

HOLY NEW MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Compiled by Vladimir Moss

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT DID THE MARTYRS DIE FOR?

The Apostle Paul writes: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things..." (Philippians 4.8). In the terrible twentieth century, there was nothing more true, more pure and more lovely than the feats of the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia. Their faith, their virtue, their love of God and man warms hearts grown cold from the icy breath of the prince of this world and protects them from the power of satan. Truly, with their heart they believed unto righteousness, and with their mouth they confessed unto salvation (Romans 10.10). And so they are with the Lord, Who said: "Whosoever shall confess in Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew 10.32).

When we look down the roll-call of Christian martyrdom, we are struck by the great variety of reasons for which the martyrs suffered. Some were killed for what were clearly reasons of faith - because they confessed the One God against the pagans, or Christ against the Jews, or one or another dogma of the faith against the heretics. But others suffered to defend their chastity (e.g. the Martyr Thomais), or because they rebuked injustice (e.g. St. John the Forerunner), or because they refused to return evil for evil (e.g. Saints Boris and Gleb), or simply because they were *there*, unwitting obstacles to the impious designs of evil men (e.g. the 14,000 innocents of Bethlehem, St. Edward the Martyr). The Holy Church accepts all of them as martyrs because, even if they were not killed specifically for their confession of the faith, nevertheless they died for Christ, being true Christians who suffered an unjust death at the hands of the evil one. They witnessed for Christ in the sense that they imitated Him in life and death, and thereby witnessed to the power of His Resurrection.

The holy new martyrs of Russia present a similar apparent variety in the reasons for their martyrdom. This has led to some to wonder whether they are all really martyrs for Christ. In particular, some have cast doubt on the sanctity of at least some of the Russian new martyrs and confessors on the grounds that they suffered for "political" reasons, for their pronouncements against the crimes of Soviet power or in favour of monarchism.

Martyrs or Political Criminals?

Now we are familiar with this argument in relation to the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, an argument that was well refuted by Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles: "We will speak to the point, in a way that befits an honest, believing Christian. The Tsar-Martyr, and his family as well, suffered for Christian piety. He was opposed to the amorality and godlessness of the communists, both on principle and by virtue of his position - on principle, because he was a

deeply believing Orthodox Christian; by virtue of his position, because he was a staunch Orthodox Monarch. *For this he was killed.* To ask him anything concerning the faith was unnecessary, because he gave witness before the tormentors to his steadfastness in Christian principles by his entire previous life and works, and especially by his profoundly Christian endurance of the moral torments of his imprisonment. He was a staunch defender and protector of the Christian faith, preventing the God-haters from beginning a vicious persecution against believers in Christ and against the whole Orthodox Church. *For this reason he was removed and slain...*

"It is also known from witnesses still alive that prior to the Revolution it was proposed that the Tsar repeal the strictures against anti-Christian secret societies, and it was threatened that if he refused he would lose his throne and his life. The sovereign firmly refused this proposal. Therefore, they deprived him of his throne and killed him. Thus, he suffered *precisely* for the faith."

However, it is not only the Tsar's canonization that has been labelled as a "political" act, an attempt to rehabilitate a "political criminal" or political programme. Since so many of the non-royal martyrs were also condemned as "political criminals", it is necessary to defend them, too, from this charge.

Thus A. Zhuravsky writes in his book on the martyrs of the Kazan diocese in 1918: "To the present day many of our contemporaries have preserved the conviction that the majority of those clergy who suffered in 1918 suffered torments not so much for the faith as for their 'political' pronouncements, which were expressed in Church sermons against the violence of atheism, of the Bolshevik terror, of the trampling on the norms of Christian morality and even against Soviet power. Therefore there exists the opinion that it is not worth canonizing this or that group of martyrs only because they suffered for 'political crimes', or, on the contrary, suffered as it were by chance, only because they happened to be servants of the cult. In the latter case, it is said, the very fact of 'witnessing' for the truth of Christ is absent."

Zhuravsky goes on to refute these charges as follows: "As regards those who 'suffered by chance', let us point out only that everything happens in accordance with the Providence of God and the 'witness' is priesthood itself, clerical rank, belonging to Orthodoxy, for which these righteous ones were doomed to torments by the Godless. Let us also remember that since the times of the persecutions against the first Christians the Eastern Church has maintained the position that the single fact of martyrdom communicates holiness. Moreover, if we turn to the Lives of the Saints, we shall find tens of short descriptions of 'facts' of martyrdom, when both the names of the saints and the circumstances of *their* martyric deaths remained unknown. For the first Christians it was clear - if the Christian died in the faith and from the pagans, then he died for the faith and for Christ, and consequently, was worthy of veneration, as having already acquired for himself the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. For that reason the Orthodox Church chants in the troparion to the martyrs: 'In your sufferings you acquired unfading crowns...!'

"As regards politics, things are not quite so unambiguous. If we turn to the history of the persecutions against the first Christians, we discover to our amazement the wonderful similarity of the position (and reasons for persecution) of the Christians in the conditions of the Roman empire and of the Soviet state. According to Roman legislation, the Christians were persecuted, not for their convictions (for Roman law did not punish convictions, but actions), but for their refusal to bow down to the cult of the emperors. And the Christians were judged as hostes Caesari and hostes rei publicae, that is, as political prisoners, opponents of the authority of Caesar, and as 'enemies of the people!' In the trials of the Christians three main accusations were brought forward: that they were opponents of the state religion (sacrilegium - godless ones), as non-venerators of the cult of Caesar (crimen laesae majestatis) and as secret plotters (they formed secret societies). But that is exactly what we see in the 20th century! The Orthodox Christians and the clergy were also judged, not for their religious convictions (after all, freedom of confession was guaranteed by the Constitution), but for 'political' anti-Soviet activity, for refusing to bow down to the idol of the Bolsheviki's dreams. And so is it the case that the first Christians, who refused to bow down to the statue of Caesar and rebuked the pagan abomination of idol-worship, differ so much from those pastors of 1918, who rebuked another idol (but also pagan), and other disorders (but of the same kind and nature), witnessing their zeal for their faith with every sermon? As Prudentius, the Christian poet and hymnographer, justly remarked: '*Despising the temple* (the pagan temple - A.Zh.) *means rejecting the emperors.*' But we can make almost the same remark with regard to the 20th century: Despising (that is, rejecting) state atheism (Godlessness, materialism) means rejecting the revolution (from the point of view of the authorities such a person was a 'counter-revolutionary'). Already from the end of the 1920s Christians began to be accused of, amongst other things, secret plots aimed at the overthrow of the existing system. Let us note that the latter had much in common with the Roman empire. In the Roman empire there was no pagan church: '*That which, among the Christians, related to the sphere of Church activity, in Rome related to the sphere of activity of the state. The priests, pontifexes and flamens were state functionaries; therefore by dint of historical necessity that challenge which the Christian Church hurled at the pagan faith and to which the pagan church had to reply was accepted by the state.*'

"But, you know, the Soviet state did not have its own 'institution of the Church'. The role of that institution was played by the communist ideology, whose 'ideological clergy' (commissars, party secretaries, popularisers of 'Marxist-Leninist' philosophy, etc.) were also employed by the state. The Soviet state, like the Roman empire (its much more likeable forerunner), took the challenge of the Church of Christ to the bearers of Godless (antichristian) ideology as a challenge to itself, a challenge to Bolshevism, a challenge to the initiators of the mindless plan to erect a new tower of Babylon of the future. And insofar as the state authorities had religious functions, it descended with all its strength upon its 'rival' and rebuker - the Orthodox Church. All this

completely explains why we cannot reject the fact of martyrdom solely because at its base their lies the authorities' declaration of the passion-bearer's 'political guilt'. Every case must be examined individually."

Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union

Zhuravsky's point is well taken. And yet, in order to understand what precisely it was that the Russian New Martyrs died for, and the great difficulties they had in defining their relationship to the State, it is necessary to consider the *differences* between the situation of the confessing Christians in Old Rome and in the Soviet Union. For since Christ had been born in the Roman Empire and had explicitly commanded the giving to Caesar of what was Caesar's, and the Apostle Paul had had no hesitation in using his Roman citizenship to defend himself against the Jews, the Roman Empire was natural and lawful for Roman Christians in a way that the Soviet state, for many powerful reasons, could never be for Russian Christians.

Thus Tertullian once said to the Roman pagans: "Caesar is more truly ours (than yours) because he was put into power by our God". Emperor-worship was not part of the original constitution of the Roman Empire; such famous emperors as Tiberius, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius explicitly rejected it; and in the case of those who tried to enforce it, such as Nero and Domitian, it was in essence an *import* from the eastern pagan theocracies, an heretical *aberration* from the fundamental Roman conception, which was that the emperor is subject both to his own laws, of which he is the main custodian, and to the laws of God, being emperor "by the will of God" and not "as a god". "In fact," as Professor Sordi writes, "the imperial cult had never been imposed formally, or even encouraged, by any of the emperors to whom the Christian apologists from Aristides to Quadratus, from Melito to Athenagoras, were addressing their works."

Thus the early Christians could quite clearly and sincerely distinguish the honour in which they held the institution of the empire and the emperor himself from the disgust they felt for the cult of emperor-worship during the few reigns in which it was imposed; which is why they refused to offer incense to the emperor's statue, while continuing to pay taxes and carry out military service.

Soviet power, however, was established by the overthrow of the Christian Roman Empire and in direct opposition to everything which that Empire stood for. Unlike the pagan Romans, the Bolsheviks did not acknowledge that their power had been established "by the will of God"; nor did they consider themselves subject to any laws, human or Divine. Of course, no society can exist without laws, and the Bolsheviks did create a code of laws; but since the essence of their state was "the mystery of lawlessness" (II Thessalonians 2.7), they had no compunction in breaking their own laws whenever it suited them - which, in the case of relations with the Church and Christians, meant most of the time.

This placed the Christians before a most acute dilemma. Their first instinct - an instinct which found expression above all in the decrees of the Local Council of the Russian Church - was to refuse any kind of recognition for the Soviet state. Thus on November 11, 1917 the Council addressed a letter to the faithful, parts of which hinted at a complete rejection of the Bolshevik regime: "To our grief, as yet no government has arisen which is sufficiently one with the people to deserve the blessing of the Orthodox Church." Again, on January 19, 1918 Patriarch Tikhon issued his famous anathema against the Bolsheviks and their co-workers, adjuring all Christians "*not to commune with such outcasts of the human race in any matter whatsoever*". A few days later, the Council endorsed the Patriarch's anathema in even stronger language.

This first instinct of the Russian Church in the face of Soviet power has never been extinguished among Russian Christians. It continued to manifest itself both at home and abroad (for example, in the First All-Emigration Council of the Russian Church Abroad in 1921), both in the early and the later decades of Soviet power (for example, among the "passportless" Christians of the Catacomb Church). However, it was very soon tempered by the realisation that publicly and on a large scale such outright rejection of Soviet power could be sustained only by *war* - and after the defeat of the White Armies in the Civil War there were no armies left to carry on the fight against the Bolsheviks.

Therefore from the early 1920s a new attitude towards Soviet power began to evolve among the Tikhonite Christians: loyalty towards it as a political institution ("for all power is from God"), and acceptance of such of its laws as could be interpreted in favour of the Church (for example, the law on the separation of Church and State), combined with rejection of its atheistic world-view (large parts of which the renovationists, by contrast, accepted).

In essence, this new attitude involved accepting, contrary to the decrees of the Local Council of 1917-18, that the Soviet State was not Antichrist, but Caesar - no worse in principle than the Caesars of Ancient Rome. Therefore some things were due to it - "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's". This presupposed that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion.

But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved very hard to draw. For to the Bolsheviks there was no such dividing line; to them, *everything* had to be in accordance with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state and its ideology did not pry. Unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives in their own way so long as they showed loyalty to the state (which, as we have seen, the Christians were very eager to do), the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to

Lenin), in science (Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as "anti-Soviet behaviour", i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviets, such a person was an *enemy of the people*.

In view of this, it is not surprising that many Christians came to the conclusion that, as the English saying goes, "hung for a penny, hung for a pound" - it was less morally debilitating to reject the whole regime that made such impossible demands, since the penalty would be the same whether one asserted one's loyalty to it or not. And if this meant living as an outlaw, so be it. Such a rejection of, or flight from the state had precedents in Russian history; and from as early as 1918 we find priests, such as Hieromartyr Timothy Strelkov of Mikhailovka (+1930) and bishops, such as Hieroconfessor Amphilochius of Yeniseisk (+1946), adopting this course.

Nevertheless, this path required enormous courage, strength and self-sacrifice, not only for oneself but also (which was more difficult) for one's family or flock. It is therefore not surprising that, already during the Civil War, the Church began to soften her anti-Soviet rhetoric and try once more to draw the line between politics and religion. This is what Patriarch Tikhon tried to do in the later years of his patriarchate - with, it must be said, only mixed results.

Thus his decision to allow some, but not all of the Church's valuables to be requisitioned by the Bolsheviks in 1922 not only did not bring help to the starving of the Volga, as was the intention, but led to many clashes between believers and the authorities and many deaths of believers. For, as the holy Elder Nectary of Optina said: "You see now, the patriarch gave the order to give up all valuables from the churches. But they belonged to the Church!"

The decision to negotiate and compromise with the Bolsheviks - in transgression of the decrees of the 1917-18 Council - only brought confusion and division to the Church. Thus on the right wing of the Church there were those, like Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, who thought that the patriarch had already gone too far; while on the left wing there were those, like Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who wanted to go further. The basic problem was that the compromises were always one-sided; the Bolsheviks always took and never gave; their aim was not peaceful co-existence, but the complete conquest of the Church.

However, the Patriarchal Church remained Orthodox under Patriarch Tikhon and his successor, Metropolitan Peter, for two major reasons: first, because the leaders of the Church did not sacrifice the lives of their fellow Christians for the sake of their own security or the security of the Church organization; and secondly, because, while the Soviet regime was recognised

to be, in effect, Caesar rather than Pharaoh, no further concessions were made with regard to the communist *ideology*.

But everything changed in 1927 with the notorious declaration of the deputy head of the Russian Church, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod. By declaring that the Soviet regime's joys were the Church's joys, and its sorrows the Church's sorrows, Sergius in effect declared an *identity of aims* between the Church and the State. And this was not just a lie, but a *lie against the faith*, a concession to the communist *ideology*. In fact, it implied that communism as such was good, and its victory to be welcomed.

Moreover, Sergius followed this up by committing *the sin of Judas*; he placed all those who disagreed with him under ban and in effect handed them over to the GPU as "counter-revolutionaries". Far from "saving the Church", as he claimed, he condemned its finest members to torture and death. And then his successors in the present-day Moscow Patriarchate (MP) followed this up with *the sin of Pilate* - the criminal indifference to the truth manifest in their participation - under pressure from the communists as Pilate had been from the Jews - in the "heresy of heresies", ecumenism.

In order to protect the flock of Christ from Sergius' apostasy, the leaders of the True Church had to draw once more the line between politics and religion. One approach was to distinguish between *physical* opposition to the regime and *spiritual* opposition to it. Thus Archbishop Barlaam of Perm wrote that physical opposition was not permitted, but spiritual opposition was obligatory. This criterion allowed Christians quite sincerely to reject the charge of "counter-revolution" - if "counter-revolution" were understood to mean *physical* rebellion. The problem was, as we have seen, that the Bolsheviks understood "counter-revolution" in a much wider sense...

Another, still more basic problem was that it still left the question whether Soviet power was from God or not unresolved. If Soviet power was from God, it should be counted as Caesar and should be given what was Caesar's. But bitter experience had shown that this "Caesar" wanted to seat himself in the temple as if he were God (II Thessalonians 2.4). So was he not in fact Antichrist, whose power is not from God, but from Satan (Revelation 13.2), whose power *allowed*, but by no means *established* by God for the punishment of sinners? If so, then there was no alternative but to flee into the catacombs, rejecting totally the government of Satan on earth.

In the early years after Metropolitan Sergius' declaration, many Catacomb Christians, while *in practice* not surrendering what was God's to the Soviets, *in theory* could not make up their minds whether the Soviet regime was Caesar or Antichrist.

Thus Hieromartyr Joseph (Gavrilov), superior of Raithu Desert (+1930), confessed at his interrogation: "I have never, and do not now, belong to any political parties. I consider Soviet power to be given from God, but a power

that is from God must fulfil the will of God, and Soviet power does not fulfil the will of God. Therefore it is not from God, but from Satan. It closes churches, mocks the holy icons, teaches children atheism, etc. That is, it fulfills the will of Satan... It is better to die with faith than without faith. I am a real believer, faith has saved me in battles, and I hope that in the future faith will save me from death. I firmly believe in the Resurrection of Christ and His Second Coming. I have not gone against the taxes, since it says in Scripture: "To Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

From this confession, impressive though it is, it is not clear whether Hieromartyr Joseph recognised the Soviet regime as Caesar, and therefore from God, or as Antichrist, and therefore from Satan. In the end the Bolsheviks resolved his dilemma for him. They shot him, and therefore showed that they were - Antichrist.

In the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), meanwhile, a consensus had emerged that the Soviet regime was not Caesar, but Antichrist. This was the position of, for example, Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava, Metropolitan Innocent of Peking and Archbishop Averky of Jordanville. As Archbishop Theophanes put it in the same critical year of 1927: "The Bolshevik authorities are in essence antichristian, and there is no way in which they can be recognised as being established by God."

The same conclusion was reached by the Catacomb Church inside Russia. Thus the Catacomb Council of Ust-Kut, Siberia, in July, 1937, decreed:

"1. The Sacred Council forbids the faithful to receive communion from the clergy legalized by the anti-Christian State.

"2. It has been revealed to the Sacred Council by the Spirit that the anathema-curse hurled by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon is valid, and all priests and Church-servers who have dared to consider it as an ecclesiastical mistake or political tactic are placed under its power and bound by it.

"3. To all those who discredit and separate themselves from the Sacred Council of 1917-18 - **Anathema!**"

Thus we come to the conclusion that the confessing Christians of the Soviet Union suffered and died precisely for Christ and against the Antichrist. This was not a political struggle because the Antichrist is not a purely political figure. In his kingdom there is no sustainable boundary between religion and politics; everything is *both* religion *and* politics; for he claims to be both *lord* (of the bodies) and *god* (of the souls) of his subjects. This being so, it is impossible to resist the Antichrist in one sphere while cooperating with him in another - the totalitarian man-god must be rejected *totally*. It is the glory of the holy new Martyrs and Confessors of Russia that, having exhausted all attempts to achieve some kind of honourable modus vivendi with the Antichrist (more often than not, for the sake of others rather than themselves), when they were

finally presented with the stark choice between the man-god and the God-Man, they boldly and unswervingly chose the latter, proclaiming: "Thou art my Lord and my God" (John 20.28).

The Martyrs and the Moscow Patriarchate

In November, 1981 the Russian Church Abroad, meeting in New York, canonised the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia. This act proved to be very popular not only in the Russian Church Abroad and the Catacomb Church, but also among ordinary believers in the Moscow Patriarchate - that church organisation founded by Metropolitan Sergius and Stalin which had become the "official church" of the Soviet Union since 1943. Over the next twenty years, under pressure from these believers in its own ranks, the MP began to follow the Russian Church Abroad's example, glorifying first some of the major martyrs who died before 1927, such as Great Princess Elizabeth and Patriarch Tikhon, and then, in its "Jubilee Council" of the year 2000 - the Royal Martyrs and several of the martyrs who died after 1927.

How was it possible for the MP to glorify Tsar Nicholas, which, following communist ideology, it had condemned as a "blood-sucker" for so many years?

The decision to glorify Tsar Nicholas was a compromise, reflecting the very different attitudes towards them in the patriarchate. The Royal Martyrs were called "passion-bearers" rather than "martyrs", and it was made clear that they were being glorified, not for the way in which they lived their lives, but for the meekness with which they faced their deaths. This allowed the anti-monarchists to feel that Nicholas was still the "bloody Nicholas" of Soviet mythology, and that it was "Citizen Romanov" rather than "Tsar Nicholas" who had been glorified - the ordinary layman stripped of his anointing rather than the Anointed of God fulfilling the fearsomely difficult and responsible role of "him who restrains" the coming of the Antichrist. Of course, even if the Tsar had committed the terrible sins he was accused of (nobody denies that he made certain political mistakes), this would in no way affect his status if he was truly, as all the Orthodox believe, martyred for the sake of the truth. After all, many of the martyrs lived sinful lives, and some even temporarily fell away from the truth. But their sins were wiped out in the blood of their martyrdom. However, this elementary dogma was ignored by the MP, which wished, even while glorifying the Tsar, in a subtle way to humiliate him at the same time.

How was it possible for the MP to glorify the martyrs after 1927, when these rejected Metropolitan Sergius and were condemned by him as graceless schismatics - for example, Hieromartyr Victor of Glazov, whose relics are incorrupt and wonderworking, but who said that Metropolitan Sergius' betrayal was "worse than heresy"? After all, as late as 1992 "Patriarch" Alexis II was declaring that the Catacomb Church was uncanonical. How could an "uncanonical" and "graceless" Church produce martyrs?

The short answer is that, as in the case of the Royal Martyrs, the people already venerated them, and it was impossible to deny their manifest holiness any longer... However, since to glorify only the true martyrs would be to admit that they themselves were schismatics, the MP hierarchs proceeded also to glorify a series of *false martyrs* - hierarchs and priests who remained in communion with Metropolitan Sergius and shared in his sin of Judas. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Fr. Oleg Oreshkin: "I think that some of those glorified will be from the sergianists so as to deceive the believers. 'Look,' they will say, 'he is a saint, a martyr, in the Heavenly Kingdom, and he recognized the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, so you must be reconciled with it and its fruits.' This will be done not in order to glorify martyrdom for Christ's sake, but in order to confirm the sergianist politics."

This position had been anticipated by "Patriarch" Alexis II in 1993, when he declared: wrote: "I believe that our martyrs and righteous ones, regardless of whether they followed Metropolitan Sergius or did not agree with his position, pray together for us." It became official at the Council of 2000, as Sergius Kanaev writes: "In the report of the President of the Synodal Commission for the canonisation of the saints, Metropolitan Juvenaly (Poiarkov), the criterion of holiness adopted... for Orthodox Christians who had suffered during the savage persecutions was clearly and unambiguously declared to be submission 'to the lawful leadership of the Church', which was Metropolitan Sergius and his hierarchy. With such an approach, the holiness of the 'sergianist martyrs' was incontestable. The others were glorified or not glorified depending on the degree to which they 'were in separation from the lawful leadership of the Church'. Concerning those who were not in agreement with the politics of Metropolitan Sergius, the following was said in the report: 'In the actions of the "right" oppositionists, who are often called the "non-commemorators", one cannot find evil-intentioned, exclusively personal motives. Their actions were conditioned by their understanding of what was care for the good of the Church'. In my view, this is nothing other than blasphemy against the New Martyrs and a straight apology for sergianism. With such an approach the consciously sergianist Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov), for example, becomes a 'saint', while his ideological opponent Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, who was canonized by our Church, is not glorified. For us another fact is also important, that Metropolitan Seraphim was appointed by Sergius (Stragorodsky) in the place of Metropolitan Joseph, who had been 'banned' by him."

The canonisation of *both* the true *and* the false martyrs downgraded the exploit of the true martyrs without denying it completely. It was as if the MP were saying: "Yes, these were good men, and we give permission for them to be venerated and prayed to as saints. But it would have been better if they had followed the lawful hierarchy!"

Some, seeing the glorification of the Catacomb martyrs by the successors of those who had persecuted them, remembered the words of the Lord: "Ye

build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets'. Therefore ye bear witness against yourselves that ye are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up the measure of your fathers!" (Matthew 23.29-32).

As the Kaliningrad parish of the ROCOR wrote on November 1/14, 2000: "What throng of new martyrs was canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate if, in that multitude, there are 'saints' who fought against the Church, and who later suffered at the hands of their masters - but not for Christ, having become, rather, victims who were offered up upon the altar of the revolution, just as were thousands of other bolsheviks and liberal dreamers? A throng of new martyrs in which victims and executioners, holy martyrs and 'Christians' (at whose orders these new martyrs were shot and sent to prisons and labour-camps), find themselves side by side?"

The 20th canon of the Local Council of Gangra declares: "If anyone shall, from a presumptuous disposition, condemn and abhor the assembly [in honour of] the martyrs, or the services performed there, and the commemoration of them, let them be **anathema**...." And again, Canon 34 of the Council of Laodicea decrees: "No Christian shall forsake the martyrs of Christ, and turn to false martyrs, that is, to those of the heretics, or those who formerly were heretics; for they are aliens from God. Let those, therefore, who go after them, be **anathema**."

This act of canonising both the true and the false martyrs has further absurd consequences. First, it means that, if any one was still tempted to consider that the official acts of the MP had any validity at all, he can now be assured that even the MP itself does not believe in them. For consider: Archbishop Victor, Metropolitan Cyril and the whole host of Catacomb confessors were defrocked, excommunicated and cast out of the community of the "faithful" by official acts of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod. But if these "defrocked" and "excommunicated" people are now saints in the Heavenly Kingdom, this only goes to show, *as the MP now implicitly admits*, that the actions of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod were completely uncanonical and invalid!

Secondly, it also shows that *the MP does not know what martyrdom is, and looks upon it in an essentially ecumenist spirit which deprives it of all meaning*. Some years ago, a writer for the *Anglican Church Times* was reviewing a book on the "martyrs" of the Anglican Reformation. In the spirit of that ecumenism that has been at the root of Anglicanism for centuries, this reviewer claimed that both the Catholics who died for their faith at the hands of the Anglicans and the Anglicans who died for their faith died at the hands of the Catholics died for the truth as they saw it and so were martyrs! For it was not important, wrote the reviewer, who was *right* in this conflict: the only thing that matters is that they were *sincere* in their beliefs. And he went on to deny that heresy in general even exists: the only real heresy, he said, is the belief that there is such a thing as heresy!

The act of the MP presupposes a very similar philosophy. It presupposes that you can be a martyr whether you oppose the Antichrist or submit to him, whether you confess the truth or lie through your teeth, whether you imitate the love of Christ or the avarice of Judas. This is the perfect philosophy for our lukewarm times! But if the Lord Himself spews such lukewarmness out of His mouth, then so should we. And if the anathema on those who venerate false martyrs does not frighten us, let us at least pay heed to the words of St. Paul: "If a man strive for mastery, yet he is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (II Timothy 2.5)...

The Purpose of This Book

Better than all theoretical considerations, however, in deciding who is a true martyr and what true martyrdom is, is the reading of the Lives of the Martyrs themselves. The purpose of this book is to provide a representative selection of the vast rollcall of the Russian New Martyrs and Confessors from every province of the vast land of the Soviets, and throughout the period of the Soviet yoke, from the revolution of 1917 to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. While the lives of some well-known martyrs are included, several other chapters describe the exploits of some that are less well-known, whose memory has been preserved only in the depths of the Russian True Orthodox Church.

1. HOLY TSAR-MARTYR NICHOLAS II AND HIS FAMILY AND SERVANTS

Early Years

Tsar-Martyr Nicholas was born in St. Petersburg on May 6, 1868, the feast of St. Job the Long-Suffering. And how prophetic this coincidence turned out to be! For, as he himself intuited, Nicholas was destined to follow the example of this great Old Testament Saint both in his sufferings and patience. The Lord allowed Job to suffer many things, trying him in the fire of calamity to test his faith and show him forth to succeeding ages as a pillar of patience. In the same way, Nicholas was tried and tempted, but emerged as a crown-bearing victor over temptation and a holy martyr.

His grandfather was Tsar Alexander II, the liberator of the peasants, who loved him and called him "sun ray". "When I was small," said Nicholas to his daughters, "they sent for me every day to visit my grandfather. My brother George and I had the habit of playing in his study while he was working. His smile was so pleasant, although his face was usually handsome and calm. I remember that it made a great impression on me in my early childhood... Once my parents were away, and I was at the all-night vigil with my grandfather in the small church in Alexandria. During the service there was a powerful thunderstorm, streaks of lightning flashed one after the other, and it seemed as if the peals of thunder would shake even the church and the whole world to its foundations. Suddenly it became quite dark, a blast of wind from the open door blew out the flame of the candles which were lit in front of the iconostasis, there was a long clap of thunder, louder than before, and I suddenly saw a fiery ball flying from the window straight towards the head of the Emperor. The ball (it was of lightning) whirled around the floor, then passed the chandelier and flew out through the door into the park. My heart froze, I glanced at my grandfather - his face was completely calm. He crossed himself just as calmly as he had when the fiery ball had flown near us, and I felt that it was unseemly and not courageous to be frightened as I was. I felt that one had only to look at what was happening and believe in the mercy of God, as he, my grandfather, did. After the ball had passed through the whole church, and suddenly gone out through the door, I again looked at my grandfather. A faint smile was on his face, and he nodded his head at me. My panic disappeared, and from that time I had no more fear of storms."

When he was aged ten, Nicholas Alexandrovich was handed over to the care of General G.G. Danilovich, who invited a series of specialists to come to the palace and instruct him in various subjects - Russian, French, English, German, mathematics, history, geography and chemistry. His favourite subject was history, and at the age of sixteen he became a member of the Imperial Historical Society. He read the historians Karamzin and Soloviev, and his favourite novel was Tolstoy's historical novel, *War and Peace*.

He was particularly close to his English tutor, Charles Heath, and General V.N. Voeykov, the last Commander of the Imperial Palaces, who was the first to comfort him after his abdication, commented that "one of the Emperor's outstanding qualities was his self-control. Being by nature very quick tempered, he had worked hard on himself from his childhood under the direction of his tutor, the English Mister Heath, and had achieved a tremendous degree of self-possession. Mister Heath frequently reminded his imperial pupil of the English saying that aristocrats are born but gentlemen are made." Another great quality of his was love of the poor: he often wore patched clothing while spending his personal allowance to help poor students to pay for their tuition.

Above all the creatures of the earth, Nicholas Alexandrovich loved birds. When he heard them singing, he would become so absorbed that his playmates often commented on it. Once, when a young sparrow fell from its nest, little Nika, as his friends called him, said:

"It is necessary to pray for the little sparrows. May Dearest God not take it - He has enough sparrows."

On March 13, 1881, the Tsar-Liberator Alexander II was murdered by a revolutionary fanatic. On a Petersburg street, in broad daylight, a bomb was thrown which injured some of the guards but left the Tsar unhurt. With no regard for his personal safety, he left his carriage and was attending to the injured when a second bomb was thrown, fatally wounding him and many others. He was rushed to the Winter Palace where he died in the presence of his grief-stricken family. Later, on the spot of the murder, there was built a magnificent church, Christ the Saviour "Upon the Blood", which became the main stronghold of the Catacomb Church in Petrograd after 1927.

"We were having breakfast," said St. Nicholas, "in the Anichkov palace, my brother and I, when a frightened servant ran in and said:

"An accident has happened to the Emperor! The heir [Nicholas' father, the future Tsar Alexander III] has given the order that Great Prince Nicholas Alexandrovich (that is, I) should immediately go to the Winter palace. One must not lose time."

"General Danilov and I ran down, got into a carriage and rushed along Nevsky to the Winter palace. When we were going up the staircase, I saw that all those who met us had pale faces and that there were big red spots on the carpet - when they had carried my grandfather up the staircase, blood from the terrible wounds he had suffered from the explosion had poured out. My parents were already in the study. My uncle and aunt were standing near the window. Nobody said a word. My grandfather was lying on the narrow camp bed on which he always slept. He was covered with the military greatcoat

that served as his dressing-gown. His face was mortally pale, it was covered with small wounds. My father led me up to the bed:

"Papa,' he said, raising his voice, 'your sun ray is here.'

"I saw a fluttering of his eyelids. The light blue eyes of my grandfather opened. He tried to smile. He moved his finger, but could not raise his hand and say what he wanted, but he undoubtedly recognized me. Protopresbyter Bazhenov came up to him and gave him Communion for the last time, we all fell on our knees, and the Emperor quietly died. Thus was it pleasing to the Lord."

Submission to the will of God was the distinguishing characteristic of Tsar Nicholas II's character. His faith in the Divine wisdom that directs all things gave him that supernatural calm which never abandoned him. We fear catastrophes, but, as St. John Chrysostom said, there is only one thing that is truly fearful - sin. The Lord is in control of everything; everything is either blessed by Him or allowed by Him.

Nicholas' parents were Tsar Alexander Alexandrovich and Tsaritsa Maria Fyodorovna. Alexander was a man who feared God and became one of Russia's great Tsars, though his reign was short (1881-1894). Nicholas' mother, formerly Princess Dagmar of Denmark, was a loving and supportive wife and mother who accepted her adopted faith, Holy Orthodoxy, into her soul and along with Alexander transmitted it to her children.

The activity of the hate-filled revolutionaries was to plague Nicholas and his family throughout their lives. In 1888, while Tsar Alexander III and his family were travelling towards Kharkov, the imperial train was rocked by two explosions and derailed. Only the level-headedness and great physical strength of the Tsar kept the Royal Family from being killed.

Despite such difficult circumstances, Nicholas, now the Tsarevich, was being formed in all the Christian virtues. During his youth his kindness to others and selflessness impressed all who met him. While living frugally himself, he gave freely to those less fortunate. It is known that he often anonymously gave scholarships and other gifts through the agency of one of his childhood teachers. More than once he said:

"When I become Tsar, there will be no poor or unfortunate people. I want everybody to be happy!"

The Tsarevich entered military service, and always afterwards remained devoted to the army, taking a detailed interest in the life of the soldiers.

In 1894 the health of Nicholas' father, Tsar Alexander, began to fail, and on October 20 he reposed as a result of kidney disease under the loving hand of his confessor, St. John of Kronstadt.

By this time the Tsarevich Nicholas was already engaged to Princess Alexandra (Alix) of Hesse in Germany; and they were married one month after Alexander's repose. The couple had met several years before and fallen in love, but there had been obstacles to their marriage. Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich, Nicholas' uncle, and his wife, Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, Alix's sister, had done everything they could to bring the couple together. But Tsar Alexander III and his wife had been opposed to it, as had been Kaiser Wilhelm. However, the major obstacle had been the Princess' faith. She had been born and raised as a Lutheran and was very devoted to her faith, but she needed to convert to Orthodoxy in order to become Empress of the Russian nation. Being a highly principled woman, she did not take this as a light matter and at first resisted. Thus in November, 1893 she had refused the Tsarevich, writing:

"Dear Nicky, you, having such a strong faith, will understand that I consider it a sin to change my faith, and I would be unhappy to the end of my days, being conscious that I had committed a great sin. I am sure that you would not want me to go over to your faith against my convictions. What happiness can marriage give if it begins without the true blessing of God? And I consider it a sin to change the faith in which I have been brought up and to which I belong now. I could never acquire peace of soul, and so I, though called to help you in everything, would never be for you a real companion in life..."

But God in His loving-kindness did not abandon her. She was greatly helped by her sister, Great Princess Elizabeth, who had converted to Orthodoxy two years before; and soon, after a number of meetings with an Orthodox archpriest who expounded to her the Faith, she gladly accepted baptism. Her conversion was anything but nominal. The depth of her embrace of Orthodoxy was to be a spiritual reproach to the Russian nobility and "intelligentsia", who, listening to the spirit of antichrist, had gradually become ashamed of their faith, considering it something "outdated". The young Empress had a secret chapel in her palace in Tsarskoye Selo, and her bedroom walls were covered in icons. She read the Holy Fathers assiduously, and her greatest joy was to have discussions with religious people of all classes. By contrast, life among the aristocrats of St. Petersburg was a great burden to her. She was shy by nature, and at first she did not speak Russian fluently (with her husband, as his diaries shows, she always spoke in English). But the root of the matter was that she was of a different spirit from the worldly aristocratic society of St. Petersburg. She sensed it, and they sensed it; and this meant that she was unpopular with them for the rest of her life, even to the extent of suffering the most disgusting slanders from them.

However, to the poor and suffering of Holy Russia she was much closer. Even when on holiday in Crimea, she would go with her daughters on visits to hospitals and sanatoria, and they all acted as theatre sisters in the First

World War. She was also closely involved in famine and unemployment relief, and in professional training for girls.

His Most Pious Majesty

The official coronation of the Tsar and Tsarina took place in May of 1896 in the Moscow Kremlin. As Tsar Nicholas was crowned, he knelt and prayed aloud: "O Lord God of our fathers, and King of kings, Who created all things by Thy word, and by Thy wisdom has made man, that he should walk uprightly and rule righteously over Thy world; Thou has chosen me as Tsar and judge over Thy people. I acknowledge Thine unsearchable purpose towards me, and bow in thankfulness before Thy Majesty. Do Thou, my Lord and Governor, fit me for the work to which Thou hast sent me; teach me and guide me in this great service. May there be with me the wisdom which belongs to Thy throne; send it from Thy Holy Heaven, that I may know what is well-pleasing in Thy sight, and what is right according to Thy commandment. May my heart be in Thine hand, to accomplish all that is to the profit of the people committed to my charge, and to Thy glory, that so in the day of Thy Judgement I may give Thee account of my stewardship without blame; through the grace and mercy of Thy Son, Who was once crucified for us, to Whom be all honour and glory with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, unto the ages of ages. Amen."

During the days of the coronation a great tragedy occurred. At Khodynka field, people had been lining up to receive free gifts. Pressure built up, some people fell, and hundreds were crushed to death. The Tsar, on hearing the news, immediately wanted to cancel his official engagements and go to the hospital where the injured were being looked after. But his entourage, belittling the seriousness of the event, discouraged him.

This was later held against the Tsar, and the tragedy was seen as a bad omen for the coming reign...

The Royal couple settled into their life of responsibility and took the lead in setting an example of godliness and true pastoral care for their enormous flock. Nowhere was this more evident than in their love and care for the Holy Orthodox Church. They gave much money and support to monasteries and to the building of churches. The Tsar considered it his sacred duty to restore to Russia her ancient traditional culture, which had been abandoned by many of the "educated" classes in favour of modern, Western styles. He encouraged the building of churches in the ancient architectural styles, rather than in the styles favoured since the disastrous "reforms" of Emperors Peter I and Catherine II. He commissioned the painting of large numbers of icons in the Byzantine and Old Russian styles, adorning many churches with them. In the words of Archpriest Michael Polsky, "In the person of the Emperor Nicholas II the believers had the best and most worthy representative of the Church, truly 'The Most Pious' as he was referred to in church services. He was a true patron of the Church, and a solicitor of all her blessings."

During the reign of Tsar Nicholas II, the Russian Church reached her fullest development. The number of churches increased by more than 10,000. There were 57,000 churches by the end of the period. The number of monasteries increased by 250, bringing their total up to 1025. Ancient churches were renovated. The Tsar himself took part in the laying of the first cornerstones and the consecration of many churches. He also stressed the importance of educating the peasant children within the framework of church and parish schools. By 1912, there were 1,988,367 children in these schools, in spite of a campaign by the Duma to close them. He also opened special industries for the city poor to help them earn their own living.

Christian literature flourished at this time. Excellent journals were published, such as Soul-Profiting Reading, Soul-Profiting Converser, The Wanderer, The Rudder, The Russian Monk, and the ever-popular The Russian Pilgrim. The Russian people were surrounded by spiritual nourishment as never before.

Tsar Nicholas visited churches and monasteries in all parts of the country, venerating their saints. There was no tsar in whose reign more saints were glorified (canonized) than that of Nicholas. His love of Orthodoxy and the Church's holy ones knew no bounds; among those glorified during his reign were: St. Theodosius of Chernigov (glorified in 1896), St. Isidore of Yuriev (1897), St. Seraphim of Sarov (1903) St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk (1909), St. Anna of Kashin (1910), St. Joasaph of Belgorod (1911), St. Hermogenes of Moscow (1913), St. Pitirim of Tambov (1914), St. John (Maximovich) of Tobolsk (1916) and St. Paul of Tobolsk (1917).

Being a peace-maker by nature, the young tsar made an unprecedented suggestion to the world early in his reign - that all nations come together and meet in order to cut their military forces and submit to general arbitration on international disputes.

The result of his proposal, the Hague Peace Conference, was convened on May 18, 1899, and served as the precedent for the later League of Nations and United Nations. In 1921, the American President, Warren Harding, officially acknowledged the Tsar's noble efforts towards the limitation of armaments by way of binding agreements among the Powers.

In 1901 the Tsar removed the phrase in the Basic Laws of the Empire that called the Tsar the "Supreme Judge" of the Church. In this way he showed his great concern that the Church should be truly free of state interference; it was he who took the first steps towards restoring Church-State "symphony". In 1906 he convened a Pre-Conciliar Convention, whose aim was to prepare for the first truly independent Church Council since 1682 and elect a patriarch. By God's Providence, this Council did not take place until August, 1917, when the Tsar had already abdicated and was in prison.

The Tsar was unparalleled in Russian history for his mercifulness. He pardoned criminals, even revolutionaries, and gave away vast quantities of his own land and money to alleviate the plight of the peasants. It is believed that he gave away the last of his personal wealth during the Great War, to support the war effort.

The Tsar took great interest in the strivings of the people for a better life. He changed the passport system introduced by Peter I and thus facilitated the free movement of the people, including travel abroad. The poll tax was abolished and a voluntary programme of hospitalisation insurance was introduced, under which, for a payment of one rouble per year, a person was entitled to free hospitalisation. The parity of the rouble was increased greatly on the international markets during his reign. In 1897, a law was enacted to limit work hours; night work was forbidden for women and minors under seventeen years of age, and this at a time when the majority of the countries in the West had almost no labour legislation at all. As William Taft commented in 1913, "the Russian Emperor has enacted labour legislation which not a single democratic state could boast of". He also introduced important changes in the countryside, helping peasants to migrate and set up business on state lands in Siberia, thereby relieving the pressure of population in European Russia.

In 1903, at the insistence of the Tsar himself, St. Seraphim of Sarov was glorified, and a huge celebration was organized in Sarov monastery, to which hundreds of thousands of people came from all over Russia. The Tsar and the Great Princes mingled easily and freely with the peasants, all one in the great Christian family that was Holy Rus'. Many miracles of healing were performed at the relics of the great saint; and nobody who was present remained unmoved.

During this feast, the Tsar was made aware of the future apostasy and downfall of the Russian nation and Church through a prophetic letter written by St. Seraphim himself. Shortly before his death in 1833, the saint had written this letter, sealed it with five wax seals and addressed it "to the Tsar in whose reign I shall be glorified". He then gave it to Elena Motovilov, the young wife of N.I. Motovilov, who is now well-known for recording his conversation with the saint about the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. She kept that letter for seventy years and gave it to the Tsar at the glorification ceremony. While the exact contents are today unknown, it is nevertheless certain that St. Seraphim prepared the Tsar for the coming tribulations.

Furthermore, on the return trip from Sarov, the Royal Family visited St. Seraphim's Diveyevo Convent where Blessed Pasha (Parasceva) the Fool-for-Christ spoke to them several hours; it is said that she foretold to them their own martyrdom as well as that of Holy Russia.

