word which explain various aspects of the issue, from the words of hierarchs and laymen in Russia.

(2) The second question is the path of ecumenism-modernism which the leaders of "world Orthodoxy" (led by the Patriarch of Constantinople) are pursuing, and from which the OCA has shown no indication of separating itself. This is another complex question, going back (like the Moscow question) to the 1920 s, but becoming clearer than ever in recent years. This path is a tragic betrayal of Orthodoxy, which differs from the betrayal of Florence in the 15th century only in that it is not yet complete; but it [letter ends]

263.

March 7/20, 1979

St. Paul the Simple

Dear Anna,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your letter. I think it reveals less confusion than you think—perhaps your ideas are still somewhat confused, but I think your basic attitude is correct, and if you persevere in spiritual struggle your ideas also will straighten themselves out.

Your battle with "demoniac fornication" is not as unusual as you may think. This passion has become very strong in our evil times—the air is saturated with it; and the demons take advantage of this to attack you in a vulnerable spot. Every battle with passions also involves demons, who give almost unnoticeable "suggestions" to trigger the passions and otherwise cooperate in arousing them. But human imagination also enters in here, and it is unwise to distinguish exactly where our passions and imagination leave off and demonic activity begins—you should just continue fighting.

That the demons attack you in dreams is a sign of progress—it means they are retreating, seeing that you are resisting conscious sin. God allows this so that you will continue fighting. Often this demon goes away altogether for a while, and one can have a false sense of security that one is "above" this passion; but all the Holy Fathers warn that one cannot consider this passion conquered before the grave. Continue your struggle and take refuge in humility, seeing what base sins you are capable of and how you are lost without the constant help of God Who calls you to a life above these sins.

About our Russian Church Abroad—I think it is not a bad description to say that it is in a way the "conscience" of Orthodoxy today. One Greek priest once told us a very similar thing. Of course, we in this Church are all very human and weak ourselves, but we do try to keep the standard visible, from which almost all the Orthodox churches are falling away at a rapid pace.

I think the Protestants are not too far off about the "one world church," the harlot of the Apocalypse—but, like all their apocalyptic ideas, they add many distortions to their ideas. From the experience of the Council of Florence in the 15th century (when the Greek Churches did for a time join the Pope of Rome), and from the recent pronouncements of Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople and Pope John Paul II—I don't see how anyone can deny that the "Union" of most Orthodox Churches with Rome (and through Rome to at least some of the Protestant bodies) is rather close. As for the Catacomb Church in Russia, it certainly exists, and quite a bit of material has been published on it (from eyewitnesses) in the Russian language/press in recent years. Its chief bishop, as far as we know, is still Metropolitan Theodosius (who is of course a different person from the OCA Metropolitan), who issued a declaration that was circulated in Moscow and Leningrad when the present Patriarch Pimen was elected in 1970.

About your joining the Synod: let this decision come naturally and peacefully. We are not out to make "fanatics," but to speak the truth of age-old Orthodoxy which most Orthodox Christians today are abandoning (in fact, many Orthodox people aren't even aware of them, so great is the level of ignorance today). If you are to marry Timothy, this is something you will decide together. Since our parishes in Sacramento and Calistoga have no English services or English-speaking priest, you would probably do best to continue attending OCA services there while you think and pray about this question. We certainly recognize the sacraments of other Orthodox jurisdictions, and there is no doubt that you have been baptized Orthodox. Your decision (if you make it) to join the Russian Church Abroad will mean that you want to join the small band of strugglers who recognize the process of apostasy in the Orthodox Churches and consciously want to separate yourself from it. We tell our own spiritual children that, wherever there is no Synod church, they can attend other Orthodox churches, but that they should not receive Holy Communion there (except in case of mortal necessity)—this is basically the position of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, one of the Catacomb bishops of the 1930's.

I will be serving Liturgy in our Redding mission church this Sunday (March 25) and conducting a "Bible Study" afterwards. You are very welcome to attend if you can. Liturgy will be early (around 8 a.m.), followed by lunch and Bible study around noon. The address is 1972 Jewell Lane (in the southern part of town, just off Business Route 99). If you were to come by bus, someone could pick you up at the station; you could call 241-1732 (the telephone number of

Mrs. Valentina Harvey, in whose garage our service are held). I would be glad to talk with you then.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

264.

April 20/May 3, 1979

St. Theodore Trichinas

Dear Barry,

CHRIST IS RISEN! May the blessing of our Lord be with you!

We were very happy to receive your letter and hear of your path to Orthodoxy. May God send you His grace abundantly and grant you eternal salvation in His True Church!

The light you saw, and the presence you felt, I am sure, are from God. Such a thing is fairly frequently experienced by converts to Orthodoxy, and the remembrance of it is often of great help in the temptations that come upon one in leading a true Christian life. However, don't think much about it, and especially don't make any "theories" about it! Just know that God is close and sometimes lets us feel that closeness.

As you prepare for Baptism, I would give you several words of advice:

1. Don't allow yourself to get stuck on the outward aspect of Orthodoxy—whether the splendid church services (the "high church" to which you were drawn as a child), the outward discipline (fasts, prostrations, etc.), being "correct" according to the canons, etc. All these things are good and helpful, but if one overemphasizes them one will enter into troubles and trials. You are coming to Orthodoxy to receive Christ, and this you should never forget.

2. Don't have a hypercritical attitude. By this I don't mean to give up your intellect and discernment, but rather to place them in obedience to a believing heart ("heart" meaning not mere "feeling," but something much deeper—the organ that knows God). Some converts, alas, think they are very "smart" and they use Orthodoxy as a means for feeling superior to the non-Orthodox and sometimes even to Orthodox of other jurisdictions. Orthodox theology, of course, is much deeper and makes much better sense than the erroneous theologies of the modern West—but our basic attitude towards it must be one of humility and not pride. Converts who pride themselves on "knowing better" than Catholics and Protestants often end by "knowing better" than their own parish priest, bishop, and finally the Fathers and the whole Church!

3. Remember that your survival as an Orthodox Christian will depend very much on your contact with the living tradition of Orthodoxy. This is something you won't get in books and it can't be defined for you. If your attitude is humble and without hypercriticism, if you place Christ first in your heart, and try to lead a normal life according to Orthodox discipline and practice—you will obtain this contact. Alas, most Orthodox jurisdictions today (such as the OCA) are losing this

contact out of simple worldliness. But there is also a temptation on the "right side" which proceeds from the same hypercriticism I just mentioned. The traditionalist (Old Calendar) Church in Greece today is in chaos because of this, one jurisdiction fighting and anathematizing another over "canonical correctness" and losing sight of the whole tradition over hyper-fine points. Our Russian Church Outside of Russia is in the best possible position in this regard, being rather in the middle of these two extremes and maintaining a balanced position (for example, grieving and occasionally remarking on the loss of Orthodoxy by the other jurisdictions, but not going to the extreme of declaring them to be "without grace"). We have recently written an article, in this connection, on Blessed Augustine, whom some converts (and Greeks) would like to regard as simply a "heretic," without seeing that despite his errors he is actually more Orthodox than the modern, formally-correct "theologians" who criticize him

You yourself have had enough experience in life to avoid these temptations, which are actually those of the young and inexperienced; but it is good to keep them in mind.

You are already probably fairly well prepared for Baptism in outward knowledge (that is a lifelong task in any case, and one is never really "prepared"!). I would advise you to read some things that give more the "feel" of Orthodox Church life. The Confessions of Blessed Augustine is good reading for repentance and the warming up of the heart, and the ascetic and devotional literature of the Church is also very good—Lives of Saints, Desert Fathers, collections like the Lausiac History and the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great (who is much loved in the East). I am sending you separately our newest publication—some Homilies of St Symeon the New Theologian, which serve as a kind of catechism of the meaning of our Christian life, and also (in case you haven't seen it) our article on Blessed Augustine from last year's Orthodox Word.

As for serving God in the clerical state—that can be seen better after you become Orthodox. It is best not to think too eagerly of it in the beginning for fear of going "too fast" and not absorbing the lessons right in front of one. God will show. Just this Saturday (two days from now) we will have the ordination here of a young convert from Roman Catholicism. He joined the Church about 9 years ago and matured through various trials into someone who is just "ripe" for pastoral service. You must definitely meet him, and will gain much from talking with him. (He is Alexey Young, editor of the missionary periodical Nikodemos. He will take over our missionary labors in the southern Oregon area. By the way, the latest issue of Nikodemos is an excellent appeal to Roman Catholics to come to Orthodoxy—you should read it. We will have some extra copies soon in case you don't subscribe.) There are many complications in pastoral labors today, and there is more hope for success in them if one "matures" into them rather than follow a standard path of "being assigned to a parish."

This summer we will have our St. Herman Pilgrimage again on August 8-9, and then a week of courses on various Orthodox subjects (this year it will probably be a rather intense course). It would be good if you could attend. Of course, you are welcome to come and visit us any time. Please feel free to write about any questions you may have, also.

May God guide your steps into His Church and make you a fruitful laborer for Him!

With love in Christ,

H.S.

265.

Sunday

April 30/May 13, 1979

Apostle James

Dear Fr. Herman,

Christ is Risen!

We were glad to hear from you from Jordanville, and look forward to news from Mt. Athos. Friday night we sang the canon to St. Demetrius the Great Martyr, praying that he would be able to open the way to the Holy Mount for you, and every day we sing his magnification.

Why do they want you to stay in Jordanville for two weeks? If it's absolutely necessary or useful, then of course you should. But if it's just so they can "test" you and see if you're "worthy" to be having an independent existence outside of Jordanville, or to prepare you for bishop—then run from it as fast as possible. Vladika Nektary on his last visit mentioned again his desire to retire with us here, but said that now he would not, because now we will be taken away for bishops in 2 or 3 years, and then no one knows who will be "appointed to Platina," and he wouldn't like it. I suggested to him that we would take the path of Sergius of Radonezh instead of George Grabbe (who says that according to Metr. Anthony one can not refuse to be a bishop), and he was consoled a little.

I deeply, deeply feel that we have God's work to do here, and if we allow ourselves to be taken from it we will betray our calling, and probably be flops besides. Vladika Laurus apparently looks on us with the eyes of the organization, not giving much importance or value to what we do, and only looking for the right hole to plug us into for the "good of the whole." Your two weeks in Jordanville (if it is not really very necessary or useful) would hurt not so much we as our common work—making it seem less urgent to the church world, and making you very "visible."

Forgive me if I'm not looking at this right. You will know best what to do when you return.

We have been all right this week, working fairly well, and with only a few visitors. I find myself rather nervous being "in charge" and having to read the mail, but there's no great suffering yet. Pray for Dima—his family is visiting next week and want to take him home for a "normal life," and he is frightened that he will do whatever they say. But it's probably best for him to be scared. If he goes, of course, it will be difficult for us. Guma and Sergei are behaving well. The kids are due today in Wildwood. The sisters are about as usual.

I think most of all about our summer Pilgrimage, which could be a magnificent opportunity for "Orthodox enlightenment" such as is not being given very much nowadays. How are the sermons in Jordanville? I have the impression that a heavy "church" atmosphere is hanging over everything and stifling a much needed freshness, and we could be helping to give this freshness.

Perhaps when we're dead they'll even recognize our labors—but at least we have to help those we can. Is this wrong?

I watched Fr. Alexey serve twice, and he will do fine. I gave him some general advice on confession, and he basically understands it. I confessed Ian and Susan by telephone on Friday.

Robert Murray (Iakov's father) was in a terrible accident at the time of the ordinations, and miraculously escaped with only a sprained ankle and bruises. Fr. Alexey and I went to visit him and I liked him—I think he wants faith but just can't break out of his rut. I gave him Fr. Dimitry Dudko's book, and he promised to read it.

Today was the wedding in Etna, and next Sunday the first service in Medford.

A few days ago it was snowing in Wildwood, and today it's 80 degrees—real summer weather.

Pray for us. May God make your trip fruitful.

With love in Christ,

Your brother, hieromonk Seraphim

P.S. Chuck and Roberta came yesterday with their baby Timothy, who is healthy. They have 30 people now, with 10 children in school.

P.P.S. Someone sent us a Xerox from Jordanville of your Zutie Ctareza Theodosius—76 pp.—is this right?

P.S. I had a long talk With Dima. He is preparing himself psychologically to leave, and I can't "push" him not to—his mother wrote him that he is "brainwashed" and that we are "exploiting" him, and he probably begins to believe it a little. Obviously, he is being given a "test" of his freedom—he will have to respect his place here more if he will be able to stay.

Don't write him a letter "demanding" or "forcing" anything on him?—he already thinks you "force" him too much. May Gods will be done. This is evidently a "test" that he needs. I will grieve more for him than for us if he leaves, but of course it will be discouraging to have so few hands with so much to do. I grieve most of all the "church public opinion" (Jordanville, etc.) doesn't seem to approve of our existence. But God is with us!

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to Fr. Roman Lukianov.

266.

May 1/14, 1979

Prophet Jeremiah

Dear Father Roman,

CHRIST IS RISEN! Christ is in our midst!

We send our heartfelt congratulations on the Feast of Christ's Resurrection. May God grant you new strength for faithful labors in this holy season!

In your latest church bulletin there is an announcement of a talk by Fr. Lev Puhalo on the Orthodox Christian teaching on life after death." Fr. Lev's recent statements on this subject have upset us and quite a few other people, and I would like to share our feelings with you.

In recent issues of The Tlingit Herald Fr. Lev has put forth the rather startling doctrine that the soul sleeps, or at least is virtually unconscious, without any kind of knowledge or memory, after death, and several times he has indicated that the Orthodox teaching on the "toll-houses" encountered by the soul after death is not to be understood the way it is set forth by the Holy Fathers and in the Lives of Saints, but rather is to be thrown out entirely or re-interpreted as an "allegory." The Tlingit Herald, vol. 6, no, 2, has some rather unkind remarks about those who accept these accounts the way the have been handed down, as if these people are "overturning the clear teachings of the Church," and he even compares such people with Billy Graham and the Protestants. It is evident that in these words he is attacking (among other things) our own series of articles on "The Soul After Death." In private letters from Fr. Lev to other persons, which we have seen, he openly attacks what he calls the "Platina doctrine of the soul," as well as the "un-Orthodox" Jordanville teaching on life after death, and the "ghastly doctrine of Archbishop John Maximovitch" on this subject. In making these attacks he presents such a caricature of the Orthodox teaching on the "toll-houses" and other aspects of life after death (calling them "pagan"), and is so self-confident in dismissing all Patristic writings and Lives of Saints that disagree with his own opinions (calling the "spurious," "suspicious and dubious," or "apocryphal," etc.) that we are very much afraid that he will lead people astray concerning the very important teaching of the Church ;; life after death. When we noticed that both Fr. Neketas' bulletin from Seattle and your own bulletin announced Fr. Levs lectures on this subject, we were dismayed to find that he is receiving support from our parishes in spreading his teaching.

The teaching which he is spreading is not only un-Orthodox itself, it is also filled with a spirit of disrespect for everyone who keeps to the "old teaching" on this subject (whom I suppose he would accuse of being under "Western influence," not seeing how very Western and rationalistic his own teaching is), and what he is doing is to undermine respect for Lives of Saints and other basic Orthodox sources, at the same time setting himself up as the "interpreter" of these sources for all of us who are not as modern and "sophisticated" as he is. This, to my mind, is something just as bad as what Fr. Schmemann is doing in the OCA; but we never expected to see such modernism and rationalism in our Russian Church Outside of Russia!

I wonder what we can do about this? Recently Fr. Michael Pomazansky wrote a good article on the "toll-houses" in Orthodox Russia (1979, no. 7) as a direct answer to Fr. Levs attacks, and our own recent article in The Orthodox Word on this subject covers about the same material as Fr. Michael's article. We thought that after seeing such articles Fr. Lev would stop and at least acknowledge that he had not looked carefully enough at all the Orthodox sources on this subject; but alas, he continues to confuse people and insist that he knows how to "interpret" these sources, and that the rest of us are anti-Orthodox, Protestants, etc.

We have no desire whatever to enter into a public debate with Fr. Lev on this subject, which we think would only confuse and upset people all the more; but what can be done to restrain his spreading of disrespect for Orthodox sources, as well as his setting himself up as an authority on questions which he obviously has not studied well? It is true enough that the question of life after death is one that is rather complex and involves images that sometimes are not to be taken "literally" (our own article on the "toll-houses" discusses this point—Orthodox Word #83, pp. 247-249); but Fr. Lev unfortunately uses this as an excuse to "throw the baby out with the bath-water," and this can only have a bad effect on those who trust his words.

These are the feelings of both Father Herman and myself on this subject, and I am writing this at least to make you aware of them. I don't know if practically you will be able to do anything about this situation; Fr. Lev himself seems so emotional about his opinions that I wonder if he will be restrained even by his best friends. I would be glad to hear your comments on all this.

Please pray for Fr. Herman. God willing, he is already on Mt. Athos, but we still worry that he will not be allowed to enter. Please give my greetings to Matuskha.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. Please pray also for our missionary labors here. Just in the last year we have been able to begin missionary parishes in Redding and Etna, Calif., and Medford and Woodburn, Oregon (three of them English parishes, and the last one Russian). Just last weekend Fr. Alexey Young was ordained priest to take care of Etna and Medford. We all feel very strongly the difficulties of preaching true Orthodoxy in these terrible times, but we also see very clearly Gods help in our humble labors.

267.

Tuesday St. Nicholas Day

May 9/22, 1979

Dear Brother [Fr. Herman],

Christ is Risen!

Glory be to God that you arrived on Athos—may God grant that your stay be fruitful, both for now and the future.

We are fine. We are all at Wildwood after serving Liturgy for St. Nicholas. Today is cold and foggy, after a week or two of hot weather. OW is just over half done. The brothers are fine, as long as I watch over them. Br. David wants to stay, but has to face the temptation of his parents' visit yet. Guma is usually my consolation, but sometimes difficult. Sergei is all right as long as I don't expect too much for him—but he's all moods.

The two little goats are very lovable. The goat's milk is very good—just like cow's milk, but richer. The sisters are fine. Svir has been staying with them for a week and is very happy.

Fr. Alexey is fine and very calm. There are already problems—Liuba wants more money for her house, and now it looks like she won't give it. They were to have services on Sunday at the rented hall again.

We are working well. I get time for writing only on Sundays—if this were a permanent situation I wouldn't get much done. The two of us can accomplish much, but separately not much, I think.

Give thanks to God for everything, and take what you can of value from the old world. May God return you safely. We miss you!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

268.

May 12/25, 1979

St. Epiphanius of Cyprus

St. Hermogenes of Moscow

Dear Father Laurence,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for the news and the copies of Fr. Lev's letters. We have heard from Fr. Herman from Athens, Thessalonica, and Karyes; but no word yet whether he will be able to stay more than four days. The Metropolitan of Thessalonica gave him the permit with no difficulty.

We too are sick of the "polarization" in the Church; I think a better name for it is "politics" and "party-line"—the rest of us don't want to be "polarized" and are content to leave the party-line to itself. I once thought that the Party would gradually mellow and come together with the rest of us; but now I'm inclined to think that the silly extremisms are necessary to the Party in the same way that atheism can't be separated from communism: once you take them away a person might begin to think for himself on other points also, and then the party discipline is ruined. It is so silly (but also so tragic) that even "theologians" and "ThDs" think so much in terms of prepared slogans and cliches and refuse to look at things with an open mind. The Shroud of Turin is indeed a very interesting question to anyone willing to look at the evidence; there are some difficulties and "holes" in the evidence, but also much that is persuasive. There is a new book (by Ian Wilson in England) that explains the "missing links" in the Shroud's history by hypothesizing that it is actually the same as the Image not Made with Hands, and that it wasn't until the 11th or 12th century that it became generally known that the folded-over image was actually the whole body and not just the face. This theory seems rather plausible to me, but unfortunately he has no very solid evidence to back it up, just circumstantial evidence. Probably there will never be "certainty" on this question—but the very fact that someone like Fr. Constantine of Jordanville should accept the Shroud so wholeheartedly is already enough to silence any arrogant denials of its authenticity—at least for those who are sensitive and

respectful of opinions outside one's own circle (a rare quality nowadays, which is itself a symptom of the lowness of our church life).

Unfortunately, the many "disciples" and would-be "theologians" who surround Party Headquarters with adulation make it all the more difficult for the party people to break out of the mold. Perhaps the best hope is when individual party members are placed out in the "real world" of non- party members and are forced to become more realistic and less doctrinaire. From what we hear, this has been happening to Fr. Alexis in England, although it remains to be seen how free he will actually become, especially since the rest of the Church seems so passive with regard to the doings of the Party.

About life after death: Yes, I think that the experiences of the "sectarians and idiots" should be taken seriously, because the experiences are obviously real, and while on the one hand they confirm what Orthodox sources say about the first moments of death (and thus give an opportunity for some people to find out about and accept the whole Orthodox teaching), on the other they most logically point to a non-Orthodox conclusion about life after death. The object of our articles is to place them in the whole context of Orthodox teaching, and incidentally to set forth this teaching in detail. Our model is Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov's volume III, where he speaks in detail of the Roman Catholic teaching in order to set forth the Orthodox teaching. Many of our Orthodox people, I think, have very vague notions about this teaching—as witness the support some of the parishes are giving to Fr. Lev's lecture on the subject, which, judging from what I have seen, is far from the Orthodox teaching and falls into several of the Roman Catholic pitfalls which Bp. Ignatius warns against. Even after all the Patristic citations in our article on the toll-houses, and Fr. Michael Pomazansky's article on the same subject, Fr. Lev continues to repeat his Schmemannisms about the toll-houses, and people like Fr. Neketas support him. This, by the way, is what I think is Fr. Neketas' weakest point—not so much that he joins "bandwagons" as that he is a 100% party-man and refuses even to look at evidence that contradicts the party line. (Although from what I hear lately, Fr. Panteleimon himself is not so much against the toll-houses any more; but evidently the party hasn't heard this.) I'm sorry if We ourselves have given the impression of jumping of a "bandwagon"; but is this really such a sin, if what one says is accurate and relevant?

Fr. Alexey Young is off to a good start in the Medford mission—please pray for him, as it will be difficult. God sends His grace, but the odds against any kind of spiritual life today are so strong. Fortunately, there are quiet workers like him here and there, and the Church is not yet·, entirely swallowed up by politics.

May God give you strength to bear your cross with courage. For a little struggle, God gives a great reward. Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

269.

May 12/25, 1979B

St. Hermogenes of Moscow

Dear Barry,

May the blessing of our Lord be with you!

First of all—yes, you are welcome to come and visit with Dan on June 5-7, or whenever you can make it. I trust you know from Dan that we have "primitive" accommodations.

I will be glad to talk with you about confession. However, you should be encouraged to know that according to Orthodox Church rules there is no sin whatever that can prevent a man from becoming a monk—since the monastic state is supposed to be specifically one of repentance. Priesthood, of course, is something different, but even there, it is possible for a monk to be ordained priest after being divorced in the world and repenting his sins. But this is something you definitely should not think about for some time after becoming Orthodox—it will only cause you unnecessary temptations. God will show you what is right for you when the time comes.

Dan is right—don't be too taken up by "fantasies." But don't entirely squash them, either—without dreams, we can't live! May God grant your Ruben the grace to be baptized and find his place to be a fruitful Orthodox Christian. It is true, though, that our modern parishes would present a problem for him. Here in the monastery we are largely free of such problems; in fact, at various times we've had quite a collection of "misfits" staying here. God will provide the answer for Ruben also.

I hope you will be able to force yourself to finish your courses—you will be surprised how later some of the things which now seem so useless will turn out to have a use after all (even Kant and Skinner!).

May God grant you to continue with such freshness towards Orthodoxy as you felt when reading St. Symeon's Homiliesl Be aware, however, that this will be possible only with sufferings; everything you need to deepen your faith will come with suffering—if you accept it with humility and submission to God's will. It is not too difficult to become "exalted" by the richness and depth of our Orthodox Faith; but to temper this exaltation with humility and sobriety (which come through the right acceptance of sufferings) is not an easy thing. In so many of our Orthodox people today (especially converts) one can see a frightful thing: much talk about exalted truths and experiences of true Orthodoxy, but mixed with pride and a sense of one's own importance for being "in" on something which most people don't see (from this comes also the criticism against which you've already been warned). May God keep your heart soft and filled with love for Christ and your fellow man. If you will be able to have a spiritual father with whom you can confide the feelings of your heart, and can trust his judgment, all this will be easier for you—but if it's pleasing to God for you to have such a spiritual father, it will come "naturally," as all things do in spiritual life—with time, patience, suffering, and coming better to know yourself.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

270.

May 24/June 6, 1979

St. Symeon of Wondrous Mt.

Dear Father Theodore,

Christ is in our midst!

I received and read your letter with some sadness. (Father Herman is presendy on a month- long pilgrimage to Mt. Athos and won't be back for a week or so.) I had heard, rather briefly, from Fr. Chrysostomos and Fr. Auxentios about this incident, and then that they had left you to "sort things out for himself," and that they could expect no more "support" from you. I was rather puzzled as to what this might mean, and only replied briefly to them that this trial would pass and they shouldn't let it upset them too much.

We do not know Fr. Chrysostomos well. We began correspondence with him 10 or 11 years ago through a friend of ours who met him in southern California; I assumed at that time that he was a convert, though I haven't much of a memory for such things. He visited us once at our bookshop in San Francisco for a few hours, and we had a good visit (he had just returned from Greece, where he had visited Dr. Kalomiros and other Old Calendarists). Later he wrote a letter thanking us. Then, after our 1969 issue on "Western Orthodox monasticism" we received a kind of "open letter" from him, which I believe he sent to Boston also, criticizing our use of the term "Western Orthodox"; not a vicious letter, just critical and rather cold and "correct" in tone. Then we heard no more from him; we heard that he had gone to Jordanville to teach, but had been asked to leave in connection with some accusations he and some others had made of some seminarians. He seemed to suffer from the "correctness and criticism" disease of so many young zealous Orthodox people.

After a few years we heard from him again when he was studying at Princeton (I think he was teaching there in the end), and we exchanged some short notes: he sent us a manuscript or two of his student friend (now Fr. Auxentios), promised to send a tape of one of Fr. Florovsky's lectures if he could, etc. He mentioned being close to Bishop Petros, then Metr. Akakios, and his grief at church politics. Then he was teaching at the University of California at Riverside (in southern California, near his home), and finally (probably no more than three years ago) revealed in confidence that he had formed a monastery with Fr. Auxentios. He sent photographs of the church, then of Metr. Akakios' visit to make him Archimandrite, and began/to write much longer letters, together with his monthly church bulletin (there was a small parish attached to the monastery). He mentioned Fr. Panteleimon, at first hesitantly, and I told him freely that not everyone in our Church followed the "Boston party line," and it was possibly for us to have communion with Greek Old Calendarists who were not "approved in Boston." I read his letters with great sympathy, seeing him as someone broken and humbled by his own over-critical approach in earlier years, as well as by the factions and jealousies of the Greek Old Calendarist movement. Fr. Herman, however (who is sharper psychologically) noted that his letters were too

humble and too complicated, and that he probably wasn't too different from the other Greek factions we already knew about.

Well, all this is the basis of whatever knowledge we have of Fr. Chrysostomos, and it isn't enough to explain what happened between you. (I imagine that Fr. Herman will not find it too surprising, however.) Apparently, he has some deep personal insecurity about something, and the church situation sets it off. His getting so angry at obviously untrue accusations must be a psychological mechanism for defending himself [against] the deeper attack he feels against his "weak point," whatever it is. I myself have a feeling that it is all somehow bound up with the great problem of our present-day Orthodoxy (where it tries to be serious and faithful to tradition): too much calculation and not enough heart. We've seen this in Father Panteleimon, in Dr. Kalomiros (especially when he formed his own schism over the iconographic depiction of God the Father), in the priests who follow the "Boston line," in numerous converts; well, why look further—I see it in myself, it's part of the air we breathe in our "enlightened," mind-oriented times. Russian priests seem to be freest of it, and I think there's hope for us converts too, if we suffer enough.

I don't think you need to doubt the genuineness of the good you received from Fr. Chrysostomos; it's just that now you see his weak side also. God knows if your relationship with him will ever be anything like what it was. Perhaps, indeed, you were "used," when his calculation overcame his good heart; but perhaps this calculation itself is only the slave of his deeper emotions.

Well, we are all flawed. Perhaps that is the great spiritual fact of our times—that all the teachers are flawed, there are no great elders left, but only "part-time" spiritual teachers who spend part of their time undoing their good works. We should be thankful for the good teaching we can get, but sober and cautious.

The lesson to you is probably: sobriety. Yes, you should trust your heart (I'm sure Fr. Herman will agree with me)—what thing better do we have? Certainly not our calculating mind. I don't think you will be harmed by the trust you gave Fr. Chrysostomos; the good he did will stay with you, if you stay humble and sober. (If you did give him excessive trust, in the guru-sense, then you are suffering the punishment for it now; but that should pass.) But your own conscience and heart have to speak; totally blind obedience simply isn't possible, especially in our times. In your future relationship with him (if he will allow it), you will just have to keep trusting your heart, I think. Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov's constant advice to the Christians of the last times is: there are no elders left, check all teaching against the Gospel (of course, not in the sense of "calculating" to see where the teacher is wrong—but naturally, with the heart and conscience).

Fr. Chrysostomos wanted to stop his correspondence with us over this incident, being afraid our friendship with him would "taint" us. We wrote to him that if we were going to be on anyone's "black list" we were probably already on it, and that our friendship with him had nothing to do with politics. I gather from Fr. Auxentios that at least part of their reason for cutting you off was to protect Fr. Chrysostomos from any taint of controversy, which upsets him terribly. (He had some kind of heart attack over this whole incident.) Of course, one of the reasons why it upsets

him is, apparently, because he likes to get into the thick of it himself. His cutting you off is probably as "escape" for him, but the drasticness of it shows that it is not very rational. Fr. Hilarion of Jordanville once wondered aloud to me whether Fr. Chrysostomos might have a "persecution complex," and perhaps that is the case (whatever precisely it might mean).

Years ago, when Fr. Herman and I were young and naive, we dreamed of a vigorous, single-minded movement of zealous Orthodoxy among young converts, Russians, Greeks, etc. Alas, we have become older and wiser and no longer expect much. All our confessors of Orthodoxy have their all- too-human side also. We had great confidence in Fr. Panteleimon for a while, until we saw the cold and callous way he and his followers "dropped" those who deviated from the "party line"; then we saw the blindness with which he followers repeated even his minor opinions (and kept to them even when he abandoned them!), and we began to hear from his critics in Greece also (it's astonishing how he has alienated his one-time friends there). Fr. Neketas Palassis virtually cut us off cold when he saw we weren't accepting the "party directives," even on such debatable questions as grace among the New Calendarists, the Shroud of Turin, and evolution. We had a good correspondence with Dr. Kalomiros for a while, and then he also dropped us, apparently because we dared to disagree with him over "evolution" (I thought it was just a friendly debate, but apparently it was more important to him than that). We still have a good correspondence with Bishop Kyprian, whom you met, who seems the most moderate of the Old Calendarists we know; but we don't know him too well. In so many Orthodox zealots, it seems to me, there is an intellectual narrowness, combined with some kind of political orientation, that produces factions right and left and loses sight of the "common task" which we thought (and still think) is so clear, especially when you contrast it with the crude renovationism that is going on now in the Metropolia, Greek Archdiocese, etc.

We ourselves try to keep peace with everyone, but don't conceal our opinions when we see someone trying to force narrow personal opinions on the Church (as in the "rebaptism" controversy a few years ago in England, which produced such unnecessary schisms both on the right and left). For a while we were upset with Fr. Panteleimon's seeming attempt to "take over" Church opinion and tell everyone what to think in order to be "correct"; but we see now that there is a "silent minority" (or perhaps even majority) of our priests who don't follow the party line, and we are calmer about it. After all, parties come and go, but it is God Who governs His Church. In the meantime, we rejoice whenever we see anyone trying to be fervent in Orthodoxy and minding his own business; that's why Fr. Chrysostomos' "political fit" is so sad. Maybe (God grant it!) this is just something that will pass, and when he sees the "threat" is not so great he will return to normal.

Of late we've had another grief. Fr. Lev Puhalo is out to "get" us. We've seen his letters to Jordanville and elsewhere (a couple of which he sent to us himself), and he means to "expose" our teaching on life after death as (apparently) being utterly under "Western influence" and to be totally discarded. We're in good company, as he places us in the same camp with Jordanville publications on the subject as he well as the "ghastly teaching of Archbishop John Maximovitch." (He will also have to attack Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninovs teaching, but I don't know if he realizes it yet.) His idea seems to be to show how "sophisticated" and "theological"

he is, and how "simple and naive" the rest of us are for believing the "moral fables" in the Lives of Saints (which are also there in the writings of the Fathers, however)—without realizing it, he's a real "modernist"! We're not too upset about it—I think he'll just burn himself out with these irrational attacks—but it's sad to think of the unnecessary confusion he is spreading. Even Fr. Neketas Palassis sponsors his strange teaching that the soul is "unconscious" after death—which I'm sure Fr. Lev only invented because he can't stand the "toll-houses"! For all our sympathy for "underdogs," we can't see Fr. Lev as anything but an unbalanced opportunist who will just cause trouble in the Church until he finally collapses. If this is the result of the "Patristic revival" (whose coat-tails he's trying to ride), then we don't need it! One can find and manipulate Patristic quotes to "prove" just about anything; what is really needed is a deeper reading and drawing from the writings of the Fathers (which is not being done too much nowadays, as far as I can see).

But we also have joys. Fr. Alexey Young was ordained here a few weeks ago in order to take care of our little mission in Medford, Oregon. Fr. Herman and I were serving this mission once a month, but then the group decided we were too "strict" and called in the OCA. The priest came was so modernist that part of the group was shocked and decided they wanted the "old Orthodoxy" after all and called us back; and of course they're more satisfied with Fr. Alexey because we're "monks" and a little too much for them. The leader of the group is a Russian lady from Shanghai, and despite her worldliness it seems that the memory of her childhood Orthodoxy stood up for her and she felt the difference. Please pray for Fr. Alexey—it will be difficult for him.

I'm sorry I don't have any real advice for you in your grief, unless it's just one word: yes, trust your heart and conscience, and don't do anything to violate them. If Fr. Chrysostomos will let you back in his favor without demanding politics of you, well and good; you will already be wiser and more sober. Probably you will have to wait a while before trying to contact him again, if you then feel you should. If he doesn't change his mind, then apparendy you will have to leave him with his own problems, which evidently are great. May God have mercy on us all! Pray for him. A monastic community, because of its close-knit character, can sometimes be a tense place, and the devil attacks it more powerfully than other places.

Meanwhile, don't give up spiritual life just because you have no immediate guide! The Fathers still speak to us through their writings (have you read Unseen Warfare recently?), and life itself is a teacher if we try to live humbly and soberly, and once in a while you may get a good word of advice from somewhere. Treasure everything good (it's good to keep a diary of it), and don't grieve at what you don't have!

Fr. Dimitry Dudko, by the way, is good to read—I think on the whole he speaks more to the heart of Orthodox Christians than just about anyone else today. (Of course, he has his mistakes also.) We've received two brief notes from him—all the rest of our correspondence with him is probably in the GPU files.

Pray for us strugglers. We have very few laborers (our one novice, a simple boy, was just dragged away by his parents, and he was too weak to resist), and we are surrounded mainly by

women and children. I guess this is supposed to humble us, and it certainly does make us think differently than if we were surrounded by "disciples." God is with us, and we have many joys. We remember you with much love. Hopefully, Fr. Herman will have a word for you when he returns. Pray for him. On his last postcard he says he might have a chance to go to Romania to venerate the relics of Blessed Paisius, and the thought is rather frightening—too close to the Russian NKVD, and Fr. Herman's father was an "enemy of the people."

With love in Christ,

P.s. Fr. Auxentios has just written us a new letter, concerning new rumors about Fr. Chrysostomos (that he is a spiritualist and believes in reincarnation), which he is afraid will get to Fr. Chrysostomos. He writes that Fr. C. is "seriously ill, and incapable both physically and mentally…. The doctor tells us that Father needs complete rest and no outside interference…. Suddenly I have seen a human being destroyed right in front of me."

I have great pity for this man, a part of whose suffering is certainly due to the unhealthy church situation of our times (which sometimes gives me a sinking feeling also, especially all the un-Christian criticism, in the name of Christian truth, of people who at least are trying to struggle and keep the Faith). I don't know what we can do to help him—but let us increase our prayer and love! Your suffering over him is given you, I am sure, in order to deepen your Christianity and make you better able to help other sufferers.

271.

June 1/14, 1979

Martyr Justin the Philosopher

Dear Father Yves [Dubois],

Christ is in our midst!

We received your note of alarm and hasten to reply. Not knowing the specific nature of your encounter with Archbishop Vitaly, as well as the other problems you have had in the last three months, I will only give you our impressions both of the article you enclosed and of Archbishop Vitaly in general, as we know him.

The article struck both of us as extremely unrealistic, rather elitist and snobbish, and obviously written by someone with very little real experience in the missionary field. It corresponds not at all to the realities of missionary labor in our Church.

Why then was it written? I would guess, knowing Vladika Vitaly: it expresses chiefly the personal jealousy of Vlad. V. for the successful missionary labors in our Church which he would like to be heading himself, but is not. We noticed years ago that Vlad. V. has had not a single good word to say of the labors of our Brotherhood, for example. He sometimes justifies this privately by saying that we are in "prelest" for our veneration of Vladika John; but it is actually, I think, out of jealousy because he has been unable to do much in the mission field himself, despite his talk about it. Lately he seems to have developed the same jealousy for Fr.

