

## Quo Vadis Constantinople Patriarchate?

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*Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (Apoc. 2:4,5)*

When the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, took upon himself the title, Ecumenical, in the fourth century, he met with ardent opposition from St. Gregory the Dialogist [the author of the PreSanctified Liturgy]. St. Gregory wrote to the Byzantine Emperor, "All of Europe is in the hands of the barbarians. Cities have fallen, fortresses are in ruins, the provinces have been depopulated, there are no hands left to cultivate the land, and idol worshippers persecute and even kill the believers. And in the midst of all this, priests [bishops], who should fall down in church courtyards in sackcloth and ashes in prayer, instead run after empty titles" (*The Monks of the West*, Count de Montalembert, p. 370). Even Pope Gregory the Dialogist began to use the title "The servant of God's servants" in his official documents. In Church life every infringement of the spirit of Orthodoxy, of the Orthodox perspective, will sooner or later bring forth its sorrowful fruit, unless it is corrected in time.

Recently we have read frequent press reports which represent the Patriarch of Constantinople as the spiritual leader of all of Orthodoxy. For example, in *The Catholic World Report*, December, 1991, we read "Bartholomaios, Dimitrios Archontonis in the world, became the Ecumenical Patriarch of 135 million Orthodox Christians. Though the rulers [the Turkish authorities] might not recognize the Patriarch's leadership of the whole world, the rest of the populace does recognize it. The majority of believers are located in the former USSR and southeastern Europe."

Does this reporting simply represent a lack of understanding of Orthodox ecclesiology on the part of the heterodox? Perhaps one can justify such reporting [by non-Orthodox] concerning Orthodoxy as a matter of ignorance, but how does one explain the following words of the late Patriarch Dimitrios to reporters, when he claimed that he "holds a see of primacy" as spiritual head of the Orthodox world (*Foni ton Pateron*, 4, No. 1, April-June, 1991)?

According to the teaching of the Church, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has a primacy of honor, which passed on to her after Rome fell away from the catholic Church. The third canon of the Second Ecumenical Council reads, "The bishop of Constantinople must have primacy of honor after the bishop of Rome because Constantinople is the New Rome." This "primacy of honor" had no dogmatic basis whatsoever. It was based purely on the political significance of the given city [which has no significance now]. In the Orthodox Church all bishops, including the Ecumenical Patriarch, are equal. Besides these neo-papist ambitions, there are many other disturbing events associated with the Patriarchate of Constantinople in our sorrowful 20th century.

Let us pause to reflect on the period of history beginning in 1922, when Patriarch Meletios IV (Metaxakis), an infamous modernist and Mason, ascended to the Patriarchal throne. In 1923 he summoned the so-called "Pan-Orthodox Congress," which introduced the Gregorian calendar and discussed the possibility of a second marriage for priests. Concerning these changes, Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) wrote, "From the moment of that sorrowful Pan-Orthodox Congress of Patriarch Meletios (who gave such a self-proclaimed title to a meeting of four to six bishops and a few priests, without the participation of the other three Patriarchs), from the time of that un-Orthodox Congress, an act of vandalism was wrought against Orthodoxy. Many reforms were proposed, which the Church with terrible, binding curses had forbidden; reforms such as married bishops, a second marriage for clergy and the abolition of fasts. It is true that this un-Orthodox Congress did not succeed in officially promulgating all these impious violations of Church laws, limiting itself to proposing the institution of the New Style calendar and the celebration of all the holy days thirteen days earlier than proscribed, while leaving the Paschalia untouched. This senseless and pointless concession to Masonry and to Papism, which long ago had tried to institute such a change of calendar in their attempt to totally absorb the Unia in Latinism (the main external difference between the Uniates and Latins is the Old Style calendar of the former), violates the Apostolic ordinance of the Sts. Peter and Paul fast, for if the New Style calendar is followed, when Pascha falls on April 21 (O.S.) or later, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul occurs before the Sunday of All Saints, and therefore the preceding Fast is totally eliminated!"

On June 9, 1922 Meletios uncanonically received the Finnish diocese into his jurisdiction, and on August 28 he accepted the Estonian diocese, which formerly was a part of the Russian Church. He also interfered in the affairs of the Serbian Patriarchate on Czechoslovakian territory.