The Tsarina nearly fainted and said: "I don't believe you, it cannot be!"

Now the Royal Couple desperately wanted a son. Between 1895 and 1901 four daughters had been born to them: Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia. These were beautiful and pious girls, greatly loved by their parents and future martyrs for the Lord; but they could not provide what Russia needed most of all – an heir to the throne. Since, according to the Basic Laws, only a male could succeed to the throne, the heir apparent was Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich, the Tsar's brother. However, he later contracted an illegal, morganatic marriage, which caused him to be exiled from the country until the beginning of the Great War. In fact, he became technically Tsar for a very short time in March, 1917; but the Provisional Government then forced him to abdicate. So if the Royal Couple had not given birth to a son, the throne would have passed to a younger brother of Tsar Alexander III, Great Prince Vladimir, and his descendants. However, this branch of the Royal Family were on very bad terms with the Royal Couple, and in particular with the Tsarina. Moreover, in 1917 Great Prince Kirill Vladimirovich deserted the defence of the Tsarina and her children, tied a red ribbon to his car and joined the revolution in the Tauris Palace in Petrograd. So a great deal depended on the birth of a male heir to the Tsar and Tsarina.

So the good news that Blessed Pasha of Sarov gave to the Royal Couple in August, 1903, was of extreme significance. Getting up from her bed with a piece of red material in her hands, she said: "This is for some little trousers for your son, and when he is born, you will believe what I have been telling you." A year later, in August, 1904, the Tsarevich Alexis was born...

With the succession apparently secured, the Tsar now attempted to solve the other great need of the country – the restoration of the patriarchate. Shortly after the birth of the Tsarevich, according to the Procurator Lukyanov, he went to the metropolitan of St. Petersburg and asked for his blessing that he abdicate from the throne and become a monk. But the metropolitan refused to bless this. According to another version of this story, in 1906, during the Church's pre-conciliar assembly, he asked the Synod whether they had a candidate for the patriarchate. When they said no, he offered himself as a candidate. The bishops were shocked and refused his offer. The Tsar, being a humble man, never brought this subject up again.

But soon they noticed that Alexis was a haemophiliac... This cast the succession again into doubt. For how could a person with such a serious, incurable illness be an effective ruler, even if he lived a full natural span of years (which was unlikely)?

It also imposed an enormous physical and psychological burden on his parents. The child had to be watched constantly in case he fell and incurred the painful internal bleeding that was characteristic of the disease. Moreover, his condition had to remain a state secret in case the knowledge of it among the people would become yet another excuse for attempts to overthrow the monarchy and the dynasty.

The Tsar maintained extraordinary emotional self-control in keeping up the appearance that everything was well – as his wife wrote to him, “you will always keep a cheery face and carry all hidden inside.” But she had greater difficulty in maintaining appearances, fell ill herself and frequently had to withdraw from public life for long periods. This only increased her unpopularity. Moreover, she had the added burden of feeling guilty for her son’s condition; for the haemophiliac gene had been passed down from the female members of the English side of her family, from Queen Victoria, her grandmother, her mother and herself. As the Grand Duchess Olga, the Tsar’s sister, commented, “the birth of a son, which should have been the happiest event in the lives of Nicky and Alicky, became their heaviest cross.”

During his reign the Tsar sought the advice of Blessed Pasha on all serious questions. He used to send the Great Princes to her, and according to her cell-attendant, Eudocia Ivanovna, one would no sooner depart than another arrived. After the death of Blessed Pasha's cell-attendant, Matushka Seraphima (Bulgakova), they would put all their questions to her through Eudocia Ivanovna, who relates that she once said:

"Your Majesty, come down from the throne yourself!"

Not long before her death in August, 1915, Blessed Pasha was continually making prostrations to the ground in front of the portrait of the Tsar. When she was worn out, her cell-attendants lifted her up.

"Mamashenka, why are you praying to the Tsar?"

"Stupid, he will be higher than all the tsars."

There were two portraits of the Tsar: one of him with the Tsaritsa and the other of him alone. But she kept prostrating to the one of him alone. Again she said about him:

"I don't know, a monk saint, perhaps a martyr!"

The tragedy of Alexis' haemophilia was followed by a succession of other tragedies, even a small number of which would have broken a lesser man. But for the Tsar they only served to further refine the nobility of his soul. First there was the disastrous war with Japan of 1904-05 during which the Russian fleet was destroyed and many thousands of soldiers killed.

Although the Russo-Japanese war was a bloody failure, the Tsar refused to allow the official record to whitewash anything. He said: "The work must be based exclusively on the bare facts... We have no need to keep silence because more blood has been shed than was necessary.... Heroism is worthy to be noted on an equal footing with failures. It is, without exception, necessary to aim at recording the historic truth inviolably."

The year 1905 was to be a "rehearsal" for the bloody events that took place twelve years later. On January 6, 1905, at the feast of the Blessing of the Water at the Winter Palace, during the salute of the guns of the Peter and Paul fortress, one of the guns was loaded with grape-shot, and the grape-shot struck the windows of the palace. Part fell near the procession where the clergy and the emperor's and empress's suite was. The calmness of the emperor's reaction was so striking that it drew the attention of the members of his suite. He didn't move a hair and only asked:

"Who commanded the battery?"

And when they gave the name, he said with evident sympathy:

"Ach, poor (so-and-so), how sorry I am for him!"

They asked the emperor what effect this incident had had on him. He replied

"I fear nothing until 1918..."

A few days later, while the Tsar was out of St. Petersburg, a peaceful political demonstration led by the revolutionary priest Gapon was fired upon by troops in the city and hundreds were killed. "Bloody Sunday" was blamed on the Tsar. Encouraged by Lenin and Trotsky, a campaign of disorders was begun all over the Empire; the 1905 revolution had begun. The revolutionaries, led by Lenin and Trotsky, instigated mutinies, strikes, riots and assassinations. Many high government officials were murdered in the streets, among whom, in February, 1905 was Nicholas' uncle, the **Grand Duke Sergius**, husband of the Empress' sister, Grand Princess Elizabeth. The house of the Prime Minister, **Peter Arkadievich Stolypin**, was blown up and many in his family were injured.

Unfortunately, many in all classes of society supported the revolutionaries, fulfilling in themselves the words of St. Paul concerning the men of the last times: "... lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, highminded..." (II Timothy 3.2-4).

The great prophet and wonderworker St. John of Kronstadt repeatedly exhorted his countrymen to repent and support the God-anointed ruler or face a terrible disaster. In 1905 he said: "We have a Tsar of righteous and pious life. God has sent a heavy cross of sufferings to him as to His chosen one and beloved child, as the seer of the destinies of God said: 'Whom I love, those I reproach and punish' (Revelation 3.19). If there is no repentance in the Russian people, the end of the world is near. God will remove from it the pious Tsar and send a whip in the person of impure, cruel, self-called rulers, who will drench the whole land in blood and tears."

On one occasion, the emperor was talking about the sufferings that lay ahead of him with his prime minister, Stolypin. "It was not for nothing," he said, "that I was born on the day of Job the Much-Suffering." And on another occasion he said: "I have more than a presentiment that I am destined for terrible trials, and that I shall not be rewarded for them on this earth... Nothing that I have undertaken succeeds for me; I have no successes. Man's will is so weak... How many times have I applied to myself the words of the holy Job, 'For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me.'"

Once, having prayed a little before an important decision, the emperor said to Stolypin: "Perhaps an atoning sacrifice is necessary for the salvation of Russia. I shall be that sacrifice. May the will of God be done!"

Stolypin later recalled: "He made this triumphant declaration to me in the simplest, calmest and most even voice. There was a strange mixture in his voice, and especially in his look, of decisiveness and meekness, at the same time unshakeable and passive, unclear and well-defined; as if he was expressing, not his own will, but was rather bowing to some external power - the majesty of Providence."

After the disturbances of 1905-06, Russia entered into a period of great prosperity. The Tsar had been forced to grant some liberal freedoms and a parliament (Duma), which the enemies promptly used against him. Nevertheless, with the wise and dynamic assistance of Stolypin, the Tsar led the nation through a time of such growth - agricultural, economic, educational and industrial - that had the First World War not occurred, Russia would have undoubtedly become the leading nation of the world.

But the Tsar never pursued industrial growth at the expense of his people. In 1908 he was presented with a huge plan for industrialisation which demanded far more money than was available. The Tsar replied: "Peter I had little money and so he used forced labour and this cost him the lives of a million of his subjects... The realisation of this project would cost between 10 and 15 millions of the premature deaths of my subjects... I cannot in conscience sacrifice millions of my subjects, and therefore we must endure (without industrialisation)."

When he was advised that the success of future wars depended upon industrialisation, he replied: "We will hope in God. If the war is short, we will win, but if it is long, then such is our fate."

Again, the head of the police promised the Tsar that there would be no revolution in Russia for a hundred years if he would permit 50,000 executions. The Tsar quickly refused this terrible proposal. After the revolution, however, the Bolsheviks thought nothing of butchering many millions of people for acts of "civil disobedience".

The Tsar tried to heal the revolutionary illness with mercy and forgiveness. One student was sentenced to death, but on the eve of the execution, his fiancée petitioned the Tsar for a commutation of his sentence. The Tsar was reached by having his personal attendant call him from his bedroom. He received the petition and sent off a telegram commuting the sentence. He praised the attendant for his daring and even had the student sent to the Crimea for treatment of his tuberculosis.

The Tsar was always careful not to be vindictive, saying: "Irritation solves nothing, and besides, a sharp word from me would sound more offensive than from anyone else."

In 1911, during the performance of Glinka's opera, *A Life for the Tsar*, in Kiev, at which the Tsar was also present, Stolypin was assassinated. Before he fell to the ground, he turned to his sovereign in the balcony and, blessing him with the sign of the Cross, said: "May God save him!" The death of Stolypin was a huge blow to the state – never again would the Tsar find such a loyal, wise and courageous Prime Minister...

In 1913 the Royal Family travelled extensively through Russia to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the establishment of the Romanov dynasty. In 1613 the Russian people had not only raised Michael Romanov to the throne: they had also called down a fearful anathema on any who should be unfaithful to the Romanov dynasty. The execution of the fearful anathema was close to fulfilment...

N.V. Khvostova recounts the following incident that took place in 1914, before the War: "The Imperial Family was spending the summer in Livadia. The Empress used to like very much to take walks by herself; and for this reason she would drive out of Livadia in an open carriage; after going a few miles she would get out of the carriage and walk on foot in the company of one of her ladies in waiting. Always modestly dressed – in a plain summer dress, sandals and without a fancy hat – she would sometimes go down to Yalta, drop by some church in order to pray unnoticed by others. This she also did on the day about which I am now going to recount. The Empress stopped by the Autsky Church, prayed for a while and put some candles by the holy icons. In the church there stood a group of very poorly dressed people who had come to baptize a child. The priest had already put on his vestments, but the people evidently were awaiting someone and thus he did not begin the service. The Empress had already intended to leave when the priest approached her and asked her to take the place of the terribly late godmother. The Empress kindly agreed, and taking the child in her arms she stood together with the child's father, a poor shoemaker. To the question directed to the Empress concerning how she would like the little girl to be called, she answered simply: "Alexandra". And then, in the course of the service she performed everything that is required of sponsors, i.e. together with the shoemaker she walked around the font three times, holding the child

in her arms, in accord with the Church typicon. After the baptismal ceremony, the Empress jotted down simply in the metrical book of the Autsky church: "Alexandra Romanova". In parting, she shook the hand of everyone who had come for the christening, and having asked the address of her goddaughter, she set out on foot. The next day, an imperial coach drove up to the poor house of the shoemaker, the father of the newly-baptized, which was on the outskirts of Yalta, and the lady-in-waiting who had accompanied the Empress the day before brought Shurochka (little Alexandra) an entire trousseau and for her parents a gift of 500 rubles from the Most-august godmother. Up to the Revolution the Empress, no matter where she was living, not only remembered her god-daughter, but also took care for her and for all her many brothers and sisters, the children of the poor shoemaker. Of course, when the Revolution broke out, one can surmise that Shurochka – the Imperial goddaughter – as everyone called her, and her whole family had to suffer much on account of her father's spiritual relationship to the Russian Empress. This is, of course, far from being the only incident told me by the eyewitness of it, my sister-in-law, who was that lady-in-waiting who had the good fortune of accompanying the Empress and being present with her at the baptism of the shoemaker's child. The Empress Alexandra Feodorovna was the incarnation of modesty and of feminine angelic goodness, and her good deeds she strove to do unnoticed by others."

The First World War

On August 1, 1914, the feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Russia was forced to declare war on Germany and Austria. As Great Princess Elizabeth testified, the peace-loving Tsar did not want this war, but aggression against Orthodox Serbia by the Germanic nations left him no other honourable choice.

At the outbreak of the war, the Liturgy was celebrated in the Winter Palace. The French Ambassador observed that "Nicholas II prayed with a holy fervour which gave his pale face a movingly mystical expression". The tsar's devotion to prayer was commented on by many; his private car included a "veritable chapel", and he never missed a service while in army headquarters.

When the war broke out, the Tsar ordered that all the money he had deposited in Britain be returned to Russia. The British did not want to comply. The Tsar then called a conference of bankers and merchants of the highest rank. He put 92 million roubles on the table and asked them voluntarily "to give money for the military victory of which the Russian people will be proud." The merchants and bankers refused to give any money. But the Tsar expended the whole of his fortune on the war effort.

As soon as the war broke out, the Tsarina and the four daughters became nurses; and hospitals were opened at Tsarskoye Selo, near the family's residence, where wounded soldiers were brought. They worked long hours, diligently and tirelessly following the commandment of Christ to visit the sick.

Anna Vyrubova, the Tsarina's closest friend, wrote that she was a "born nurse", who "from her earliest accession took an interest in hospitals, in nursing, quite foreign to native Russian ideas. She not only visited the sick herself, in hospitals, in homes, but she enormously increased the efficiency of the hospital system in Russia. Out of her own private funds the Empress founded and supported two excellent schools for training nurses, especially in the care of children.": "I have personally seen the Empress of Russia in the operating room, assisting in the most difficult operations, taking from the hands of the busy surgeon amputated legs and arms, removing bloody and even vermin-ridden field dressings."

The Empress herself wrote to the Emperor: "This morning we were present (I helped as always giving the instruments and Olga threaded needles) at our first big amputation (whole arm was cut off). Then we all had dressings (in our small hospital), very serious ones in the big hospital. I had wretched fellows with awful wounds... scarcely a 'man' any more, so shot to pieces, perhaps it must be cut off as it's so black, but [we] hope to save it - terrible to look at, I washed and cleaned and painted with iodine and smeared with Vaseline, and bandaged all up - it went quite well - and I feel happier to do the things gently myself under the guidance of a d.[octor]. I did three such... One's heart bleeds for them, I won't describe any more details as it's so sad, but being a wife and mother I feel for them quite particularly..."

There was a young soldier, still a boy, of whom she wrote that he "kept begging me" and was "gradually getting worse". When he died, the Tsarina was overcome with grief: "I came home with my tears... Never did he complain, never asked for anything, sweetness itself - all loved him and that shining smile... Another brave soul left this world..."

At first the war went well, and the country was united heart, soul and body in patriotic fervour behind their Tsar. But soon, due to poor communications, mismanagement and subversive treachery, problems arose in supplying the armed forces with ammunition and food. The army began to suffer defeats, and many men were killed. It was at this crucial time that the Bolsheviks, fuelled by German money, went to work spreading discord and defeatism among the troops and at home.

In 1915, tens of thousands of Serbian troops, fleeing from the Germans, began to die during a forced march to the Albanian coast. The western allies looked upon them with indifference from their ships, moored in the Adriatic Sea off Albania. The Tsar informed his allies by telegram that they must immediately evacuate the Serbs, otherwise he would consider the fall of the Serbs as an act of the greatest immorality and he would withdraw from the Alliance. This telegram brought prompt action, and dozens of Italian, French and English ships set about evacuating the dying army to Corfu. But western propagandists could not forgive the Tsar for his intercession and rumours that he wanted a separate peace began to seep out.

Once, during manoeuvres, the Tsar and his suite were brought breakfast. However, when he discovered that nothing had been prepared for the soldiers who were holding his horses, he would not eat until all the soldiers had received their rations.

In 1915, the following event described by Count Sheremetev took place when the Tsar and his family arrived in Sebastopol: "His Majesty, who loved to make long drives in the car in the environs of Sebastopol after breakfast, ... unexpectedly set off with the Empress to the monastery of St. George, where he had been for short periods in earlier years, but where nobody expected him this time. The abbot and brotherhood were very surprised and delighted by the visit of their Majesties...

"We went into the church, and a moleben began. The harmonious voices of the monks immediately changed in mood: it was as if we had come into a quiet bay after a storm. Everything was so prayerful, penetrating and quiet... Suddenly beyond the doors of the church, which were very small, there was an unusual sound, loud voices and a strange turmoil - in a word, something that did not correspond to the seriousness of the moment or the usual monastic order. His Majesty turned his head in surprise, knitted his brows in displeasure and sent to find out what had happened and from where this incomprehensible disturbance and whispering to each other was coming from. I went out of the church and learned the following from the monks who were standing there: in the rocks of the cliffs to the right and left there lived two schema-monks whom none of the monks had ever seen, and who were known to be alive only from the fact that the food which was placed for them on the narrow path in the rocks would be taken by some invisible hand by morning...

"And then an improbable event took place which shook all the monks of the monastery: two elders in the clothing of schema-monks were quietly climbing the steep steps that led upwards from the direction of the sea. They could have known nothing about the arrival of his Majesty, for neither the abbot nor the brothers themselves, nobody knew about the visit of his Majesty, which had been decided on quite suddenly, at the last minute. That was what caused the disturbance among the brotherhood. I told his Majesty about this and saw that this event made an impression on him, but he said nothing and the moleben continued.

"When the moleben had come to an end, his Majesty and the Empress kissed the Cross, then chatted for a while with the abbot and came out of the church onto the square... There, at the point where the wooden staircase ended, stood the two old elders. One had a long white beard, while the other had a short beard. When his Majesty came up to them, they both silently bowed to the earth before him. His Majesty was clearly embarrassed, but he said nothing and slowly bowed to them.

"... Now, after all that has happened, I wonder: did the schema-monks not foresee with their noetic eyes the destinies of Russia and the Royal Family, and did they not bow down to the feet of his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas II as to the great sufferer of the Russian land?"

In August, 1915, Igumen Seraphim (Putyatin) visited Blessed Pasha of Sarov. "In my presence the clairvoyant kissed the portraits of the Tsar and his family several times. She placed them together with the icons and prayed to them as to holy martyrs. Then she wept bitterly. I understood these allegorical acts only when there took place the great sorrows experienced by the Tsar and his Family and linked with the war; for although they were not torn by grenades or wounded by lead bullets, their loving hearts were torn by the unprecedented sorrows and flowed with blood. They were truly bloodless martyrs. In the same way the Mother of God was not wounded by weapons of torture, but at the sight of the suffering of her Divine Son, as Righteous Simeon said, a sword pierced her heart. Then the eldress took little icons of the Mother of God of Loving Tenderness, in front of which St. Seraphim died, and blessed them from a distance for his Majesty and his Family. Then she gave them to me and asked me to send them to them. She blessed icons for his Majesty, her Majesty, the Tsarevich, the Great Princesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna and A.A. Vyrubova. I asked her to bless a little icon for Great Prince Nicholas Nikolayevich. She blessed one, but not of the Mother of God of Loving Tenderness, but of St. Seraphim. She blessed icons for nobody else, although I even asked her to bless some for some people. But my requests had no influence on her, for she acted independently..."

The Tsar as Commander-in-Chief

In August, 1915, the Tsar took control of the army as Supreme Commander. Almost everyone was appalled at the decision. But "God's will be done," wrote the Tsar to the Tsaritsa after arriving at headquarters. "I feel so calm" – like the feeling, he said, "after Holy Communion". And it turned out to be the right decision...

"In the autumn," writes Robert Massie, "the Tsar brought his son, the eleven-year-old Tsarevich, to live with him at Army Headquarters. It was a startling move, not simply because of the boy's age but also because of his haemophilia. Yet, Nicholas did not make his decision impetuously..."

"The Russian army, battered and retreating after a summer of terrible losses, badly needed a lift in morale. Nicholas himself made constant appearances, and his presence, embodying the cause of Holy Russia, raised tremendous enthusiasm among the men who saw him. It was his hope that the appearance of the Heir at his side, symbolizing the future, would further bolster their drooping spirits. It was a reasonable hope, and, in fact, wherever Alexis appeared he became a center of great excitement..."

In August, 1915, 33 delegates from various left socialist parties met in Zimmerwald in Switzerland. By this time the patriotic surge that had made Lenin so isolated the year before had receded and his defeatism was becoming popular again. And so his call for immediate peace and the turning of the imperialist war into a civil one was passed, and strengthened revolutionary sentiment inside Russia.

At the same time, taking advantage of the Tsar's absence, the liberals formed a "progressive bloc" constituting a majority in the Duma, which claimed that in order to bring the war to a successful conclusion, the authorities had to be brought into line with the demands of "society". By "society" they meant the social organizations that had come into existence during the war - the Zemstvo Union, the Union of Cities and the Military-Industrial Committee. The last was led by A.I. Guchkov, an Octobrist and therefore supposedly a rightist, but a man who hated the Tsar and wanted to introduce a constitutional monarchy. The progressive bloc also put forward several political demands: a broad political amnesty and the return of all political exiles: Polish autonomy; reconciliation with Finland; the removal of repressive measures against the Ukrainians and the removal of restrictions on the Jews; equal rights for the peasants; the reform of zemstvo and city self-administration, etc. All these were questions that the Tsar considered "important, state matters, but not vital for the present moment". He wanted all attention to be concentrated for the moment on winning the war.

Paradoxically, during the war parliaments in the West European countries had less influence on their governments as all major decisions were taken in small war cabinets, whereas in Autocratic Russia the parliamentarians demanded - and got - more and more of a voice. The progressive bloc led by Guchkov now demanded "a ministry of trust" and "a government endowed with the country's trust". Essentially, it was an attempt to seize power from the autocrat...

However, the Tsar decisively rejected the demands of the progressive bloc. He ordered the Prime Minister to suspend the Duma and sacked the ministers who supported the bloc. The liberals continued their agitation, but gradually the mood in the country turned against them...

Things were getting better at the front. Thanks to organizational changes introduced by the Tsar, the crisis in supplies that had contributed so significantly to the defeats of 1915 began to be overcome. Under the Tsar's command, the fortunes of the Russian armies revived, and in the autumn of 1915 the retreat was halted. As Hindenburg, the German commander, wrote: "For our GHQ the end of 1915 was no occasion for the triumphal fanfare we had anticipated. The final outcome of the year's fighting was disappointing. The Russian bear had escaped from the net in which we had hope to entrap him, bleeding profusely, but far from mortally wounded, and had slipped away after dealing us the most terrible blows."

In 1916, in order to relieve the Italians and save Venice, the Brusilov offensive was launched against the Austrians in Galicia. "The consequences of this victorious operation," writes Goulévitch, "were at once manifest on the other theatres of war. To relieve the Austrians in Galicia the German High Command took over the direction of both armies and placed them under the sole control of Hindenburg. The offensive in Lombardy was at once abandoned and seven Austrian divisions withdrawn to face the Russians. In addition, eighteen German divisions were brought from the West, where the French and British were strongly attacking on the Somme. Further reinforcements of four divisions were drafted from the interior as well as three divisions from Salonica and two Turkish divisions, ill as the latter could be spared. Lastly, Romania threw in her lot with the Allies..."

"Few episodes of the Great War," writes Sir Winston Churchill, "are more impressive than the resuscitation, re-equipment and renewed giant effort of Russia in 1916. It was the last glorious exertion of the Czar and the Russian people for victory before both were to sink into the abyss of ruin and horror. By the summer of 1916 Russia, which eighteen months before had been almost disarmed, which during 1915 had sustained an unbroken series of frightful defeats, had actually managed, by her own efforts and the resources of her allies, to place in the field - organized, armed and equipped - sixty Army Corps in place of the thirty-five with which she had begun the war. The Trans-Siberian railway had been doubled over a distance of 6,000 kilometres, as far east as Lake Baikal. A new railway 1,400 kilometres long, built through the depth of winter at the cost of unnumbered lives, linked Petrograd with the perennially ice-free waters of the Murman coast. And by both these channels munitions from the rising factories of Britain, France and Japan, or procured by British credit from the United States, were pouring into Russia in broadening streams. The domestic production of every form of war material had simultaneously been multiplied many fold.

"The mighty limbs of the giant were armed, the conceptions of his brain were clear, his heart was still true, but the nerves which could transform resolve and design into action were but partially developed or non-existent [he is referring to the enemy within, the Duma and the anti-monarchists]. This defect, irremediable at the time, fatal in its results, in no way detracts from the merit or the marvel of the Russian achievement, which will forever stand as the supreme monument and memorial of the Empire founded by Peter the Great."

The Germans were well aware of Russian strength. In his *Memoirs* Hindenburg writes that "the only solution to relieve a desperate state of affairs" was "a policy of defence on all fronts, in the absence of some unforeseen and untoward event."

That "untoward event" came for the Germans in the form of the Russian revolution...

Abdication

Once, in December, 1916, the Emperor and Empress went for the day with two of the Grand-Duchesses to Novgorod, where they visited some hospitals and monasteries and attended the Liturgy in the cathedral of Saint Sophia. Before leaving, the Empress visited the Yuriev and Desyatina monasteries. In the latter there lived the eldress Maria Mikhailovna, who was according to different accounts 107 or 116 years old and who for many years had been lying on an iron bed in iron chains.

According to the Empress's own account in a letter to the Tsar: "She blessed and kissed us. She sends you an apple (perhaps you'll eat it). She said that the war will soon end - 'tell him that we've had enough.' To me she said: 'As for you, beauty - a heavy cross - don't fear.' (She repeated this several times.) 'Because you came to us, two churches will be built in Russia (she repeated this twice) - don't forget us, come again.'"

According to another account, when the Empress came in, the eldress stretched out her withered hands to her and said: "Here comes the martyr - the Tsaritsa Alexandra!"

She embraced her and blessed her. A few days later she died...

It has often been asserted that the Tsar was a weak-willed man who allowed himself to be ruled by his wife in matters of State, and, through her, by Rasputin. However, General A.I. Spiridonovich, having mentioned the empress' insistence on not trusting anybody but Rasputin, Vyrubova and Sablin, comments: "The Emperor understood all this well and very frequently acted against her advice, guided by his own experience. Sometimes his decisions coincided with the Empress' wishes. But to claim indiscriminately that the Emperor acted in state matters only according to the Empress' wishes is a great mistake. This means ignoring the facts as well as the character and principles of the Emperor. Emperor Nicholas was far from being as simple-minded and weak-willed as many thought."

As for Rasputin, the Tsar's sister Grand Duchess Olga writes: "Knowing Nicky as I did, I must insist that Rasputin had not a particle of influence over him. It was Nicky who eventually put a stop to Rasputin's visits to the palace. It was again Nicky who sent the man back to Siberia and that more than once. And some of Nicky's letters to Alicky are proof enough of what he really thought of Rasputin's advice..."

The enemies accused the Empress of pro-German sympathies because of her German blood. But her letters demonstrate beyond a shadow of doubt that she was completely devoted to Russia. In any case, as the French ambassador pointed out, "her education, her intellectual formation and her morals were entirely English."

In May, 1917, a Sarov archimandrite, who was sorrowing over the fate of the Royal Family, fell asleep during prayer and saw a vision of the Family together with St. Seraphim. And the saint told him not to sorrow, that God would not forsake his chosen ones, and that He had sent him, Seraphim, to comfort the Royal sufferers in the hour of their trial.

"Do you see the radiant light come from the faces of the Royal sufferers? This is a sign that they are under the special protection of God, as being righteous ones... Look at the face of the Empress and you will see that the light coming from it is brighter than the others. This is a sign that she will suffer more slander than any from the followers of the world's slanderer."

Conspiracies began to take shape among court officials, the Duma (Parliament), the generals and the nobility, even including relatives of the Tsar. This, at a time when unity was more than ever needed. The Duma deputies and army generals were putting pressure on the Tsar to abdicate. They kept reassuring him that only such an act would save Russia from bloodshed. He repeatedly asked: "Are you confident that my abdication will save Russia from bloodshed?" Again they reassured him that it would. But the Tsar knew the quality of the men who were advising him. On the very day of his abdication, while holding a bundle of telegrams from the Corps of Generals and even from his own uncle, demanding his resignation, he said: "What is left for me to do when everyone has betrayed me? As he sadly wrote in his diary on the same day: "All around me I see treason, cowardice and deceit."

The enemies had arranged that the Emperor should not meet his strongest supporter, the Empress. She understood this and wrote: "My heart is rent with suffering, since you are completely isolated. It is clear that they do not wish to allow us to see each other before you sign some sort of paper. If they compel you to make concessions, you are under no circumstances obliged to fulfil them, because they are obtained by unworthy means. We are all of good cheer, but pressured by circumstances. We only suffer for you and endure humiliation for you, holy sufferer..."

And after the abdication, the Empress wrote to the Emperor: "You will be crowned by God Himself on this earth, in your own country..."

And so, after an entire night spent in prayer, he laid aside the crown for what he felt was the good of his country. For, as he wrote: "I am ready to give up both throne and life if I should become a hindrance to the happiness of the homeland." And again: "There is no sacrifice that I would not make for the real benefit of Russia and for her salvation."

What has been called "the Abdication Manifesto" was in fact a telegram to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Alexeyev: "During the days of the great struggle against the external foe which, in the space of almost three years, has been striving to enslave our Native Land, it has pleased the Lord

God to send down upon Russia a new and difficult trial. The national disturbances that have begun within the country threaten to reflect disastrously upon the further conduct of the stubborn war. The fate of Russia, the honour of our heroic army, the well-being of the people, the entire future of our precious Fatherland demand that the war be carried out to a victorious conclusion, come what may. The cruel foe is exerting what remains of his strength, and not far distant is the hour when our valiant army with our glorious allies will be able to break the foe completely. In these decisive days in the life of Russia, We have considered it a duty of conscience to make it easy for Our people to bring about a tight-knit union and cohesion of all our national strength, in order that victory might be the more quickly attained, and, in agreement with the State Duma We have concluded that it would be a good thing to abdicate the Throne of the Russian State and to remove Supreme Power from Ourselves. Not desiring to be separated from Our beloved Son, We transfer Our legacy to Our Brother Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, and bless Him to ascend the Throne of the Russian State. We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect. In the name of our ardently beloved Native Land We call upon all faithful sons of the Fatherland to fulfil their sacred duty before it, by submitting to the Tsar during the difficult moment of universal trials, and, aiding Him, together with the representatives of the people, to lead the Russian State out upon the path of victory, well-being and glory. May the Lord God help Russia. Pskov. 2 March, 15.00 hours. 1917. Nicholas."

Metropolitan Anastasius writes that the emperor "was far removed from the idea of defending his authority only for the sake of the desire to rule. 'Are you sure that this will be to Russia's benefit?' he asked those who, supposedly in the name of the nation, presented him with the demand that he renounce his hereditary rights, and when he received a positive answer, he immediately laid aside the burden of royal government, fearing lest a single drop of Russian blood might fall on him in case a civil war arose."

Though he no longer had the responsibility of government, his first thoughts were for his nation, as he said to one of his officers,

"Just to think that, now I am Tsar no longer, they won't even let me fight for my country."

At the very moment of the Tsar's abdication - 3 o'clock on March 2, 1917 - a miracle took place that attested to God's love for Russia. In the village of Kolomenskoye, near Moscow, according to a revelation of the Mother of God, a search had been taking place for several days for her icon "The Reigning Mother of God". This icon had gone at the head of the Russian army in 1812 as it drove Napoleon out of Russia. But then this wonder-working icon had been forgotten and seemingly lost. No one knew about its fate. And only on March 1, 1917, did a pious widow by the name of Eudocia receive a revelation

to look for the icon in the village of Kolomenskoye. She looked through both of the churches of the village, but did not find the icon. Then she asked whether they had any old icons. They told her that there were some in the basement. She asked to go there, and she and a deacon went down into the basement.

"And truly, there were many old, dust-covered icons there. They began to wipe them one by one. But they still did not find the icon they were looking for. But when she came up to the icon "The Reigning Mother of God", Eudocia cried out:

"That's her!",

although it was still covered with a thick layer of dust which made it impossible to recognise. But when they cleaned it, it was true: the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God had been found. It depicted the Mother of God seated on a throne, her countenance both stern and sorrowful, an orb and sceptre in her hands and the Christ-child giving a blessing in her lap, with God the Father looking down from above. This icon soon thereafter miraculously renewed itself and the robe of the Mother of God was seen to be blood red, something which had been foretold also in the dream. Services were written to this icon and many people made the pilgrimage to venerate it. Healings, both of physical and mental infirmities began to take place before it.

However, the attention the event deserved was given to it neither by the provisional government, which was only to be expected, nor by the people, which was less expected, nor even by the Church herself... Then the servant of God Eudocia insisted that according to the revelation the icon had to be taken round the Kremlin seven times. But they managed to take it round only once during the time of Patriarch Tikhon, that is, after the October revolution, and to the sound of gunfire. Eudocia said:

"The Mother of God said: if they take it round the Kremlin seven times, the Bolsheviks will not be able to capture it!"

But this was not done. The Bolsheviks put the icon in a museum under the title "A counter-revolutionary icon of the Mother of God". Recently, it has been returned to Kolomenskoye.

After the abdication, on March 9, the Tsar arrived back in Tsarkoye Selo, where his family were all under house arrest like common criminals. All the children were ill. Alexis, Olga and Maria had measles and were bedridden with high fevers; Tatiana and Anastasia both had painful ear abscesses.

Again the image of Job overshadowed him - all had been taken from him except his dear ones and his indomitable faith. He did not curse his fate, accepting all as the will of God, and did not even murmur against his captors who treated him with disrespect and even contempt. What greater example

could the Russian people have asked for, or what nobler man could have led them as their king? Thus Christ's lament over the chosen people was fulfilled in Holy Russia as well: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23.37-38).

Not only the Tsar, but the whole of his blessed family, met their fate with truly Christian patience. Thus on March 13, 1917, the Tsarevich Alexis wrote to his sister Anastasia:

"I will pray fervently for you and Maria. With God everything will pass. Be patient and pray."

And shortly after the abdication the Empress said: "Our sufferings are nothing. Look at the sufferings of the Saviour, how He suffered for us. If this is necessary for Russia, we are ready to sacrifice our lives and everything." And again: "I love my country, with all its faults. It grows dearer and dearer to me... I feel old, oh, so old, but I am still the mother of this country, and I suffer its pains as my own child's pains, and I love it in spite of all its sins and horrors... Since [God] sent us such trials, evidently He thinks we are sufficiently prepared for it. It is a sort of examination... One can find in everything something good and useful - whatever sufferings we go through - let it be. He will give us strength and patience and will not leave us. He is merciful. It is only necessary to bow to His will without murmur and wait - there on the other side He is preparing for all who love Him indescribably joy."

From early childhood the Great Princesses had had the feeling of duty instilled in them. A defining trait of theirs was their flaming patriotism. They did not think of marrying a foreigner or non-Orthodox. They wanted only to serve Russia, to marry Russians and to have children that would serve Russia.

A. Volkov, who had been the Tsar's valet for a long time, remembered: "I cannot say much about the character of the Royal Family, because I am an unlearned man. But I shall say what I can. I shall say simply this about them: it was the most holy, most pure family..."

For five months the Royal Family lived under virtual house arrest in the Alexandrovsky palace in Tsarksoye Selo, where there were regular services. The celebrant, Fr. Athanasius Belyaev, wrote in his diary for Great Friday, March 30, 1917: "The service was pious and compunctionate... Their Majesties stood throughout the service... Before them were placed anvils on which lay Gospels, so that they were able to follow the reading. They all stood until the end of the service and left through the general hall for their rooms. One has to have been close and seen for oneself to understand and be convinced how fervently, how in accordance with Orthodoxy, the former Royal Family prayed to God, often on their knees..."

Imprisonment

On July 28 they learned that they were being sent, not to the Crimea, as they had hoped, but three or four days' journey away to the east. They were ordered to pack warm things and prepare for departure. During the preparations they celebrated the Tsarevich's birthday, on July 30, and gave him a book, Journey through the Urals. On the night of August 1 they were taken to the railway station, accompanied by 45 of those close to them, 330 soldiers and 6 officers. They were put in a carriage marked "Japanese Mission of the Red Cross".

On August 6 they arrived in Tobolsk on the ship "Rus", and were accommodated in a spacious house with a garden. Protopriest Vladimir Khlynov, superior of the Tobolsk cathedral, celebrated services for the Royal Family in the governor's house. Once, when he was imprisoned on Solovki, he witnessed that the Tsar had said to him:

"I can in no way forgive myself for having given up power. I never expected that power would fall to the Bolsheviks. I thought that I was giving up power to the representatives of the people..."

At first the Royal Family went to services in the cathedral. And they and all the people liked this. But once the cathedral protodeacon on the Tsar's namesday, at the end of the moleben, pronounced the "Many Years" to the Tsar with his full title. This annoyed the Tsar. After the service, on coming home, he said:

"Who needs this? I very well know that the people still love me and are faithful to me, but now there will be unpleasantnesses, and they won't let us into the cathedral again."

And so it turned out. But thanks to this, the protopriest was invited to the house to perform services, and in this way got to know the Family better. The princesses sang simply and harmoniously. They had good books in which they followed the services. The Tsar also assisted the priest during the services.

Once the Tsar sent Bishop Hermogen of Tobolsk a bow to the earth, asking him to forgive him that he had been forced to allow his removal from his see. He could not have done otherwise at the time, but he was glad to have the opportunity of asking the bishop's forgiveness now. The bishop was very touched, and sent a bow to the earth to the Tsar together with a prosphora and asked for his forgiveness.

The late Rev. G.V. Vaughan-James, Anglican chaplain of the Convent of St. Denys, Warminster, England related the following story. He was on a British ship that was sent to a port on the Black Sea for the purpose of rescuing the Tsar and his family and bringing them to England. The crew were very

excited by the mission. When they arrived at this port, Rev. Vaughan-James was told to leave the ship and get into a train without asking questions. The train travelled for some time and then stopped at a small station. A woman of striking beauty and wearing a sable coat entered his compartment. She told him that she was a lady-in-waiting of the Tsaritsa, and handed him an icon of St. Nicholas with the words:

"The Tsaritsa has asked me to give this to you. Take it back to England, and ask the English people to pray for the safety of her children."

The Rev. Vaughan-James was very surprised. The woman left the compartment, and the train returned to the port. After returning to the ship, the Rev. Vaughan-James was told that a telephone message had come from London, ordering the ship to return to England without the Tsar and his family. The rescue operation had been cancelled. No reason was given. On the way home all the crew were depressed, and while they were still at sea it was announced on the radio that the Tsar and his family had been killed.

The Rev. Vaughan-James did not know what to do with the icon, and gave it to the Admiralty, where, he said, it still hung in one of the rooms. However, a search recently undertaken at the Admiralty did not reveal the icon.

In the spring of 1918 a commissar arrived from Moscow and informed the Tsar that he was being taken away that night. The Tsar feared that he would be forced to sign the Brest-Litovsk treaty, but the commissar assured him that that was not the case. The Tsar insisted on allowing someone to accompany him, and the Tsaritsa suffered much, not knowing whether to follow her husband or to remain with her sick son. Finally, after much heartbreak, she decided to entrust her son to his tutor and to follow her spouse.

The parents and children had never been separated, but now they had to be, and this on the eve of Pascha, which they had always celebrated together. On April 13/26, the Royal Couple left Tobolsk and covered 285 versts by wagon before reaching the railhead. On April 17/30, the Tsar, the Tsaritsa and Grand Duchess Maria Nikolayevna with some members of the servants, arrived in Yekaterinburg and were imprisoned in the home of the engineer N.N. Ipatiev. On May 10, the remaining members of the family arrived.

In Yekaterinburg the Royal Family spent three hellish months of psychological torture - and yet they all retained their inward calm and state of prayer, so that not a small number of their tormentors were softened by these valiant Christian strugglers. As Pierre Gilliard, the French tutor to the Tsarevich Alexis recalled:

"The courage of the prisoners was sustained in a remarkable way by religion. They had kept that wonderful faith which in Tobolsk had been the admiration of their entourage and which had given them such strength, such serenity in suffering. They were already almost entirely detached from this

world. The Tsaritsa and Grand Duchesses could often be heard singing religious airs, which affected their guards in spite of themselves.

"Gradually these guards were humanised by contact with their prisoners. They were astonished at their simplicity, attracted by their gentleness, subdued by their serene dignity, and soon found themselves dominated by those whom they thought they held in their power. The drunken Avdiev found himself disarmed by such greatness of soul; he grew conscious of his own infamy. The early ferocity of these men was succeeded by profound piety."

When this would happen, the inhuman Bolsheviks would replace the guards who had been so touched with crueller and more animalistic ones.

Seldom being allowed to go to church, they nevertheless nourished their souls with home prayers and greatly rejoiced at every opportunity to receive the Divine sacraments. Three days before their martyrdom, in the very house in which they were imprisoned, there took place the last church service of their suffering lives. As the officiating priest, Fr. John Storozhev, related: "It appeared to me that the Emperor, and all his daughters, too, were very tired. During such a service it is customary to read a prayer for the deceased. For some reason, the Deacon began to sing it, and I joined him... As soon as we started to sing, we heard the Imperial Family behind us drop to their knees' (as is done during funeral services)... Thus they prepared themselves, without suspecting it, for their own death - in accepting the funeral viaticum. Contrary to their custom none of the family sang during the service, and upon leaving the house the clergymen expressed the opinion that they 'appeared different' - as if something had happened to them."

The Tsaritsa wrote: "St. Paul tells us here also that he rejoiced in his thorn. He did not at first. He cried to heaven to have it removed. But when his Master told him that he needed to keep it, that he needed it, that it had in it a blessing for him, he chafed no longer. Indeed, he made friends with it quickly, accepted it, and stopped complaining about it. That is the only right and sensible thing to do with any disagreeable, uncongenial, or painful thing we find we cannot have removed. It is God's will that it should be in our life for some good reason which He knows. We should get the victory over it by taking it to our heart, by receiving it as coming from Christ. No matter how it hurts us, if we accept it in this way it will leave benediction in our life. God sends some of our greatest blessings to us in our thorns, and it would be sad if we thrust them away and missed them. There are many who are so full of themselves that they have no room for Christ. If only they could come empty, empty of self, He would fill them with Himself, and then they would have untold power for good in the world. We may safely trust Him with the enriching of our lives. He knows when pain is needful, when loss is the only way to gain, when suffering is necessary to hold us at His feet. He gives us trouble in order to bless us in some way, and we shall always be losers when we chafe or reject our thorn."

Concerning her family, she used to say:

"We are one, and this, alas, is so rare today. We are tightly united together... a small, tightly knit family..."

