

Participation by the Orthodox Church of Greece, Holy Synod in Resistance, in Consecrations of Russian Hierarchs

An historic visit to Odessa, Ukraine

In accordance with the decision of the *extraordinary Meeting (V)*, November 16, 2007 (Old Style), of the extended Standing Holy Synod in Resistance—with the participation of His Eminence, Bishop Agafangel of Odessa and Tauris, First Hierarch of the *Temporary Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration* of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), which did not accept the *union*, this past May, with the Moscow Patriarchate—, two of our Hierarchs—His Eminence, Bishop George of Alania and His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone—visited Odessa, Ukraine.



This visit was made for the purpose of cooperating with Bishop Agafangel in the Consecration of two new Russian Hierarchs, in order to strengthen the diocesan structure of the segment of the ROCA which preserves unadulterated, and unwaveringly continues, its historical heritage and its salvific confessional mission.



Our two Hierarchs arrived by air on the evening of Wednesday, November 11, 2007 (Old Style) in Odessa, where Bishop Agafangel was awaiting them, and were accommodated in a hotel in the city.

• **On Thursday**, November 23, 2007 (Old Style), they visited the Convent of the Annunciation of the *Theotokos*, which has aligned itself with Bishop Agafangel. The Convent, under the direction of Mother Alexandra, has some twenty nuns, and is located about fifty kilometers from Odessa. The Sisterhood moved from Ishim, Siberia,



where it previously had its headquarters, having decided not to follow the local Bishop, Evtikhy, who has entered into union with the Moscow Patriarchate. The Abbess, Reverend Mother Alexandra, is a Russian who grew up in America, where she was a spiritual daughter of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, and later of the blessed Metropolitan Philaret. She was formerly married and is distinguished for her wisdom, activity, and spiritual zeal. She and her Sisterhood have been energetically supporting the activities of Bishop Agafangel, despite the poverty and privations of the Convent, where their main occupation is iconography.

Over the course of these days, the second meeting of the *Temporary Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration* of the ROCA was convened at the facilities of the headquarters of its President, Bishop Agafangel, in the Cathedral Church of the Archangel Michael, in Odessa. Many of this jurisdiction's Priests from the Ukraine, Russia, the Republic of Moldova, and abroad (Brazil, Australia) took part in this conference.

During one of these sessions, our two Bishops were invited to hear an interesting ecclesiological presentation by Father Valery Alexeev, the Diocesan Secretary, regarding *Divine Grace and the Loss Thereof*, and also to participate in a discussion of current ecclesiastical matters.

• **On Friday**, November 24, 2007 (Old Style), during the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, in Odessa, His





Eminence, Bishop Agafangel, with the participation of His Eminence, Bishop George of Alania and His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone, Consecrated Archimandrite Andronik (Kotliarov) Bishop of Richmond and New York, in order to shepherd the anti-unionist parishes and communities of the ROCA in North America.

• **On Saturday**, November 25, 2007 (Old Style), Bishop Agafangel, with the participation of the three other Hierarchs, Consecrated Igumen Sophrony Musienko Bishop of St. Petersburg and Northern Russia, in order to shepherd the anti-unionist communities of the ROCA in Russia.

• **Before** each Consecration, His Eminence, Bishop George of Alania read, in Russian, the following *Synodal Affirmation* of our Holy Synod (Protocol No. 455/ November 17, 2007 [Old Style]):



Synodal Affirmation

Through the present *Synodal Letter*, we hereby affirm that we, the undersigned Members of the Standing Holy Synod in Resistance, Orthodox Church of Greece, by virtue of the *Seventh Resolution* adopted at the regular annual meeting (the thirty-fourth/October 4, 2007 [Old Style]) of the entire Holy Synod, having convened for an extraordinary meeting (the fifth/November 16, 2007 [Old Style]), at the Headquarters of the Synod in Resistance (that is, the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Attica, Greece), with the participation of His Eminence, Bishop George of Alania and His Eminence, Bishop Agafangel of Odessa and Tauris, First Hierarch of the *Temporary*

Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church
Abroad,

have unanimously and unreservedly resolved

a. to coöperate in Consecrating Russian Hierarchs, in order to strengthen the diocesan structure of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction under His Eminence, Bishop Agafangel;

b. that two of our Hierarchs—*viz.*, His Eminence, Bishop George of Alania and His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone—will go to Odessa, Ukraine, beginning on November 22, 2007 (Old Style), in order to participate in the Consecrations of two Hierarchs, to be performed by His Eminence, Bishop Agafangel.

We affirm that our two aforementioned Hierarchs lawfully and canonically represent the Holy Synod in Resistance, with the knowledge and consent of our entire Hierarchy, acting in its name and under its full responsibility.

We ask that the present *Synodal Affirmation* be read publicly and in Church before each Consecration in Odessa, Ukraine.

Acting President

† *Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi*

Members:

† *Bishop Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis*

† *Bishop Ambrose of Methone*

† *Bishop Klemes of Gardikion, Secretary*

• **On Sunday**, November 26, 2007 (Old Style), the five Hierarchs Concelebrated the Divine Liturgy. His Eminence, Bishop Agafangel was the principal celebrant, with other clergy taking part from among those participating in the ongoing meeting.