The essence of this interference can be derived from the following incident (quotes from the book, *The Orthodox Involvement in Carpatho-Russia* by Z.G. Ashkenazy). "According to the old Hungarian law of August 10, 1868, and confirmed in the second paragraph of the first

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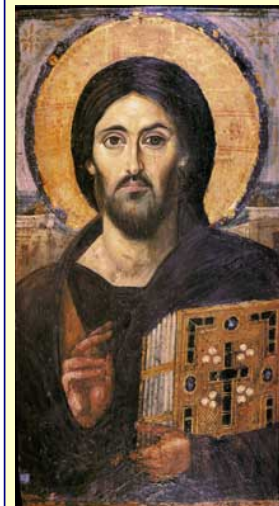
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law of the Republic of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918, all Orthodox Christians living in the territory of the former Hungarian Kingdom are under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Patriarchate. This fact was confirmed by an answer given to the delegation of the Czechoslovakian Orthodox Church by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Czechoslovakia on August 11, 1920, no. 23608. In this letter, the Council of Ministers agreed that the future bishop of Carpatho-Russia should be chosen from among the Serbian clergy. This in fact transpired during a council of 63 Orthodox communities on August 19, 1921. This council declared Bishop Dosithey (Nishsky) to be bishop of Czechoslovakia. The Orthodox of Czechia, Moravia and Silesia also recognized the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. As further evidence, the Czechoslovakian bishop Gorazd (Pavlik) was consecrated by the Serbian Patriarch Dimitrios, in September, 1921, and the Orthodox community of Prague recognized the Serbian jurisdiction by letter on March 29, 1921. When he arrived in Prague as a delegate of the Serbian Patriarchate, Bishop Dosithey received the local community under his canonical auspices. Representatives of the community informed the bishop by letter on September 3, 1921 that they had chosen him to be their bishop.

"At the same time the Prague community chose Archimandrite Sabbatius as their priest and requested that the Serbian Church consecrate him bishop of Prague. The Serbian Synod responded to this attempt of the Prague parish to bypass Bishop Gorazd, usurp control of Orthodox affairs and submit the Orthodox community to their authority by stating that it was impossible to assign a separate bishop to a single, small parish. Without the knowledge or consent of the community, Archimandrite Sabbatius and Dr. Chervinka set out for Constantinople at the end of 1922 to see Patriarch Meletios IV. Meletios had been placed in his position by the British and the French, though his election had been contested by the Eastern Patriarchs as being uncanonical."

"One can deduce the sentiments of the local Greek population towards the Patriarch from the fact that a Greek mob assaulted him during a Church council and demanded that he step down. After the French and British evacuated Constantinople, he was forced to do so" (Days, No. 184, October 6, 1923).

"Patriarch Meletios was well-known as a supporter of the Russian 'Living Church' movement, which rose up against Patriarch Tikhon; he also initiated the adoption of the Latin calendar by the churches of Constantinople, Romania and Poland, and created a Polish autocephalous church, which turned over the Orthodox living in Poland into the hands of the Polish nationalists" (see the proceedings concerning the murder of the Polish Metropolitan George, compiled by Archimandrite Smaragdus).

No doubt, Patriarch Meletios, with the knowledge of the Czechoslovakian government, interfered in the affairs of the Czechoslovakian church, thereby violating the fifteenth and sixteenth canons of the First Ecumenical Council and the second canon of the Second Ecumenical Council, which forbid transfer from one jurisdiction into another and interference in the affairs of a foreign diocese, especially since he had the consent of neither the Serbian nor Russian churches. In February, 1923, Meletios consecrated Fr. Sabbatius as archbishop of the newly-instituted Czechoslovakian branch of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which included Carpatho-Russia. Dr. Chervinka was ordained to the priesthood. The Serbian Church protested against this intrusion into her territory at the Council of Bishops held at Karlovsky in 1923 and declared Meletios' actions uncanonical. As a result of this decision, even the synod at Constantinople declared the Patriarch's actions uncanonical and directed Bishop Sabbatius to refer to the Serbian synod in all church matters.

"Thus, three bishops appeared in the Czechoslovakian Church. Bishops Dosithey of Carpatho-Russia and Bishop Gorazd of Moravia recognized the Serbian jurisdiction. The bishop of Prague, Sabbatius, considered himself to be under Constantinople and claimed rule over the entire Czechoslovakian Church, demanding obedience from the Church in Carpatho-Russia.

