

**A Letter from Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky)
To a Priest of the Church Abroad
Concerning Fr. Dimitry Dudko and the Moscow Patriarchate***

June 26/July 9, 1980

Dear Father _____,

For a long time now I have been intending to write a few words to you, but somehow I haven't managed to "get around to it".¹ But at last I have collected myself, and so I write.

When I, while still in Australia,² began to receive information from America — already "post factum",³ that here [in New York City] there had been protests, demonstrations, and even *molebens* in front of the Soviet consulate, I became quite alarmed and regretted that I was not here, since I would have decisively opposed much of what took place. In particular, holding a *moleben* in such a place.⁴ Did they not sing the Lord's

* From *Tserkovny Novosti* (*Church News*), No. 59, March-April, 1997.

¹ Quotation marks, parentheses, all emphasis, and ellipsis marks are those of Metropolitan Philaret. All bracketed insertions and footnotes are the translator's.

² Metropolitan Philaret had been in Australia on an extended pastoral visit from Dec. 7/20, 1979 until April 3/16, 1980. (See *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 5, March 1/14, 1980, p. 8; and No. 8, April 15/28, 1980, p. 12.)

³ Here Metropolitan Philaret had written the Latin phrase in by hand.

⁴ The first demonstration — held on Jan. 1/14, 1980, in front of the headquarters of the Soviet mission to the UN — had been organized by the Coalition for a Free Russia, as a protest against Soviet aggression in Afghanistan. Yu. Mashkov, a participant reporting on the event, erroneously stated that it had been done "with the blessing of the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Metropolitan Philaret". (See *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 3, Feb. 1/14, 1980, pp. 15-16.) A second demonstration, with a *moleben* followed by a procession, was organized by the Committee for the Defense of Persecuted Orthodox Christians, on Feb. 11/24, 1980, in support of the recently-arrested Fr. Dimitry Dudko, Fr. Gleb

song in a strange land?⁵ What cause was there to display the holy things of the Church's services before the gaze of the frenzied servants of Antichrist? Was it really not possible to pray in church?

I must say frankly that I am always seized by dismay when I hear of "protests", "demonstrations", and the like. In the USSR, life is governed by him (the one with horns) who fears only Christ and His Cross; and who fears nothing else in the world. And he merely chortles over protests and demonstrations. "Public opinion"? Why, the antichrist regime has nothing but the uttermost contempt for it! They wanted to seize Czechoslovakia — and they seized it, paying no heed to the commotion that was raised. They wanted to invade Afghanistan — and they invaded it, again paying no attention to the protests and threats of the various Carters & Co.⁶ All attempts to shape public opinion in the so-called Free World in favor of those suffering from Communism are powerless and fruitless, since the Free World stubbornly closes its eyes and imitates the ostrich, which hides its head under its wing and imagines that it cannot be seen...⁷

In bewilderment did I read in the newspaper how one journalist approvingly cites your words: "Fr. ___ is correct when he writes: Russia is arising from the dead! We must believe in this; for we believe in Christ the Saviour Who arose from the dead."⁸

I cannot understand — what is the connection between the one and the other? Personally, I believe in the Resurrection of Christ — for me this is the most precious thing in the world. But I absolutely cannot see why **must** I believe that Russia is "resurrecting"? I hope that she truly will arise, when the all-powerful nod for it will be given by God. But at present, not only do I not share your enthusiasm, but I am greatly alarmed for the Russian people. The falsehood and emptiness of atheism is obvious to them. But alas, it is not true Orthodoxy that is being disseminated there. There, under the guise of Orthodoxy, the Russian people are being offered Bulgakovism, Berdyaevism, and similar rubbish of the Evlogian schism.⁹ The sects are flourishing there: the Baptists,

Yakunin and others. A similar demonstration was held in San Francisco on this day. (See *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 7, April 1/14, 1980, p. 12.)

⁵ Cf. Psalm 136, v. 5.