Panteleimon and his missionary labors. The article seems to be his "sour grapes"—since the convert movement in our Church is not under his control, it is not really very good. (All this began with him years ago, when he had great hopes that Timothy Ware would remain with him and put his—Vlad. Vitaly's—missionary plans into action. After all his failures in this direction, he has gotten sour on converts in general, and neither trusts nor understands them.)

Both of us in our personal contacts with Vlad. V. have found him cold and pretentious, and totally lacking in the warmth and Christian love of someone like Vladika John Maximovitch, who inspired a spontaneous missionary movement just by these qualities, without Vladika Vitaly's pretensions to be a "theologian," etc.

All of this I write not out of any bitterness toward Vladika Vitaly (who has never caused us personally any trouble at all, apart from our disappointment that he never supported our work), but only so that you might not have any false picture of him or false hopes in him; he does not represent what our Church stands for and stands outside the vital currents in our Church, whether Russian or convert (the Russians, for example in Jordanville, have no more rapport with him than we do). He happens to be "powerful" in the Synod—but this is largely a superficial thing, having to do with church politics and hardly affecting at all the grass roots labors of such as you or we.

We are puzzled as to what Vladika Vitaly can possibly mean when he says that this very unsuccessful article has become "Synod policy." Of course, it has become no such thing; and in any case, the article presents no proposals or programs as such and only expresses one mans reflections (rather poor ones) on the question. What Vlad. V. probably means is that the Bishops listened to the report and expressed their appreciation of it without thinking at all of any practical consequences of it. The Bishops could not but have noticed the total impracticality of implementing any such ideas, since almost every diocese (certainly in this country) already has well-developed church services in the English or other non-Russian languages, and Vlad. V. himself must often have been present at such services.

Please let us know of your more specific ecclesiastical difficulties. We could talk to our Vladika Anthony, but so far there is nothing specific enough to talk about. Is anybody really trying to stop you from having services in English?

I hope you understand that one does not have to take very seriously some of the things our bishops say—that is, sometimes some of them say things just to "save face" or protect their sense of authority, and no one, least of all the bishops themselves, expect such statements to be put into practice. And please don't let Vlad. Vitaly's coldness upset you. We would advise you to stay as far away from him as possible—he doesn't have the right spirit at all, and is more concerned with church politics than the real needs of the flock today.

We ourselves have had complete freedom in developing our American mission. Our services both in the monastery and in our missions are almost entirely in English, and Vladika Anthony when he visits makes a point of encouraging us to do everything in English, and he himself does as much as he can in English. This is certainly the "normal" attitude of our bishops, and Vlad. Vitaly's remarks are surely atypical.

Please write us more, and don't become discouraged. Pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

272.

June 5/18, 1979

Beginning of the Peter-Paul Fast

Dear John [Hudanish],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you, and give you a profitable season of the Fast!

I'm glad to hear the services went well on Pentecost. However: beware\ No matter how "right" you may be on various points, you must be diplomatic also. The first and important thing is not "rightness" at all, but Christian love and harmony. Most "crazy converts" have been "right" in the criticisms that led to their downfall; but they were lacking in Christian love and charity and so went off the deep end, needlessly alienating people around them and finally finding themselves all alone in their rightness and self-righteousness. Don't you follow them!

Specifically: if you have a Russian congregation used to a regular choir singing—let them keep it, don't fight with them over it, don't insist on doing things the "right" way! You are making much too big an issue of it, and you are offering most unfair criticism to those who disagree with you. People who stand in church while the choir sings are not offering their "private prayers"—they are praying with the priest and singers, and often praying much better than the singers, who are usually so absorbed by the mechanics of following the music and text that they pray very poorly.

The attitude toward the little Woodburn mission which you reveal in your letter is a very dangerous one, both for you and others. I will tell it to you straight and pray that you have the courage to accept it and act on it before it is too late. The "zeal" you are showing for English services, congregational singing, etc.,—is not primarily zeal according to God, is not based on Christianity; it is, on the contrary, only stubborn self-will, a symptom of the "correctness disease" that plagues so many converts and leads straight to disaster. If you do not fight against this passion now (for it is a passion), the Woodburn mission is doomed, and you yourself will very likely lose your own faith and your own family. I have seen this "convert-pattern" in practice too often not to warn you about it.

You are still new to Orthodoxy, and yet you wish to teach those older in the faith (and from the way you describe it, you are "teaching" them quite crudely, without the slightest tact or Christian charity). Plain common sense should tell you that this is no way to act; Christian love should make you ashamed of your behavior and anxious to learn more of basic Christianity before daring to teach anyone anything. I haven't heard from anyone in the Woodburn area, but I can image how your behavior must offend and hurt them. There is nothing mysterious about the fact that you are alienating people; your behavior, as you have described it yourself, is exactly the

kind that drives people away and causes fights in the Church. Don't hide behind "English services" and "no-partitura" singing: these are only half-truths which your pride seizes on in order to avoid basic Christian humility and love.

Look for a moment at how it must seem to others: you couldn't get along in the Portland parish and had to drop out; now, in your "own" parish, you drive people away. It simply cannot be that others are always to blame and you are always innocent; you must start correcting your own faults and living in peace with the Christians around you.

How do you do this? You begin by accepting certain basic Orthodox principles:

1. All questions regarding church services (language, kind of singing, etc.) and behavior in church (including head coverage of women, etc.) are decided by the priest who serves. You are not to be a "policeman" who enforces "church laws" according to your understanding of them; it's already clear that you are going to drive everybody away doing this, and in any case, people come to church hoping to escape the cold legalism of the world that surrounds us—have pity on them!

2. Realize that you are still a new convert and have much to learn, and are not to be a "teacher" of others, save in the sense that every Orthodox Christian is a source of edification (or the opposite) to others by his behavior. This edification is given first of all, of course, to one's own family, and this is a place where, according to what you have told me, you are very weak. You seem to have some Old Believer "patriarchal" ideas about the family (many of which are totally inapplicable to family life today, and produce disasters when insisted on), combined with a lack of genuine love and concern for your family. You've indicated in earlier letters that you and your wife might just drift apart, that Stephen may not end up Orthodox—but how can a Christian husband and father realize such terrible things and not be filled with zeal to correct himself before these disasters happen? (For if these things do happen, you will be to blame: because you did not give your family an example of living Christianity to inspire and warm them, but only some kind of legalistic, soul-less "correctness" that only feeds the ego.)

3. Begin to humble yourself in your relations with others, to act towards them first of all with compassion and love; go out of your way to see things the way they see them and not give offense to their feelings. Cease to be an egotist and learn to live in peace with the Christians around you. This can't be done overnight, but you can start.

4. Start studying seriously the ABC's of Orthodox Christianity. Have you read Unseen Warfare recently?—that's a good place to start.

About the Woodburn parish: you will have to resign yourself to the fact that, at the present time, this is a Russian parish, where services will be conducted mainly in Russian and in a way that does not seem strange or novel to those attending. There is room in the Church both for "Burlingame"-style services, "Etna"-style, and "Woodburn'-style—which, by the way, is not the same as "Burlingame" style at all, but rather something in between. If you are going to make war against "Burlingame" style services, you are not only needlessly offending the Russians who are used to that, but are also insulting your own bishops (who, after all, allow Burlingame to exist).

There is a half-truth in your observations on these matters, but the kind of services you want cannot be dictated to people who find them strange; they must develop gradually, naturally, and in peace. (This is precisely the "Platina-Etna" way, and not the externals which you want to copy.) Otherwise they are not God-pleasing. These questions are not as important to you as you think they are right now; just a few months ago you thought quite differently and were idealizing the Assurs and your Russian services. Your ideas of "correctness" are largely dependent upon your whims and moods. There is plenty of spiritual food for you and your family in the present state of things: public Russian services once every two months, with much even then in English (sermons, Epistle and Gospel, confession); and the rest of the time the church is your family chapel for whatever English prayers you have a zeal for. To have English Etna-type public services now in Woodburn would be an insult and competition to the nearby struggling Portland mission, while there is a need for a Russian mission in this area. What will come in the future, God will show; but it will come naturally and peacefully if at all.

I've said enough, perhaps more than you can digest at once. I do not call on you to "abandon all your ideas," or to become a totally different man overnight. I only want you to start working harder on yourself and to be more compassionate to others, and to relax on trying to be so "correct." This is not so impossible, and I think you will never find happiness and spiritual peace unless you do this.

I hope you do not accept his letter as an impossible dose to swallow, as earlier you found Fr. Georges letters. Your absence of spiritual rapport with him made it very difficult for you to receive whatever good he could give you. I have been bold to write this letter to you knowing that you freely asked me to be your spiritual father and that a spiritual rapport does seem to exist between us. I would urge you to continue to look to the "Etna model" of Orthodoxy for inspiration and guidance: but not the external side so much as the inward side that is the source of its strength. Look at Fr. Alexey's attitude toward his wife, his children, other people, the way he tries to put Christianity into practice; compare this with your own attitudes, and start to soften your heart.

Please forgive me if any of this is hurting; I mean you only the best, and am very concerned at where your present behavior is taking you.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. No, you should not have khitons made for you and your sons. It would make you too "special"— you're thinking too much of the outward side of prayer.

P.s.s. Yes, God willing, one of us will come to Woodburn sometime in August for services.

273.

June 16/29, 1979

St. Tikhon of Kaluga

Dear Mrs. Prokopchuk,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your letter and the article from the Tlingit Herald. We also have been disturbed of late, not only by this, but by other articles also in this publication. It sometimes happens, of course, that there are differences of opinion among writers on Orthodox subjects, but in such cases one should always have a moderate tone and full respect for those with whom one differs, as well as a humble awareness of one's own fallibility and the possibility of making mistakes or distortions oneself. The articles in the Tlingit Herald on life after death, on the contrary, have been marked by a sometimes very crude tone and a crass disrespect for those whose views the author criticizes. We have noticed the same thing in the articles on Blessed Augustine, the Shroud of Turin, etc. This is all the more inexcusable in that the views the author criticizes are often not those of heretics or of theological amateurs, but often of respected theologians and hierarchs of the Orthodox Church. The attacks on Blessed Augustine, for example, are an insult to the views of virtually every one of our bishops in the Russian Church Outside of Russia. Even in a matter that is legitimately open to different interpretations, such as the Shroud of Turin, such a disrespectful tone simply cannot be taken, if only for the reason that a number of venerable Orthodox authorities do accept it as authentic (such as Archimandrite Constantine of Jordanville, who wrote a moving article in Orthodox Life some years ago on its significance for our times).

Quite apart from the tone of the articles, on the other hand, is the question of whether the author is right in the assertions he makes. It is quite clear, I think, that on a number of occasions he has been very wrong. His assertion, for example, that Blessed Augustine is a "heretic" and has always been so regarded in the Orthodox Church, contradicts every single piece of evidence there is on the subject. (He himself does not give any Patristic evidence for his assertion, but only his own opinion.) The errors of Bl. Augustine have been recognized from an early century in the Orthodox Church, but never was Bl. Augustine himself regarded as a heretic, as our own historical investigation in The Orthodox Word has shown. Some years ago we asked one of our true Orthodox theologians, Fr. Michael Pomazansky of Jordanville, what he thought of the opinion that Bl. Aug. was a "heretic," and he only replied that yes, he did distort several Orthodox doctrines (as Fr. Michael has set forth himself in his book on Dogmatic Theology), but he could not at all understand this "campaign" against a man who, after all, is a Father of the Church and on the whole taught correctly.

On the question of life after death, the author has made assertions that are also quite far from the truth. His attack on the "toll-houses" comes from his failure (and evident unwillingness) to read the sources on them in the right Orthodox spirit; he makes a caricature of them due to his own crudely over-literal understanding of them and then wishes to accuse anyone who disagrees with him of holding this same crude misinterpretation. Any Patristic texts that disagree with his views he dismisses as "spurious" or "apocryphal" without offering any proof whatever for such statements. Generally accepted accounts in Lives of Saints he calls "wild tales." But his recent statements on the "sleep" of the soul after death have simply astonished us: how can anyone with the slightest knowledge of Orthodox texts make such a spectacular blunder—is difficult to

understand. The few texts he uses to support this and other of his erroneous views are either fragmentary and inconclusive, or simply taken out of context.

In recent months we have seen copies of correspondence between the author of these articles, (Deacon Lev Puhalo) and various other parties. In these letters he makes it clear that he wishes to publicly expose and attack the teaching on life after death of (1) The Orthodox Word·, (2) the Jordanville publications on the subject (especially the Jan.-Feb., 1978, issue of Orthodox Life)·, and (3) Archbishop John Maximovitch. Of course, he will also have to attack the teaching of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, and the whole tradition of Orthodoxy on this subject.

This makes us sad, and troubles us—why does such unnecessary conflict have to be stirred up in the Church? We ourselves (and the Fathers at Jordanville) have no desire or intention to enter into a public debate on this subject, and we are all doing what we can to handle this situation quietly. Recently Bishop Laurus of Jordanville saw fit to forbid Fr. Lev to speak on this subject in the Buffalo parish, and Fr. Michael Pomazansky, who is probably the most refined and profound of our still-living Russian theologians, wrote an excellent article in Orthodox Russia defending the Toll-houses against recent attacks on them (without mentioning Fr. Lev by name). Our own series of articles on "The Soul After Death" is intended to give an over-view of the whole Orthodox teaching on this subject, and hopefully when completed it will answer any questions raised by Fr. Lev, but without entering into arguments with him. (Perhaps a "positive" side of Fr. Lev's articles is that they have caused us to present the Orthodox teaching with maximum clarity, keeping in mind any possible distortions such as he has expressed.)

We have had comments similar to yours from other readers of the Tlingit Herald. Our advice would be simply not to place any trust in any articles there that make sweeping statements and dismiss the opinions of anyone who might disagree. Also, his use of Patristic quotations is not to be trusted—his use of them is often one-sided and out of context. For whatever reason, the author seems to have "declared war" against Orthodox theology the way it has been handed down to us, and we fear he will confuse many in the name of a "return to the Fathers," while in reality he is misusing the Fathers in the same way he so uncharitably accuses others of doing. May God preserve us from such a "Patristic revival"! It is actually much closer to theological "modernism."

We ask your prayers for us, that we may continue ourselves to present the Orthodox teaching on life after death as it has been handed down to us from the Holy Fathers and in the Lives of Saints. These sources in the end will survive all the attacks made against them, but they are still far from being well enough known among Orthodox Christians.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

274.

Aug. 9/22, 1979

Apostles Mathias

Dear Father Akakios,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your letter and the copy of your article for The Old Calendarist. I had not seen it before, and my impression of it from Fr. Theodore's brief words was, indeed, that it was more in the nature of a personal attack on Fr. Panteleimon. My advice to Andrew Bond not to print it was mostly to protect him from the attacks on him that could follow from people in our Russian Church—and that could well discourage him so thoroughly as to make him stop printing The Old Calendarist and even cause a crisis in his own faith.

Having read the article now, I see that it is much more general than I thought. I would still urge you not to print it, however, and will explain why:

In the letter you are obviously "reacting" to Fr. P's words and actions, and this "personal" reference (even if the person isn't identified) gives its tone to the article whether you want it or not. Fr. P's followers, if they wanted, could easily "answer" the article and "prove" that he is not "really" what you say, that he too is against false "perfection," that he has great "compassion" for the erring, etc.— and many would be persuaded by this to respect Fr. P. all the more. In any case, the matter would remain on the level of controversy and polemic, which must somehow be avoided if anything good is to result.

We understand and greatly sympathize with you in your sufferings, and in your desire to do something to counteract the poisonous atmosphere which has been created by Fr. P. (among others) in his wrong approach to Orthodoxy: I would characterize this approach less as one of "perfection" than as one of calculation—an Orthodoxy more of the head than of the heart. The problem is that this disease is in all of us—it is part of the spirit of the times, and we indulge in it at times. This spirit is inevitably present whenever controversy arises, no matter who is right or wrong; and therefore our only hope to clear the air is to avoid controversy whenever possible, to rise above it as much as we can, to set our eyes on what is above and not be distracted by the things below. All easier said than done!— but we can make an effort.

My own advice to you and the other Fathers would be to give up the idea of battling on this "controversial" level (they will have an "answer" to anything you say, and it will be convincing to all but your friends), and—since everyone knows about your existence now anyway—perform a mission of basic information about the Old Calendarist Church. Perhaps you could resume publication of the bulletin you used to publish in California, or in any case send articles to The Old Calendarist and to us (we could publish Old Calendar information in our letter column without making certain people too angry). Our Orthodox people in America simply don't know anything about the Old Calendarist Church, and that is why their reactions sometimes are so hostile. For example, the formation of the new Synod is neither known nor understood here, and an objective presentation of it (together with the names of Bishops Kallistos and Kyprian, who are known at least a little) would certainly arouse interest and sympathy. The visit of the bishops to your monastery and Jordanville also is "news." The problems your Church faces (presented as

calmly as possible) would also be instructive. The more this basic information is put into the "air," the less hostility there will be from people in our Church (except for those who just want to be hostile!). Your monastery could help to be a voice of moderation in our time of extremes.

We've just finished our yearly St. Herman Pilgrimage, where we strongly called for a faithful but sober Orthodoxy and warned about perils like the "correctness disease." It takes time for new converts to understand such things—but with time, experience, and patient explaining, they do begin to get the point.

We wish you all the best—and first of all survival, and then faithfulness in Orthodoxy. May God grant you to withstand the temptations and stay in your present place to become rooted. There will be temptations everywhere! Please remember us in your prayers.

With love in Christ,

275.

Aug. 9/22,1979

Apostle Matthias

Dear Father Chrysostomos,

Christ is in our midst!

Thank you for your letter, which was most welcome, and please forgive my long silence in not writing to the other Fathers—I have just been too busy and unable to write. My letter to Andrew Bond advising him not to print Fr. Akakios' letter was meant more than anything else to protect him from the attacks that would come if he printed an attack on Fr. Panteleimon (I had thought that the article was more personal than it is). I have written Fr. Akakios separately about this.

We greatly sympathize with you in your sufferings caused by such uncharitable attacks, some of them from within our Church. But know that this is for your refinement and salvation, and can be of benefit to others if you endure them firmly and patiently. If you can stand firm and stay where you are, the trial will surely pass away and leave you stronger. Let the voice of the 14-year old Debra be the vox populi for you: you have more friends than you may think.

Now your monastery is known and you can't hide from anyone. May God grant that this be the occasion for your labors in enlightening the Orthodox about the cause of the Old Calendar Church. A calm and objective presentation of information on the Old Calendar Church is much needed in America and you could do it, preferably through your own bulletin. I have mentioned this to Fr. Akakios also.

May God strengthen you in your trials. Know that GOD IS WITH US!

Please remember us in your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

276.

August 10/23,1979

Archdeacon and Martyr Laurence

Dear Andrew,

May the blessing of the Lord by with you!

Thank you for your letter. Yes, it was a little "nagging," but I must say I agree with most of your points. Yes, the "Grabbe newsletter" is thoroughly uninspiring and has little positive to say about Orthodoxy. Its best forgotten and not spread further. (He puts it out in Russian himself, and unfortunately a great deal of it is reprinted in Orthodox Russia.)

We agree with you also on the forbidding of services to "uncanonized" saints. It's true enough that the Russian Church in recent centuries has done this—but in our days of total desolation why forbid one of the few positive Orthodox things that is happening? The answer, I think, is that one or two of the politically powerful bishops (Vitaly of Montreal, Seraphim of Chicago) want to assert their "authority" and can find no better way to do it, and the other bishops don't want to fight over it. It is discouraging—but again, the best thing is to "forget" it and quietly continue the veneration of these saints out of love for them. v

That our bishops don't assert their authority when there is occasion for it—specifically, in restraining Fr. Panteleimon in some of his acts—is a sign of this weakness and giving way to political considerations.

All of this is a sad background for our present Orthodox labors—here you are right. But please listen to this: WE SIMPLY CANNOT LET OUR ATTITUDES, INSPIRATION, AND MISSIONARY LABORS TAKE THEIR TONE FROM ALL THESE NEGATIVE FACTORS: WE MUST OURSELVES BE GENERATING A POSITIVE OUTLOOK THAT WILL INSPIRE OURSELVES AND OTHERS. How?—on this I'll say more below.

This is why I think it unwise to print the article of Fr. Akakios. He has sent it to us, and I see now it is less in the form of a personal attack than I had expected—but it is still only a reaction, and the influence of Fr. P. simply cannot be fought on that level: his followers, if need be, will simply fill the air with counter-attacks, more hero-worship, etc., and the air will be even more filled with the poisonous fumes that are choking us today.

When I say that the influence of Fr. P. is "past its peak" (or however I expressed it) I don't mean to say that it isn't still quite powerful and, in some respects, increasing; this poisonous influence increases exactly in proportion to the spiritual vacuum so common in new converts, and in others also—it gives easy and "correct" answers that make one feel important for belonging to the "right party" that has the answers. But this is superficial—the answer is to go deeper and get in contact with true, heartfelt Orthodoxy. And this is beginning to happen, and to such an extent that I think it's the "wave of the future" in our Church. Almost all of our younger Russian priests, in America at least, are aware of the limitations of Fr. P. and are getting inspiration from elsewhere—chiefly from Russia, and especially from Fr. Dimitry Dudko. This is what you

should be doing too—you probably sell Fr. Dimitry's book, Our Hope and haven't read it—correct?

The Fathers at St. Gregory Palamas monastery have, at least partially, fallen into a trap—they are so dazed by the bad effects of Fr. Pant's influence that they are placing their reaction to it as the most important thing—that's what their attention is fixed on, that's what they write and argue about. I agree with them that this influence is bad and poisonous—but we simply must get above it, start getting inspiration from elsewhere and "forget" Fr. P. as much as we can. We are still on the best terms with the Fathers at St. Gregory's, by the way, and have written them something similar. There are already enough of us aware of the "Panteleimon problem" (which in essence boils down, I think, to a question of a dead Orthodoxy of the head, of calculation, vs. the true Orthodoxy of the heart) that if we begin now to look to the sources of true Orthodox inspiration, to nourish ourselves on them, to communicate them to others, to speak out when need arises on problems of the day—we can have a substantial influence ourselves on overcoming the poisons already in the air and introducing a fresh air that can inspire and save them from dead legalism and "correctness."

You suffer from what "Boston" has done, from the inertia of our bishops—well, be aware that THIS SUFFERING IS A PART OF THAT DEEPER ORTHODOXY YOU SHOULD BE SEEKING AND TAKING INSPIRATION FROM. Read Fr. Dimitry Dudko and start to learn; you cannot help but be inspired by him. His constant theme is: there's hope for us, because we suffer. He is now putting out a weekly newsletter which is tremendously inspiring. Fr. Alexey Youngл;iii be printing a few issues of it in English; if you want, I could translate some more for you. (Actually, much of it has been appearing in Orthodox Russia—do you have any translators there?) Fr. Dimitry, by the way, gives us a chance to get around some of our own problems here; here they don't like us to talk about uncanonized saints—but Fr. Dimitry openly refers to "Holy New Martyr Nicholas" (the Tsar).

The whole Orthodox Church in the free world is in a state of near paralysis; our Russian Church Abroad is better off in that it has at least kept more of the traditions and piety of the past and doesn't betray Orthodoxy in the Ecumenical movement. But God has given us the talent of freedom, and we who can walk and write and print have an obligation to inspire those we can with the true Orthodoxy of the heart. I'm not against a "polemical" article here and there (your articles in the last issue were good)—but such articles have to be only incidental to something more important that is being said and should have a compassionate tone that rises above mere polemics and anger.

Keep up The Old Calendarist and fill it with inspiring things. They are coming from Russia, you can find them in Greece (something about Bishop Kyprianos, for example), in Uganda, even in your England. (By the way, why don't you write us a letter for publication on the positive opportunities for pilgrimage in Europe?)

We had a very successful pilgrimage and summer courses here this past two weeks, with large doses of positive inspiration, information on the suffering Christians in Russia, together with warnings about the perils to living true Orthodoxy today (including our Greeks, mentioned by

name), and ending with the baptisms of two new converts. Here and there, positive things are going on in the Church; it's up to us to help increase them!

Why don't you come visit us again soon? Our missionary territory in Northern California and southern Oregon now has four mission parishes and some fervent Christians who are far away from all church politics.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. The Turin Shroud, of course, is a whole question in itself, but do you really have such evidence that it is a fraud? All the evidence I've seen points to the opposite, although I'm not quite persuaded of Ian Wilsons theory that the Shroud is really identical with the "Image not made with hands." Have you read his book?

P.p.s. Vladika Vitaly has just published Metr. Anthony's Dogma of Redemption in English, and Bishop Grabbe praises it sky-high. Please don't advertise or sell this book—Metr. Anthony's teaching on this subject has been controversial for decades, and our best bishops and theologians have rejected it. Jordanville and other book centers here are deliberately not stocking it, and our Bishop Nektary has asked Fr. Neketas also not to distribute it. Years ago, at the instigation of Bishop Nektary, we warned Fr. Panteleimon about this teaching, but for political reasons he fell for it; now, however, even Fr. Michael Azkoul has written a review against it, and his fashionability will probably come to an end now. His ideas on this subject are sloppy theology, at best.

277.

Aug. 22/ Sept. 4, 1979

Martyr Agathonicus

Dear Father Mamas,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your letter. I wondered when I sent my little note: maybe this will just evoke another "open letter" such as your monastery is famous for? But I thought: No, it is so obviously a purely personal note that an "official answer" won't be seen as necessary. But you did make such an answer, after all.

Why such an "over-reaction" on your part? Like so many of the letters from your monastery, there are many correct points in it, which in my case I never intended to challenge; but also there is so much that is unnecessary, as if you wish to make sure that I know you are qualified to teach me. And the parts of your letter that are wrong you (in my view) would require much effort to explain, and given the tone of your letter you would not yet be receptive to such an explanation in any case.

My short note to you was purely personal, and I aimed at your heart, not your head; if I misled you into thinking I in principle favor second-hand translations and "pious fables" and "Old Believerism," I am sorry, especially since I caused you to take such unnecessary time explaining things to me which I had no thought of questioning in the first place.

But when all is said and done, my initial feeling remains: I am afraid for you. So you have a "community" and an "elder"—I didn't "overlook" them, I was only trying to speak to you personally. Do I have to remind you that a group passion can be even more deadly than an individual passion? Forgive me, but I feel passion in your letter—a passion that will be expressed also in your translations, no matter now many work on them with you. Do you realize what times we live in? We live in an atmosphere of such spiritual fakery that it infects us and spreads even when we are reading accurately- transmitted Patristic texts. We are all sick with this plague—and can we be so self-confident about our Patristic translations, about our community and our elder? There is nothing automatic or infallible about an elder, a community, about obedience, or any of the words of the Scripture and the Fathers; they all can be merely outward and without effect for salvation; the only test of them is the effect they truly produce upon the soul.

I will not answer your letter on the level you wrote it; you were not writing to me, but to a straw man you could shoot down. It is pointless for me to defend myself when you "correct" me on points I never held and never defended. Even on the "literal" level, you read our Blessed Paisius book so carelessly that you didn't find there the passages you thought you had to translate yourself, and then tell me that it is a "great pity" we didn't translate them!'(See Blessed Paisius, pp. 81, 119, 180. 183, etc.) I'm not saying this to prove you're "wrong" and I'm "right, or to score one more "point" against you—we're all wrong so much of the time, if not with the head then certainly with the heart, that none of us have anything to boast about. I use this merely as an example of how unnecessary so much of your letter was.

I only wish, once more, to speak a word to you personally, using an example or two from your letter.

You mention Vladika Andrew and his "mistake." Frankly, this story doesn't ring true to me; it seems like a "pious fable" in reverse—one intended to show how "simple" the Russians are, and how "smart" we others are. Some Russian priests, it is true, make this simple mistake, and it is rather a joke among some of them; I would doubt that Vladika Andrew would make this mistake—but even if he did, how could it be that you, who know both English and Russian, "had a hard time figuring out" what he was talking about? Any convert or Greek who knows Russian should have got the point immediately; are you sure this wasn't some misunderstanding on your own part, or on that of the translator if there was one, or some joke of Vladika Andrew that you didn't get? But that's secondary; * the point is: you stored up the incident to "use" later on, and the way you use it does not reflect well on you. You will say that you are "correct"; but your attitude is superior and cold (that's my feeling from your words), and you do ill to repeat the story in this way. I have heard Russian clergy tell similar stories about bishops' mistakes, but it was with warmth and affection; "correctness" is thereby maintained, but without any of the coldness and superiority I feel in your words.

You mention “Eastern Orthodox Books”—which, by the way, is not “somehow affiliated” with us, but is an independent enterprise. Their printing of St. Isaac, in the copy we have, does not indicate a publisher at all, and I understand this was done deliberately to avoid giving “Orthodox approval” to it; the very few copies printed were for customers of the more expensive edition. Perhaps they should have printed the Introduction too—but my point here is that again you have “stored up” this information to “use” at the right time (and you even had to do a little research to know that Eastern Orthodox Books printed it). But then Why didn’t you store up some “good” information about Eastern Orthodox Books. Why didn’t you mention in the Foreword to the Ladder (I assume you were part of this group effort—if not, forgive me for the mistake) that Fr. Lazarus’ translation has been in print these several years and is still available in paperback with an introduction by I. M. Kontzevitch? Aren’t you, in many cases, selectively “storing up” information that makes others look bad or “simple” or non-existent? Is this the Christian spirit? (I am speaking this to you personally·, please do not write another letter defending your monastery against thinking evil of others; I’m only writing this to hit your heart, and I’m not attacking your monastery or sending this letter to your “enemies.”)

Only one more point: you “catch” us teaching “the baptism of the dead”! Good heavens! Are you going to let this image throw you? Well, perhaps if there are readers like you such images should be excised—you will extract the last drop of blood from them. But even so, the “deductions” you draw from it! No papalist would be so scholastically “logical” as you were! Would you really “eat, drink and be merry” if you thought there was “some sort of baptism after death” as described in this story? I don’t know a single Orthodox Christian who would! And because someone might want to pray for his unbaptized grandfather (in the way handed down to us by Fathers like Elder Leonid of Optina, Theophan the Recluse, and Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd)—is he really teaching that God is “the ultimate cause of the damnation of sinners and unbelievers”?! Really, your reasoning is so outlandish that I am at a loss to “defend” myself—just line me up against the wall and shoot me down! Do such accusations benefit those you show them to? I sincerely doubt that they benefit either you or me.

Well, enough. It seems I’ve now lined up my own accusations against you! Please forgive me, I am not the one to humble you—but I do hope you will extract whatever good you can for yourself from my words, sinful and passionate as they may be. My heart is sad for you; I feel there is something you miss. I think you need a big dose of warmheartedness and simplicity; may God grant that you get it! I say this because your letter was so overblown and so unnecessary. If you think images like the “baptism” one are unwise (an image which none of our readers who has mentioned it has taken literally), perhaps you could say so in a sentence or two, without making all those “deductions,” which I think are an unfruitful use of your time.

Please forgive me for my words if they seem harsh or unkind; I assure you of my sincere love and prayers for you. Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

278.

Sept. 20/0ct. 3, 1979

Great Martyr Eustathius

Dear Father Hilarion,

Christ is in our midst!

I had planned to write you after our Pilgrimage about your spiritual son, John Van Deerlin, and here almost two months have slipped by. Laziness and distractions! Anyway, he arrived safely before the first day of the Pilgrimage and stayed for several days of courses. He started off a little "smart" and wanted to discuss things that were beside the point (why is marijuana worse than alcohol? etc.), but he was humbled a little and seemed to get the point. He had a problem at first with "communism," and after my talk (where I had discussed communism, I thought, from a spiritual rather than a political point of view), he wondered whether he had wandered into a "California right-wing group." But after some gentle discussions, he calmed down and took the rest of the lectures and courses very seriously. He even began reading Gulag and was enlightened about the Tsar by one of our 18-year-old converts. In the end he left a good impression, and with maturing in the faith he could be a sober Christian. We confirmed for him what you had told him about jurisdictions and receiving Communion. Of course, he is still fresh and a little vague about his Orthodoxy—but we've come to prefer this to the super-correctness of some of our new converts. We remember him fondly, and he promised to write.

Of late, it seems, we've fallen into even more disfavor with "Boston." Fr. Herman wrote Fr. Panteleimon a note asking if the monastery could help with some translations from Greek, to which we received a disdainful and critical answer by Fr. Mamas, condemning our use of Bp. Theophan's translations of St. Symeon the New Theologian, etc. I replied with a brief note to the effect that "expertness" was not the highest of virtues (having in mind his boasting of knowing Syriac and Greek and translating St. Isaac from the original), and that our St. Symeon booklet was a humble venture, having as its protection the spiritual authority of Bp. Theophan. I thought at the time: what if this provokes an "open letter"?—but the note was so obviously personal to Fr. Mamas that I thought no more of it, thinking also that the "open letter" era was past. But alas! In a week we received his reply, accusing us of Old-Believerism, the spreading of "pious fables," and various heresies (including teaching the "baptism of the dead"!), and having such a disdainful tone to our poor Russians (including Vladika Andrew) that it hurt. I didn't answer his accusations, but wrote him a personal reply, telling him frankly that he needed a good dose of warm-heartedness and simplicity and warning him that obedience was not the infallible panacea he claimed it was. (In effect he had written that he couldn't be criticized because he acts under, obedience, which is an infallible guide.) To this there has been no reply.

Just recently I came across some letters to us from Boston 12 years ago—and what a difference! They were just strugglers then, and too bogged down in daily labors to be writing such long-winded epistles. What has happened? I fear it is not for the good. The "correct" converts who follow the "Boston line" are going down a blind alley, I think—that's not where the real Orthodox life and concern should be today. I hate to think of where it will end. Fr. Lev Puhalo, I think, is an example of where this mis-directed zeal can take one.

Well, enough negativism. We are trying to direct our missionary labors to a simple kind of flock, and we do have responses from it. Fr. Dimitry Dudko still seems to us to be nearest the center of the true spiritual concern today, and there are even signs that the "revival" in Russia is beginning to touch the Russian youth abroad. People who were at the conferences in Toronto and Angwin (the latter was a very boring and academic thing last year) have told us that the Russian young people are "waking up"—glory be to God, if only it will be in the right spirit!

Please pray for us. We remember you with much love. We don't know yet when Fr. Herman [letter ends]

279.

Oct. 23/Nov. 5, 1979

Apostle James the Brother of the Lord

Dear Father Neketas,

Christ is in our midst!

We have recently received vol. 6, nos. 8 and 9, 1979, of the Tlinget Herald. According to the return address on the envelope and the heading on the title page, this publication was mailed and published by you. You yourself in the past have indicated that Fr. Lev Puhalo at times acts in an unbalanced and irrational way, and from our own experience I know that it would be pointless to write him directly to protest against the content of this issue; it would only produce another of his irrational letters or even a whole new series of attacks against us in the Tlinget Herald. Therefore we are writing to you as the person responsible for distributing this issue.

Father, what can we say to you? You, of course, realize, that this issue is (among other things) a personal attack against our Brotherhood for our series of articles on "The Soul After Death." The attempt of the author of these articles is, clearly, not merely to "correct" the "errors" he thinks we have been teaching, but to discredit us entirely as publishers of Orthodox material. Orthodox Christians, when they disagree, are normally able to express their disagreements in a civil way without trying to discredit those who hold errors, if such they be, and certainly without casting aspersions on their Orthodoxy in general, on their scholarship, or even on their sanity.

But what must the unsuspecting reader think when he is told that the "toll-houses" which we recently presented as an Orthodox teaching in The Orthodox Word are "a new and novel doctrine in the Church" (p. 15), that they come from an "old pagan astral cult" and "are merely an illogical mutation of these pagan myths" (p. 24), are "imaginary" (p. 18), that "Manicheism (more directly, Methracism) is fundamental to the 'toll-house' theology" (p. 23). What must he think to read that some of the sources which we cited in presenting this teaching are a "perverted 'ikon'" (p. 16) which constitutes a "grotesque and radical innovation" (p. 23), and a "fantastic literature and spiritual delusion," most notably "Gregory of Thrace's wild tale about the Journey of Theodora" which is "heresy-filled" (p. 24) and was revealed to a man who was in "no longer merely delusion, but already insanity" (p. 24). The author declares that this literature is a

"fantastic, apocryphal literature which seeks to insinuate the pagan psychostasia myths into Orthodox teachings" (p. 17).

Father, if all this is true, then we who have presented this teaching and used these sources must clearly be heretics, willful innovationists, and in general irresponsible, deceived, and nearly insane people.

Must we answer such charges? Do you believe this?

Father, we are deeply, deeply offended and hurt by this surely irresponsible attack against us which you have supported.

But this is a small part of the decisive protest which we must make to you.

We did not make up this teaching. We received it from our fathers and teachers in the faith. Quite recently it has been taught quite openly by a number of respected voices in the Church, and it is evident that Fr. Lev's attack is more generally against them also: against Holy Trinity Monastery, which has published several of the sources which Fr. Lev attacks in issues of Orthodox Life in recent years; against Fr. Alexey Young and Nikodemos, whose latest issue was devoted to this subject; against Father Michael Pomazansky, the most respected theologian in our Church, whose recent article on the toll-houses was prompted in part by Fr. Lev's earlier attacks against them; against Archbishop John Maximovitch, whose sermon in the last Nikodemos was already singled out for attack by Fr. Lev a year or more ago (it appeared in The Orthodox Word seven or eight years ago).