"The scandal caused by this confusion is easy to imagine. Bishop Sabbatius insisted on his rights in Carpatho-Russia, enthusiastically recruiting sympathizers from the Carpatho-Russian clergy and ordaining candidates indiscriminately. His followers requested that the authorities take administrative measures against priests not agreeing to submit to him. Bishop Dosithey placed a rebellious monk under ban—Bishop Sabbatius elevated him to igumen; Bishop Dosithey gathered the clergy in Husta and organized an Ecclesiastical Consistory—Bishop Sabbatius enticed priests to Bushtina and formed an Episcopal Council. Chaos reigned in church affairs. Malice and hatred spread among the clergy, who organized into 'Sabbatites' and 'Dositheites.'

"A wonderful spiritual flowering which gave birth to so many martyrs for Orthodoxy degenerated into a shameful struggle for power for a more lucrative parish and extra income. The Uniate press was gleeful, while bitterness settled in among the Orthodox people against their clergy, who were not able to maintain that high standard of Orthodoxy which had been initiated by inspired simple folk."

When Patriarch Meletios ascended the Patriarchal throne of Alexandria following the death of Patriarch Photios in 1925 (having been previously evicted from Athens), he immediately introduced the New Style calendar there. His successor in Constantinople, Patriarch Gregory VII (1923-24), recognized the decrees of the "Living Church" council to depose Patriarch Tikhon. He demanded that the Russian Metropolitan Antony and Archbishop Anastassy, who were residing in Constantinople at the time, cease their activities against the Soviet regime and stop commemorating Patriarch Tikhon, while advising them to recognize the Bolsheviks. Receiving no compliance from them, Patriarch Gregory organized an investigation and suspended the two bishops from serving. He asked Patriarch Dimitrios to close down the Russian Council of Bishops in Sremsky-Karlovsky, but Dimitrios refused. He [Gregory] also granted autocephaly to the Polish Church.

Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) wrote the following concerning these matters: "We know that the creation of a new metropolia or the granting of autonomy to a diocese is permitted only with the agreement of the former metropolitan and his synod. Patriarchs Meletios and Gregory granted the Polish and Finnish dioceses autonomy without the consent of his Holiness, Patriarch Tikhon. The Patriarch of Constantinople absconded with these dioceses, and attempted to justify his actions by saying that Patriarch Tikhon's position in the former Russian territory was no longer free, so therefore he could do as he pleased. In fact, the status of autonomy was granted as a concession to the heterodox governments of Finland and Poland, with the former one having attempted, since the fourteenth century, to wrench the Little Russian and White Russian areas from under control of the Russian Orthodox Church. This would have occurred ages ago too, had not the patriarchs in Constantinople defended the unity of the Russian Church out of a desire to help the Church as a whole. This defense was, and is, the main stumbling block to the gradual catholicization of Russian communities in Poland and lutheranization of the Orthodox in Finland. These undermining attempts of both non-Orthodox governments generated extreme dissatisfaction among their Orthodox populations, who were left completely helpless in this situation of republican tyranny, which is more suppressive than any other form of tyranny.

"Even more iniquitous and cruel was the relationship of the late Patriarch Gregory and his synod towards the diocese and the person of the Archbishop of Finland. The Ecumenical Patriarch consecrated a vicar bishop for Finland, the priest Aava, who was not only not

tonsured, but not even a rasophore. Moreover, this was done not only without the agreement of the Archbishop of Finland, but in spite of his protest. By these actions the late Patriarch of Constantinople violated a fundamental canon of the Church—the sixth canon of the First Ecumenical Council [and many others], which states, 'If anyone is consecrated bishop without the consent of his metropolitan, the Great Council declares him not to be a bishop.' According to the twenty-eighth canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the patriarch cannot even place a bishop in his diocese without the approval of the local metropolitan.