⁶At the time of these demonstrations, the Synod had sent a telegram and then a letter to President Carter concerning the current persecutions in the USSR. (See *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 8, April 15/28, 1980, p. 13.)

⁷ For an Orthodox view on how to help our persecuted brethren, see the letter, "Compassion for the Suffering", in *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 14, No. 9, 1980, pp. 1-12.

⁸ Of course, here both "arise" and "resurrect" (and their various related forms) are derived from the same root in Russian.

⁹ In 1931 Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky, 1868-1946), having already withdrawn from the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, placed himself and his flock under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, thus forming the "Temporary Patriarchal Russian Orthodox Exarchate", based in Paris. Although the Exarchate itself was abolished in 1965 under pressure from Moscow, the present successors of Metropolitan Evlogy and his adherents remain in submission to the Ecumenical Patriarchate as its Russian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western Europe. For further information in English, see: *A History of the Russian Church Abroad: 1917-1971* (Seattle: Saint Nectarios Press, 1972).

Fr. Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944), and Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948) were among a group of free-thinkers and intelligentsia who were expelled from Russia by the Soviet government in the 1920s. They were associated with Metropolitan Evlogy's Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris, of which Fr. Sergius was even dean. Their Gnostic, false teaching of "Sophiology" was condemned as heresy by the Second Pan-Diaspora Sobor of the ROCA in 1938. (For an English translation of the report submitted to the Sobor by Count Paul Grabbe [Bishop Gregory's father], see *Living Orthodoxy*, Vol. 16, No. 6, Nov.-

etc. The official Church preaches cooperation with the God-hating regime, lauding it in every possible way.¹⁰ The true Orthodox Church has gone into the catacombs, hidden from the common masses... Is that, then, the “rebirth of Orthodoxy”?... And are you not perhaps taking a bit too much upon yourself, proclaiming to the whole world that Orthodoxy is being reborn in Russia? God grant that the Truth should overcome all errors and should triumph over them. But for the present it is still too soon to speak of it, since the influence of the anti-Orthodox elements is still so very strong there; not to mention the fact that the antichrist Soviet regime, as long as it rules Russia, will never permit the triumph of Orthodoxy. It is not without cause that the true Orthodox Church concealed Herself in the catacombs and is fiercely persecuted.

Now a few words on the tragedy of poor Fr. Dimitry Dudko.¹¹

From the very beginning of his activities, when his name was being mentioned more and more often as a pillar of Orthodoxy, and moreover, the members of the Synod, the hierarchs, were joining their voices to this; I however, the author of these lines, immediately kept out of it and forewarned my fellow hierarchs that a disaster might happen here. How so? Because in the USSR, according to the precise definition of Archimandrite Constantine,¹² there is now a **satan-ocracy**. There rules he whom the Saviour called a liar and the father of lies.¹³ This lie reigns there. Therefore one cannot trust anything that occurs there. Any seemingly spiritually encouraging fact may turn out to be a falsification, a forgery, a deception or a provocation...

Why did this calamity befall Fr. Dimitry Dudko? Let's assume the best, not suspecting him of conscious collaboration with the KGB and betrayal of his convictions, but simply noting the sad fact that he did not endure, but was “broken”; he capitulated before the enemies of the Church. Why? It would seem that he did display courage and daring; and then suddenly, such an inglorious end. Why?!

Because his activity took place **outside of the true Church...**¹⁴

Dec., 1994, pp. 15-28.) It should be noted that the Moscow Patriarchate also condemned Fr. Sergius Bulgakov as a heresiarch.

¹⁰ Alas, they did not hearken to the wise admonition of Saint Theodosius of the Kiev Caves:

“Live in peace not only with your friends, but also with your enemies; but only with your personal enemies, and not with the enemies of God.”

¹¹ Fr. Dimitry Dudko had been arrested on Jan. 2/15, 1980. After six months spent under arrest and in prison he publicly recanted on television and in the press.