You have sponsored such an irresponsible attack against such respected teachers in our Church, some of them indeed very pillars of our Church. Father, I am deeply ashamed for you. What can you possibly be thinking of accomplishing by this?

But there is something even worse that you have done.

This is an attack not just against these recent teachers of the Church, but also against the very teaching of the Church. Father, you have been to seminary. You must know by now that Fr. Lev is no theologian. This article has no theological foundation, but is a passionate diatribe which is composed of varying amounts of misunderstood teachings set up as ridiculous "straw men," quotations which do not prove his points or are taken out of context, unfounded private opinions set up as dogmas, arbitrary interpretations of art history, and the like, with enough obvious truths and half-truths thrown in to make the whole thing convincing to some who have not thought much about the subject or have not been much exposed to the Orthodox teaching.

If you wish to know what the Church really teaches about the toll-houses (as opposed to Fr. Levs most uncharitable and totally unfair caricature of them), I would advise you (for a beginning) to re-read our own article on them in The Orthodox Word, no. 83, where the exposition of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov is set forth and there are numerous citations from Holy Fathers, Lives of Saints, and Divine services. There you will find also a discussion of "How to Understand the Toll-houses," in view of the sometimes figurative elements which appear in descriptions of them (I know of literally no one who has ever read these descriptions in so "literal" and one-sided a

manner as Fr. Lev); you will also find there a discussion of the toll-houses as a universal phenomenon in spiritual life, the experience of which begins in this life; as well as other aspects of this rather subtle teaching which Fr. Lev has deliberately cast aside in order to set up and ridicule a caricature of it and expose all who believe in the toll-houses as some kind of simpletons or idiots.

In another article in the same issue, "The Body, the Soul and Death," Fr. Lev continues his attack against our series of articles, and makes even more definite than before his most un-Scriptural, un-Patristic, and un-Orthodox teaching that the soul at death "enters into a condition of inactivity, a sort of sleep in which it does not function, hear or see…" (p. 19). He conveniently dismisses everyone who holds a different teaching as "Origenistic"—despite the obvious fact that those who hold the Orthodox teaching on this subject have nothing in common with Origens views and do not accept his ideas that the soul is "imprisoned" in the body, that it "pre-exists" its "fall" into the body, etc. "Origenism" here is merely a smear word he uses to paint his enemies black. This is dirty fighting.

Since you have printed and distributed this article and the earlier articles where Fr. Lev has set forth this teaching of the souls "sleep" after death, I assume you must believe it, especially since Fr. Lev presents it in such categorical terms, dismissing any other teaching as heresy. We gently reminded you that this teaching is not Orthodox in a note some months ago.

Is it really necessary to set forth the Scriptural, Patristic, and general Church texts which give the Orthodox teaching on this subject? Up until now no one has been challenging this teaching in our Church, and one would have thought a defense of it to be unnecessary. That the modernist theologians of other jurisdictions have often challenged it is not surprising; it is part of their "modernism" in general. But certainly anyone who reads and loves the Orthodox Lives of Saints and accepts the authority of the Orthodox theologians of our own Church would never think of questioning this teaching.

I hope that Fr. Lev's "fit" will pass, and his spite against us and the recent teachers of our Church will be exhausted with what he has already written, and a lengthy defense of the Orthodox teaching will not be required. In any case, I offer to you below just one quotation from a text which has already appeared in our series on "The Soul After Death." This is a brief statement from St. Mark of Ephesus' "Second Homily on Purgatorial Fire" which gives some rather specific indications of how active the soul is after death. Unfortunately, we now hear that the teaching of St. Mark on life after death has also been called into question by Fr. Lev, and perhaps you will soon be printing Fr. Levs attack on it—may God not allow it! Certainly St. Mark's words are authoritative for us (although the words of many other authoritative Fathers could also be cited), since he was the chief defender precisely of the Orthodox teaching on life after death at Florence, opposing the Latin errors. Here is the text (emphasis added by me; see The Orthodox Word, no. 79, p. 90):

"We affirm that neither the righteous have as yet received the fullness of their lot and that blessed condition for which they have prepared themselves here through works, nor have sinners, after death, been led away into the eternal punishment in which they shall be tormented eternally.

Rather, both the one and the other must necessarily take place after the Judgment of that last day and the resurrection of all. Now, however, both the one and the other are in places proper to them: the first, in absolute repose and free, are in heaven with the angels and before God Himself, and already as if in the paradise from which Adam fell (into which the good thief entered before others) and often visit us in those temples where they are venerated, and hear those who call on them and pray for them to God, having received from Him this surpassing gift, and through their relics perform miracles, and take delight in the vision of God and the illumination sent from Him more perfectly and purely than before, when they were alive·, while the second, in their turn, being confined in hell, remain in the lowest pit…. And this teaching we have as handed down from our Fathers in antiquity, and we can easily present it from the Divine Scriptures themselves."

Even from this quite explicit quote about the consequences of the soul after death, of course, Fr. Lev could take a sentence out of context (as he has already done with innumerable other Fathers) and "prove" his own point ("the righteous have not yet received the fullness of their lot," hence are unconscious). But I am addressing you as someone who, I sincerely hope and believe, wants to know the truth and not merely to possess a collection of meaningless "proof" texts.

It would be pointless to offer many specific criticisms of these articles you have printed, when their whole intent is so mistaken and the teaching so un-Orthodox. I would only point our two or three incidental things that, it seems to us, you do very ill in presenting in such a way to Orthodox readers.

Fr. Lev accuses "the heretical teaching that the Ancient of Days (Dn. ch. 7) was God the Father" (p. 23). Father, in the past you have already printed enough of such categorical statements that find "heresy" in every corner; it is really time for them to stop. Prophetic images such as the "Ancient of Days" are of such a character that often a hard-and-fast identification is not even possible or necessary, let alone being made into a "dogma" so that misidentification of it is a "heresy." It happens that some Fathers have indeed identified the Ancient of Days as God the Father, while others identify this image as God the Son. Specifically, St. John Chrysostom in his commentary on Daniel (ch. 7), noting that it is One "like the Son of Man" Who comes to the Ancient of Days, states that Daniel was thus "the first and only one to see the Father and the Son." Is he then a heretic? The use of such language in this case is just name-calling and vain boasting over ones supposed "correct interpretation" of Scripture.

Again, Fr. Lev speaks of Blessed Augustine's "blasphemous commentary on Genesis" (p. 23). Can you find one single Father or teacher of our Orthodox Church who has ever referred to this book in this way? This is simply hatred posing as "righteousness" in "exposing" someone whom the Orthodox Church continues to regard with reverence, despite such malicious attacks on him.

Again, Fr. Lev has found a new Orthodox teacher to attack and discredit: Because Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov emphatically teaches the Orthodoxy of the toll-houses (and sees the attack on them as a sign of theological modernism), Fr. Lev accuses him of "novelty" also: "Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov, who, was, of course, educated in the then prevalent Latin-milieu of Russian seminaries, accepted this novel interpretation" (p. 17). Father, despite the superior "of

course," this man doesn't know what he's talking about! Bishop Ignatius graduated from engineering school and never went to a seminary at all; his knowledge of the Fathers and of Orthodox doctrine came from his own Patristic reading and his experiences in Russian monasteries under some of the leading spiritual elders of his time. Soon Fr. Lev will be attacking all the Russian monasteries and elders also. Can't you see that he merely attacks and discredits, without facts or evidence, anyone who disagrees with his opinions and whims? This is dishonest.

Father, there has been enough and too much of all this. Why do you sponsor such immature, irresponsible articles? Not long ago you told someone: "We all know that Fr. Lev is unbalanced, but he is on our side? And true enough, Fr. Lev's extreme statements are usually only exaggerations of opinions you yourself have printed before. But don't you see that:

(1) You are sponsoring a most unhealthy party spirit in the Church, putting "your side," evidently those whom you regard as "theological experts" and "super-Orthodox" among the converts and Greek-Americans, against the "other" side—i.e., presumably us poor "Russians" who stick to the tradition our fathers have handed down to us and are not easily "reformed."

And (2) You are attacking with increasing openness the tradition of theology and piety whose representatives took you in when you were in need of an Orthodox Church home. This is ingratitude to say the least.

In both these respects you are helping to create a very bad feeling in our Church, and there is disaster ahead if you do not change.

I will not speak for the rest of the Church, but will only tell you how grieved we ourselves are with what you are doing. From the moment you entered our Church we were among your most ardent supporters, as you well know. Even when we recognized some of the differences of opinion between you and us we did not cease to give you our support. And then you began cutting us off— over what, I really don't know. Was it "evolution," or the "Shroud of Turin," or our "Russianness," or just the fact that we didn't follow your "party line"? You began to spread doubts about the Orthodoxy of our views, spreading suspicion about us and other "Russians" in our Church, even dropping us from your list of "important places in the Synod," in your Calendar.

We know that you yourself have suffered in the past from Synod politics (we have defended you on many occasions when we could); but we have all suffered from this, it isn't something unique with you Greek-Americans, and you will not escape such things no matter what jurisdiction you might belong to. You have at times complained about feeling yourself to be a "second-class member of the Synod" and at being told to "go back to the Greeks where you belong." We have been sorry to hear such things, but you know that we and many others in our Church have never treated you like that.

But you yourself, for whatever cause, are playing that same game of politics. We very strongly feel ourselves that you are trying to make us (our Brotherhood and other defenders of the traditions of our Russian Church) into "second-class members" of the Church organization, and that you are trying to undermine the theologians and the theological authority of our Russian

Church. You are taking advantage of an unusual situation in which your own bishops do not speak your language and cannot keep track of all that you say or understand the nuances of it, in order to promote the cause of a virtually independent kind of "Orthodoxy" within our Church, one that has no living continuity with the fathers and teachers of our Church but comes from the fashionable "patristic revival" of the modernist seminaries. Can't you see how dangerous this is, how you yourself can lose the tradition of Orthodoxy and confuse others in the process by trusting your own opinions and the opinions of the clique to which you belong?

Apparently, for you Fr. Panteleimon is the authority. As your spiritual father no one will protest his right to spiritual authority over you. If you wish to accept also his personal opinions about all manner of church affairs, that is also your right. But you cannot make him into the authority for our Church or our converts or insist that his opinions prevail over all others in the Church. His actions and statements are public enough over the last 15 years to show that he is no infallible guide to Orthodoxy, that he has often been mistaken, has needlessly alienated many people in our Church and among the Old Calendarist Greeks, has lessened his own authority by playing politics—in other words, that he is fallible like the rest of us, that whatever his intentions, he has done both good and ill in his church activities. His authority, whatever it may be for you personally, cannot justify your sponsorship of Fr. Lev's articles for "party" reasons, or your undermining of our Russian theologians and the Church's teaching.

You talk much of "Western influence." It seems to be one of your "party slogans." Father, don't you see how very Western you and Fr. Panteleimon yourselves often are? You can't just go "back to the Fathers"; you must be linked to them through your own fathers—and the fathers of our Russian Church, to which you still belong, are precisely the ones you are undermining.

Father, be humble enough to see that this is one of the reasons why some in our Church have been suggesting to you that you should "go back to the Greeks" and work out your problems with them. As long as you are undermining the teachers and authorities of our Church (Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, 19th-century catechisms, Unseen Warfare, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, now even Bishop Ignatius, etc., etc.) and trying to force your own attitudes and opinions at least on the English- speaking part of our Church—then you really do look like a foreigner out to demolish our Russian Orthodoxy. And when you publish attacks on the toll-houses and sponsor really novel doctrines like the "sleep" of the soul, you certainly reveal yourself as "Greek-Archdiocese mentality" through and through. If these are the things you want to teach and publish, then by all means you should go back and fight it out with your Greeks, instead of taking refuge behind Russian bishops whose authority you are undermining. Your Greeks will not protest when you attack the toll-houses—because the Greek Archdiocese lost contact with the Orthodox teaching on such subjects long ago, and you're still operating on their "wave-length." It is just not fair for you to remain in our Church, and in a very protected place where our bishops really have little contact with you, and try to attack and convert the rest of us to your Greek-Archdiocese attitudes.

When you first came to us eleven years ago you seemed anxious to learn from our Church; now you've gotten used to us, spotted many of our weaknesses, and you seem only to want to teach us. All you will do by this is to cause fights, bitterness, and deep sorrow.

I've already said enough. If you don't understand what I'm saying by now, you never will. We are not your "enemies"; we would be sad to see you change jurisdictions, not only because it would mean that you have lost the golden opportunity you had with us to go deeper into Orthodoxy, but also because you yourself could contribute something valuable to our Church if you could be closer to us in spirit. But if you want to stay with us and be anything other than a "troublemaker" in our midst, you must begin to learn more and teach less—at least in the way you "teach" through Fr. Lev's articles.

I have written this with pain of heart, and I pray that you will receive it with your heart. How I wish that there could be the oneness between us that we thought existed in the beginning! There is no need for you to mistrust the "Russians"; I suspect that in you heart you are very much like them, but the ideas and opinions you have acquired are separating you from them. There are "good" Russians as well as "bad," loving and aware Orthodox people as well as politicians. Unfortunately your mind seems to have led you into contact with some of our "politicians," and you never got close enough to the real heart-beat of our Church. You could never have been attracted by Fr. Lev's articles if you had.

Please forgive me if anything I have said has offended you. We have never had any intention of being your "enemies," only to speak the truth as we see it; if you want us to be enemies you will have to make us so yourself.

I hesitate now to send this. I have not worked it over for public inspection. It is addressed to you personally, and doubtless you will have to show it to "party headquarters"—I say this not in sarcasm, but just knowing the way you do things. I don't think such an arrangement is very healthy or good for the Church, and I suspect it also gives you a measure of false security which shields you from some of the Orthodox reality of our day. If you want to answer, please answer yourself and don't let someone you think is "smarter" do it for you. That's not our "Russian" way and we regard it as rather an insult.

Please forgive my over-bold words, and do not judge me too severely for them; please pray for us sinners, who grieve that such a letter is necessary (but of course it is—the situation is bad and won't get better by silence; in particular, I hope I've communicated well enough that Fr. Lev's articles are inexcusable).

With sincere love in Christ our Saviour,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. A recent issue of your Witness gives an example of how sometimes you help to undermine Orthodox traditions without even being aware of it, simply by virtue of not being in sufficient living contact with the tradition.

You reprinted Fr. Michael Henning's article on "Christmas," "Easter," and the "New Year." While the intent of the article is commendable—to show that there is an Orthodox way and a non- Orthodox way of looking at these things—the article does err, I think, in its over-zealous insistence on abolishing terms which, after all, aren't that reprehensible, and will cause in some converts an undesirable "correctness" complex with regard to them. But worse: the author

obviously views the "new year" question in a purely abstract manner and evidently has no contact with the traditional Orthodox way of handling the question: Archbishop John without fail had a new year's moleben on January 1/14 every year, precisely to mark the civil new year by the old calendar (not the new—he refused to serve a moleben then); this is sound, living "conservatism." The Church new year is another occasion entirely—which you yourself admit since you don't change the year's number on Sept. 1. But some of your "correct convert" readers, when they hear that Archbishop John did this, will very likely begin to suspect further his Orthodoxy—and you will have helped put a new poison in the air without realizing it. (Don't think it isn't so—how many already show disdain for Archbishop John because he venerated Blessed Augustine and did other things the "Patristic revival" forbids!) There must be a whole different tone to the preaching of Orthodox truth!

P.p.s. On reading this I find a phrase that will probably be offensive to you: "party headquarters." Forgive me; I shouldn't have used it. But I'm leaving it as it is trusting that you will accept this letter in good faith for the points that are made in it, and will not try to "pick it apart"; and also because it does show how this situation is widely viewed in our Church (something which perhaps you are not aware of)—so much so that even your best friends admit that "of course they have their own 'synod of bishops'". This letter is written with utmost frankness in the hope that real contact can still be restored between us and this whole idea of an "independent Orthodoxy" in our Church (which does amount to a clique or party) will come to an end.

280.

Nov. 1/14, 1979

Sts. Cosmas and Damian

Dear Father Roman,

Christ is in our midst!

Thank you for the letter and the Xeroxes about the "Grabbe affair."

About Fr. Panteleimon: whatever has happened between us is not due to the recent letters that have been exchanged between us; there is something much deeper involved, and the recent letters are only a small sign of it. Fr. Panteleimon is evidently upset because we dared to express a criticism of several of the opinions held by him and his brothers, but we did this trusting that good relations between us do not depend upon our simply accepting whatever he and his brothers say or write; but evidently he does not agree with this.

I will try to explain briefly what the "deeper" thing is (as we see it) that causes Fr. P. to be unhappy with us.

From the very beginning, even before Fr. P. entered our Church, we were extremely open and well disposed to him; later, when first he and then Fr. Neketas and other Greek priests joined our Church, we were among the first to welcome and support them, writing a number of articles about them and defending them before our bishops and others when there were controversies around them.

Quite early, we discovered that there were differences of opinion between us and the "Greeks": they were a little too "fanatical" about other jurisdictions, rather uncharitable towards Roman Catholics and other non-Orthodox, rather unfair to some Orthodox people with whom they disagreed; and Fr. P himself expressed some extreme opinions about the Weeping Icons, about Blessed Augustine, etc. None of these differences of opinion caused us to think any less highly of Fr. P. and the "Greeks," or to give them any less support. We accepted these as minor differences which should not lessen the bond of love between us.

In the midst of these sincere good relations which existed between us, we began to hear, from various people in our Church, complaints against Fr. P. and Fr. Neketas. Some thought that the views they expressed in their publications were too "fanatical," others thought they were spreading false teachings, still others said they were "trying to take over the Synod." For about two years (1971 to 1973) we were enthusiastically defending Fr. P. and Fr. N. against all these accusations, denying some of them and covering others with love and understanding. (We were so sympathetic to Fr. P. that even the most extreme thing we knew that he had done—to call Bishop Peter of Astoria a "simoniac" and "sorcerer"—we justified as the weakness of someone who was zealous but who sometimes did make mistakes of judgment.)

But then, in 1973, several of the actions of Fr. P. and Fr. N. began to upset us, and it is definitely true that a "cooling" in the relations between us began at that time—although this was much greater on their side than on ours, as I will describe below.

(1) Fr. Neketas (and back of him Fr. P.) expressed extreme displeasure over two publications of (then layman) Alexey Young—one against the theory of evolution, and one in favor of the Shroud of Turin. The fact itself that they objected to the articles did not upset us (we also had noted the weak spots in the "Shroud" article, which originally had been written for a Roman Catholic readership and had many obvious "Latinisms" in it); it was rather the way in which they objected that upset us: through our extensive correspondence with Fr. Neketas, it became clear that he believed that on such subjects it is not possible to have different opinions or interpretations; the "Orthodox view" must be one in favor of evolution (!) and against the Shroud. We had thought that Orthodox Christians could at least discuss these subjects together in a friendly way; but according to Fr. N. one cannot discuss these questions, but must accept the opinion of the "Orthodox experts" on them—and the first "expert" for him was Fr. P. After this, Fr. Neketas began to tell people to "stay away from Etna" because Alexey Young was "just a Roman Catholic," and we know people who followed this advice. Later this uncharitable attitude was extended to include our Brotherhood also, and in general everyone in the "Russian" side of our Church who did not agree with the opinions of Fr. P. Fr. Neketas made a kind of "public demonstration" of this attitude when he dropped the name of our Brotherhood from the list of "important places in the Synod" in his 1978 Calendar; in 1979 our name again did not appear in this list. Obviously, his attitude is that since we do not agree with his opinions (and those of Fr. P.) we do not "exist."

Thus, our first cause to be upset with Fr. N. and Fr. P. was our discovery that they had formed a political party within our Church, and those who do not agree with the "party line" are dismissed and regarded as non-existent, and people are even warned about the "dangers" of having contact

with such ones. The more we found out about this "party spirit," the more grieved we became; but in the Russian tradition of "longsuffering," we said little about this to anyone for a long time and did not have a similar feeling towards Frs. N. and P., hoping that this was somehow a "misunderstanding" that would improve with time.

(2) At this same time (1973) we began to discover that our "Greeks" not only had a "political party," but also used political techniques to achieve their aims. For example, in 1972 Fr. Neketas suggested to Alexey Young that he "merge" his Nikodemos with Fr. Neketas' Orthodox Christian Witness, and that Fr. N. would be happy to print the combined periodical to make it "easier" for Alexey. We thought this a very strange thing at the time, and simply advised Alexey to continue his own independent publishing; only later did we realize that by this means Fr. N. intended to "take over" Nikodemos and ensure that it would never print anything not in accordance with the "party line." Later our "Greeks" told Andrew Bond in England that they would distribute his publication, The Old Calendarist, in America, but only on condition that no articles be printed without their censorship. In 1973, when we had asked Fr. Neketas if he could help with the distribution of our proposed Russian-language periodical (which we were never able to begin), Fr. N insisted that we let him print it also—and we began to realize that even our Russian-language work was to be "censored in Boston"—and not even by Russian-speaking people, but by converts who had learned some Russian.

Other "political techniques" of our "Greeks" include "spreading the word" that some particular publication or person is "outside the party line." For example, after the publication of the "Shroud" article, Fr. Alexey received a number of letters from Seattle all canceling their subscriptions to Nikodemos and offering, instead of the friendly criticism one would expect from fellow Orthodox Christians, a cold cutting him off. Alexey was so depressed and hurt by the treatment our "Greeks" gave him at that time that he would have given up printing altogether if we had not supported him and told him that the attitude of other people in our Church was not at all cold like that. Later, when it became obvious that Alexey Young was very talented and that his publications were quite good and important for our converts, Frs. P. and N. made a visit to him evidently in view of becoming "reconciled." But even this visit was also a matter of politics, for Nina Seco (who has always been an unquestioning follower of Fr. P.) told Alexey later that the monastery in Boston had no interest in being friendly with Alexey if he was not going to follow their "party line."

Thus, on many occasions we have received clear indications that Fr. P. and his followers did indeed intend to "take over the Synod": i.e., to make their "party line" prevail at least over the convert wing of our Church, and if possible over the Russians also. This whole attempt is so foreign to the Orthodox spirit that we have found it to be extremely distasteful, a kind of "Jesuitism" that has crept into our Church with the coming of Fr. P. In fact, in 1973 when I visited Seattle and saw Fr. P. there, he told me something that I did not fully appreciate then, but which now I see as a part of the "problem" which he has become for us: He told me that if one is working for a good church cause, it is permissible for one to lie, cheat, etc., for the sake of the "good cause." Sadly, we have seen this "Jesuit" principle in operation among our Greeks in the way they spread tales about people they do not like, misrepresent the position of people they

wish to criticize, "warn" their followers against people like Fr. Alexey Young, our Brotherhood, etc.

(3) Also in 1973 began the era of Fr. P's "open letters" to people in our Church whom he wished to criticize and "correct." There had been some earlier "open letters" to people outside our Church, and even then we had noticed that, while these letters were basically "correct" in their points, there was something in the tone of them that was foreign to our Orthodox mentality. Instead of giving their opponents the benefit of any doubt as to their position or beliefs, these letters sometimes took unfair advantage of isolated statements the opponents had made in order to accuse them of beliefs which they really did not hold. We regarded this as a rather small point at the time, but even then I expressed the view that I myself would not like to be the recipient of such an "open letter."

In 1973 (and perhaps before that, I don't know) these "open letters" began to be addressed to people in our own Church. We have seen a number of these letters, written by Fr. Ephraim, Fr. Mamas, Fr. Alexis (now Archimandrite), Fr. Panteleimon himself, and addressed to us, to Fr. Alexey Young, to Andrew Bond in England, to Metropolitan Philaret, and to several of our bishops. Almost without exception these letters have made a bad impression on us. In most of their individual points they are "correct," but in their tone they are filled with self-justification, subtle mockery of others, and a tone of cold superiority which seems to say: "Here is the Orthodox teaching; we are the authorities; you just listen to us and be obedient." These open letters, more than anything else, are what have led us to the conclusion that there is something "wrong" about Fr. P. and his activities.

We now have had quite a long experience of the activities of Fr. P. and his followers and of the "convert" movement in our Church, as well as of the "Old Calendarist" movement in Greece and America, where Fr. P. has also tried to exercise his influence. I can say sincerely that, having been most open and friendly to Fr. P. from the very beginning, we do not now have any hatred or bad feelings towards him. But in all honesty I must state the negative things about his activity which we have had occasion to observe in the 15 years or so of our contacts with him (actually, Fr. Herman knew him in Boston even before that, when Fr. P. was strongly arguing against our Church and in favor of the Metropolia). These negative aspects of his activity are serious enough that if he does not make a major effort to correct them he may well end by becoming an enemy of our Church:

(1) Holy Transfiguration has become a center for spreading criticism, rumors, and tales about other members of our Church, the Old Calendarists, etc. This is not an accident; it is precisely the way Fr. P. wants it and has planned it. From the very beginning Fr. P. has taken as his principle that the affairs of everyone in the Church are his business: he knows everything that is going on, has "files" on everyone, feels it his right to "correct" everyone in the Church (from the Metropolitan on down), and himself spreads the "correct" opinion about everyone and everything. He has criticized our own monastery just because we do not have a telephone and so are not in his "network," and he cannot call us up to "correct" us whenever he feels like it.

We believe that Fr. P. is very mistaken in his desire to know everything that goes on in our Church as well as outside it, more even than our bishops know; this desire is prompted by his involvement in church politics and is a very unhealthy thing, both for himself and for those many people whom he inspires to be interested in church matters which are none of their business. Fr. P. himself has "set the tone" of uncharitable criticism and the spreading of tales for which his monastery is notorious. As a small example: recently he told you of the rumor that Fr. Herman did not stop at Jordanville on his way back from Mt. Athos because he did not want to speak at the commencement exercises and because he was dissatisfied with Jordanville s "academic rather than monastic" emphasis. There is no truth whatever to this rumor, and this is the first time we have even hear it. Fr. Herman was not invited to speak at the commencement exercises at all, and he came directly back to California because he was totally exhausted from his trip and because our only helper at that time had left us. Why does Fr. P. repeat such rumors? We certainly knows that the main effect of such rumors would be to spread discord and distrust between Jordanville and our monastery; his first duty, then, if he means well to us and to Jordanville, would be to refuse to believe any such rumors and to strictly forbid his followers to believe or spread them. But on the contrary, he "innocently" repeats such tales, and by his authority actually causes many people to believe them. This he has done time after time; especially among the Greek Old Calendarists his words have had a poisonous effect; many to this day believe that Bishop Peter of Astoria is a "simoniac" or a "sorcerer," that Archimandrite Chrysostomos of Ohio is "not a Greek" (as though that were a crime even if it were true), is "a former Roman Catholic," "has forged his doctors degree," etc. If you question Fr. P. about any of these rumors, he always has an excuse that justifies him: he was misquoted, or he did not start the rumor, or it is true "in a certain sense," etc. But the fact remains that there is no single figure in our Church today who has such a large following of people who are willing to obey his every word; if he himself were to make a strong attack against the believing and spreading of rumors in the Church, the worst part of this problem in our Church would be ended. Instead, however, he is the one who most promotes such rumors, always with the intention of making himself and his political "party" seem correct.

By this political technique Fr. P. has acquired innumerable enemies in the Church, both in America and in Greece. People who entirely supported him and trusted him in the beginning have been alienated from him precisely because of his politics and unfair political techniques. He has alienated most of the leading figures in the Old Calendarist movement in Greece, and in our own Church these political techniques of Fr. P's are the main cause of the "coldness" which has come about between him and many of our bishops, priests, and laymen. For a short time, it is true, Fr. P. enjoyed great respect in Greece and helped give our Church great prestige there. But unfortunately, here again Fr. Ps techniques were first of all political·, in order to make our Church look good, he felt himself free to misrepresent the real positions of our bishops, to tell half-truths about what we really believed, and as a result, in the end all of this backfired, and today Fr. P. (and also our Church, to a large extent) is not well thought of in most places in Greece, in particular among the Old Calendarists; he has his own small following there of people who belong to his "political party," but he does not enjoy wide respect in Greece as a whole.

(2) Fr. P. and his monastery, in order to make themselves appear as "theological experts," have systematically undermined the theological authority of the most highly respected teachers of the Russian Orthodox Church in general, and of the Russian Church Outside of Russia in particular. Here Fr. P. has applied his political techniques to a goal far worse than the "personal" triumphs he achieves when rumors are spread about people he disapproves of; in spreading the same kind of rumors about theological authorities, he is undermining the very ground on which we Orthodox Christians stand today. If such theological giants as Metr. Philaret of Moscow, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, and in general the theology taught in our seminaries for the last century and more, are not really "Orthodox" at all— then we are in a very dangerous condition, and where are we to find our theological authority by which to stand firm against all the errors and temptations of these times? Fr. P. teaches: We will teach you what is right, we will read the Holy Fathers for you and teach you the correct doctrine, we have excellent translators and interpreters who are more Orthodox than Bishop Theophan, Metr. Philaret of Moscow, Archbishop Averky, and all the rest. This is a terribly dangerous game that Fr. P. is playing, he is unwittingly undermining the Orthodox ground under his own feet.

The chief weapon which Fr. P. uses in his attempt to undermine the theological authority of our Russian theologians is the recent academic fashion of looking everywhere for "Western influence" in our theological texts. There is a half-truth in this search; Fr. Michael Pomazansky and other good theologians will readily admit that there were such "Western influences" in the theological texts of the latter period of Russian (and Greek) history—but they also emphasize that these influences were external ones which never touched the heart of Orthodox doctrine. To say otherwise is to admit that Orthodoxy was lost (!) in these last centuries, and only now are young "theologians" like Fr. P. "finding" again the Orthodoxy of the Fathers. Fr. P. is too cautious to say such a thing in so many words, but by his actions and statements he is promoting an attitude which is very close to this, and he has caused many, many ignorant converts to lose all respect for the great Russian theologians and to expect "real Orthodox theology" only from the circle around Fr. P.—including Fr. Lev Puhalo!

To give a few examples: Fr. P. has spread the idea that Metr. Philaret of Moscow was very "Western" in his theology and that his Catechism was "Roman Catholic" and should not be read; Fr. Neketas picked this up and, in his often crude way, printed several times in his Witness that the Catechisms of the 19th century were "awful" and should not be used by Orthodox Christians. (This Catechism was always the first book Vladika John would give a new convert!) Speak to any convert under the influence of Frs. P. and N., and almost certainly they will have no respect for Metr. Philaret and for Orthodox Catechisms in general. After we in The Orthodox Word and Fr. Alexey Young in Nikodemos had mentioned how respected authorities in the Greek Church (St. Nectarios of Pentapolis, St. Makarios of Corinth) had used Russian Catechisms (translated into Greek) in their own pastoral labors, Fr. Ephraim in one of his "open letters" spoke condescendingly even of these Greek authorities, saying that St. Nectarios was known "more for this piety than this theology" (St. Nectarios was also against evolution, which is another reason why his theological authority has been discredited).

Another example: Fr. P. spreads the rumor that Bishop Theophan the Recluse is "scholastic" and thus not to be trusted. I have seen no proof for this assertion; it is only another rumor which helps to discredit a major theological authority in the Russian Church. (And what if it were true? Is "scholasticism"—whatever that means for our Greeks"—a heresy? Is Fr. P. not "scholastic" himself in some ways?) In one of his "open letters" which Fr. Neketas published in his Witness, Fr. Alexis of Boston went so far as to say that Unseen Warfare should not be read (!) because it comes originally from a Roman Catholic source and "just does not sit right." What presumption! A major spiritual text for Orthodox Christians, which has the authority of two major theologians (St. Nikodemus and Bishop Theophan) behind it—is dismissed and regarded as of no value; a little group of basically American converts think they are more sensitive and authoritative than these great Church authorities! Later Fr. Ephraim (I believe) explained that St. Nikodemus also was under "Western influence" and there [fore] is really not to be trusted.

Another example: the authority of Archbishop Averky was undermined by Fr. P., who spread rumors that he was "Western" and "scholastic" and the like. Followers of Fr. P. spread the tale that Archbishop Averky was "one of the worst" of our theologians who are under "Western influence."

For years Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov was not subject to this criticism, probably because his writings are so anti-Roman-Catholic. But now also the attack against him is beginning: in the latest Tlinget Herald Fr. Lev states that Bishop Ignatius believed in the "toll-houses" because he was under "Western influence" and went to a "Latinized" seminary (he doesn't know that Bp. Ignatius didn't go to a seminary at all!). Fr. Levs whole recent attack against our Orthodox doctrine of life after death is a direct result of Fr. P's influence. Fr. P., it is true, is not directly responsible for each statement Fr. Lev makes, but it was Fr. P. who has put into the air the whole idea of discrediting Russian theological authorities, and Fr. Lev only adds a few of his own ideas in order to make himself seem to be a "theological authority" in his own right. It was Fr. P. who produced Fr. Lev as a "theological authority, " and Fr. P. could stop Fr. Lev's publications in an instant if he wanted to (through Fr. Neketas who publishes them). Why does he allow him to continue? Fr. N. told Fr. Alexey Young recently: "We all know Fr. Lev is unbalanced, but he is one of us." That is, he follows the "party line, " and therefore we won't stop him! God only knows how many innocent people Fr. Lev has already confused with his fantasies of the "sleep" of the soul and with his attitude of open disrespect for the traditional teaching of the Orthodox Church.

This undermining of the theological and spiritual authority of the teachers of the Russian Church which took him in with such open arms when he was in need of a Church home—is surely one of the most serious and disastrous of Fr. P's wrong steps. I really do not know how he can amend this mistake, now that so many unsuspecting converts have caught the "disease" of distrusting our Russian theologians. His work in accepting and translating Metr. Anthony's "Dogma" (which he promised us several years ago that would never print, after we had explained to him Bishop Nektary's objections to it) is already an indication of how far he and his followers are from being "theological authorities." It does not bother us that he is wrong on this point; we all make mistakes, and in a healthy church atmosphere we can easily forgive each other and not

hold such mistakes against each other. What bothers us, rather, is that Fr. P. insists that his group of "theologians" are the experts for our Church, and anyone (living or dead) of whom this group does not approve must be dismissed and discredited, often in a crude way. Thus he helps to poison the Church atmosphere, spreading distrust and suspicion.

(3) Fr. P. has established around himself a very unhealthy "authority complex," built upon the insecurity of so many of our American converts (which includes our "Greek-Americans" also). Because of his "charismatic" talents for charming people he has made himself an "authority" which for many people overshadows all the theologians and spiritual giants of the Orthodox Church, living and dead. Whatever he says is true, even if all the theologians of the past century teach otherwise. It is because of this inflated "authority" that the undermining of our theological authorities has been so successful: no one can be right if Fr. P. disagrees with him! It is because of Fr. P.'s "authority" that so many converts will not listen to reasoned theological arguments on any subject; "Fr. P. has spoken, the subject is closed!" This is papalism, not Orthodoxy! With people who accept Fr. P's "authority" in this way it is impossible to argue; their minds are closed on all subjects where Fr. P. or someone in his clique has spoken. This is why the arguments of Fr. Lev Puhalo, which if subjected to close examination can be seen to be very flimsy, are widely accepted by converts: he is one of Fr. P's "anti-Western" "theologians," and thus his words can be accepted with almost blind authority and do not need to be discussed.

Whenever the opinion of Fr. P. on any subject is challenged, he (or more often, one of his monks) gives a reply in the form of a more or less "open letter" which "proves" that he is always "correct" (except sometimes in small details). This constant attitude of self-justification is made easier for him in that all his opinions are "group opinions" and there is usually no one responsible person who must answer for them.

I have already mentioned above what we think of these "open letters"; but most shocking of all to us were the two letters which Fr. P. himself wrote in 1975 to Archbp. Averky and our own Archbp. Anthony, in connection with Fr. P's refusal to serve wherever Bishop Peter of Astoria was allowed to serve. (We have heard all manner of arguments from Fr. P. and his followers about Bishop Peter, but in the end it became quite evident that the one and only cause for the "problem" with Bishop Peter was personal and factional jealousy: Fr. P. will not allow the existence in America of any Greek clergy who are not in his own "party." Dr. Kalomiros has told us that the whole problem was that Bishop Peter was a real Greek who had rapport with Greeks, and Fr. P. is an American who has rapport only with Americans and Greek-Americans.) In these letters Fr. P., instead of apologizing as simply and humbly as possible for his mistake, did his utmost to prove that he was "right" and the bishops were "wrong," and then he threw in a number of accusations against these bishops themselves: that Archbishop Averky never visits Boston, that Metr. Philaret does not like to visit Jordanville, that Archbishop Anthony has had a fight with our Brotherhood, etc. These letters were a final proof for us that Fr. P. in his Church activities is inspired first of all by political calculations, and that the "files" he keeps on everyone are weapons for his own justification and for making accusations against anyone who disagrees with him.

Fr. P. has been with our Church now for almost 14 years. In that time he has done many positive things. He has given money to worthy causes in the Church, has an impressive monastery and dedicated priest-followers, has in many ways helped the spirit of zealousness which is notably lacking among so many of our Russians. But by his political maneuvering, his undermining of our Orthodox theological authorities, and his promotion of an unquestioning "papal" obedience to the opinions of himself and his "theological party"—he has done so much harm that I wonder whether all of his good deeds can make up for it.