Inseparable in life, they were now to remain inseparable in death.

After midnight on July 4/17, 1918, the entire family, with their doctor and two faithful servants, was brought to the basement of the house of their confinement under the pretext of moving them once again because "there's unrest in the city". There they were brutally and mercilessly murdered, the children as well as the adults, under the cover of darkness - for "men loved the darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3.19). The Tsar was shot as he stood forward to defend his family. Tsaritsa Alexandra was able to make the sign of the Cross before she, too, fell. The first bullets did not bring death to the youngest ones, and they were savagely clubbed, bayoneted and shot at point-blank range before being robbed of all their precious things.

Those killed were: the Tsar, the Tsaritsa, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, Alexis, the Tsar's physician **Eugene Botkin**, the Tsaritsa's chamber-maid **Anna S. Demidova**, the cook **Ivan Mikhailovich Kharitonov** and the servant **A.E. Trupp**, the sailor **Clement G. Nagorny**, who had looked after the Tsarevich since early childhood, and **Ivan D. Sednev**, the servant to the Grand Duchesses. **General Elias L. Tatishchev** and **Prince Basil Dolgorukov**, who had been refused permission to stay with the Royal Family at Yekaterinburg, were also shot in prison on July 10, 1918. The maid-of-honour, **Countess Anastasia V. Hendrikova**, the court teacher, **Catherine A. Schneider**, and the footman, **Volkov**, were taken to prison in Perm. On September 4 the Cheka came for them and the two women were taken out with a group of hostages and shot. Their bodies were discovered by the Whites the following May. Volkov by a miracle escaped and died in exile in Estonia in 1929. The kitchen boy **Leonid Sednev**, Ivan's nephew, was taken from the Ipatiev House the day before the shooting, but was arrested and shot by the NKVD in 1941 or 1942.

Eugene Sergeyevich Botkin was born on May 27, 1865, the son of an outstanding doctor. In 1889 he graduated from the Military-Medical Academy with distinction. In 1897 he became a lecturer in the Academy. He took part in the Russo-Japanese war and distinguished himself by his courage. In 1908 he was appointed a doctor to the Royal court. In May, 1917 he was placed under arrest together with the Royal Family and chose to go with them into exile, leaving his own family. The Tsar was deeply moved by his decision. He did not die immediately, but had to be shot again.

In a letter to a friend Botkin wrote: "My voluntary incarceration is limited in time to the same extent that my earthly existence is limited. In essence, I am

dead – dead for my children, for my friends, for my work... I did not hesitate to leave my children as orphans so as to fulfil my duty as a doctor to the end, just as Abraham did not hesitate, when God required it of him, to offer his only son in sacrifice. And I firmly believe that just as God saved Isaac then, He will now save my children and will Himself be to them a Father..."

Clement Grigoryevich Nagorny was born in Yaroslavl province, and was a sailor of the Guards crew that sailed on the Tsar's yacht "Standart". He looked after the Tsarevich Alexis. He voluntarily went with the Royal Family to Tobolsk and then accompanied the Royal Children to Yekaterinburg. On May 28, 1918 he was arrested together with the servant of the Great Princesses, **Ivan Sednev**, because they were disturbed by the behaviour of the guards and tried to save things belonging to the Royal Family from being stolen. They were both cast into prison in Yekaterinburg, where they were in the same cell as the former Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvov. On June 1 they were shot in the environs of Yekaterinburg.

On August 21, just before **Countess Hendrikova** was shot, she was asked if she had voluntarily followed the Romanovs to Tobolsk. She stated that she had. When asked if she would return and continue to serve them if she were set free, she said:

"Yes! Up to the last day of my life!"

On the night of July 4/17, Blessed Maria Ivanovna, the fool-for-Christ of Diveyevo, began to shout and scream:

"[They're killing] the princesses with bayonets! Cursed Jews!"

There is evidence that the murders were ritualistic. Thus strange cabbalistic symbols were found on the walls of the room where the crime took place which have been deciphered to mean: "Here, by order of the secret powers, the Tsar was offered as a sacrifice for the destruction of the state. Let all peoples be informed of this."

Again, on the wall of the death-chamber was found an inscription which fittingly sums up the deed from the point of view of the Jewish revolution. It was a quotation from the German Jewish poet Heine, slightly altered to bring out the word "tsar" and identifying the tsar with Belshazzar:

Belsatzar ward in selbiger Nacht On the same night Belshazzar
Von seinen knechten umgebracht. Was killed by his own slaves.

But the truth was quite the opposite. Belshazzar hated the people of God, and his removal opened the way for the rebuilding of the Temple of God in Zion by the Jewish Prince Zerubbabel. The killing of Tsar Nicholas, on the other hand, opened the way to the destruction of Orthodox Russia and its transformation into Babylon.

Thus ended the life of the Christ-like Tsar, as a sacrifice for the Orthodox Faith and for the Russian people, both of whom he so fervently loved and believed in.

Martyr-Great-Princess Olga Nikolayevna wrote from Tobolsk: "Father asks the following message to be given to all those who have remained faithful to him, and to those on whom they may have an influence, that they should not take revenge for him, since he has forgiven everyone and prays for everyone, that they should not take revenge for themselves, and should remember that the evil which is now in the world will be still stronger, but that it is not love that will conquer evil, but only love..."

And in the belongings of the same holy martyr were found the following verses by S. Bekhteyev:

*Now as we stand before the gates of death,
Breathe in the lips of us Thy servants
That more than human, supernatural strength
To meekly pray for those that hurt us.*

Posthumous Glory

In 1917 Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, who alone in the Church's hierarchy had refused to accept the Provisional Government because of his oath of allegiance to the Tsar, had the following revelation in a series of dreams: "I saw a field. The Saviour was walking along a path. I went after Him, crying,

"Lord, I am following you!"

"Finally we approached an immense arch adorned with stars. At the threshold of the arch the Saviour turned to me and said again:

"Follow me!"

And He went into a wondrous garden, and I remained at the threshold and awoke. Soon I fell asleep again and saw myself standing in the same arch, and with the Saviour stood Tsar Nicholas. The Saviour said to the Tsar:

"You see in My hands two cups: one which is bitter for your people and the other sweet for you."

"The Tsar fell to his knees and for a long time begged the Lord to allow him to drink the bitter cup together with his people. The Lord did not agree for a long time, but the Tsar begged importunately. Then the Saviour drew out of the bitter cup a large glowing coal and laid it in the palm of the Tsar's hand. The Tsar began to move the coal from hand to hand and at the same

time his body began to grow light, until it had become completely bright, like some radiant spirit. At this I again woke up. Falling asleep yet again, I saw an immense field covered with flowers. In the middle of the field stood the Tsar, surrounded by a multitude of people, and with his hands he was distributing manna to them. An invisible voice said at this moment:

"The Tsar has taken the guilt of the Russian people upon himself, and the Russian people is forgiven."

In the same year Elder Nectarius of Optina said: "Now his Majesty is not his own man, he is suffering such humiliation for his mistakes. 1918 will be still worse. His Majesty and all his family will be killed, tortured. One pious girl had a vision: Jesus Christ was sitting on a throne, while around Him were the twelve apostles, and terrible torments and groans resounded from the earth. And the Apostle Peter asked Christ:

"O Lord, when will these torments cease?"

"And Jesus Christ replied: 'I give them until 1922. If the people do not repent, do not come to their senses, then they will all perish in this way.'

"Then before the throne of God there stood our Tsar wearing the crown of a great-martyr. Yes, this tsar will be a great-martyr. Recently, he has redeemed his life, and if people do not turn to God, then not only Russia, but the whole of Europe will collapse..."

The sanctity of the Tsar has been revealed in a number of miracles.

Thus in 1947 Protopresbyter Michael Polsky recounted the following story in which the intercession of the martyred Royal Family saved about a company of Cossacks who had lost contact with their transport and army, and were surrounded by the Reds in the midst of a swamp. The priest Fr. Elijah summoned everyone to prayer, saying:

"Today is the day of the commemoration of the Tsar-martyr. His son, the young Tsarevich Alexis was the honoured ataman of the Cossack armies. Let us beseech them that they intercede before the Lord for the salvation of the Christ-loving Cossack army."

And Fr. Elijah served a moleben "to the Tsar-martyr, the Emperor of Russia". And the refrain during the moleben was: "Holy Martyrs of the Royal House, pray to God for us!" The whole company sang. At the end of the moleben, Fr. Elijah read the dismissal: "Through the prayers of the holy Tsar-martyr Nicholas, the Emperor of Russia, his Heir the young Tsarevich Alexis, ataman of the Christ-loving Cossack armies, the right-believing Tsaritsa-martyr Alexandra and her children the Tsarevna-martyrs, may He have mercy and save us, for He is good and loveth mankind."

To the objection that these holy martyrs had not yet been glorified, and miracles from them had not yet been revealed, Fr. Elijah replied: "Through their prayers we shall get out... They have been glorified... You yourselves have heard how the people has glorified them. The people of God... May the holy youth Tsarevich Alexis show us. Don't you see the miracle of the wrath of God on Russia for their innocent blood?... You will see revelations through the salvation of those who honour their holy memory... There is an indication for you in the lives of the saints. You will read that Christians built churches over the bodies of the holy martyrs without any glorification. They lit oil-lamps and prayed to them as to intercessors and petitioners..."

The company and transport got out of the encirclement in a miraculous manner.

They were walking up to their knees, even up to their waist in mud. Sometimes they sank in even up to their necks. The horses got stuck, but then jumped out and went on... They didn't remember how far they went or how tired they were... And they got out... 43 women, 14 children, 7 wounded, 11 old men and invalids, 1 priest and 22 Cossacks - 98 people and 31 horses in all. They came out on the other side of the swamp, on the corner of land which was occupied by the Cossacks who were holding back the encircling movement of the Reds, straight into the middle of their own people. None of the locals could believe that they had come through by that route. And the enemy had not heard the noise made by their passage. And in the morning the Red partisans could not find any trace of where they had got away. There had been people - and then there were none!

Again, the nun Barbara (Sukhanova) writes: "In the summer of 1923 a girl known to me by the name of Irina Meier received a letter from Petrograd from her friend - also a young girl of gentry family. I am amazed that this letter got through at that time. The girl from suffering Russia openly wrote that with the help of God she had decided to choose the monastic path and was striving for it with all her heart.

"This pure soul described a recent dream she had had. She was walking in Petrograd when in front of her there rose up a new, beautiful, white church. She entered it. The house of God was amazingly beautiful. Everything in it was shining, gleaming and iridescent. The girl was struck by its majesty and asked:

"In whose honour is this church built?"

"And an invisible person replied: 'In the name of the slaughtered Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich.'"

Again, Monk Zachariah writes: "The Serbian people loved the Russian Tsar with all their heart. On March 30, 1930, there was published in the Serbian newspapers a telegram stating that the Orthodox inhabitants of the city of

Leskovats in Serbia had appealed to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church with a request to raise the canonization of the late Russian Emperor Nicholas II, who was not only a most humane and pure-hearted ruler of the Russian people, but who also died with the glory of a martyr's death.

"Already in 1925 there had appeared in the Serbian press an account of what happened to an elderly Serbian lady who had lost two sons in the war and whose third son, who had disappeared without a trace, she considered also to have been killed. Once, after fervently praying for all who had been killed in the war, the poor mother fell asleep and saw in a dream the Emperor Nicholas II, who told her that her son was alive and was in Russia, where he had fought together with his two dead brothers. 'You will not die' - said the Russian Tsar - 'until you see your son.' Soon after this dream, the old woman received news that her son was alive, and within a few months after this she joyously embraced him alive and well when he returned from Russia.

"On August 11, 1927, in the newspapers of Belgrade, there appeared a notice under the headline, 'Face of Emperor Nicholas II in the monastery of St. Naum on Lake Ochrid.' It read as follows: 'The Russian painter S.F. Kolesnikov was invited to paint the new church in the ancient Serbian monastery of St. Naum, being given complete creative freedom in adorning the interior dome and walls. While completing this, the artist thought of painting on the walls of the church the faces of fifteen saints, to be placed in fifteen ovals. Fourteen faces were painted immediately, but the place for the fifteenth long remained empty, since some kind of inexplicable feeling compelled Kolesnikov to wait for a while. Once at dusk he entered the church. Below, it was dark, and only the dome was cut through with the rays of the setting sun. As Kolesnikov himself related later, at this moment there was an enchanting play of light and shadows in the church, and all around seemed unearthly and singular. At this moment the artist saw that the empty oval which he left unfinished had become animated and from it, as from a frame, looked down the sorrowful face of Emperor Nicholas II. Struck by the miraculous apparition of the martyred Russian Tsar, the artist stood for a time as if rooted to the spot, seized by a kind of paralysis. Then, as he himself describes, under the influence of a prayerful impulse, he leaned the ladder against the oval, and without marking with charcoal the outline of the wondrous face, with brushes alone he made the layout. He could not sleep the whole night, and, hardly had the first daylight appeared than he went to the church and in the first morning rays of the sun was already sitting high on the ladder, working with such a fever as he had never known. As he himself writes: 'I painted without a photograph. In the past I several times saw the late Emperor close up, while giving him explanations at exhibitions. His image imprinted itself in my memory.'"

The following vision was seen in 1971 by a certain Basil, a spiritual son of Archbishop Leontius of Chile of blessed memory, who had reposed that same year, at the same time when the Church was discussing the glorification of the New Martyrs of Russia: "At the beginning of this dream I saw myself in a

huge temple not built by human hands. On the right kliros for quite a distance was a huge crowd of people dressed in white; I could not make out their faces. Around me there was a quiet, heartrending singing, although I couldn't see anyone there. Then both sides of the altar swung open and from them began to come out holy hierarchs and monks, fully vested in gentle blue vestments: among them I could recognise only St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia. From the door near me, among the passing bishops, Vladyka Leontius passed by and stopped near me, saying:

"You, brother Basil, were called and you did come. You know we have a great celebration here today!"

"What kind of celebration, Vladyka?" I asked.

"And he continued: 'The heavenly glorification of the Tsar-Martyr!'"

"And having bowed to me slightly, he continued on his way to the kathedra (in the centre of the church). Finally, the holy doors of the altar opened, and out of them came the Tsar-Martyr, looking just as he appears on his official portraits during the first years of his reign - that is, very young. He was dressed in the Tsar's royal mantle, as during his coronation, and he wore the emperor's crown on his head. In his hands he held a large cross, and on his pale face I noticed a slight wound, either from a bullet or some blow. He passed by me at an even pace, descended the step of the ambo, and went into the centre of the church. As he neared the kathedra, the singing increased in volume, and when his foot touched the step of the kathedra, it became so loud that it seemed that a whole world of people had gathered and were singing with one breath."

Again, in 1988, Claude Lopez, an Orthodox Christian from Switzerland, wrote that one day he, having great veneration for the New Martyrs, had placed a commemorative coin of the Tsar in his icon corner, along with an icon of the Royal Martyr with a halo. One day he noticed moisture on the coin and discovered that it was exuding a quantity of fragrant myrrh, which had flowed into the box in which it was kept. This obvious miracle continued until October of 1988, and resumed briefly during the autumn of 1989.

Finally, there is this testimony of a man from Spain: "I am 48 years old. I am Spanish-born from Barcelona. My name is Mateo Gratacos Vendrell. When the things I am going to mention happened, I was not a member of the Orthodox Church. Now, through God's mercy, I've become a member (August, 1989). During four years I had had a pain in the loins and in the belly on the right side. I consulted various doctors and went through the usual routine (x-rays, ecography, etc., and analyses). All the results were negative. It was deduced that my pain was psychosomatic (psychological). To calm me down, I was treated through acupuncture and laser, but in vain; my pain was still there. I was desperate. One night I was experiencing again acute pain, I started reading. To mark my page I had put a portrait of Tsar Nicholas

(his icon, in fact). I looked at the icon and he (the Tsar) looked at me. I started asking him to pray to Christ our Lord; for having suffered during the last days of his life, he would have compassion. I accepted the pain that I had but I could not accept the fact that I was 'mad', because I knew that my pains were real. On the next day, after that very night, as I was on my way to a job, a client who is also a friend of mind asked how I was and upon knowing that I was still suffering, he asked whether I had consulted Dr. P. I answered no. He told me to go and see him on his behalf. I went there on the next day. When he examined me he said that there was nothing psychosomatic; I had an invisible (on the radio) kidney stone. I underwent a 'natural treatment' and the stone went out naturally after one month. During this period of time I prayed to the Lord to remember me because of my love for the Tsar. I promised to Tsar Nicholas that I would distribute and make known his icon as a 'moleben' for the mercy he showed to the poor man who suffered for four years and saw his problem solved in less than a month through his intercession. Thank you, Saint Nicholas II, I am very thankful."

2. HOLY MARTYRS GREAT PRINCE SERGIUS AND GREAT PRINCESS ELIZABETH

and those with them

Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich was born in 1857, the son of Tsar Alexander II and the brother of Tsar Alexander III. He was a very religious and highly cultured man who loved reading and music. Shy by nature, he made some of those around him think he was cold. But he was not. Without advertising the fact, he helped very many people. Ludmila Koehler writes: "All available evidence shows that Grand Duke Sergius was an outstanding personality and that he was highly educated, strict and demanding, but also kind-hearted. Naturally he was disliked by liberals and especially by the revolutionaries for his firm convictions; he was therefore eliminated by them, like so many other outstanding conservatives."

The Great Prince's first educators were Anna Tiutcheva, the daughter of the great Russian poet, who taught him to love Holy Rus' and its holy sites, Naval Captain Demetrius Arseniev, the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostsev, the economist Vladimir Petrovich Bezobrazov, the historian Constantine Nikolayevich Bestuzhev-Ryumin and the talented archaeologist Alexis Sergeyevevich Uvarov. The Great Prince's favourite subject, as of his beloved nephew, Tsar Nicholas II, was history.

In 1882 Great Prince Sergius founded the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, becoming its first president, and after his death his wife inherited from him the chairmanship of the society.

Great Princess Elizabeth was born on October 20 / November 1, 1864, the second child of Prince Ludwig (Louis) and Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt, being the granddaughter (on her mother's side) of Queen Victoria of England. She was named after one of her ancestors, Elizabeth of Turingen, whose life exerted a great influence on her. She was brought up in conditions of simplicity and modesty. The elder daughters themselves cleaned their rooms and stoked up the fire. The parents of Elizabeth distributed a large part of their income in charity, and every Saturday the children would go with bouquets of flowers to the hospital. They were instilled with love for people, especially suffering people, as the foundation of life. Later Elizabeth would say: "They taught me everything at home". Elizabeth's mother died when she was only fourteen, but her nobility of heart transformed this suffering into a lifelong compassion for the bereaved.

From childhood Elizabeth loved nature and especially flowers. She had an artistic gift, and throughout her life spent a lot of time drawing. She also loved classical music.

People of various characters and positions in life were very similar in their estimates of Elizabeth: "Exceptional beauty, a remarkable mind, a subtle sense

of humour, angelic patience, nobility of heart", was one such estimate. Metropolitan Anastasy, second president of the Synod of the Russian Church in Exile, wrote of her: "She was a rare combination of exalted Christian spirit, moral nobility, enlightened mind, gentle heart and refined taste. She possessed an extremely delicate and multi-faceted spiritual composition and her outward appearance reflected the beauty and greatness of her spirit."

In June, 1884, Elizabeth married Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich, having refused a whole series of other suitors, including the future German Emperor Wilhelm. The couple had no children of their own, but later adopted the two children of Great Prince Sergius' brother Paul. According to one source, Great Prince Sergius and his wife had both secretly wanted to remain virgins. Learning that they shared this secret desire, they decided to marry while living as brother and sister. However, authoritative sources do not confirm this story.

The couple were married in St. Petersburg, first according to the Orthodox rite, and then according to the Protestant rite.

Although Elizabeth remained Protestant for the time being, she studied Russian and tried hard to understand the culture and faith of her new homeland.

The couple's summers were spent in Great Prince Sergius' estate of Ilinskoye, near Moscow, and their winters in St. Petersburg. Later they built a winter residence in Usovo, but Ilyinskoye remained the favourite residence of the couple, and they were very popular with the peasants on the estate.

In 1887 the couple went to England to represent the emperor at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. In 1888 they went to Jerusalem for the consecration of the church of St. Mary Magdalene. There Elizabeth said: "How I would like to be buried here" - and she was. The trip to the Holy Land made a deep impression on her. She wrote to her family in Darmstadt: "You cannot imagine how joyful it is to be able to see all these holy places... where our Lord walked and lived."

Soon after this, the grand duchess converted to the Orthodox Church. Already in 1890 she wrote to the Tsarevich Nicholas that she had tried with all her strength to convince her sister Alexandra (the future spouse of the Tsarevich) that she would love the Orthodox faith, "to which I also am striving to be united, the genuine and true faith, the only faith which has remained undistorted down the centuries and has retained its original purity."

On January 1, 1891 she wrote to her father: "You must have noticed how profoundly I venerate the religion here since you were here last time, more than one and a half years ago. I have been constantly thinking and reading, and praying to God to show me the right path, and I have come to the

conclusion that it is only in this religion that I can find all the real and powerful faith in God that a person must have in order to be a good Christian. It would be a sin for me to stay as I am because I now belong formally and for the outside world to one church, while inwardly I pray and believe as does my husband. You cannot imagine how kind he has been: he never tried to force me in any way, presenting all this to my conscience alone. He knows what a serious step this is, and that one has to be completely convinced before deciding on it. I would have done it even earlier, only I was tormented by the thought that I would be causing you pain, and that many of those dear to me would not understand me. But don't *you* understand, my dear Papa? You know me so well. You must see that I have decided on this step only out of profound faith, and that I feel that I must stand before God with a pure and believing heart. How simple it would be to remain as I am now, but then how hypocritical, how false it would be, and how I would be lying to everyone, pretending in all external rites that I am a Protestant when my soul belongs completely to the religion here. I have thought and thought deeply about all this, having been in this country already for more than six years... I so strongly want to receive the Holy Mysteries at Pascha with my husband... Earthly happiness I have always had as a child in my homeland, as a wife - in my new homeland, but when I saw how deeply religious Serge was, I felt so far behind, and the better I got to know his Church, the more I felt that it brought me closer to God - it is difficult to describe such a thing... This may seem sudden, but I have thought about it already for such a long time, and now, finally, I cannot put it off. My conscience does not allow me to. I earnestly beseech you, when you have received these lines, forgive your daughter if she has caused you pain. But is not faith in God and the confession of faith one of the main consolations of this world? Perhaps you can telegraph me just one line, when you receive this letter. May the Lord bless you. This will be such a consolation for me, because I know that there will be many unpleasant moments, since nobody will understand this step. I ask only for a small affectionate letter."

Her father did not send her the telegram she wanted with the blessing, but he wrote a letter in which he said that her decision caused him pain and suffering and that he could not give his blessing. Then Elizabeth Fyodorovna showed courage and spiritual firmness and, in spite of her moral sufferings, she unhesitatingly decided to become Orthodox. In general, firmness was one of the main qualities of her character: on taking a decision, she went straight for the goal no matter what the obstacles. "My conscience," she wrote to her father, "does not allow me to continue in this spirit - it would be a sin; when I remained in my old faith I was lying all the time... It would be impossible for me to continue living as I lived before."

"Dear one," she wrote to her brother, "you call me unserious, and you write that the external splendour of the church has charmed me. You are mistaken. Nothing external has attracted me, and not the services, but the foundation of the faith. The external signs only remind us of that which is inner... I am converting out of a pure conviction; I feel that this is the loftiest

religion and that I will do this with faith, with profound conviction and with the assurance that God's blessing is on it."

Unlike her German relatives, her English relatives were sympathetic to her conversion - in particular her grandmother, Queen Victoria, who wrote her an affectionate, encouraging letter, which brought her great joy. As she wrote to the queen: "The only thing which made me wait so long was that I knew that so many would be pained and not understand me. But God gave me courage and I hope they will forgive me the pain I caused them, as I have my whole soul in this Church here, and I felt I was lying to all and to my old religion in continuing to be a Protestant. It is a matter of conscience whose profound importance only the person concerned can really feel."

When she told her husband of her decision, according to a former courtier, "tears involuntarily spurted from his eyes". He had not spoken a word to her about his desire that she become Orthodox. As she wrote on April 18, 1909: "He with his large heart never forced his religion upon me and found strength to bear up in this great grief of not seeing me in his faith, thanks to Fr. John [of Kronstadt], who told him: 'Leave her alone, don't speak about her faith, she will come to it of herself', and thank God it was so. Well, Serge, who knew his faith and lived in it as perfectly as a true Orthodox Christian can, brought me up and thank God warned me against this *spirit of delusion* you talk of." About her husband she wrote to her brother: "He was a real angel of kindness. How often, by touching my heart, he could have brought me to a change of religion, so as to make himself happy; and never, never did he complain. Take his side with your close ones and tell them that I adore him, and also my new country and that in this way I learned to love their religion also." Elizabeth said that it was her husband who had educated her (presumably, in the Orthodox faith).

Tsar Alexander and his wife, and all the Orthodox relatives of the Romanov house, were overjoyed at Ella's decision. Her husband was in raptures. As he wrote to Tsarevich Nicholas: "I am infinitely happy. I don't know by what right I deserve such grace. I am completely unworthy."

On March 8/20 she again wrote to her father: "Please, please forgive me for causing you so much suffering, but I feel so infinitely happy in my new faith. Earthly happiness I have always had as a child in my homeland, as a wife - in my new homeland, but when I saw how deeply religious Serge was, I felt so far behind, and the better I got to know his Church, the more I felt that it brought me closer to God - it is difficult to describe such a thing... However, in this case everything is in my hands and in God's, and I am convinced that He will bless this step; my hope depends on His strength, and I constantly pray that I will always be a good child and faithful wife and always remain a good Christian, and that in my earthly happiness I will always think of the future and my salvation and always be prepared for it (death)... Please show Alix... this letter."

She was received into the Orthodox Church by Holy Chrismation on Lazarus Saturday, April 13/25, 1891. She kept her former name, but now in honour of Righteous Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. Now she could say to her husband, in the words of the Moabitess Ruth: "Your people has become my people, and your God - my God" (Ruth 1.16).

In the same year Grand Prince Sergius was appointed governor-general of Moscow. As she wrote to her father: "After seven years - long, happy years - of our married life, which we have spent with our dear relatives and friends here in Petersburg, now to have to begin a completely new way of life, and to more or less have to give up our cosy home life in the city, since we have to do so much for the people there, and actually we are playing the part of a ruling prince - it will be very difficult for us..."

And indeed it was difficult for both of them. Sergius loved his former post as colonel-in-chief of the Preobrazhensky regiment, and now had to govern the province of Moscow at a time of increasing revolutionary activity when society was becoming increasingly anti-monarchist. Elizabeth had to smile to guests, dance and talk, independently of her mood or health. Often she was exhausted and had headaches. She was very popular, but also there were many slanders. Once she told her brother Ernest that she thought that every human being had to have an ideal in life. When he asked her what her ideal was, she replied: "To be a fully perfect woman, and this is not easy, for one must learn to forgive everything..."

Her sufferings, both physical and spiritual, were increased by the death of her father, to whom she was very attached... A trip down the Volga, and another to Darmstadt and England, consoled her, and she involved herself more in charities for the poor in addition to the many public engagements that she could not avoid. But her sadness lingered on...

According to the witness of Metropolitan Anastasy, the Great Prince did much to raise the level of Muscovite life. "His meek, idealistic personality was filled with instruction and a favourable influence on all Russians. The woes, sorrows and misfortunes of the people always found a ready response in his heart and speedy help." Indeed, the charitable work of the couple was amazing in its variety and extent.

Ella worked hard to bring about the union of her sister Alix (Alexandra) to Tsarevich Nicholas. As she wrote to Queen Victoria, "the world is so spiteful, and not knowing how long and deep this affection on both sides has been, the spiteful tongues will call it ambition". However, the marriage finally took place in 1894, and the two sisters were united in Russia in the Orthodox faith.

Grand Prince Sergius' brother Paul married a divorcée and a commoner, and was forced to leave Russia. And so his children Marie and Dmitri came under the tutorship of Great Prince and Princess. Elizabeth had already

shown herself a wonderful mother to the poor and sick, and now became in effect the mother of two more children.

In 1903 Sergius and Elizabeth went to the uncovering of the relics of St. Seraphim in Sarov. From there she wrote: "What infirmities and what illnesses we saw, but also what faith! It seemed as if we were living in the time of the earthly life of the Saviour. And how they prayed, how they wept - these poor mothers with their sick children. And, glory to God, many of them were healed. The Lord counted us worthy to see how a mute girl began to speak. But how her mother prayed for her!"

During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, the Great Princess became the leader of a patriotic movement that swept the whole of society: she organized sewing workshops for the needs of the army, several in the Kremlin itself, where women of all classes worked; she equipped several hospital trains excellently at her own expense, including camp churches equipped with everything necessary for the Divine services; she daily visited hospitals; and she worried over the widows and orphans of those killed in the war.

But then came the tragedy that changed her life. Great Prince Sergius had just resigned from the office of governor general of Moscow because he disagreed with the government on policy towards the terrorists, thinking that they should be treated more severely. His letters show his complete devotion to the monarchy and to Tsar Nicholas in particular. "You know," he wrote to him in 1896, "how I love You; my whole life belongs to You and the service and works of Your Father. Believe me: Your glory is dearer to me than anything on earth." But he felt that the Tsar was being too soft, and therefore retired into private life. For some time before his death he had been receiving death threats, and when he went out he used to try to ensure that he was as far as possible alone. On February 6/18, 1905 he was killed by a bomb that exploded almost at the doorstep of the palace that he and his wife inhabited in the Kremlin. At that moment the Great Princess was leaving for her workshops. She was alarmed by the sound of an exploding bomb nearby. Hurrying toward the place (near the Chudov monastery in the Kremlin), she saw a soldier stretching his military overcoat over the maimed body of her husband. The soldier tried to hide the horrible sight from the eyes of the unfortunate wife. But the Great Princess dropped to her knees, on the street, and put her arms out trying to embrace the torn remains of her husband. The bomb had shattered his body to such an extent that his fingers were found, still in their gloves, on the roof of the neighbouring building.

After the first pannikhida in the Chudov monastery, Elizabeth returned to the palace, put on black mourning clothes and began to write telegrams. From time to time she asked about the condition of the wounded coachman of the Great Prince. They told her that his condition was hopeless, and that he could die soon. So as not to upset the dying man, Elizabeth took off her mourning clothes, put on the blue dress she had been wearing before and went to the hospital. There, leaning over the bed of the dying man, she caught his

question about Sergius Alexandrovich and, so as to reassure him, she smiled and said: "He has sent me to you." Calmed by her words, and thinking that the Great Prince was alive, the devoted coachman **Andrew** died that night...

The next day St. Elizabeth received Communion in the church in which her husband's coffin was standing. On the third day after his death she felt that the soul of the deceased was asking her to do something. She understood that Sergius Alexandrovich wanted to send his forgiveness to his assassin, Kaliayev, through her. She went to the prison where he was detained.

"Who are you?" he asked upon meeting her.

"I am his widow," she replied, "Why did you kill him?"

"I did not want to kill you," he said. "I saw him several times before when I had the bomb with me, but you were with him and I could not bring myself to touch him."

"And didn't you understand that by killing him you were killing me?" ...

Then she said that she was bringing him forgiveness from Sergius Alexandrovich and asked him to repent. The Gospel was in her hands and she begged the criminal to read it. He refused, but she left it in his cell together with a little icon. Leaving the prison, the Great Princess said:

"My attempt was unsuccessful, but, who knows, perhaps at the last minute he will understand his sin and repent."

She asked the tsar for clemency for him. And he was ready to bestow it provided the bomber did not refuse it himself. (According to another source, her request was refused.) On the memorial cross erected upon the site of her husband's death, the grand-duchess inscribed the Gospel words:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do..."

Great Prince Sergius was buried in the Chudov monastery in the Kremlin; a chapel dedicated to St. Sergius, his patron saint, was built there.

Igumen Seraphim says of the Great Princess' conduct after the murder: "Like a spiritual heroine she did not break down in consequence of her great sorrow, as happens to many women. She grieved most of all about the sudden death of her husband, afraid for his fate in the world to come." And yet she herself said of him that he was "a holy person, an angel of goodness, who never did any harm to anyone". And she was comforted by spiritual elders, who told her that the blood of her husband's martyrdom would surely efface all the errors and sins of his past.

From that time on, she remained in mourning clothes, refused the food she was accustomed to, and vegetables and bread became her daily nourishment, even before she took her monastic vows. She dissolved her court, withdrew from the world and devoted herself entirely to the service of God and her neighbour. She opened two hospitals in which she looked after the sick. She divided her property into three parts, distributing it to the state, to the heirs of her husband and (the largest part) to charity. With what remained she then acquired a small estate with four little houses and a garden, and then another neighbouring plot, on the Ordynka in Moscow.

Here, with the blessing of the elders of the Zosima hermitage, to whom she placed herself in complete obedience, she founded a small monastic community, calling it the convent of Saints Martha and Mary, in order to unite in it the virtues of the two sisters of Lazarus - prayer and good works. It contained a hospital with a house church, an out-patients department, a chemist's, a refuge for young girls, a library, and a hostel for the sisters. In 1911 the main Protection church was built in the traditional Novgorod-Pskov style according to a plan by A.V. Shusev and with interior paintings by Nesterov. Protopriest Metrophanes Serebryansky, an exceptional pastor, was appointed the spiritual father of the community.

At first Elizabeth wanted to regenerate the institution of the deaconess in the convent that she founded. In early Christianity deaconesses had been widows or elderly virgins. Their main duties were to look after women entering the Church, to teach them the faith, to help them during the sacrament of Holy Baptism and to look after the sick and needy. During the persecutions against Christianity the deaconesses had served the martyrs in prison. However, the Russian Synod did not approve of her idea of regenerating the institution, and she had to put aside this thought.

In April 1909 the Great Princess wrote: "My darling Serge rests in God with so many he loved who have gone to join him and God has given me on this earth a beautiful work to fulfil. Only He knows whether I will do it well or badly, but I will try my best and put my hand in His and go with no fear whatever the crosses and criticism this world may have in store - little by little my life has turned onto this way. It is not a fantasy of the moment and no disappointment ever can come - I can be disappointed in myself but then I also have no illusion and don't imagine I am different to others. I want to work for God in God for suffering mankind, and in my old age when my body can't work anymore I hope God will let me then rest and pray for the work I began and then I will leave the busy life and prepare for that great home - but I have health and energy and there is so, so much misery and Christ's steps guide us amongst the suffering, in whom we help Him..."

The convent began its existence on February 10, 1909. At first it had only six sisters, but within a year the number had risen to thirty and continued to rise. On April 9 seventeen sisters headed by Elizabeth were tonsured into monasticism (probably the little schema). She put off her black mourning

clothes, put on the white habit of a sister of mercy, and took the name Alexia after St. Alexis of Moscow, whose relics rested in the Chudov monastery. According to one source, she was tonsured by the future Hieromartyr, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev. According to another source, however, Bishop Tryphon, in the world Prince Turkestanov, gave her her monastic vestments with the prophetic words: "These vestments will hide you from the world, and the world will be hidden from you, but at the same time they will witness to your charitable activity, which will shine before the Lord to His glory."

Just before her tonsure, the Great Princess wrote: "My taking of vows is even more serious than if a young girl marries. I am espousing Christ and His cause, I am giving all I can to Him and our neighbours, I am going deeper into our Orthodox Church and becoming a missionary of Christian faith and charity work and - oh dear! - I am so unworthy of it all, and I do so want blessings and prayers..." And on the morning of her tonsure she said to the sisters: "I am leaving the glittering world where I had a glittering position. But together with all of you I am ascending to a greater world - the world of the poor and the suffering. I have lain this upon myself, not as a cross, but as certain way full of light, which the Lord showed me after the death of Serge and which for many, many years before this began in my soul..."

The community's twenty-two-bed hospital in time acquired a high reputation. The best specialists in the city worked there for nothing. Often the most seriously ill people from other clinics were brought there. Every week 34 doctors worked, also for nothing, in the out-patients' department. In the chemist's they took no money from the poor for medicines, and distributed them to others at a considerable discount. They gave the orphans a basic foundation in medicine as well as a general education. They served over 300 meals to the poor daily. On Sundays the community organized a school for illiterate factory women.

Mother Elizabeth very carefully distributed tasks among the sisters - to each according to her strength. She watched over their health and tried to see that they had enough rest. She looked after the incurably ill and helped at operations, taking all the most burdensome tasks upon herself. At the same time, her personal life was very ascetic. She slept for no more than three hours in every twenty-four on a wooden bed without a mattress, and after praying for a long time at night, she would go round the hospital wards. For food she had a few vegetables and some milk, and kept all the fasts strictly.

However, she considered the most important thing to be not the hospital, but visiting and helping the poor in their homes. The community received up to 12,000 requests for help every year. They had to arrange treatment for some, look for work for others, send still others abroad to study. How much money, food, clothing and medicine was distributed! But "Great Matushka", as she was called, considered their main work to be bringing the love of Christ to the suffering.

She used to visit the notorious Khitrovka market, believing, as did all the sisters of the community, that everyone is made in the image of God even if that image is partly distorted by the passions of life. She tried to touch the depths of their hearts, to arouse the beginnings of repentance in people sunk in corruption. Sometimes she succeeded, and then the gradual recovery of a spiritually sick person would begin. Mother Elizabeth rescued orphans from these dens of iniquity, and tried to persuade their parents to hand them over to her for education. She set up the boys in a hostel, and one such group even formed an artel of messenger-boys. The girls were educated in the refuge and in closed boarding-schools.

The sisters did not work for personal glory, and they did not count how many people they helped. They had to endure insults and mockery, sometimes they were deceived. But they did not despair in their service. The pledge of their constancy and conscientiousness was their faith in the words of Christ: "And he who gives even one of these My little ones to drink a cup of cold water... will not lose his reward."

One of the nuns of the convent, Mother Lyubov', Euphrosyne in the world, came to the monastery in the following remarkable way. At the age of sixteen she fell into a lethargic sleep, during which her soul was met by St. Onuphrius the Great. He took her to three saints. Euphrosyne recognized one of them to be St. Sergius of Radonezh, but she did not know the other two. Then St. Onuphrius told Euphrosyne that she was needed in the Martha-Mary convent. Waking from her sleep, Euphrosyne began to ask where such a convent might be in Russia. One of her acquaintances turned out to be a novice in the convent and told Euphrosyne about it and its abbess. Euphrosyne wrote to the abbess asking whether she could be received into the convent, and received an affirmative reply. When she arrived at the monastery she went into the cell of the abbess and recognized in her the female saint whom she had seen standing next to St. Sergius. Then, on receiving the blessing of the spiritual father of the convent, Fr. Metrophanes, she recognized in him the second of the saints. Exactly six years after this St. Elizabeth received the crown of martyrdom on the day of the uncovering of the relics of St. Sergius of Radonezh, while Fr. Metrophanes later received the monastic tonsure with the name of Sergius in honour of St. Sergius... Once, when she was not yet trained in the rules of the monastic life, Euphrosyne went into the cell of the abbess without asking a blessing. She saw St. Elizabeth in a hairshirt and chains. "My dear," said the saint, "when you enter, you must knock."

Among her very varied charitable works, St. Elizabeth paid the fares of pilgrims sailing from Odessa to Jaffa, and built a large hospital in Jerusalem. She also built an Orthodox church in Bari in Italy where the relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker rested.

In spite of her many and arduous duties, she found time to go on pilgrimage to the greatest shrines of Russia, like Sarov, Pskov, Kiev, Optina Hermitage, Zosima Hermitage, Solovki, Pochayev.

Among the holy elders she knew, writes Ludmila Koehler, "the grand duchess singled out Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel. The grand duchess was in the habit of seeing him on her annual pilgrimage to the Seven Lakes Hermitage (near Kazan). There she attended all the monastery services and shared the simple food with the brotherhood. Archbishop Tikhon (of San Francisco) relates that she and her faithful cell attendant Barbara usually were present at the four o'clock tea in the Abbot's quarters.

"When Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel later stayed at the Eleazorov Hermitage (near Pskov) and his health began to fail, it was decided to add a little church to his small dwelling. The grand duchess not only contributed money but donated icons and even designed the iconostasis for the church. Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel decided to go to Moscow in order to thank her personally; on this occasion, he invited her to attend the blessing and dedication of the church, and she did. He, in his turn, visited the Martha and Mary Sisterhood at the invitation of the grand duchess for the spiritual enlightenment of the sisters.

"When Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel died (in Kazan, in 1915), the grand duchess came for the funeral service and took part (with the sisters of the Mother of God Convent in Kazan) in the funeral repast. She also accompanied the coffin up to the Monastery of our Saviour on its way to the Seven Lakes Hermitage.

"News of the impending war reached the grand duchess while she was in the province of Perm. She proceeded to Verkhoturye to venerate the relics of St. Simeon; here she took Holy Communion. Verkhoturye is located only a short distance from Alapayevsk, which was destined to be the scene of her martyrdom.

"The Grand Duchess became something of a legend in her time. It is enough to quote a few of the numerous stories depicting her selfless services to the needy. A poor woman was admitted to the sisterhood hospital, the wife of a worker who was an unbeliever. As a consequence of malicious propaganda about the Royal House, he disliked all its members. During the many hours the man spent at the bedside of his stricken spouse, he noticed one particular sister who was like a compassionate, loving mother to the sick, and to his wife in particular. She not only rendered all the usual services, but also encouraged the patient by kind, heartening words. After the dying woman had received the Final Communion, this sister spent the night with her trying to alleviate her suffering and dying agony. After the woman's death this same sister helped others prepare the body for the funeral. When the husband found out that it was the grand duchess, he admitted his error and turned to God.

"Almedingen tells another fascinating story about a radical student, whose only sister had joined the Martha and Mary Sisterhood. When this 'republican' went to pay a call at Great Ordynka, she 'met the grand duchess, and to be in the same room with her was peace. I understood nothing about her vocation. I merely knew that she was good, creative and friendly, and I envied her the faith I did not possess.'

"She was particularly impressed when her sister told her that 'once when visiting a particularly dirty part of Khitrovka, the grand duchess sneezed, and the woman in the room at once offered her a very dirty rag, and she accepted it as though it were of finest, cleanest linen.'

"Another story concerns a woman 'who had overturned a lighted oil stove... Her clothes had caught fire and her body was a mass of burns. Gangrene had set in and the doctors despaired of saving her. With gentle but obstinate courage, the grand duchess nursed her back to life. It took two hours each day to dress her wounds, and the stench was such that several of the nurses fainted. The patient recovered within a few weeks and this was considered a miracle at the time.'"

By the middle of 1914 there were already ninety-seven sisters in the community, and there was talk of building daughter-communities outside the city.

Then the war began, and part of the sisterhood was sent to work in the field hospitals. Others served in a hospital in Moscow. Serious difficulties arose with the provision of food and clothing, but the community did not suspend its charitable work.