• **The second** meeting of the *Temporary Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration* of the ROCA issued the following interesting “**Appeal**” at the conclusion of its proceedings:



Appeal
of the Temporary Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration
of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad
December 6-8, 2007

Reverend Fathers, beloved brothers and sisters!

With God's blessing, we have held the second regularly scheduled meeting of the Temporary Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration (TSEA) of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA). This meeting was primarily dedicated to organizational plans in preparation for the Fifth All-Diaspora *Sobor*, which has been scheduled for the Autumn of 2008. A Synodal Planning Committee was established and charged with arranging all preparatory matters.

This *Sobor* will free us from reinterpretations and distortions of the principles of the life and ministry of the Church Abroad, and will lead us to a steady development of Church life. One of the primary matters we hope to examine is the proclamation of the sanctity of the third First Hierarch of the ROCA, Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky). Many have called for such a proclamation, for which there is a multitude of witnesses regarding his Divine interventions. A special committee has been appointed to make a full examination of this matter.

At this meeting, a report by the President of the TSEA was read regarding his visit to Greece from November 28 to December 3 (New Style) and his participation in the work of the Holy Synod in Resistance under Metropolitan Cyprian. We thank the members of that Synod for their readiness to participate in the restoration of a full Hierarchy for our Church. We believe that a new period has now begun in our mutual fraternal relations, which will yield many beneficial results, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Church.

With the fraternal aid of the Bishops of the Greek Synod in Resistance, two new Hierarchs have been Consecrated for the ROCA. Our present goal is most assuredly to work hard for the restoration of our spiritual family.

In the light of the approaching Fifth All-Diaspora *Sobor* and our genuine desire to see the Church Abroad in a state of fraternal unity, comprised of all of those clergy and faithful who have remained loyal to it and have not accepted the union with the Moscow Patriarchate, we

declare that we do not dare to condemn those who withdrew from the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA before May 17 for ecclesiological reasons. We call upon all of the faithful members of the ROCA to work for the restoration of the unity of the Church and to participate in joint efforts in preparation for the *Sobor*.

Furthermore, we call upon all of the members of the True Russian Orthodox Church (under Archbishop Tikhon—*Trans.*) to bring an end to all injurious spiritual rhetoric and mutual condemnations, to return to the ranks of the ROCA, and to accept extensive rights to autonomy (the terms of which will have to be discussed and agreed upon). When fraternal relations have been restored, we will be able, in accordance with the Canons and in unity, to settle matters regarding parishes located on Russian soil.

Likewise, we call upon our flock, and all of those who have withdrawn from us, to cease all mutual hostility and to extinguish the fire of the passions, that we might soberly examine the current state of Russian Orthodoxy and do whatever is possible for us as faithful sons and daughters of our common Mother, the Local Russian Orthodox Church.



† *Bishop Agafangel of Odessa and Tauris,
President of the TSEA of the ROCA*

† *Bishop Andronik of Richmond and New York,
Vice-President of the TSEA of the ROCA*

† *Bishop Sophrony of St. Petersburg and Northern Russia,
Member of the TSEA*

Archpriest Valery Kravitch – Member of the TSEA

*Father Vladimir Petrenko, on behalf of the
member of the TSEA, Archpriest George Petrenko*

Hieromonk John Smelic – Member of the TSEA

• **During** this historic visit, our Hierarchs were also able to visit the Cathedral Church of the city; the historic Greek Church, in which the tomb of the Holy Hieromartyr Gregory V, Patriarch of Constantinople,

is located; the Convent of the Dormition of the *Theotokos*, with the Holy Relics of the new Saint Kuksha; the Athonite *Metochia* of the Monastery of St. Panteleimon, of the Skete of the Prophet Elias—with the incorrupt Relics of its *Dikaios*, the new St. Gabriel—, and also of the Skete of St. Andrew, *et al.*

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The historic events of these days, and in particular the participation of our Hierarchs in Consecrations of new Bishops for the restoration of a Hierarchy for the original ROCA, signify the inception of a truly new period in fraternal relations between the Holy Synod in Resistance and the ROCA.

The festive proclamation and the consolidation of our unity—undertaken in a spirit of total harmony and love, in the midst of a synodal gathering, embracing in Hierarchical Liturgical concelebrations and Consecrations—were truly a gift of the Holy Spirit, Which “establisheth the whole order of the Church.”

Our Holy Synod has the profound feeling and satisfaction in Christ that, as a *grateful Sister*, it has rendered to its *affectionate Sister*, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, what the latter had given to the anti-ecumenist Old Calendar community in Greece in the years 1960 and 1962 (with synodal ratification in 1969 under the very saintly Metropolitan Philaret), to wit, the formation of a Hierarchical administration, that it might continue its historic course and realize its God-pleasing visions for the unity of the Church.

During this new period of renewed unity between Greek and Russian anti-ecumenists, it is certain that, through the Grace of our Lord and the Protection of the *Theotokos*, there will be abundant, good, and blessed spiritual fruits, to the glory of God and the *increase* of the Church, in the Confession and Witness of the Truth and Unity of our Orthodox Faith.