¹² Archimandrite Constantine (in the world, Cyril Zaitsev, 1887-1975), spiritual father of the brotherhood of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, N. Y., instructor at the seminary, and editor of *Pravoslavnaia Rus and Orthodox Life*. (For a short obituary see: *Orthodox Life*, Vol. 25, No. 6, Nov.-Dec., 1975, p. 3; for a fuller biography, see: *Orthodox Word*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1976, pp. 20-27.)

¹³ John 8: 44.

¹⁴ At this time the then Archbishop Vitaly (Ustinov) of Montreal concurred totally with Metropolitan Philaret's evaluation. In a sympathetic yet uncompromising article which he published in the August 1980 *Parish Newsletter* of his St. Nicholas Cathedral in Montreal (and which was subsequently printed in English, at his request, in the *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 14, No. 51, 1981, pp. 7-9), he wrote: “...And in this good, urgent impulse of ours we somehow completely forgot a very important fact which no power can erase from life... Fr. Dimitry forgot, as we all did, this fact which cannot be wiped away by time or by life. And this fact is the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate. We are in no way mistaken when we call the Patriarchate Soviet... Such a corrupt, anti-canonical organism was not able, of course, to inspire Fr. Dimitry to follow the way of confession, much less of martyrdom, to the end. Fr. Dimitry's whole mistake is found in the fact that, although he often condemned and exposed his Soviet hierarchs, still he never separated himself from the Patriarchate as an organism, but even defended it as his own legal authority.”

What then is the “Soviet church”? Archimandrite Constantine has often and insistently stated that the most horrible thing that the God-hating regime has done in Russia is the creation of the “Soviet church”, which the Bolsheviks presented to the people as the true Church, having driven the genuine Orthodox Church into the catacombs or into the concentration camps.

This pseudo-church has been twice anathematized. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the All-Russian Church Sobor anathematized the Communists and *all their collaborators*. This dread anathema has not been lifted till this day and remains in force, since it can be lifted only by a similar All-Russian Church Sobor, as the canonical supreme, ecclesiastical authority.¹⁵ And a terrifying thing happened in 1927, when the head of the Church, Metropolitan Sergius, by his infamous and apostate Declaration, subjected the Russian Church to the Bolsheviks and proclaimed collaboration with them.¹⁶ And thus in a most exact sense was fulfilled the expression in the prayer at the beginning of Confession:¹⁷ “having fallen under their own anathema”!¹⁸ For in 1918 the Church anathematized all the confederates of Communism, while in 1927 she herself joined the camp of these collaborators and began to laud the red, God-hating regime — to laud the red beast spoken of in the Apocalypse.¹⁹

¹⁵ Some have asserted that Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin, 1865-1925) himself subsequently retreated from this bold position and cooperated with the Soviets, and that Metropolitan Sergius’ Declaration of 1927 was the logical and organic development of Patriarch Tikhon’s policy. Such was not the case:

“In fact, the text of Tikhon’s Epistle had been doctored. The opening of Russian archives makes it possible to ascertain that Tikhon had significantly qualified his call for obedience to the regime by adding that it was due only to the extent that its orders did not ‘contradict the faith and piety (*vere i blagochestiu*).’ Since in the eyes of the Church virtually all of the Communists’ actions violated the tenets of Christianity, the injunction — as actually written, not as made public — had a rather hollow ring.” (Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* [New York: Vintage Books, 1995], pp. 345-46.)

¹⁶ Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky (1867-1944), one of the deputies of the *Locum tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne. On July 16/29, 1927, he issued his infamous Declaration. At a historic meeting with Stalin on Aug. 22/Sept. 4, 1943, permission was received to convoke a Bishops’ Sobor in order to elect a new “Patriarch” of Russia. Four days later, on Aug. 26/Sept. 8, the duly assembled Sobor of nineteen hastily summoned bishops chose Metropolitan Sergius to be the first Soviet Patriarch.