The Dowager Empress, the Empress and Mother Elizabeth among themselves the work of nursing the wounded according to the front lines: the German front, the Austrian front, and the Turkish front. The latter, although smaller in size of operations, was just as intense in fighting. They were able to draw all kinds of people into their organization, men of high and low ranks, officials, clerks, government workers and a whole hierarchy of women. The Red Cross on a uniform was seen on everyone who could spare any time from housework. There was no sacrifice too great - money was given freely and personal life was not important in time of war.

Together with her younger sister, the Empress Alexandra, Mother Elizabeth was slandered on account of her German blood. But she harboured no bitterness against her enemies. Once she tried to warn her sister against Rasputin, but was rebuffed.

Metropolitan Anastasy wrote: "She suffered deeply for the royal family... when the thorns of grievous slander were woven around them, especially during the war. In order not to give impetus to new evil gossip, the grand

duchess tried to avoid conversations on the subject. If it so happened that because of idle people's tasteless curiosity the subject was broached in her presence, she immediately killed it by her expressive silence. Only once after returning from Tsarskoye Selo, she forgot herself and remarked, 'That terrible man (i.e. Rasputin) wants to separate me from them, but, thank God, he will not succeed.' The occasion referred to is probably the one mentioned by several writers when the grand duchess went to warn her sister."

Rasputin was killed on December 29, 1916 by Prince Felix Yusupov. He owed much to the grand-duchess' warmth and good counsel, and considered her his second mother. She asked him to accompany her to the glorification of St. Joasaph of Belgorod, which made a great impression on him. And he was always fleeing to her when he was in distress.

"I was immeasurably grateful to the great princess," he wrote, "that she understood my despair and was able to direct me to a new life. However, I was tormented by the fact that she did not know everything about me and considered me to be better than I was.

"Once, when speaking to her face to face, I told her about my adventures, which, as it seemed to me, were unknown to her.

"'Calm down,' she smiled, 'I know much more about you than you think. It was for that reason that I called you. You are capable of much evil, and of much good if you find the right path. And great sin is not greater than sincere repentance. Remember that the reason sins more than the soul. But the soul can remain pure even in a sinful body. Your soul is important to me. And I want to open it to you yourself. Destiny has given you everything that a man could desire. But from him to whom much is given, much is required. Think that you are responsible. You are obliged to be an example. You should be respected. Trials have shown you that life is not a game. Think how much good you could do! And how much evil you could cause! I have prayed much for you. I hope that the Lord has hearkened to my prayer and will help you.'

"How much hope and strength of soul sounded in her words!"

Immediately after the February revolution Prince Felix flew to Moscow to inform her about recent events. "She embraced me," he writes in his Memoirs, and blessed me with tears in her eyes.

"'Poor Russia!' she cried. 'What terrible trials await her! And we are all powerless to resist the will of the Lord. It remains to us only to pray and hope on His mercy.'"

"She listened very attentively to my account of the tragic night [of Rasputin's killing].

“‘You could not have acted otherwise,’ she said when I fell silent. ‘Your act was the last attempt to save the homeland and the dynasty. And it is not your fault that events did not measure up to your expectations. The guilt lies on those who did not understand their own duty. The killing of Rasputin is not a crime. You killed a demon. But it was even to your credit: in your place anyone should have acted in the same way.’

“Then Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna informed me that several days after the death of Rasputin the abbesses of monasteries came to her to tell her about what had happened with them on the night of the 30th. During the all-night vigil priests had been seized by an attack of madness, had blasphemed and shouted out in a voice that was not their own. Nuns had run down the corridors crying like hysterics and tearing their dresses with indecent movements of the body.

“‘The Russian people is not responsible for everything that is happening,’ continued the great princess. ‘Poor Nicky, poor Alex! What torments are prepared for them! May the will of the Lord be done. No power of evil can overcome Holy Rus’ and the Orthodox Church. Good will triumph without fail. And those who keep faith in it in themselves will finally see the light. The Lord punishes and He has mercy.’”

“Time flies so unnoticeably that you don’t even distinguish days or years, everything merges together into one second of prayer and mercy... Today is twenty-five years since I was united to our beloved Church... Everything is merged together in the profoundest gratitude to God, to our Church and to those noble examples that I have been able to see in truly Orthodox people. And I feel myself to be so insignificant and unworthy of the limitless love of God and of that love which has surrounded me in Russia – even the minutes of sorrow were sanctified by such consolation from above, and while the petty misunderstandings that are natural for people were smoothed away with such love that I can say only one thing: ‘Glory to God for all things, for all things.’”

The Lord bestowed upon Grand Duchess Elizabeth the gift of spiritual discernment and prophecy. Fr. Metrophanes related that not long before the revolution he had a very vivid and clearly prophetic dream, but he did not know how to interpret it. It was composed of a sequence of four pictures, in colour. The first revealed a beautiful church. Suddenly, it became surrounded by tongues of fire, and the whole church went up in flames – a terrifying spectacle. The second showed a portrait of the Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna in a black frame; the corners of the frame sprouted forth shoots bearing lily buds that blossomed, becoming so large as to conceal the portrait. The third showed the Archangel Michael holding a flaming sword. In the fourth, St. Seraphim of Sarov stood on his knees on a rock, his hands upraised in prayer.

Perplexed by this dream, Fr. Metrophanes described it to the Grand Duchess one morning before the Liturgy. St. Elizabeth said she understood the dream. The first picture signified that there would soon be a revolution in Russia, that a persecution would be raised against the Church, and for our sins, our unbelief, the country would be brought to the brink of destruction. The second picture signified that her sister and the entire Royal Family would receive a martyr's death. The third picture signified that subsequently Russia would be overtaken by frightful tribulations. The fourth signified that by the prayers of St. Seraphim and other saints and righteous ones of the Russian land, and by the intercession of the Mother of God, the country and its people would obtain mercy.

The revolution threw the country into chaos. Crowds of freed prisoners roamed round Moscow. Mother Elizabeth forbade the sisters to leave the community.

Once, as an American journalist, Rita Dorr, recounts, "a great mob went to the House of Mary and Martha, battered the gates open and swarmed up the convent steps demanding admission. The door opened and a tall, grave woman in a pale silvergray habit and white veil stepped out into the porch and asked the mob what it wanted.

"We want that German woman, that sister of the German spy in Tsarskoe Selo," yelled the mob. "We want the Grand Duchess Serge."

"Tall and white, like a lily, the woman stood there. 'I am the Grand Duchess Serge,' she replied in a clear voice that floated above the clamor. 'What do you want with me?'

"We have come to arrest you," they shouted. "Very well," was the calm reply. "If you want to arrest me I shall have to go with you, of course. But I have a rule that before I leave the convent for any purpose I always go into the church and pray. Come with me into the church, and after I have prayed I will go with you."

"She turned and walked across the garden to the church, the mob following. As many as could crowd into the small building followed her there. Before the altar door she knelt, and her nuns came and knelt around her weeping. The Grand Duchess did not weep. She prayed for a moment, crossed herself then stood up and stretched her hands to the silent, staring mob.

"I am ready to go now," she said.

"But not a hand was lifted to take Elizabeth Fyodorovna. What Kerensky could not have done, what no police force in Russia could have done with those men that day, her perfect courage and humility did. It cowed and

conquered hostility, it dispersed the mob. That great crowd of liberty-drunk, bloodmad men went quietly home, leaving a guard to protect the convent."

In the spring of 1917 St. Elizabeth wrote to her sister Victoria: "God's ways are a mystery and perhaps it is a great blessing we can't know all that the future has in store for us. All our country is being snipped into little bits. All that was gained in centuries is being demolished, and by our own people, those I love from all my heart. Truly, they are morally ill and blinded not to see where we are going. And one's heart aches, but I have no bitterness. Can you criticize or condemn a man in delirium, a lunatic? You can only pity and long for good guardians to be found, who can keep him from smashing all and murdering whomever he can get at."

The German ambassador Mirbach twice tried to see her and pass on an invitation to go to Germany, but she refused to receive the representative of an enemy country and said that she categorically refused to leave Russia: "I have done no harm to anyone. May the will of the Lord be done."

In this year, Mother Elizabeth wrote to her friend, Countess Alexandra Olsufiev: "God in His great mercy has again helped us to go through these days of internal strife, and today I had the infinite consolation of praying in... and attended the divine ceremony of blessing by our Patriarch [Tikhon]. The sacred Kremlin, with visible marks of these sad days, was dearer to me than ever before, and I realized to what extent the Orthodox religion is God's True Faith. I felt such pity for Russia and her children who, at this moment, know not what they do. Isn't it a sick child that one loves a hundredfold more in the time of his illness rather than when he's gay and healthy? One would like to bear his suffering, to teach him patience, to help him. This is what I feel every day. *Holy Russia cannot perish*. But, alas, Great Russia is no more; but in the Bible God shows how He had pardoned His repenting people and once more granted them blessed power. Let us hope that the prayers, which intensify every day, and the repentance, which increases, will bring the Holy Virgin to intercede for us before her Divine Son, and that God will pardon us."

In April, 1918 she wrote to the same correspondent: "If we look deep into the life of every human, we discover that it is full of miracles. You will say, 'Of terror and death, as well.' Yes, that also. But we do not clearly see why the blood of these victims must flow. There, in the heavens, they understand everything and, no doubt, have found calm and the True Homeland - a Heavenly Homeland. We on this earth must look to that Heavenly Homeland with understanding and say with resignation, 'Thy will be done.' Great Russia is completely destroyed, but Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church, which 'the gates of hell cannot overcome', exists and exists more than ever. And those who believe and who do not doubt for one moment will see 'the inner sun' which enlightens the darkness during the thundering storm... I am only convinced that the Lord Who punishes is also the same Lord Who loves. I have read the Gospel a great deal, and, we wish to recognize that great sacrifice of God the Father when He sent His son to die and be resurrected for

us, we must feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, who illumines our path. And then joy will become eternal, even if our poor human hearts and our little earthly minds will experience moments that seem very terrible... We work, we pray, we hope, and each day we feel the mercy of God. Each day we experience a constant miracle. And others begin to feel this and come to our church in order to relax in soul. Even though all the powers of hell may be set loose, Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church will remain unconquered. Some day, in this ghastly struggle, Virtue will triumph over Evil. Those who keep their faith will see the Powers of Light vanquish the powers of darkness. God punishes and pardons."

"The spring of 1917," writes Ludmilla Koehler, "marks the beginning of her slow but steady ascent to martyrdom: searches, accusations, disruptions of the welfare system so painstakingly established by her, deportation, and finally a martyr's death. God led her to her great destiny by measured steps so as to strengthen her spirit. By the end of her ordeal she was as strong as tempered steel, radiating the bright light of her sainthood. Grand Duchess Elizabeth's attitude toward the turmoil besetting Russia is seen in a letter she sent to an old friend about this time. In it she predicts the complete disintegration of Russia and accepts it with the words, 'Thy will be done.' She is, however, simultaneously convinced that the gates of Hell will not prevail over the Church, which has been promised an eternal existence. Those who believe in this will be able, according to her, 'to discern the concealed beam of light shining through the darkness at the very height of the storm.' To be sure, she anticipated severe trials, but she looked on the approaching storm as having both 'horrifying as well as spiritualizing elements'.

"The harassment and persecution started gradually, first with a visit by a revolutionary gang under the leadership of a student who was visibly impressed by what he saw - the simple life-style of the sisters, including their Mother Superior, their activities, the relief they were able to provide to the needy. They parted in a friendly fashion, but this was just the beginning. It is obvious that the grand duchess was aware of the road ahead of her. She dampened the joyful reaction of the sisterhood to this 'peaceful' intrusion with the prophetic remark, 'Obviously we are still not worthy of a martyr's crown.' But she did not have long to wait for it.

"For a while the convent was allowed to go about its activities unhampered. The authorities largely ignored it, save for supplying it occasionally with critically needed supplies. One may speculate that at this point the authorities were afraid to attack the grand duchess and the sisterhood because of the popularity they enjoyed among the poorer inhabitants of Moscow."

At about this time, Igumen Seraphim of the Seraphim-Alexeyev monastery in Perm tried to convince the Great Princess to go with him to Alapayevsk.

“There,” he told her, “I know good people in Old Believers’ sketes and they can protect Your Highness.”

She refused to hide from fear of repression, but added:

“If I am killed, I ask you to bury me in a Christian manner.”

It was not long before Fr. Seraphim was able to retrieve her body and fulfil his promise to the Great Princess...

Another trial came at Pascha, 1918, when the chekist secret police arrested some of the sick and declared that they were transferring the orphans to a children's home. Then, on the third day of Pascha, continues Ludmilla Koehler, "on the feast day of the Appearance of the Iberian icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (March 31), Patriarch Tikhon was celebrating the Liturgy in the Iberian church across the street from the Martha and Mary Convent. After the service, the Patriarch visited the sisterhood and served a moleben, finding heartening words for the abbess and the sisters. He promised his assistance and protection should they be needed. The sisters felt greatly relieved and encouraged by this gesture but the grand duchess may have had premonitions of an impending separation from her community.

And indeed, immediately following the Patriarch's departure, she was to be cruelly torn from her sisters. Red guards intruded into the convent and ordered her to go to the station with them. The parting was agonizing. Both the abbess and her closest collaborators realized that this separation was forever. The scene must have been touching. The sisters surrounded their beloved Mother Superior and cried. There followed a painful leavetaking and prayers. Only the departing grand duchess remained calm. She blessed all the sisters with the sign of the Cross. She could not bid farewell to each of them individually, pressed for time by her captors as she was. She was able to say only a few words, making her orders known. The emotional scene only impelled the lawless authorities to act in a still ruder fashion. Using force, they literally tore the grand duchess from the flock of sisters and dragged the innocent victim away. Patriarch Tikhon made an attempt to intercede on behalf of the Great Princess, but to no avail.

They arrested Mother Elizabeth and two other sisters - **Barbara** Yakovlevna and **Catherine** Ianysheva. Before sitting in the car, the abbess signed all the sisters with the sign of the Cross. One of them recalled: “And they took her away. The sisters ran after her as far as they could. One fell on the road. When I came to the liturgy, I heard the deacon reading the litany, but he couldn’t, he was crying... And they took her away to Yekaterinburg, with someone escorting her, and Barbara was with her. They were inseparable... Then she sent a letter to us, to batyushka and each sister. 105 little notes, and every one in accordance with her character. To one a quotation from the Gospel, to another from the Bible, to another from herself. She knew all the sisters, all her children...”

During the rail journey she wrote to the sisters: "Lord, give the blessing. May the Resurrection of Christ console and strengthen you all... May St. Sergius and the holy hierarch Demetrius and St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk protect you all, my dear ones... I cannot forget yesterday, all your dear faces. O Lord, what suffering is in them, how their hearts are suffering! Every minute you become dearer to me. How can I leave you, my children, how can I console you and strengthen you? Remember, my dear ones, what I said to you. Always be not only my children, but obedient pupils. Come closer to each other and be as one soul, all for God, and say, with John Chrysostom: 'Glory to God for everything!' You older sister, unite your sister. Ask Patriarch Tikhon to take the 'chicks' under his wing. Make a place for him in my middle room. Make my cell a place for confession, and the big one for receptions... For God's sake, do not become despondent. The Mother of God knows why Her Heavenly Son sent us this trial on the day of Her feast... only don't become despondent and don't weaken in your radiant intentions, and the Lord, Who has temporarily separated us, will strengthen you spiritually. Pray for me, the sinner, that I may be counted worthy to return to my children and become perfected for you, and that we may all think how to prepare ourselves for eternal life.

"You remember how afraid I was that you rely too much on my support as a stronghold in life, and I said to you: 'You must cleave more to God. The Lord says: "My son, give Me your heart, and your eyes will see My paths". Then be assured that you will give all to God if you give Him your heart, that is, your very selves.'

"Now we are going through one and the same experience and involuntarily we find the consolation to bear our common cross of separation only with Him. The Lord has found that it is now time for us to bear His cross. Let us strive to be worthy of this joy. I thought that we would be too weak, that we had not grown sufficiently to bear a great cross. 'The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away.' As it was pleasing to God, so has it happened. May the name of the Lord be blessed unto the ages. What an example St. Job gives us by his submissiveness and patience in sorrows. For this the Lord later gave him joy. How many examples of this sorrow do we find in the Holy Fathers in the holy monasteries, but then there was joy. Prepare for the joy of being again together. Let us be patient and humble. Let us not grumble but be thankful for all things.

"Your constant intercessor in prayer and loving mother in Christ,

"Matushka."

St. Elizabeth and her two nuns were joined in Yekaterinburg by other royal prisoners: Great Prince Sergius Mikhailovich, the three Brother Princes Igor, John and Constantine Constantinovich, the poet Prince Vladimir Paley (who

wrote about "Aunt Ella's" great kindness to him) and Prince John's wife, the Serbian Queen Elena Petrovna.

Then, on May 20, the prisoners were taken to the Urals town of Alapayevsk, where they were imprisoned in one of the city schools. For some weeks the Grand Duchess, though under guard, was able to go to church, to do some gardening, to paint and to pray. She was also in contact with her nuns in Moscow, and received gifts from the peasants of the region.

But on June 21 a stricter regime was imposed and Sisters Barbara and Catherine were taken away from their spiritual mother to Yekaterinburg. There they petitioned the authorities to be returned to Alapayevsk, and finally they were allowed back.

Soon Prince John Constantinovich's wife Elena Petrovna was torn from his side, and it was obvious to the captives what was in store for them. By the beginning of July their last contacts with the outside world were severed and the number of guards increased.

On the night of July 3-4 Tsar Nicholas and his family were executed in Yekaterinburg. On the following night, the two nuns and other members of the royal family were taken outside the building where they were staying on the pretext of an armed attack. Nobody was allowed to see them. Outside the house their hands were tied behind their backs and they were blindfolded. They were taken in a car twelve miles outside the town. The leader of the assassins was named Ryabov.

Great Prince Sergius Mikhailovich started to struggle with the assassins and was shot; the rest were blindfolded and thrown into a mine shaft that was 200 feet deep. According to eye-witnesses, Prince Igor was shot as he tried to run away. At the edge of the shaft, Mother Elizabeth pleaded with the executioners to have mercy on the other princes. But they were all thrown head first down the shaft.

Mother Elizabeth was the last. She crossed herself and prayed loudly:

"Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Two grenades were thrown into the mine shaft after her; they killed **Prince Theodore Mikhailovich Remez**. The others died in terrible sufferings from hunger, thirst and wounds. The bodies of Mother Elizabeth and Prince John Constantinovich were found on a ledge only 50 feet from the top. Mother Elizabeth had remained alive for a long time. Mortally wounded herself, she had tried to bind the wounds of Great Prince John, serving her neighbour until her very death. Two grenades fell beside her, but did not explode: the Lord preserved the body of her who was pleasing to him. On her chest was an icon of the Saviour Not Made with Hands adorned with precious stones,

which the Tsar had given her on day of her chrismation, and on the back of which were inscribed the words: "Palm Saturday, April 13, 1891".

According to one report from the recently published communist archives: "From beneath the ground we heard singing! I was seized with horror. They were singing the hymn, 'Lord, save Thy people'."

A peasant hid near the mine for two days, and all the while he could hear the martyrs singing. It was the cherubic hymn that they chanted from under the ground. The peasant drove to the camp of the not very far distant White Army and told them about what had happened. They reproached him for not giving any help, at least by throwing a piece of bread into the mine.

When the White Army was able to reach the spot they removed the bodies of the martyred ones. They included, besides Mother Elizabeth and Nuns Barbara and Catherine: **Princes Sergius Mikhailovich, John Constantinovich, Igor Constantinovich, Constantine Constantinovich, Vladimir Paley and Theodore Remez.** In 1945 the Soviets occupied Manchuria, and the bodies of all the princes buried in Peking disappeared.

Lubov Millar writes concerning the post-mortem on the bodies: "The Grand Duchess was severely bruised: there was a bruise the size of a child's palm on her forehead and one the size of an adult's palm on her left temple; hypodermic tissues, muscles and the cranial dome were also bruised; the skull bones were intact. Next to the martyr lay two unexploded hand grenades; the Almighty did not allow the body of His chosen one to be torn to shreds. An icon of the Saviour was found on her chest..."

Nun Barbara, in the world Vera Tsvetkova, was from Moscow. She belonged to a religious family of intelligentsy that greatly venerated Mother Elizabeth. After emigrating to the south of France, they found themselves in a difficult situation. They had to find a new flat, but their poverty deprived them of the possibility of finding it in such a short time. However, believing in a miracle, the daughter nevertheless began to search. On the eve of the day on which the family was to be evicted, Barbara had a dream in which she saw Mother Elizabeth, who asked: "Why don't the Tsvetkovs appeal to me for help? If I could help them earlier, now it is still easier for me to give them help." And she promised Vera to arrange everything in the way she wanted. On waking in the morning under the strong influence of her dream, Vera renewed her search. As she was passing the office where she had only recently applied for flats for sale without success, she felt an insistent desire to ask again. Vera knew that her fresh inquiries were likely to be as unsatisfactory as her previous ones. But some clearly felt invisible force urged her to try again. Great was her astonishment when the official, seeing her arrive at the door, called her in, pulled out a map of the city and, pointing to a house and garden with his finger, said to Vera: "This village will suit you." It turned out later that a Belgian had entrusted the office with offering his dacha to needy Russian refugees. The owner of the house did his good deed in

memory of the happy years he had spent in Tsarist Russia. Later, Vera became one of Mother Elizabeth's nuns with the name Barbara.

The bodies of the Alapayevsk martyrs were buried in the cathedral in Alapayevsk, on October 18. Then, when the White Army was forced to retreat, Igumen Seraphim of the Seraphim-Alexeyev monastery in Perm escorted the bodies by train, first to Irkutsk (July, 1919) and later to China (February 28, 1920). During the journey St. Elizabeth appeared several times to Fr. Seraphim.

On the arrival of the bodies in Harbin, they were met by Duke Nicholas Alexandrovich Kudashev, who reported that "the bodies were totally decayed - all, except the Great Princess Elizabeth, whose body was totally incorrupt. The coffins were opened and put in the Russian Church. The Great Princess was lying as though she were alive and had not changed at all since the day when I, before my departure for Peking, said good-bye to her in Moscow - only on one side of her face was a large bruise from when she was thrown into the mine."

On April 3, 1920, the bodies of the martyrs were buried in the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov at the cemetery of the Russian mission in Peking. The body of the Martyr Elizabeth was found to be incorrupt. She looked asleep, and the three fingers of her right hand were folded as if she had been trying to make the sign of the cross.

At the request of the Great Princess' relative, the Marquess of Milford Haven, the bodies of the Martyrs Elizabeth and Barbara were taken by an English warship to Jerusalem, where they were laid to rest in January, 1921 in the crypt chapel of the Russian convent of St. Mary Magdalene on the Mount of Olives. In 1888 the Great Princess had expressed the desire to be buried there. Later, however, she said that she would like to be buried in her Martha and Mary convent in Moscow...

On May 2, 1982, the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, the relics of the holy martyrs were translated from the crypt of the convent of St. Mary Magdalene to the convent church. It was found that each of them had been buried in five coffins, the outer one of oak containing two further zinc caskets, a wooden one, and an inner one of metal. When the inner casket of the Great Princess was opened, the chapel was filled with a sweet fragrance, which was said to be like that of honey and jasmine. Although the chapel was open and well-aired, this fragrance remained. The clothing of the martyrs was found to be damp, although the atmosphere at Gethsemane is very dry. The material was as if some liquid had been poured over it, so moist was it, although hitherto the coffins had been sealed. When a small portion of the relics was placed in a glass-topped receptacle, the glass became moist, and it was found that the sacred relics of both the martyrs exuded a fragrant myrrh. The bodies of both martyrs were found to be in a state of partial incorruption.

In 1981 the hand of St. Elizabeth and the hand of St. Barbara were brought to the glorification of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia in New York – the only relics of New Martyrs taken beyond the borders of Russia.

St. Elizabeth once said: "It is easier for feeble straw to resist a mighty fire than for the nature of sin to resist the power of love. We must cultivate this love in our souls, that we may take our place with all the saints, for they were all-pleasing unto God through their love for their neighbour."

3. HOLY HIEROMARTYR TIKHON, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, in the world Basil Ivanovich Bellavin, was born on January 19, 1865 in Toropets, Pskov province, the son of a priest, Fr. John of the Spaso-Preobrazhensky church. His mother was called Anna. Once his father dreamed that he spoke with his dead mother. She warned him of his imminent death and went on to say that one of his sons would die a youth and be brought back to Toropets, and Basil would become very great. Just after he had been made Bishop of Alaska, Basil accompanied the body of his youngest brother back to Toropets, in fulfilment of this prophecy.

In 1872 Basil entered the Toropets spiritual school, and in 1878 - the Pskov theological seminary. He was a very cheerful, good-humoured and kind boy, quite tall with blond hair. He was also very intelligent, and used to help his schoolmates with their work. In 1884, at the very young age of 19, he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. He was very popular with his fellow-students, who prophetically nicknamed him "Patriarch" and once jokingly censured him, crying: "Many years, your Holiness". On June 11, 1888 Basil graduated from the Academy as one of the best students; his dissertation was on the subject, "Quesnel and his relationship to Jansenism". Then he returned to Pskov seminary as a teacher in Dogmatic and Moral Theology, living very simply in a tiny annexe to a simple wooden house near the church of St. Nicholas. On December 14, 1891 he was tonsured into the mantia by Bishop Hermogenes (Dobronravyn) of Pskov. On December 15 he was ordained to the diaconate, and on December 22 - to the priesthood.

On March 17, 1892, Tikhon was appointed inspector of the Kholm theological seminary. On June 24, 1892 he was briefly transferred to the Kazan Theological Academy, but soon, on July 15, returned to the Kholm seminary as rector in the rank of archimandrite. Here, besides his duties in the seminary, he was made president of the Diocesan Educational Council, president of the Kholm Orthodox Brotherhood of the Mother of God, dean of the monasteries of the Kholm-Warsaw diocese and publications censor.

On May 6, 1895 he was awarded the order of St. Anne, second class.

Fr. Tikhon's simple, unaffected ways endeared him to the local population, and many uniates returned to the Orthodox Faith through his gentle tact. This reached the ears of the Holy Synod, and on October 19, 1897 (or 1898) he was consecrated Bishop of Lublin, a vicariate of the Kholm-Warsaw diocese, in the Trinity cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg by Metropolitan Palladius (Rayev) of St. Petersburg, Archbishop Arsenius (Bryantsev) of Kazan, Archbishop Anthony (Vadkovsky) of Finland, Bishop John (Kratirov) of Narva and Bishop Gurias (Burtasovsky) of Samara.

After his consecration, Bishop Tikhon returned to Kholm, where he remained for about a year. Then, on September 14, 1898, he was made Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska. On February 7, 1900 he was appointed Bishop of North America and Alaska, becoming archbishop on May 5, 1905.

His activity in America was very successful, in recognition of which he was awarded the order of St. Vladimir, third class, in 1901, and the order of St. Anne, first class, in 1904. In Minneapolis he founded a seminary, which was soon producing enough American priests to obviate the necessity of sending priests from Russia. And in New Canaan, Pennsylvania he founded the St. Tikhon's monastery. The number of parishes increased from 15 to 70, and all became self-supporting. As in Kholm, Tikhon continued his missionary activity among the uniates, and a large number converted to the Orthodox Faith. Service-books were translated into the English language with his blessing. A special achievement of Vladyka Tikhon's, in view of the later disintegration of American Orthodoxy into various ethnic groups, was his unification of all the groups - Russian, Greek, Syrian, Bulgarian, Aleut - under his leadership. A symbol of this unity was the first Orthodox Church Council in America, which was convened by Tikhon in Mayfield, New York, in February, 1907.

However, Tikhon did not attend this Council because on January 25, 1907, he was appointed Archbishop of Yaroslavl and Rostov. Here, as always, Tikhon made a special point of visiting all the churches in his diocese, and by his humility, approachability to all classes and kinds of people, and active interest in the details of the lives of all his spiritual children he soon became as popular in Yaroslavl as he had been in Kholm and America. But his gentleness and love were combined with firmness on matters of principle. This once brought him into conflict with the governor of Yaroslavl, who on December 22, 1913 secured his transfer to Vilnius. The people were greatly saddened, and at a grand farewell ceremony he was made an honorary citizen of the city, the first time any bishop had been accorded this honour.

The Holy Synod awarded him the order of St. Vladimir, second class, in 1909, and the order of St. Alexander Nevsky in 1913. In 1916 he was awarded a diamond cross for wearing on his klobuk.

In Vilnius the Orthodox were a distrusted minority in a sea of Catholics. But once again Vladyka succeeded in winning the trust and respect of the heterodox. However, his work in this field was interrupted by the war. He worked first with refugees, and then with the soldiers at the front. He conducted services under bombardment and maintained the morale of the soldiers so well that he was awarded a military order for distinguished conduct. When Vilnius was occupied by the Germans, Archbishop Tikhon was forced to go to Moscow, taking the relics of the holy three Vilnius martyrs with him. However, he was not detained long in Moscow and soon returned to the part of his diocese which was still in Russian hands. Here he often visited the soldiers and came under enemy fire.

Once he was entrusted by the Synod with travelling to Tobolsk, where Bishop Barnabas, supported by Rasputin, had on his own initiative carried out the glorification of a saint. As always, the archbishop carried out his obedience with tact, and succeeded in reconciling the warring parties.

During the war Archbishop Tikhon was frequently called upon to attend meetings of the Holy Synod. On January 29, 1917, on his way to one such meeting, he stopped in his native land of Pskov and served the Divine Liturgy and a moleben for the granting of victory to the Russian armies in the Trinity cathedral. That evening, however, at a meeting with the seminarians, he prophesied terrible times to come for Russia, and great sorrows and deprivations for everyone without exception...

After the abdication of the Tsar and the coming to power of the Provisional Government in March, 1917, Archbishop Tikhon was a member of the Synod under its new procurator, Prince Lvov. However, there was so much friction between Lvov and the members of the Synod that in April the procurator dismissed all of them except the future traitor of the Russian Church inside Russia, Archbishop Sergius of Finland. Sergius became head of the new Synod, which also included the future traitor of the Russian Church in America, Metropolitan Platon of Georgia.

Since Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow had been among those removed from his see, it was necessary to elect a new metropolitan. On June 19, 1917, a congress of the clergy and laity of the diocese of Moscow met and on June 23 / July 6 elected Tikhon as Archbishop of Moscow and Kolomna. The decisive vote took place before the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God. However, this appointment caused some pain to him, because for a long time the lawful incumbent of the see of Moscow, Metropolitan Macarius, protested against his removal and did not want to recognize it as lawful. Some years later, the two holy hierarchs were reconciled.

Metropolitan Tikhon immediately set about visiting all the churches of his diocese, and became a member of the committee to prepare the election of delegates to the forthcoming Local Council of the Russian Church.

At about this time Bishop Joannicius of Archangelsk arrived at the Solovki monastery to supervise monastic life there. As he was coming towards the monastery hospital in the company of the monastery's clergy and monks, he met a monk named Tikhon whom the brotherhood considered to be mad and who ran up to the window, opened it, stood on the sill and started to bless the approaching company with both hands, crying:

"We, humble Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, declare..."

Then he looked at the bishop who was just entering and said:

"and we bless you."

Surprised by this strange behaviour, the bishop asked the superior who this was. And he received the reply:

"This is Monk Tikhon, who already a year ago, having gone out of his mind, began to go up to the window and bless the people entering, saying similar things."

It is not known whether the bishop was satisfied by this reply. But soon the election of Archbishop Tikhon to the patriarchate gave a prophetic significance to the acts of Monk Tikhon...

On August 15, 1917, the Local Council of the Russian Church opened in the cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow attended by 564 delegates. On the day before the opening of the Council Archbishop Tikhon was promoted to the rank of Metropolitan. He was elected president of the Council by 407 votes to 33.

While the Council was in session, the Kremlin was being bombarded by the Bolsheviks, who were resisted only by a small force of junkers. When the Kremlin fell, everybody in the Council was very worried by the fate of the young men who had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks, and on the fate of the holy things that had been fired at. The first to enter the Kremlin when access was made possible was Metropolitan Tikhon at the head of a small group of Council delegates. These delegates witnessed that the metropolitan went everywhere fearlessly, paying no attention to the savage soldiery.

The first major question before the Council was the restoration of the patriarchate, which had been abolished by Peter the Great in 1700. 200 delegates participated in the Section on the Higher Church Administration which was to decide this question, and for a long time the opponents of the patriarchate, led by the future renovationist Professor Titlinov, waged a bitter struggle against its restoration. However, the Bolshevik coup on October 25 changed the mood of the Council, and on October 31, at the suggestion of Count Paul Mikhailovich Grabbe, nominations of candidates took place.

On the first secret ballot, Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov received 101 votes, Archbishop Arsenius of Novgorod - 27 votes, and Metropolitan Tikhon - 23 votes. On the second ballot, only the first three candidates on the first ballot were considered. Archbishop Anthony got 159 votes, Archbishop Arsenius - 148 votes, and Metropolitan Tikhon - 125 votes. These three names were then put in a blessed urn and placed before the famous wonderworking Vladimir icon of the Mother of God. On the following morning, October 28, after the Divine Liturgy and a moleben served to the Holy Hierarchs of Moscow, Elder Alexis of Zossima hermitage drew out one of the names and handed it to Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, the future hieromartyr. Metropolitan Vladimir crossed himself and read out:

"Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow, Axios!"

A delegation from the Council headed by Metropolitan Vladimir went to the Trinity podvorye, where Metropolitan Tikhon was staying. After a moleben had been served, the Patriarch-elect said: "Your news about my election as Patriarch is for me that scroll on which was written: 'Tears, groans and mourning.' Such was the scroll that the Prophet Ezekiel had to eat. How many tears I shall have to swallow and how many groans let out in the patriarchal service that is set before me, and especially at such a terrible time! Like the ancient leader of the Hebrew people, Moses, I shall have to say to the Lord: 'Why dost Thou torment Thy servant? And why have I not found mercy before Thine eyes, that Thou shouldest lay upon me the burden of the whole of this people? Did I bear this people in my womb and give birth to it, that Thou shouldest say to me: bear it in your hands as a nanny bears a child? I alone cannot bear all this people, for it is heavy for me' (Numbers 11.11-14). From now on the care of all the Russian churches is laid upon me, and I must care for them every day. And who could be happy with that, even if he were among those who are stronger than me? But may the will of God be done! I find strength in the fact that I did not seek this election, and it came in spite of me and in spite of men, in accordance with the lot of God. I trust that the Lord Who has called me will Himself help me through His almighty grace to bear the burden laid upon me and will make it light. A consolation and encouragement for me is the fact that my election has not taken place without the will of the All-Pure Mother of God. Twice she, through the presence of her honourable Vladimir icon has been present in the cathedral of the Saviour at my election. This time the lot was drawn from her wonderworking image. I have as it were come under her honourable omophorion. May she the all-powerful one stretch out to me, the weak one, the hand of her help, and may she deliver this city and all the Russian land from every need and sorrow."

Then he withdrew to the Holy Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra to prepare to receive his lofty rank.

Soon the word went through Moscow that God had chosen, not "the cleverest" (umneyshij), Anthony, or "the strictest" (strozhayshij), Arsenius, but "the kindest" or "the quietest" (tishayshij), Tikhon. And on November 21 / December 4, 1917, Metropolitan Tikhon was enthroned as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in the Kremlin Dormition cathedral.

As he received the staff of St. Peter from Metropolitan Vladimir, the newly elected Patriarch expressed his sorrow at the tragic events that were taking place around him: "The patriarchate," he said, "is being restored in Rus' at a terrible time, in the midst of shooting and weapons of death-dealing fire. Probably it will itself be forced to resort more than once to bans in order to bring the disobedient to their senses and restore church order. But as in ancient times the Lord appeared to the Prophet Elijah not in the storm or in the earthquake but in the coolness and the breath of a quiet breeze, so now to

our pusillanimous reproaches: 'Lord, the sons of Russia have abandoned Thy covenant, they have destroyed Thy altars, they have fired at the holy things of the churches and the Kremlin, they have slaughtered Thy priests' - the quiet breath of Thy words is heard: 'There are still seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the contemporary Baal and have not betrayed the true God.' And the Lord as it were says to me: 'Go and search for those for whose sake the Russian Land still stands and is maintained. But do not abandon the lost sheep who are doomed to destruction and slaughter - sheep who are truly pitiful. Shepherd them, and for this take this, the staff of goodwill. With it search out the lost sheep, return the oppressed, bind up the wounds of the wounded, strengthen the sick, destroy those who have grown fat and obstreperous, shepherd them with justice.' May the Chief Shepherd Himself help me in this, through the prayers of the All-Holy Birth-Giver of god and the Holy Hierarchs of Moscow. May God bless you all with His Grace. Amen."

After the Liturgy the Patriarch went round the Kremlin in a cross procession, sprinkling the wall with holy water.

Patriarch Tikhon immediately had to face a great test of his leadership as the new Bolshevik regime passed law after law restricting and robbing the Church, while excesses and murders of Church servers throughout the country increased. He did not wait for the delegates to the Council to return from their Christmas recess, but immediately took upon himself the whole responsibility for rebuking the communists. On January 19, 1918, he anathematized the Bolsheviks and their co-workers, saying: "I adjure all of you who are faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ not to commune with such outcasts of the human race in any matter whatsoever". Addressing the pastors and archpastors, he said: "Do not hesitate for a moment in your spiritual activity, but with fiery zeal call your children to defend the rights of the Orthodox Church which are now being trampled on. Immediately organize spiritual unions, call on them to enter, not of necessity but voluntary, into the ranks of the spiritual warriors, who oppose external force with the force of their holy inspiration..." The decree ended with an appeal to defend the Church, if necessary, to the death. This was read out by Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan to a closed session of the Council, which immediately supported the Patriarch with an epistle of its own.

In March, the Patriarch condemned the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which separated the Ukraine and Kiev, the mother of all Russian cities, in enemy hands and left millions of Russians in captivity, freeing the Bolsheviks to turn the war into a civil one. In May he made a triumphant journey to Petrograd, where the faithful greeted him en masse and with great joy. In July, on hearing of the killing of the Tsar and his family, he immediately served a pannikhida and funeral Liturgy during a session of the Council. He condemned the murders, and warned that anyone who did not likewise condemn it was also guilty of this most terrible of crimes.

Shortly afterwards some members of the Council suggested to the Patriarch that he take refuge abroad, so that he not share in the fate of the Tsar. "The flight of the Patriarch," replied his Holiness, "would play into the hands of the enemies of the Church. Let them do with me what they want."

In October, 1918 the Patriarch again condemned the Red terror, saying: "It is not our task to judge earthly governments. Every government allowed by God would attract blessing if it were truly a servant of the Lord for the benefit of its subjects and were a deterrent not for good deeds but for bad (Rom. 13.34). But now to you who use your powers for the persecution of the innocent, we direct our word of warning. Celebrate the anniversary of your rule by freeing the imprisoned, cease the bloodshed, violence, destruction, persecution of the faith, turn not to destroying, but to maintaining order and laws, give the people their well-deserved rest from civil war. Otherwise you will have to answer for all the righteous blood shed by you (Luke 11.51), and you who have taken the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26.52)."

When this epistle was read out at a united session of the Synod and the Higher Church Council, many tried to dissuade the Patriarch from publishing it, indicating that it would put him in great danger. The Patriarch listened carefully to all this, but did not change his decision. However, the Muscovites feared for the Patriarch's life, and organized 24-hour guards at his residence so that the alarm could be sounded immediately if he was arrested.

On November 24, 1918 his Holiness was subjected to house arrest, and a search was conducted in his flat. On January 6, 1919 he was released under guard. In the course of 1920 the Patriarch was often subjected to house arrest.

As the civil war progressed Patriarch Tikhon adopted a strictly apolitical stance that reflected the fact that there were millions of Russian Orthodox on either side of the conflict. Thus in the autumn of 1919, when the White armies had captured Orel and threatened Moscow, he issued an epistle to the clergy requiring that they not enter into the political struggle, while at the same time reminding them that the commandments of God are more binding than any human directives: "Remember the canonical rules, archpastors and fathers, and the testaments of the holy apostles: 'Guard yourselves from those who create discord and dissension'. Decline from participation in political parties and speeches, obey your human superiors in external matters (I Peter 2.14), give no reasons to the Soviet authorities to suspect you, submit to their commands insofar as they do not contradict faith and piety, for we must obey God, according to the apostolic exhortation, more than men (Acts 4.19; Galatians 1.10)."

On November 7/20, 1920, as the White armies boarded the ships taking them to Constantinople with several Russian hierarchs on board, he issued his famous ukaz no. 362, which authorized hierarchs who were out of touch with the centre to form their own autonomous administrations. This not only gave the émigré bishops the basis for their independent activity, but also

helped the patriarchal Church to survive during the ascendancy of "the Living Church" and was used by the Catacomb Church after the apostasy of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927.

In 1921 a terrible famine struck the Volga region. Tikhon immediately authorized that the Church send aid to the starving, and in August appealed to foreign Christian leaders for help. But the Bolsheviks saw in this tragedy an opportunity to oppress the Church even further, and letters began appearing in the press accusing the Church of greed and demanding that all the Church's wealth should be used to feed the hungry. The Patriarch then issued a statement authorizing that all the church valuables could be donated, but only voluntarily and excluding those which were consecrated for use in the Divine Liturgy.

In February, 1922, the Bolsheviks decreed that the local soviets should seize all the valuables from the churches. This led to bloody clashes between the local soviets and believers. Many Orthodox suffered martyrdom defending the Church from sacrilege, many were brought to trial. On May 6 the Patriarch himself was placed under house arrest in the Troitskoye podvorye, being accused of "resistance to the requisitioning of church valuables" under articles 62 and 119 of the criminal code.

At one such trial, that of the 54 in Moscow in May, the Patriarch appeared as a witness for the defence.

President: "Do you consider the state's laws obligatory or not?"

Patriarch: "Yes, I recognize them, *to the extent that they do not contradict the rules of piety.*"

President: "You ordered that your appeal calling on the people to disobey the authorities [this was the statement on church valuables] should be read out to the whole people.

Patriarch: "The authorities well know that in my appeal there was no call [to the people] to resist the authorities, but only to preserve their holy things, and in the name of their preservation to ask the authorities to allow their value to be paid in money, and, by helping their starving brothers in this way, to preserve their holy things."

President: "Well this call will cost the lives of your faithful servants."

At this point he pointed with his hand to those on trial.

Then, according to another source, the testimony of eye-witnesses, Patriarch Tikhon cast a loving look at the priests of the bench of the accused and said: 'I always said and continue to say... that I alone am guilty of everything, and this is only my Christian army, obediently following the

commands of the head sent to her by God. But if a redemptive sacrifice is necessary, if the death of innocent sheep of the flock of Christ is necessary' – at this point the voice of the Patriarch was raised and it became audible in all the corners of the huge hall, and he himself as it were grew tall as, addressing the accused, he raised his hands and blessed them, loudly and distinctly pronouncing the words – 'I bless the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to go to torment and death for Him'. The accused fell on their knees. Both the judges and the prosecutors fell silent... The session did not continue that evening. In the morning the verdict was pronounced: 18 priests were to be shot. When they were being led out of the hall, they began to chant: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life".