For some time now we have been aware that Fr. P. has been dissatisfied with our Orthodox Word, where we have expressed ideas in accordance with our Orthodox tradition but contrary to his opinions: that our bishops have not denied the grace of the other Orthodox jurisdictions, that Unseen Warfare, Metr. Philaret's Catechism, and other books of which he disapproves are quite Orthodox, that Blessed Augustine is actually a saint in the Orthodox Calendar, that those who criticize our recent theological authorities are going on dangerous ground, etc. Fr. P., has not written us directly criticizing these articles, but we do know that he has spoken publicly in sermons against our articles, has encouraged the spread of disdainful rumors about us (Fr. Mamas, for example, told one new convert that Fr. Herman was "Protestant" because of his enthusiastic sermons), and in general has let his followers know that our publications are not to be trusted. We have been very grieved at all this, because from the beginning we thought we were working together with Fr. P. for the cause of true Orthodoxy; and now it turns out that he has formed his own special mission and does not need our cooperation any more.

The most recent incident—the exchange of letters with Fr. Mamas—is only a small sign of the great disharmony described above, which has now come to exist, not merely between our two monasteries, but between two wings of our Church: that which accepts Fr. P. as the one authority over all others living and dead; and that which tries humbly to follow in the age-old tradition of Russian Orthodoxy and accepts as its first authorities such recent teachers as Bishop Theophan the Recluse, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, Archbishop Averky, Archbishop John Maximovitch, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, etc.

Briefly, the story of this most recent correspondence is this: Fr. Herman wrote a brief note to Fr. P., asking if his monastery could help as it did some years ago with some translations from Greek for The Orthodox Word. Fr. Mamas answered this letter and told us that they had no time to help us, but that he could help us by correcting the text of translations of Greek Fathers which we were making from the Russian (specifically, St. Symeon the New Theologian). In itself, of course, we have nothing against such an offer; if Fr. Mamas really knows ancient Greek well, he could probably help to make our translations of St. Symeon more precise. But the tone of his letter was so self-centered and disdainful (he spoke of the "horrible translation" that Jordanville had published, told how he was studying Syriac to translate St. Isaac the Syrian, and wrote in general as though he and his clique were really the greatest "experts" in sight) that I wrote only a very short note in reply, telling him in general that one could go astray by "correctness": also, that grasping the "savor of Orthodoxy" was more important, and that I sensed a danger in his becoming such an "expert" on St. Isaac—perhaps it would be better for his simplicity to translate this book humbly from the Greek or even the Russian, and perhaps to suffer another 20 years

before daring to undertake anything so high. When I wrote this I thought: perhaps this will cause another "Boston open letter" teaching us about the importance of "correct translations"; but my note was so obviously personal that I put this thought out of my mind, and Fr. Herman blessed me to send the note.

But sure enough, Fr. Mamas wrote a whole "epistle" in reply, accusing us of being against accurate translations from the originals, of promoting "pious fables," of "a taint of Old Believerism," of teaching the "baptism of the dead" (because of a quote in The Orthodox Word which he read in an overly-literal way and gave a meaning totally out of context), showing a disdainful lack of respect for both Bishop Theophan the Recluse and Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo, and informing us that he could not go astray because he has an "elder" and "obedience." The "tone" of this letter was cold, superior, "expert"—very different from the normal warm, unassuming letters we receive from Orthodox clergy and monks, even when they may be critical of something we have published. He also took the opportunity to translate long passages from a letter of Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky on his translations from Greek, saying that "it is a great pity that you did not translate this letter in full to include in your book—when in fact we had translated the passages, and our very publication of the book on Blessed Paisius shows how much we value his careful attitude towards Patristic translations. We were very offended by the letter, which went to great pains to "correct" us on points we had never held, and we felt that the main purpose of the letter was to show to others how "wrong" we are and how "right" Holy Transfiguration Monastery is (all these letters they show to a number of people, whether or not they are "open"—that is how we ourselves received copies of their letters to Archbishop Averky, Archbp. Anthony, Metr. Philaret, and others which we never asked for and which should never had been made so "open"). In addition, he took the opportunity of criticizing Eastern Orthodox Books, thinking we have some connection with them, for publishing a book he disapproved of.

My reply to Fr. Mamas was rather indignant, and perhaps a little too "warm" for the Boston mentality. I told him his letter was so unnecessary, an "over-reaction"; that I wished him a good dose of "warmheartedness and simplicity"; that he is wrong if he thinks his "elder" and his "community" will infallibly preserve him from mistakes (since group passions can be worse than individual passions); that his criticisms are unfair and we don't teach what he claims we teach at all; and that he should be more charitable to Eastern Orthodox Books and tell positive things about them—for example, p. xvii of their new edition of the Ladder deliberately omits mention of the Eastern Orthodox Books reprint which was still available then (this we took as an intentional indication that Eastern Orthodox Books is "non-existent" because it doesn't follow the Boston "party line"). Fr. Mamas did not reply to this letter, but Fr. Ephraim replied for him, saying that I had tried to "psycho-analyze" Fr. Mamas, that no one there has even heard of the Eastern Orthodox Books reprint of the Ladder; and that they don't want to receive any of our books in exchange for their books and incense which they send us. (I had asked Fr. P. in a note "how many" of our books he wanted for the Monastery, since he had never asked for any). This letter, while not disdainful and "expert" like Fr. Mamas', indicates how far the gulf is becoming between them, who want to be the "experts" of the Church, and the rest of us, who value a humbler attitude towards church activity. How Fr. P. and his monks could have "forgotten"

about the Eastern Orthodox Books Ladder is a wonder—Vladimir Anderson himself told Fr. P. years ago he was going to print it, Fr. Herman discussed it with Fr. P. later, and Nina Seco and other followers of Fr. P. knew all about it and were opposed to it, thinking it was "competition" with the Boston edition. (It wasn't "competition" at all, since Vladimir kept this book in print for a good five years before the Boston edition was ready.) I suppose we'll have to accept that Fr. P. "forgot" about it, but it still seems strange. And that they don't want our books makes us sad—we have freely distributed their books and had hoped that they would want to give our books to monks and pilgrims. Years ago, when the monastery was friendly to us, it was Fr. Ephraim himself who had suggested that we "exchange" publications and handicrafts, but now our publications are out of favor. (Fr. Ephraim politely suggested that we "exchange" with St. Mark's bookstore, but that would be a purely commercial exchange which isn't what we asked about; they just don't want our books.)

From this correspondence it has only become more obvious that Fr. P. does not much approve of our publications, and is somehow going on a different path. I think it is simply the "party line" that is to blame—we do not follow it and do not intend to follow it, and this is why Fr. P. is dissatisfied with us.

What this means for the future, I don't know. May God preserve us! We wish to be friends with everyone who is struggling for true Orthodoxy, but the "spirit" coming from Fr. P. seems to be different from that of the humble strugglers we know, both in the Russian and Greek Churches. We've tried gently to communicate some of this to Fr. P. and Fr. N.—but up to now they have only replied with their "correctness," and have indicated no desire to be more humble about their pretensions.

Please pray for us. We sense that the problem with Fr. P., is part of the much larger problem of church politics which has such disastrous results nowadays. We pray for Fr. P. and sincerely hope that he can have a humbler approach to church affairs, but we have little hope, since things have already gone so far. We have recently written a letter to Fr. Neketas also, complaining about Fr. Lev's latest Tlinget Herald, which was outrageous. This kind of thing cannot go on for long!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. Please do not show this letter to Fr. P.—we know it would go in our "file" and would only be used against us. Sad—but true, I fear.

281.

Nov. 8/21, 1979

Archangel Michael

Dear Andrew [Bond],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

We were glad to hear from you, and we welcome your new publication News (or is it Orthodox News? It could be an important and encouraging publication, which is much needed in our days of gloom and negative thinking. Something better than the "Grabbe newsletter" is much needed! May God bless your labors!

The letter from Lazarus Kelly is indeed a sad reflection on the wrong spirit of so much of our church life. But actually—it isn't so sad after all. He found that the "fanatic" spirit isn't right, and he's just a newcomer; so the "Boston spirit" isn't grabbing everybody after all, is it?

You may not realize it there, but a full reaction is setting in in our Church against this narrow spirit of fanaticism. For the time being it may still look as though fanaticism is still in fashion, but things are changing. The whole attitude towards Fr. Dimitry Dudko in our Church is one sign of it— all the Russians receive him with open arms, and there is no talk about his "grace" at all—anyone who can talk like that is Orthodox, period. The problem of his bishops, intercommunion, etc., still remain—but all the time it becomes more obvious that these questions, in the Russian Church at least, are temporary and superficial and do not hinder the deeper unity between us and true sons of the Russian Church like Fr. Dimitry. Incidentally, his "rebellious" attitude towards his "correct" and "bureaucratic" bishops is also instructive for us.

Even your Fr. Alexis is changing a little. Of late he has made a point of entering into closer contacts with some of us here in America who are obviously "anti-Boston." In his last letter to us he even began to speak positively about the new Greek Archbishop in London—he obviously begins to realize that fanaticism is out, our Church hasn't accepted it, although he is still somewhat bound to the "Boston line." But even the latter may be changing. We've had a rather blunt exchange with Boston and Seattle in recent weeks, and perhaps at last they will see that the rest of us are simply not going to follow the "party line."

I've been invited to speak at Jordanville on St. Herman's day (Dec 12/25) when there will be a youth pilgrimage. The people in back of it are of the anti-Boston clergy, and this pilgrimage, God willing, will be part of the call to spiritual life and awareness not in the framework of narrowness and fanaticism. Please pray that I will be able to say a fruitful word there. Fr. Herman spoke at the pilgrimage there in 1973 and gave a flaming word, but people weren't as prepared for it then as they are beginning to be now. Only I'm a dull speaker compared to Fr. Herman, so please pray that I will be able to get some "punch" over.

The Fathers at St. Gregory's have sent a copy of a letter for publication in The Old Calendarist, thinking that perhaps we would be against it. On the contrary, we welcome such letters, which throw light on a subject which is still almost unknown in our Church, or else clouded over by the political maneuvering of our Greeks. We will be publishing some things of Fr. Chrysostomos ourselves in upcoming issues of The Orthodox Word.

I'm sending separately an air mail copy of the 1980 Calendar—we sent you 40 copies by sea mail last week, hoping they will arrive at least by the first of the year (that gives them two months travelling time).

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1980

282.

Jan. 24/Feb. 6, 1980

Blessed Xenia of Petersburg

Dear Father Ambrose,

Christ is in our midst!

Father Herman has asked me to answer your inquiry about Fr. John Lewis. We have known him by correspondence for a number of years, and I know several people in the parishes where he served before becoming a monk (including my godfather, who was his chief help in his parishes and helped him establish them).

To our knowledge, he is a typical "American convert"—very fervent, but with a certain instability or imbalance which can be healed (if then) only after many years of struggles and sufferings. He came to our Church from the American Metropolia with perhaps a little too much "zeal" and rather too much talk about how wrong everyone in the Metropolia is (of course, he was mostly correct, but the tone of "criticism" was a little too present in him). I think he was sobered somewhat by the difficulties he experienced in starting a parish, but then his "criticism" began again, this time directed against members of the parish. He began to set up "Russians" against "Americans," and finally chased all the Russians out of the parish and "excommunicated" my godfather in a very bad letter (which I have seen) that shows him to have illusions about himself as a "spiritual guide"; he made what seems to have been a conflict of personalities into a case of "righteousness vs. unrighteousness."

Then Fr. John began to dream about monasticism. He visited Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo, who wanted him to become a monk and open an old-folks' home (he had been a celibate priest until then). He wrote us then about this, and we encouraged him, knowing that Vladika Andrew was very realistic about spiritual life, and that Fr. John seemed to understand the need for sufferings in spiritual life. But this monastic desire took a very strange form: Fr. John and his deacon were tonsured (by Fr. Panteleimon in Boston, who I believe was against the idea, but followed Vladika Andrews desire), and then told his parishioners that the church was now a monastery and that they should not come and bother the "monastic calm." Finally he had the parish sign over the church property to the monastery, he sold it and moved away. He tried to make his second parish in Pennsylvania also sign their property over to him, but they refused. He changed the location of his monastery several times, and then about a year or more ago moved to Florida.

On my recent visit to the Eastern U.S. I visited my godfather and met people from both of Fr. Johns former parishes. I found that he left a very bad impression behind him. His first parish was

completely destroyed and the people scattered; the second parish remains but has bad feelings about him. The impression was strong that Fr. John has acted in a very unbalanced and irresponsible way.

I do not know the nature of Fr. Johns present troubles with Bishop Gregory; very possibly (knowing this bishop) there are some injustices there. I spoke with Bishop Laurus about the matter in Jordanville, and his impression is that Fr. John is moving around simply to escape supervision from any higher church authorities. I myself think that he is a restless, somewhat unbalanced person whose only hope for spiritual survival is to "stick it out" where he already is. I have written this to him myself, but have received no answer. I really don't know what his state of soul has been in this past year, and why he is moving around so much.

Of course, for your Church to receive him without a canonical release would place a very big obstacle in the way of peace between our jurisdictions. But even with a canonical release I think you will have trouble with him, and I think you should get to know him rather well before accepting him even canonically. Because of Vladika Andrews blessing, I still have hopes that he will survive spiritually—but only on condition that he stay put in one place and not go from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Vladika Andrew told him that he would learn through sufferings and would not be considered a "real monk" by others because of his "non-monastic" work in taking care of old people. How your bishops would accept such an idea I don't know; I think Fr. John could get along with our bishops if he really wants to (our bishops are really quite tolerant and lenient on the whole). From my talk with Bishop Laurus, I doubt very much that he will be able to get a canonical release to your jurisdiction. I think your bishops should emphasize to him the necessity for such a canonical release, and of getting to know him better if he does obtain it.

On my trip to Jordanville last month I visited the fathers at Hayesville and had a very nice visit. I think such quiet visits are the best we can hope for at the present time; our bishops are still "reacting against" all their bad experiences with "Greeks" in recent years. However, I noted that Vladika Laurus was very well disposed to what Fr. Chrysostomos wrote in his recent article on the Old Calendar situation—a balanced, objective view of it; and such things will help much in the long run, I think.

Please give our heartfelt greetings to Bishop Kyprianos and ask his blessing for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

283.

March 13/26, 1980

St. Nicephorus of Constantinople

Dear John [Hudanish],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

I have received your letter with its news and its various accusations against Father Herman and myself. It is rather an insulting letter —something I don't think you understand; you probably think you were just being "honest," without seeing that an Orthodox Christian expresses his honest in an entirely different tone. This Christian tone is what you are lacking in your life in general, as I see it.

There would be little point in attempting to answer all your accusations, except to say that in some points you are mistaken, in others you don't "get the point," and in even in those cases where you may be "perfectly right" you do not show the basic forgiveness and compassion which Christ our God expects of us Orthodox Christians, if we are to attain His forgiveness.

What can I say? Obviously I have failed you as a spiritual father, not communicating to you even the basic ABC's of Christian spiritual life. In this past year you have gone from bad to worse, alienating even more than before, through your un-Christian behavior, the Old Believers, the Orthodox community, visiting priests, and even your own son—who is surely to a large extent what you have made him, apparently more unconsciously than consciously. The blame for all of this rests squarely upon your shoulders. You are not behaving in a Christian way to any of these people, and you seem totally unaware of the fact. (Judging from your past misinterpretations of words like this, I must add: of course, you may sometimes act in a Christian way towards them, and may God grant you more such occasions; but the sum total or your behavior, and the reason why you are driving people away from yourself, is precisely your un-Christian behavior.) You act like a spoiled child who has no intention of growing up.

If you wish to be an Orthodox Christian you must begin now\ from this very day and hour and minute, to love God and your fellow men. This means: not to act in an arbitrary or whimsical way with people, not just saying the first thing that enters your head, not picking fights or quarrels with people over anything, big or small, being constantly ready to ask forgiveness of them (and to ask it more than you think is necessary), to have compassion for them and fervently pray for them.

If you still accept my authority as a spiritual father, I am giving you a different prayer rule: instead of the Jesus Prayer, say every night 100 prayers by the prayer-rope, with words something like this (or the equivalent in your own words): Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on my brother (name)… going by name through all the people close to you, starting with your immediate family. With each petition make a bow (prostrations for members of your immediate family). Stop at 100 (repeating names if necessary), and let the last petition be for everyone. By this I want you to wake up and start loving your brothers and sisters, both of the household of faith and those without. You are building on your property an immense project which makes absolutely no sense if at the same time you are chasing away the people for whom, supposedly, it is being built. Build first on love and compassion for your fellow men, and then the building of earthly materials will make sense and be completed safely.

I am sad to see that you have "missed the point" on so much that Fr. Herman has tried to tell you, so much so that you have used his benefactions to you, which you don't understand, into slanders against him. People like Father Herman who try to help others to see their own shortcomings and

overcome them literally turn gray when their good words are returned to them as a slap in the face. That is very crude of you. When Fr. Herman tells you that you act out of pride in your good deeds (which is so obvious I shouldn't think it would need proof), only a totally insensitive person could draw the conclusion that it is the good deeds that should be abandoned and not the pride. But let me repeat it for you in simpler language: Many of your good deeds, indeed probably all of them to some extent, are spoiled because they are mixed with pride; continue to do good deeds, but pray God to make you humble so you will not spoil them. The effect of a good deed done with humility is 100 times greater than the effect of a good deed done with pride—first of all inwardly, but then outwardly also. It is just a slander, caused by spiritual insensitivity, to say or imply that Fr. Herman told you not to do good deeds; you are probably thinking this just to justify your anger against him, which is caused by the feet that he tells you the truth about yourself.

About David, I will repeat the advice which you have misunderstood: no one has said he is a parasite, but only that he very easily falls into this pattern (as he has in the past) if those around him do not act wisely. He needs to be constantly pushed in the direction of being independent and responsible, and not babied, or else there will be disaster, first and foremost for himself. You probably do not realize that one big reason for his positive behavior at this moment is that he is "scared"-*» scared at being in a new place, scared of failing at work, scared of Father Herman.

This is a very good thing for him, and Fr. Herman has helped him with this far more than you can understand. When and if David ceases to be "scared," there will be trouble. Father Herman and I both know him much better than you do. If I lose "credibility" (such a heartless expression!) with you for saying this, so let it be.

From the tone and content of your letter, I would judge that you are tired of me as a spiritual father. If you do not change this attitude there is nothing I can do for you, and I will certainly not press you. It is not a question of seeking for a "starets" in your case, but of an honest attempt to understand the most elementary principles of Christian spiritual life. You are doing very poorly at this understanding, and I grieve that I have failed you so much by not giving you this understanding in a way you could receive it. Your failure is not because you are incapable. You have the mind to understand, and I think you have the heart also; but you are ruining this golden chance (with a church right in your back yard and more than one priest who is willing to help you) which you have to learn what Christian spiritual life is, by your stubborn self-love and by just not caring for those around you. Start caring and being sensitive to those around you, and you will see how your life will change (you may think that it is the others who have changed, but first of all it will be yourself).

I make a prostration before you and beg your forgiveness for my many sins and failings towards you. May God forgive and have mercy on us all. I send you heartfelt greetings for the approaching Pascha—may it be a time of spiritual renewal for us all! And I assure you that, whatever your attitude may be towards me, mine towards you has not changed in the least.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. Are you reading any spiritual book? You should read Unseen Warfare. Do you have a copy?

P.p.s. May God reward you for your deed of compassion to the poor Mexican. But how could you think that Fr. Herman would want you not to do such things? You must listen more when he speaks to you of love and compassion; if you had had such compassion for your own son, on a regular basis, he would not have left you. He loves you, in case you don't know it.

The Slavonic Gospel was sent to you last week, and you should have it by now. We don't have an extra prosphora seal, after all, and you will receive one sooner from Boston than we could get you one.

284.

The Orthodox Word

Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

Platina, California 96076 U.SA.

March 26/April 8, 1980

Dear Maria [Kraft],

CHRIST IS RISEN! May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

We have received your letter, and Gleb has received one also, informing us of your wish that Gleb leave us immediately.

Already several weeks before this, two representatives of the Redding Social Welfare Department had visited us and told us that you wished Gleb to leave. After talking to him and to us at length, they told us they were satisfied with his-situation and would not help you in your attempt to make him leave us as long as he himself did not desire this; and Gleb was very firm in telling them that he desired to stay. Legally, a boy of 15 (almost 16) has a right to decide with whom he wishes to live.

None of us know your motives in wishing him to leave. I only wish to tell you something from the bottom of my heart: Gleb has found a home, a spiritual maturity, and a deep psychological security with us. To uproot him from this security now and force him to live with someone else would be a most cruel thing to do. You would have to do this very much against his will, and this could only alienate him from you, perhaps for good; and such a compulsory move could have disastrous results for him both spiritually and psychologically. Please do not try to uproot him from the home he has found with us for five years now. In two years he will be already 18 and ready to make his own further decisions about his future, and nothing he has gained here will hinder such a free and mature decision.

We are prepared to support Gleb's decision (which does not involve any disrespect for you) to the utmost, and according to the law it is up to his free decision where he wishes to live. Please respect his decision.

As far as we are concerned, you need not send any money at all for his upkeep.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

285.

Bright Saturday

March 31 /April 13, 1980

Dear Fr. Neketas,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

We haven't received any answer as yet to my letter to you of last October, but we have received several new issues of the Tlingit Herald, still published and distributed by you, and the insulting, arrogant series of attacks on what we have been defending as the Orthodox teaching on life after death continues unabated. You must regard it as very important to "demolish" thoroughly what we have said (and what Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, Bp. Theophan the Recluse, Archbishop John Maximovitch, the publications of Holy Trinity Monastery, and many others have taught) in order to continue sponsoring discussions of such a quality.

Father, what would be the point of Father Herman appearing at the Seattle conference in July? You've already (through Deacon Lev's works) tried to discredit his labors for Orthodoxy, sharing in Deacon Lev's deliberate attempt to "embarrass" him (I take this word from one of Deacon Lev's letters where he described what he was going to do). Father Herman's appearance in Seattle would obviously provoke unpleasant scenes, if not from you or Deacon Lev, then from some of your readers who have now learned to regard our Orthodoxy as quite dubious, indeed "heresy-filled" (to quote Deacon Lev's description of one of the Orthodox texts which we continue to regard as Orthodox).

Some people have tried to explain your position to us. One person (a Russian priest) thinks that we just have to accept that this is the way "Greeks" behave—that if they disagree with you or want to fight with you, they call you every name in the book, try to thoroughly discredit you by honest or dishonest means, and think they are proving their "Orthodoxy" by this. I sincerely hope that this is not the basis on which you act.

Another person, one of your own parishioners, says that you are an "innocent victim" of Deacon Lev—that you have such blind trust in him that you aren't even aware of the insulting tone and intent of his writings on life after death (as well as on some other subjects).

It's not for us to guess what you have in mind, but you are certainly succeeding in alienating us and many others from you, including your own bishop.

Let this brief letter be another cry of our anguish over what you are doing. You have made us feel most unwelcome in Seattle. If Fr. Herman did come, it would be a most strained occasion, and who knows what seemingly innocent opinion, shared (like the teaching on life after death which we have printed) by numerous Orthodox theological authorities in the present and past

centuries, might be picked out for another discrediting attack by Deacon Lev or someone under his influence?

With heartfelt grief, but still loving you in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

286.

May 14/27, 1980

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Dear Fr. Michael [Azkoul],

Christ is in our midst!

Thank you for your letter and its attempt to bring peace in the midst of the "debate" over the toll-houses, the "sleep" of the soul, and so forth. I very much appreciate your concern and kind words.

I must say that for my part, although I realize Deacon Levs articles were occasioned by my own articles (they will bear my signature in the book form), I do not regard this "debate" as primarily a personal one at all. For one thing, it hasn't really been a "debate" at all, since all the attacking is coming from his side; and for another, the attack is not really against me, since the basic part of my articles is simply a retelling of the teaching of Archbishop John Maximovitch, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, etc.—but rather an attack against this teaching itself, which he has tried to demolish entirely, for whatever reasons of his own. If he wishes to apologize for his rather crude attacks, I hope the apology will be to all the good Orthodox teachers, living and dead, whom he has maligned, and not just to me personally; but I see no need for a personal meeting with him over this.

I suspect that Deacon Lev's articles are only a small part of a larger attitude in our Church of distrust for the recent theological authorities of the Russian Church. If people like Fr. Panteleimon of Boston had not first suggested that many of our recent Russian bishops and theologians are not really to be trusted, I doubt that Deacon Lev would ever have written such a series of attacks. This is a bigger problem for which I fear there is no easy answer. For our part, we intend to continue presenting the teaching of these bishops and theologians (on various subjects) as authoritative and Orthodox, unless it can really be shown to us that they are not. Deacon Lev's articles on life after death have not shown us this at all.

I would disagree with only one point in your letter: I do not believe that I have presented the toll-houses as a dogma in my articles. I don't think they really are a theologoumenon either, because they don't belong properly to the sphere of dogma at all (except as they touch on the doctrine of the Particular Judgment), but rather belong to the Orthodox ascetic teaching and Orthodox piety. It would never occur to me to make belief in or even awareness of the toll-houses into a condition for baptism; but I would certainly expect that as a person goes deeper in the faith and reads the ascetic texts and Lives of Saints he would become acquainted with them and accept

them as a matter of course. My articles have been meant as an attempt to facilitate this, whereas Deacon Lev's articles, it seems to me, are an attempt to persuade people not to read this Orthodox literature as somehow harmful to a person's Orthodoxy or state of soul.

By the way, in the several years we have been printing the "soul after death" series, I don't recall that we've received a single comment criticizing the teaching set forth there, whereas we have received many letters expressing interest and approval. The only real criticism we have received is that the series has taken up too much space in The Orthodox Word. I rather agree with this comment, but unfortunately our circumstances, physical and financial, are such that we could not print this book except by first publishing it in serial form.

It is not I, but Father Herman, who has been invited to the Seattle Conference. He is at present very disinclined to go, not out of any personal offense (the "soul after death" series is all my work), but for the same reason our Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Nektary have told us they will not be attending: the atmosphere in Seattle has become rather tense and unfriendly to those of us who do not share the particular views of Fr. Neketas and Fr. Panteleimon on various church subjects. Deacon Lev's attacks are the most recent and the biggest sign of this tenseness (Fr. Neketas continues to publish them despite our strong protests), but even before then I am afraid that we and our bishops have been regarded as "scholastic," not really "correct" in our Orthodoxy, too "Russian," and what have you. I think that Fr. Neketas, in particular, wants to place us in some kind of "categories" that will reduce our influence (and thereby undermine whatever Fr. Herman might say at Seattle—"he's only a Russian, or a scholastic," etc). Just last week Fr. Herman personally went to see Fr. Neketas to minimize any "personal" differences between us—but just now we've received a copy of Fr. Neketas' letter to our Archbishop Anthony protesting Fr. Herman's supposed desire to change his talk to one on the toll-houses at Seattle—a thought that never entered his mind and which he would certainly never do of his own free will! Apparently Fr. Neketas thinks that Fr. Herman wants to force the tollhouses on everyone, and therefore he interpreted his words to produce this result, which is quite far from the truth.

I believe the Synod will be meeting soon to discuss some of these questions, and Fr. Herman's final decision on Seattle will be made probably after that, and after a last consultation with our two bishops.

Thank you again for you concern, and please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

287.

May 23/June 5, 1980

St. Leontius of Rostov

Dear Father Demetrios,

Christ is in our midst!

Thank you very much for your letter with its concern over church harmony in connection with Fr. Herman's going (or not going) to the Seattle conference next month. Several priests have contacted us in this same connection—some saying about the same thing you said, but others, on the contrary, telling us to stay away from Seattle because the Orthodox "tone" there is wrong.

We ourselves, though we have been aware of the tension between some of our Greek clergy and the rest of the Church, resolved, from the moment that Fr. Herman was invited to speak, to accept the invitation and go through with it, for the sake of the ordinary believers who know little or nothing of the tension in the Church and would only be scandalized. This resolve continued firm even after Deacon Lev began his insulting articles (about which we complained to Fr. Neketas, as the publisher of them). As Deacon Lev's attacks continued, and Fr. Neketas indicated his agreement with them, we began to waver in this resolve. It is not that we feel personally insulted—for Deacon Levs attacks are more against the authorities (Archbishop John, Bishop Ignatius, Theophan the Recluse, etc.) from whom we have taken the teaching we have printed. But the nature and tone of Deacon Levs attacks would place us in an awkward position in Seattle: if we go and take part without saying anything, we give silent approval to his errors and insults; if we protest publicly, it creates a disturbance among the people which would only confuse many (because, after all, the question is a rather subtle one, and Deacon Lev has erred more in the tone of his writings and in attacking the Orthodox spirit of piety than in doctrine—though he is off there also), making a normal part of Orthodox teaching and piety into something that is controversial and somehow dubious. As a last resort, to preserve some degree of harmony for the sake of the people, we thought of asking Fr. Neketas to allow us to have a table to distribute our literature, including an "answer" to Deacon Lev, so that those who wish can see that we don't agree with his teaching; and then there wouldn't need to be anything said and there would be no "fight" at the conference.

The latest Orthodox Christian Witness, however (which Fr. Neketas did not send to us, but which we received from a horrified subscriber of his), contains a new attack against us which shows that the tension in the Church is not caused by Deacon Lev at all; that has been only one aspect of it. Now the attack is against Fr. Dimitry Dudko, and we (and Father Alexey Young) who have defended him are publicly accused of "telling outright fibs" and of being "unprincipled and irresponsible." Again, we are not primarily concerned with the attack against us personally. But this is an attack against one of the best representatives of living Orthodox, the Orthodoxy of the heart! The author of * this article is most unfair (omitting Fr. Dimitry's other statements on the Catacomb Church and on the Ecumenical Movement, after he had been told something of what "ecumenism" actually means in the free world), uncharitable (extracting the maximum of "error" from Fr. Dimitry's words, without understanding the point of his words), and filled with a jesuitical logic that is most un-Orthodox.

Evidently (as someone has suggested to us), Fr. Neketas really doesn't want us at his conference, and this is his way of saying "Stay away!" Well, we certainly don't want to be identified with this kind of cranky "Orthodoxy," and it looks indeed as if Fr. Herman will have to stay away. He will be talking to our bishops this weekend and make his final decision then. (Both Archbishop

Anthony and Bishop Nektary have already told us that they don't want to come anywhere near the conference.)

We have just heard that Deacon Lev, at the request of the Synod of Bishops, has been forbidden to publish or give lectures; but I'm afraid the problem will not stop there. Already several of the "super-zealous" and "super-correct" converts in our Church have decided that our Church has "betrayed Orthodoxy" by not cutting off all the Orthodox Churches and declaring them to be without grace, and they have joined the Mathewite Old Calendarists, who are the only "consistent" group that declares itself to be the only remaining Orthodox Church (except for the Catacomb Church of Russia—which, however, is also probably too "liberal" for the Mathewites, if they only knew its real opinions, which are evidently about the same as those of our bishops). There must be more heart in our Orthodoxy and less "canonical logic," which leads to discord and schism. May God preserve us from this jesuitical imitation of Orthodoxy!

We have received Volume II of Vladika Averky's works, and rejoice to see his words receive wider circulation. Please remember us in your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

288.

May 30/June 12, 1980

St. Isaac of the Dalmatian Monastery

Dear Father Hilarion,

Christ is in our midst!

I've wanted to write you so many times, but I seem to be constantly distracted, and now that I have a specific occasion to do so I cant remember the other things I wanted to talk to you about! Anyway, please remember us poor distracted ones in your prayers.

The specific cause of my letter is this: Fr. Alexey Young is expanding his Nikodemos into a monthly "newspaper" (if God will only give him the strength!), and for his children's page I have proposed to translate parts of the Zakon Bozhy of Fr. Seraphim Slobodskoy. Since it is copyrighted by Holy Trinity Monastery and the author is reposed, we evidently need the permission of the Monastery to use it. Could you ask Vladika Laurus about this and tell us if there are any complications? Our idea right now is simply to supply some pages for a children's section, beginning with Part One of the book (perhaps with a few of the illustrations), and only later (if then) to think of printing all or part of the book separately. I would be very grateful for a word on this as soon as possible, as the first issue is due to come out about the end of the month.

Vladika Anthony has blessed this new venture, which will be quite modest (probably 8 pages a little less than the size of Orthodox Russia at first), but I think it could be very important for our American Orthodox flock and for English-speaking Orthodox in general. Out here we have noticed a whole new "tone" in the converts of recent years: much less of the "know it all" spirit,

emphasis on “canons” and “Typicon,” etc., and much more just basic Orthodox Christianity. This is the flock Fr. Alexey hopes to supply with good Orthodox material and significant news (without controversy!).

Thanks to God, the first 150 pages of Fr. Michael’s Dogmatic Theology is now being set up at last, and “publication date” of the whole book is set for all (pray for this!). Mary Mansur mentioned something about a revision of the “Baptism” chapter—do you have the text? I will be correcting that part within the next month or so.

Mary also mentioned you would like to come out west and visit us again—you are always welcome! We have had more brothers and pilgrims this year than ever, but our life remains basically the same. Fr. Peter is having his difficulties and grows faint-hearted very easily; please pray for him. He doesn’t seem to be entirely “present” yet; and our unseasonable cold weather has gotten him down also. He is helping well in the printshop, however.

One of your seminarians from Russia wrote me some months ago about translating Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future into Russian. I think I didn’t answer him—but if you know who it is, please tell him yes, he has our permission (he wasn’t there when I visited in December).

Please pray for us. We remember you with much love.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

289.

St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

Platina, California 96076

June 2/15,1980

New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke

AN OPEN LETTER TO FATHER NEKETAS PALASSIS

Dear Father Neketas,

Christ is in our midst!

I wish to speak a word to you from the heart, and at the same time to explain to you and others why I feel unable to come to your Seattle conference next month.

Of late, it seems, you have published some words against our publications and other similar publications in our Russian Church Abroad. First it was the insulting, offensive series of articles on life after death, which ended so badly for the author, who is now forbidden by our bishops to publish and give lectures; in these articles all of us who have tried to present the Orthodox teaching on this subject have been assigned to the ranks of heretics, blasphemers, and the like. You will have to excuse me if, seeing these articles, I (together with quite a few others) had

serious misgivings about coming and speaking at your conference. I want no fight with anyone, but I hope you can understand that it is not a pleasant thing to go where one is distrusted, liable to be insulted, and where certain ordinary topics (like life after death) have suddenly become "controversial" because of such immature attacks on them.

For the sake of church harmony and peace, I myself went to visit you in Seattle a few weeks ago. On this visit, among other things, I told you how deeply Father Dimitry Dudko speaks to Orthodox Russians—and Americans too, for that matter; I have really met no Orthodox person who has read him seriously and sympathetically who has not been deeply moved by his Orthodox message for all of us today. And now, just a week or two after my visit, you have published a new attack, consigning Father Dimitry in effect to the ranks of the heretics and calling us who have printed about and defended him "unprincipled and irresponsible" and tellers of "outright fibs" (that is, lies) about him (p. 14, Orthodox Christian Witness, May 12/25). The specific quotations that are attacked in this article are from The Orthodox Word and Nikodemos, but Orthodox Russia and other periodicals in our Church have made similar defenses of Father Dimitry. These are serious accusations against members of one and the same Russian Church Abroad, and the anonymous author should certainly be identified and made responsible for his words.

This new attack is uncharitable in the extreme, both to Father Dimitry and to us who have supported him. And how unfair and inaccurate it is! The author of the article has selected a few statements made by Father Dimitry, but has passed over other statements which show him in a much more favorable light with regard to the question of ecumenism and the Russian jurisdictions (after he was better informed about these things by sympathetic people living abroad); he does not mention that, concerning the Catacomb Church, Father Dimitry has said nothing different from what some members of that Church themselves have said in recent years, and his words do not at all have the evil intent the author reads into them: he has not tried to understand what Father Dimitry is really trying to say in the statements that are criticized (they are not statements about "ecclesiology" at all, but warnings to his listeners not to make Orthodoxy into a "sect"—a warning which I believe you yourself should take to heart); he has not covered such shortcomings as Father Dimitry does have with love and sympathy, he has entirely missed the point of Father Dimitry's message in his haste to "catch" him in an error and discredit him as an Orthodox spokesman, and thereby also to brand us who defend him as unprincipled and irresponsible liars and opportunists, as though the reason we speak about Father Dimitry is in order to gain glory from this "celebrity," as the article calls him.

I deeply feel that it is terribly wrong, that it is a crime against Orthodoxy, for you to print such attacks, for you to grieve and insult your fellow Orthodox Christians so needlessly and without foundation!

You are not the only one to rise up against Father Dimitry; the Russian press also has its detractors of him, some going so far as to suspect him of being a KGB agent. Father Dimitry himself suffers immeasurably from these slanders and criticisms. Let me quote for you what he has written about his critics abroad, in a recent letter which describes his "sleepless nights":

"You are bold to criticize us without seeing what is what, and not knowing our circumstances… Is it not time to learn to understand each other, to help each other, to rejoice for each other?… Russia is perishing, the whole world is perishing, protecting itself behind a false prosperity; and we hinder each other from doing the work of God… The people for whom I have decided to give over my whole life have suddenly begun to poison me. O Lord, forgive them!… Help me to bear this very heavy cross!"

With all my heart I hope that you will learn from courageous Orthodox pastors like Father Dimitry and cease trying to "catch" them for phrases which may (or may not) be in error. Surely in your own heart—if you have read his writings with any kind of sympathy—you know that he is not an "ecumenist," and any errors he may make in his writings come solely from his simplicity.