¹⁷ In the Russian order for this rite, the prayer in which this phrase occurs precedes the penitent’s recitation of his sins.

¹⁸ In like manner, as Bishop Gregory [Grabbe] noted in sorrow: “Indeed, by not investigating the matter seriously and by forgetting about this previously confirmed anathematizing of the New Calendarists/ Ecumenists (or perhaps not venturing to abrogate this resolution), our Sobor, as frightful as it may be to admit it, has fallen under its own anathema. Had it probed the net spread before it more carefully, it would never have issued such a contradictory Decision.” (See *Tserkovny Novosti* [Church News], No. 40, Sept.-Oct., 1994, pp. 2-4.)

¹⁹Rev. 12: 3.

The Moscow Patriarchate’s collaboration with the godless regime was not passive, but very active betrayal — especially abroad, through the Peace Programs, the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches. By denying before the whole world that the Church in Russia was undergoing persecution, by assisting in the closure and destruction of churches, by surrendering the persecuted faithful over to the Soviet authorities for supposedly “political” offenses, and by making common cause with the murderers of the true Orthodox Christians, the Moscow Patriarchate is guilty likewise of the blood of all the New Martyrs.

See the sobering account of an incident from the life of Saint Martin of Tours (as related by his biographer, Sulpitius Severus), and commentary on it, in the article: “An Evil Communion”, *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1980, pp. 1-11.

As if that is not enough. When Metropolitan Sergius promulgated his criminal Declaration, then the faithful children of the Church immediately separated themselves from the Soviet church, and thus the Catacomb Church was formed. And she, in her turn, has anathematized the official church for its betrayal of Christ.²⁰

And it was within this very church of the evil-doers that the activities of Fr. Dimitry Dudko occurred, who has frankly declared in the press that he is not going to break with the Soviet church but will remain in her.²¹ Had his spiritual eyes been open, and had he seen the true nature of the official church, he might have found within himself the courage to say: “I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and with the ungodly will I not sit”²² — I am breaking off with the company of the enemies of God, and I am withdrawing from the Soviet church”. Why, then for us he would have become one of our own — his courage would have destroyed the barrier which irrevocably stands between us by virtue of the fact that the Sobor adopted as its guiding principle the Testament of Metropolitan Anastasy.²³ For in this Testament it is ordered that we must not have any communion **whatsoever** with the Soviets, not only no communion in prayer, but not even ordinary contact in daily life.²⁴ But as long as Fr. Dimitry would have refused to remain in the Soviet pseudo-church, and would have withdrawn from membership in her — the barrier would no longer have applied to him.²⁵

²⁰ See the testimony of the first Catacomb hierarch, the New Martyr, Bishop Maxim (Zhizhilenko) of Serpukhov. Vladyka Maxim also testifies to Patriarch Tikhon’s true feelings about the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. (Ivan Andreyev, *Russia’s Catacomb Saints* [Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982], pp. 52-68.)

²¹ For a penetrating analysis of the case of Fr. Dimitry Dudko and his relation to the Soviet hierarchy, see the article “Shadows in the Midst of Light and Darkness”, in *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 13, No. 38, 1980, pp. 1-18.

²² Ps. 25: 5. The word here rendered as “congregation” is, in the original Greek and Slavonic texts, *ecclesia / tserkov*, i.e., “church”.

²³ Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky, 1873-1965), Metropolitan Philaret’s predecessor as First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

²⁴ The pertinent concluding passage of the Testament reads thus:

“As regards the Moscow Patriarchate and its hierarchs, for so long as they are found in close, active, and benevolent cooperation with the Soviet regime, which openly confesses its total godlessness and strives to implant atheism in the entire Russian nation, then the Church Abroad, maintaining Her purity, must not have any canonical, prayerful, or even ordinary communion with them whatsoever, at the same time, leaving each one of them to the final judgment of the Sobor of the future free Russian Church.”