Among the critics of the Patriarch on the question of church valuables was a group of pro-revolutionary "renovationist" clergy, who created the so-called "Living Church". In this same month of May they took advantage of the Patriarch's transfer to the Donskoy monastery to seize control of the Church's central administration.

Soon the renovationists were attacking several of the basic dogmas of the Church, and introduced several modernist innovations such as the new calendar and married bishops. They adopted a vigorously pro-Soviet and anti-patriarchal policy. The GPU supported them while imprisoning those clergy who remained loyal to the Patriarch. Soon most of the churches in Moscow and about a third of those in the whole country were in their hands. However, the masses of the people remained faithful to the Patriarch, who in April, 1922 was imprisoned in the Taganka prison pending his trial.

At this last liturgy in freedom, on April 24 / May 7, Fr. Michael Polsky concelebrated with the Patriarch in the village of Bogorodsk in Moscow. "Late at night, before this, he returned from the Cheka. He had only just been interrogated cruelly and for a long time. At home, among those close to him, who were tormented with expectation, the Patriarch said:

"'This time they interrogated me really strictly...'

"'What will happen to you?' asked one anxiously.

"'They promised to cut off my head,' replied the Patriarch with his usual geniality.

"He served the liturgy – as always, with not the slightest trace of nervousness or even tension in prayer. Looking at him, who was preparing himself for prison, and perhaps also for execution (that was a serious threat at the time), I involuntarily remembered the words of Christ: 'The prince of this world come, and will find nothing of his own in Me'. Let them accuse, they will find nothing, he will be innocent..."

At their second council, which met in Moscow in April, 1923, the renovationists first heaped praises on the revolution, which they called a "Christian creation", on the Soviet government, which they said was the first government in the world that strove to realize "the ideal of the Kingdom of God", and on Lenin: "First of all, we must turn with words of deep gratitude to the government of our state, which, in spite of the slanders of foreign informers, does not persecute the Church... The word of gratitude and welcome must be expressed by us to the only state in the world which performs, without believing, that work of love which we, believers, do not fulfil, and also to the leader of Soviet Russia, V.I. Lenin, who must be dear also to church people..."

The council tried Patriarch Tikhon in absentia, and deprived him not only of his clerical orders but also of his monasticism, calling him thenceforth "layman Basil Bellavin". Then the patriarchate itself was abolished, its restoration being called a counter-revolutionary act. Finally, some further resolutions were adopted allowing white clergy to become bishops, and priests to remarry, and introducing the Gregorian calendar. When the decisions of the council were taken to the Patriarch for his signature, he calmly wrote: "Read. The council did not summon me, I do not know its competence and for that reason cannot consider its decision lawful."

46 "bishops" out of the 73 who attended the council signed the decree condemning the Patriarch. One of them, Joasaph (Shishkovsky), told Fr. Basil Vinogradov: "The leaders of the council Krasnitsky and Vvedensky gathered all those present at the 'council' of bishops for this meeting. When several direct and indirect objections to these leaders' proposal to defrock the Patriarch began to be expressed, Krasnitsky quite openly declared to all present: 'He who does not immediately sign this resolution will only leave this room straight for the prison.' The terrorized bishops (including Joasaph himself) did not find the courage to resist in the face of the threat of a new prison sentence and forced labour in a concentration camp and... signed, although almost all were against the resolution. None of the church people had any doubt that the 'council's' sentence was the direct work of Soviet power and that now a criminal trial and bloody reprisal against the Patriarch was to be expected at any time."

The pressures on the Patriarch were mounting inexorably, with daily visits from the GPU agent Tuchkov, who made blackmail threats to force him to make concessions to the State. (Tikhon called him "an angel of Satan".) In April, the government announced that the Patriarch was about to go on trial on charges arising from the trials of the 54 in Moscow and of Metropolitan Benjamin in Petrograd the previous year. However, partly because the authorities wanted to give the renovationist council the opportunity to condemn him first, and partly, later, as the result of an ultimatum issued by the British foreign minister Lord Curzon, which was supported by an outcry in the British and American press, the trial was postponed to June 17.

At the beginning of June, the Patriarch fell ill and was transferred from the Donskoy monastery to the Taganka prison. There he was able to receive only official Soviet newspaper accounts of the Church struggle, which greatly exaggerated the successes of the renovationists. Feeling that his presence at the helm of the Church was absolutely necessary, and that of his two enemies, the renovationists and the communists, the renovationists were the more dangerous, the Patriarch decided to make concessions to the government in order to be released. As he said: "Reading the newspapers in prison, with each passing day I was more and more horrified that the renovationists were taking the Church into their hands. If I had known that their successes were so meagre and that the people was not following them, I would never have come out of prison." But, being in ignorance of the true state of affairs, on June 3/16 and again on June 18 / July 1 he issued his famous "confession", in which he repented of all his anti-Soviet acts (including the anathema against the Bolsheviks), and "finally and decisively" set himself apart "from both the foreign and the internal monarchist White-guard counter-revolutionaries".

This "confession" was undoubtedly a compromise, a concession in favour of the Bolsheviks, which sowed no little confusion and perplexity in the ranks of the Orthodox. However, as Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) points out: "1) it did not annul the anathema in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church on Soviet power, 2) he did not declare himself a friend of Soviet power and its co-worker, 3) it did not invoke God's blessing on it, 4) it did not call on the Russian people to obey this power as God-established, 5) it did not condemn the movement for the re-establishment of the monarchy in Russia, and 6) it did not condemn the Whites' struggle to overthrow Soviet power. By his declaration Patriarch Tikhon only pointed to the way of acting which he had chosen for the further defence and preservation of the Russian Orthodox Church. How expedient this way of acting was is another question,... but in any case Patriarch Tikhon did not cross that boundary which had to separate him, as head of the Russian Orthodox Church, from the godless power."

Moreover, as reported in *Izvestia* on June 12, 1924, the Patriarch managed to write to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), as it were replying to the perplexities elicited by his words on "walling himself off" from the "counter-revolution" of the Church Abroad: "I wrote this for the authorities, but you sit and work"...

Tikhon was released on June 27, 1923, and his appearance in public - he had aged terribly in prison - was enough to send the Living Church into a sharp and irreversible decline. They remained dangerous as long as they retained the favour of the authorities; but by 1926 the authorities were already turning to others (the Gregorians, then Metropolitan Sergius) as better suited for the task of destroying the Church. And by the end of the Second World War the last remaining renovationists had been absorbed into the neo-renovationist Soviet Moscow Patriarchate. However, the Patriarch bitterly repented of his "repentance"; he said that if he had known how weak the Living Church really was, he would not have signed the "confession" and

would have stayed in prison. And when he was sadly asked why he had said that he was no longer an enemy of the Soviet government, he replied: "But I did not say that I was its (i.e. the Soviet government's) friend..."

We see a striking parallel between the destinies and decisions of Patriarch Tikhon and Tsar Nicholas here. Both were peacemakers, ready to lay down their own lives for the sake of their flock. Both, in the interests of saving lives, made fateful decisions which both came bitterly to regret – the Tsar his decision to abdicate the throne, and the Patriarch his decision to "repent" of his anti-Soviet behaviour. But in spite of these mistakes, both were granted the crown of life from the Lord, Who looks on the heart and intentions of men, forgiving them their unintended consequences...

Protopriest Lev Lebedev writes: "On freeing Patriarch Tikhon from prison, [the Bolsheviks] at the same time officially *forbade* the commemoration of his name during the Divine services, as *a criminal* whose accusation *had not been removed*...For violating this ban, according to the circular of Narkomiust N 254 of December 8, 1923, those guilty (that is, those who would continue to consider the Patriarch the head of the Church and commemorate him during the Divine services) were subjected to *the punishment appointed for criminals* – three years in the camps! But in spite of everything the people, the priests and deacons *continued to commemorate him!*"

The Patriarch, though now released from prison, was severely curtailed in what he could do. Once he told Fr. Michael Polsky, who brought him greetings and bows from bishops and priests who were in prison: "It's better to sit in prison. After all, I only consider myself to be in freedom, but I can do nothing. I send a hierarch to the south, and he lands up in the north; I send another to the west, and they take him to the east."

On July 15, the Patriarch anathematized the Living Church, declaring: "They have separated themselves from the body of the Ecumenical Church and deprived themselves of God's favour, which resides only in the Church of Christ. Consequently, all arrangements made during our absence by those ruling the Church, since they had neither legal right nor canonical authority, are non-valid and void, and all actions and sacraments performed by bishops and clergymen who have forsaken the Church are devoid of God's grace and power; the faithful taking part in such prayers and sacraments shall receive no sanctification thereby, and are subject to condemnation for participating in their sin..."

Large numbers of parishes, especially in such important urban centres as Petrograd (through Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky)) and Voronezh (through Archbishop Peter (Zverev)), now renounced renovationism, and influential renovationist hierarchs such as Metropolitan Sergius hastened (and yet not very quickly, as Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene of Glukhov pointed out) to make public confessions to the Patriarch.

The authorities then tried to make the Patriarch introduce several of the innovations which the renovationists had adopted. One of these was the new calendar. For a short time, the Patriarch was in favour of this, thinking that the other Orthodox Churches had accepted the new calendar. However, the people were against it, and when he received a telegram from Archbishop Anastasius of Kishinev, the future first-hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad, saying that the other Orthodox Churches had not accepted the new calendar, the Patriarch reversed his decision. He informed the authorities about this, and noted with some irony that he did not quite understand why the secular authorities should be interested in changing to the new style...

"The brutal persecution," writes Fr. Demetrius Serfes, "did not let up during the entire remaining period of the Patriarch's life. They wished thereby to make him their obedient slave, as Metropolitan Sergius subsequently became, but he remained a guardian of Orthodoxy. Never during the Church's entire history had it ever been confronted by such a cruel and evil foe. The Patriarch literally fell ill after every encounter with Tuchkov, who directed Soviet ecclesiastical policy. The Patriarch was not afraid of martyrdom. The most savage death would probably have been easier for him than having to be constantly concerned over exiled bishops, priests and faithful laymen. On the other hand, as the breakdown which took place during his imprisonment indicated, it would seem that it was essential to do everything possible without changing the fundamental principles of the Church and its internal freedom, so that the recent state of affairs under which the sheep were abandoned to the mercy of wolves, would not occur again. The sheep however, realized that their shepherd had not forsaken them, but had been parted from them against his will. And they showed their love for him whenever possible."

In February, 1924, one of the renovationist leaders, Krasnitsky, with GPU backing, tried to join the patriarchal Church. After some wavering, the Patriarch rejected this, though the effort caused him to fall ill. Then Patriarch Gregory IV of Constantinople, who had just caused a schism in his own Church by introducing the new calendar, tried to reconcile the Patriarch with the "Living Church". The Patriarch decisively rejected this attempt.

On March 21, 1924 the case against Patriarch Tikhon was shelved. The Bolsheviks now resorted to another tactic. Instead of trying to remove the Patriarch, whose popularity was too solidly entrenched among the people, they tried to force him into accepting legalization by the state on terms that involved more-or-less total submission to them. To this end they applied blackmail - the threat of shooting several bishops. Under this terrible moral torture, the Patriarch's health began to deteriorate...

At about this time the Patriarch confided to his close friend and personal physician, Michael Zhizhilenko, the future Catacomb Bishop Maximus, that he feared that soon the "political" demands of the Soviets would go beyond

the bounds of faithfulness to Christ, and that the Church, in order to remain faithful, would have to go into the catacombs.

On December 7, 1924, the Patriarch sent an epistle to all the clergy of the Church, in which he wrote: "Whoever was in the administration of the Living Church in the HCA cannot take up any further administrative position in our Church. And not only can he not be an administrator: he cannot have a vote during a Council." This was an important decree, because it disqualified the man who eventually became "patriarch" after Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, who had been in the renovationist HCA.

After the publication of this epistle, the Bolsheviks decided to kill the Patriarch – or perhaps only frighten him by killing the man closest to him, his cell-attendant **James Anisimovich Polozov** (according to another version, Sergeyeovich Ostroumov). He began serving the patriarch in 1902, when he was in America. On returning from America, in 1920, James married Princess Drutskaya-Sokolinskaya. On March 19, 1921 he was arrested at the patriarchal Trinity podvorye and cast into the Lubyanka, and then into Taganka prison. The order was signed by Dzerzhinsky himself. Immediately the patriarch sent a letter to the investigator, asking him to free James Anisimovich. A few days after the arrest, his first daughter was born, but the mother's emotion was such that it affected the child, who died eight days after birth. On August 11 James Anisimovich was condemned to one year's imprisonment on Solovki. But the sentence was not carried into effect, and he was released because the GPU had only arrested him in order to exert pressure on the patriarch. On March 22, 1922 he was arrested again. The patriarch said: "They don't need him. Let them take me." Again, James Anisimovich was interrogated only once, and for a long time was not even accused. In the end he was accused that "in every way he aided and made easier the coming to the head of the Church of counter-revolutionary elements", but he refused to sign this. He was cast into the Lubyanka, but fell seriously ill there with a nervous disease, so he was transferred to a prison hospital. His wife did everything she could to have him released. By October she had obtained his release on condition that he promised not to leave the city. When she came to take him home he was in such a state that she did not recognize him, and the whole of his journey home he was stopping and weeping. Two weeks after his release a son was born to the couple. The patriarch became his godfather.

On the evening of December 22, 1924 another attempt was made on the life of the patriarch or his faithful cell-attendant – it is not clear who. In any case, it was the cell-attendant who was killed. Jane Swan writes: "... The Patriarch was standing before the icons in his bedroom praying. Hearing a shot, he crossed himself in the direction of the shot, then opened the door. For a moment, the door could not be opened for something was obstructing it. Then it suddenly gave and there James lay covered with blood, half on the floor and half against the door. Two men stood there. On seeing the Patriarch, one of them grabbed his own head with his hands and turning, ran out. The other followed, also running. Tikhon shouted:

"Stop, what have you done? You have killed a man!"

"James opened his eyes, looked at the Patriarch, and then died. The police were called at once, and next day a notice was printed in *Izvestia* that two thieves had entered the apartment of Citizen Bellavin and stolen a fur coat. No mention was made of the murder and no investigation was ever made. Curiously enough, the Bolsheviks made an issue over James' burial [which took place on December 25 before a huge crowd of worshippers]. The Patriarch wished to have him buried at the monastery and for a while the Bolsheviks refused. Finally it was allowed, but almost as soon as the grave was made, the government announced that they were building a crematorium on that spot. Tikhon had the grave removed next to the walls of the church and eventually his own body was to be placed in the grave next to James'. This incident shattered the little health which remained to the Patriarch and his attacks [of angina] increased."

Holy Martyr James was canonized by the Russian Church Abroad in 1981.

According to the witness of Bishop Maximus (Zhizhilenko), during the murder of his cell-attendant, the Patriarch remained in a chair in the same room, but the murderer did not see him.

On January 12, 1925, the Patriarch was admitted to a small private hospital run by Dr. Bakunina. Even here he came under pressure from the GPU agent Tuchkov. However, his health recovered somewhat, and for a while he was able to officiate in church again. On March 23, he consecrated two bishops. But the following evening he arrived back at the hospital exhausted after a meeting of the Holy Synod.

Fr. Alexander Tolgsky, who died in 1962 as pastor of the church of St. Elijah the Prophet in Moscow, witnesses that after confessions made to him by doctors of the Bakunina clinic, "I have not the slightest doubt that Patriarch Tikhon was martyred".

According to the official version of the Patriarch's death, he died at 11.45 p.m. on March 25 / April 7, 1925, "at the end of the feast of the Annunciation". There is no hint in the official version that the Patriarch may have been poisoned. But this is the inference to be drawn from the following account by the Catacomb Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), which he received from the Patriarch's cell-attendant:

"The Patriarch continued his work. On the Annunciation [March 25], having celebrated the Liturgy, he was completely healthy. At four o'clock Metropolitan Seraphim of Tver [a suspected GPU agent who later joined Metropolitan Sergius' false synod] came to him. The Patriarch told him that he would serve the next day, but Seraphim said:

"Do not serve, your Holiness, have a rest. You are very tired and weak."

"Seraphim left at eight o'clock in the evening.

"The Patriarch felt well and was getting ready to serve the next day. But suddenly there was a ring at the door. When they opened the door, a doctor entered. The doctor said:

"Your Holiness! You rang us and asked us to come since you were weak. Here I am to examine you and prescribe you some medicines."

"The Patriarch said: 'But no. I feel fine.'

"Okay," said the doctor, "but just allow me to examine you. Your pulse is weak. You must drink some medicine."

"The Patriarch asked: 'Why have you come and not my doctor, who always looks after me?'

"He's not at home now, he's on call, but I was at home - so here I am," replied the doctor. "In an hour's time I shall send you a mixture."

"An hour after the doctor had left, at ten o'clock in the evening, [the cell-attendant] Mark brought the Patriarch a mixture and said that the doctor had ordered him to drink a spoonful.

"Give it to me," said the Patriarch.

"Mark poured out a spoonful of the mixture and the Patriarch drank it. Immediately he began to vomit (be sick). The cell-attendants Stratonicus and Mark rang the doctor. After a few minutes the doctor appeared. The Patriarch was lying down.

"What's the matter with him?" asked the doctor.

"The doctor prescribed a mixture and ordered us to give him one spoonful," replied Mark.

"The doctor demanded to see the mixture immediately. They gave it him. On seeing it, the doctor threw up his hands and immediately sent the Patriarch to hospital. Mark and Stratonicus took him out and put him in the carriage. They got in themselves and accompanied him to the hospital. There they gave him some milk, and prepared some baths, but nothing helped. Within an hour and a half Patriarch Tikhon had died. The cell-attendants took him back. At three o'clock the Patriarch was laid out as a corpse at home. I write this from the words of the cell-attendants Mark and Stratonicus, who were with the Patriarch in the place of the murdered James."

Just as the official version of the Patriarch's death may have been tampered with, so his official will, which was flagrantly pro-Soviet, was almost certainly a forgery. That was the opinion of Bishop Maximus and Protopriest Basil Vinogradov. As Bishop Gregory Grabbe writes: "We know that on the day of the death of the Patriarch the question of the epistle [his will], which was demanded by Tuchkov, was discussed. Apparently the last conversation between the Patriarch and Metropolitan Peter was precisely about this. The room in which the Patriarch died was immediately sealed by Tuchkov. Only after several days did Tuchkov give what purported to be the will of his Holiness to the two metropolitans to be taken to the newspaper.

"But Fr. B. Vinogradov tells us, from the words of people who were near the room of his Holiness the Patriarch, that during the conversation with Metropolitan Peter the Patriarch was heard to say: 'I cannot do that.' Then it is very important to draw attention to the fact that at the meeting of the assembled bishops the notorious 'will' was NOT proclaimed. Fr. Vinogradov is right in emphasizing that Tuchkov, in allowing the meeting, would undoubtedly have demanded its proclamation if it had really been signed by the Patriarch. Moreover, Metropolitan Peter in his first address as locum tenens did not mention the will...."

"Nevertheless," writes Protopriest Lev Lebedev, "a week after the death of the Patriarch the document was published in the newspaper Izvestia under the title 'Testamentary Epistle' of Patriarch Tikhon (later it was simply called 'Testament'). *They overlooked* a series of absurdities. Thus the 'Testament' (that is, that which is given before death) began with the words: 'Now we... *having recovered from illness*, entering again on the service of the Church...' and so on. The heading: 'By the mercy of God Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow *and the whole Russian Church*' is illiterate: he always wrote 'and all Russia'. The 'Testament' is dated 7 April, 1925, a date only according to the new style, whereas the Patriarch *always* used a double date (according to the old and the new styles). Finally, Metropolitan Peter *said nothing* to the almost 60 hierarchs assembled for the burial of his Holiness on April 12 about the existence of the 'Testament', which he could not have failed to do in view of its exceptional importance if it had been signed. And then he did not distribute it to the dioceses and parishes, which he would have been *obliged* to do as Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne. But the most weighty proof of the its fabrication lies in the fact that Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), who agreed to full cooperation with Bolshevism and on July 29, 1927 wrote his infamous 'Declaration', in which he emphasises the direct *succession* of his line of friendship with Soviet power from Patriarch Tikhon, says not a word about the 'Testament' and does not refer to it, which he would unfailingly have done if he had considered it genuine."

Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov) has further pointed out that the wording of the Patriarch's will is lifted almost word for word from the renovationist appeal published on April 30 / May 12, 1922 under the heading: "To all the believing sons of the Orthodox Church of Russia". Moreover,

although "the official Soviet 'variant of the death' of Patriarch Tikhon was timed to take place in the clinic of Dr. Bakunina", it ends with the words "Moscow. Donskoj monastery". "This means that the writing and signing of this 'document' took place and was finished in the Donskoy monastery, and not in the clinic of Dr. Bakunina! Which corresponds to the hidden truth..."

According to the Patriarch's cell attendant, Constantine Mikhailovich Pashkevich, his last words, uttered in an unusually strict tone, were: "I shall now go to sleep... deeply and for a long time. The night will be long and very dark."

The burial of the Patriarch took place on March 30 / April 12, 1925 in the presence of fifty-eight bishops and enormous crowds. There has never been such a huge demonstration of religious feeling in Russia from that time to the present day. He was buried in the old winter church of the Donskoy monastery.

The monastery was closed in 1927, and it was rumoured that the monks had hidden the relics to protect them from the communists. However, in May, 1991, after a fire that damaged the church, a search commenced for the relics of the Patriarch. Hearts sank when, after hours of digging beneath the marble slab bearing the Patriarch's name, they finally uncovered a burial vault only to find it contained nothing but cobwebs. Closer inspection, however, revealed that this chamber was only part of the underground heating system. They also noticed that the heating ducts directly beneath the assumed burial place were firmly secured with cement and not limestone as elsewhere in the system. More significantly, this part of the system lay not on the ground but on top of a massive cement slab. The care with which it was all arranged made it doubtful that this was the work of chekists. Two more days of intense digging - and the real sepulchre was uncovered. It may have been that this was the plan from the first, which would explain why only a few hierarchs were admitted into the church for the actual burial. The relics, which were almost entirely incorrupt in spite of the extreme dampness of the vault, were discovered on February 19, 1992 (according to another source, February 22).

On March 23 / April 5, 1992, patriarchal bishops solemnly transferred the relics of Patriarch Tikhon to the monastery's main church. Witnesses, who included Catacomb Christians, reported that "it was even possible to recognize the face of the Patriarch from his incorrupt visage, and his mantia and mitre were also preserved in complete incorruption. Witnesses also speak about a beautiful fragrance and an unusual feeling of reverential peace at that moment. But then, as some patriarchal clerics confirm, on contact with the air the relics crumbled, or - as the Catacomb Christians remark - the relics were not given into the hands of the Moscow Patriarchate. Then they buried them in plaster - a blasphemous act from an Orthodox point of view..." However, official patriarchal sources contradict this report, saying that the bones were washed before being vested again and re-interred.

At the reliquary there is an icon in which the Saint is depicted holding a scroll with the words: "My children, stray not from the path of the Cross, which has been sent to us by God."

2. HOLY HIEROMARTYR ANDRONICUS, ARCHBISHOP OF PERM

and those with him

Archbishop Andronicus, in the world Vladimir Nikolsky, was born on August 1, 1870. He was the son of a deacon of the church the village of Povodnevo, Myshkin uyezd, Yaroslavl diocese. In 1885 he finished his studies at the Yaroslavl theological school, and in 1891 - at the Yaroslavl seminary, before entering the Moscow Theological Academy. On August 1, 1893, with the blessing of St. John of Kronstadt, he was tonsured into monasticism with the name Andronicus, and was ordained to the diaconate on August 6. In 1895 he graduated from the Academy, and was awarded the degree of candidate of theology for his work "The Early Church's Teaching on the Eucharist as a Sacrifice in connection with the Question of Redemption". On July 22, 1895 he was ordained to the priesthood.

Fr. Andronicus began his pastoral service in the Caucasus, being assistant inspector of the Kutaisi theological seminary from 1895 to 1896. From 1896 to 1897 he was a teacher of homiletics and inspector of the Alexandrovsky missionary seminary in Ardon, Ossetia. In 1897 he was appointed a member of the Russian Orthodox mission in Japan. This appointment, in his own words, "made me so sorrowful that I wept and would have been very glad if it had not happened... It was sad to part... But this led me to the thought that one should not live as one wants, but as God commands..."

Hieromonk Andronicus described his journey to Japan in his book, A Missionary Journey to Japan (Kazan, 1899). On September 21, 1897 he left St. Petersburg, and on October 26 he left Odessa with Archimandrite Sergius (Stragorodsky) and arrived in Japan on December 26 after stopping in Greece, Italy, France, England and the U.S.A. In 1899 he was released from service in Japan.

On March 5, 1899, at the request of Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Fr. Andronicus was appointed rector of the Alexandrovsky missionary seminary in Ufa with the rank of archimandrite. He stepped down from this post on January 13, 1900, and on October 18 was appointed rector of the Ufa theological seminary. In 1901 he was awarded the order of St. Anna, second class, and in 1905 - the order of St. Vladimir, fourth class.

In 1905, after the publication of the Tsar's manifesto on civil liberties, Archimandrite Andronicus appealed to the population of the province to return to peaceful work. Later, he would say the following about the events in Russia: "It is a question... of a struggle between faith and faithlessness, between Christianity and Antichristianity... Masonry... will openly drive out Christianity... and pour into one man of iniquity, the son of perdition, the Antichrist. This is the clue to our most recent liberties: their aim is the destruction of Christianity in Rus'!"

"It is necessary to work in such a way as to organize the whole people into one family, firmly and consciously standing for the holy, historical heritage of the people - the Christian Faith and the autocratic Tsar. It is necessary obstinately and assiduously to steer clear of all parties, and to preserve the people precisely as a people, foreign to all party spirit, for wherever there is party spirit, there is division, there is struggle, there order is not to be looked for, and the whole is bound to disintegrate. And for that reason, when they say that amongst the parties there is a Russian party, this is either a lie or a misunderstanding. No, it is the Russian people itself, plucking up courage, consciously looking round on all sides and deciding firmly to stand for its treasure and not give in to the cunning schemes of its enemies...

"Stand aside from all flattering parties, who want to rob you of your most holy feelings; know God and His autocratic Tsar, so that through your striving and unanimity he may truly be an autocrat, so that he may be the source of righteousness on earth. Remember that all these parties that have appeared do not have your good in mind, but are aiming only to rule over you: the Cadets will be in the majority in the Duma, as they were in the previous Duma - and they will rule by force over everyone; there will be Socialists and other leftists - and they will do the same; no one will be able to restrain them until some other party wins a majority. But the main thing is that all these parties are trying to destroy the Faith in your land - that Faith by which you have been living for a thousand years now; and at the same time they are trying to separate you from your Tsar. And then they will completely get rid of him - that Tsar whom you have placed over you before God, and who rules you according to conscience..."

On November 5, 1906, Archimandrite Andronicus was consecrated Bishop of Kyoto and appointed assistant to the head of the Russian spiritual mission in Japan, St. Nicholas of Japan.

On March 28, 1907 he was greeted by the Orthodox flock in Tokyo. On May 27, he petitioned to be released from service in Japan because of illness, which was granted on July 5. On October 26, 1907, he became the deputy of Bishop Eulogius of Kholm and took temporary control of the diocese, appearing in a session of the State Duma in Kholm.

On March 14, 1908 he was made Bishop of Tikhvin, a vicariate of the Novgorod diocese.

A contemporary remembered: "Already at first sight his thin figure, assiduous prayer and cordial words made a most pleasant impression... Vladyka mixed his zealous, tireless service with heartfelt sermons, his lofty position - with simple, close relations with the Orthodox worshippers. Fear of society's displeasure did not embarrass the bishop-preacher. In his sermons Vladyka often reproved the frenzy of worldly spectacles with great boldness."

Bishop Andronicus continued to be a firm supporter of the Orthodox Tsar: "While among the other peoples of Europe the power of the princes and kings conquered the peoples and in relation to them was the enslaver of the disobedient, but weak [people] - we, on the other hand, ourselves created our own power and placed the princes - the prototypes of our tsars - over ourselves. Thus was it at the recognition of Ryurik and his brothers, whom our forefathers here, near Ilmen lake, placed over themselves to rule at a time when we had only just begun to be conscious of ourselves as a people, when our statehood was founded. With the acceptance of Christianity this power entrusted by the people to the princes received a Divine sanctification from on high: the princes became the anointed of God, receiving high authority over the people from God, so as to rule the people under God. Moreover, as Great Russia grew and became stronger, the power of the princes, who were later called Autocratic Tsars, became higher, being bound to answer for the power that was given them over the people before God and their conscience. Then, when by the permission of God we had no Tsar in Rus', having survived the terrible years under various kinds of administrations, and not finding in any of them salvation from the destruction that threatened, we quickly and unanimously (with the exception of a few power-seekers and intriguers) restored our tried and tested form of power over the kingdom: having elected Michael Fyodorovich to the kingdom, we entrusted the whole Tsarist Autocracy over ourselves to him before God and in the name of God the Omniscient. And we were not mistaken in our wise reasoning this time: our half-destroyed and exhausted kingdom quickly gathered strength and was regenerated and strengthened in all respects, even attaining incomparably greater glory and prosperity than in the times prior to the time of troubles. We came out onto our historical road.

"In what was this autocratic power of the Tsar strong? In that fact that it was based on the conscience and on the Law of God, and was supported by its closeness to the land, by the council of the people. The princely entourage, the boyars' Duma, the Zemsky Sobor - that is what preserved the power of the Tsars in its fullness, not allowing anyone to seize or divert it. The people of proven experience and honesty came from the regions filled with an identical care for the construction of the Russian land. They raised to the Tsar the voice and counsel of the people concerning how and what to build in the country. And it remained for the Tsar to learn from all the voices, to bring everything together for the benefit of all and to command the rigorous fulfilment for the common good of the people of that for which he would answer before the Omniscient God and his own conscience. When applied to the present situation, this was our original Russian constitution worked out by the people itself, but as different from the constitutions from beyond the seas, about which our Red Hundreds of various shades rave, as heaven is from earth. This, our constitution, our Tsarist Autocracy rests not on faithfulness to the Tsar of a chance party majority, which sometimes changes in accordance with various, sometimes purely fortuitous or artificially created conditions, but on faithfulness to the Divine, eternal Law that is supreme both

for the Tsar and the people, and to its echo - the law of the conscience, which dies only with the death of its bearer, man."

On the national question Vladyka wrote: "We [the Russians] have not violated and do not violate any of the peoples which are subject to us; we give to all, as before, freedom in all affairs of life on the basis of a common law that is equal for everyone, as also freedom of confession of his native faith for everyone. But we are the masters of the country and we wish to be such in fact, and therefore nobody must dare to mock us, or acquire power over us, or encroach on our higher rights. Still less shall we allow the dignity of our spiritual wealth and most important heritage - the Orthodox Faith and the Autocratic Tsar - to be mocked... In past times the Georgians themselves asked to be received into submission to Russia; for they saw that otherwise they would perish in intestinal warfare in the Caucasus or would be seized by their neighbours, the Turks or the Persians. And let the other nationalities of our great Kingdom remember that if they separate from Russia they will perish, being seized by their very strong neighbours, who are just waiting for this. And what kind of power these neighbours have let the Poles sincerely describe, remembering their brethren in Germany. A special word concerning the Jews: we did not accept them in our land and did not even conquer them. We cannot and will not give them equal rights, in accordance with the prophetic word of warning of the great writer of the Russian land, F.M. Dostoyevsky: 'The Jews will destroy Russia.' They do not want to use our tolerating them in our midst - so let them go wherever they want: we will not detain them at the gates; and we can live freely and prosperously without them. But if they remain among us, they will be as foreigners for us, not having the right to participate in the building of the people and the state."

On March 8, 1913 Vladyka Andronicus received the independent see of Omsk; and his ascent up the Urals Golgotha began on July 30, 1914 with his appointment as Bishop of Perm and Solikamsk (renamed Perm and Kungur on July 1, 1916). That summer Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna made a pilgrimage to the relics of St. Symeon of Verkhoturye. On July 19, 1914, the feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov, World War I began.

In August Perm heard the voice of Bishop Andronicus: "Amidst today's terrible events the Lord has decreed that I should occupy the see of the enlightener of Perm, St. Stephen. There, in the west, blood-red clouds have already gathered... Yes, this war is terrible, it will demand much blood, many victims. But truly it is allowed by the Providence of God..."

"This is a great mercy of God after all the heavy trials and humiliations which our Homeland has undergone in recent times. And it is all our fault, because we have willingly given our souls into captivity to every kind of foreign import, as if we even rejoiced to become complete Europeans and were leaving behind our so-called Russian backwardness. Now we see from bitter experience that this foreign forwardness is in fact complete barbarism, moral bankruptcy and spiritual perversion."

Vladyka Andronicus set about building up the huge region with its one and a half million inhabitants and 570 churches and monasteries with apostolic zeal.

In November, 1914 he made his first visit to the Belogorsk monastery, to the cave church and to the Seraphimo-Alexeyevsky skete near the monastery. The skete was the cherished dream of some young Christian souls. It published some profound booklets on the monastic life, and the patriotic publication The Voice of Duty. The skete superior, Igumen Seraphim, published a unique chronicle of the 300th anniversary of the House of the Romanovs.

The bishop applied himself zealously to missionary work, to concerts of church music, to spiritual discussions and to patriotic exhortations to serve the Fatherland. He paid particular attention to the monasteries. In the summer of 1915 he again visited the Belogorsk monastery. He went far beyond Kungur to consecrate a place for the Shamarsky missionary monastery, which was founded in memory of the visit to the province of Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna. In June he made a pilgrimage to the Tabor hermitage. There thousands of worshippers had assembled from Perm.

"And so, beloved," said Vladyka to his flock, "do not complain about sorrows as if they were a terrible misfortune. They wash away our sins, while giving extra holiness to virtue. It is not sorrows that are terrible, but carelessness, which destroys the man even while he remains at rest."

In 1916 he travelled to army headquarters and on August 12 had a conversation with the Tsar in which he warned him about Rasputin - to no effect. The Tsar very much liked the gift that Vladyka brought him - a pair of soldier's boots. (The province of Perm provided the army with boots.)

On March 3, 1917, the day after the Tsar's abdication, Vladyka Andronicus invited the leading citizens of the city to a meeting in the bishop's residence. Vladyka read out a draft "To All Russian Orthodox Christians", in which he called the present situation an "interregnum". Calling on all to obey the Provisional Government, he said: "We shall beseech the All-Generous One that He Himself establish authority and peace on our land, that He not abandon us for long without a Tsar, as children without a mother. May He help us, as three hundred years ago He helped our ancestors, that we may unanimously and with inspiration receive a native Tsar from His All-Good Providence."

The new over-procurator wrote to Andronicus demanding an explanation for his actions in support of the old regime and "aimed at the setting up of the clergy against the new order". The correspondence between them culminated on April 16 with a detailed letter from Archbishop Andronicus, in which he said:

“The act on the refusal of Michael Alexandrovich which legitimises the Provisional Government declared that after the Constituent Assembly we could have a monarchical government, or any other, depending on how the Constituent Assembly will pronounce on this. I have submitted to the Provisional Government, I will also submit to a republic if it will be established by the Constituent Assembly. But until then not one citizen is deprived of the freedom of expressing himself on the form of government for Russia; otherwise, if someone could irrevocably predetermine the question on the form of government in Russia, a Constituent Assembly would be superfluous. As I have already said many times, I have submitted to the Provisional Government, I submit now and I call on all to submit. I am perplexed on what basis you find it necessary to accuse men ‘of inciting the people not only against the Provisional Government, but also against the spiritual authorities generally’.

Later in 1917 Vladyka became one of the seven hierarchs in the preconiliar council of the Local Council of the Russian Church in Moscow. From August 15/28, 1917, until the end of the second session on April 7/20, 1918, Vladyka Andronicus took an active part in the Council, being deputy president of the section on the Old Ritualists and Yedinovery, deputy president of the publishing section and president of the section on the legal and property qualifications of the clergy. He was called “Burning Fire” at the Council. After the Bolsheviks seized the printing presses, Vladyka Andronicus did everything possible to see that the documents of the Council and its epistles should be published.

On December 13/26, 1917, he returned to Perm and made an appeal to his flock to stand firm in defence of the Church. On January 28 / February 8, 1918 the Bolsheviks of Perm published the decree on freedom of conscience and the separation of the Church from the State. Thus the lawless robbing of Church property which had taken place in 1917 was replaced by the "lawful" confiscation of the Church's possessions. On January 25 Vladyka Andronicus made a written appeal to the Orthodox people in all the churches and monasteries of the diocese to defend the heritage of the Church from the aggressors and looters.

In February the blood of unarmed defenders of the Faith flowed in Perm. Under the cover of machine-guns the Bolsheviks looted the podvorye of the Belogorsk monastery, killing many. On February 19 Bishop Andronicus wrote: "May the Lord give rest to, and forgive the sins, voluntary and involuntary, of all the Orthodox monks and laypeople killed in the city of Perm for the Holy Faith and Church in the Belogorsk podvorye. May the Lord bless the zeal of all those who at that time stood firmly for the holy things of the Church, fearing only God, and not the enemy terrors. May all Orthodox Christians be encouraged to stand [zealously] for the Holy Church, so as not to allow the enemy of our salvation [to desecrate] our holy heritage. [All] those who rise up against the Holy Church and mock her and her servants I

curse in the name of God... If they do not repent, then I reject them, as enemies of the Church, from Holy Communion and from the hope of eternal salvation. And if any of them secretly or by deceiving the priest receives Communion, then that Communion will be for him with Judas Iscariot for eternal condemnation. This is to be proclaimed in all the churches of the city of Perm and Motovilikhi."

At the end of the second session of the Council, on April 11/24, Vladyka arrived in Perm. On April 16, Holy Thursday, a search was carried out in Vladyka's residence and chancellery by the Cheka. While expecting arrest at any moment, Vladyka was remarkably calm. He confessed and received the Holy Mysteries every day, and his radiant mood never left him.

On April 22 / May 5, he was raised to the rank of archbishop by Patriarch Tikhon. On April 26 / May 9, there was a cross procession in Perm in honour of St. Stephen of Perm, during which the archbishop first read the epistle of the Moscow Council on the subject of the Bolsheviks' decree on the separation of Church and State and then instructed the archdeacon to anathematize "all those who encroach on the temple of the Lord, until they correct themselves."

On April 27, the Friday of Bright Week, Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich Romanov was in the old Peter and Paul cathedral in Perm. He noted in his diary: "Archbishop Andronicus served the Paschal Vespers; he served very well." In the night from the 30th to the 31st of May the great prince was seized by the authorities and disappeared.

On April 28, there was a search in the consistory and certain documents were taken. On the same day Vladyka wrote to Patriarch Tikhon: "I am for the time being in freedom, but I shall probably be arrested soon... In the event of my arrest I am leaving instructions concerning the closing of all the churches of the city of Perm. Let them reckon with the people itself."

The Bolsheviks accused Vladyka of calling on the people to armed resistance to Soviet power. He replied: "My faith and the laws of the Church order me to stand on guard for the faith and the Church of Christ and her dignity. If I do not do this, I shall cease to be not only a bishop, but also a Christian. Therefore you can hang me now, but I will not give you a penny from the Church, you can take it over my dead body, but while alive I will give you nothing that belongs to the Church. That is what I believe and how I act, and I call on the Orthodox people to stand for the faith even unto death."

Those close to him urged him to hide, fearing his arrest, but he said that he was ready to accept death for Christ, but would not abandon his flock. While he awaited arrest, he was calm and received communion every day. On May 9 there took place a great cross process headed by the archbishop. This was a true Triumph of Orthodoxy. Turning to the concealed agents of the Bolsheviks in the crowd, he said: "Go and tell your chiefs that if they can

come to the doors of the churches and vestries only over my dead body, and with me they will not get a church farthing."

The Bolsheviks increased their pressure on the archbishop throughout May. On June 1 he gave a written order to his vicar, Bishop Theophanes, to enter upon the administration of the diocese in the event of his violent death. Just before Vladyka Andronicus' arrest the chekists arrested the president of the "Union of the Russian People" in Perm and shot him in the wood.

Shortly before his arrest, a priest tried to dissuade Vladyka from his martyric course: "How can you save the flock from the wolves who are destroying it and yourself not fall into despondency from the brutality in the people and the coming defilement of the holy things?" Vladyka replied: "Believe me, Father, all this atheism and robbery is an assault of the enemy, a foul abuse of the good and God-fearing Russian soul. For the time being, because of their violation of their oath [to the tsar], God has removed the people's reason and will, until they repent... But when they do repent, at first gradually, then they will completely their spiritual sight, will feel their strength and like Ilya Muromets will cast off this horror which has enshrouded the whole of our country... Perhaps I will no longer be in this world, but I will never abandon the hope and certainty that Russia will be resurrected and will return to God."

1,500 Red Army soldiers were summoned by the Bolsheviks for the arrest of Vladyka Andronicus. At three o'clock in the morning on June 4/17 he was arrested and put into a droshky taking him to the police in Motovilikhi. All those in the hierarchical house were also arrested.

On the next day, June 5/18, he was taken to the Perm Cheka, where he spent the night. In reply the superiors of all the churches of Perm and Motovilikhi carried out the order of their archpastor: "I am closing down for Divine services all the churches of Perm and Motovilikhi, and I forbid the carrying out of any Divine services except baptism and the last rites for the dying." From the night of Vladyka's arrest the Perm clergy went on strike. The city was in turmoil. Orthodox Christians gathered on the streets, demanding the release of Archbishop Andronicus and cursing the Bolsheviks.

Meetings organized by the Bolsheviks blamed the clergy for everything, and the Bolshevik press claimed that Vladyka had called on the worshippers to shoot the Bolsheviks, and that he was only trying to save his own skin.

Vladyka had been arrested by an armed detachment of Bolsheviks under the leadership of the former convict Myasnikov, who surrounded the home of the archpastor. "On the third night [June 6 to 7]," recalled Myasnikov, "we went for five versts along the Siberian highway, turned left into the forest, went on for about a hundred metres and stopped the horses. I gave Andronicus a spade and ordered him to dig a grave. Andronicus dug out as much as was required - we helped him. Then I said: 'Go on, lie down.' The

grave turned out to be too short, he dug out a bit more at his feet and lay down a second time. It was still too short, he dug some more - the grave was ready. I allowed him to pray. Andronicus prayed in all directions for about ten minutes. Then he said he was ready. I said that I would not shoot him, but bury him alive unless he repealed his decrees, but he said that he would not do this and would not refrain from attacking the Bolsheviki. Then we covered him with earth and I shot a few times."