It is true that, at the present time, we clergy of the Russian Church Abroad could not concelebrate with Father Dimitry, but our unity with him in the faith is much deeper than this. As Father Dimitry himself has well said, our deeper unity is best expressed today (owing to the enslavement of the Moscow Patriarchate) by our external disunity, but this does not prevent us from being true brothers in the Orthodox faith and learning from and supporting each other. This is why our bishops have decreed that Father Dimitry and other imprisoned for the Orthodox faith in the USSR should be remembered by name at the Proskomedia.

I myself would love to speak to the Orthodox faithful on the message of Father Dimitry Dudko, which is so needed now by us all. But I could not do this now in Seattle, because this subject too has become "controversial," the air has been "poisoned," and whatever I say will be discounted and undermined. Anyone who trusts your publications will surely suspect me of being an "ecumenist" myself if I dared to defend him. Forgive me, but I just cannot take part in your conference. The struggle for salvation and preaching the Orthodox Gospel in today's world is difficult enough without having to suffer obstacles from one's own brothers in Christ.

We are living in a time of world-wide spiritual crisis, when the best people in the West are beginning to wake up to the truth of Orthodoxy and are coming to drink of its living waters. We have the common task of feeding the Orthodox flocks, not attacking the shepherds who really care for the flock, as Father Dimitry does. In such a time, you should not be occupying yourself with needless and unfair accusations, nor with uncharitable deductions about the views of others or with legalistic "inescapable conclusions" about the Russian jurisdictions, such as you have published in your latest attack (p. 17); any of the bishops or theologians of our Church could have told you how over-simplified and false these "conclusions" are. I think that in your haste to prove how "correct" you yourself are, you are losing sight of the bigger picture of Orthodoxy in today's world and are pushing yourself into a deadend, cut off from some of the most positive and genuine manifestations of Orthodoxy today.

May you be able to open your heart to what our bishops and the suffering Orthodox people in Russia and abroad can teach you. Then we will all rejoice and be one with you.

With love in Christ,

[signed] Unworthy Hieromonk Herman,

Hieromonk Herman,

Superior, St. Herman of Alaska Monastery

290.

June 9/22, 1980

St. Cyril of Alexandria

Dear Fr. Demetrios,

Christ is in our midst!

We were glad to hear of your conference next summer; these conferences could be valuable supports for our difficult task of standing in the truth in these evil times.

I hope you don't mind if I have a suggestion or two for this conference:

First, I think a good number of English-speaking Russian priests should be invited to speak. Father Herman was the only Russian invited to speak at Seattle, and this creates the impression that the conference is for an "American clique" in the Church, and not for the Russian Church Abroad as a whole; even if this wasn't the intent, the result is that this group of priests is more and more cutting itself off from the rest of the Church. There are many Russian priests who could give excellent talks in English (and probably on a less "intellectual" and more down-to-earth level than we Americans usually give)—for example, Fr. Valery Lukianov, Fr. Roman Lukianov (especially on the new martyrs of Russia), etc.

Second, I think the theme of the conference should be expressed in positive terms. "Modernism and ecumenism" are good to talk about as dangers facing us, but I think they shouldn't set the tone for a conference. If they're mentioned in the title, perhaps it could be something like: "Preaching the Orthodox Gospel in the midst of 20th-century modernism and ecumenism," or something similar. The evils of our time are so great that sometimes we lose sight of the greater power of what we have to oppose them with—I think this is the mistake of those who are attacking Fr. Dimitry Dudko, who almost more than anyone else today is preaching the positive Orthodox Gospel, even though he is overwhelmed with the evils of contemporary society.

We've sent you a copy of Father Herman's open letter to Fr. Neketas. I don't know what else he could have said or done. To pretend the problem doesn't exist (when it's already gone so for that honest love and sympathy can be called "unprincipled and irresponsible") is foolish, and to wait longer to begin protesting will have worse results. Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Nektary (who are both literally crushed by the attack on Fr. Dimitry Dudko) have said they themselves will be as far away from Seattle as possible during the conference. I only hope that Fr. Neketas and others, when they see how they are pushing away the best part of our Church from themselves, will make an earnest effort to come back and join the rest of us in a positive witness of Orthodoxy. If not, I fear they will go into schism, still thinking themselves "correct" and everyone else wrong.

Thank you for the name of the young couple in Oakland; I will write to them if we don't see them here (or with Fr. Alexey in Etna) before long.

Since writing the above, we've heard of Fr. Dimitry Dudko's "confession" on Soviet television. May God help this poor man in his hour of trial; one can only imagine the pressures and tortures placed upon him to extract this (chiefly, I would think, threats against his family and spiritual children). I hope there will be no gloating over this on the part of his enemies. For my part, I think the lesson in this for us is to go deeper within ourselves. It can be very consoling to know that someone there is a "hero" and is saying boldly what even we in freedom seldom have the courage or strength to say; but now we can appreciate a little better the suffering vte must all go through to be true Orthodox Christians in these terrible times. This "confession" does not invalidate a single word he said before, as I see it; but now it is others who will have to continue this work. We must all pray for each other more, and have more love and sympathy for each other. May God help us all! I sense the clouds becoming ever darker over America too. Please pray for us here, that we may put out some more essential books while we still have time and freedom.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

291.

June 25/July 8, 1980

Martyr Febronia

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul?],

Christ is in our midst!

I have read your letter to Father Herman, expressing your grief over the division which seems to be occurring in our Russian Church Abroad. You are certainly correct that the issue at stake is not the teaching of Deacon Lev Puhalo, nor is it the attitude towards Fr. Dimitry Dudko. These are only the forms this apparently deepening division has taken in recent months.

If Fr. Alexey Young has sent you a copy of his own letter to Fr. Neketas telling of his withdrawal from the Seattle Conference, you will see a little more how this problem seems from our side. Frankly, a number of us for some time have felt ourselves to be considered "second-class citizens" in the Church by Fr. Neketas and Fr. Panteleimon, expressed by their private (and some not so private) "warnings" that we are not really Orthodox, are really "scholastic," shouldn't be supported or mentioned, etc. The recent escalation of these "warnings" by Fr. Neketas, which has caused the present scandal, seems to indicate that our views (which generally only reflect the views of our bishops) are really quite "dangerous," and a kind of public "war" has to be declared against them. This we all regard as exceedingly sad and unnecessary, but as long as this attitude exists I don't know what other response can be given than the one given by Fr. Herman and Fr. Alexey. The form of an "open letter" was used so as not to drag the matter into the church press, where it does not belong (the open letter was sent mainly to our English-speaking priests for their

information). Several of our bishops have expressed their gratitude and approval to Father Herman for his letter, which seems to indicate the deepness of what is occurring.

Since you do not seem to be partisan in this conflict, you could perhaps help towards an eventual restoration of peace. Therefore, I would like you to know that none of us (as far as I know) who are on the "black list" of Fr. Neketas regards any one of the differences which he has raised with us to be an insuperable barrier to the unity which should exist between us; we are on excellent terms with other people who differ with us no less on certain questions. The cause of disunity, rather, is in the attitude of Fr. Neketas (and those who think as he does) towards these difference, towards our bishops and their authority, towards the theological authorities of our Russian Church, etc. As long as Fr. Neketas regards his opinions as the only permissible or Orthodox ones in the Church, and regards with suspicion (which he spreads to others) all those who disagree with these opinions, there will be conflict. Fr. Herman's letter (and Fr. Alexey's) is a challenge to Fr. Neketas to change his attitude and accept the rest of us (including the bishops with whom he disagrees) as equally Orthodox. It goes without saying that he will also have to accept and live with the decisions of our bishops on church matters. If they are no authority for him, he will not long remain in our Church.

Until such time as Fr. Neketas reveals a basic change in his attitude, the rest of us will continue to grieve over the kind of Orthodoxy he is preaching, which drives some people away from the Church and makes others into something near a kind of sect. None of us wish to be identified with this kind of Orthodoxy.

In your letter you mention the "disaster" which could occur because of this division in the Church. We ourselves have felt for some time that Fr. Neketas and others who share his attitude are heading straight for a schism, which now seems almost inevitable if he does not change his direction. Such a schism nobody needs; there are so many groups of "correct" Orthodox in Greece now (none in communion with the others) that a new group will only prove the devil's power to divide Orthodox Christians. There is something terribly wrong in this attitude, but we ourselves are powerless to change it (Fr. Neketas simply won't listen to what we and others have tried to tell him). I would wish Fr. Neketas and others would take to heart the humble confession of Bishop Kallistos of Corinth (whom Fr. Neketas praised to the skies in his bulletin some years back, when he was still a Mathewite); when asked recently why he has left the Mathewites and joined the "moderate" group of Old Calendarists (together with Bishop Kyprian of Athens and others), he replied simply: "I used to be a fanatic, but by the prayers of my elder I was delivered from this." If you ask Fr. Neketas about him now, I suspect you will hear that he has become "senile." If so, that is another part of an attitude which cries out for correction. When there is evidence of this correction, there will be peace in our Church.

Asking your prayers,

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

292.

July 19/Aug. 1, 1980

St. Seraphim of Sarov

Dear John [Hudanish],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you.

It was good to hear from you at such length. I will answer your questions as well as I can in the little time I have:

Regarding Dr. [Stephen] Reynolds: no, we had not invited him to speak at our Pilgrimage nor did we put him on the program. Our talks are on practical Orthodoxy rather than on an academic level and he would be out of place as a speaker.

The One Thing Needful was printed privately (and rather expensively)—I think its $8 per small volume), but we will be reprinting it soon at a more accessible price.

I was glad to hear of your reconciliation with Fr. George and your receiving of the Holy Gifts. It goes without saying that to lead a fruitful Christian life you should be reconciled with everyone for whom you may have any bad feelings.

However, in connection with the recent "open letters" I would caution you not to accept all that Frs. George and Neketas tell you about the Church situation. The present tension between us is indeed a deep one and is over the basic point (as Bishop Nektary explained it to us two days ago): These and other Greek priests have come to our Russian Church Abroad thinking they will teach our bishops and people what Orthodoxy is. On a number of points their interpretations are not in harmony with those of our bishops and theologians; this is bad enough, but they further insist that the views of our Russian Church Abroad are wrong and must be corrected. This is arrogant, proud, and can have no possible outcome but schism, for which Fr. Neketas has been preparing his people for some years now ("When the crunch comes and we have to separate from the Russians"). If you trust their interpretations of the Orthodox Church situation today, you will be cut off from the rest of us in the Russian Church Abroad and will end in an Orthodox "sect" with them. If you will ask Vladika Nektary's frank opinion about this subject, I think you will get the same answer (if he will speak frankly to you).

Regarding your more specific questions:

1. Has Deacon Lev been forbidden to preach and publish? This is what we were informed by our two bishops by word of mouth. Both bishops thanked Fr. Herman for his "open letter" without mentioning that it was inaccurate (although now Bishop Nektary says he isn't sure of the details, since he wasn't at the Synod himself), and Bishop Laurus of Jordanville, in his own letter of thanks to Fr. Herman, said that "your open letter is correct, both in content and tone? Whether the original decision of the bishops was toned down, or whether the prohibition concerns only the subject of life after death, I cannot say. I do know that the bishops were extremely upset with Fr. Lev's articles and laid a prohibition of some kind on him because of them. Fr. George Macris has written Fr. Herman that the letter from the Synod to Fr. Lev accused Fr. Lev of "heresy" in his articles and took "our side" entirely, for which Fr. George blames us. We have not seen this

letter from the Synod, but the petition to the Synod to discuss this question came not from us but from another priest quite independently, and the hostility of the bishops to Fr. Lev's articles has nothing to do with us. These articles, by the way, were really quite outrageous, both in content and tone, and scandalized many (one bishop travelled to San Francisco and told our Archbishop Anthony that he has a "heretic" publishing in his diocese), and it was certainly quite right for the Synod to prohibit their continuation. I have sent you separately our new book, The Soul After Death, where the last appendix constitutes my own "Answer" to Deacon Lev on the issues involved there. That Fr. Neketas offers not one word of apology for printing these articles (at least for their crude and disrespectful tone if not for their content) seems to indicate the depth of the hostility he has for what he regards as the "Russian" teaching on these questions (a teaching which, however, is actually almost entirely derived from Greek sources).

2. Is Fr. Dimitry Dudko an ecumenist or not? This is a "red herring" if there ever was one. Call someone an "ecumenist," and say it loud enough, and you will frighten people away for sure! I'm enclosing Fr. Roman Lukianov's answer to Fr. Neketas and Fr. George on this question. Read Fr. Dimitry's books and articles yourself and surely you won't be able to accuse him of this.

But the real source of disagreement between Seattle-Boston and the rest of us ("Platina" is only a small part of the other side) is not particular opinions on whether Fr. Dimitry is an ecumenist—it is the tone with which they push their opinions, spreading distrust and suspicion of everyone but their own group, indulging in name-calling and innuendo, cleverly telling only half the truth to make themselves look better. For example, Fr. Neketas' "open letter" clings to a technical point: was Deacon Lev forbidden to speak on all subjects or not? But he does not tell the truth that he was indeed forbidden to speak at least on life after death. This is dishonesty, not telling the truth; but in their eyes it is justified because the purpose of the letter is not to tell the whole truth, but to discredit Fr. Herman. Fr. Neketas' letter asks the question: does Fr. Herman perhaps believe that Roman Catholics have grace? He has nothing to base this on (the evidence against it in numerous statements in The Orthodox Word is clear enough)— but his purpose is not to tell the truth, but to place doubts in his readers about Fr. Herman. Again, in Fr. Neketas' letter one cannot but note the glee with which he reports Fr. Dimitry's "retraction." Simple decency would have dictated a refusal to take advantage of this unfortunate event, which should cause us to pray for and sympathize with this poor man, apparently broken in his sense of mission (but not in his Christianity). But not only does he gloat over it, he deliberately rubs it in by quoting some Western news services (which at times can be so notoriously insensitive and inaccurate, as Fr. Neketas surely knows) who said Fr. Dimitry was "cheerful" and the like. This is playing dirty; and when one considers that Fr. Neketas omitted quoting other Western news reports which said just the opposite—that Fr. Dimitry was obviously "nervous and ill at ease"— it again adds up to dishonesty: the aim is not to tell the truth, but to discredit Fr. Dimitry. Such innuendo and half-truth should have no part in the Church, in polemics and otherwise.

As for name-calling, Fr. Neketas in his open letter defends his statement that the editors of The Orthodox Word and Nikodemos are "unprincipled an irresponsible" for stating that Fr. Dimitry is well-disposed to the Catacomb Church and that he is not an ecumenist. Honest people do not use

words like “unprincipled and irresponsible” with regard to differences of opinion like this; their intent is only to discredit, not to speak the truth.

Fr. George Macris, in his recent letter to Fr. Herman, has now called him an “ecumenist” also (or rather, someone with the “venom of ecumenism” in him). This would be ludicrous if it were not so tragic. These people are forming a sect which is far from the spirit of Orthodoxy which brought me, you, and many others to the Church. It is the “political expediency” of this sect which blinds them to the dishonesty and unfairness of their accusations and condemnations of others.

Both of our bishops blessed Fr. Herman’s decision not to attend the Seattle conference. Two days ago, in a long talk with Vladika Nektary, we asked him again: was this right? He answered: it was right, and he himself would not have attended save out of obedience for the sake of “peace.” Bishop Laurus also withdrew the Jordanville speaker from the conference, although without any statement about it. Our purpose is simply to let it be known that we separate ourselves from this kind of wrong Orthodox spirit. When Fr. Neketas and others change their attitude and cease their unfair criticisms, judgments, innuendos, slanders, and this whole so-unorthodox technique which they use to spread their views—then there will be peace between us. Frankly, we have given up; they don’t want peace, and they won’t stop their technique. They have become too politically involved in it. I hope I’m wrong.

To touch on another point: those who regard Fr. Dimitry Dudko simply as an “enemy of the regime have certainly missed the point about him. His words on the spiritual crisis of our times, and the need to start being Orthodox Christians right here and now, no matter what the circumstances, are a message we all need. His writings are most inspiring and helpful for us poor strugglers today, and it is tragic that many who could benefit from him may now turn away from his writings because of the “red herring” about him. As for his relation to the Moscow Patriarchate: if you don’t understand it with your heart (as all our Russian clergy have indeed done), then I suppose it will have to be explained in detail. Give us time and we will try. Unfortunately, there is so much calculation and so little heart in so much of our “correct” Orthodoxy today. May God preserve us all!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. This is a private letter. Please do not show it to Fr. George, Fr. Neketas, or anyone close to them, or else it will be sent all over the world as some kind of evidence against me and added to the “file” on their enemies. I have obviously spoken very frankly to you in trust, and I would certainly not use this kind of language when talking to them or to a wide audience.

293.

August 5/18, 1980

St. Eusignius

Dear Rev. [Marion J. (Symeon)] Cardoza,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you.

I have received your second letter and am very touched by the urgency of your appeal to find the true roots of Christianity. Please forgive my delay in answering your first letter; we have been very busy these past few weeks with a pilgrimage here to our monastery.

May God reward your search for true Orthodoxy. I myself found it twenty years ago after a fruitless wandering in oriental religions, and I have never doubted that this is the true Church established by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The pitfalls in the way of finding and becoming one with Christ s Church are many, as you yourself have already realized. I myself believe that if one is absolutely sincere and truthful, and will beware of trusting his own opinions and feelings, God will grant him to find His Church.

I will be in Santa Cruz over the Labor Day weekend to give a talk at a Russian-language religious conference there, and I would be very happy to meet with you then, and with members of your community if you wish. I do not yet know my schedule that weekend, but if you can tell me when you might be free, I am sure we can arrange a meeting.

We are sending you separately a few more Orthodox publications. Please pray to God that he might make our meeting fruitful.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

294.

Aug. 5/18, 1980B

Hieromartyr Fabian of Rome

Dear Michael,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your long and informative letter on the Seattle conference and your own ideas on Fr. Dimitry Dudko. We were not at all offended by anything you wrote there; in our opinion it is quite possible to have differences of opinion on such subjects and still be of basically one mind in the Orthodox Faith which we share.

Our difference with Fr. Neketas, therefore, is not primarily on such particular points as whether Fr. Dimitry Dudko is a “ecumenist” or what our precise attitude should be with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate. The basic problem, I think, is that Fr. Neketas (and whoever else thinks as he does) thinks and publicly states that only his opinion is acceptable and Orthodox, and if you disagree with him you are not quite Orthodox or (even more strongly) you are “unprincipled and irresponsible” (a charge which, in his open letter to Fr. Herman, he not only does not apologize for, but even repeats more strongly). Where this attitude prevails, there can hardly be peace in the Church, and the unity in confession of the Orthodox Faith beings to crumble. This attitude we cannot help but protest against; I believe it can only end in some form of sectarianism, dividing

one from one's brothers in the faith who in all sincerity disagree over such matters of personal opinion.

The whole question of the Moscow Patriarchate is, I think, a little more subtle' and complex than the position you have set forth (either the Patriarchate or the Catacomb Church). We will be publishing in The Orthodox Word some texts from and about the Catacomb Church which I hope will make this a little clearer. In the meantime, we are sending you Fr. Roman Lukianovs open letter to Frs. Neketas Palassis and George Macris, which sets forth rather well the thinking of our bishops and clergy of the Russian Church Abroad on this subject (although, of course, it is not a complete view of the subject). We ourselves do pray at the Liturgy for Metropolitan Theodosius (assuming he is still alive), but I can understand why our bishops would rather not make an official proclamation about this. It is also possible to make a false idealization of the Catacomb Church; they also have their weaknesses underground, and the "answer" to this question will hardly come before the fall of the Communist regime and the restoration of some kind of normality to [the] Russian Church situation.

Another point: on Fr. Dimitry Dudko, on Blessed Augustine, and on numerous other subjects, a disturbing thing to us (and to many) is that Fr. Neketas and those with him are not very traditional in their thinking—i.e., their opinions are formed not as handed down by their fathers in the Faith (whom they consider hopelessly deformed by "Western" or "Catholic influence"), but by a group of them thinking it out, researching it, looking it up in ancient books, etc. This isn't the way the Faith has been handed down in the past. To take an example: the place to look for the Church's opinion on Blessed Augustine, I think, is not the official calendars of saints (which have always been very incomplete, and still are), but the actual opinions of Orthodox Fathers. This is what I tried to do in my article on Blessed Augustine, and I think the opinion set forth there will stand no matter how many "ancient calendars" Bl. Augustine fails to appear on. Similarly, the Church's teaching should not have to be "looked up" in theological dictionaries, as Fr. Neketas states he did, and the concept of "toll-houses" is not discredited merely because this word appears only a few times in such dictionaries; if one is going to discuss this issue, he should surely have its basic outlines in mind before he looks up any specific references to it, and should be able to recall some of the numerous references in the Philokalia and other such books, which often discuss the reality without mentioning the word. I hate to think that our rich Orthodox theological tradition is now going to have to pass through the spectacles of such abstract "scholars," whose "research" only proves they aren't too much at home in the subject to begin with.

A final point: what Fr. Neketas is doing, I think, is not so much "fanaticism" as what should be called "correctness disease": basing his Orthodoxy on formally "correct" statements without taking into consideration the whole context of these statements. I personally think that one of the aspects of Antichrist's rule will be such formal "correctness" (probably even his "icons" will be in good Byzantine style!) but without the heart of Orthodoxy—love, compassion, self-distrust, humility, Christ Himself. All these "definitions" Fr. Neketas would like to make about the church situation today and the people in it are not what we need in the face of the frightful worldliness and indifference to Christ which is so strong in our midst. Our bishops do give us

basic direction (don't participate in the WCC, no direct communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, etc.), but placing so many dots over is and crossing so many t's—I think does more harm than good. In the present case, it has certainly stirred up a lot of disturbance in the Church (our own two bishops and Vladika Laurus approved Fr. Herman's letter to Fr. Neketas and thanked him for it, as did a number of priests, and Vladika Laurus also withdrew his monastery's lecturer at the conference).

We just finished a very successful Pilgrimage and courses, with seven baptisms of adult catechumens and much interest shown in the lectures and courses. The atmosphere in favor of Orthodoxy has changed greatly in recent years. May God grant us to be able to give what these seekers need!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. Enclosed is a petition drawn up after one of the talks at our Pilgrimage. You can gather signatures yourself if you want, and send them to the Synod (75 East 93rd St., N.Y.C., 10029).

P.p.s. Another difference we have with Fr. Neketas: we think issues like the "Shroud of Turin" should be freely discussed in the Church press, with pro's and con's weighed and individual Orthodox Christians free to think and act about it as they wish. But Fr. Neketas wants to suppress any discussion of it, since it's "obviously a demonic fraud," and anyone who discusses it openly or sympathetically is considered "Roman Catholic." I think this is hopelessly narrow and unnecessary and smells a little of "papalism."

P.p.s.s. We haven't seen the latest Orthodox Monitor, but of course do not sympathize with concelebrations with the Metropolia, etc. Sadly, there is a "reaction to the left" going on among such of our clergy owing to the "over-rightness" of Fr. Neketas and a few others. Neither bodes well for the future. How difficult it is to stay on the "middle, royal path."

295.

Sept. 3/16, 1980

Hieromartyr Anthimus

Dear John [Hudanish],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

A few words on a point or two of your recent letter; I was rather disappointed that you didn't appreciate Fr. Roman's letter. I read it again after reading your letter, and it's obvious to me that his letter comes from the heart and was written with suffering and compassion, and certainly with no bad feelings (he is known to be probably the closest of our Russian priests to Fr. Panteleimon, and certainly has no "anti-Greek" feelings). If there are one or two phrases you may have interpreted as "sarcastic," they are certainly outweighed by the heartfelt sincerity of the letter as a whole. In any case, you should certainly not be judging Fr. Roman for "pride," especially on the basis of a single word (and that from a person who is obviously not at home in

the English language!). This temptation to make too-quick judgments of others is one into which we all fall, but that's where we have to fight our first impulses and try to correct ourselves. In actual fact Fr. Roman is a very humble, simple man, and he would never even have spoken out on such an issue if he did not feel something very wrong in the Witness attack on Fr. Dimitry Dudko. If even he speaks out, you can be sure that many of our silent bishops and priests are also disturbed (as indeed we know).

Fr. Roman uses a very good phrase in his letter (which I don't interpret as sarcastic at all): "theological microscope." That is what you are using in your reflections on Fr. Dimitry Dudko. To make him into an "ecumenist" because his Patriarch gives communion to Roman Catholics is certainly theological nit-picking.

Firstly, to give communion to Roman Catholics is surely an anti-canonical act, but in itself it does not constitute a "heresy" that deprives a whole Church of the grace of God and makes everyone in the Church a "heretic"—that is Jesuit thinking, not Orthodox. You can ask your own bishop what he things about that. Because we defend Fr. Dimitry does not in the least mean we defend this anti- canonical practice or approve of his Patriarchate; those are not the issues at all. Here we are in agreement with Fr. Neketas.

Secondly, this anti-canonical act is only one of many disorders in the Moscow Patriarchate, the worst of which is its acceptance of the dictation of the atheist authorities as a matter of principle (this is "Sergianism"). It is for this reason that our Church has no communion with Moscow. But our Church recognizes this as a temporary situation which will end when the Communist regime comes to an end. Until that time we refrain from judging the Church situation there; we simply stay clear of the Moscow Patriarchate and have no communion with it.

Thirdly, our attitude towards Fr. Dimitry does not mean the acceptance of any views of his which may be mistaken, nor does it mean that we are in formal communion with him. We simply recognize him as a voice of the true Orthodox spirit which is so lacking in our world today, and even in most of our own church circles; his voice is a pledge that our lack of communion with the Moscow Patriarchate is only a temporary thing, because the Orthodoxy of someone like Fr. Dimitry is one with our own.

Fourthly, there is the question: Why does Fr. Dimitry not leave the Patriarchate and join the Catacomb Church? He has been criticized for saying he must stick with the Patriarchate because "that is what has been given us." But did you ever think, realistically, about his alternatives?

(a) The Catacomb Church by its very nature is hidden and never reveals itself to outsiders, especially to such famous ones as Fr. Dimitry. It not only does not seek converts, it positively runs away from them, knowing the chances of being found out by KGB agents.

(b) To "join the Catacomb Church" Fr. Dimitry would surely want to meet some of its bishops and clergy and find out their real position on Church matters as opposed to hearsay opinions (would you join a Church or jurisdiction you knew only by hearsay?). This is virtually impossible under Soviet conditions. And there are many questions one would want to ask the Catacomb hierarchs before actually placing oneself under obedience to them: are the rumors that

there are "sectarian" elements in their outlook true or false? Are the rumors true that they place "Russia" above "Orthodoxy"? etc. Wouldn't you want these things cleared up before you joined such a Church? The point here is: the matter is by no means simple.

(c) Even if he could find the Catacomb Church and talk to its bishops, the decision to join it immediately puts an end to his activity, since this Church is totally illegal and all known members are instantly arrested. If you say that he should be ready to suffer this, then you should say the same thing about the clergy and laymen of the Catacomb Church—why don't they "confess" their faith and be arrested instead of hiding in the catacombs and not making their faith available to all?

For these and other reasons it is totally unrealistic to expect Fr. Dimitry to "join the Catacomb Church" (if he did, glory to God, it would be a big message for all; but we can't expect or demand it). This is not to say that we "recognize" the Moscow Patriarchate or deny the witness of the Catacomb Church; it is only to look at church matters in Russia realistically and compassionately. The Orthodox picture of the Russian Church situation today does not exactly correspond to the jurisdictional picture. Fr. Neketas and others, by trying to limit our view to the jurisdictional picture, and prove everyone a "heretic" who doesn't belong to our jurisdiction, in my opinion are doing a disservice to the Orthodox Church and leading people in the direction of a sectarian outlook, away from the Orthodox outlook.

There are other aspects I could discuss, but no time for now. I will be seeing you soon.

With love in Christ,

P.s. I have just learned, from a seemingly reliable source, that one of the chief reasons Metr. Nikodim was "demoted" in the hierarchy of the Soviet Church in the early 1970's (the official reason was his health), was precisely because he had given communion to Roman Catholics in Rome at the Russicum, and the conservative hierarchs of the Patriarchate had enough courage to protest against it. This "proves" nothing, of course, but it certainly shows that church life in Russia is by no means simple and our judgments about it should take into consideration the many facets of it and not just the narrow letter of the law.

Another thought: all these arguments pro and con Fr. Dimitry would be so unnecessary if only people would read his books with an open heart. His words are such a breath of fresh air for people today, especially (I think) people like you who find it difficult to read other basic books like Unseen Warfare—he speaks right to the heart of today's people, both in Russia and outside. We had hoped to be able to print a translation of his Sunday Talks (printed in Russian by Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal), but Vladika tells us that he is having a translation printed in Washington. You should get it and read it.

296.

Oct. 14/27, 1980

Elder Nazarius of Sarov

Dear Father Photios,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you very much for the invitation of the Orthodox Conference to be a speaker at the 1981 Conference in Pennsylvania. I am honored and grateful.

However, next summer will be a very busy one for me. At just about the same time as the Pennsylvania Conference, I will be giving a talk at the Russian-language Conference of our Church in San Francisco, and right after that will be the preparations for our local St. Herman Pilgrimage, for which I have to prepare both a talk and a whole course.

Therefore, please forgive me, but I must respectfully decline the invitation to speak at the Pennsylvania Conference.

You mentioned in your letter the "misunderstandings" which have arisen within our Russian Church Abroad. I have been watching the development of this process for a good eight years now, and I regret to say that, in my opinion, the divergence has now become so deep that no mere meeting at a summer conference is going to change things a bit. Representatives of both "sides" (or those who might be identified as such) could meet and be polite to each other, but the actual differences are too deep and subtle to be discussed" with any profit. The underlying issue, I think, is one of trust vs. distrust of our Russian Orthodox Church and tradition. But to name only one specific difference: Since Fr. Panteleimon will be present at the Conference, it is obvious that no public prayers will be offered for Fr. Dimitry Dudko, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, and other suffering and imprisoned clergy who, while officially in the Moscow Patriarchate, by their statements and actions are (as Bishop Gregory has written) "our brothers in one and the same Church." To be frank, I would be very uneasy and troubled to participate in services at which I knew that such prayer could not be offered and warm defense and support of these clergy could not be given without making one a cause of "controversy" and even disrupting the "peace and harmony" of the Conference. This is in spite of the fact that the English-speaking people in our Synod, in my experience, are very well disposed to give such prayer and support—until they are told by someone in an apparently responsible position that such persons are "heretics" and can't be prayed for. I don't see any easy answer to this problem, but I do see how the lack of prayers offered for our suffering brothers cripples us.

But that is between us. I really will be very busy this summer and will barely be able to keep up with the obligations I already have.

We will be glad to send you information and photos of our monastery, as well as samples of our publications, for your display; please tell us what is needed and we will send it.

Asking for your prayers,

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

297.

Oct. 14/27, 1980B

Elder Nazarius of Sarov

Dear Father Demetrios,

Christ is in our midst!

I have just written Fr. Photios, declining the invitation to speak at the 1981 Conference, I know that this will be a disappointment to you, but I hope that you will be able to understand my feelings and will not judge me.

Officially, I am declining because I will be too busy next summer. This is certainly true, because I have been committed for a long time to give a talk at the Russian Conference of our Church in San Francisco in July, and the preparations for my talk and course at our own summer St. Herman Pilgrimage always take me much time also.

But just between us, I would like to say something more: I believe you had hopes that the Pennsylvania Conference could be an opportunity for reconciling the differences between our Greek- Americans and those of us who are increasingly disturbed and offended by their actions and statements. I would love to be able to help in such a reconciliation, but I am powerless: I could go to the Conference, be polite to Fr. Panteleimon and his followers (or even express my opinion frankly to him in private—it would make no difference), and leave with absolutely nothing changed. Whatever the present "disagreement" might be (for example, the question of Fr. Dimitry Dudko), the underlying causes are much deeper.

These causes, as I see it, are two (or rather, one cause with two sides): (1) A deep distrust on the part of our Greek-Americans in the Orthodoxy of our Russian Church Abroad—both the Orthodoxy of our present-day bishops and theologians, and the whole Orthodox tradition of which they are the inheritors; and (2) the formation of a clique, centering around Fr. Panteleimon, of Greeks and Americans (and a very few Russians under their influence) who think they "know better" than our Russian Church what Orthodoxy is, and are determined to make their "superior knowledge" prevail in our Church or else leave it as "apostate."

The answer to this situation, I believe, can only be one: Fr. Panteleimon and his followers must really and deeply begin to trust themselves less and the Russian Church more. If and when they can do this, the disagreements in the Church which have been caused by their attitude will disappear almost by themselves.

I personally feel that one of the present disagreements which has been caused by their attitude (the disagreement over Fr. Dimitry Dudko) is of such a magnitude that my participating in the Conference, knowing that public prayer for Fr. Dimitry and his fellow sufferers in the Moscow Patriarchate (whom Bishop Gregory calls "our brothers in one and the same Church") could not be offered publicly, and open support for and defense of them could not be given (as long as Fr. Panteleimon is there)—would be a betrayal of Orthodoxy on my part. I would be turning my back on my suffering Orthodox brothers and telling others not to pray for them, while justifying the pharisaic "correctness" that is spreading like a disease among us. And this is only one of the many disagreements that will be occurring in the months ahead as Fr. Panteleimon and his followers try to impose their idea of Orthodoxy on the rest of us.

The presence of Deacon Lev Puhalo as a speaker at the Conference would be another reason why I would wish not to attend, so as not to support in any way either his publicly-proclaimed errors, his attempt to "modernize" and "renovate" our Orthodoxy, or his crude disrespect towards the Orthodox tradition which has come down to us—all with the approval of Fr. Panteleimon and other Greek- Americans.

Theoretically, some of the present "disagreements" in the Church could be removed by a public apology and disavowal of their statements by Deacon Lev, Fr. Neketas Palassis, and Fr. Panteleimon. I would be very surprised but encouraged to see such statements, but I wonder if even this would touch the underlying problem? Nevertheless, let us see such disavowals and then we can hope for reconciliation. Until then, I hope you will be patient and understanding if some of us stay far away from what is happening.

I look with pain and sadness on this whole situation, which I have tried to describe as I see it; but as I have said, I am powerless to do anything about it. I could be persuaded to be as friendly as you like with Fr. Panteleimon or anyone else, but it would not change anything. Our Brotherhood was extremely friendly to Fr. Panteleimon and all our Greek-Americans even from before the day they entered our Church, and when we saw the emerging "disagreements" eight years ago we tried our best to make them see the "other side." The result was only, at first, a total silence and evident unwillingness to listen, and finally, a "stab in the back" for a reward of our long support of them. The inevitable schism which they are now preparing (if they don't change soon) will be the last step in a process which only they can change.

Please forgive me if I seem discouraging or pessimistic, and also please don't think that I judge you in your own position, especially with regard to the Conference, where of course you must take into consideration all different points of view and not go "against the current." I certainly believe you are one of those who will be faithful to our Russian Church Abroad when and if (God forbid!) our Greek-Americans create their schism, and I also believe that there will be more priests faithful to our Church than some may think would be the case. May God preserve us all in these difficult times! (But really, it was no better in ancient times!)

To return to the Conference: I see with sadness that it was unrealistic of me to hope that it could be "above parties and politics" and would be representative of the whole of our Church and not just the loudest English-language clique. But still, do you really have to be silent about the suffering Russian Church, of which, after all, we are a part? The struggle of Fr. Dimitry, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, and their fellow-strugglers, strikes such a responsive chord in all of us who are not being "jammed" by Fr. Panteleimon's opinions, that the 1981 Conference will seem pale and academic without active interest and support shown for it. Fr. Victor Potapov, I am sure, would be glad to speak on this subject—but if Fr. Panteleimon is going to criticize and "correct" and neutralize his talk, then of course it would be pointless. Must so much of our Church be under the dictatorship of one man and his clique, who are becoming more and more out of contact with the best of living Orthodoxy today?;

The starving, suffering Orthodox in Uganda (see the next Orthodox Word and Orthodox America) would be another natural subject for the Conference to be concerned about, if it is to be

more than academic. But I somehow think even this would be a "forbidden" subject, since they are "new calendarists." One of our priests under Fr. Panteleimon's influence wrote us after one of our appeals for them, doubting that he should send they money for clothes, because their Orthodoxy might not be "pure." How can we combat this cold-hearted elitism?

Please forgive me if I have been too frank or too pessimistic. Actually, deep down I do hope that we will "suffer through" this whole problem and that the deeper heart of our Church will make itself known in the end.

Please continue to remember our Brotherhood in your prayers, as we remember you. I will be glad to hear your comments. I told Fr. Photios that we would be glad to send information and photos of our monastery for a display, and also our publications—just tell us what to send.

With love in Christ,

P.s. I am trusting you that a copy of this letter will not go into Fr. Panteleimon's "files"! These "files" smell like "KGB" to many of us!

298.

Nov. 14/27, 1980

Apostle Philip—Thanksgiving Day

Dear Anna, Catechumen,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

I was happy to receive your letter—happy not because you are confused about the question that troubles you, but because your attitude reveals that in the truth of Orthodoxy to which you are drawn you wish to find room also for a loving, compassionate attitude to those outside the Orthodox faith.

I firmly believe that this is indeed what Orthodoxy teaches.

I agree with you that the Greeks in our Synod (who are only a small, but a noisy minority in our Church) express themselves sometimes with unnecessary harshness towards the non-Orthodox, and even (in some cases) towards the Orthodox! The article on Father Dimitry Dudko in our latest Orthodox Word is an attempt to give an Orthodox answer to this harsh attitude—especially the section "Is Fr. Dimitry an Ecumenist and a Heretic?"