For the full English text of Metropolitan Anastasy’s Testament, see *Orthodox Life*, Vol. 15, No. 3, May-June, 1965, pp. 10-12. The Russian is found in *Pravoslavnyaya Rus*, No. 10, May 15/28, 1965, pp. 1-2.

In 1980 Archbishop Vitaly was still of the same opinion, and — as though echoing Metropolitan Philaret on this point — stated in his article on Fr. Dimitry Dudko cited above (p. 3, note 14, of this present letter):

“Then the True Church went into the catacombs, into a position of illegal existence. From that time to this day the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate is liable to judgment, and until that future true council there can be no kind of contact, not even in everyday matters, as Metropolitan Anastasy, reposed in God, commanded us in his last will and testament.”

²⁵ As it turned out, Fr. Dimitry Dudko’s decision to loyally “remain with the hierarchy that has been given us” (to quote his own words), did him little good. The Moscow Patriarchate refused to lift a finger to help him. The then Metropolitan Alexis of Tallinn and Estonia (Ridiger, the present Patriarch), while on a visit to Austria, in reply to questions about the numerous recent arrests of Orthodox believers, stated: “In the Soviet Union citizens are never arrested for their religious or ideological convictions”. (*Keston News Service*, Keston College, England, Issue No. 94, March 21, 1980. p. 1.)

I recall a marvelous case of the direct and miraculous aid of God to those who remained faithful to the end. They banished a group of nuns belonging to the Catacomb Church to Solovki.²⁶ The Chekists told them: “Get settled now, and tomorrow you will go to some sort of work”. But they received an unexpected answer: “We will not go and work.”

“What, have you gone out of your minds? Do you know what we will do with you?” screamed the Chekists. There followed the calm reply of people who in their faithfulness feared nothing: “What shall be, shall be — but what is pleasing unto God shall be, and not what suits you executioners and criminals. You may do with us what you please: starve us, torture us, hang, shoot, or burn us with fire. But we give you notice once and for all: we do not recognize you, you servants of Antichrist, as the lawful authority and we will not fulfill your orders in any way!...”

In the morning the infuriated Chekists drove the nuns up onto the “hill of death”. Thus was called a high hill where in winter an icy wind always blew. In that wind a man would freeze to death within a quarter of an hour. The nuns, clad in their shabby *rassas*, are led up the hill by Red Army men in their sheepskin coats. The nuns go happily, joyously along, chanting psalms and prayers. The soldiers left them at the top of the hill and then descended. They hear how they continue their chanting. Half hour, an hour, two, yet more — all the while the sound of chanting carries from above. Night fell. The guards approach the nuns — they are alive, unharmed, and continue chanting their prayers. The amazed soldiers led them home to the camp. News of this spread immediately throughout the entire camp. And when on the following day the guards were changed and yet the same thing happened, the camp authorities were bewildered and they left the nuns in peace...²⁷

Is this not a victory? Behold what it means to be faithful unto death — as the marvelous words of the Apocalypse say: “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”.²⁸ In this instance, it’s an obvious miracle, as it was with the three youths in the Babylonian furnace, only there the death-bearing element was fire, but here a death-dealing and killing cold. Behold how God rewards faithfulness!

And hear my heartfelt conviction: if the entire mass of the many millions of Russians would evidence a like faithfulness, as did those nuns, and would refuse to obey the bandits who have been oppressing the Russian nation, then Communism would collapse in a second. For the succor of God, which had saved in a miraculous manner the nuns while on their way to certain death, would come likewise to the Russian people. But as long as the nation recognizes the regime and obeys it, even if all the while cursing it in their hearts, that regime will remain in place.

Of course, the nuns were strengthened by the power of God, just as the ancient martyrs; without this aid they would not have endured. But their *podvig* [martyric exploit] was accomplished within the true Church, filled with grace and Truth. For the true Church, according to the apostolic teaching, is the **Body of Christ** — the Lord abides in Her and leads Her as Her Divine Head.