Myasnikov's account more or less accords with the testimony of two Perm chekists Dobelas and Padernis, both of them Latvians, and was corroborated by a baptized Jew, a former communist party member who became a priest and was shot by the Bolsheviki. According to them, Vladyka Andronicus was buried alive and shot near the road from Perm to Motoviliha (the workmen's suburbs) on June 7/20. According to another account, he had his cheeks hollowed, his ears and nose cut off, and his eyes gouged out, and was then thrown into the river to drown.

One of the archbishop's executioners, Lashevich, was once dying in a hospital in Harbin, China. As he turned restlessly on his bed, he was heard shouting: "Why are you standing here, Andronicus, what do you want? I didn't bury you, I was ordered to do it. You've come for me, don't oppress me. You know, I'm not guilty." And again he would say: "Andronicus, blood, Perm... Don't! Go away! Don't torment me!"

Shortly before his death, on May 5, 1918, Archbishop Andronicus said: "Perhaps I will no longer be in this world, but I am not deprived of the hope and certainty that Russia will be resurrected and return to God. Exhort everyone and reconcile the embittered with life, pour into them the principles of the radiant life according to the Gospel of Christ. Our work is to gather the flock of Christ... so that those who have become disillusioned with every kind of party here might find a living haven and good repose in the Church and amidst believers. The soul of the people will be resurrected - and its body, our healthy statehood, will also be resurrected. May the Lord help us! Forgive and pray for the sinful Archbishop Andronicus who invokes the blessing of God upon you..."

Among the archbishop's papers after his death was found the following plan for a speech:

"1. My speech will be short: I rejoice to be condemned for Christ and the Church. You are worth a lot, but my life is - spittle.

"2. Counter-revolution! Politics is not my affair. For perishing Russia will (not) be saved through our mutual backbiting out of desperation.

"3. But my treasure is the Church. Calling on everyone everywhere, I excommunicate and anathematise those who rise up against Christ and encroach on the Church..."

3. HIEROMARTYR HERMOGENES, BISHOP OF TOBOLSK **and those with him**

Bishop Hermogenes, in the world George Ephraimovich Dolganov (or Dolganyov), was born on April 25, 1858, in Cherson province, in the family of a yedinoveriye priest who later became a monk. He went to Odessa theological seminary, and then received a classical education in Ananyevo before entering the juridical faculty of Novorossiysk University. On graduating from there, George did a course in the mathematical faculty and listened to lectures in the historico-philosophical faculty. Then, in 1889, he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, graduating in 1893. Being a religious child from his early years, he was helped to make the decisive step in devoting himself to God by Archbishop Nicanor (Brovkovich) of Cherson. On November 28, 1890 he was tonsured into monasticism. Then on December 2, 1890 he was ordained to the diaconate, and on March 15, 1892 – to the priesthood. He worked hard as a preacher and took an active part in the circle of student-preachers. He served frequently in the academy church and acquired a large number of admirers, who saw in him a future pillar of the Russian Church. In 1893 he was appointed inspector of the Tiflis theological seminary, where he more than once had to punish the young Stalin. In 1898 he was appointed rector of the seminary with promotion to the rank of archimandrite. In Georgia he founded church schools and assisted the spread of missionary work among the population.

On January 14, 1901, in the Kazan cathedral in St. Petersburg, he was consecrated Bishop of Volsk, a vicariate of the Saratov diocese by Metropolitans Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg, Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky) of Moscow and others. In this see he paid particular attention to missionary work. On March 21, 1903 Bishop Hermogenes became Bishop of Saratov and Tsaritsyn, and in the same year was summoned to attend the Holy Synod. He built many churches, sketes, prayer houses and chapels in his diocese. Regular services and chanting according to the typicon was introduced into the monasteries, monks of strict life came from Athos and other places. The bishop attracted many people to missionary work, including many with higher education. There began the publication of brochures and pamphlets on questions of the faith which were widely distributed. The bishop himself led religious readings and discussions on religious subjects outside the services.

Bishop Hermogenes took an active part in the struggle against the growing revolutionary fervour. During the disturbances of the 1905 revolution, in spite of poor health, he served almost every day and preached with great inspiration. He called on the people to exhort and rebuke the disturbers of the peace, and if this did not work, to depart from them. At the request of the Orthodox population he led cross processions, which soon came to embrace almost the whole city.

He used to say: "Orthodox flock, hold strongly onto the Faith of Christ as the anchor of salvation, and He will lead you to your new fatherland... Do not forget your Mother, the Orthodox Church. She will not teach you bad things, she will guard you from the wolves which are appearing in sheep's clothing among you... They promise much, but in fact give nothing except trouble and the destruction of the state structure. Always remember that prayer and labour are the true hope of the true sons of the Holy Church and the native land of Russia. Always remember also that it is not joys and satisfactions that lead to the blessed life, but sorrows; it is not through the wide gates that we can reach the Heavenly Kingdom, but along the narrow path, through the magnanimous bearing by each of his cross."

On February 6, 1905 Vladyka served a pannikhida for the murdered Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich, saying that it was not only the terrorists who were responsible for his death, but also Russian society, many of whose members had little faith and even rejected the State order. Saratov was a very "progressive" city in those years, and in 1908 the Saratov Duma decided to name two primary schools after the novelist Tolstoy. Vladyka asked the governor to revoke the Duma's decision, but was refused. He also asked for the Orthodox to be protected from the plays "Anathema" and "Anthisa", but was again refused.

Bishop Hermogenes was greatly admired by St. John of Kronstadt, who said that he did not fear for the destiny of Orthodoxy after his death, knowing that Bishop Hermogenes would continue his work and struggle for Orthodoxy. In 1906 he wrote to Bishop Hermogenes foretelling his martyrlic death: "The Lord is opening the heavens [for you] as He did for Archdeacon Stephen, and is blessing you."

Bishop Hermogenes prepared and read out to the Holy Synod a report calling for the expulsion of certain Russian writers from the Church. On the initiative of the author the report was published and distributed to the members of the State Duma and many influential people. The reaction of the State officials was one of universal indifference. They were all afraid of touching the public's idols, although many State officials considered themselves to be Orthodox.

At a session of the Holy Synod at the end of 1911, Bishop Hermogenes had a sharp difference of opinion with V.K. Sabler, the procurator of the Synod, with regard to the attempt to introduce a corporation of deaconesses into the Orthodox Church and the rite of a funeral litany for the heterodox. The bishop spoke in defence of the church canons against the procurator and the Synodal officials, who were often completely indifferent to the fate of Orthodoxy. The procurator, with the silent acquiescence of the hierarchs in session, insisted on his opinion. On December 15, 1911 Bishop Hermogenes sent a telegram to the Tsar as the supreme defender and preserver of the foundations of the Orthodox State. The procurator responded by sending a report to the Tsar asking him to suspend the bishop from participation in the

Holy Synod and to order him to return to his diocese. On January 3, Vladyka was removed from the Holy Synod and ordered to return to his diocese. He received this order on January 7, but asked permission to stay in St. Petersburg for three days in view of his illness. The procurator refused. On January 12 the Synod under the presidency of the procurator condemned the bishop's "dishonouring of the Holy Synod's decrees and judgements before his Majesty the Emperor".

Concerning his suspension Bishop Hermogenes wrote: "I consider the reason for my suspension to have been, in the main, those differences of opinion which emerged between myself and the majority of the members of the Synod during an examination of the most important questions that have arisen during the present session of the Synod. I have often pointed out to the members of the Synod that it is necessary to examine the matters raised by the over-procurator, and not just pass over them in accordance with the wishes and views of the secular authorities. For now, when the Church is seen to be in a state of complete disintegration, the voice of the Synod must be firm, clear, definite and in strict accordance with the canons and teachings of the Church. In my speeches in the Synod I began a struggle not with the hierarchs in session in the Synod - I understand their position - but with that bureaucratic attitude to the affairs of the Church which has recently been observed in the Synod. And my critical attitude to the projects put forward by the over-procurator were displeasing above all to the over-procurator himself, and it was at his request that I was suspended. If my suspension is linked with a telegram, then it is with the telegram sent to the Higher authority [the Tsar]. I expounded in detail my view on those questions which were examined in the Synod, and I demonstrated the necessity of deciding them on the basis of the strict application of the canonical rules of the Church."

On January 15, in a telegram to the procurator, the Tsar demanded that Vladyka Hermogenes immediately leave the city. The procurator told the bishop that he should leave for Saratov not later than the following day. Towards evening on the same day Archbishop Nazarius (Kirillov) of Poltava and Bishops Nikon (Rozhdestvensky) of Vologda and Seraphim (Chichagov) of Kineshma came to Bishop Hermogenes and tried to persuade him to leave immediately. On learning that the bishop had not left, the procurator asked the Tsar to suspend him from ruling the Saratov diocese and send him to the Zhirovitsky monastery of the Dormition. The Tsar agreed, and on the same day, January 17, signed an ukaz for his suspension from the diocese with his residence in the Zhirovitsky monastery.

Another, probably more important, reason for the bishop's suspension was his opposition to Rasputin. Vladyka had originally considered Rasputin a true man of prayer, but came to change his mind. For the man who had originally introduced Rasputin to him, Bishop Theophan (Bystrov), the confessor of the royal family, suddenly came to see who Rasputin really was, and began writing his friend Bishop Hermogenes letters, trying to enlist this courageous fighter against freethinking in his fight against Rasputin.

When Rasputin's bad actions began to come to light in the course of the year 1910, Bishop Hermogenes vacillated for a long time. However, having made up his mind that Vladyka Theophan was right, and having the notorious Monk Iliodor (Truphanov) on his side now too, he decided to bring the matter up before the Holy Synod, of which he was a member, at its next session. Before that, however, he determined to denounce Rasputin to his face. This took place on December 16, 1911. According to Iliodor's account, Hermogenes, clothed in hierarchical vestments and holding a cross in his hand, "took hold of the head of the 'elder' with his left hand, and with his right started beating him on the head with the cross and shouting in a terrifying voice, 'Devil! I forbid you in God's name to touch the female sex. Brigand! I forbid you to enter the royal household and to have anything to do with the tsarina! As a mother brings forth the child in the cradle, so the holy Church through its prayers, blessings, and heroic feats has nursed that great and sacred thing of the people, the autocratic rule of the tsars. And now you, scum, are destroying it, you are smashing our holy vessels, the bearers of autocratic power... Fear God, fear His life-giving cross!'"

Then they forced Rasputin to swear that he would leave the palace. According to one version of events, Rasputin swore, but immediately told the empress what had happened. According to another, he refused, after which Vladyka Hermogenes cursed him. In any case, on the same day, December 16, five years later, he was killed...

Then Bishop Hermogenes went to the Holy Synod. First he gave a speech against the *khlysty*. Then he charged Rasputin with *khlyst* tendencies. Unfortunately, only a minority of the bishops supported the courageous bishop. The majority followed the over-procurator in expressing dissatisfaction with his interference "in things that were not of his concern".

Vladyka Hermogenes was then ordered to return to his diocese. As the director of the chancery of the over-procurator witnessed, "he did not obey the order and, as I heard, asked by telegram for an audience with the tsar, indicating that he had an important matter to discuss, but was turned down."

The telegram read as follows: "Tsar Father! I have devoted my whole life to the service of the Church and the Throne. I have served zealously, sparing no effort. The sun of my life has long passed midday and my hair has turned white. And now in my declining years, like a criminal, I am being driven out of the capital in disgrace by you, the Sovereign. I am ready to go wherever it may please you, but before I do, grant me an audience, and I will reveal a secret to you."

But the Tsar rejected his plea. On receiving this rejection, Bishop Hermogenes began to weep. And then he suddenly said:

"They will kill the tsar, they will kill the tsar, they will surely kill him."

As he approached Zhirovitsy, Vladyka heard the sound of church bells from afar. The superior and the whole brotherhood came out to meet the hierarch. The monastery courtyard was full of people, and Vladyka addressed them saying:

"I do not consider myself to be an exile, but a man who wishes to devote himself entirely to the service of the Lord God."

On settling in two small rooms on the second floor of the stone building, he took up the ascetic life to which he was accustomed. He went to bed late, and got up unfailingly at seven o'clock. He often served. Many people came to his services from the villages and from the city of Slonim.

The summary dismissal of the holy hierarch without a proper trial or conciliar decision of his case, as if the Church was just one of the institutions of State, grieved not only Vladyka Hermogenes but also many believers. But Vladyka sorrowed not for himself, but for the future of the Orthodox Church, of Russia and of the Royal Family. He would cover his face with his hands, weep long and bitterly and then say:

"It's coming, the highest wave; it will crush and sweep away all the rot, all the rags. A terrible thing will happen, terrible enough to make the blood run cold. They will destroy the Tsar, they will destroy the Tsar, they will destroy him without fail."

It was during his stay in the Zhirovitsky monastery that the gift of clairvoyance was revealed in the bishop. Metropolitan Manuel (Lemeshevsky) recounts the following incident. With the permission of God, the daughter of one woman had died as a result of sorcery, and the other had fallen ill. The mother decided to go to Bishop Hermogenes and ask for his advice and prayers.

In the morning she went into the church where Vladyka was serving. The service had finished. He left the altar and walked straight towards her. Before she had had the opportunity to express her woe, he said to her:

"You have come with a great sorrow, one young daughter of yours has died and the other is ill. My dear one, you know, this was done by evil people, and the Lord allowed it to happen. Some days will pass, and then this ill daughter of yours will also die. Before her death a woman will come to her; she will silently enter the room, and then this ill daughter of yours will also die. But do not be upset, nothing can happen unless God allows it."

His words were fulfilled exactly. The mother returned home. In a few days an unknown woman visited her and immediately left. After this her sick daughter died.

On August 25, 1915, Vladyka was assigned to the Nikolo-Ugreshsky monastery in Moscow diocese. On March 8, 1917 he was assigned to the see of Tobolsk. But the Provisional Government was not pleased with the courageous bishop, and on September 7, 1917 the minister of confessions asked the Holy Synod not to allow Bishop Hermogenes to go to Tobolsk, and gave him some task which would keep him in Petrograd or Moscow. This meant that Vladyka was able to take part in the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Eventually, however, on December 6, 1917, Vladyka arrived in Tobolsk and wrote later to the patriarch that he thanked the Lord from the bottom of his heart for sending him to this "city-skete enveloped in silence". Vladyka called on his flock "to preserve faithfulness to the faith of the Fathers, not to bow the knee before the idols of the revolution and their contemporary priests, who demand from Russian Orthodox people the distortion of the Russian national soul with cosmopolitanism, communism, open atheism and disgusting, animal-like debauchery." He wrote the following resolution on the decrees of his diocesan congress: "I do not bless the coup that has taken place, I do not celebrate the hitherto chimerical 'pascha' (or rather: tormenting Golgothat) of our much-suffering Russia and its exhausted in soul clergy and people. I do not kiss the dark and 'stormy' face of 'the revolution. I will not enter into friendship or unity with it, for I still do not know for sure *who* and *what* it is today, and *what* it will give our Homeland, and especially the Church, tomorrow."

At about the same time, by Divine Providence the exiled Royal Family arrived in Tobolsk on their way to eventual martyrdom in Yekaterinburg. On Christmas Day they were in the church of the Protecting Veil. At the end of the service the deacon, for the first time since the February revolution, chanted "Many Years" and wishes for a long life to the Royal Family. The senior officer in charge of the Family, Commissar Pankratov, was enraged, and when told that the deacon had said this on the instructions of his superior, Fr. Alexis, he ordered: "Drag him out of the church by his braids!"

The next day a commission of inquiry formed by the Tobolsk Soviet criticised Pankratov, and demanded that he harshen the regime of his prisoners: "To prison with the Romanovs!" They also tried to arrest Fr. Alexis. However, Bishop Hermogen refused to give up his priest, and sent him to a remote monastery. Moreover, he challenged the Soviet: "Russia is not a republic, it can be declared a republic only by the planned Constituent Assembly. From history and from canon law we know that monarchs, emperors and tsars who for some reasons leave the throne and cease to carry out their duties, are not deprived of their imperial or tsarist dignity. Therefore I see nothing prejudicial in the behaviour of the priest and deacon." Thus did Vladyka Hermogenes imitate his namesake, Patriarch Hermogenes (+1612, canonized in 1914) in standing for the legitimate Tsar of Russia. As the Dowager Empress wrote to him: "Vladyka, you bear the name of St. Hermogenes. That is a sign."

Vladyka paid special attention to the soldiers returning from the front. The powers that be looked on them as on people who could again be driven under gunfire and dragged to acts of looting and pillaging, so as to bind them to themselves more strongly through bloody crimes. At the end of February, 1918, Bishop Hermogenes presided over a meeting of the St. John - Dmitrievsky brotherhood in his hierarchical quarters. In an ardent speech he described the psychology of the soldier, and pointed out that the soldier expected, not condemnation, but help from society. It was decided to organize a special section attached to the brotherhood to help the soldiers. The bishop's care for the soldiers returning from the front drove the Bolsheviks to distraction; they were trying to fill the soldiers with spite, but here under Bishop Hermogenes' influence the people were beginning to worry and care for them.

On January 18 Patriarch Tikhon blessed cross processions throughout Russia. Vladyka Hermogenes also blessed one in Tobolsk. On the eve he was ordered not to go ahead with it, otherwise he would be arrested. The next day he served the liturgy and a moleben in the Tobolsk Kremlin. Everybody knew that the cross procession had been banned. But the bells rang out, and Vladyka and the clergy came out of the cathedral for the procession. Huge crowds flowed along the wall around the Kremlin chanting: "Lord, save Thy people..."

The Tobolsk Kremlin is above the city, while the house of the Tsar and his family was below it. From the walls there was a good view of their house. Vladyka went up to the edge of the wall. He raised the wooden cross in his hand and blessed the Royal Family.

It was in this period that the breach between the Tsar and Vladyka was healed. The Tsar sent Vladyka a bow to the earth, asking him to forgive him for allowing his removal from his see. He could not have done otherwise at the time, but he was glad to have the opportunity of asking the bishop's forgiveness now. Bishop Hermogenes was very touched, and sent a bow to the earth to the Tsar together with a prosphora, asking for his forgiveness. And every day he continued to hold services for the Royal Family.

The next day, January 19, Patriarch Tikhon anathematized the Bolsheviks, and a few days after that the Bolsheviks passed a decree on the separation of Church and State which placed believers outside the law, and which gave excuse for all kinds of excesses against the Church and Christians. Bishop Hermogenes wrote about the decree: "The atheist composers of the decree have found executors of their will amidst our soldiers, who, through the ignorance and at the instigation of their leaders, have dared to raise their hands against the holy things of their forefathers and accomplish a work worthy of God's great condemnation. They have done what those who crucified Christ did - but may the prayer of Christ be fulfilled also on them: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

"Orthodox Christians! If the Holy Church is dear to you, if in your hearts the faith in Christ which your parents inspired in you and which was handed down to us by a whole array of Russian saints has not been completely crushed in your hearts, listen to the voice of reason and Christian conscience and understand that the decree on the Church contains within itself a clear sermon of unbelief and a declaration of irresponsible and merciless struggle with the Orthodox Faith and all believers.

"The antichristian decree declares that 'religion is a private matter' - the personal matter of each separate person, but not of society or the State. In these words is contained the greatest untruth and the greatest harm for every religion in general, and especially for the universal religion of Christianity and for the Universal Church of Christ. In actual fact, the Christian faith is a public, conciliar, universal faith.

"The Christian cannot be saved on his own, in separation from others. 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name,' said Christ, 'there am I in the midst of them.' The Christian is saved in the Church - in the society of believers: it is to this society of the Church that the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, which acts and is bestowed upon believing people only in the Church, for the sake of the common Church faith and love, for the sake of the common good.

"The society of the Church is like the body of a man: in the body all the members are linked together, they live and act together. If the link between the separate members is broken, the body is destroyed and perishes. A man perishes in exactly the same way if he departs from the society of the Church, if he does not want to be saved together with the others, if he wishes to be an autonomous person, not subject to the spirit and rules of the lawful Church union of all the believers.

"Christians cannot be saved without common prayer, without the carrying out of public services, without the participation of the whole people in the sacraments, without doing good works with the participation of all: pan-ecclesiastical charity, education, and care for each other, etc.

"The decree declares religion to be a private matter, because its composers do not want to recognize the Orthodox Church as a Divine institution; they are striving to disunite and disperse the Christians; they even want to place all of them under suspicion and subject them to house arrest, forbidding them to go to the churches for common Church prayers; they want to kill faith in their hearts and make them atheists!

"Knowing that the Orthodox Church cannot teach and save believers without churches, and that the faith of the Russian people is closely bound up with the veneration of the holy things of the Church, the decree removes from the Orthodox Church the right to acquire property and dispose of it, and

thereby deprives the Church of the possibility of building and maintaining churches, and keeping them in a beautiful condition. If the decree is carried out, the Russian land will soon be deprived of the churches by which she was formerly adorned and glorified amidst the other peoples: her churches will be turned by the hands of the atheists into places of entertainment or will come into a state of complete poverty and dilapidation: in their place, according to the word of the Scripture, will be 'the abomination of desolation'! Did our forefathers build the holy churches with great labour and at great expense so that we, their unworthy descendants, should turn them from the beautiful habitation of God into a den of thieves, and so that instead of the Divine services they should arrange various spectacles and games in them to the shame and corruption of the Russian people, so that Russia should be mocked and laughed at in the eyes of all the people of the world?!

"The antichristian decree declares the heritage of the holy churches to be 'the heritage of the people'. But was not the property of our churches the heritage of the people up to now? Everything that is in the church always was and is the heritage of the whole believing people; all the believers have contributed their mite from a pure heart, voluntarily and lovingly, they have given it to God, to the work of God, for the sake of the salvation of their souls. They knew that the gift of their love was pleasing to Christ, Who accepted the pouring out of the myrrh from the adulterous woman; they knew that this gift of their sweat and labour would go to the salvation of their souls, that it would have no other purpose. They were right: all the offerings have been preserved, have been multiplied and have been used only on the needs of the Church.

"Let the heritage of the churches be now, as it was before, the heritage of all believing people, let them - the believers - dispose of this heritage in accordance with its purpose. They were given this right by the Church authorities, and the Church Council, half of which was composed of laymen, in a detailed manner defined and strengthened the rights of the laypeople to participate in the disposal of Church property under the leadership of the Church authorities. But we cannot permit the heritage of the Church to be used by people who do not belong to the Church or are even complete unbelievers. The enemies of the Church slander the clergy; they say that the heritage of the Church was seized by them, that they used it on their own needs. This is a witting lie. The clergy has not used the offerings to the church, although they could, according to the word of Scripture, 'feed from the altar'; they have existed on the reward for their labour which they have received from the parishioners. They have disposed of the heritage of the Church with the knowledge and agreement of elected people from the parish - the Church wardens, the members of the trusts, in accordance with the 72nd canon of the Holy Apostles and the 10th canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople. In accordance with these canons the heritage of the Church is the heritage of God and is can be used only on Church needs - on deeds aimed at the salvation of people; its use for worldly needs is recognized to be the greatest of crimes.

"The antichristian decree violates the Church canons: it removes the heritage of God from the churches and hands it over into the hands of the secular authorities, thereby turning the sacred heritage of God's churches into a secular heritage!

"Brother Christians! Raise your voices in defence of the Church's Apostolic Faith, the holy things of the Church, the Church's heritage. Defend your right to believe and confess your faith as you learned it in days of old, as you were taught it by the holy apostles, the holy martyrs, the God-wise fathers of the Church, the Christian ascetics. Take care of the holiness of your souls, the freedom of your consciences. Say loudly that you have been accustomed to pray and save yourselves in the churches, that the holy things of the Church are dearer to you than life itself, that without them salvation is impossible. No power can demand from you that which is against your faith, your religious conscience: 'We must obey God rather than men', said the holy apostles. That is what we, too, must say. The apostles joyfully suffered for the faith. Be you also ready for sacrifice, for podvig, and remember that physical arms are powerless against those who arm themselves with powerful faith in Christ. Faith moves mountains, 'the faith of the Christians has conquered the pagan boldness'. May your faith be bold and courageous! Christ destroyed hades. He will also destroy the snares of the enemies of our Church. Believe - and the enemy will flee from before your face. Stand in defence of your faith and with firm hope say: 'Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered!'"

Vladyka blessed the distribution of this leaflet, and the next day he heard that the authorities were in a rage because of it. On April 24 a threatening article against him was published in a local newspaper, and he was told by those close to him that something was being planned against him. But Vladyka was as always joyful and paid no attention to the Bolsheviki's spite.

At 11 o'clock on April 26, Latvian Bolsheviki carried out a search in Vladyka's residence, mocked the holy things and even lifted up the altar, but did not find him. The same night another search was carried out in the Znamensky monastery, in the residence of Bishop Irinarch, and in the Mikhailovsky skete, which was some eight versts from the city.

On Lazarus Saturday, the authorities told Vladyka that they didn't want to arrest him, just interrogate him, and they would put that off until the Monday after the feast. But they demanded that he keep quiet about the search they had carried out. Vladyka refused to keep quiet and said he did not believe them. And at the all-night vigil for the feast he said: "Whatever they say or do against me, let God be their judge: I forgave them and forgive them now... And once more I declare that my hierarchical activity is alien to all politics. My politics is faith in the salvation of the souls of believers. My platform is prayer..."

That night Vladyka said: "I do not expect clemency from them. They will kill me; more than that, they will torture me. I am ready, I am ready even now. I do not fear for myself, I do not sorrow for myself. I sorrow for the city, I fear for the inhabitants. What will they do with them?"

The next day, Palm Sunday, after the Liturgy, Vladyka celebrated Vespers, during which he said: "The days of the sufferings of Christ the Saviour on the Cross are drawing near. The Soul of the Divine Sufferer, waiting for the coming terrible torments, was tortured by a great anguish, and He sought strength for Himself not only in prayer to God the Father, but also asked His disciples to keep vigil and pray with Him, in order thereby to relieve the great torment which lay with all its weight on His shoulders.

"I, too, feel that the days of my passion and martyrdom are drawing near, and for that reason my soul, in expectation of the coming sufferings, is in great anguish and torment. Therefore I fervently beseech you all to support me, too, in these days by your holy prayers..."

After the cross-procession on Palm Sunday, which ended at five o'clock, the bishop was arrested and taken to the headquarters of the Red Army. Meanwhile, to prevent a possible uprising, soldiers patrolled the streets and scattered groups of citizens. Bishop Irinarch went to the authorities for an explanation. They said that the cross-procession had angered the local Jews, who had begun to incite the soldiers against the bishop. The next day the authorities told the citizens that the arrest had been carried out for political reasons in order to preserve public order. But later, in response to an official request from a commission set up by Patriarch Tikhon to investigate the matter, the president of the executive committee said that Bishop Hermogenes had been arrested on the orders of the Central Executive Committee as a black-hundredist and pogrom-inciter; but they had no documentary evidence to prove his criminal activities.

At one o'clock at night Vladyka was taken under convoy to Tyumen and then to Ekaterinburg. The convoy mocked him throughout the journey. On April 18 he arrived in Ekaterinburg and was put in prison near the Sennaya square, next to the Simeonov church. In prison, Vladyka either read (mainly the New Testament and the lives of the saints) or wrote; but he mainly prayed and chanted church hymns.

In May, a special delegation from the Diocesan Congress was sent to Ekaterinburg to petition for the liberation of the bishop before the local soviet of soldiers' and peasants' deputies. The soviet demanded a 10,000 roubles' ransom, which was then raised to 100,000 roubles. In spite of the protests of the bishop, the money (the authorities lowered their demands to 10,000 again) was collected by the merchant D.I. Polirushchev and paid as ordered, and the authorities issued a receipt.

The delegation consisted of Bishop Hermogenes' brother, **Protopriest Ephraim Ephraimovich Dolganov**, the Tyumen priest **Fr. Michael Makarov** and the lawyer **Constantine Alexandrovich Minyatov**. Fr. Ephraim was born on January 28, 1874 in Kherson province and served in the cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg from January 28, 1908 to 1918.

The next day the delegation went in full force to the soviet, hoping for the liberation of Bishop Hermogenes. However, they never returned to the flat they had rented. Instead, they were arrested and shot on June 29.

On the third day of Trinity, Bishop Hermogenes was taken by train to Tyumen together with **Priest Peter Ivanovich Karelin** from the settlement of Kamensky factory, the dean of the second district of Ekaterinburg diocese, and the laymen **Nicholas Knyazev, Mstislav Golubev, Henry Rushinsky and the officer Yershov**.

On the night of June 26 the train arrived in Tyumen, and the prisoners were put on the steamer "Yermak". On the evening of June 27 the steamer stopped at the village of Pokrovskoye (Rasputin's home village). Fr. Michael joined them there. The next evening, at 10 o'clock, the prisoners were transferred to the "Oka", from where they were to go on to Tobolsk for the trial of Vladyka. As he went towards the gangway, Vladyka quietly said to the pilot:

"Baptized servant of God, tell the whole great world that I ask them to pray to God for me."

The arrested men were placed in the dirty, dark hold of the steamer, which headed down the River Tura towards Tobolsk. At about midnight on June 28 or 29, the Bolsheviks took Fr. Peter out onto the deck, tied two heavy granite stones to him and threw him into the water. Fr. Michael was bound with cords, stripped to his underwear and thrown overboard. At 12.30 Bishop Hermogenes was brought out of the hold onto the deck. He prayed for his tormentors and blessed them. Then with obscene swearing accompanied by blows, the guards tore off the bishop's ryassa and cassock and pinioned his arms behind his back. Since the bishop continued to pray loudly, the commissar ordered that his jaw be held. A blow on the face forced the old bishop to keep silent. Then an eighty-pound rock was tied to his bound hands. The guards grabbed the bishop and, after several swings to and fro, hurled him into the river.

This took place on June 16/29, 1918. On July 3 the holy relics of the hieromartyr were discovered on the banks of the river by peasants of the village of Usolsk. The next day he was buried by the peasant Alexis Yegorovich Maryanov at the place where he had been discovered together with the stone that had been tied to him.

Here the body remained until July 21, when it was transferred to the village of Pokrovskoye and placed in a temporary grave in Pokrovskoye cemetery. On July 27 the body was disinterred and vested in hierarchical vestments in the church of Pokrovskoye. Then a cross procession accompanied it to the steamer "Altai". On arriving at the place where the holy relics had been discovered, the steamer docked and after a pannikhida a large wooden cross was placed on the spot inscribed with the words: "Here on July 3, 1919 were discovered the honourable remains of the Martyr-Bishop Hermogenes, who was killed on June 16 for the Faith, the Church and the Homeland."

In the evening of the following day the steamer arrived in Tobolsk, where the coffin and body of the hierarch was met by a cross procession from all the city churches and many thousands of people. Finally the body was placed in the Sophia Assumption cathedral, where it remained for five days without giving off any odour of corruption. On August 2, after the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Irinarch together with a multitude of clergy and in the presence of the military and civil representatives of the Siberian government buried the hieromartyr in a crypt constructed in the chapel of St. John Chrysostom in the place where St. John of Tobolsk had first been buried.

The youth **Sergius Konev** was killed soon after the martyric death of Bishop Hermogenes, who had sheltered him in his house to protect him from the corrupting influence of the world.

Once Sergius was at school and said that his granddad had been arrested only for believing in God.

The children shouted:

"He's speaking about God, he's speaking about God."

The boy was caught and cut to pieces with sabres. They continued to cut him up even after his death because they thought that he was moving.

The youth Sergius was buried by the cathedral, not far from the tomb of Hieromartyr Hermogenes.

On September 3, 2005 the tomb of Bishop Hermogenes was opened. The body and vestments were found to be well preserved, and a fragrance came from the grave. The coffin with the body was placed in the Pokrov cathedral in Tobolsk.

5. HOLY CONFESSOR ABBESS MARGARET OF MENZELINSK

Abbess Margaret, in the world Maria Mikhailovna Gunarodnoulo, was born in 1865 or 1866 in a family of Greek origin. Before becoming a nun she lived in Kiev. Her spiritual father was Protopriest Alexander Korsakovsky, the rector of the St. George church, in whose parish she lived. In his memoirs Prince N.D. Zhevakov, who knew matushka long before she became a nun, writes: "I saw in Maria Mikhailovna the incarnation of fiery faith and ardent love for God. Small, frail, almost an old woman, she burned like a candle before God: everyone who knew her knew that she had been born precisely in order to warm others with her love." Shortly after receiving the monastic tonsure with the name Margaret, she went to live in the "Joy and Consolation" community of the Orlov-Davydovs near Moscow, where the abbess was the very elderly Countess Orlova-Davydova. This period in her life was a heavy trial that demanded great courage, patience and humility.

On January 18, 1917 the Holy Synod appointed her superior of the Menzelinsk women's monastery of the Prophet Elijah in Ufa province with elevation to the rank of abbess. This appointment took place thanks to the efforts of Prince N.D. Zhevakov, the assistant over-procurator of the Holy Synod. And her ordination as abbess took place in the presence of Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, who was exceptionally fond of Matushka Margaret.

The move to Menzelinsk was long and difficult. At the end of 1917 she arrived in the monastery, which was one of the biggest women's communities in the Ufa diocese. It had three churches, a church-parish school, a monastic economy with fruit trees, kitchen-gardens and apiaries. The nuns worked in the guest-house for pilgrims, in workshops devoted to iconography, gold-weaving, carpentry, dress-making and book-binding, and also baking bread and prosphoras and preparing food. The monastery even had its own photographic studio - an extreme rarity at that time. In 1917 there were fifty nuns and 248 novices. The intelligent and educated abbess was renowned for her strict ascetic life and the good order she introduced into the monastery in the old Russian spirit.

In April, 1917 the revolutionary wave also hit the Prophet Elijah monastery. By decree of the Provisional Government, the church-parish schools had to be transferred into the administration of the Ministry of popular enlightenment, but the abbess tried to defend the monastery's school from this transfer on the grounds that the property and buildings of the school belonged to the monastery and that the pupils were its novices. She declared that the upkeep of the school would from now on be the responsibility of the monastery (under the Tsars the State had paid the teachers). The unshakeable will of the abbess to keep the school's education in the Orthodox faith had an unexpected result: the city left the school in her

hands. Moreover, since city girls were studying in it, the city decided to pay the teachers and provide the necessary equipment.

On April 18, 1918 Abbess Margaret was elected a member of the diocesan council.

In May, 1918 the Czech legion rebelled, and by July the whole province had been liberated from the Bolsheviks. However, battles still continued on the western boundaries of the province, and Menzelinsk changed hands between the combatants several times. In the late summer the Whites abandoned Kazan; and according to Nun Alevtina, a previous inhabitant of the monastery, Abbess Margaret at one time decided to leave with the Whites and not remain under the authority of the Bolsheviks. She was at the wharf preparing to leave when St. Nicholas appeared to her and said:

"Why are you running from your crown?"

Stunned by the vision, Abbess Margaret returned to the monastery and told the monastery priest about what had happened. And sensing that she would soon have to suffer for the faith, she asked for her coffin to be prepared in advance, and that she should be buried on the very day of her death, after the burial service.

During the night of August 11-12 the Bolsheviks suddenly left Menzelinsk. The citizens created a voluntary unit to guard the city and established links with units of the White army. On August 21 the Bolsheviks renewed their attack on Menzelinsk. The Whites held out for four hours, but finally the Bolsheviks burst into the city and began to take revenge... On August 21 and 22, they shot 150-200 people in the city. Mother Margaret was one of their victims. Another was **Priest Vozdvizhensky** of the Trinity church.

According to the witness of the Red Army soldier Ya.F. Ostroumov, the excuse for killing the abbess was the fact that the nuns were trying to defend some White officers (probably wounded) in the monastery. "Several White officers who had been left in the monastery were hidden in the cells of the women's monastery and were... shot in the monastery courtyard. The abbess of the monastery was also shot... for hiding White officers in the cells of the monastery."

According to another account that reached Prince Zhevakov across the front line, the Bolsheviks, having burst into the territory of the monastery, wanted to defile the church, but the abbess did not let them in there. Matushka fearlessly went out to the crowd of drunk and heavily armed Bolsheviks and meekly said to them: 'I do not fear death, for only after death will I appear before the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom I have striven all my life. You will only bring forward my meeting with the Lord... But I wish to suffer and endure endlessly in this life if only you would save your souls... In killing my body, you kill your own souls... Think about that.'

In reply to this they hurled insults and curses at her and demanded that she open the church. The abbess refused outright, and the Bolsheviks said to her: "Look to it: early tomorrow we will kill you..." With these words they left.

After their departure, having locked the monastery gates, Abbess Margaret went together with the sisters into the church, where they spent the whole night in prayer and communed at the early liturgy. The abbess had not succeeded in leaving the church when the Bolsheviks, seeing her coming down from the ambon, took aim at her and fired point-blank. "Glory to Thee, O God!" cried the abbess loudly when she saw the Bolsheviks taking aim at her, and... fell dead to the floor.

Nun Alevtina has a slightly different account: "The following day [after the Whites left Menzelinsk], Abbess Margaret was arrested as a supposed 'counter-revolutionary' during a service. She was taken out onto the porch, and having refused her request to partake of the Holy Mysteries, shot her."

Immediately after the burial service, the sisters of the monastery buried her behind the altar of the Ascension church where she had been shot.

It was only the next day that the abbess's request to be buried on the very day of her death, which had at first seemed strange to the priest, became comprehensible. For the same chekists who had shot Abbess Margaret brought out a Muslim mullah to be shot, wishing to bury him in one grave with the Orthodox superior of the monastery. However, since she was already buried, they could not do this and took the mullah somewhere else.

According to M.V. Mikhailova, the daughter of a priest of Menzelinsk, in the 1970s, near the main church of the Menzelinsk monastery, which was closed at that time, they decided to dig a hole behind the very altar. Suddenly they came on a coffin. In it were the incorrupt relics of Abbess Margaret with a cross on her breast. They did not disturb the coffin, but filled in the grave and found another place for the hole...

A great Russian elder - St. Ambrose of Optina, it seems - prophesied about this monastery that under one superior they would build a church, another would be a martyr, and under a third - the bells would fall. The prophecy was fulfilled. Abbess Margaret became a martyr, and under the last superior they removed the bells from the church and closed the monastery.

5. HOLY MARTYR DUNIUSHKA OF USSURUISK

“**Blessed Duniushka** appeared among us soon after the [end of the Russo-]Japanese War. Whence she came, none knew. She would usually come to our town in the summertime, departing with the arrival of cold weather. Whither she went, none knew. I do not recall Duniushka’s presence in my early childhood, but I would chance to meet her in our house later on, and sometimes to be present at her conversations with my elders. She was respected in the town – and somewhat feared. The peasant-women often turned to her for advice on household and family matters; they would confide their women’s woes to her, attending to her words and trusting her. But such popularity weighed heavily on Duniushka, although she realized that this was the way she had to travel to her targeted goal in life; then the cross which she had consciously taken upon herself would not appear to be beyond her strength to bear. She never gave precise replies to the questions asked of her. Her arguments could be understood in a twofold manner; and there were even times when she would reply sharply to some questions. ‘How’s that, my dear? I’m no prophet – how can I know?’ And then she would add, quietly: ‘It will be as you say, my dove, if you but pray properly for it.’ To another question, she responded with an unclear reply, and the woman felt that Duniushka was leaving something unsaid. ‘Well, what is one to do?’ she would usually reply. ‘Maybe it won’t be as you say; be patient – it means that you haven’t yet merited it. The Lord knows, after all, what will be best for you. Don’t try to find out – I’ll say a prayer,’ she would add, with a sigh.

“Sometimes there would be moments when she would be inspired to ‘speak’. Then she would become transformed, in full view of everyone: she would appear to grow taller; her cheeks would acquire a rosy hue; her voice would sound loud and self-assured; her eyes would gleam unnaturally, illumining her entire face. At such times, she would be listened to with bated breath.... At first she would speak with a restrained voice, with only the expression on her face changing; gradually, she would grow ecstatic and her voice would grow stronger, as she no longer restrained it – and quickly, very quickly, as though afraid that she might be stopped, she would continue hastily: ‘Blood! Blood! People will end their lives in martyrdom!... The Holy will be desecrated!... Brother will rise up against brother! The Nation will lose her Sovereign!... Oy!’ would burst forth from her lips, with some sort of hopeless moan.... But what she said was not comprehensible to anyone at the time....

“I recall Duniushka as already being an old woman: skinny, of tiny stature, – she appeared very cheerful and lively. Her face was unwrinkled, retaining its sweet appearance. Her eyes, in particular, stood out; with her gaze, she would pierce anyone with whom she was speaking, and rarely was that person able to bear it. She was always cleanly attired, in a long, dark skirt and a light-colored blouse, over which she wore a small, dark jacket. The white scarf on her head was always neatly tied at her chin. During the summer, she

would wear small bast-sandals; in the winter, felt boots and a poorly-fitting fur coat. She always exuded a scent of rose-oil or incense, and wherever she had been present, the aroma would remain long after she had left. I would ask my father why Duniushka gave off such an aroma – and my father would explain it to me thus: ‘Duniushka leads a different kind of life; she is a person given to strict fasting and prayer – she eats no meat or fish; on the days [that the Church has] appointed, she nourishes herself with milk and vegetables – mostly raw, and even then, without eating her fill. On Wednesdays and Fridays she eats nothing at all. She has no place to call her own, where she might go to rest, such as a home. During the summer, the peasants see her in the fields or in the forest, whither she goes to be alone – apparently for prayer – spending long periods of time upon her knees. It is much more difficult for her in the wintertime. No one knows where she spends her time during the cold winter nights. For people such as Duniushka, food and drink cease being necessities. Usually, their bodies become permeated by spiritual vibrations. As a result of refraining on the physical plane, they obtain power on the spiritual one – and, as a result of prayer and ascetic podvigs [exploits], they might well be endowed with miracle-working abilities, even during their lifetimes. Under such conditions, Duniushka cannot emit an unpleasant smell. We know of many similar cases from the Lives of the Saints.’

“Duniushka acted like a peasant-woman, but rumours circulated that she had been the wife of a prominent government official. Having lost her beloved husband, having early become a widow, she had chosen for herself ‘the way of a wanderer for the sake of Christ.’ She patiently bore this cross with honour to the end of her life, never departing from the appointed rules....

“Before the German War of 1914, Duniushka again often repeated her prognostications of calamities which seemingly were to come upon the land. No one thought of war. After all, the Japanese War had but recently ended; the nation was recuperating from military action, life had begun to settle down into a normal routine, and then – suddenly – war again! Duniushka, after all, ‘never cast her words upon the wind!’ – ‘Brother will rise up against brother! They will destroy everything acquired by their ancestors.... They will sweep away religion, and – most importantly – there will be no master in the land!’ The master in the land, of course, is the Tsar’ – God’s Anointed One! He cannot go anywhere! Duniushka’s predictions were incomprehensible...