I will set forth briefly what I believe to be the Orthodox attitude towards non-Orthodox Christians.

1. Orthodoxy is the Church founded by Christ for the salvation of mankind, and therefore we should guard with our life the purity of its teaching and our own faithfulness to it. In the Orthodox Church alone is grace given through the sacraments (most other churches don't even claim [to] have sacraments in any serious sense). The Orthodox Church alone is the Body of Christ, and if salvation is difficult enough within the Orthodox Church, how much more difficult must it be outside the Church!

2. However, it is not for us to define the state of those who are outside the Orthodox Church. If God wishes to grant salvation to some who are Christians in the best way they know, but without ever knowing the Orthodox Church—that is up to Him, not us. But when He does this, it is outside the normal way that He established for salvation—which is in the Church, as a part of the Body of Christ. I myself can accept the experience of Protestants being "born again" in Christ; I have met people who have changed their lives entirely through meeting Christ, and I cannot deny their experience just because they are not Orthodox. I call these people "subjective" or "beginning" Christians. But until they are united to the Orthodox Church they cannot have the fullness of Christianity, they cannot be objectively Christian as belonging to the Body of Christ and receiving the grace of the sacraments. I think this is why there are so many sects among them—they begin the Christian life with a genuine experience of conversion to Christ, but they cannot continue the Christian life in the right way until they are united to the Orthodox Church, and they therefore substitute their own opinions and subjective experiences for the Church's teaching and sacraments.

About those Christians who are outside the Orthodox Church, therefore, I would say: they do not yet have the full truth—perhaps it just hasn't been revealed to them yet, or perhaps it is our fault for not living and teaching the Orthodox Faith in a way they can understand. With such people we cannot be one in the faith, but there is no reason why we should regard them as totally estranged or as equal to pagans (although we should not be hostile to pagans either—they also haven't yet seen the truth!). It is true that many of the non-Orthodox hymns contain a teaching or at least an emphasis that is wrong—especially the idea that when one is "saved" he does not need to do anything more because Christ has done it all. This idea prevents people from seeing the truth of Orthodoxy which emphasizes the idea of struggling for one's salvation even after Christ has given it to us, as St. Paul says: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." But almost all of the religious Christmas carols are all right, and they are sung by Orthodox Christians in America (some of them even in the strictest monasteries!).

The word "heretic" (as we say in our article on Father Dimitry Dudko) is indeed used too frequently nowadays. It has a definite meaning and function, to distinguish new teachings from the Orthodox teaching; but few of the non-Orthodox Christians today are consciously "heretics," and it really does no good to call them that.

In the end, I think, Fr. Dimitry Dudko's attitude is the correct one: We should view the non-Orthodox as people to whom Orthodoxy has not yet been revealed, as people who are potentially Orthodox (if only we ourselves would give them a better example!). There is no reason why we cannot call them Christians and be on good terms with them, recognize that we have at least our faith in Christ in common, and live in peace especially with our own families. St. Innocent's attitude to the Roman Catholics in California is a good example for us. A harsh, polemical attitude is called for only when the non-Orthodox are trying to take away our flocks or change our teaching—as the Roman Catholics tried to do in western Russia in past centuries. This explains why some people even today continue this harsh tone.

As for prejudices—these belong to people, not the Church. Orthodoxy does not require you to accept any prejudices or opinions about other races, nations, etc.

As for your future spouse: the Church does allow marriage to non-Orthodox Christians who keep the basic Orthodox teachings (Catholics, Anglicans, etc.); but as a practical question, you should convert him! Otherwise there are inevitably conflicts, even under the best circumstances; but when both parents are Orthodox and the children see their parents agreed on the Faith, it is the best possible atmosphere for raising good Christian children.

I hope this has answer your questions; if you have any more, or need more explanation of these questions, please write. I think Fr. Dimitry Dudko s book Our Hope sets forth these questions very well, and perhaps even your family and friends would benefit by reading it.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. Will we be seeing you at our winter Pilgrimage in Redding (Feb. 14-15?).

299.

Nov. 22/Dec. 5, 1980

Apostle Philemon

Your Grace, Dear Vladika Gregory,

Blagoslovite!

Thank you very much for your letter of Nov. 9/22. Please be assured that I have no intention of replying to Deacon Levs "Open Letter," which I regard more as a "provocation" than as a serious attempt to deal with theological issues. To the few priests who have inquired, I have replied that my "answer" is already contained in Appendix 4 of The Soul After Death, and I intend to say nothing further on the subject.

In my opinion, the intention of Deacon Lev is not really to show how "scholastic," "origenistic," etc. is the teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church on life after death; that seems incidental to a larger attempt to discredit the authority of the Russian Church in general and to establish himself (and his circle of fellow "theologians") as the authorities on all aspects of Orthodox teaching. His teaching on life after death goes hand in hand with his declaration that Blessed Augustine is a "heretic," that the catechism of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow must by thrown out or "revised" by todays "experts," etc. I think it is rather unimportant to refute individual details of Fr. Levs teaching (where truths, half-truths, and falsities are all mixed up together), but that it is sufficient to point out his un-Orthodox tone and intent. Unfortunately, this same tone and intent are being promoted in our Church (although not usually so brazenly) by Fr. Panteleimon of Boston, Fr. Neketas Palassis, and a few others of our "Greek wing," who form almost an independent "jurisdiction" within our Russian Church Abroad and do not seem to accept the authority of the Russian Church. Some of the followers of this group have been talking as if they wished to create a schism from our Church, telling unsuspecting people that our bishops are "betraying" them by being "ecumenists," "Augustinians," etc. It is among people of this over-simplified, primitive mentality that Fr. Lev finds support for his own new teachings.

Despite the loud noise and disturbance made by these people, I believe their influence is much less than it might seem, and it is decreasing with each loud statement they make (such as Fr. Levs "open letter," Fr. Neketas' attack on Fr. Dimitry Dudko, etc.). If there is a schism, I am sure it will involve only a few of our clergy, mostly Greeks. The "silent majority" of the clergy of our Church, both Russians and converts, will certainly not follow them. And all of us, I am sure, with the exception of a few of the Greeks, will be most grateful and relieved if the bishops put an end to Fr. Levs outrageous "theologizing."

If I may be permitted another comment, I would like to remark on the English-language Conferences of our Church, held every summer. The "tone" of these Conferences seems to be set by Fr. Panteleimon and his circle, with the result that, while there do seem to be some good lectures at them, there is present in general a spirit of criticism of our Russian theological tradition, of theological "expertness" and "revisionism" which does not at all reflect the spirit of our Russian Church Abroad but seems to be an intrusion from outside—another reflection of the "jurisdiction within a jurisdiction" that is causing such problems now and which, I think, is what really produced Fr. Levs "theology." From several who attended the Seattle Conference last year, for example, I heard that in the discussions there the "Augustine is a heretic" theme was quite emphasized, and this is only one of the subjects which helps to undermine the authority of our own bishops and our theological tradition.

In the 1981 Conference in Pennsylvania I notice that Dr. Kalomiros will be speaking on "The Creation of Man and the World," and I greatly fear that his talk and his very presence will only promote the spirit of "criticism" which is poisoning our Church so much. I myself had a lengthy correspondence with Dr. Kalomiros some years ago on the subject of "creation and evolution," and I discovered to my astonishment that he is an adherent of the most naive kind of evolutionism (he wrote that Adam could well have had the face of an ape, because he was at first an ape-like creature to whom God gave His Spirit!), and that he is most doctrinaire and arrogant in upholding his opinions (he refused to discuss any scientific evidence with me because I have no doctor's degree in science, and when I criticized some of his opinions and showed that some of his scientific "evidence" is outdated and is no longer accepted even by evolutionary textbooks in the West, he broke off the correspondence with me.) Dr. Kalomiros' opinions on creation have been greatly criticized by conservative clergy in Greece, and theologically, in his correspondence with me, he had very shaky and superficial grounds for upholding his scientific evolutionism. In addition, Dr. Kalomiros has now made himself notorious in Greece for starting his own schism from the Old Calendarists over the issue of the Icon of the Trinity showing God the Father as an old man—he insists the icon is heretical and justifies the breaking of communion with those who venerate or even tolerate it. Will not his presence at a Conference of our Church further promote the spirit of criticism and even schism in our midst? Can't we somehow begin to shake off this foreign influence in our Church and get back to our organic ties with the Russian theological past and with the suffering Russia of today? I assure you that I am not the only one to be concerned over this matter; the majority of our young American clergy, I am sure, will be glad to return to the solid roots of our Church and shake off the Western spirit of criticism which Fr. Panteleimon, Fr. Neketas, Fr. Lev, and a few others are trying to pass off as Orthodox.

Asking your prayers and blessing,

With love and respect in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

300.

Nov. 23/Dec. 6, 1980

St. Alexander Nevsky

Dear Father Demetrios,

Christ is in our midst!

Many, many thanks for your letter of concern over the latest outbreak of hostile feelings in our Church (Deacon Levs Open Letter). I certainly have no intention to reply to such a letter, which seems more like some kind of deliberate "provocation" than a serious or well-meaning approach to matters he disputes. To the few priests who have inquired about this, I have replied that I mean to say nothing more than I have already said in Appendix 4 of The Soul After Death. I wrote the same to Bishop Gregory, who wrote me recently thanking me for a copy of The Soul After Death and saying that he found it interesting.

I am sad to say that I think such attacks will probably get worse before they get better; the cause for attack seems to be incidental—our Greeks seem determined to prove at any cost that the rest of us are not really Orthodox, and Fr. Lev has eagerly joined their camp. This group is simply so narrow that they will not be satisfied until everyone agrees with their opinions or ar least is silent and allows their narrow views to prevail. If they get their way, the spirit of freedom and brotherly joy will disappear from our Church and be replaced by their narrow "party line," and if anyone disagrees with it he will be squashed. How Western and rationalistic this is—and such a "Western captivity" is surely much worse than the one they accuse our whole Church of being in! I really don't see how our Greeks will be able to avoid a schism in the end.

I sense a danger in one of the speakers at your summer conference also—Dr. Kalomiros. He has written many good things, but he is also very narrow. The last we heard he had created a schism (with a few of his followers) from the Old Calendarists of Greece over the question of the icon of the Holy Trinity showing the Father as an old man (the kind that Bishop Alypy and Fr. Kyprian paint): anyone who venerates or even tolerates it is apparently a "heretic"! (That's also about what Fr. Lev says.) Dr. Kalomiros is also very immoderate in his pro-evolutionism, and in a talk on "creation" (or in a discussion afterwards) he is very likely to express some of his strange opinions, such as: Adam may well have looked like an ape, since he was born as an ape-like creature and only became "man" when God breathed His Spirit into this ape-like creature! (Conservative theologians in Greece regard him as a radical evolutionist.) Such opinions, like Fr. Lev's ideas on life after death, only confuse people. The polemical tone with which they present their opinions is perhaps the most disturbing thing of all—it means that no discussion is possible with them.

I think you are right to address the Synod of Bishops directly with your appeal about Fr. Levs Open Letter. Some other priests have done this too. May our bishops give a clear and God-inspired word for the guidance of all!

Two weeks ago we opened up a small mission in Willits, Calif, (at Deacon Vladimir Anderson's house). Glory be to God, we are able to do something in missionary work.

I hope that you do not find the disorders in the Church too discouraging. This is what we are to expect for our sins, and in the end God will draw good for us out of all this sad experience.

Please pray for us.

With low in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

301.

Nov. 23/Dec. 6, 1980B

St. Alexander Nevsky

Dear Brother in Christ, Constantine,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Many thanks for your letter and the check for $50. Your renewal for The Orthodox Word has been recorded, and The Soul After Death and 1981 Calendar will be sent shortly. I am replying for Father Herman, who has had a short stay in the hospital—which, thanks to God, revealed nothing as seriously wrong as we had feared.

I was especially pleased with the copy of your letter to Fr. Neketas, which made the same attempt to speak from the heart more than the head that prompted our own "defense" of Fr. Dimitry Dudko. I don't see how we can do anything else in our days, and I fear the future of the "Greek wing" of our Russian Church Abroad if they can't see this. Sadly, our own attempts to communicate with Fr. Neketas have broken down completely; he simply will not listen to us, and his fellow priest in Portland is speaking openly of the "betrayal" of our bishops through their "ecumenism"; he wrote Fr. Herman that he has "ecumenical venom" in him also. They must surely change, or they will end in schism.

I appreciate especially your arguments on pp. 11-12 about Sergianism and about the possibility of passing from the enslaved part to the free part of the Russian Church—a point which seems impossible for the legalism of Fr. Neketas to understand, but which nicely expresses an undoubted fact. Thank you also for standing up for Holy Russia, which is so maligned nowadays!

My only criticism of the letter is your use of the term "materially heretical": even if you can justify its use somehow defining this matter, it is still an unfortunate phrase to apply to one's fellow Orthodox, and bur "heresy hunters" will not let it slip by them!

Regarding your remark as to how we can be not in communion with someone whom we commemorate at Proskomedia, I think the perplexity is more seeming than real. If we are in communion with Fr. Dimitry at the present time, it is only in a spiritual or even abstract sense that could not be realized in practice without a change in his own status. We could not concelebrate with him in Russia because of his commemoration of Pimen, and he could not concelebrate with us here (if he should come to the West) until he ceased commemorating Pimen (which I suppose is what he would indeed do—i.e., join our Church). Fr. Dimitry's own remarks on "unity within division," as baffling as they are to the legalistic mind, are the closest attempt I've seen to express this perplexity of the church situation of our times.

We had a very good visit with Fr. Roman at our Pilgrimage last summer, and his talk (which appears in our new Calendar and Orthodox Word) was inspiring to many. May God grant him many years, and give us more of such pastors!

Please remember us in your prayers.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. When you read The Soul After Death, Appendix 4 contains all my answer to Deacon Lev; I do not intend to enter into the polemics of his newest "open letter."

302.

St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

Platina, California 96076

Dec. 7/20, 1980

St. Ambrose of Milan

Mrs. Irina Hay

Russian Research Center

Harvard University

1737 Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Dear Mrs. Hay,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your "open letter" of November 3 and your personal letter of November 4. I assure you that I found no reason for offense in either of them, and for me they are only the occasion for a friendly discussion of the teaching (at least one aspect of it) and the importance of two great hierarchs and theologians of 19th-century Russia—Theophan the Recluse and Ignatius Brianchaninov.

My comment on page 3 of The Soul After Death that Bishop Theophan was perhaps the "only rival" to Bishop Ignatius as a defender of Orthodoxy against modern errors was not meant to imply in any way that Bishop Theophan was inferior as a theologian or a patristic scholar; I merely had Bishop Ignatius as the center of my attention there, and Bishop Theophan thereby looks a little "smaller" in that context, which of course he was not in reality. In saying, in the same place, that Bishop Theophans defense of Orthodoxy was on a less "sophisticated" level than Bishop Ignatius', I was also not implying any inferiority to Bishop Theophan, but only expressing what I believe to be the case: that Bishop Ignatius in general paid more attention to Western views and to combatting them in detail, whereas Bishop Theophan emphasizes more single-mindedly the handing down of the Orthodox tradition and only incidentally touched on the Western errors regarding it. I had in mind, for example, the contrast between Bishop Ignatius' long defense and explanation of the toll-houses (which I cite on pp. 73ff of The Soul After Death), and Bishop Theophans laconic statement (the only one I know of where he criticized the Western skepticism with regard to this teaching) that "no matter how absurd the idea of the toll-houses may seem to our 'wise men,' they will not escape passing through them" (Psalm 118, p. 289). By speaking of the "sophisticated" level on which Bishop Ignatius wrote, I only meant to say that he was more concerned than Bishop Theophan to argue with the Western views on their own ground, while Bishop Theophan seemed more inclined to dismiss the Western views without much discussion. But perhaps this was not true in all cases.

Thus, I think that on the relative greatness of these two hierarchs there is no real disagreement between us. I certainly acknowledge Bishop Theophans greatness as a theologian and a patristic scholar, and my only reason for emphasizing Bishop Ignatius in The Soul After Death is that it was he and not Bishop Theophan who spoke in such detail against the Western errors with regard to the Orthodox teaching on life after death. I very much welcome your research on Bishop Theophan, whom I greatly respect and admire, and who unfortunately is not as appreciated as he should be today owing to the inclination of some people nowadays to view him rather naively as "scholastic" just because he translated some Western books or perhaps used some Western theological phrases.

Regarding the specific point of Bishop Theophans disagreement with Bishop Ignatius' teaching: You are correct in the supposition expressed in your private letter to me that when I wrote of this disagreement on page 36 of The Soul After Death I had not read Bishop Theophans booklet Soul and Angel, which criticizes Bishop Ignatius' teaching, and that my comments there were indeed based solely on Fr. Florovsky's small reference to it. Having since been able to obtain and read Bishop Theophans booklet, I see that my comments there are not precise. You are, of course, correct that there was no "dispute" between the two, but only Bishop Theophans disagreement, expressed after the death of Bishop Ignatius. The point of disagreement was also not expressed precisely (as I will discuss below). The main question you raise, however, is whether indeed this disagreement was a "minor" one, as I have stated; this question I would like to address here briefly.

Perhaps this question is only a semantic one, based on a difference of perspective in viewing the disagreement between these two theologians. Anyone reading Bishop Theophans Soul and

Angel, with its 200 (albeit small) pages criticizing Bishop Ignatius' teaching, and seeing the emphasis with which Bishop Theophan accused what he regarded as Bishop Ignatius' error, might be inclined to call the disagreement a "major" one. But in looking at the whole context of Bishop Ignatius' teaching on life after death, I still cannot help seeing this disagreement as a "minor" one, for the following reasons:

1. Bishop Theophan, in the whole course of his criticism in Soul and Angel, accuses only one and the same error (or supposed error) of Bishop Ignatius: the idea that the soul and angels are bodily and only bodily in nature. Bishop Theophan himself writes: "If the new teaching had only said that angels have bodies, one would not have needed to argue with it; for in this case the chief, dominating side in angels would still be a rationally free spirit. But when it is said that an angel is a body, one must deny in it rational freedom and consciousness; for these qualities cannot belong to a body" {Soul and Angel, Second Edition, Moscow, 1902, p. 103). If Bishop Ignatius had indeed held such an opinion, with all the emphasis and consequences which Bishop Theophan ascribes to it, it would surely have been a serious error on his part. But even so, it would not have directly affected the rest of his teaching on life after death: angels and souls would still act in the same way and in the same "places" whether they are bodies or have bodies (or even assume bodies, as Bishop Theophan himself seems more inclined to believe). Bishop Theophans criticism, thus, does not at all affect the whole system of Bishop Ignatius' teaching, but only one technical aspect of it. And even here their agreement is greater than their disagreement: both agree that there is a bodily aspect to the activities of angels, whether in this world or in the other world, and that therefore the accounts of their activities in the Lives of Saints and other Orthodox sources are to be accepted as true accounts and not as "metaphors" or "fantasies," as Western critics believe. Therefore, in the whole context of Bishop Ignatius' (and Bishop Theophan's) teaching on life after death, I cannot but see this disagreement as "minor."

2. I seriously question whether Bishop Ignatius actually taught the teaching which Bishop Theophan ascribes to him; certainly, at any rate, he did not place on it the emphasis or draw the consequences from it which Bishop Theophan was most concerned to oppose. Thus, in the quotation from Bishop Theophan above, where he states that "when it is said that an angel is a body, one must deny in it rational freedom and consciousness"—it is clear that Bishop Theophan is only drawing the logical conclusion from what he thinks Bishop Ignatius believes, but nowhere can he find a quotation from Bishop Ignatius himself that he actually believes angels to be deprived of rational freedom and consciousness; certainly Bishop Ignatius did not believe this. In my own reading of Bishop Ignatius' "Homily on Death" I did not find such a teaching. I have not read his "Supplement" to this work, but I am sure that there also there will not be found the whole emphasis and consequences of the teaching which Bishop Theophan accuses. Without entering into the full details of the disagreement between them (which might be a major study in itself and would have, I think, no particular value for Orthodox theology or the Orthodox teaching on life after death), I suspect that the error on Bishop Ignatius' part was not in holding the precise teaching which Bishop Theophan criticizes, but (perhaps) in overemphasizing the bodily side of the angelic nature and activity (rather easy to do in combatting the overly "spiritual" emphasis of Western teachers to the extent that he may sometimes have seemed to be saying that angels (and souls) are bodies rather than (as I think he actually meant to say) that

angels and souls have (ethereal) bodies, or that a bodily aspect is part of their nature. As Bishop Theophan has said, there would be no argument between them if such was indeed his teaching, for he regards this (for example, in Soul and Angel, p. 139) as a permissible opinion on this complex question which has not been dogmatically defined by the Church.

All the more, then, if Bishop Theophan was even slightly mistaken as to the emphasis of Bishop Ignatius' teaching, should this disagreement be regarded as "minor," in my opinion.

3. Bishop Theophan was once specifically asked whether in the teaching of Bishop Ignatius he had found any other error, apart from the supposed teaching of the "materiality" of the soul. He replied: "No. In Bishop Ignatius there is only this error—his opinion on the nature of the soul and angels, that they are material. In all that I have read in his books, I have noticed nothing un-Ortho- dox. What I have read is good" (Letter of Dec. 15, 1893, in The Russian Monk, Pochaev Monastery, No, 17, Sept., 1912). Thus, in the context of the whole Orthodoxy teaching of Bishops Ignatius and Theophan, this disagreement is truly a "minor" one.

Now to pass to a final point, concerning the aerial toll-houses encountered by the soul after death. In your open letter you quote a letter of Bishop Theophan in which he states that life after death "is a land closed to us. What happens there is not defined with precision…. As to what shall be there—we shall see when we get there." From this, as well as from the fact that Bishop Theophan does not mention the toll-houses often in his writings, you conclude that "the teaching as such, in all of its symbolism, was…at most peripheral to his thinking," and you think I am mistaken at least in my emphasis that Bishop Theophan was a staunch defender of the Orthodox teaching of the toll-houses. To this I would reply with several points:

1. I also can recall only these two direct references in the writings of Bishop Theophan to the teaching of the toll-houses. However, these two references are sufficient to show that he did indeed hold this teaching and taught it to others, and that he was quite critical, even scornful, of those who denied it ("No matter how absurd the idea of the toll-houses may seem to our wise men," they will not escape passing through them").

2. The fact that in some of his letters when the subject of life after death is touched on, he does not mention the toll-houses, does not seem to me a necessary indication that this subject is "peripheral" to his teaching, but only that he speaks in each case to the need of his listener, and some people do not need (or are unable) to hear of the toll-houses. I have found this same thing in my own experience as a priest: With those who are ready for it, the teaching of the toll-houses is a powerful incentive to repentance and a life lived in the fear of God; but there are those for whom the teaching would be so frightening that I would not even speak of it to them until they were better prepared to accept it. A priest sometimes encounters dying people so little prepared for the other world that it would be pointless to speak to them even of hell, let alone the toll-houses, for fear of removing in them the little hope and awareness they might have of the Kingdom of Heaven; but this does not mean that hell has no part in the teaching of such a priest, or that he would not defend its reality decisively if it were attacked. Especially in our "enlightened" 20th century, many Orthodox Christians are so immature spiritually, or have been so misled by modern ideas, that they are simply incapable of accepting the idea of encounters

with demons after death. Any Orthodox priest in his pastoral approach to such people must, of course, condescend to their weakness and give them the "baby food" they require until they are more prepared to accept the strong food of some of the Orthodox ascetical texts; but the Orthodox teaching on the toll-houses, handed down from the early Christian centuries, remains always the same and cannot be denied no matter how many people are incapable of understanding it.

3. Moreover, in actual fact the teaching of the toll-houses does appear in other works of Bishop Theophan—in his translations if not in his original works. There are numerous references to this teaching in his five-volume translation of the Philokalia, several of which I have cited in the text of The Soul After Death (pp. 80-81, 258-9, 262). In Unseen Warfare also (Part Two, ch. 9), there is an exposition of the Orthodox teaching on the "examination by the prince of this age" given to everyone on his departure from the body; the word "toll-houses" does not appear there, but the text says clearly that "the most decisive battle awaits us in the hour of death," and it is obvious that the reality is the same as that which Bishop Ignatius is so concerned to defend, and which in other places Bishop Theophan does call by the name of "toll-houses."

4. The text of Bishop Theophans Soul and Angel contains not one word critical of Bishop Ignatius' teaching on the toll-houses. Now, in Bishop Ignatius' "Homily on Death" he states unequivocally that "the teaching of the toll-houses is the teaching of the Church" (Vol III of his Works, p. 138), and he goes on to justify this statement in great detail. And Bishop Theophan, in his criticism of Bishop Ignatius' teaching, states that "in the present article the new teaching of the above-mentioned brochures ("Homily on Death" and the "Supplement" to it) is examined in full detail, without leaving uncensured a single thought in them which should be censured" {Soul and Angel, p. 4). It is quite clear, then, since Bishop Theophan found nothing whatever to censure in Bishop Ignatius' ideas on the toll-houses, that he is in full agreement with Bishop Ignatius that "the teaching of the toll-houses is the teaching of the Church."

5. In the very text of Soul and Angel, Bishop Theophan sets forth the conditions of the soul after its departure from the body in terms identical to those of Bishop Ignatius' exposition. These are precisely the conditions required for the occurrence of the encounter of the soul with demons at the toll-houses, so this quote, even though it does not directly mention the toll-houses, may be taken as an indication of Bishop Theophans agreement with Bishop Ignatius on the nature of after-death reality, his sole difference with Bishop Ignatius being on the question whether the nature of angels is only body (which, as I stated above, I do not believe Bishop Ignatius actually taught). Here is the quote from Bishop Theophan:

"The soul, after its departure from the body, enters into the realm of spirits where both it and the spirits are active in the same forms as are visible on earth among men: they see each other, they speak, travel, argue, act. The difference is only that there the realm is an ethereal one of subtle matter, and in them therefore everything is subtly material and ethereal. What is the direct conclusion from this? That in the world of spirits the outward form of being and of mutual relations is the same as among men on earth. But this fact does not speak of the bodiliness of the nature of angels, or say that their essence is only body" (Soul and Angel, pp. 88-89).

6. You do not disagree with me on the main point: that Bishop Theophan, like Bishop Ignatius, did hold the Orthodox teaching of the toll-houses; your only disagreement with me is on the emphasis the two teachers placed on it (Bishop Ignatius spoke of it more, Bishop Theophan less). I think there is a very simple explanation for this seeming difference of emphasis: It was Bishop Ignatius who felt it necessary to write a whole treatise on the subject of life after death, where the subject of the toll-houses, being an important part of the Orthodox teaching, of necessity occupies a conspicuous place; while Bishop Theophan, not having written such a treatise, mentions this subject only in passing. I would imagine (without looking through all his works to verify it) that in his other writings Bishop Ignatius mentions the toll-houses no more often than Bishop Theophan. The few references in Bishop Theophans writings, however, do indicated that he held the teaching as firmly as Bishop Ignatius. The difference between them, then, I would say, is not in what they believed or even in the force with which they expressed their belief, but in the point I mentioned at the beginning of this letter: that Bishop Ignatius was more concerned than Bishop Theophan to do close battle with the rationalistic views of the West, while Bishop Theophan handed down the Orthodox tradition with less attention to fighting specific Western errors regarding it.

In view of all this, I believe that my statement in the preface of The Soul After Death, that Bishop Theophan "taught the same teaching" as Bishop Ignatius, is justified: in view of the whole Orthodox teaching on life after death which they had in common, the difference between them on the one point of the "bodiliness" of the nature of the soul and angels (a difference caused, I believe, more by the apparent overemphasis of Bishop Ignatius on the "bodies" of angels than by his actually holding the teaching ascribed to him by Bishop Theophan)—is indeed "minor." With regard to the points of the teaching on life after death set forth in The Soul After Death (since I did not defend or even mention Bishop Ignatius' supposed teaching that souls and angels are only bodies), their points of agreement are close to complete. The agreement of their teaching on life after death is all the more striking when one compares it with the views of the rationalistic critics of the West who, even up to our day, deny not only the reality of the toll-houses but also the whole after-death reality which Bishops Theophan and Ignatius described in virtually identical terms, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and so forth. Against such false views the united witness of Bishops Theophan and Ignatius to the Orthodox teaching handed down from antiquity is indeed impressive.

I should be very interested in hearing further of your research on Bishop Theophan, for whom, as I have said, I have the greatest respect. Will you be publishing an article or book on him, or any translations of his works? I myself have translated the first part of The Path to Salvation, which is now appearing serially in the newspaper Orthodox America.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. I do not know how "open" your letter to me was, or to whom it was sent. I am sending copies of my reply only to a few people who are closely interested in this subject.

303.

Dec. 9/22, 1980

Conception of St. Anna

Right Rev. Bishop Gregory

75 E. 93rd St.

New York, N.Y. 10028

Your Grace, Dear Vladika Gregory,

Blagoslovite!

Thank you for your kind letter and the Synod document regarding the "controversy" on life after death. While I find this document quite satisfactory as far as it goes, I was rather sorry to see that it omitted some of the errors of Deacon Lev which have caused disturbance among the faithful: in particular, his insistence that prayers for the dead can bring no benefit to them and cannot change their condition, and his idea that the Orthodox texts in which the Church's teaching on life after death is expressed can be subjected to "criticism" and dismissed for any of the various reasons he has used in his writings (because they are "forgeries," "later additions," "allegories," "scholastic texts," etc.). I understand that you have deliberately understated his errors in order to make it easier for him to express his "repentance," so that the controversy can be quieted; but I very much fear that such a document is far from sufficient either to stop Fr. Levs false "theologizing" or to lessen the confusion of some of the faithful.

Just recently we received a copy of a letter from one of our Russian priests to Fr. Lev in answer to his "open letter" to our Brotherhood. This Russian priest wrote Fr. Lev that he had read neither my book nor his, but that he felt it necessary to warn Fr. Lev against pride, giving as an example Fr. Lev's statement that he knows better than the Apostle Paul that the latter's experience was not and could not have been "out of the body." There was not one comment made in this letter in favor> of any of Fr. Lev's teachings; and yet, in his long reply to the few lines of this priest's letter, Fr. Lev expresses his joy that he "agrees" with his teaching; and now he is undoubtedly telling his followers that "another Russian priest has joined us against the scholastic teaching" and the faithful who listen to him are further confused.

In a word, Fr. Lev is constantly misinterpreting letters and documents addressed to him, making it seem as if they are in his favor even when the truth is quite the opposite. I am sure he will try to do the same thing with the present Synod document, making it somehow appear that the Synod actually agrees with his teaching. To put a stop to this tactic of his, I believe, will require something much more decisive than this document.

I was also a little sorry to see, in the English translation of the Synod document, that it was I who "initiated a controversy" on the question of life after death. I believe the fact is quite the contrary: it was Deacon Lev who initiated a controversy, even before the publication of my articles, by his own letters and articles against the teaching on life after death in an article in

Orthodox Life·, his attention was directed towards me only when he saw that I was continuing (though without any polemical tone) to support the same Orthodox teaching even after his criticism. Since that time the "controversy" has been his doing and not mine: with the exception of Appendix 4 of The Soul After Death, my articles have not responded to his attacks, whereas his have been harshly polemical and have been directed not specifically against me, but against all of those who defend the Church's teaching on life after death.

Despite Fr. Lev's exaggerated claims that many agree with him and are against the teaching contained in The Soul After Death, we have yet to see evidence that this whole controversy involves anyone but Fr. Lev himself and a few of his followers (and, incidentally, the innocent newcomers to the faith whom he has now confused). From the time we began printing the articles on life after death in The Orthodox Word, we have received virtually 100% favorable comments on it; the only "protests" have come from Fr. Lev and a few of his followers. The "controversy" on life after death, as far as I can see, is solely the work of Fr. Lev and his small circle.

I sincerely hope that the Synod document will be sufficient to stop Fr. Levs polemics, but I really believe that only something much more decisive will have any lasting effect on him. One problem, of course, is that the subject of life after death is only one of many subjects on which Deacon Lev regards himself as an "expert" and as able to teach the rest of the Church and correct the "errors" of Orthodox tradition. In his private statements he goes even further than in his lectures and printed works. A few years ago, for example, he was one of those instrumental in inspiring the schism of the Guildford parish in England, when he wrote to the people there that Archbishop Anthony of Geneva is indeed a "heretic," and that there are also other "heretics" in our Synod of Bishops. I cannot help but regard Deacon Lev as a trouble-maker who will not bring good to our Church.

Please be assured that we ourselves will not enter into public debate with him. His whole polemical approach to Church questions is profoundly distasteful to us—as, I am sure, it is to almost all the clergy of our Church.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have written in answer to an "open letter" to me on the question of the teaching on life after death of Bishops Theophan the Recluse and Ignatius Brianchaninov. I believe that it is possible to discuss such questions without polemics, even while defending one's own opinion, and I have tried to do this in my letter. Unfortunately, Deacon Lev has tried to exaggerate the disagreement between Bishops Theophan and Ignatius, in order to justify his own rejection of so much of Bishop Ignatius' (and the Church's) teaching on life after death.

I very much agree with you that in our preaching of Orthodoxy we should emphasize the positive teachings of the Church and engage less in controversy.

Asking your prayers,

With love and respect in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. The new issue of Fr. Lev's Tlingit Herald (nos. 8-9, renamed for some reason Orthodox Missionary) contains another example of his polemical approach on questions which no one but him is interested in arguing about. In his life of St. John Cassian he states: "In his time, the two great false teachings in the West were those of Pelagius of Britain and Augustin of Hippo," and in his footnote to this passage he writes: "Augustin of Hippo and his followers wrote several works against the Orthodox faith. They called the Orthodox faithful, who were led by St. John Cassian and St. Vincent of Lerins, "semi-Pelagians," and tried to have them condemned."

Besides the obvious errors in these statements (Blessed Augustine, while he had errors in his teachings, certainly never wrote any "works against the Orthodox faith"; the term "semi-Pelagians" is of much later origin; and Blessed Augustine never tried to have St. Cassian "condemned," but wrote in a most loving and uncontroversial spirit regarding what he thought were his errors)—the belligerent and polemical tone of his mistaken accusations against Blessed Augustine, an Orthodox Father whose name is included in our Calendar of Saints, is most unfitting for one who claims to be transmitting the Orthodox tradition. All the more in an article written for children are such comments out of place, having as their aim to raise up "fanatics" of his own distorted views—some of whom later, like himself, will probably be challenging the Church's teaching and attitudes. Such statements appear many times in his writings, together with numerous errors of fact and distortions meant to prove his own sometimes strange opinions. In view of this, his writings on the subject of life after death are only a small part of the unpleasant polemics in which he has been indulging for years. Could he not be notified that an end should be put to all of these unnecessary and harmful polemics?

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1981

304.

Dec. 28/Jan. 10, 1981

Dear Brother and Sister in Christ, George and Margaret,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

Thank you for your letter, which we appreciate for its sincerity. While perhaps there are differences in our views, if we can express them sincerely, and with mutual love and forgiveness, these differences will not constitute an obstacle to our unity in Christs Church. You have expressed your disturbance over some statements we have published in The Orthodox Word, and I would like here to explain these statements a little more fully, so as to avoid any possible misunderstandings about them.

First of all, I believe it is not accurate to say that we have been making "attacks" in The Orthodox Word against Holy Transfiguration Monastery, St. Nectarios Church in Seattle, or any Synod clergy. While we have made warnings about what we regard as unhealthy attitudes which may (or may not) be shared by the individuals you mention, we have been very careful not to phrase these in the form of accusations or "attacks" on individuals—both because we regard such

personal disputes as unfruitful and unedifying for the faithful, and because we simply don't have in mind to "attack" anyone at all: we are only warning about attitudes which have already had disastrous results in our Church and are hoping to prevent the increase of these disasters. If you will read again the passage you interpret as our "attack" on some priests of our Church (on p. 121 of issue no. 92), you will see that we stated there "if someone can find his place in this jurisdiction without falling into the pitfall…" This is not an "attack," but only a warning, based on the bitter experience of people who have come to our jurisdiction and left it precisely because they fell into this pitfall and are now (in the spirit of some of the fanatical Old Calendarists in Greece) accusing our own bishops of "heresy" and "apostasy." The bitter spirit of dispute and factionalism which is being spread by some of these people is sufficient cause, I think, to issue a warning about this spirit.

Secondly, I think you should be aware (as perhaps you are not) that, whereas we ourselves have made no attacks against anyone in our Church in The Orthodox Word, the publications of St. Nectarios Church in Seattle have made such attacks. Specifically, in the article in Orthodox Christian Witness directed against Fr. Dimitry Dudko, the editors of The Orthodox Word and Nikodemos are called "unprincipled" and "irresponsible" for their defense of Fr. Dimitry (these editors are not called by name, but their words are quoted); to me, this is a stepping beyond the bounds of a legitimate difference of opinion, and an attempt to begin a "war" on this question. In our "Defense of Fr. Dimitry" we did not answer this accusation, nor did we make accusations of our own, believing that such things are not for the good of the Church. Incidentally, a number of our bishops have expressed their agreement with our position and their grief over the article in Orthodox Christian Witness.