"Based on precisely this same canon, the predecessors of Gregory vainly attempted to realize his pretensions and legalize their claims to control. This uncanonical 'bishop' Aava, once consecrated as bishop, placed a monastic klobuk on his own head, and thus costumed, he appeared in the foreign diocese of Finland. There he instigated the Lutheran government to persecute the canonical Archbishop of Finland, Seraphim, who was respected by the people. The Finnish government previously had requested the Ecumenical Patriarch to confirm the most illegal of laws, namely that the secular government of Finland would have the right to retire the Archbishop. The government in fact followed through with the retirement, falsely claiming that Archbishop Seraphim had not learned enough Finnish in the allotted time. Heaven and earth were horrified at this illegal, tyrannical act of a non-Orthodox government. Even more horrifying was that an Orthodox patriarch had consented to such chicanery. To the scandal of the Orthodox and the evil delight of the heterodox, the highly dubious Bishop German (the former Fr. Aava) strolled the streets of Finland in secular clothes, clean-shaven and hair cut short, while the most worthy of bishops, Seraphim, crudely betrayed by his false brother, languished in exile for the remainder of his life in a tiny hut of a monastery on a stormy isle on Lake Lagoda.

"The late Patriarch Gregory VII acted in a like manner with the Church of Estonia, wresting it from its subordination to the Russian Church, and adulterously bringing it into submission to itself, in defiance of the aforementioned Church canons. Patriarch Tikhon condemned [a similar] violation of Church canons in a letter to Metropolitan Dionysios, in which he directly affirmed that the transfer of the Polish Orthodox Church from its canonical submission to the Russian Church to another see was illegal. Patriarch Tikhon wrote, 'The late Patriarch Gregory VII, under pressure from the Lutheran government in Finland, agreed, even in regards to Holy Pascha [to change the calendar], disregarding the anathemas placed on such changes by the holy Councils (the First and Antiochian, canon 1 and the seventh Apostolic canon). Celebrating at the same time as the heretics, and even with the Jews, "is an exception to the rule" [they claim], though the holy Church strove in every way to avoid this coincidence when it established Holy Pascha, 'in order not to celebrate with the Jews.' Now the Finnish government persecuted both physically and morally those faithful Orthodox monastics and laypeople who desired to obey God more than men (Acts 5:29), ("Sorrowful Epistle," Church News, No. 11-12, 1925).'"

Patriarch Athenagoras also left behind a tragic legacy. In 1966 he, together with his synod, "lifted" the excommunication from the Roman Catholics, which had been declared by Patriarch Michael Cerularius in 1054, and later was confirmed and accepted by the entire Orthodox East. Athenagoras also included the Pope's name in the diptychs (commemoration) of the Church of Constantinople. He expressed many numerous un-Orthodox thoughts. For example in one Nativity epistle he praised the movement towards one chalice by those "who know not the difference in their dogmas and are not concerned about them." Of course the Ecumenical Patriarchate had no right to "lift" these anathemas, especially since the reasons for the anathemas have only deepened with time. Including the name of the Pope in the diptychs is possible only if the Pope were to become Orthodox.

After Patriarch Athenagoras' death, Patriarch Dimitrios was elevated to the throne, and in his first speech he asserted, "We will follow in the steps of the holy and great path of our great predecessor, the ever-memorable Patriarch Athenagoras" (see *Episkepsis*, Dec. 15, 1977, pp. 34; and Nos. 139, 159, 161, 214). Great turmoil was created when Dimitrios announced that by extreme economy and unconditionally, in case of the dying, Holy Communion could be received from a Roman Catholic priest (see *Macedonia*, No. 7/8, 1987).

The Sacred Kinot [council] of the holy Mount Athos expressed its alarm over the above announcement in an epistle dated December 15, 1987. The Patriarch responded with a letter in which he condemned the Athonites for interfering in the affairs of the Ecumenical throne and being tempted by "dark powers." On April 20, 1988 the Kinot answered this letter of the Patriarch with a new epistle that was personally delivered to him by a committee of Athonite fathers consisting of igumens from three monasteries. Here the fathers expressed the perplexity of the Athonite monks over these matters. Patriarch Dimitrios assured the commission that the Patriarchate's activities were within the limits of Orthodoxy. Later, in a new interview published in *Orthodox Typos*, July 1, 1988, un-Orthodox opinions, such as the reconfirmation of the possibility of inter-confessional Communion in instances of imminent death, were again expressed by the Patriarch. On July 7/20, 1988 the Kinot of the Holy Mountain responded to these views by writing "No longer can the Holy Kinot tell the Athonites and other believers that you preserve strictness in your confession of Orthodoxy, and firmness in your faith since you openly preach otherwise. The Holy Mountain can no longer express its devotion and respect for the Ecumenical See. Athos firmly adheres to the sacred covenants of faith and piety."