²⁶ The infamous concentration camp for clergy and monastics, located in the former Solovets Monastery on islands in the White Sea.

²⁷ For the full account in English, see: Ivan Andreyev, *Russia’s Catacomb Saints* (Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982), pp. 78-84. For the Russian, see: *Pravoslavnyaya Rus*, No. 3, Feb. 1/14, 1977, pp. 12-13.

²⁸ Rev. 2: 10.

Will anyone dare to assert that the Lord and His grace abide in the church of the evil-doers,²⁹ which lauds His demonized enemies and collaborates with them, which because of this is found under a twofold anathema, as indicated above? Can a church which has united with the God-haters possess grace?! The answer is obvious!

The hierarch Theophan the Recluse³⁰ in his own day warned that a terrible time was approaching when people would behold before their eyes all the appearance of church grandeur — solemn services, church order, and such — while on the inside there would be total betrayal of the Spirit of Christ. Is this not what we see in the Soviet church? Patriarchs, Metropolitans, all the priestly and monastic orders — and at the very same time, an alliance with the God-haters, that is, a manifest betrayal of Christ.³¹

To this company belongs also Fr. Dimitry Dudko. Of course, his sincere religious feelings compelled him to preach concerning God and not to condone many of the disgraceful happenings in the lives of Russian people. But for him, Pimen was, and likely still is, his spiritual head, the head of the Soviet hierarchy; while for us it not at all so. For our Sobor in 1971 passed a resolution: on the basis of such and such canons to consider the election of Pimen as unlawful and invalid, and to consider all his acts and decrees as having no force or significance.³²

How difficult is poor Fr. Dimitry Dudko's position now! What is he to do? Continue his pastoral work? And what can he say to the faithful? Say the same thing that he said before his "repentance"? But then, he has already renounced this! Say the opposite? Why, they believed him before when he preached that which won for him the trust and respect of the faithful — and now, how will he look them in the face? One girl correctly said that there is one way out for him: make a genuine repentance in atonement for the one he just now made. But in order to do that he must depart from the church of the evil-doers for the true Church, and there make his repentance. However, in return, the red church will undoubtedly deal with him with particular malice and cruelty. Of course, by

²⁹ This hearkens back to Psalm 25:5 — "the congregation of evil-doers" cited earlier.

³⁰ Bishop Theophan (Gorov, 1815-1891), glorified as a saint by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1988.

³¹ Even pious and astute laymen within the Moscow Patriarchate came to realize that her hierarchs were "betraying the Church not out of fear, but for conscience sake", to quote Boris Talantov, one of the authors of the famous "Open Letter of the Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis" which so enraged Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov, 1929-1978), of sorry memory. In June of 1969 Boris Talantov was arrested and later sentenced to two years in prison for "anti-Soviet activities". He died in prison in January 1971. See: his exposé, "The Leaven of Herod", by B. Talantov, *Orthodox Word*, Vol. 7, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1971, pp. 273-293. Concerning Metropolitan Nikodim, see: "On the Death of a Soviet Bishop", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, Vol. 12, No. 10, 1978, pp. 1-8.

³² This Bishops' Sobor met in September of 1971 in Montreal. One of the issues which it discussed was the election, in June of 1971, of Metropolitan Pimen (Izvekov, 1910-1990) as "Patriarch" of Russia. The pertinent passage of this resolution, signed by all the hierarchs present, reads thus:

"Therefore, elections of patriarchs performed in another manner [i.e., than the Sobor of 1917] which is not free, do not express the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church and are not lawful. Not only the election of the present Pimen, calling himself patriarch, but likewise the elections of his two predecessors must also be considered unlawful. ...All the elections of Patriarchs of Moscow, beginning in 1943, are invalid on the basis of the Thirtieth Canon of the Holy Apostles, and the Third Canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council..."