Further, the St. Nectarios Church in Seattle has been responsible for publishing the very crude attacks made by Deacon Lev Puhalo against the traditional Orthodox teaching on life after death and against all of us who uphold it. These attacks have culminated in Deacon Levs proclaiming me (in an open letter) a literal "heretic" because I have defended the traditional teaching in my book, The Soul After Death. These attacks have caused so much disturbance in the Church that the Synod of Bishops has had to issue a decree exposing a few of Deacon Levs errors, exonerating me of the false charge of heresy, and ordering Deacon Lev to cease these attacks; in the Western American Diocese (and perhaps others now) Deacon Lev has been suspended from clerical functions and forbidden to publish or lecture until he admits his errors. Such attacks as his, I am sure you will agree, should have no place in the Church, and I and many others are only grieved to see the part that the St. Nectarios Church has had in disseminating them.

Thirdly, I think you should be very careful when you draw conclusions from the statements of the Bishops of our Russian Church Outside of Russia. When our bishops in 1971 condemned the decision of the Moscow Patriarchate to give communion to Roman Catholics, they used strong language, calling it a "heretical" act; but they did not proclaim the Moscow Patriarchate to be deprived of grace, or to be totally fallen away from the Church. The bishops, on various occasions, have specifically refused to make such a proclamation; and in their statement at the 1976 Sobor they specifically addressed the sincere and struggling priests of the Moscow Patriarchate in terms reserved only for priests who possess and dispense the grace of God (as

noted in our article on Fr. Dimitry). This statement was enough to cause some ex-members of our Church in England to proclaim our bishops as "heretical."

I think the whole question of the Moscow Patriarchate is much more subtle and complex than you seem to think. When you quote our own article on the "Catacomb Tikhonite Church," I find no contradiction between it and our article on Fr. Dimitry: in the former article, we stated only that "if normal Orthodox Church life is not restored to Russia, the Moscow Patriarchate will eventually wither and die in apostasy, and the innocent people who follow it will find themselves beyond any doubt outside the Church of Christ." I still believe this to be true; but it does not follow that we must regard the Moscow Patriarchate today as being without the grace of God (this very question was discussed in that same article), nor does the article deny that normal Orthodox Church life could be restored to Russia—and I think the phenomenon of Fr. Dimitry and the other confessing priests of the Moscow Patriarchate gives us good hope that such will eventually be the case (after the fall of Communism).

I myself find it painful that there are differences between some of us in the Russian Church Abroad. However, I think that a sincere expression of these differences is not sufficient cause for a loss of unity between us. Something else, however, is the spirit of accusation and attack which a few members of our Church have been indulging in; this is already a violation of unity, and I very much fear the end result of it. A number of people, as I have said, have already left our Church in anger, and I see others evidently preparing to go the same way. Our warnings on this subject in The Orthodox Word are meant to save as many people as possible from this suicidal step. Some dangerous signs: Just recently the priest of the St. Nectarios Church in Portland told two of my spiritual children whom I had sent there, that our Russian bishops are "betraying" him by their "ecumenism"; another Greek priest has told his flock that soon they will again be without bishops because they will have to leave the Russian Church Abroad; another clergyman openly calls some of our bishops "heretics." The perils about which we are warning are not imaginary, not at all.

I deeply wish that you will understand that we are by no means against you and other "refugees" to our Church. From the time they joined our Church, we were among the most ardent supporters both of Holy Transfiguration Monastery and St. Nectarios Parish, and we are not "against" them now. Even while we are warning about attitudes which may be held in these places, it is always with the hope that they have not yet taken "possession" of these places, and if we express the warning in general and not personal terms, perhaps these attitudes can still be changed before it is too late and a tragic schism has resulted.

We will be glad to discuss any of these questions further with you in the same spirit of friendly interchange. May God send you His abundant grace in the new year, and forgive all of us our many shortcomings.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. The article by Bishop Kyprian in our new Orthodox Word (no. 93) gives the view [letter ends]

305.

Jan. 17/30, 1981

St. Anthony the Great

Dear John [Hudanish],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

I received your letter with its clear message: either we do things your way, or you kick us out! Of course, you view it differently: that you are standing up for correctness, Orthodoxy, etc., and this is your duty since the clergy don't seem able to do it. This is a pitfall into which very many, especially among converts, have fallen.

In your case, I have seen this coming for a long time, and your letter was not a surprise to me. The devil often attacks in this way: because the singing at the last Liturgy in Woodburn was quite prayerful, the devil chose precisely this point to destroy the services in Woodburn, picking as his instrument someone who allows himself to become excited over matters which he does not fully understand. In place of the prayerful singing which is of the same sort that is sung in virtually all the churches of our Russian Church Abroad (including Jordanville in the time of Archbishop Averky— which should at least make you pause and think that perhaps you haven't fully understood what he was saying about church singing)—you would force everyone to obey the dictates of an inexperienced, spiritually immature layman.

It is a real catastrophe, both for the parish and for you personally. But perhaps you can use this opportunity to examine and criticize your own conduct in the past year or two. You have alienated and offended so many in Woodburn, as well as three priests who have travelled from far to serve there. Can it really be that you alone are righteous and Orthodox, and everyone else stands in need of correction by you? Some months ago, when I hinted to you on the phone that Fr. Herman had the distinct impression from you that you didn't want him to come back, you seemed surprised that you could have given such an impression; but the fact that now you've kicked us both out does indeed confirm that you do not consider us welcome (except under terms of your dictation).

Read pages 81-84 of Unseen Warfare, and any other passages there on the perils of trusting oneself, in order to see the pit you have dug for yourself.

To answer your ultimatum specifically: No, neither Father Herman nor I will serve in your chapel under your conditions or under any other conditions you may set, because: (1) the order of church services, singing, and everything else having to do with the conduct of worship is the sphere of the priest who serves, not laymen (a point about which Archbishop Averky was very emphatic); and (2) the particular conditions you wish to impose who chase out the Russians for whose sake the services have been organized, and not least of all because of the disrespect for

legitimate church authority which you are displaying. I am deeply sorry that you do not seem to realize this or to care whether it be so or not.

Please forgive me for all in which I have failed you as a spiritual father. Seeing your immature state and your resistance to what I have tried to teach you, I have given you little; your ultimatum is a clear revelation of a lack of Christian awareness, sensitivity, and struggle. May God grant that you can still come to your senses and change! Do you remember a phrase which, some years ago, I thought you understood?— "He may be Orthodox, all right, but is he a Christian?" Take it to heart and finally begin to work on yourself—you will be surprised then to see how others seem to change also!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

p.s. The article in the latest Orthodox Word on "Super-Correctness" should also help you, if your heart is open. Bishop Laurus of Jordanville (a faithful disciple of Archbishop Averky) just wrote to thank us for this article, which he considers just what's needed today. You aren't the only one with this problem!

306.

Jan. 24/Feb. 6, 1981

Hieromartyr Clement of Ancyra

Dear James [Paffliausen],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

It was good to hear from you and of your reflections; although your situation may seem confusing to you right now, the thinking and evaluating you are forced to do are all for the good and will be profitable in the long run.

I think the jurisdictional problem is not really as big as it may seem to you right now. While there are some in our Russian Church Abroad (most notably the Greeks you have come to us from the Greek Archdiocese and "overreacted" to the whole situation) who want to make the Synod the exclusive and only Orthodox body left in the world, the prevailing opinion in our Church is not at all so exclusivistic. I think the realization is increasing among us that we must speak for and to all Orthodox who want to preserve their Orthodoxy, and that we should be slow in drawing absolute lines between jurisdictions. There is still a measure of partial communion between us and the other jurisdictions: for the most part there is no clergy concelebration (although even this does exist to some degree in a few places), but there is a good amount of communion on the lay level, usually left up to the discretion of the local priest. This whole attitude presupposes that there is indeed grace in the Mysteries of the "canonical" jurisdictions, and that the heresies of a few hierarchs have not yet completely infected their Churches. Our refusal to have full communion with the other jurisdictions comes from the need to make a basic

distinction between the disastrous, even suicidal path they are following, and our own attempt to stand in the truth and keep the tradition.

Regarding the Moscow Patriarchate, I think our article on Father Dimitry Dudko in a recent Orthodox Word (sent to you together with Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future) explains this rather clearly.

As an example of our own attitude to other jurisdictions: your idea for us to have a "retreat" for students at the University presents no real problem for us. We could have Vigil and Liturgy and a series of talks under only one condition: that we not have to concelebrate with clergy of any other jurisdiction. We could give confession and communion to any Orthodox person, although here at the monastery we would be more restrictive and would treat each case separately. Our talks at such a "retreat" (actually we should have a better name for it!) would not concern jurisdictions (although we could answer any questions people might have about them). Actually, we would love to have such a weekend there, and I am sure our Archbishop would bless it. If it is really possible, please give us some idea of the facilities available, the amount of time people might be willing to devote to it, (the whole of Saturday and Sunday, or less?), the level of the participants (mostly non-Orthodox?), etc. It would be most convenient if the weekend be not the first or second of the month, when we have mission services in our parishes here. I am sure Fr. Alexey Young of Orthodox America would also like to participate.

Regarding the OCA and our Russian Church Abroad: I think it is frankly impossible for you to hope to change the OCA; it is only individuals and small groups there that can really hope to escape the main current of modernism, ecumenism, etc. But I can't tell you: "Come to the Synod and all your problems will be solved." You should be aware that we have our own problems and politics too, before you make this decision. Actually, our main problem is not "fanaticism" (regarding other jurisdictions as heretical, or without grace, etc.)—this is a minority view which most of us don't accept, and it only hinders the preaching of the Orthodox Gospel in America. The main problem I think you would find is the un-missionary attitude of many of our parishes, which are satisfied just to keep their Russians and don't reach out to others. But this is changing; the younger priests are almost all at least somewhat mission-oriented, and I myself as a convert have never really had a problem with this. Any convert who is willing to struggle for it can find an outlet for his missionary zeal. If you wish to be a priest in the world, you will not find an English-language parish ready to support you, but the very struggle involved in establishing yourself could be very fruitful for the deeper Orthodoxy that is so needed today.

From what I hear, St. Vladimir's Seminary is not very conducive to keeping or developing any kind of traditional Orthodoxy. Our seminary at Jordanville requires some Russian (although less with each passing year—many of the graduates now do not have a fluent command of the language and write papers and tests in English). If you already knew some Russian, you could finish the course there in three years (it gives a BTh). It is conceivable that a semi-correspondence course could be worked out for theological courses in English, but for this they would want to know you personally.

Pray to God (and to our Archbishop John) and He will show you the way. We would be glad to talk with you more about these questions. Please let us know about the possibilities for a weekend at the University. (The second or third Sunday of Lent would be a good time.)

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

307.

Meat-fare Saturday, 1981

Dear Father Alexey,

Christ is in our midst!

I've had a bad cold this week and have kept to my cell, and therefore have had time for a few reflections on our mission, church life, etc.

First of all, I've looked at some of the recent Orthodox periodicals—and on the whole, what a dreary collection of texts. There is very little life anywhere, and so much emphasis on externals, bishops, splendid services, etc. The OCA's Orthodox Church, it is true, talks a lot about mission, stewardship, responsibility, etc., and I began to wonder why I didn't like it (maybe I'm just prejudiced or jealous?). But then I looked at the latest Orthodox America—and what a difference! Every page has something for the soul, something to learn and be inspired by; but the Orth. Church only talks about things that might be inspiring (if they were genuine), while giving nothing whatever for the soul. It's like a two-dimensional facade with nothing at all behind it.

Therefore, not to be proud, but to see things the way they are—what you and we all are trying to do is extremely important in the real missionary sense, no matter how little support some may give it.

I say this having also in mind Fr. Panagiotes' letter. Perhaps it is uncharitable of me, but my first thought on hearing of it was: if they wish to think that way, I would rather have them as enemies than as "friends" who speak well but are ready to stab you in the back. The whole course of the last years' events with our Greeks has been positive, I think, in that it has brought concealed attitudes to light and removed the sugary "friendship" which is so frustrating. Recently Fr. Isaac wrote from Boston that we send them "too many" Orthodox Words—five is plenty, and they sent back most of the Calendars we sent them. The year before Fr. Ephraim had already said they didn't need any of our books (although we sent some since then to individual monks), and now they can give us Psalters and Ladders only with 20% discount. The message is clear: They have their view of Orthodoxy and don't want anything to do with ours.

But they, it is now obvious, are a small minority. Our subscriptions constantly increase, and almost no one has cancelled over our "controversial" articles. (One person in Boston threatened to do so over our seeming "attacks" on Boston, but after my letter did renew.) Most people in the Church who read English publications are either with us or at least are not against us; only a small, narrow group is opposed. We'll just have to leave this group to itself and speak to

everyone else. We have already broken the ice on "forbidden" topics, and should continue to pay no heed to what the Greeks think about the Shroud, evolution, etc. Public opinion in our Church was almost paralyzed for a while by these "forbidden" subjects, but I think if we lead the way the air will be made healthier for everyone.

Thinking about my Genesis course this summer, I was rereading part of Dr. Kalomiros' letters. How discouraging! One loses all inspiration to get tangled up in this subject, seeing how he handles it. And really, the tone is just like Deacon Lev's. I wondered why, and Fr. Herman answered me: They're trying to keep up with the "advanced" fashions of the universities; and I think that's probably the answer. Especially Kalomiros' repeated insistence (Deacon Lev says the same thing) over how many have "lost their souls" because of literal interpretations of Genesis—that is, we have to give them Genesis on their level, changing the truth if need be so as not to offend them or give them more than they can chew. But anyone who is really converted to Christianity will surely begin to rethink this whole intellectual outlook, won't he? Isn't the real problem that Dr. Kalomiros, Deacon Lev, and others are intellectuals who haven't been fully converted, or have brought their intellectual baggage with them into Orthodoxy—the same thing they accuse others of? This was the disease of the Russian intellectual converts earlier in this century, and I think our Greeks fall into the same category.

Therefore, I am plowing ahead with Genesis according to the Holy Fathers, realizing that it may cause more waves among the Greeks (and name-calling—but I'm already a "theosophist" and can't get much worse than that!), especially since it will be "competition" to Dr. Kalomiros' talk in Pennsylvania.

Speaking of Genesis, I see no reason why this course on Genesis couldn't be turned into the main portion of our long-lost "evolution" book. The whole outline of it now becomes clear to me. It should be called something positive (no evolution in the title), such as "Genesis, Creation and Early Man: An Orthodox View," and the first and main part should be simply an Orthodox interpretation (according to St. John Chrysostom, St. Ephraim, etc) of the first chapters of Genesis, discussing "problems" raised by modern men in the course of the discussion. Then, as the secondary thought (less than half the book), a discussion of the whole question of evolution, something like this:

1. Evolution as a scientific theory: the "proofs" of evolution. This would be a brief discussion of everything people think proves evolution—just enough to show that these aren't really proofs at all, and evolution can neither be proved nor disproved. The chapter you've already written should take care of most of this already, perhaps even shortened to make our contact with the scientific side of the question as brief as possible, since this is the most debatable part of it.

2. Evolution as popular science—basically your chapter on "Early Man" to show how textbooks fill in the "gaps" of scientific knowledge and present a picture much more solid than any facts warrant. Eugene Zavarin will be satisfied to see we aren't using a highschool textbook as a scientific treatise, but only showing how evolution filters down to this level.

3. Evolution as mythology and cosmic speculation, —some remarks on Carl Sagan's "Cosmos" television series and book. I add this here because one of our subscribers just sent a dipping

about this, which seems to be much in the air now, and it seems typical of the way evolution is preached today as dogma and almost religion. What do yo think of this? Are you familiar with this series?

4. Where did the idea of evolution come from?—to explain how it got in the air. I've written about half of this already.

5. "Christian" evolution and T. de Chardin—your article. (Or maybe ch.s 4 and 5 should be reversed.)

6. The new reaction against evolution: towards a Christian-inspired scientific approach to origins, with citations from the Creationist literature.

I think this basically takes in the work we've done over the past eight years. If we can carry it through, it should be a pioneering work which will make this question at least discussable among Orthodox Christians, many of whom are concerned but just don't know where to begin to think it through. What do you think? Any ideas or discussions? I will be working on the whole first part for the summer course, and maybe you and I could look over and organize the rest of it sometime this summer. Then it will be timely to print it, especially since the subject will be somewhat in the air with my and Kalomiros' talks.

Rereading Kalomiros' letters, I see that there is something quite basic at stake in our differences with the Greeks. In this particular case, it is obvious that Kalomiros has no intention whatever to humble himself before the mind of the Fathers. He "knows better" than they, and therefore he easily categorizes as "absurd" opinions which they held because he himself has thought it out better, with the aid of modern science. In this case he is broader than the Fathers; in most cases, perhaps, our Greeks are narrower—but it is their own wisdom that they trust and which they wish to impose on others. Our key is—sticking to the wisdom of the Church, trusting our own Fathers and the Holy Fathers who lived before. People are ready to hear this.

Please pray for Catechumen Genevieve (Timothy Shell's Mimi), whom, God willing, we will baptize this Pascha, and Catechumen Andrew (Robert Kencis), who will probably be baptized sooner. Before Lent begins, please forgive me and us all for our sins against you in thought, word, and deed. May God forgive and have mercy on us all, and grant us all a profitable Lent!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

308.

April 1/14, 1981

St. Mary of Egypt

Dear Vanya [Danz, John D'Anci?],

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

To be frank, it was a great relief for us to receive your two letters and hear that you had left the monastery in Boston, despite the difficult spiritual experience this may be for you. Just a few days before receiving your first letter I was expressing regret that I had helped get you into that situation, and if I were able to get a message through to you it would be: leave that monastery.

I say this not because of our "political" differences with Fr. Panteleimon and his 'monks—that is a secondary matter (but it is, of course, serious enough, since it is probably going to cause them to leave our Church). But Misha's letter to Fr. Herman was so spiritually wrong (for its presumption, criticism, "knowing better," "being spiritual while looking in a mirror," etc.) that we have finally been forced to a sad conclusion: there is something wrong with Fr. Panteleimon himself (it must be him, because all the letters from there breathe the same spirit, as if written by the same person—even though some of the writers we know personally to be not like that at all). We were afraid that out of simplicity and trust you would be molded by this atmosphere and end up sounding the same way.

Our acquaintance with Fr. Panteleimon and some of his monks (and some who have left him) has given us food for some sobering thoughts about Orthodox monasticism in the American atmosphere. I think one general conclusion is this: the idea of "super-strictness" in monastic training is really not workable in our times; it produces too much fakery and posing. It is much better to emphasize simple faith and love and the basic Christian virtues, and work on the monastic life a little at a time, even though this is accompanied by a certain looseness in discipline. This is basically what Jordanville is about, although it is not much emphasized or talked about there, which results in the fact that many there seem to be unaware of it and don't work much on it.

Fr. Gregory of Denver spent two days with us last year, enough to see his spiritual profile and warn you: STAY AWAY FROM HIM! He has disagreements with Fr. Panteleimon, but he has been completely formed by him, and there's something wrong: super-strictness without the loving flexibility our Russian monks have, even without a strict monastic "training."

Don't give up on monasticism. You stuck it out a year in Boston, and that was a valuable experience in spite of the problems. Don't be in a rush to decide, but see how you like the life in Jordanville. If you're able to fit in all right, then probably you should stay there (if only to avoid the temptation to "run" again). If not, you're welcome to come to us (we'd love to have you)—but if you do, it should be with the resolve to spend a year here and then see what the next step might be. We have a little "monastic corpus" now with three cells, away from the main monastery buildings (where our younger boys and short-term residents stay). Our two ryassophore monks are living now in this "corpus," but one of them will be leaving soon: Fr. Peter from Jordanville came last Pascha to spend a year, and he's decided to return (he's a little too "smart" for our conditions and he thinks we're really not "monastic" enough for him). If you stay in Jordanville, Fr. Hilarion will cause you the fewest complications as a spiritual father, and Fr. Theodosius (a simply monk who teaches in the seminary) is a sober person to talk to.

Pray for us, and let us know how you are. Please remember us especially at Pascha, as we will remember you. God is with us!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

309.

Pascha Monday, 1981

April 14/27

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Brother in Christ, George,

IN TRUTH HE IS RISEN!

Enclosed is the first copy of "The Light of Orthodoxy" which you sent us. I looked through it and have pointed out in pencil in the text two or three places which I thought might cause you some trouble. However, I simply have no time (and Father Herman has less) to really "censor" the whole text, let alone all the issues you will be putting out.

We really can't think of anyone who might have the time and opportunity to serve as your advisor in this project. However, even such an advisor will be no guarantee that you won't get into trouble by publishing something unfitting. The recent publications scandal to which you refer was caused not by failure to consult with others (his advisors apparently share his errors), but by the extremely arrogant and pompous tone with which he tried to instruct others, even those who are much more rooted in Orthodoxy than he. In glancing through your publication I did not notice such a tone, and I doubt that you would cause much controversy, save perhaps in the points I have noted in the text.

In general I would have only one word of advice for you: be very humble in your confession of Orthodoxy, and avoid "dogmatizing" on points that might be controversial among Orthodox Christians.

May God be your help in your efforts.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

310.

June 13/26, 1981

St. Tryphillius of Cyprus

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Christ is in our midst!

Thank you for your letter. I am frankly happy to see someone with your views on Blessed Augustine willing to do something besides hit him (and all of us who have any respect for him) over the head.

You ask for cooperation on what seems to be a "thorough study" of Bl. Augustine. I really wonder about the value of such a study—for someone who wishes to expose the source of "Western influence" in Orthodox theology, this detailed analysis itself seems so terribly Western!

If your attempt is to find our Augustine's real place in the Orthodox Church, I think your approach is all wrong. It assumes that "we moderns" are the ones who can do this—that we can "know better" than anyone in the Orthodox past. I don't think so. I have a deep distrust of all of us who are writing on theological subjects today—we are more under "Western influence" than anyone before, and the less we are aware of it, the more obnoxious our "Westernism" becomes. Our whole cold, academic, and often disdainfiil approach to theology is so remote from the Fathers, so foreign to them. Let us admit this and try not to be so presumptuous (I speak for myself also).

I have no time (and probably not the sources) to find out how much St. Photios.or St. Mark read of Bl. Augustine. I would suspect that St. Photios had read rather little apart from the texts under dispute, and St. Mark probably more (in fact, St. Mark can probably be shown to be under Augustine's "influence" in some way if you search hard enough!—his disciple Gennadius, after all, was the translator of Thomas Aquinas into Greek). Undoubtedly their respect for Augustine was based on the general respect for him in the Church, especially in the West from the very beginning.

And this brings up the only real question I think you might fruitfully research: what did the Western Church think of Blessed Augustine in the centuries when it was Orthodox? The West knew him as one of their own Fathers; it knew his writings well, including the disputes over them. What did the Western Fathers who were linked with the East think of him? We know St. Cassian's opinion—he challenged (politely) Augustine's teaching on grace while accepting his authority on other questions. St. Vincent of Lerins' argument is more with the immoderate followers of Augustine. In neither case was there talk of "heresy," or of someone who was totally un-Orthodox. St. Faustus of Lerins—if anyone, he should be an enemy of Augustine, but the evidence seems to the contrary. St. Caesarius of Arles, St. Gregory the Great—admirers of Augustine, while not following his exaggerations on grace. I don't mention some of the enthusiastic followers of Augustine.

There is room for research here in Latin sources, but no research can overthrow the obvious fact (it seems to me)—the Orthodox West accepted him as a Father. If he's really a "heretic," then doesn't the whole West go down the drain with him? I'm sure you can find enough signs of "Western mentality" in Gregory the Great, for example, to disqualify him as a Father and Saint in the eyes of many of today's Orthodox scholars—he also is accepted in the East on the basis of his general reputation in the West, and on the basis of his Dialogues (which I'm sure a few would now question as having a right to be called an Orthodox book).

I think the "heresy hunt" over Augustine reveals at least two major faults in todays Orthodox scholars who are pursuing it:

1. A profound insecurity over their own Orthodoxy, born of the uncertainties of our times, the betrayal of ecumenism, and their own purely Western education. Here Augustine is a "scapegoat"—hit him hard enough and it proves how Orthodox you yourself really are!

2. An incipient sectarian consciousness—in attacking Augustine so bitterly, one not only attacks the whole Orthodox West of the early centuries, but also a great many Orthodox thinkers of recent centuries and today. I could name you bishops in our Church who think like Augustine on a number of points—are they, then, "heretics" too? I think some of our anti-Augustinians are coming close to this conclusion, and thus close to schism and the formation of an "Orthodox" sect that prides itself on the correctness of its intellectual views. A number of people have already left our Russian Church Abroad for the Mathewites after being infected with this consciousness (not just over the issue of Augustine—the Mathewites are more pro-Augustine than anyone in our Church—but over the whole idea of "intellectual correctness" as an ideal).

I myself am no great admirer of Augustine's doctrines. He does indeed have that Western "super-logicalness" which the Eastern Fathers don't have (the same "super-logicalness" which the critics of Augustine today display so abundantly!). The one main lovable and Orthodox thing about him is his Orthodox feeling, piety, love for Christ, which comes out so strongly in his non-dogmatic works like the Confessions (the Russian Fathers also love the Soliloquies). To destroy Augustine, as today's critics are trying to do, is to help destroy also this piety and love for Christ—these are too "simple" for today's intellectuals (even though they also claim to be "pious" in their own way). Today it is Augustine; tomorrow (and it's already begun) the attack will be on the "simple" bishops and priests of our Church. The anti-Augustine movement is a step towards schism and further disorders in the Orthodox Church.

Let us assume that one's exegesis of Romans 5:12 is incorrect; that one believes like Augustine on the transmission of original sin; that one knows little of the difference between the "transcendent" and the "economic" Trinity and sometimes confuses them. Can't one still be Orthodox? Does one have to shout so loudly one's "correctness" on such matters, and one's disdain (and this disdain is strongly felt!) for those who believe thus? In the history of the Church, opinions such as these which disagree with the consensus of the Church have not been a cause for heresy hunts. Recognizing our fallible human nature, the Fathers of the past have kept the best Orthodox views and left in silence such private views which have not tried to proclaim themselves the only Orthodox views.

I myself fear the cold hearts of the "intellectually correct" much more than any errors you might find in Augustine. I sense in these cold hearts a preparation for the work of Antichrist (whose imitation of Christ must also extend to "correct theology"!); I feel in Augustine the love of Christ.

Forgive me for my frankness, but I think you probably welcome it. I have spoken from the heart, and I hope you will not pass this letter around so it can be put in various "files" and picked apart for its undoubted shortcomings.

May God preserve us all in His grace! Please pray for us.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. An important point I didn't specify in the letter above—the extreme criticism of Augustine show such a lack of trust in the Orthodox Fathers and bishops of the past who accepted him as a Father (including the whole Orthodox West before the Schism). This lack of trust is a symptom of the coldness of heart of our times.

311.

August 13/26, 1981

Apodosis of Transfiguration

Dear Dr. Johnstone.

May the blessing of the Lord by with you!

Thank you for your letter of August 10/23 and the copy of your letter to Metropolitan Philaret. We do appreciate your sending it.

I am sad to hear that you find The Orthodox Word, no. 96 so greatly disturbing. I honestly think the content of the issue does not warrant such a strong reaction. The real issue involved is surely no more than the propriety of presenting as an Orthodox model a priest who was, after all, a member of the Soviet Church, with which we have no communion (and with which, as our issue 96 states quite clearly, we should have no communion).

Articles on Archimandrite Tavrion, Fr. Dimitry Dudko, and other courageous priests of the Soviet Church have appeared for several years in the Russian-language church periodicals published in Jordanville, and there has been on outcry in our Church; it is generally understood that this is a matter of personal choice, and those who would prefer to keep the "strict line" and not even mention such priests have not shown any particular disturbance when others (such as ourselves) have considered the words and actions of these priests as having a posidve value for us in the West. Our readers, judging from our mail, have generally agreed with us in this. The reason there has been no outcry, I think, is quite simply because our disagreement over the small question of propriety is outweighed by our much greater agreement on the nature of the Church, the stand of our Russian Church Outside of Russia, etc.

The outcry and the disturbance come, rather, from converts to our Church like yourself who, it would seem, find their disagreement to be much deeper. This disagreement may be seen in some of the value judgments you make in your letter to the Metropolitan: a bishop in the Soviet Church is a "pseudo-bishop," "Soviet bishops are no bishops." Your disagreement with us, therefore, is a deep one over ecclesiology; evidently you agree with Fr. Michael Azkoul who recently stated (Orthodox Christian Witness, Aug, 10/23) that "heresy has negated these ancient Sees. There is no 'church,' hence no Mysteries" in the Churches of Moscow and Constantinople.

I hope you are aware that our Russian Church Outside of Russia has never taught and does not now teach this; this is an opinion which has been introduced into our midst by some converts who think themselves wiser than our bishops. I am sorry that you seem not to see the obvious meaning of our Church's not having communion with the Soviet Church: that way we stay free of politics and do not bind ourselves to bishops who are not free and who are often forced to betray the truth. But to state that this Church has no grace is a presumption our bishops have never dared to make. This view, in my opinion, is not at all the result of a sound or strict ecclesiology, but is the result of a too-strict logic (a typical disease of our Western mentality) being applied where it does not fit. I do think that the comfortableness of our Western life (in particular, the absence of the agonizing choices that sometimes present themselves to clergy in Russia) only helps one to be "strictly logical" without seeing the whole context of church life in Soviet Russia. I believe the statement on the church situation in the "Catacomb Epistle" printed in our same issue no. 96 says nicely what needs to be said on this subject, and I would encourage you to study it more closely, without hastening to think that it contradicts itself; it sets forth the very position of our Russian Church Abroad: no communion with the Soviet Patriarchate, but no statement about "lack of grace," and compassion for those who have no other source of church life. This is surely the position of our Metropolitan Philaret, who in sending us the material on Archimandrite Tavrion for publication was not in the least inconsistent with his strict stand against the Soviet bishops.

Can't we agree on this much and let our disagreements be over small points? If not, I fear the schism that is brewing in our midst on the part of those who really think they "know better" than our bishops. I can already see in Fr. Michael's sermon in Orthodox Christian Witness the beginnings of exaggerations which can serve to accelerate a schism: certainly none of us who admire Fr. Tavrion think that he attempted, or that one can, "join the Moscow church in order to save it"; we have no "enthusiasm for the Moscow church" (I regard that as simple slander); we are not engaging in any kind of "muddled thinking," "twaddle," or "sophistry"—but the use of such language certainly shows that he is not well disposed to understand the position of Metropolitan Philaret and the rest of us.

I pray that, since you are so interested in this question, you will not be satisfied with a superficial answer, and will not press "logical deductions" that take the place of real ecclesiology, but will study the question more deeply in the statements of our Russian bishops (both of the Catacomb Church and the Russian Church Abroad—see, for example, our bishops' statements in The Orthodox Word, 1976, no. 5, pp. 160-166). I think you will find that the position of our bishops has not changed at all; rather, what has been uncovered is that you (and those who think like you) were not of one mind with our bishops in the past, and you are only now finding this out. I pray that you will find that you can be of one mind with our bishops; their attitude is really just about the only sound one in the Orthodox world today, even if it is not always easy to "define" it to our very Western, modern minds.

Please forgive me if anything I have said here has in any way offended you; I have certainly not intended to do so, and hope that there will be continued peace between us all in the Russian Church Abroad. Please pray for us all.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

312.

August 18/31, 1981

Martyrs Florus and Laurus

Your Grace, dear Vladika Laurus,

Blagoslovite!

First of all, Father Herman and all the brethren send you heartfelt congratulations on your namesday. Spasi, Christe Bozhe! Thank you very much also for your recent visit to us, which was very much appreciated by our pilgrims. Our pilgrimage seems to have been a great success, with much interest aroused in gaining a deeper knowledge of Orthodoxy.

This past Saturday and Sunday we were visited by Basil Voytan and his parents and had a long discussion with them over his future. He does not want to do anything else but prepare himself for service in the Church, but he is also very much afraid of the depression which came over, him last year in Jordanville (and lasted for months), based upon idleness, inability to apply what he reads in spiritual books to the reality of his life, etc. He is presently in a "bored" state, and without close supervision he is afraid (and we agree) that he will lose all interest in serving the Church.

Therefore, we informed him of what you had told us about the correspondence courses that will soon be set up, and of the possibility of receiving a Jordanville degree without being present at the seminary for all five years of courses. We proposed (in the presence of his parents) that he spend the next school year here with us doing all the Jordanville course work he can do, under our guidance. After praying and receiving Holy communion the next day, he accepted this proposal and is preparing to come here in a few weeks.

With your blessing, we would like to give him as much of the second and third year course materials as he can handle (this will depend on his facility in Russian, which we haven't tested yet). We have the list of books for the third-year course; is there a similar list for the second year? If you approve of this plan, what would be required to do for him to be enrolled in the seminary?—write papers, take examinations, etc.?

From what we know of him over the past several years, Basil seems to be a highly gifted and motivated boy who could easily perform the necessary work; and under close supervision we believe his emotional problem (which seems to be bound up with immaturity) can also be handled.

Please let us know your opinion of all this, so that we will know what to give him when he comes. We plan to give him a strict regime, with certain hours every day for study, and personal help as needed.

Asking your holy prayers,

With love and respect in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. We hear that our Greeks have risen up in protest against our article on Elder Tavrion, and that the Synod is going to discuss it. I hope the bishops will have in mind that those who are protesting are doing so because they think, as Father Michael Azkoul wrote in the Orthodox Christian Witness of August 10/23, that "heresy has negated these ancient Sees. There is no 'church,' hence no Mysteries" in the Churches of Moscow and Constantinople. I think our Greeks must be about to leave us because of our "apostasy"!

313.

August 21/September 3, 1981

Martyr Bassa

Your Grace, dear Vladika Gregory,

Blagoslovite!

We have heard from several sources that the Greek clergy in our Church are making a rather loud protest against our recent articles on Archimandrite Tavrion (The Orthodox Word #96). The main article was sent us by Metropolitan Philaret specifically for publication, and we printed also his short letter which stated this fact. We thought that the Metropolitans statement would prevent any adverse comment and would cause our Greek clergy to begin to rethink their own fanatical position with regard to the church situation in Russia.

Unfortunately, the result was something quite different, and the past two issues of Orthodox Christian Witness have contained articles by Father Michael Azkoul and by Holy Transfiguration Monastery which not only make statements very disrespectful towards the Metropolitans statement, but also set forth an ecclesiology which I believe is totally foreign to our Russian Church Outside of Russia: that the Orthodox Churches of Moscow and Constantinople (and presumably all the other Local Orthodox Churches, which are in communion with them) are without grace, that their "bishops are no bishops," etc.

These are statements of such a serious kind that if they are allowed to go uncorrected they will create the strong impression that our Church has indeed become what our enemies would like to think it is: a sect.

Our Greeks would very much like everyone to think that all the converts and non-Russians in our Church, and many of the Russians also, share their fanatical views. We have just heard from one of our parishioners in the Portland area (where someone from our monastery goes occasionally to serve the Liturgy in Slavonic) that Father George Macris is insisting that the Russians there (who attend the English-language parish when there is no Slavonic service) write or sign letters of protest to ^ the Metropolitan against our articles; this has caused much confusion among the Russians, who cannot understand what this is all about.

We ourselves have received only two letters of protest against our issue #96, both of them from persons thoroughly under the influence of our Greeks; all other responses have been favorable—in fact, those who have responded have found the image of Father Tavrion to be a very inspiring one. I am enclosing my reply to Dr. John Johnstone concerning his letter of protest to the Metropolitan, which perhaps you have seen.

I think I mentioned once before in a letter to you that the "silent majority" of the members of our Church, both clergy and laymen, both Russians and converts—does not follow the fanatical party-line of our Greeks. We (and very many with us) certainly hope that the loudness of the outcry of our Greeks will not cause any statement on the part of our Church leadership that could be interpreted as favorable in any way to the cause of fanaticism such as our Greeks are now preaching so loudly. Our Russian Church Outside of Russia can continue to be a beacon-light to the other Orthodox Churchs—but it will not be so if we become a sect such as our Greeks would make us out to be (and a sect which would only be warring with other small "sects" in Greece—for our Greeks have no oneness at all with the Old Calendar movement in Greece).

Please forgive my boldness in speaking so frankly. I have done so knowing that the non-fanatics in our Church (the vast majority, I am sure) are not organized and do not think it their business to make loud (and sometimes coerced) statements in the manner of our Greeks.

Asking your prayers and blessing,

With love and respect in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. We recently concluded a very successful week of lectures and courses in our summer St. Herman Pilgrimage. About 150 people attended the first day, and nearly 200 were present at some time during the week (most of them converts). We noted that in virtually none of them was there the "super-correct," "know-it-all" attitude which is promoted by our Greeks; all, on the contrary, were eager to learn and most respectful of the authority of our bishops, two of whom (Bishops Alypy and Lauras) were present at some time.

314.

August 21 /Sept. 3, 1981B

Apostle Thaddeus

Dear Father Gregory,

Christ is in our midst!

Many thanks for your letter. We have heard from several others also of the "party" spirit at the Pennsylvania conference, which is sad but is now what we have come to expect. We plan no public disputes over anything, and I pray that God will keep us out of being dragged into any; there will be no peace in the Church until we are all able to stand a little above the issues of the day and have a little tolerance for differing opinions. Easier said than done! Just now we hear of the big outcry our Greeks have raised against our article on Elder Tavrion, the "final straw"

being that the Metropolitan himself sent and endorsed it for publication. Father George Macris in Portland is trying to force our old Russian parishioners there (who attend his English services when we can't come for a Slavonic service) to write letters of protest to the Metropolitan, and the poor old ladies don't understand what it's all about! What a narrow strait-jacket of logic they want to force us into, and how little it suits the real needs of the Orthodox mission today! We plan no answer tjo this outcry, but presume the bishops will sooner or later have to make a statement that we do not regard the Moscow and other Churches as "without grace," even if it might cause the schism of our Greeks. We plan nothing further on Blessed Augustine either, apart from re-issuance of our earlier articles on him; those who hate him do so for personal reasons and won't be convinced by anything we could say.