“Before the war started, my father was transferred to a new parish in the Cossack stanitsa on the Chinese border. Our family took it hard, parting with the Ussuriisk Region and their native Uspenka. There were no such beauties of nature in the new locality as those for which the Ussuriisk Region was renowned. Mother had her own problem: it was necessary to part with her beloved farm – with the cow, the horse, with the domestic fowl.... We were moving to different surroundings, and Mama took it hard.... Duniushka would often come by; she liked to have some tea from Mama’s samovar. She and Mama were both great tea-drinkers. After dinner, I was sometimes given

permission to spend some time in the dining room. From childhood, I had liked to draw and copy the pictures from my favourite magazine, Niva. Thus, being present during Duniushka's conversations with Mama, I would become an invisible witness of what was said....

"A month before our departure, Duniushka came to say her farewells. It was the end of summer. In the dining room, the silence was broken by the samovar, releasing hissing steam. Mama poured out the just-steeped, fresh tea. It was cosy. In the front corner burned an unquenchable lampadka. I sat quietly with my pencils and with my Niva. And I knew that I would never again see Duniushka. Today, there was much that she promised to tell Mama.... And she said: 'Don't grieve that you're leaving Uspenka. It will be easier to bear the world's woes where you're going. This trouble will come upon everyone and grind them up, as though in a meat-grinder. It won't touch Batiushka, though, and many will later envy him.' (She bent over, closer to Mama, and said something to her, quietly).... 'The war will end, and its end will turn the whole country upside-down. Insurgents will appear - leaders - who will incite the people against the Tsar.... It will be terrible!' ...

"Duniushka appeared pale, with faded eyes, and it was as though she did not have enough air to breathe.... 'And later, they will seize upon religion. They will sweep away that which has been gathered through the ages and assiduously preserved by our ancestors. But it will be impossible for them to root it out; the roots will remain - and, after many years, they'll give forth a most-beautiful bloom and fruit.... The Tsar will leave the nation, which shouldn't be, but this has been foretold to him from Above. This is his destiny. There is no way that he can evade it.' Being briefly quiet and, as it were, having gathered her thoughts, she added: 'For this, he will receive a martyr's crown on earth, for which he'll receive, subsequently, an eternal crown, a Heavenly one.... He will be a prayerful intercessor for the nation and the people, when the chastisement fallen upon dozens of generations for the harm done to God's Anointed One will reach an end.... The generations to come will bear the responsibility for this act on the part of their ancestors. The disaster in the land (she had the revolution in mind) will disperse the people; they will be scattered to various countries, losing touch with one another. But, wherever Russians go, they will bring their culture and their religion. At the far end of Russia, there will be an enormous earthquake. The waters will break out of the ocean, flooding the continent, and many nations will perish. Many diseases beyond understanding will appear.... The face of the earth will change.... The people will comprehend their guilt; they will come to understand how far they have departed from God and from His teachings, and then they will begin to be reborn spiritually, gradually being cleansed physically, as well. People will become vegetarians. By that time, many animals will have vanished. The horse and the dog will only be seen in pictures; and later - the cow, the goat, and the sheep will disappear forever from our planet.... People will no longer be interested in politics, and the spiritual principle of each nation will predominate...'

“Duniushka paused momentarily. I was left with the impression, looking at her and listening to her prophecy, – that she had grown extremely tired.

“We thought that she had already finished her prophesying, but then, suddenly, with a great surge of energy, she continued: ‘Russia will be supreme in the world. Her name will be ‘Holy Rus’. All sects and religions will pour into Orthodoxy.... But Orthodoxy, and -- essentially speaking -- religion, will draw closer to what it was in Apostolic times. . . . In those ages to come, there will no longer be any tsars or kings. In Holy Russia a prince will reign, who will come from the nation that gave us our religion [i.e., Byzantium]. He will be a supremely spiritual person, who will provide the opportunity for uplifting the moral fibre and the spiritual principles of the nation.... In the course of one of those ages, Asia will bestir herself; she will try to penetrate into Europe, but her attempts will be futile. No one will ever overcome ‘Holy Rus’, and only through her will salvation come to the world.... Keep my words secret until my death. She [i.e., Death] already waits for me; she’s not beyond the hills. And you, Matushka, will have to suffer cruelly; you will endure everything in a Christian manner; you will lose your children; but, later, fate will be kind to you – you will meet again...’

“In 1918, we received a sad bit of news. On the Dormition of the Most-Holy Mother of God [August 15/28] in the large village of V., according to his custom, **Father Seraphim** was celebrating the Liturgy. With shouts and curses, a group of the ‘local authorities’ burst into the church. They grabbed Father Seraphim and, just as he was – in his vestments and his liturgical cuffs – they hanged him upon the Royal Doors. Duniushka rushed to his defence, and was killed immediately with a ramrod. Mama later told me that all of Duniushka’s predictions concerning our family had come to pass.... I have tried to record, in this, my diary, everything that I had once heard personally, having been present at my Mama’s meeting with Duniushka....

6. HOLY NUN-MARTYR EUDOCIA OF DIVEYEVO

and those with her

Blessed Dunyushka - her full name was Eudocia Alexandrovna Sheikova - was born in a peasant family in the village of Puzo. Her mother Alexandra died early, when Dunya was two years old, and her father Alexander married again. Dunya's real mother was very pious, but her stepmother was of a different spirit. She tried to kill Dunya's father with arsenic, and finally succeeded. Dunya herself said that for seven years she had known that her step-mother was trying to poison her father, and had told her father:

"Don't drink that water, look, it's muddy."

In the same village there lived Dunya's uncle and aunt. Dunya learned piety from them and lived with them during her adolescent years. Uncle was the churchwarden; prayer in church was not enough for them, and they prayed a lot at home. When Dunya was nine, she and her friend Maria went to Sarov, and there an elder knocked their heads together, from which moment they lived side by side for three years. Maria would reap while Dunya sat on the sheaves and sang. They always went to church together hand in hand. Dunya would always walk in a warm scarf and homespun coat, and never showed her face. In their youth they went to Sarov, Diveyevo and Ponetayevka. Dunya recounted how they once went to see Pelagia Ivanovna in Diveyevo. She was feeding the doves at the fence. Dunya went up to the fence.

"Go away, you scamp, don't scare the doves," said the cell-attendants.

Dunya cried and would not go away. She had a morsel in her hands, and she threw that, too, to the pigeons. Pelagia Ivanovna said:

"Why are you driving her away from me, bring her here and feed her."

Some said that the love between Dunya and Maria was from the devil, others - from God. If Maria was in trouble, Dunyushka would not be separated from her. Maria was beaten by her parents, and Dunya by her relatives. They kept driving them away from each other, but they held hands and walked along singing. They also went to church as a couple. When Maria died, Dunya went every day to the church, and although when Maria had been alive they had begun to throw stones at them, when she was on her own they did it even more. They would not let her into the church on feastdays, and she could only go to liturgies she had ordered.

In her seventeenth year she fell seriously ill. She could only walk with a stick, but she was able to put wood in the stove herself (her aunt had died by this time). Later, however, when she was twenty, she became even worse. It was Christmas, and she cried out:

"I'm dying, I'm on fire."

The two girls who used to come to her took her out into the courtyard and poured two buckets of cold water onto her. Then she said:

"Take me into the cell."

Then they laid her on a bench, and she never got up again. She never received treatment from doctors, and no one knows what her illness was, but everyone says that Dunyushka was a great sufferer. She was completely chained to her bed for about 35 years and had to be carried to her execution. Several families in the village took constant care of Dunya, providing her with everything she needed. She was always surrounded by "nurses" - girls from various places who were voluntarily called to serve her. She lived in great poverty, in the same few clothes till she died. She never cut her hair or her nails.

The Orthodox Russian people does not simply feel compassion for such sufferers. They are surrounded by a special veneration, which is rooted in a special faith in the divine election and gifts of grace of all those who innocently undergo great suffering. Such was Dunyushka's reputation. She was often visited by people from afar who were seeking spiritual edification and consolation. And there are still living people who witness from their personal experience that Dunyushka had the gift of clairvoyance.

When Daria Timagina joined Dunya there were three of them: Dunya, Daria and Dunya's uncle. In her time Dasha Timagina had been on the point of marrying, but the Sarov Elder Anatolius (in schema Basil) had blessed her to go in obedience to the sick Dunya. (The elder died in 1919, and in 1927 his relics were discovered to be incorrupt.) Then other pious girls came to join them, and they created a rule. They would sing verses, kontakia and akathists. Dunya could be consoled only by prolonged singing and reading. She read well, but was unable to write. She read lives of saints most of all, bringing them from the church, although she had some of her own. Dasha, like Dunya, had a good voice. She could not read, but she could recite the Psalter and chant verses and hymns by heart.

Dunya complained that she needed a novice who could read, so Fr. Anatolius blessed Annushka to join her. She loved singing and reading, and knew the church typicon. She was then twenty-three and lived with Dunya for eighteen years. She came to her from a worldly life. Dunya forced her to clean the floor, and she would say:

"Tell me to dance a little."

And Dunya allowed it, she let her do anything. Thus she read novels secretly, without letting Dunya know. Dasha saw it and told Dunya. Then Annushka began to cry:

"But what can I do, Dunya, I'm bored. I'll run away..."

And she wanted to run away. It was still the evening, otherwise she would have run away. But in the night she saw herself in the church in Ponetayevka, and she saw what looked like St. Seraphim feeding a bear. She went up to him, bowed at his feet. He blessed her, gave her a dried crust and said:

"Oh you idler! Look, I'm giving you something to do - go and nurse my children."

And he took her by the hand and led her into a cell. And there stood two cradles with two small girls lying in them.

"Nurse them," he said - and left.

She began to nurse them, but they began to cry. She wanted to run away. She ran up to the door, but it was like a wall: it was impossible to get out.

Anna woke up. And she told Dunya her dream. And Dunya said that these girls were her and Dasha. She persuaded Anna to stay and told her to pray to the Heavenly Queen.

I.N. records that once his father brought her some bread. She always accepted his offerings, but this time for some reason she refused to take it:

"You need it," she said.

On his way home, he met a woman who complained that she had nothing to feed her son who had arrived, she had no bread. He understood that the bread which Dunya had refused to accept was destined for this family.

Once Dunya was visited by a woman from Moscow who was endowed with a good voice. Dunya listened to her singing and then suddenly said:

"You're not wearing a cross."

The woman objected three times.

"I'm not blessed or a fool-for-Christ, I'm a sick maiden," said Dunya, "but you're not wearing a cross. Fear the Heavenly Queen," she concluded, pointing to the Iveron icon of the Mother of God.

And the woman admitted that her cross was in her purse.

People recall that Dunyushka was venerated by the venerable clairvoyant elder of Arzamas, Archimandrite Sophronius. In those difficult years Fr. Sophronius used to comfort the Orthodox, prophesying that atheism would not reign forever in Russia, but that there would come a time when our Russia would again rise in the strength and glory of Orthodoxy. Fr. Sophronius never saw Dunya, but he deeply respected her, and he used to advise pilgrims setting off for Sarov to call in on the sick Dunyushka.

"She is higher than I," he would say.

Not long before the events in August, Fr. Sophronius sent Dunya a gift - an icon of the Saviour wearing a crown of thorns. On seeing the icon, Dunya wept:

"O batyushka, what have you sent me..."

And Dunyushka more than once prophesied her own death. There was a custom in the village that when someone died they rang the bell six times. But Dunya said:

"They won't ring either the big or the small bell for me."

Her girl-servants objected: "For you we'll ring as on Great Saturday."

"They'll throw me out like dung," replied Dunya.

In the summer of 1919, in obedience to the insistent demands of Dunyushka, some of the girls dispersed to their homes. The rest remained. But in the end three went to their deaths with Dunya - two Darias and Maria. The only one of them who was local, from Suvorovo, was Daria Stepanova Timagina. In 1919 she was about 35 years old, having spent 18 of those years without parting from Dunya. Nothing is known about the other Daria except that her homeland was somewhere to the east of Nizhni-Novgorod, and that she had several times served the sick Dunya with fervour. Maria was a native of Mordovia. She had once married, but then fell ill with some illness of the legs and then went to blessed Dunya, with whom she remained to live.

About two weeks before the fateful events - witnesses her god-daughter, Ryasofor-nun E. - Dasha felt a terrible anguish and went for a few days to Ponatayevsky monastery, not far from Sarov. On her return she said that on the way back from Ponatayevsky four birds had pecked at her head. Soon after this an armed detachment arrived in the village. It was endowed, in accordance with the laws of "war communism", with the fullness of judicial and executive power. They say that the detachment was flushing out deserters, and the son-in-law of the priest, the teacher Antipas Pavlovich, made a denunciation that deserters were hiding in the house of Dunyushka, who was stirring them up not to go into the Red army...

An investigation - that is, interrogations and beatings - was begun and went on for only two days. They beat Dunyushka and the nurses - the Mordovian Masha did not let slip a single word. They also beat the constant visitors of Dunyushka's little cabin. The whole village was in a state of great agitation. But one of Dunyushka's admirers, Peter Karasev, who died in about 1962, related how the fear disappeared at the first blow, and he did not feel any pain, but felt joyful and peaceful:

"I wanted to be beaten again for Dunyushka".

They summoned nobody to the trial, which took place in Antipas Pavlovich's house. There are different accounts of its course and the content of the sentence. Some say that Dunyushka was particularly condemned for praying for the tsar. And extra provisions were also found in her house. The latter is quite possible, for her numerous visitors - who included merchants from Arzamas - always brought Dunya something. Others say that the judges had different opinions and they had to refer to a higher authority.

Nothing is known about the nature of the "crime" of Dunya's "nurses", but everyone unanimously witnesses that right until the evening of August 4/17 there was a real possibility of their escaping execution. There were no constant guards around the house, and some of the girls were able to leave. Daria Timagina, the other Daria and the Mordovian Maria voluntarily decided to share blessed Dunya's lot.

In the evening of August 4/17 all four were transferred to the neighbouring izba, which had been given to Dunya by a deceased old woman, and were placed under guard. Dunyushka's house, which had been terribly ravaged by the prolonged search, was set alight and burned to the ground that same night.

At dawn on August 5/18, some women who had gone out to milk their flocks saw four columns of light rising from earth to heaven above the cemetery. At about 10 in the morning the priest Basil Radugin came to the arrested women, informed them about the death sentence and offered that they receive Communion. Dunyushka asked:

"Are you forbidden to intercede for us?"

The priest replied that he couldn't help them, and that the same threat hung over him, too. After this all four partook of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

At about 11 a cart came up to the house. The whole village already knew about the impending execution, and a large crowd of people had gathered, but those who came too close were driven away by the soldiers with lashes. The two Darias and Maria carried Dunya out on their arms, laid her into the cart and themselves mounted upon it.

Ryasofof-nun E. was 22 at that time, and well remembers the scene: "The people all around were weeping, but the condemned women were smiling happily, crossing themselves and saying farewell to everybody. My godmother was tall, good-looking, with a beaming face - a strong one, she was. She was bowing in all directions and saying:

"Forgive me, Orthodox, forgive me.'

"Turning to my mother, she said:

"Olga, take my coat.'

"My mother went up to the cart, but the soldiers drove her away. But my godmother continued saying farewell:

"Farewell, Orthodox, forgive me for Christ's sake.'

"And they all said farewell and smiled happily - you know, they had just had Communion..."

The cart, surrounded by soldiers, moved off towards the cemetery. The soldiers were beating Dunya with lashes all along the way. The nurses joined hands over Dunya, protecting her from the blows. The lashes fell on them, but they smiled all the while, as if they felt nothing. John Anisimov, who died in about 1924 of typhus, used to say that when they were beating the girls with lashes on the way to the place of execution, he suddenly saw a White Dove with outstretched wings above their arms as they defended Dunya. And the blows rained down on the wings, and the soldiers said that the lashes bounced backed from those those being beaten as if from something elastic. At the moment of the vision Anisimov felt an especially sharp pang of compassion for the sufferers which freed him from any fear for his own life.

They were shot on the territory of the cemetery of the village of Suvorovo, fifteen kilometres from Diveyevo.

Dasha Timagina was holding Dunyushka in her arms. The first time they fired blanks for some reason. Dasha shuddered and dropped Dunya to the earth. At that moment one of the soldiers refused point-blank to shoot.

"I can't. I can see something white, with white wings, near them."

The commander of the unit swore terribly and pushed him aside. He also seemed to be experiencing some kind of terror, and was trying to suppress it with constant swearing. After the second shot it seemed that Masha the Mordovian was still alive. Ryasofof-nun E. says that she was still "quivering", so they thrust a bayonet through her throat.

Then they called some people who were standing at a distance to dig a grave. Basil Ivanovich Seednov was one of those called. He relates that when a big hole had been dug, the soldiers wanted to push the bodies of the shot women straight into the grave with their boots. But he hastily jumped into the grave and asked them to give him the bodies. He covered the faces of the dead with their kerchiefs. There is a rumour that later, at night, some people secretly brought some coffins and transferred the bodies into them, singing the burial service according to the full Orthodox rite.

After the shooting, the commander of the unit who had been in charge of the shooting read the sentence.

"They were real witches, no wild animal would have tolerated what they did."

And he added with a smirk:

"But Christ is risen, and they will arise."

More than once the soldiers expressed their terror by calling the dead "witches". The imperturbable calm and joy of those doomed to death always terrifies murderers. But there was something special here - the extreme degree of defencelessness and orphanhood. The fact that they were women, and virgins, and one of them was chained to her bed with an incurable illness - all this tore at the heart and appealed to their compassion.

Some years after the execution, a fire destroyed half the village, and many said that this was their punishment for not defending Dunyushka. Her memory was linked in the minds of the villagers with a recognition of their guilt.

Twice a year every year, on August 5/18 and the day of St. Eudocia, March 1/14, many venerators of Dunyushka from new generations gather in Suvorovo, Nizhni-Novgorod and other parts of the region. At memorial feasts they sing a song about Dunyushka composed in Suvorovo: "O our mother Eudocia..." Before the funeral they carry out Dunya's great prayer rule, which contains the troparia to the Iveron Mother of God and St. Seraphim. Dunyushka had a special veneration for the Good Gatekeeper and promised to hear everyone who sang this troparion at her grave: "Before thy holy icon..."

The spiritual eye undoubtedly perceives in the exploit of these new passion-bearers the participation of the great wonderworker of Sarov, who was not slow to come to the help of his "orphans". In this region his prayers are felt everywhere, and everywhere the traditions about his miracles and prophecies are preserved.

7. HOLY MARTYR MARIA OF SIBERIA

Maria Bochkareva was a simple peasant woman from Siberia. In 1914 she tried to enlist in the army, but was refused. Not to be deterred, she spent her last eight roubles in sending a telegram to the Tsar, petitioning him to allow her to serve in the Russian army. Her petition was granted: she was allowed to fight under General Gurko. By February, 1917, she had risen to the rank of sergeant, having spent two years in the trenches with several wounds and a number of medals to prove it.

Concerned by the collapse of military discipline, she appealed to General Brusilov to let her form a shock battalion of women in the hope that this would shame the rest of the soldiers into fighting. Brusilov agreed, the battalion was formed under the leadership of Lieutenant Maria Bochkareva, and was blessed by Metropolitan Tikhon (Bellavin), the future patriarch, on Red Square before being sent to the front in June. The women shaved their heads and put on standard army trousers. During the summer offensive near Smorgon, Bochkareva's battalion did better than most. The women volunteers broke through the first two German lines, followed by some sheepish male conscripts. But then they came under heavy German fire. The women dispersed in confusion, while most of the men stayed put in the German trenches where they had found a large supply of liquor and proceeded to get drunk. Despite the shambles around her, Bochkareva battled on. At one point she came across one of the women having sexual intercourse with a soldier in a shell-hole. Imitating Phineas in his zeal, she ran her through with a bayonet; but the soldier escaped. Eventually, Bochkareva herself was seriously wounded, and the last offensive of the Russian army in the First World War came to an end.

In October, 1917, the women's battalion became subject to the headquarters of the Petrograd military district, and at the beginning of the storming of the Winter Palace, at about nine in the evening, a unit of the women's battalion capitulated. The soldiers and sailors arrested 137 women and disbanded the women's battalion. Only Maria Bochkareva was detained. She was interrogated in the Smolny Institute by Lenin and Trotsky. The leaders of the proletariat spoke graciously with the legendary woman officer, and were full of admiration for her courage. They offered that she work with the Bolsheviks. Maria refused outright and managed to escape from those who had arrested her.

She wanted to go abroad, to America. But she did not succeed, and was again arrested. She was stripped naked and put against the wall with other male officers. They say that as she was waiting for her execution she prayed before an icon of St. Anna. But then a miracle took place. The rifle of one of the executioners trembled. He recognized in the naked woman the officer who had saved his life on the German front. The soldier stood next to her and

declared that he would die together with Maria. The Bolsheviks had a meeting. Finally, they decided to send Bochkareva to the Cheka.

God delivered Maria Bochkareva from the Lubyanka. After many trials she managed to escape to the U.S.A. There she met Theodore Roosevelt, and obtained an audience with President Woodrow Wilson. She fell on her knees and begged him to help the struggle against the Bolsheviks. She was so persuasive that the American president wept.

In August, 1918, when an anti-Bolshevik rebellion broke out among the workers in Izhevsk, Maria Bochkareva arrived in Archangelsk so as to create women's "death battalions" in the army of General Miller. But they demanded that Lieutenant Bochkareva not shame the uniform of the Russian officer, and even removed her epaulettes. Meanwhile, in the Izhevsk region thousands of women had put on military uniforms. And they often stirred up the men to attack.

In October, 1919, Bochkareva arrived in Omsk, where many refugees from Izhevsk and Votkinsk had assembled under the protection of Admiral Kolchak. Maria Bochkareva made a last attempt to form a women's battalion. Soon she again fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks. By a decree of the Omsk Cheka dated May 15, 1920, she was sentenced to execution by shooting...

8. HOLY HIEROMARTYR BENJAMIN, METROPOLITAN OF PETROGRAD

Metropolitan Benjamin - in the world Basil Pavlovich Kazansky - was born on April 17, 1873 in the village of Nimensky pogost, Andreyevsky volost, Kargopol uyezd, Olonets province, into the family of a priest.

Of his childhood he wrote: "In my childhood and adolescence I immersed myself in reading the Lives of the Saints and was enraptured by their heroism and their holy inspiration. With all my heart I sorrowed over the fact that times had changed and one no longer had to suffer what they suffered. Times have changed again, and the opportunity has been opened to suffer for Christ both from one's own people and from strangers!"

In 1893, having finished his studies at Olonetsk theological seminary, he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, and in 1895 he was tonsured and ordained to the diaconate. On May 19, 1896 he was ordained to the priesthood. In 1897 he graduated from the Academy, and was appointed teacher of the Holy Scriptures in the Riga theological seminary. In 1898 he became inspector of the Kholm theological seminary, and on October 6, 1899 - of the St. Petersburg theological seminary. On April 2, 1902 he was made rector of the Samara theological seminary with the rank of archimandrite. On October 12, 1905 he became rector of the St. Petersburg theological seminary.

On January 24, 1910, he was consecrated Bishop of Gdov, a vicariate of the St. Petersburg diocese, being raised to the rank of archbishop on March 6, 1917. Bishop Benjamin was a learned and irreproachable monk who placed the interests of the Church above everything else, even going so far as to speak out openly against Rasputin. And so after the February revolution, on May 25 / June 7, 1917, he was elected archbishop of Petrograd and Ladoga by a majority vote of the people of Petrograd (including the workers) in place of Rasputin's appointee, Metropolitan Pitirim, who had been arrested and removed from his see. On June 17, 1917 he was renamed Archbishop of Petrograd and Gdov. On August 14 he was raised to the rank of metropolitan and made a member of the Holy Synod by the Local Church Council that had just opened.

From October 27 to November 3 he was in the Kremlin while it was being fired on. A shell fell on his cell, and he escaped death through a miracle. The Council appointed him president of a commission for photographing and describing the damage done to the Kremlin.

On January 21, 1918 he headed a huge cross procession in defence of the Alexander Nvesky Lavra, which had been invaded by Red Army soldiers on January 19.

On January 26, 1918, by a resolution of the Council, he was appointed archimandrite of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. He took part in the opening of the Theological-Pastoral school of the Petrograd diocese, and also took an active part in the organization of the Theological Institute.

In 1919, during a trip to Kronstadt, Vladyka was arrested for being in the city for longer than the permitted time. Two days later he was released and sent to Petrograd.

In March, 1922, the communists started confiscating church valuables on the pretext of giving help to those starving in the Volga region. Metropolitan Benjamin objected to confiscation, but he did bless the voluntary donation of valuables. In this he was motivated both by compassion for the starving and by concern to avoid the bloody clashes between communists and believers which had taken place in other cities.

At first the Petrograd communists adopted a conciliatory attitude, and agreed to the metropolitan's proposals with regard to the voluntary donations and the control of funds raised by the parishes. However, the authorities in Moscow disapproved; they wanted, not cooperation with the Church, which would raise the Church's prestige, but war against Her. So the metropolitan was told that there would be no voluntary donations or control by the Church, but confiscation.

As the day set for the confiscation approached, the population of the city grew restless. Then on March 24, Petrogradskaya Pravda published a letter signed by twelve clergy who were to become the pillars of the future renovationist or "Living Church". They accused the Church of "playing politics" and being "counter-revolutionaries", and demanded the confiscation or unconditional surrender of the Church's valuables to the authorities. However, the peacemaker metropolitan succeeded in defusing the situation by sending two of the twelve, Vvedensky and Boyarsky, to Pomgol, the Soviet Committee for providing help to the starving, to negotiate an agreement. The upshot was that permission was obtained to substitute other possessions for the consecrated vessels (whose handover the Patriarch had forbidden), and the appropriation went ahead in a peaceful manner. This agreement negotiated with the Soviet authorities was to become the main basis of the prosecution's case against the metropolitan at his trial...

In spite of this, there were clashes between the authorities and the ordinary believers. Thus on March 15 a large crowd gathered at the Kazan cathedral to protest against the forthcoming requisition. On March 26 soldiers were summoned to disperse a crowd at the Nativity church. On March 30, during another demonstration against requisition at the Znamenskaya church, the police beat up the crowd. On April 14, at the church of St. John, a two-thousand-strong crowd pelted the commission with stones and rang the bells. On April 21 violence was again displayed against the members of the commission at the St. Vladimir church, and again on April 26 at the Protection

and St. Andrew cathedrals, and on May 4 - at the Putilov church. The Bolsheviks replied with repressions. They staged more than two thousand trials, shot about 10,000 people and sent hundreds of thousands to the camps.

In May, 1922, Patriarch Tikhon was placed under house arrest. Profiting from this circumstance, Vvedensky and other members of the group of twelve succeeded in usurping control of the central ecclesiastical administration in Moscow. In mid-May a Higher Church Administration (HCA) was set up, and the schism became entrenched.

The renovationist or "Living Church" schism stood for acceptance of the revolution, more privileges for the lower, married clergy, the acceptance of married bishops and twice-married priests, the new calendar and other innovations in church services. They also proclaimed some clearly heretical teaching. Metropolitan Benjamin vigorously defended the teaching of the Church against the renovationists, as we can read in this account written by the Catacomb Bishop Peter (Ladygin) (+1957):-

"When Metropolitan Agathangelus issued this epistle [accepting the leadership of the Church as lawful patriarchal locum tenens], he was immediately arrested and exiled to Siberia. But Eudocimus, Antonin and Leonid then consecrated the protopriests Vvedensky, Krasnitsky, Stadnik and others to the episcopate, while they made themselves metropolitans. They created a Higher Church Administration which was confirmed by Soviet power. Then they became the ecclesiastical rulers throughout Russia. They created a programme [of twenty-eight points], in which it was said that 'our Lord Jesus Christ is not God, and the Mother of God is not a Virgin' and other points which go against our Church and the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and Apostles...

"Then in Moscow this Higher Church Administration began to demand that all the bishops and priests should recognize them, while all those who did not recognize them were thrown into prison. The three metropolitans: Vvedensky, Krasnitsky and Boyarksy went one evening to Metropolitan Benjamin and suggested that he also unite with them. He said:

"I was elected to this see by the people. Without the people I cannot decide. Tomorrow is Sunday, the people will be free. We shall ask the people to assemble at the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. Then you explain to them what renovationism and the Living Church is.'

"They all agreed to this. That same evening Metropolitan Benjamin phoned the deans of Leningrad that they should immediately announce in all the churches that some metropolitans had arrived from Moscow who had suggested that he accept renovationism.

"Tomorrow, May 28th [new style], I shall serve in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. At the end of the Liturgy the representatives of the Living Church will

explain what renovationism and the Living Church is. And I shall ask the whole people and all the believers who are interested in Church matters to come at ten o'clock to the Lavra.'

"On May 28th, 1922, the people began to come together from the whole of Leningrad, and in front of the entrance they placed notebooks in which everyone's name could be recorded. From these notebooks it is calculated that 12,000 people gathered, as well as the clergy from every church. Three people: Archimandrite Macarius, Hieromonk Seraphim and Hierodeacon Herman wrote down everything that happened and sent it to me in Odessa.

"At the end of the Liturgy Metropolitan Benjamin addressed the people, saying:

"'There have arrived from Moscow representatives of the Living Church. They propose that we accept their teaching. I cannot do this without you, who elected me. So I have invited all of you who are interested in Church affairs. Listen carefully. They will explain their programme to you, and then I will express my own opinion!'

"Then, on the ambon, Metropolitan Benjamin appointed eight members of the presidium; the metropolitan himself, four clergy and three laymen. Then he declared the session open.

"Vvedensky came out onto the ambon. He began to explain his programme as follows

"'Brothers and sister, up to now,' he said, 'we have been subject to the Tsar and the metropolitans. But now we are free, and we ourselves must rule the people and the Church. More than 1900 years have already passed since it was written for us that the Lord Jesus Christ was born from the Virgin Mary and is the Son of God. But that is not true We recognize the existence of the God of Sabaoth, about whom our whole Bible and all the prophets have written. And we recognize them. But Jesus Christ is not God. He was simply a very clever man. And it is impossible to call Mary, who was born of a Jewish tribe and herself gave birth to Jesus - the Mother of God and Virgin. And so now we have all recognized the existence of God, that is, the God of Sabaoth, and we must all be united: both Jews and Catholics must be a living people's church.'

"When he had said this, the whole people cried out:

"'We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and God, and we recognize the Mother of God to be a Virgin!'

"Then Krasnitsky came out and said:

"Brothers and sisters, the baptism of small children has been accepted by us. But when the child is just born he does not know or understand anything. They baptize him, put a little cross on him, and he grows up with the obligation of wearing this cross and not taking it off. But when he has grown up, he will learn and know everything - the cross will be quite unnecessary for him. So we do not recognize the baptism of young children, and when he comes of age let him be baptized and wear a cross. In the same way we do not recognize marriage: it is unnecessary and wrong. Why bind people? It should be like this: they should get together, register a civil marriage, and if one doesn't like the other, then let them go off in search of another and let him take another woman. We have freedom now. So we do not recognize any saints or relics. Nor do we recognize monasticism. We don't need any monasticism. Before, bishops had to come from the monks. This is wrong, because a man cannot live without a woman, nor a woman without a man. Bishops must be married, and priests also. It used to be that if a priest's wife died he had to remain a widower until his death. That is wrong. Now there is freedom. We can take a second and a third wife.'

"Then Boyarsky came out. He said:

"Although Vvedensky said that Jesus Christ is not God but a clever man, and the Mother of God is not a Virgin, I do not agree with this. I recognize that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Mother of God a Virgin... But baptism, marriage, holy relics, monasticism - I do not recognize!

"When he had said this, the people cried out:

"We do not need your explanations. We do not want your new Living Church!

"There was a disturbance and shouting among the people. Metropolitan Benjamin began to calm them down. When the people had settled, Metropolitan Benjamin said to them:

"You have all heard all the explanations of the representatives of the "Living Church". Perhaps there is someone who will agree to join them. But I cannot, because this is the same blasphemy which was previously preached by Arius and his followers. And so I, in accordance with the rules of the Apostles and the Ecumenical Councils am obliged to anathematize all the leaders of this living and new church and their followers.'

"Then he immediately turned towards the Royal Doors and said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and of the All-pure, immaculate and Ever-Virgin His Mother, the Birth-giver of God, I anathematize...'

"And there and then the protodeacon pronounced anathema on all the teachers and followers of the 'Living Church'. But while they were chanting anathema, Vvedensky, fled out of the sanctuary through a side-door into the courtyard of the Alexander-Nevisky Lavra, and informed the GPU by telephone of what had happened. But Metropolitan Benjamin began to preach and give further explanations to the people. While he was speaking, there appeared representatives of the Soviet authorities and arrested Metropolitan Benjamin and the four bishops and three laymen who had been appointed members of the presidium.

"Immediately, they took them out into Gorochovaya street, where the GPU was situated. All the people who had been in the Lavra went there and demanded that the authorities release the metropolitan and those who had been taken with him. The whole people gathered and towards the evening of May 28th about 30,000 people had gathered on the square of the GPU. No-one left, they continued demanding their release, but the authorities did not release them. It was already late in the evening when the people were dispersed by a cavalry army."

The next day chekists arrived at the residence of the metropolitan and arrested him for "resistance to the requisitioning of church valuables". Meanwhile, Vvedensky took over the chancellery. Without turning a hair, he went up to the hierarch for a blessing. "Fr. Alexander," said the metropolitan peacefully, "you and I are not in the Garden of Gethsemane". And without blessing the schismatic, he calmly listened to the statement about his arrest.

On May 29, the administration of the diocese passed to his vicar, Bishop Alexis (Simansky) of Yamburg, the future false-patriarch. On the same day, Metropolitan Benjamin was brought to trial together with 86 other people. They were accused of entering into negotiations with Soviet power with the aim of annulling or softening the decree on the requisitioning of church valuables, and that they were "in a plot with the worldwide bourgeoisie and the Russian emigration". He was given many chances to save himself in a dishonourable manner. Thus even before the trial Vvedensky and the Petrograd commandant Bakaiev had come to him and given him the choice: either revoke the anathema against Vvedensky or face trial. But the metropolitan refused to revoke the anathema. (His deputy, Bishop Alexis, having recognised the HCA to be lawful, did revoke the anathema, on June 4.) Again, during the trial, the judges hinted that he save himself by naming "the authors" of the proposition he had sent to Pomgol. The metropolitan again refused, saying: "I alone did it - I thought everything over; I formulated, wrote and sent the proposition myself. I did not allow anybody else to participate in deciding matters entrusted to me as archpastor."

Also on trial with him were most of the members of the administration of the "Society of Orthodox Parishes", the superiors of almost all the churches of Petrograd, the professors of the Theological Academy, the Theological Institute and university, members of the lower clergy and simple people "of

various ranks and callings" who had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks during the street disturbances that took place during the requisitioning of church valuables - 87 people in all.

Vladyka was called an "enemy of the people" who was working in agreement with the world bourgeoisie. He was given many chances to save himself in a dishonourable manner. Thus even before the trial Vvedensky and the Petrograd commandant Bakayev had come to him and given him the choice: either revoke the anathema against Vvedensky or face trial. But the metropolitan refused to revoke the anathema. (It was revoked by his successor, Alexis Simansky, who became the second Soviet Patriarch in 1945.)

Again, during the trial, the judges hinted that he save himself by naming the authors of the proposition he had sent to Pomgol. The metropolitan again refused, saying:

"I alone did it - I thought everything over; I formulated, wrote and sent the proposition myself. I did not allow anybody else to participate in deciding matters entrusted to me as archpastor."

The renovationists Krasnitsky and Vvedensky testified against Metropolitan Benjamin during the trial, which was staged in what had been the Club of the Nobility. Three witnesses came forward to defend the metropolitan. They were immediately arrested, so no-one else came forward.

Once the prosecutor Krasikov prophetically remarked: "The whole of the Orthodox Church is a counter-revolutionary organization. It follows that the whole Church should be put in prison!"

In the thirties this is precisely what happened, when the whole of the True Church was either imprisoned or driven underground.

During the trial, Metropolitan Benjamin said: "I of course reject all the accusations made against me and once again triumphantly declare (you know, perhaps I am speaking for the last time in my life) that politics is completely alien to me. I have tried as far as I have been able to only a pastor of human souls. And now, standing before the court, I calmly await its sentence, whatever it may be, well remembering the words of the apostle: 'Take care that you do not suffer as evil-doers, but if any of you suffer as a Christian, thank God for it' (I Peter 4.15-16).

Professor Ilya Georgievich Yegorov of the Technological Institute defended the metropolitan so well during the trial that the judge in his fury brought him, too, to trial.

The defence lawyer Y.S. Gurovich delivered an eloquent speech, in which he said: "If the metropolitan perishes for his faith, for his limitless devotion to the believing masses he will become more dangerous for Soviet power than

now... The unfailing historical law warns us that faith grows, strengthens and increases on the blood of martyrs."

Gurovich's speech was greeted by tumultuous applause. Then the final word was given to the defendants (there were sixteen in all). When the metropolitan rose to speak, he first expressed sorrow at being called an "enemy of the people".

"I am a true son of my people," he said. "I love, and always have loved, the people. I have dedicated my whole life to them and I felt happy to see that they - I mean the common people - repaid me with the same love. It was the Russian people who raised me to the high position I have been occupying in our Russian Church."

This was all that he had to say about himself. The rest of his speech dealt with explanations and considerations for the defence of the others. Referring to some written documents and other facts, he exhibited extraordinary memory, logic and calmness.

A reverent silence followed the metropolitan's speech, which was broken by the presiding judge. He addressed the metropolitan in a gentler tone of voice than before, as if he also was affected by the spiritual strength of the defendant.

"All this time," he said, "you have spoken about others; the tribunal would like to hear about yourself."

The metropolitan, who had sat down, rose, looked at the presiding judge in a puzzled way, and asked in a low, clear voice:

"About myself? But what else can I tell you about myself? One more thing perhaps: regardless of what my sentence will be, no matter what you decide, life or death, I will lift up my eyes reverently to God, cross myself and affirm: 'Glory to Thee, my Lord; glory to Thee for everything.'"

On July 5 Metropolitan Benjamin was convicted of "organizing a counter-revolutionary group that set itself the aim of struggling with Soviet power". In accordance with articles 62 and 119, he was sentenced to death with confiscation of his property.

Over a month passed before the sentence was carried out. In a letter from prison, Metropolitan Benjamin anticipated the position of the Catacomb Church, saying: "The reasoning of some, perhaps outstanding pastors is strange: 'we have to preserve our living forces', that is give in to everyone for their sake! Then what is Christ for? It is not the Platonovs and the Chuprins and the Benjamins and those like them who save the Church, but Christ. That point on which they are trying to stand is destruction for the Church - it is wrong to sacrifice the Church for oneself. Now is the time of trial. People are

sacrificing everything for the sake of political convictions... Cannot we Christians display a similar courage even unto death, if we have some faith in Christ and the life of the age to come?"

And in another letter he wrote: "It is difficult, hard to suffer, but according to the measure of my sufferings consolation abounds from God. It is difficult to cross this Rubicon, this frontier and give oneself over wholly to the will of God. But when this is done, then man abounds in consolation and does not feel even the greatest sufferings; filled as he is in the midst of sufferings by an inner peace, he draws others to sufferings so that they should imitate that condition in which the happy sufferer finds himself... I talked about this before to others, but my sufferings had not reached their full measure. Now, it seems, I have to go through everything: prison, trial, public mockery and demands for my death as if the people applauded it, the ingratitude of men, their betrayal, inconstancy and similar things, anxiety and responsibility for the fate of others, and even for the Church herself.

"My sufferings have reached their height, but consolation has also increased. I am joyful and calm, as always. Christ is our life, our light and our peace! With Him it is good at all times and in all places. I do not fear for the fate of the Church! We pastors should have more faith. We should abandon our self-reliance, our intelligence and learning and (human) strength, and give place to the grace of God.

"... I am joyful and peaceful, as always. Christ is our life, light and rest. With Him it is always good."

On the night of August 12 to 13 (new style), 1922, Metropolitan Benjamin, **Archimandrite Sergius**, **George Novitsky** and **Ioann Kovsharov** were shaved and dressed in rags, so that the firing squad would not know that they were executing clergymen. Metropolitan Benjamin went to his death calmly, whispering a prayer and crossing himself. They were all shot.

9. HOLY HIEROMARTYRS STEPHEN AND VLADIMIR OF BORTSURMAN

And those with them

Fr. Stephen Nemkov, a friend of **Hieromartyr Michael** (Voskresensky) of Bortsurman, served in the village of Deyanovo, not far from Bortsurman, Simbirsk province. In 1918, the Latvian Garin and his executioners came to his village and chose certain victims, although the village had not taken part in the rebellion against the Bolsheviks. The day before Fr. Stephen's martyrdom, two Red Army soldiers came to his house. The priest received them hospitably and gave them lunch.

During the meal, the soldiers tried to persuade the priest:

"Batyushka, hide yourself somewhere, or they'll shoot you all."

Fr. Stephen did not flinch. With a radiant face he got up from the table and with a broad gesture pointed at the five-headed church of the Holy Trinity.

"Look, there it is, the Trinity. I shall never leave it. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not hide and conceal himself, and neither shall I."

In the evening he was arrested together with eighteen other people. His matushka, Anna, got together a knapsack for the road, but he took nothing.

The arrested men were brought to the school building and beaten for a long time. Fr. Stephen was especially cruelly beaten and humiliated, and before his execution his hair was cut off.

After midday on the Sunday Fr. Stephen and the peasants were led out of Deyanovo in the direction of the village of Maltsev.

Coming up to a ravine, the executioners ordered the arrested men to draw up in a line. Then they shot them from a machine-gun. Fr. Stephen was executed separately, with a shot in the head. But he was not killed, and the executioners bayoneted him.

All the sufferers were buried in a common grave except for Fr. Stephen, who was buried separately in the centre of the cemetery.

On the third day, Eugenia Fyodorovna Khorina gathered together a group of believing girls and went with a box to the site of the martyrdom so as to collect the blood and remains of the martyrs. Then they placed everything they had found in the box, dug out a pit and placed the box with the remains in it.

Later a cross was erected at the site, and pannikhidas were served.

The leader of the executioners, Garin, was later killed by his own men.

*

Priest Vladimir Karpinsky took the place of Fr. Stephen in Deyanovo after his death.

At Pascha, 1923, the local communist Golopupov, nicknamed Vaska the Tatar, thought up a bold way of killing the priest. Before the beginning of the cross procession, he hid himself in the bell-tower, waiting for midnight.

The cross procession, illuminated by hundreds of burning candles, began its way around the church, and the harmonious chanting could be heard: "Thy Resurrection, Christ our Saviour, the angels are singing in the heavens..."

The shining ribbon came to the entrance to the church and stopped: the doors were closed.

"Count worthy also us on earth with a pure heart to glorify Thee..."

"Glory to the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-creating and Undivided Trinity!" Fr. Vladimir cried.

"Christ is risen!" shouted the priest.

The sound of the response was mixed with the sound of a gunshot.