If Sergius, Alexis, and Pimen were unlawful "hierarchs", then what can be said of the "ordinations" and the other "Mysteries" performed by them? If both his predecessors were invalid, what of Pimen's own "ordination" to the priesthood and episcopacy? Manifestly, neither they, nor those ordained by them, have any grace to impart to anyone.

crossing over to the true Church, he will pass over into the realm of Divine grace and strength, which can fortify him just as it fortified those catacomb nuns. God grant that he find the true and saving path.

I should also like to note the following. The Catacomb Church in Russia relates to the Church Abroad with love and total confidence. However, one thing is incomprehensible to the Catacomb Christians: they can't understand why our Church, which realizes beyond a doubt that the Soviet hierarchy has betrayed Christ and is no longer a bearer of grace, nevertheless receives clergy of the Soviet church in their existing orders, not re-ordaining them, as ones already having grace. For the clergy and flock receive grace from the hierarchy, and if it [the hierarchy] has betrayed the Truth and deprived itself of grace, from where then does the clergy have grace? It is along these lines that the Catacomb Christians pose the question.

The answer to this is simple. The Church has the authority in certain cases to employ the principle of *economia* — condescension. The hierarch Saint Basil the Great said that, in order not to drive many away from the Church, it is necessary sometimes to permit condescension and not apply the church canons in all their severity. When our Church accepted Roman Catholic clergy “in their orders”, without ordaining them, She acted according to this principle.³³ And Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky], elucidating this issue, pointed out that the outward form — successive ordination from Apostolic times — that the Roman Catholics do have, whereas the grace, which the Roman Catholic church has lost, is received by those uniting [themselves to the Church] from the plenitude of grace present in the Orthodox Church, at the very moment of their joining. “The form is filled with content”, said Vladyka Anthony.³⁴

In precisely the same manner, in receiving the Soviet clergy, we apply the principle of *economia*. And we receive the clergymen from Moscow not as ones possessing grace, but as ones receiving it by the very act of union. But to recognize the church of the evil-doers as the bearer and repository of grace, that we, of course, cannot do. For outside of Orthodoxy there **is no** grace; and the Soviet church has deprived itself of grace.³⁵

In concluding my lengthy letter, I should like to point several things out to you, Father. The Bishops' Sobor resolved to be guided by and to fulfill the Testament of Metropolitan Anastasy, in which the late First Hierarch bade us not to have any communion with the Soviet church whatsoever, not only no prayerful communion, but not even ordi-

³³ Note that here Metropolitan Philaret put the words *in their orders* within quotation marks, as if to emphasize their invalidity.

³⁴ In an earlier letter written to Mother Magdalena, Abbess of Lesna Convent, Metropolitan Philaret had quoted Metropolitan Anthony as having specifically referred to the Roman Catholics as heretics. (*Tserkovny Novosti* [Church News], No. 58, Feb. 1997.)

At the same Bishops' Sobor of 1971, mentioned above by Metropolitan Philaret, it was resolved, in view of the growing confusion caused by Ecumenism concerning the true boundaries of the Church, to henceforth follow the stricter practice and baptize all heretics who come to the Church. For the full text of this resolution and an excellent exposition by the then Fr. George Grabbe on the application of strictness and *economia*, see *Orthodox Life*, Vol. 29, No. 2, March-April, 1979, pp. 35-43. The text of this resolution had also appeared earlier in *Orthodox Word*, Vol. 7, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1971, pp. 294-301.