We had a very successful Pilgrimage here, with many more pilgrims than expected (150 the first day, and nearly 200 people altogether during the week). There were no "super-correct" zealots noticeable, no protests against the frequent mention of suffering believers in Russia (including a talk on a courageous priest [Fr. George Calciu] of the Romanian Patriarchate)—just normal people awaking to the need for a deeper Orthodoxy (or to the need for Orthodoxy at all—there were several converts made during the Pilgrimage, and two baptisms of older converts). I think there are big things just beginning to happen in the soul of America (parallel to the awakening in Russia), and we should be there to guide all those we can into Orthodoxy. There is also a beginning of awakening in Orthodox of other jurisdictions through contact with our Church, and this should certainly be encouraged by not pushing them away with statements that they have no grace, etc. In view of all this, our Greeks are just not "where it's at"—they're fighting windmills with their jesuitical logic and justifying their own "purity," while what is needed is loving and aware hearts to help the suffering and searching and bring them to Christ.

Why don't you come out for next year's Pilgrimage? I think it will expand your horizons about the missionary field.

We haven't heard from David Pirkle. I would be interested to hear how he was confused by the Pennsylvania conference, since we occasionally have to encounter such cases.

I'm sorry to hear of your experience with Arsenius; things like that can be humbling! But God is stronger than our weakness! I hope you aren't being tempted to move to the big city—? Stay where you are, and you will see it bear fruit.

Many thanks for The Sacramental Life. I read it and liked it, with only two questions: As far as I know, our Russian Church has never heard of the "re-chrismation" the Greeks practice (probably picked up by them under the Turkish Yoke), and I wonder if it might not become a temptation for our "super-correct" ones. Also, on p. 72, I wonder if the phrase "even in some sense of becoming God" might not better read: "even in some sense of becoming divine." Could you send us 20 copies against a supply of something you need? (Our money situation right now is probably as bad as yours; we are still many thousands short of what we need to print Dogmatic Theology, but are starting anyway.)

May God preserve you strong in your trials, and thanking Him for them. Please pray for us all. My greetings to Matushka and the children.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

315.

August 21/Sept. 3, 1981C

Martyr Bassa

Dear Father Photios,

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

I have heard from several people who were present at the recent Orthodox conference in Pennsylvania that you are planning to print a book by Dr. Kalomiros on creation and evolution. From one of these persons I heard that this book is to include excerpts from my correspondence with Dr. Kalomiros on these subjects in 1973. On the chance that this rumor might be true, please let me tell you the following:

This correspondence was strictly a private one between Dr. Kalomiros and myself. I specifically asked him not to send copies of it to anyone, so that we might work out our seeming differences on this subject and come to some fruitful agreement about it—something which simply cannot be done if outsiders are reading it, spreading rumors about a "dispute," and in general putting this subject into the gossip route. I was very sad to find out at that time that, despite my plea, he had indeed sent out copies, and "xeroxes of xeroxes" were being read by a number of people who were interested in it precisely as a "dispute." I was further saddened by the fact that Dr. Kalomiros, despite my several pleas to him to do so, has absolutely refused to have any contact with me since that time, evidently regarding my letter (which was quite frank and outspoken, and was intended for his eyes alone) as some kind of "insult" to him. I myself benefitted from the correspondence, changed several of my own opinions, and believed at that time that if only we could have continued the correspondence then we might have come up with something worth giving to the larger Orthodox reading public.

Given these circumstances, I think you can understand why I am absolutely opposed to the publication of any part of my correspondence with Dr. Kalomiros on this subject. I can only see it as an attempt to cause more dispute among Orthodox Christians and to sow discord among the small flock of Christ. There is enough of that already without adding more fuel to the fire. If Dr. Kalomiros wishes to publish something on this subject, let him do so in a spirit of peace, and with no reference to the disagreements which I once had with him on the subject. For my part, all I can do is categorically forbid any quotation from my letter. And if I am to be referred to in any way in this proposed book (since this would undoubtedly be for a disputatious purpose), I would ask you to send me a copy of the material for approval before publication, so that there will not be another of those senseless disputes that are dividing our flocks.

If all this is a groundless rumor, of course, please disregard this letter. My only concern is to avoid an unnecessary public "fight" between members of one and the same Orthodox Church. In essence these questions can be discussed without any "fight," calmly and with respect for

differing opinions; but the correspondence between Dr. Kalomiros and myself contains expressions (on both sides) that can too easily be interpreted as a "fight" by outsiders. This is why I wished, and still wish, it to be a private matter.

Asking your prayers,

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

316.

Sept. 4/17, 1981

Holy Prophet and God-seer Moses

Dear Father Demetrios,

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

Just a note to ask you to return the display about our monastery and missions, if you haven't already sent it back to Etna. We haven't even seen it ourselves, so please send it here.

I'm sorry you have to return so many of our books, but even more sorry to see the prejudice against them in that part of the country. Even the Russian Conference in San Francisco bought many times more than that, because they haven't been told that we are "apostates," "betrayers," and all the rest. Fr. Panteleimon must be behind it, since he has told us not to send any more books of any kind to the monastery and has canceled The Orthodox Word (besides demanding that we pay for Psalters, incense and everything else—save for a few supplies—that he use to give so abundantly).

Can't you and some like-minded priests do anything about this drying up of Christian love? The latest scandal over Elder Tavrion is a disgrace—the hate campaign in the Greek parishes (even extending to some of our innocent Russian ladies in Portland, who are supposed to sign ready-made letters against us!) simply cannot be reconciled with any kind of Orthodoxy. Fortunately, our bishops have again come out with an appropriate statement that sets things straight, and it is significant that, besides warning clergy and laymen who uncharitably judge their own Metropolitan, they warn over the danger of a "schism" if this "know-better" mentality continues.

I have no hope whatever that our Greek clergy will take this warning to heart; they seem determined to push our whole Church into the soulless, heartless, pharisaical dead-end into which they have already pushed themselves. Undoubtedly they are calculating that priests like you will unthinkingly follow them into schism, leaving only a lot of "stupid Russians" in the Synod.

Can't you and other priests like you who still have not been totally alienated by the Greeks, speak up before the fatal step is made? Tell them they have to humble themselves, cease thinking they know so much more than the whole of Church tradition, start being truly obedient to bishops and the church authority, and cease their Gestapo-GPU tactics against sincere priests and

bishops who may happen to disagree with their party line. Judging from this last outburst, the schism is close, and I'm afraid the "silent majority" of our priests and laymen will only heave a sigh of relief when the troublemakers are gone—leaving behind them a bad harvest of ill will, and continuing their name-calling and hatred in a louder tone from their new "jurisdiction."

May God preserve us from all of this! Please forgive my frankness, but I feel the time is very late, and anyone who can do anything had better do it now. I know God will continue to preserve His Church and I believe He will prosper the true Orthodox mission which is just beginning in our Church; the 150-200 souls who attended our pilgrimage and courses this year are eager to learn more, and not at all caught up in the artificial fanaticism that the Greeks propagate. But the tragedy of souls caught in a self-willed schism will be incalculable.

Please pray for us, as we do for you with love. May God grant true love and peace to His much-suffering Church, both here and in the atheist lands!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

317.

Sept. 25/Oct. 8, 1981

St. Sergius of Radonezh

Dear Father Michael [Azkoul],

Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!

Thank you for your letter. May God forgive you—and please forgive me if I have offended you in any way.

With you personally I have never felt any animosity on either side; some disagreements, perhaps, but not ill will. I do think your sermon printed recently in Orthodox Christian Witness went too far in its inferences about those who sympathize with certain priests in the Moscow Patriarchate— none of us condone the Patriarchate itself, but we share the position so well set out by our Synod in its recent decree on the "Elder Tavrion" uproar.

But his same decree does indeed use the word "schism" to refer to those over-quick to criticize others, even their own Metropolitan, and I think the danger, now becoming more obvious, has indeed long been present in our midst. I really think that this problem is now so deep that no personal forgiveness can uproot it. What is really required, I think, is the total eradication of the clique in our Church, centered around the person of Fr. Panteleimon in Boston, that thinks it knows better than our bishops and our whole Church tradition what the teaching of the Church is. Every major disturbance in our Church in recent years has come from the clash between the opinions of Fr. Panteleimon and the teaching of the Church, which are often two different things. We and many others are quite willing to live in peace with those who have different opinions on various church matters; but if they insist that the opinions are the teaching of the Church, a clash and eventual schism is inevitable. (By "eradication," of course, I don't mean that its members

should be “executed,” but only that they cease to operate as a “pressure group” in the Church and learn to humble themselves before the teaching of the bishops and the Russian Church in general.)

I sincerely hope the recent statement of our bishops on the “Elder Tavrion” article will serve to meeken the critics of our Church teachings and policies. If so, there is hope for peace.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

318.

Sept. 25/Oct. 8, 1981B

St. Sergius of Radonezh

Dear Father Demetrios,

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

I send you greetings on the feast of St. Sergius. We had Liturgy today and a procession outdoors to bless two new crosses erected in our wilderness. Glory be to God that we still have such freedom!

I presume by now you’ve received the decree of the Synod on the “Elder Tavrion” dispute. We agree 100% with it and only rejoice that the bishops have finally made clear some things which our Church has always believed, but because they weren’t necessarily written down somewhere a few people have disputed them. Please note that it is the Metropolitan and bishops themselves who raise the question of the danger of “schism” with regard to those who are criticizing their Metropolitan. This is by no means a product of imagination on our part, but indeed a very real danger that faces us, and now that the bishops have dared use the word I hope there will be an awakening and sobering up on the part of those who are overly critical.

In general, I think you underestimate the gravity of what is happening: it is by ;; means a matter of jealousy between priests or monasteries (such things, it is true, exist, but they are secondary). The first question is one of a difference in the whole approach to the Orthodox Church, our witness today, our compassion for those striving to regain a lost or damaged Orthodoxy, etc. One group in our Church (mostly Greeks and converts) wants to define this question so narrowly that our Orthodoxy becomes almost a sect, and “we are the only pure ones left”; the other group, led by our Metropolitan and bishops, wants to keep the same open and loving approach we have had for sixty years and does not want to change it. This is why there are such bitter reactions on the part of those who do want to change and narrow our conception of Orthodoxy.

You think that our Orthodox Word has become more “controversial” in recent years? But really, try to look objectively (leaving aside the opinions of some people on the East Coast) at our issues of past years and our issues of today: don’t you see that our tone has in fact become more rather than less meek than it used to be? This is the only difference, and it is a difference that has come about because our bishops have told us that they prefer this approach.

In actual fact, our articles on Elder Tavrion were not in themselves controversial at all—we simply presented the material which Metropolitan Philaret deliberately sent us with instructions to translate and print it. Our own editorial comments were intended to show how it is possible to have a strict attitude towards the Soviet Church and still be sympathetic to a real struggler like Elder Tavrion. The "controversy" erupted only when some people insisted on imposing their legalistic definitions of the church situation upon this phenomenon. Bishop Gregory has just written us and told how tired he is trying to combat the very Western idea of the Church which the critics of the Metropolitan are expressing—this is our problem.

And do you really think that we have changed in recent years over The Orthodox Word of old? Except for the meekening of our tone, at the request of our bishops, we have not changed at all. Read The Orthodox Word for 1971: we called Boris Talantov an "Orthodox Confessor" (a name we have not applied to Fr. Dimitry Dudko or Elder Tavrion), despite the fact that Talantov called the Catacomb Church a "sect"—we saw that the latter was a secondary aspect of his teaching, and the primary one was his oneness with our Church in his anti-Sergianism. And all those who are now calling us names welcomed this article on Talantov; Fr. Neketas in Seattle even reprinted part of it. Read our Orthodox Word even in 1965: there we presented the monks of Pochaev and various other members of the Soviet Church in the most sympathetic light, and no one protested.

Do you want to know where the difference actually is, in my opinion? Those who are now criticizing us so strongly have themselves changed: now they wish to declare the Moscow Patriarchate as without grace (the recent articles by Fr. Michael Azkoul and Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Orthodox Christian Witness are the first that I know of in the past 13 years where this position is set forth so clearly), and they wish to cut off all active sympathy for the Moscow Patriarchate priests and laymen, thus contradicting their own position of ten years ago.

I pray that you will be able to look at this whole situation objectively, and resist the pressures which the "pressure group" on the East Coast is trying to apply. Our bishops need the active support of us priests in defending their wise and sober approach. The only "crime" of our Brotherhood is that we have openly defended this approach. Read the Synods decree (it is in the new issue of Orthodox America, is supposed to be printed in all of our periodicals) and I think you will agree.

If you do have influence with Holy Transfiguration Monastery, tell them we would like to send them (as before) 30 or more copies of Orthodox Word, which should be freely given to all brothers who want it—we are being censured there!

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

319.

Sept. 26/Oct. 9, 1981

St. John the Theologian

Dear Father Johnikios,

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

Enclosed is a Social Security form which Basil Voytans father gave to us to fill out, and which is required by the Social Security authorities in order to give money for Basils education. Can you simply fill out the bottom part (Section C)? If so, please do so and send it in the enclosed envelope before November 1, or his family will have complications in receiving the money.

Vladika Laurus sent his blessing for Basil to stay here this year, but we still have no information on how he is to be tested, and also as to whether there are any specific textbooks for his second year classes. We have him reading Smirnov's Church History (in Russian, with translation exercises from it), a lot of Russian literature in translation (in preparation for the third-year course), Andreyev's Apologetics (in English), practice in Slavonic (both on kliros and outside). If there is no set textbook for Russian history, we will give him one of our English-language texts that covers the period from Peter I for the second year course. He also writes one composition a week (on literature, apologetics, etc.) and attends a class for all our brothers in world history from the Orthodox perspective, Is there anything else he will need this year? His knowledge of Russian is not yet at the advanced textbook level, but he is spending several hours daily at reading and translation, and is advancing steadily.

Mrs. Voytan asked where to send the tuition money, and we told her to send it to you at the seminary. Is anything else required for him to be enrolled at the seminary? Basil spends about 10 hours per week in formal classes, the rest in homework; if necessary, we could give him 20 hours per week in supervised attendance.

Please let us know what else we need to do. So far Basil is flourishing in his studies, is very interested and self-motivated, with no serious problems. He is especially interested in Russian literature and thinks that part of his problem last year was trying to plunge too much into "dukhovnost" without a better preparation in "dushevnost'".

Please pray for us. We have a good group for the winter (ten of us right now), and it should be a fruitful season.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

320.

Oct, 17/30. 1981

Prophet Hosea

Dear Father George [Macris],

Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!

Thank you for your letter and your proposal to meet me on my next visit to the Portland area. I would be glad to arrange a meeting with you, although my next visit will not be too soon. Father

Herman visits the Russian parish there more often than I, and since I made the last two visits the next one will undoubtedly be his. I won't be there until after the first of the year.

I'm sorry you found The Orthodox Word no. 96 disturbing, but I can assure you there was nothing in it "implied" about any change in our attitude towards the Moscow Patriarchate. The recent "Decision" of the Synod of Bishops says it very well, I think, and I agree with it wholeheartedly.

I think perhaps a part of the disturbance comes from the fact that the attitude of our Church Outside of Russia to the Moscow Patriarchate has never been "defined" in so many words, and some people have read into the strictness of our attitude an ecclesiological statement about the Patriarchate that simply isn't there. Among most of the Russian clergy articles on Archimandrite Tavrion (which have appeared in Orthodox Russia over the past several years), as well as others like Fr. Dimitry Dudko, Boris Talantov, etc., cause no problem because, while their position is recognized as one of "compromise" to some degree, the church situation in Russia is recognized as not yet "final" and therefore as not yet requiring any absolute judgment on our part. Therefore, our non-communion with Moscow is strict, but it is in no way compromised or threatened by our sympathy and support for courageous priests and laymen of the Patriarchate. This is not at all a "new" attitude in our Russian Church Abroad; it has always been like this, but only recently have there appeared any very public instances in which it has been expressed.

If you want a theological statement on this whole question, I think the closest you will get to it is in the writings of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan {The Orthodox Word, 1977, no. 75).

Given the non-finality of the Russian church situation, I myself find no problem in co-existing in the same Church with people who have different approaches and even different opinions on this situation, as long as they do not try to force their opinions upon the whole Church. Some seem to want to proclaim the Moscow Patriarchate as without grace and no better than Roman Catholicism; others (among the clergy) allow their spiritual children to receive communion (when travelling in Russia) from clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate. These are both matters of private opinion which can co-exist in the Church as long as no attempt is made to make them the Church's official position; I myself think the correct position is somewhere between these two extremes. If you have any difficulty accepting such "broadness," I think your difficulty is not with any of us who have expressed various opinions, but with our bishops who for fifty years have not taken any more definite position.

Asking your prayers, and assuring yours [stet] of mine,

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

321.

Nov. 25/Dec. 8, 1981

Hieromartyr Clement of Rome

Dear Father Demetrios,

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

Just a note to remind you that we haven't yet received the display concerning our monastery, and also the unsold books—we really need the latter, as we are running short of almost all of our books now and won't be able to reprint them for a while.

The impression I got from your last letter was that we should have refused to print the material Metropolitan Philaret sent us on Archimandrite Tavrion. I disagree—if we go that way we will begin to separate ourselves from our own bishops, our fathers and guides in the faith. I truly believe that they know what they are talking about and that we should listen to them. I have heard several of our priests speaking as though the recent "Decision" of the Synod on the Elder Tavrion controversy can be simply ignored (just as the earlier decision on Deacon Lev's errors on life after death can be ignored)—and this seems to me the beginning of the spiritual suicide of some of our clergy.

Now Fr. Lev is gone (and to a jurisdiction that is really considered graceless by our bishops!), and Fr. Gleb Jensen too—already fighting each other in different jurisdictions. The schism of which many of us have been warning is already real, and where will it stop? How tragic and unnecessary! Fr. Gleb accuses our bishops of changing their position and betraying the faith—but if he would have been in closer contact with the real heart of our Church in past years, he would know that none of us have changed in our attitude towards Moscow or other basic church issues. He and others read statements of our bishops, and statements in The Orthodox Word, in past years and read into them their own extreme opinions; and now when it becomes clear that none of us ever held these extreme opinions, we are accused of betrayal. This is "Alice in Wonderland" Orthodoxy! How tragic that some are now leading their flocks (albeit still very small flocks) out of communion with the only people who can still teach them what Orthodoxy is and help them to wake up from their fantasies of a "super-correct" Orthodoxy that exists nowhere in the world.

Please pray for these people, and where possible let them know that they are "off." Try to save those who will try to make the leap next. I am in contact with Fr. George Macris and still hope he can see the way things really are.

Please pray for us all.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

Letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose

1982

322.

Jan. 15/28, 1982

St. Paul of Thebes

Dear Father George [Maoris],

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST! I trust you had a good Christmas season. Ours was very festive and joyous, with tremendous Christmas weather—two feet of snow and crystal-cold weather.

This is an attempt to reply briefly to your letter of Nov. 10/Oct. 29 and keep open our correspondence.

Perhaps our new Orthodox Word (no. 98), together with the "Decision" of the Synod there printed, have made clear enough our position. Personally, I continue to regard the article on Archimandrite Tavrion as beneficial and especially needed and timely today. The increase of defections of priests from our Synod who think they are "more Orthodox" than our bishops points up the need more than ever to make known our bishops' sober and moderate stand towards the Moscow Patriarchate and some other jurisdictions; Fr. Gleb and others are leaving because they were misinformed about our bishops' stand in the first place, and because they lack precisely that Orthodox spirit and heart which Elder Tavrion exemplifies.

I think a basic problem is that some, perhaps you also, are reading into our bishops' statements positions which simply aren't there—dotting the I's, so to speak, which our bishops haven't dotted. The statement against Moscow's giving communion to Roman Catholics, for example, despite its mention of "heresy," is by no means a statement that the Moscow Patriarchate is now a heretical organization, without grace, etc. (ask our bishops, they should tell you). Nor is the recent statement of the Sobor that the Moscow Patriarchate with all its acts is "uncanonical and null and void" a statement that goes any further than Metr. Cyril's statement years ago (see OW, p. 126)—yes, we accept no acts of the Moscow Patriarchate as binding on us (leaving a final decision on them to the future free All- Russian Council); but that says nothing against the grace which (I think you will find our bishops agreeing, though not officially) believers receive in the Sacraments in Russia, nor against the continued support which we show for the "dissident" priests in Russia (see our own Archbishop Anthony's Christmas Epistle this year).

The very fact that the church situation in Russia is not final and awaits a final definition only in a free Russia (which let us pray for) renders the quoting of canons about "schism" and "heresy" unconvincing to us and many others. If and when our bishops themselves quote these canons and make the final proclamation about the Moscow Patriarchate which up to now they have deliberately avoided—then we will be convinced. Until then, this quoting of canons will only encourage more of our "super-correct" people to go into schism. The fact that you are so certain about some of these issues, while others of us think there is much matter for opinion and interpretation in them, is probably one of the chief causes of our disagreement.

It was Fr. Herman's turn to go to Oregon last weekend, and my next trip is still some time off, but I do hope to meet you. Asking your prayers,

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

323.

Spiritual Seeker

[OW 187-188, p. 117; written “towards the end of his life”, possibly a hand-written letter to Fr. Damascene]

…It so happens that Ren; Gu;non was the chief influence in the formation of my own intellectual outlook (quite apart from the question of Orthodox Christianity). I read and studied with eagerness all his books that I could get ahold of; through his influence I studied the ancient Chinese language and resolved to do for the Chinese tradition what he had done for the Hindu; I was even able to meet and study with a genuine representative of the Chinese tradition and understood full well what he means by the difference between such authentic teachers and the mere “professors” who teach in the universities.

It was Ren; Gu;non who taught me to seek and love Truth above all else, and to be unsatisfied with anything else; this is what finally brought me to the Orthodox Church. Perhaps a word of my experience will be of help for you to know.

For years in my studies I was satisfied with being “above all traditions” but somehow faithful to them; I only went deeper into the Chinese tradition because no one had presented it in the West from a fully traditional point of view. When I visited an Orthodox Church, it was only in order to view another “tradition”—knowing that Gu;non (and one of his disciples) had described Orthodoxy as the most authentic of the Christian traditions.

However, when I entered an Orthodox Church for the first time (a Russian Church in San Francisco), something happened to me that I had not experienced in any Buddhist or other Eastern temple; something in my heart said that this is “home,” that all my search was over. I didn’t really know what this meant, because the service was quite strange to me, and in a foreign language. I began to attend Orthodox services more frequently, gradually learning its language and customs, but still keeping all my basic Gu;nonian ideas about all the authentic spiritual traditions.

With my exposure to Orthodoxy and to Orthodox people, however, a new idea began to enter my awareness: that truth was not just an abstract idea, sought and known by the mind, but was something personal—-even a Person—sought and loved by the heart. And that is how I met Christ. I am now grateful that my approach to Orthodoxy took several years and had nothing of emotional excitement about it—that was Gu;non’s influence again, and it helped me to go deeper into Orthodoxy without the ups and downs that some converts encounter when they are not too ready for something as deep as Orthodoxy. My entrance into the Orthodox Church occurred at the very time I left the academic world and gave up the attempt to communicate the Chinese tradition to the Western world. My Chinese teacher also left San Francisco shortly before this—my only real contact with the Chinese tradition—and in Gu;nonian fashion he disappeared utterly, leaving no address. I remember him fondly, but after becoming Orthodox I saw how limited was his teaching: the Chinese spiritual teaching, he said, would disappear entirely from the world if Communism endures another ten or twenty years in China. So fragile was this

tradition—but the Orthodox Christianity I had found would survive everything and endure to the end of the world—because it was not merely handed down from generation to generation, as all traditions are; but was at the same time given from God to man.

I look back fondly on Ren; Gu;non as my first real instructor in Truth, and I only pray that you will take what is good from him and not let his limitations chain you. Even psychologically, "Eastern wisdom" is not for us who are flesh and blood of the West; Orthodox Christianity is clearly the tradition that was given us—and it can be clearly seen in the Western Europe of the first ten centuries, before the falling away of Rome from Orthodoxy. But it also happens that Orthodoxy is not merely a "tradition" like any other, a "handing down" of spiritual wisdom from the past; it is Gods Truth here and now—it gives us immediate contact with God such as no other tradition can do. There are many truths in the other traditions, both those handed down from a past when men were closer to God, and those discovered by gifted men in the reaches of the mind; but the full Truth is only in Christianity, God s revelation of Himself to mankind. I will take only one example: there are teachings on spiritual deception in other traditions, but none so thoroughly refined as those taught by the Orthodox Holy Fathers; and more importantly, these deceptions of the evil one and our fallen nature are so omnipresent and so thorough that no one could escape them unless the loving God revealed by Christianity were close at hand to deliver us from them. Similarly: Hindu tradition teaches many true things about the end of the Kali Yuga; but one who merely knows these truths in the mind will be helpless to resist the temptations of those times, and many who recognize the Antichrist (Chalmakubi) when he comes will nonetheless worship him—only the power of Christ given to the heart will have strength to resist him.

It is my prayer for you that God will open your heart, and you yourself will do what you can do to meet Him. You will find there happiness you never dreamed possible before; your heart will join your head in recognizing the true God, and no real truth you have ever known will be lost. May God grant it!

Feel free to write whatever is in your mind or heart.

With love,

Fr. Seraphim

324.

March 26/April 8, 1982

Archangel Gabriel

Dear Father Vladimir,

Christ is in our midst!

Archbishop Laurus has written Father Herman, enclosing Nina Berchier's letter to you requesting you to perform her marriage with Andrew Kencis, and asking Father Herman to discuss with Archbishop Anthony her freedom for marriage (since she was for a time a

ryassophore nun). Father Herman has not yet talked with Vladika Anthony about this, but in the meantime I would like to tell you our view of the matter, since Father Herman and myself have had Nina and Andrew as our spiritual children for some time—in fact, ever since I baptized them both (Nina in 1978, and Andrew in 1981).

The main problem, as I see it, is not that Nina was a ryassophore nun. She did not take vows and so could be free to marry. We are very disappointed that she allowed herself to be tempted away from the monastic life, but that is something she has to decide for herself.

The main problem, however, is this (which she did not mention in her letter to you): In her younger years, when she was living a rather loose life, she had an operation performed on her (I forget what it's called) to make her sterile. She therefore wishes to enter into marriage with no possibility of bearing children. For her to marry Andrew, who is just at the age to begin raising a family, would be a sin and a mockery of the very rite and meaning of marriage. This is all the more true in that Andrew is so young and immature (at least seven years younger than she, and immature for his age). We can only see that she is taking advantage of his immaturity to draw him into a fruitless union that cannot have God's blessing and will not bring them happiness—certainly not Andrew, who needs precisely the responsibilities and difficulties of raising children for his own salvation.

A further consideration is the fact that they wish to be married so soon, when before January of this year they knew each other only from a few meetings after Ninas return from Chile last summer (and at that, the romance developed while Nina was still wearing the ryassa and klobuk!). This only confirms the fact that their attachment for each other is a result of a "rebound" from Nina's disappointment over her monastic failure, and not something which has been deeply felt and thought through.

I sympathize with Nina's search for happiness after her failure at monasticism—but this isn't the way! It's a passing temptation, and although they undoubtedly see it all as God's plan for them, to us it has been too clearly a typical trick of the devil, working on human feelings, to get two people out of monasteries (Andrew was no more than a monastery laborer, but he did return to us last fall with the idea of monasticism in mind, and during his stay with us he was noticeably maturing; if he had stayed longer he would have been better prepared for a fruitful life in the world).

I hope things are going well for you in the parish there. Please pray for our struggling communities and missions—there are many trials, but also many joys. GOD IS WITH US!

Wishing you a joyous Pascha,

With love in Christ,

325.

May 1/14, 1982

Prophet Jeremiah

Dear Brother in Christ, Vladimir,

IN TRUTH CHRIST IS RISEN!

May the blessing of the Lord be with you!

In answer to your letter, I had better say first of all that you probably have a mistaken view as to the nature and extent of our theological courses. We have nothing at all like a "seminary," and the few courses we do have arose solely in answer to our local need to expand the theological awareness of the brothers in our monastery. (We do have summer courses in conjunction with our Sr. Herman Pilgrimage, but that is only for a week.)

Therefore, if you are looking for a regular seminary course, with officially recognized courses and a BTh degree at the end of it, you would do better to apply to the Holy Trinity Seminary at Jordanville. It is true that the orientation there is very Russian, and the upper-division courses are still mostly in the Russian language, but the first two years are now chiefly in English and with some effort at studying Russian you could get through the whole course.

Having said this, I will add that we have had some non-monastic brothers participate in our courses, and it is conceivable that you might want to join them. However, our approach in these courses is less directed to formal education than to forming an Orthodox mentality—putting off some of the wrong attitudes that are picked up from the air of our contemporary society, developing a sound attitude to culture, art, literature, music, etc., which will enable one to approach theology not in a vacuum, as is so often the case. Our non-monastic brothers participate fully in the daily round of monastic life and are under strict discipline (no "weekends off to go to the city"). Our courses for next fall are not definite yet, and will depend on who will be here to take them.

If you are interested in something like this, we might be able to help you, but the only way to tell for sure is to come and visit us for a while, when it would become evident whether you could fit in with our life and benefit from it. You are quite welcome to visit us this summer. (I should add that our living conditions are a little primitive, with little in the way of modern conveniences like plumbing, electricity, etc.)

Please feel free to write anything further about your hopes, plans, etc.

With love in Christ,

Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

326.

Letter estimated to be from early June 1982

Handwriting transcribed:

Dear Fr. A— [Alexey Young],

Christ is —!

Gleb will be in Redding Sunday to go with you to Chico, as he says you agreed on with him.

I hope you will have some serious talks with him on his future, both this week and later this summer. From me or Fr. Herman, of course, he takes everything with a grain of salt, since we are so close and he is at the "rebel" stage (mildly, but still clearly).

Just a few days ago he decided that he wants to go to Jordanville this fall. I saw right away that this is no seriously thought-through decision, but is simply a way to keep from staying with us, where he is "bored;" and it was inspired not by any desire for real benefit to be gained in Jordanville, but simply "to see how things are there," brought about by seeing the worldly attitude of Basil Anderson (who is "successful" in Jordanville because he is the only one who can run their big offset machine, and will be graduated solely on that basis and not on course work, or so he says).

Of course, I am glad that he did take seriously my warning that he has to get a seminary education if he wants to be a priest; but seeing his light-minded attitude to the whole matter, I gave him a heavy going-over and told him I could never bless him to go to Jordanville so immature and light- minded (all the American boys we've sent there in recent years have had disasters in the first year, and they were more mature than Gleb). He responded with rebellious insistence that he would go even without our blessing, even if it meant not being admitted to the seminary and just "auditing" or floating around.

In one sense, it was good that he got all this out, because he usually hides his deeper feelings, and I was even glad to see him becoming a "man" and sticking to his opinion. The next day (after a sleepless night for me) we were reconciled; I told him I respected his freedom, that no matter what (even if he went wild or became a Jordanville weirdo, which I told him were the 2 alternatives in front of him) he should always consider our monastery as his home, etc.—which caused him to weep (a rare thing with him). But I asked him, whatever he does, let it make sense, let it be part of a plan for his whole future, and not some whim of the moment, which is what his Jordanville thoughts are right now (in fact, the day before our fight, he had told me, very self-confidently, that I was "duped" if I thought anything good could come out of Jordanville graduates!)

As things stand now, he is still fixed on the idea of going in the fall, without even asking what courses are offered in Jordanville to 1st-year students, or what courses I had planned to give him here. Today I told him he'd better get started with application requirements; he was surprised that he had to make a formal application, have a medical exam, affix photos, highschool transcript (or equivalent(?), and even more surprised that he had to do something about it, not me. He did understand that the money for all this should come from his summer earnings, which is something positive (so please don't tell him where the money comes from—there won't be much of it in any case).

At the present time my main effort is to get him to see certain things as they really are and not as his emotions color them. For example: last week he was speaking eloquently to several of us about how easy it is to survive as a Orthodox Christian today even with all the temptations around us: you just have the guts to take a humbling "due" that Fr. Herman gives you and trust

your spiritual father, and you will survive. I reminded him that when I absolutely forbade him to go to Jordanville so young, and that it was "spiritual suicide" for him, he rebelled and absolutely refused to obey; but until I pointed it out to him, it hadn't even occurred to him that he had shown lack of trust in me, thereby removing from himself the very thing which he had recently boasted would save him! When the contradiction was brought home to him, he smiled in recognition and promised to write it down; but it still hasn't sunk in. Likewise, he recognizes that his reasons for going to Jordanville are worldly, and that there is in fact a danger of his losing the churchly attitude of his boyhood and becoming worldly (Basil Anderson is bad in that respect—one senses the influence of Fr. Peter and other floaters, not the pious spirit of the old monks); but all this is seen through the filter of his youthful passions, which now are headed very strongly towards "worldly experience."

In the end I see all this as a necessary part of his growth and an unavoidable temptation. My main hope is that he will put some sense into what he does and not operate solely on his passions. Any input you can give him in this direction will be good, and will probably have more weight now than what we say. (Unfortunately, Bobby Arden and other "counsellors" like that may have more weight that any of us.)

The strongest thing going to preserve him right now is his desire for priesthood, which he still sees as a calling from God and not a paying job. The more we can remind him of that and of the necessity to act in a way consistent with it, the better. It may be that his 1st year in Jordanville (if he goes as planned) will be a big testing of this desire.

This weekend he will be boating on Shasta Lake with Bobby; he will be conducting vigil and Typica in the Redding church (already a test for him!) After his week with you, I told him I expect him to be at Liturgy, whether in Etna (where I will be) or Platina—another test, because he wants to go boating again, and would have to get Bobby to take him to Liturgy.

I will be in Etna, God willing, on Sat. June 26, and hope to have an "evolution" conference with you (I hope to have my Genesis commentary typed by then).

Pray for us.

327.

To Br. Gleb 6/82

1. What do you want to do in life?

To be a fervent priest, not living for yourself but for others, not allowing yourself to become a lukewarm hireling, being faithful to all you received in childhood, not just giving sacraments to a parish, but actively spreading the true word of Orthodoxy to them and others, being one in mind with us and all others who have this same goal.

2. How can or should you prepare myself [stet] for this?

By going through a systematic course of theological study (not just on your own), which should also include literature and art (including some negative manifestations to see what is "in the air"

and attracting people); and becoming acquainted with worldly life (both secular and church) in a practical way, not entirely on your own until you are 21 or so (that is, accepting guidance on how much you should expose yourself, and being under guidance while you are doing so).

3. What are the main obstacles to this?

a. In myself. Self-trust, wanting to guide yourself without wholehearted trust in your spiritual father; combined with a very passionate nature which has not yet gone astray because it hasn't faced any great temptations. These two characteristics together mean an almost certain disaster ahead, or at best, an abnormal development, missing out on the opportunities that really lie before you to be a fruitful pastor.

b. In the world outside. The sensual tone of modern life, which will pull on your passionate nature; the temptation to be like everyone else—cold, withdrawn into yourself, not giving yourself to others, not caring enough for Christs truth and suffering souls. In church life: the temptation to be outwardly correct, but inwardly indifferent and lukewarm.

4. How should I fight these obstacles?

Through real trust in your spiritual fathers—working your future out together with them, honestly facing your own nature and problems and their advice; and through having the guts to subject yourself to a real discipline of preparing for priesthood, and not playing games with yourself.

328.

"William H. deVlaming, M.D.

Internal Medicine

1760 Gold Street

Redding, California 96001

916-243-1552

October 1, 1982

Father Herman

The Orthodox Word

St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

Platina, CA 96076

RE: Fr. Seraphim

As requested, I am enclosing a brief description of the problems experienced by Father Seraphim leading to his illness and complications recently resulting in his death.

Any vital organ of the body has a blood supply in which arteries lead blood into the organ and veins take the blood away. If there is a blockage of blood flow in either side of the circulation, the organ is not able to receive enough oxygen or nutrients to continue [to] function. In Father Seraphim, we believe that the blockage of the vein leading away from the intestines occurred several days prior to his admission to the hospital. This eventually resulted in death of the tissues of the intestine which in turn lead to a leakage of toxins from inside the bowel into the abdominal cavity, and from there into the general circulation. The results of the toxic product entering the circulation lead to a decline in other vital organ functions including the lungs and eventually the kidneys, brain, and heart. Even by the time the initial surgery was completed, damage had already been done to several important organs. Most likely is a complication of a general decline in total body function, other intestine began to be involved in the same process leading to the initial bowel damage resulting in a progressive reduction in blood flow to an extensive area of a bowel. The cycle of toxic material escaping from inside the bowel into the general circulation repeated itself and eventually depressed the lung and heart function to the point that life could no longer [be] maintained. Pulmonary edema simply means damage to the lung resulting in fluid collecting between the tiny air sacks and preventing normal function. Respiratory acidosis again relates to inadequate ventilation by the lungs resulting in an accumulation of carbon dioxide in the body. I hope that this information will be helpful.

Warmest regards,

William H. deVlaming, M.D.

Internal Medicine

—

Respiratory failure

Due to: Bowel Necrosis

Due to: Ischaemic Bowel

other conditions

renal failure

[signed] Gary B. Dandy