It is clearly evident that the Patriarchate has chosen a definite course, which it is unwilling to change. The alarm of the Athonite fathers is understandable when one considers that according to Church canons even interfaith prayers with heretics are forbidden, not to mention intercommunion. According to Orthodox understanding the Roman Catholics are heretics, and their sacraments are devoid of divine grace. St. Mark of Ephesus maintained, "The Latins are not only schismatics, but heretics" and St. Gregory Palamas wrote, "The Latins have left the enclosure of the Church."

Let us pause for a moment at the idea of calling a "Great Council of the Orthodox Church" and examine what the righteous Archimandrite Justin (Popovich) wrote about this event. We quote his letter of May 7, 1977, written in the name of the Bishop's Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Fr. Justin indicates the untimeliness of such a council, and the artificial selection of topics which reveal the papist pretensions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He writes, "The question of preparation for and calling of an "Ecumenical Council" of the Orthodox Church is not new. This question was proposed during the life of the unfortunate Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis), the creator of a schism in Orthodoxy as a result of his so-called "Pan-Orthodox Congress" held in Constantinople in 1923.

"Not a single council in the history of the Orthodox Church, even more so, a council that is so grace-filled and guided by the Spirit that it is named Ecumenical, has been summoned in such a disingenuous manner, with topics for discussion at its sessions prepared beforehand. Never have such congresses, conferences and various artificially contrived councils been summoned in such a planned-out manner. These types of gatherings are completely foreign to the Orthodox catholic (sobornost) tradition. They are in fact imitations of models learned from Western organizations, foreign to the Church of Christ.

"Historical reality is clear on these matters, the sacred councils of the Holy Fathers summoned by God always had one, or at the most two or three questions for discussion, which were raised because of great heresies and schisms which had distorted the Orthodox Faith,

divided the Church and presented a serious danger to the salvation of Orthodox people and all of God's creation. Therefore, the Orthodox Ecumenical Councils always had a Christological, soteriological and ecclesiological character. That is, their main theme their central message always focused on the God-man Jesus Christ and our salvation in Him, our deification in Him."

Regarding the Moscow and Constantinople delegations present at the first pre-council meeting in 1987, discussing a forthcoming new "Ecumenical Council," Fr. Justin writes, "Who do they [the delegates] really represent, which Church and what people of God? The hierarchy of Constantinople present at these meetings consists mainly of titled metropolitans and bishops. These are pastors without a flock and without any concrete responsibility before God and their living flock. Who does this hierarchy represent, and who will it represent at a future council? Recently the Patriarchate of Constantinople has created many new bishoprics and metropolitan seats, sees that are only titular and indeed fictitious in nature, since the actual communities no longer exist. This is being done, no doubt, in preparation for the upcoming 'Ecumenical Council,' where, with a majority created by these titled delegates, enough votes will be cast to support the neo-papist ambitions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

"All of this reflects the secret desires of well-known persons in the Patriarchate of Constantinople, who wish to manipulate all the autocephalous Orthodox churches, and the Orthodox Church in general into accepting their position of 'first in honor.' The first four topics of the ten chosen for the Council clearly expose this attempt of Constantinople to submit the entire Orthodox diaspora, which in reality would mean the whole world, to itself. They also seek the sole right to grant autocephaly and autonomy to all Orthodox churches in the world, both now and in the future, as well as the order of rank according to their definition (this is in fact the real question concerning the diptychs; it is not merely "the order of commemoration at the Liturgy," but the rank and order of Churches at councils, etc.).