³⁵ That this is not merely the personal opinion of Metropolitan Philaret can be ascertained from a perusal of the writings of many of the hierarchs of the Catacomb Church and of the ROCA. For an excellent survey and analysis of this material, see the two-part series in *Orthodox Christian Witness*: “Worse Than Any Heresy”, *OCW*, Vol. 15, No. 28, 1982, pp. 1-16; and “A Sequel”, *OCW*, Vol. 15, No. 34, 1980, pp. 1-10.

nary contact.³⁶ On what basis then have you and other clergymen had direct relations with Fr. Dudko? And have written him letters, etc.? No matter how sincere a man you³⁷ may have considered him to be, nevertheless, can your private opinion annul a ruling adopted by the Church? Now, had Fr. Dudko said: I am breaking with the official church and leaving her — then you could have entered into lively contact with him. But in the absence of that, your actions constitute a violation of ecclesiastical discipline. Dudko wrote to me personally, but I did not answer him — although I could have said much.³⁸ By the way, on what basis did you,³⁹ even before this, take it into your head to commemorate an archbishop of the Soviet church during the Great Entrance? Who gave you the right to do that, which hierarch — who, how, where, when?... Be more careful, my dear, zealous, but, ah, too impetuous fellow minister!

Peace to you and the mercy of the Lord. To Matushka and the children too.

³⁶ The Third Pan-Diaspora Sobor of 1974 paraphrased this passage from Metropolitan Anastasy's Testament in its Resolution No. V. (*Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 21, Nov. 1/14, 1974, pp. 12-13.)

In its *Epistle to the Flock*, signed by all eighteen hierarchs present, the Bishops' Sobor of 1976 again makes mention of this passage:

"Our Church Abroad, as is well-known, constitutes a part of the Russian Mother-Church, her free part. Although we, following the Testament of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anastasy, of blessed memory, have no communion whatsoever with the Moscow Patriarchate; yet we have never broken with the Russian Church, our Mother-Church." (*Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 21, Nov. 1/14, 1976, pp. 1-4.)

In an earlier epistle written by Metropolitan Philaret on behalf of the hierarchy, and in response to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's letter to the Third Pan-Diaspora Sobor, the First Hierarch speculated on what might be the future role of the ROCA in Russia:

"Your fear that we are counting on returning to Russia as some sort of judges or commanders can only be attributed to a misunderstanding or to disinformation which someone has foisted upon you. We know of no one amongst us with such thoughts. But if the liberation of Russia should take place and we could be reunited with a restored Orthodox and canonical authority, then we would assume that we are a part of the Russian hierarchy. We simply have not considered how much weight we would carry in such an event. Numerically the flock abroad is a drop in the sea when compared with the ocean of the Russian nation." (*Pravoslavnaya Rus*, No. 19, Oct. 1/14, 1974, pp. 5-6.)

³⁷ Here, and in the two following sentences, the Metropolitan has switched from the singular *thou* to the plural *you* in order to indicate that these passages refer to both the recipient of this letter and his like-minded fellow clergymen.

³⁸ For the full English translation of Fr. Dimitry Dudko's letter to Metropolitan Philaret, see *Orthodox Life*, Vol. 29, No. 6, 1979, pp. 28-30. This is followed by a lengthy related article by Bishop Gregory [Grabbe] entitled: "The Russian Church in the Wilderness and in this World", pp. 31-44.

It should be noted here that the editorial introduction to Fr. Dimitry Dudko's letter makes the following statement:

"In an exchange of correspondence which took place between the Synod's Archbishop Anthony [Bartoshevich] of Geneva and Fr. Dudko, the archbishop allayed Fr. Dimitry's fears somewhat by informing him that the Synod does not in fact deny that there is grace in the mysteries of the Soviet [sic] Patriarchate, accepts baptisms performed by its clerics, and has even received certain priests into its own fold. Fr. Dudko replied that he himself had evidently fallen victim to misinformation concerning the true state of affairs, supplied him by 'friends', and expressed his continued and abiding respect for the Synod's official stance...".

As can be seen from all that Metropolitan Philaret has written above, this statement is simply not true. It would appear that it is the editors themselves, and *not* Fr. Dimitry Dudko, who have "evidently fallen victim to misinformation concerning the true state of affairs".

³⁹ Here the Metropolitan reverts to the singular *thou*.

With love,

✝ Metropolitan Philaret