"I respect the centuries old merit earned by this Patriarchate, that is, the great Church of Christ at Constantinople. I also bow before its cross which is no way an easy one and which by its nature is the cross of the whole Church. According to the words of the Apostle Paul, when one member suffers, the whole body suffers. I also recognize the canonical order and place of primacy (of honor) of Constantinople among the local Orthodox churches, equal in honor and rights. But it would go against the Gospel if Constantinople were permitted, because of the difficulties which it finds itself under now, to lead the whole Orthodox world into a chasm, which happened once before at the pseudo-Florentine Council. If it were permitted to enact into law those dogmatic and canonical definitions of a purely historical relevance, which were intended to give the Church the wings to soar with, then rather they would become chains [restraining] her transfiguring presence in the world. One must be honest, the behavior of Constantinople's representatives in the last ten years reflects the same unhealthy uneasiness and sick spiritual condition which led the Church in the fifteenth century to betrayal and disgrace. Is the behavior exhibited under the Turkish yoke an example to follow for all times? In fact, the Turkish yoke is as dangerous to Orthodoxy as the Florentine one. Today the situation is even more serious. In those times Constantinople was a vibrant community with millions of faithful, which was able to quickly overcome the crisis, control from the outside with a temptation to betray the Faith and the Kingdom of Heaven for an earthly kingdom. Today Constantinople has dioceses without people, bishops with no one to oversee, and they want to hold the fate of the whole Church in their hands! Today there must not, and cannot be any kind of Florence.

"The centuries old struggle of Orthodoxy against Roman absolutism was a struggle for the freedom of local churches, churches that were catholic, conciliar, full, whole. Should we now travel the way of fallen Rome or some similar "second" or "third" [Rome]? Is it possible that Constantinople, after centuries of successfully resisting Roman, papal patronage and absolutism by virtue of her holy hierarchs, clergy and flock, should now ignore the conciliar tradition of Orthodoxy and replace it with the neo-papist or surrogate "second," "third" or some other kind of Rome?" (*Orthodox Russia*, No. 22, 1977)

Recently the Patriarchate has even actively participated in dialogue with Monophysites, who unfortunately were not brought to repentance and union with the Orthodox Church by the dialogue, but rather the dialogue led to apostasy from Orthodoxy. We read, "The two families [Orthodox and Monophysite] accept that the lifting of the anathemas and condemnations will be based on the fact that the Councils and the Fathers previously anathematized or condemned, were not heretics" (Point 10 of the Second Joint Declaration composed at the Ecumenical Patriarchate Centre, Geneva, Switzerland, September, 1990). Can we accept such a decision, which annuls the former decrees of Ecumenical Councils? Reviewing all that has been said above, it is difficult not to reach the conclusion that the Patriarchate of Constantinople is in fact taking a decidedly un-Orthodox position.

Early last year, Patriarch Dimitrios wrote a letter to the Moscow Patriarch, Alexis II, in which he called the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, a "so-called church" and announced that he recognized only one canonical Orthodox Church in the territory of Russia, namely the Church headed by Patriarch Alexis. What more should our Church expect, a document declaring our schismatic status, or some other type of official condemnation?

During his enthronement festivities, the new Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, announced his intentions of following the ecumenical direction set by his predecessors.

In a letter to the hieromonk, Polycarp, his beatitude, Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) wrote, "Was not primacy in the Church held until the ninth and even the eleventh centuries by the Roman popes? What then transpired? They, and all their flock, were cut off from the Church, and spent the remainder of their ruinous days as heretics. It is possible that Constantinople will suffer the same fate if it continues on the path of Meletios and Gregory VII." According to recent reports this is now happening. Patriarch Bartholomew I is reported as saying, "[The Orthodox Church feels] the need for renovation...For instance, the prescription of a forty days fast before Easter and Christmas is scarcely feasible today outside of monasteries." He further claims, "Our aims are like John's [Pope John XXIII]: to update the Church and promote Christian unity... By the grace of God, all Orthodox Churches now favor ecumenism." (*National Catholic Reporter*, Jan. 21, 1977)

May this not happen to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which brought forth from its bosom Sts. Cyril and Methodios, enlighteners of the Slavs, and numerous other saints. Constantinople was the mother of the Russian Church. Let us ponder the words of the Father of pastors and great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said, *But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted* (Matt. 23: 11,12).

The world is amiably uniting, seeking to build a new "tower of Babel," create a "new world order" and establish "paradise" here on earth. For all those whose love for the one, only, saving Orthodox Faith will not permit them to follow this "union," for them a difficult test awaits. "The trial for the saints of God will become horrible... Their small number will appear insignificant before all of humanity...,"

general derision, hatred, slander, persecution, violent death will be their lot" (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov). *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you* (John 15:19).

The faithful children of the Church of Christ must now prepare themselves for difficult, psychological isolation.

*Monk Gorazd*

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