"He is risen indeed!" was heard by the priest already not from his own parishioners, not in the earthly church, but in the Heavenly Church, with the angels chanting the Resurrection of Christ...

10. HOLY HIEROMARTYR NICODEMUS OF SOLOVKI

The most notorious camp in the Gulag in the 1920s was the famous monastery of Solovki in the White Sea. The bishops and clergy exiled to Solovki usually spent some time in the Transfiguration cathedral in the Kremlin. Among them was **Fr. Nicodemus**, who arrived in 1923. Stooped, approaching 80, he was nevertheless fit and healthy for his age. He came from Poltava region, had been a priest for 50 years, and had been sentenced by the Poltava NKVD because he did not fulfil the new rules of the Bolsheviks concerning witnesses for weddings, doctor's certificates for funerals, etc. He had been sent first to Kem, where they took away his pectoral cross, epitachelion, riza and kamilavka, leaving him only with his Gospel. He wore a red army hat with the red star cut out. This didn't put him out.

"The people say that you can recognise a priest in bast matting. Besides, everyone knows me. And I'm not wearing bast matting, but good material, I bought it in Kiev.

As night was falling, the prisoners, starving and exhausted after a long day's work, asked Fr. Nicodemus to tell them a story. They meant by that a story from the Bible. Every evening there was an attentive crowd in front of the old altar. The prisoners interrupted the story-telling with critical or enthusiastic remarks (Fr. Nicodemus was a very good story-teller).

They particularly loved the parable of the Prodigal Son. Identifying themselves with him, they wanted to know the story to the last detail. At the point that the son returned to his father, only sobs and sighs could be heard all around. Some animated opinions were expressed: some found the father's loving behaviour in receiving the rogue again unacceptable. Others, putting themselves in the place of the father, wondered whether the return of the son would have given them joy.

The next day, after work, Boris Shirayev, who later wrote his story, wanted to meet the story-teller. He was sitting on his bed, on the third level. A ray of sunlight was playing on his face, and one could see the pleasure this gave him:

"What sunshine today, what happiness!"

They started up a conversation. The father wanted to know the life of Shirayev. On learning that he had ten more years of his sentence to serve, he said to him:

"My son, don't be sad, you are still young, you have the whole of your life in front of you... Only thank God."

"Why the devil should I thank him? How can I be happy with this dog's life?"

"Don't speak like that, don't speak like that. No joy comes from the devil. Only sadness and despair come from him. But from God comes joy and gaiety."

"One is not a man here, one is nothing, just a protoplasm."

"I a nothing, a protoplasm?! I am a child of God, no-one can take that dignity from me. God has placed me in the middle of a community which I must protect."

He spat on the earth in indignation. Shirayev retorted:

"What a fine parish you have - these thieves, these filthy bandits, dressed in rags, covered with lice and starving, these fallen officers, these shipwrecked clergy, what miserable pariahs!"

"So that you may know once and for all, this is the most beautiful parish I have ever had. Look: what splendour, three levels!"

He pointed to the camp beds superimposed on top of each other.

"Christ would be proud of this community. Do you think that it was only the scribes who went to Him? No, it was the wretched ones, the starving, the crippled who sought healing, the blind, the epileptic, the possessed, the sinners, the thieves, the peasants and the fishermen. Do you think that they thought that God had come to bring them salvation? No, my little one. They had heard that an extraordinary man was going round the country healing the blind and the paralytics, and cleansing the lepers. No! They went to Him to see what kind of man He was. They listened to Him and some began to understand. With the eyes of the body they saw nothing extraordinary. However, some had the eyes of their souls opened. It was the same as with the lepers; He had cured that one of his ulcers, but hundred by His preaching. What a fool you are! You've read the Scriptures only with your carnal eyes and your materialist spirit."

"What miracles are you talking about? No-one here needs to be healed, we don't have lepers any more!"

"You say that we don't have lepers any more! You see nothing, look around you. Who is lying down over here, who is dragging himself along over there, who is coughing? All of them are lepers who are asking for forgiveness. They don't know that they're asking for it, but they're doing it without words. And not only here, it's the same throughout the world. Everyone is hungering and thirsting for the word of salvation which comes from God."

Big tears flowed out of his shining eyes and stopped, clinging to his white beard. Seizing Shirayev's head, the priest turned it towards the frescoes blackened by the smoke. One could only see one figure prostrated on the ground and another with his hands raised to heaven in thanksgiving. It was the father with the prodigal son.

"Look, open your eyes, rejoice!"

Fr. Nicodemus had arrived in Solovki a few days earlier, in a convoy. They had spent nine days in a train. In the railway carriages there had been cages which each contained three people. They were so crowded that in order for one to move the two others had to change position. The guards patrolled between the cages.

In Fr. Nicodemus' cage there was a robber and a Muslim Tartar. During the night the priest read and chanted the services in a low voice. He murmured the evening hymn: "Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the evening light, we praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God..." The Tartar understood immediately. Although he did not understand Russian, He nevertheless began to pray in his way. The thief was silent, crouching like a rabbit. He had stubbed out his cigarette-end in his pocket. Fr. Nicodemus continued to pray: "From my youth have many passions warred against me. But do Thou Thyself defend and save me, O my Saviour... In the Holy Spirit every soul is given life..." At the words during the Great Doxology, which he said in a soft voice: "O Lord God, Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us...", the thief immediately made the sign of the cross.

Fr. Nicodemus said to Shirayev: "And so we have served God for nine nights, for one can serve Him anywhere. God has said: 'There where two or three are gathered together in My name, I will be in the midst of them.' But we were three! What joy that gave me! We couldn't move, we were frightened of speaking out loud, but the spirit was free and this silent communion with our neighbours was magnificent."

"But they didn't understand your prayers!"

"Why should they not have understood them? They prayed all the same, that means that they understood. They understood with the heart."

No one knew his surname, but that was unimportant. The priest-consoler was known everywhere. He told stories in a wonderful way - stories from the Bible and the lives of the saints, but also simple, real-life stories from his former parishes. One day, a commissar was passing the night in the barracks.

"Pope, I want to bring a woman here for the night, what do you think of that?"

"What do I think of it? In my seventy years I have seen many things; you are young and full of passion, if you cannot do without her, do as seems best to you."

"Shall I bring you one, too?"

"No, my child, don't worry about me, I have been a widower for fifty years."

"Has the devil never tempted you?"

He replied: "Of course he has tempted me. Isn't a pope a man? We all have human feelings, and it is the devil's task to tempt us. And so he tempts me and I respond with prayer."

They conversed like this for a long time. The commissar did not bring in a woman, but two packets of tobacco.

They called him secretly to come and visit the sick and the dying so as to say a prayer. All those who were heavy laden came to him in secret.

One day, a thief, a big, loud fellow who was always blaspheming, was crushed by a tree. They called Fr. Nicodemus; he came, but a guard was already there who wanted to drive the priest away. Nicodemus said to him calmly:

"A man is dying, he needs a last word, that's not going to last a long time, step aside a little."

The chekist obeyed. The thief could no longer speak. Stretching out the three fingers of his hand, he indicated that he had killed three men. The father gave him absolution and he died in peace.

He was a great connoisseur of the human heart. Like a woodcutter, he went from one part of the camp to the other. Someone was despondent, so he sat down beside him and talked about everyday things.

Without beating about the bush, he attacked the problem:

"My child, pray to Saint Nicholas and the Mother of God of Tenderness and say to him: 'Your servant is suffering, he is sad, take his pain upon yourself and intercede for him. Drive away my sadness, Saint Nicholas.' He will help you, but you must pray to him and remind him often. He has a lot to do. The whole world is asking for his help, at his age he could forget. But you remind him."

In the evening, when he was telling his "holy stories", as the thieves called them, the great, sombre church was full of people. He spoke a language which they understood. He told the stories with the aid of images, embellishing the scene so that one would have thought one was with Abraham under the oak of Mamre when the three visitors approached. He had himself given the order to his wife to bring in the veal, and he himself had been the father of the prodigal son who was so moved by the return of his child.

Boris Shiryayev writes: "The face of the old priest shining with light stood in front of me and blotted out everything from me: both the rows of hard-labour bunks, and the human mish-mash crawling on them, and the charred, smoky walls of the defiled, desecrated church."

Fr. Nicodemus never feared the wrath of the bosses, and never refused to carry out his pastoral duty. They led him secretly "to those women who wished to receive Communion. The rabble contrived to push him through the window into the hospital to the dying, which was very difficult and dangerous."

It was inevitable that Fr. Nicodemus should receive the crown of martyrdom. At Christmas they had asked him to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in one of the barracks. Two guards entered unexpectedly:

"Again you are spreading your opium!"

Making the sign of the cross in their direction, he let them understand that the Holy Rite must not be interrupted. Then they led him into the death-cell, which had no heating. They stripped the prisoners of their outer clothing. The temperature in the ancient chapel was the same as outside, much lower than minus 20 degrees centigrade. To protect themselves from the cold, they piled up on the straw mattress, four lengthways, four sideways and four diagonally. Those who were on top protected themselves as best they could with long strips of material. During the long dark nights, Fr. Nicodemus was right at the top, telling them his marvellous stories. On Holy Saturday, radiant with joy, they celebrated the Liturgy. After embracing and kissing each other three times, they heard Fr. Nicodemus tell the story of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The next morning, they did not wake up. Their bodies were already cold. He had shown each of them the way to his last hour, then he had had to go the way he already knew alone...

After three years on Solovki, Fr. Nicodemus died there on May 2, 1926.

11. HOLY MARTYR LYDIA OF UFA

And those with her

Lydia Grammakova (?), the daughter of a protopriest in the city of Ufa, was born on March 20, 1901. From childhood she was sensitive, affectionate, loved by all, fearing sin and everything forbidden by God. Upon completing girls' school, at the age of nineteen she married and lost her husband in the Civil War with the departure of the White Army.

Her father joined the schism of the renovationists in 1922. The daughter, prostrating herself at her father's feet, said:

"Bless me, father, to leave you, so that I will not bind you in the salvation of your soul."

The old priest knew his daughter, just as he was aware of the wrongness of his action. He wept, and, blessing Lydia for an independent life, prophetically said to her:

"See, daughter, when you win your crown, that you tell the Lord that although I myself proved too weak for battle, still I did not restrain you, but blessed you."

"I will, papa," she said, kissing his hand, thus herself also prophetically foreseeing her future.

Lydia succeeded in entering the Forestry Department, and in 1926 she was transferred to the Collective Lumber Industry for work with the lower-paid labourers. Here she immediately came into contact with simple Russian people, whom she warmly loved and who responded in the same fashion.

The lumberjacks and drivers, who had been hardened by the work they did under difficult conditions, related with amazement that in the office of the Lumber department, where Lydia met them, a feeling came over them similar to the one, now almost smothered, which they had felt when before the revolution they had gone to meet the venerated icon of the Mother of God from the village of Bogorodskoye near Ufa. In the office foul language, insults and quarrels were no longer heard. Evil passions were extinguished, and people became kinder to each other.

This was amazing and was noticed by everybody, including the party chiefs. They kept watch over Lydia, but discovered nothing suspicious: she did not go at all to the churches that had been legalized by the Bolsheviks, and she attended catacomb services rarely and carefully. The GPU knew that members of the Catacomb Church existed in the diocese, but they could find no way of uncovering and arresting them.

With the aim of uncovering those who had not yet been arrested, the GPU suddenly returned Bishop Andrew of Ufa, the future hieromartyr, from exile. He was deeply revered by the people, but was received openly by only one church in Ufa, although secretly the whole diocese came to him. The GPU was mistaken: instead of being uncovered, the Catacomb Church deepened and spread, remaining as before inaccessible to spies. Convinced of the failure of its plan, the GPU again arrested Bishop Andrew and sent him into exile.

Lydia was arrested on July 9, 1928. The secret-operations department had long been seeking a typist who had been supplying the workers of the Forestry Department with typewritten brochures containing lives of the saints, prayers, sermons and instructions of ancient and recent hierarchs. It had been noticed that on this typist's typewriter the lower stem of the "k" was broken; and thus Lydia was discovered.

The GPU understood that they had received a clue for uncovering the whole Catacomb Church in the region. Ten days of uninterrupted questioning did not break the martyr; she simply refused to say anything. On July 20 the interrogator, having lost all patience, gave Lydia over to the "special command" for interrogation.

This "special command" worked in a corner room in the cellar of the GPU. A permanent guard was stationed in the cellar corridor. On this day the guard was **Cyril Atayev**, a 23-year-old private. He saw Lydia as she was brought into the cellar. The preceding ten days' questioning had drained the strength of the martyr, and she could not go down the steps. Private Atayev, at the call of his chiefs, held her and led her down to the interrogation chamber.

"May Christ save you,"

said Lydia, sensing in the Red Army guard a spark of compassion for her.

And Christ saved Atayev. The words of the martyr, her eyes full of pain and perplexity, fell into his heart. Now he could not listen with indifference to her uninterrupted screams and cries, as he had previously listened to the same cries from others being interrogated and tortured.

Lydia was tortured for a long time. The tortures of the GPU were usually fashioned so as to leave no particularly noticeable marks on the body of the tortured one, but at Lydia's interrogation no attention was paid to this. The screams and cries of Lydia continued almost uninterruptedly for more than an hour and a half.

"But aren't you in pain? You're screaming and crying, that means it's awful?" asked the exhausted torturers in one of the intervals.

"Painful! Lord, how painful!" replied Lydia with a broken moan.

"Then why don't you talk? It will be more painful!" said the perplexed torturers.

"I can't talk... I can't... He won't allow..." groaned Lydia.

"Who won't allow?"

"God won't allow!"

Then the torturers devised something new for the martyr: sexual assault. There were four of them - one more was needed. They called the guard to help.

When Atayev entered the room, he saw Lydia, understood the means of her further torture and his own role in it - and there was worked in him a miracle similar to the unexpected conversions of the ancient torturers. Atayev's whole soul was repelled by the satanic abominableness, and a holy enthusiasm seized him. Totally unaware of what he was doing, the Red Army guard killed on the spot the two torturers who stood before him with his own revolver. Before even the second shot had echoed the GPU man who had been standing behind hit Cyril on the head with the handle of his gun. Atayev still had the strength to turn and seize his attacker by the throat, but a shot from the fourth one knocked him to the floor.

Cyril fell with his head toward Lydia, who was stretched out with thongs. The Lord gave him the opportunity of hearing once more words of hope from the martyr. And looking straight into Lydia's eyes, Cyril, with blood gushing from him, gasped his union to the Lord:

"Saint, take me with you!"

"I will take you," Lydia smiled, radiant.

The sound and meaning of this conversation as it were opened a door to the other world, and terror darkened the consciousness of the two GPU men who remained alive. With insane shouts they began to shoot the helpless victims who threatened them, and they shot until both their revolvers had been emptied. Those who had come running at the shots led them away, shouting insanely, and themselves fled from the room, seized by an unknown terror.

One of these two GPU men became completely insane. The other soon died of nervous shock. Before his death this second one told everything to his friend, Sergeant **Alexis Ikonikov**, who turned to God and brought this account to the Church. For his zealous propagation of it, he himself suffered a martyr's death.

12. HOLY HIEROMARTYR PROCOPIUS OF BIISK

Protodeacon Procopius was the choir director in the village of Kamyshinka, Bystro-Istoksky *uyezd*, Altai district, Siberia, and also served as deacon in the Alexandrovskaya church in Biisk. At the end of 1928 or beginning of 1929 he was arrested in Biisk and taken to the local police station. There they demanded that he renounce God, torturing him by dipping him through a hole in the ice of the river Bii. Then they threw him into a special punishment cell called the "secretka", in which he could only stand. He was terribly beaten and tortured. Then he was transferred to the prison in Narym, where his wife Ekaterina came to visit him. She had been allowed a meeting only on condition that she tried to persuade her husband to renounce Christ and work at Pascha. On seeing him she hardly recognized him – he was completely covered in wounds. To the question why he refused to work at Pascha, Fr. Procopius replied: "Immediately I lift my axe, I see the Saviour Himself lying in front of me. How can I cut him?" And he went on: "When I went out of the gates to work at Pascha, I saw the Risen Christ and the Mother of God in great radiance, and He cried: 'Christ is risen!'" After that they immediately took hold of him and cast him into the "secretka". When his wife said that he should renounce God only in words and not forget Him in her heart, he replied: "Get thee behind me, Satan, and do not tempt me!" As they were driving all the clergy into exile under convoy, Fr. Procopius raised his arms and gazing at the sky, sang: "Christ is risen!" He was immediately taken out of the formation and shot.

13. HOLY CONFESSORS SERGIUS AND HELEN OF MOSCOW

And those with them

Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus was born on August 25 (April 28, according to another source), 1862 in Moscow. His family, as he wrote, "on my mother's side counted in its midst not a few advanced people - advanced in the spirit for which the 60s of what is now already the last century was distinguished.

"My parents were nobles and landowners - major ones, moreover. It was perhaps because of their links with the land and the peasants that they escaped any extreme manifestation of the enthusiasms of the 70s. However, they could not escape the general, so to speak platonic-revolutionary spirit of the times, so great then was the allure of the ideas of egalitarianism, freedom of thought, freedom... yes, perhaps freedom of action, too, which overcame everyone. It seems that at that time there was not one home of the nobility in both the capitals where the state structure of the Russian empire was not reshaped in its own model, according to the measure of its understanding and according to the last book it had read, first from *Sovremennik*, and then *Otechestvennye Zapiski* or *Vestnik Evropy*. Of course, the hard food of conversations of a political character did not much help to develop in me religious dreams, as they were then called, and I grew up in complete alienation from the Church, uniting it in my childish imagination only with my old nanny, whom I loved to distraction.

"Nevertheless, I did not know any prayers and entered a church only by chance; I learned the law of God from teachers who were indifferent, if not outrightly hostile, to the word of God, as an intractable necessity of the school's programme.

"That was the degree of my knowledge of God when I, as a youth who was Orthodox in name, went to university, where they already, of course, had no time for such trivialities as Orthodoxy.

"Left to my devices in the life of faith, I reached such an abominable degree of spiritual desolation as only that person can imagine who has lived in this spiritual stench and who has then, while on the path of his own destruction, been detained by the unseen hand of the benevolent Creator.

"But under all the spiritual abomination which accumulated in the course of the years of the freedom of religious education in family, school and, finally, public life - the silent, but loved-filled lessons of Moscow, of the country and of nanny; the boundless Christian kindness of my mother, who ceaselessly did good to her neighbour with the meekness that belongs only to Christians - all this did not allow the spark to go out in my soul,

the spark of dimly recognized love for God and His Orthodoxy - although, it is true, it hardly twinkled in my soul's darkness.

"Quite a lot of time passed. How it was passed, or rather, conducted, it is terrible to say! Terrible, of course, for a Christian. In a word, I lived a gay life!

"I had left the service a long time ago and had settled down to keep house in the country. One Holy Week, not having fasted for seven years or more, I fasted, as they say, after a fashion and received Communion. This was not without a feeling of false shame before my 'intellectuality', perhaps more out of condescension to the 'prejudices' of my lesser brethren, the peasants, who had elected me as church warden of our village church. However, when I received Communion I had what was for me a strange, incomprehensible, secret feeling of trembling, which for a long, long time I did not want to admit to myself. And after Communion I felt as if renewed, somehow more full of the joy of life: my soul experienced something which I had known a long time ago, which felt familiar; moreover, it was something inexplicably sweet and at the same time triumphant...

"Something came to fruition in my soul: I began to be visited more often by a thirst for prayer, a thirst which I was not clearly conscious of and which was sometimes even violently drowned out by everyday cares..."

In 1886 Sergius Alexandrovich graduated from the juridical faculty of Moscow university. He then served for two years as a candidate for juridical posts in Yerevan, attached to the procurator of the Yerevan district court. From 1888 he lived on his estate in the village of Zolotarevo, Mtsensk uyezd, Orel province.

Once, in accordance with the call of his heart, Sergius Alexandrovich went to the Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra - the spiritual support of the throne and the homeland:

"There were quite a lot of worshippers. The hieromonk on duty was serving a general moleben for everyone. I fell on my knees in front of the shrine containing the holy relics of St. Sergius and for the first time in my life surrendered to a wonderful feeling of prayer without cunning sophistries. I besought the saint to forgive my spiritual weakness, my lack of faith, my apostasy. Involuntary, grace-given tears welled up somewhere deep in my heart: I felt as if I had gone somewhere far away from myself, like the prodigal son, and had then returned into the bosom of the loving Mother-Church. These few hours spent under the roof of the holy monastery, this wonderful prayerful mood sent down from above through the prayers of the saint - all this accomplished such a turning-point in my spiritual life that in itself this turning-point was nothing other than a miracle quite openly accomplished over me. I came to believe. This was a

deep, irrevocable faith in which Creator and creature are invisibly united into one, in which the reverent gratitude of the creature raises it to the very One Who has created it."

But the enemy of the human race cannot leave even one soul in peace, still less one who is on the path of conversion. In this period of his life Sergius Alexandrovich experienced many trials, doubts, uncertainties, falls.

"I was no longer the former man, but I had not yet become a new one. The world and its delights had lost their significance for me - I somehow became detached from people, but the emptiness left by them in my soul did not find its fulfilment. I was visited occasionally by a prayerful mood: I acquired a greater taste for reading the Holy Scriptures, and I rested my attention and meditations on them more often and more deeply than before. But I still could not tell myself with complete sincerity that my heart had found satisfaction for itself. I began to go to church more often, but neither in church did I find what I desired. This mental state continued for about a year."

Sergius Alexandrovich heard about the great man of prayer John of Kronstadt and decided to meet him without fail. In February, 1900, when he had caught a cold and had lost his voice, Sergius Alexandrovich went to the House of the Love of Labour for an unforgettable meeting with God's righteous one. This is how he describes this visit:

"I heard steps in the direction of my door... Someone pulled on the handle. 'Why is the door not open? Open it immediately!' sounded an authoritative voice, and with a quick, energetic stride batyushka entered my room. Behind him came the reader. Fr. John took me in at a glance... and what a glance that was! A piercing, penetrating glance like lightning which revealed all my past, and the wounds of my present, and pierced, as it seemed, even into my future! I felt so stripped that I began to be ashamed of myself and my nakedness... The reader bent towards Fr. John and said loudly: 'Batyushka, here is a gentleman from Orel province (at this point he pronounced my surname) who has come to seek your advice, but he has fallen ill and lost his voice.' 'A familiar name! How did you lose your voice? Did you catch a cold?'

"In reply I could not utter even a sound - my throat was simply not up to it. Helpless and at a loss, I could only look at batyushka in despair. Fr. John gave me the cross to kiss, put it on the analogion, and then with two fingers of his right hand stroked my throat behind the collar of my shirt three times... My fever immediately left me, and my voice returned to me sounding fresher and purer than usual... It is hard to convey in words what took place in my soul then!

"For more than half an hour, as I knelt at the feet of my longed-for

comforter, I told him about my sorrows, opened to him the whole of my sinful soul and offered repentance for everything that lay like a heavy stone on my heart. That was the first true repentance in the whole of my life. For the first time with my whole being I understood the significance of the spiritual father as the witness of this great sacrament - a witness radically crushing, by the grace of God, the evil of the pride of sin and the pride of human self-love. For the first time I experienced with all my soul the sweetness of this repentance, for the first time I felt with all my heart that God, God Himself, was sending me His forgiveness through the lips of the pastor engraced by Him, when Fr. John said:

"God is very merciful - God will forgive."

"What ineffable joy I felt, with sacred trembling was my soul filled at these love-filled, all-forgiving words! That faith which so stubbornly had not been given to my soul, in spite of my evident conversion at the relics of St. Sergius, only flared up in me with a bright flame after this heart-felt confession of mine with Fr. John. I became conscious of myself as a believer and an Orthodox."

In 1903 there appeared the first edition of his remarkable book, The Great in the Small. This contained the manuscript, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. These were thought to be the records of meetings in Paris of the leaders of International Masonry, in which the Masonic plan for the subjugation of the Christian nations and the establishment of Jewish dominion over the whole world was formulated in detail. First published in 1902 in a St. Petersburg periodical, they are now believed by most to have been a forgery, plagiarized by someone from the work of the French writer Joly. However, Sergius Alexandrovich was genuinely convinced of their authenticity. Moreover, as the London Times pointed out, whether authentic or not, the Protocols were remarkably prescient in their description of the workings of "the mystery of iniquity" in the twentieth century.

"In publishing this edition of my work," wrote Nilus, "I nourish no hope that I will see it in any further editions, for reasons which the reader will understand. I conclude it with the divine word of the chief of the apostles, the apostle of the Gentiles: 'But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as the thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness!'"

After the revolution, when the prophetic significance of the Protocols became clear to many, the Bolsheviks tried by all means to have the

remaining copies destroyed. Several people were put in prison for having copies. However, we know that the Martyr-Empress Alexandra had a copy; and copies were smuggled out to the West, where the first translation into German appeared in January, 1920. "Before long," writes Richard Pipes, "translations appeared in Swedish, English, French, Polish; other foreign-language versions followed."

In the Soviet Union, being found with the Protocols was a criminal offence...

In one of his prefaces to the book Sergius Alexandrovich wrote:

"The great intercessor for the Russian land, Fr. John of Kronstadt, to whom this book was dedicated during his lifetime, and to whom I now dedicate to him as to a living person, said to me on July 14, 1903 in the Nikolo-Babayevsky monastery: 'Write: I like everything that you write.' 'For whom should I write it?' I was about to object. 'Who now reads such writings?' 'God gives the blessing,' replied Fr. John, ' - and they will buy it and read it.'

"It is by this blessing of the great pastor of Kronstadt that I explain to myself the completely unexpected spread of my sketches collected in the book and called The Great in the Small."

"What is in store for Russia?" asked Sergius Alexandrovich.

"The events of contemporary world and Russian life, and also my dealings with people who have devoted their whole life and all their activity to the service in spirit and in truth, in the likeness and truth of real Christianity, have revealed to me something new, great and terrible, 'the depths of Satan', which was still hidden from me in 1905, when the second edition of this book appeared. This revelation, which was drawn from observations of the current spiritual and political life of Christian peoples and the study of the secrets of the religious sects of the East, and in particular Masonry, have given me material of such enormous importance *that I would consider myself a turncoat traitor of Christ my God if I did not share this material with the God-loving reader.*

"I draw the attention of my reader," he wrote in the preface to the second edition, "to the sketch 'The Antichrist as an imminent political possibility', in which is found the solution of a great world mystery hidden until the times of its final realization. Now the mystery has been realized and the key to it found: the imminent triumph of all justified Christian hopes, the triumph of the whole Christian faith, is coming. But the imminent triumph of the faith has also brought closer the terrible antichristian time of persecutions against the faith, and it is not without the will of God that this sketch contains a forecast of that for which the Christian world must prepare itself so as to meet with the whole armour of

its humility and patience the terrible ordeal of the temptation that is aiming to deceive even the elect. 'He who endures to the end will be saved.'

In the preface to the final, fifth edition (an edition that was never brought to fruition), Sergius Alexandrovich wrote:

"My book about the coming Antichrist, which in its fourth edition was called It is Near, even at the Doors, was published in January, 1917, and already on March 2 of the same year there took place the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II from the all-Russian throne for himself and his son. The House of Romanov, as an autocratic dynasty, ceased to exist, and the provisional Russian government was not slow to declare that Russia was a republic. That which was foreseen as a possibility by my book became an already accomplished fact, the heritage of the past. He who restrains was taken from the midst of the Orthodox Russian community. One does not have to be a prophet to foretell his removal in the very near future from all the other monarchical states, too, not excluding 'victory-bearing' Germany and her allies. This cannot take place later than that universal peace congress which must bring to an end the still-continuing universal human catastrophe which is already coming to its final moment.

"According to the word of the Apostle Paul and the tradition of the Holy Fathers, this removal of him who restrains represents the closest and most important sign of the coming of that time when the lawless one will be revealed - he whose coming, in accordance with the working of Satan, will be with all power and signs and false miracles, and every unrighteous deception of those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth for their salvation (II Thessalonians 2.7-10)."

In 1906 Sergius Alexandrovich married **Helen Alexandrovna Ozerova**, née Ozerova, the scion of an aristocratic family, was a lady-in-waiting at the court of Empress Maria Fyodorovna. Her father, Alexander Petrovich Ozerov, had many posts at court. He was, it seems, an envoy to Greece, where Helen Alexandrovna was born. He was an envoy to the Russian embassy in Persia, and thereafter the ober-hofmeister of the Court of His Imperial Majesty. He had seven children. His eldest son, Alexander, perished in Bulgaria during the siege of Shipki. His eldest daughter, Olga, the Duchess Shakhovskaya by marriage, took monastic vows after the death of her husband and died as the abbess of the Dmitrievna women's monastery of the Moscow oblast', having taken the name of Sophia in mantia. One of the sons, David, was in charge of caring for the condition of the Winter Palace.

Brought up by her pious mother in strict obedience to the Church, Helen Alexandrovna devoted her life to caring for her elderly father and to good works. She was a trustee of one of the "Patriotic" schools founded in the last century by Empress Elizabeth for orphans of the Patriotic War of

1812; there, in addition to sciences, the young women were instructed in trades. She was also a trustee of the Rozhdestvensky medical assistant course for women, and it was there that she met her future husband. During the Russo-Japanese war Helen Alexandrovna worked in the Winter Palace together with Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna. Here she became closely acquainted with the Empress, who in 1905-06 offered her to become the Red Cross representative in Tsarskoe Selo and to take charge of all her charitable organizations.

Petersburg society looked down on the marriage; they regarded Sergius Alexandrovich as a social climber who had married one of the Empress's favourites, and was becoming a priest in the hopes of entering the ranks of the court clergy and of wielding a reactionary political influence. Then an article appeared in Novoye Vremya exposing a sinful episode in his earlier life involving a married woman. There could be no more talk of the priesthood, and the Niluses left Petersburg, choosing as their retreat the Babayevsky monastery on the banks of the Volga, where Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov had spent the last years of his life. On the way they unexpectedly met St. John of Kronstadt, who approved and blessed their marriage, and bowed to Helen Alexandrovna, saying: "I thank you for marrying him."

Prince N.D. Zhevakov recalls: "The marriage between Sergius Alexandrovich and Helen Alexandrovna was concluded in their old age, when they were both over 60 [she was seven years older than him], or thereabouts. Its foundation was not carnal, but was rather a strengthening of their friendship of many years, which had been established on the soil of their common profound religiosity."

In September, 1906 the couple went to live in Valdai, Novgorod province. However, in 1907 they visited Optina Desert, where Hieromonk Sergius, suggested that Sergius Alexandrovich help the Fathers in publishing a series of Optina leaflets. A large house just outside the monastery was presented to them for this purpose; and there they stayed for the next four years under the spiritual direction of Elder Barsanuphius.

Sergius Alexandrovich wrote in his biographical narrative: "July 7, 1909... Last night I had a heavy attack of a suffocating cough. Just what I deserved! It was from smoking, a habit which I cannot break; I've been smoking since my third year in high school and now I am so penetrated with this accursed nicotine that it has undoubtedly become an essential part of my blood. A miracle is needed to tear me away from the claws of this vice. I haven't enough willpower to do it myself. I tried to kick the habit. I didn't smoke for a day, two days - but the result was that I became irritable, angry, and this new sin was more bitter than the first. Fr. Barsanuphius forbade me even from making such attempts, limiting my daily portion to fifteen cigarettes. (I had previously smoked without counting.) Fr. Barsanuphius wrote: 'Your hour will come, and you will

stop smoking.' Regarding this habit Fr. Joseph said to me: 'Hope, do not despair: in good time, God willing, you will quit!' And, according to the word of the elders, this miracle occurred. It happened in the following way:

"I lived with my friend, my God-given wife, 'soul in soul', as they say, in the full sense of the Gospel words; i.e. in such a way that we were not two, but one flesh. The great mercy of God was granted us from above on account of our profound and firm faith in the Mystery of Marriage, which we both approached with fear and trembling. Then, in June, 1910, my wife fell seriously ill, and neither the Optina medical assistant nor the summoned doctor could identify the nature of the illness: in the morning she appeared to be almost well, but as soon as evening came her temperature rose to 40. And so it went on for a week, another, a third! I saw that my joy was melting before my eyes, like a wax candle; at any moment I imagined she would flare up for the last time and be extinguished. And my orphaned heart became filled with a great, an immeasurably great distress and grief. I fell down before the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God, which stood in the corner of the study, and I wept, pouring forth my anguish and distress and speaking to her as if the Icon were alive: 'Mother, Queen, my All-blessed Theotokos! I believe it was you who gave me my angel wife. Save her for me, and in return I vow before you that I will never smoke again. I give this vow, and yet I know that I cannot fulfil it through my own powers, but not to fulfil it would be a great sin; therefore help me!'

"This was about 10 o'clock at night. Having prayed and calmed down somewhat, I approached my wife's bedside. She was sleeping; her breathing was quiet, regular. I felt her forehead: it was damp but not hot. My sweet darling was sound asleep. Glory to God, glory to the Most Holy Mother of God! In the morning her temperature was 36.5, in the evening - 36.4, and a day later she was up as if she had never been ill. As for myself, I forgot that I had ever smoked, although I had been a chain-smoker for thirty-three years and my entire organism was so saturated with the cursed tobacco that I couldn't live without it, not for a day, not even for a minute. Was this not a miracle of the Hodigitria?"

It was under the influence of Optina and its holy elders that there poured out from the pen of Sergius Alexandrovich a series of remarkable books entitled: Holiness under a Bushel, On the Banks of God's River, The Power of God and the Weakness of Man, The Optina Elder Theodosius. In these works Sergius Alexandrovich described with amazing simplicity and talent the piety of Optina, "the swansong of Russian monasticism", as Helen Kontzevich put it, not without some sorrow in her heart.

In Holiness under a Bushel, Sergius Alexandrovich wrote: "I offer to my pious readers materials consisting of vivid and lively examples of everyday life which clarify the true secret of the monastic mission and cast

a bright light on the most secret corners of the monastic heart. They illuminate the inner cell life of the monk's soul, which in this material poured out his thoughts and feelings not for worldly honour and glory, not for the satisfaction of egotistical self-love, but spoke out of the abundance of his heart to himself and to his God." And at the end of the preface, sensing the approach of the terrible tragedy not only of Russia, but of the whole world, he speaks with pain about the untimely loss of the last lamp of Russian monasticism - Optina Hermitage and its inhabitants:

*What a lamp of reason has gone out.
What a heart has ceased to beat...*

On May 14, 1912, in the wake of the exile of Fr. Barsanuphius from Optina, and in obedience to a decree of the Holy Synod forbidding lay people to live in the monastery (although their house was outside it), the Niluses moved back to Valdai. Life for them in Valdai was rich and fruitful. Although the nearby Iveron Monastery could not replace their beloved Optina, its holy things and spiritually attuned monks were for them a source of comfort and joy. People came to see them from all parts of Russia, and they received letters...

In On the Bank of God's River, Sergius Alexandrovich writes: "After the publication of this book, I sent it as a gift to Bishop Theophan of Poltava. In reply Vladyka wrote to me the following on November 24, 1915:

"Respected Sergius Alexandrovich! I thank you from the heart for taking thought for me by sending me your book, On the Bank of God's River. I read all your books with great interest and I completely share your views on recent events. The people of this age live by faith in progress and lull themselves with unrealizable dreams. Stubbornly and with a kind of cruelty they drive away from themselves the very thought of the end of the world and the coming of the Antichrist.

"Their eyes are spiritually blinded. Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not understand. But the meaning of contemporary events is not hidden from the truly believing children of God. More than that: to those upon whom the goodwill of God rests will be revealed both the coming of the Antichrist and the end of this world... Therefore great are the merits of those who remind the people of this age of the coming great events. May the Lord help you to talk about this in the hearing of this world 'in season and out of season, with all long-suffering and exhortation' (II Timothy 4.2)!

"Your sincere admirer and intercessor, Bishop Theophan."

"May the Lord help you to talk about this in the hearing of this world' - these words of the bishop were fulfilled exactly in the years of the revolution. Such is the significance of a bishop's blessing and especially of such a bishop as Vladyka Theophan."

It is precisely to Sergius Alexandrovich that we are indebted for the discovery and deciphering of the "Conversation of St. Seraphim with Nicholas Alexandrovich Motovilov on the acquisition of the Holy Spirit".

After the publication of the "Conversation" Sergius Alexandrovich recalled:

"If only someone could have seen the state in which I acquired Motovilov's papers, which preserved in their hidden depths this valuable witness to the God-pleasing life of the holy elder! Dust, pebbles and dove's feathers, bird's droppings... All the papers were old, written on in a rapid and indecipherable hand, so indecipherable that I was simply horrified: what could I make out there?! Sifting through this chaos, bumping up against all kinds of obstacles - the handwriting, especially, was a stone of stumbling for me, - I remember almost giving way to despair. But then, amidst all this pulp, no, no, a phrase deciphered with difficulty would shine like a spark in the darkness: 'Batyushka Fr. Seraphim told me'... What did he tell? What did these uninterpreted hieroglyphs hide in themselves? I was in despair.

"I remember that towards the evening of a whole day spent in stubbornly fruitless work, I could bear it no longer and cried out: Batyushka Seraphim! Did you give me the possibility of receiving the manuscripts of your 'lay brother' from such a distant spot as Diveyevo, in order that they should be consigned uninterpreted to oblivion? My cry must have been from the heart. In the morning, having set about deciphering papers, I suddenly found this manuscript and immediately received the ability to make out Motovilov's handwriting. You can well imagine my joy, and how significant seemed to me the words of this manuscript: 'I think,' Fr. Seraphim replied to me, 'that the Lord will help you to keep this forever in your memory, for otherwise His kindness would not have inclined so suddenly to my humble petition and would not have deigned to hearken so quickly to poor Seraphim, *the more so since it is not given only to you to understand this, but through you to the whole world...*'

"For seventy long years this treasure lay under a bushel in trunks, amidst various forgotten rubbish. But was it meant to be published, and if so when? Before the very glorification of the holy relics of the God-pleaser!"

Prince Nicholas Davidovich Zhevakov writes in his memoirs: "Sergius Alexandrovich did not think up or 'compose' anything. He preferred to live near the famous Russian monasteries and use the monastery libraries. He extracted from the wealthy monastic archives valuable material and reworked it."

Being a truly Orthodox Christian, Sergius Alexandrovich fervently loved his own people and deeply understood the heavy burden of that time, sincerely experiencing it in his heart:

"In our time, which is distinguished by extraordinary discoveries and inventions - all the so-called 'miracles' of technology with which light-minded humanity amuses itself as with brilliant trinkets, playing a dangerous game that loses for it, in the expression of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, the Heavenly Kingdom, - it is especially timely and useful for every believing Orthodox to oppose to all these 'false miracles and signs' the true miracles and signs worked by the Holy Spirit through the mediation of the vessels of grace chosen by Him - the saints who are pleasing to God.

"Faith in miracles, the search for the miraculous that transcends the greyness of everyday life, and is raised above the sphere of that which is known by our five imperfect senses, is innate to the whole human race regardless of the various degrees of its spiritual development. The semi-savage cannibal searches for the satisfaction of this faith of his in shamanism, the educated theosophist - in brahmanism or yoga. The intellectual who has lost his faith hurls himself at the miracles of spiritism and hypnosis... The human race since time immemorial 'seeks signs and miracles'. For over seven thousand years now the fallen nature of mankind has been striving to find that which it lost in the fall... but cannot find it. Only true faith finds that which has been lost, and only through it are true signs and miracles given to those who search, who have been able with the help of the grace of God to preserve their faith in purity and who have not mixed with the work of faith the proud inventions of the inconstant and limited mind of man. That is how it has been in all ages. Such is now the particular spiritual condition of the majority of mankind, when the terrible times foretold by the apostle have arrived for it. People's spiritual eyes have been closed by their lack of faith or, more precisely, their apostasy from the faith, so that 'seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear and understand'.

"Man's chief good on earth - and almost his only one, one might add - is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in God in Trinity glorified. Without this faith our earthly life is not life, but senseless vegetation."

No-one was taken by surprise by the revolution of 1917 in Russia. Some prepared it, others prepared themselves for it. The catastrophe was inevitable, given the spiritual state of the people. Sergius Alexandrovich considered it his Christian duty to warn not only the Orthodox people, but also the whole world, about the terrible times that were coming, just as before him Dostoyevsky had given warnings in his novel The Devils. Thus in one small, little-known book entitled The Wheat and the Tares, and published in 1908 by the Holy Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra, he wrote the following in the preface:

"In the woes and sorrows which like a narrow, heavy ring have oppressed your wandering along the paths of life from all sides, and which have become so much more difficult in recent times, have you ever given a thought, O reader, to the final and only common end, for all those who live upon the earth, of their labours and efforts, all their sorrows and joys, disillusionments and hopes, love and hate, good and evil - everything, in a word, out of which the thorny crown of life is woven? Do you even fully know what this end is like? And if you know, do you remember it with that careful thought which its importance merits? I don't think so. So allow me, my reader and brother in Christ, to remind you, whoever you may be - a ruler of the peoples, or a poor homeless man - that there is no other end to your life than death, than preparation for death. O how great and terrible is that word, that reality! And how few people in the world think about it!

"Remember the hour of your death and you will not sin to eternity', calls our Mother the Church 'and you will not sin to eternity!' Do you hear what she says? We have forgotten about this hour, which none can escape: and yet what have we turned the whole world that surrounds into through our sins? We have forgotten about death.

"Public and family quarrels, leading to bloodshed, in which sons raise their hands against their fathers and mothers, brothers against brothers, husbands against wives, wives against husbands; civil strife, in which public garbage and our youth that has been diverted and made senseless by antitheist teaching rises up in mindless blindness against the powers that be and against everyone that lives in accordance with the commandments of God, and not according to the elements of this world. Blood is shed in torrents, and the scythe of death mows down such an abundant harvest that the heart grows cold in horror. It seems that the times have come about which the faithful Christians were warned by the threatening word of Holy Scripture, that "blood will reach the horses' bridles" (Revelation 14.20), and "if those days should not be shortened for the sake of the elect, no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24.22). And yet, people see all this, they see all the horrors of death, but few are those who think about death; as if only they, among those who are temporarily left among the living, have a guarantee of eternal life upon earth - a guarantee only they know about, and as if only those who are dead were predestined to death.

"I will judge you as I find you!... 'Savage is the death of sinners'... It is terrible for the sinner to fall into the hands of the Living God in that desired world in which the faces of the saints and the righteous shine like the stars!... No stain of flesh and spirit will enter there.

"In my quiet retreat it is as if I hear the enemy devil whispering into the ear of him who pays attention to my words: 'Don't listen to him! Go after

the educated world - that's enough of fairytales about the Heavenly Kingdom. Give us the earthly kingdom that belongs to us by right!"

At the very beginning of the revolution, in June, 1917, the Niluses were providentially invited to move south, to the estate of Prince Vladimir Zhevakhov (the future Bishop Ioasaph) in the village of Linovitsy, Piryatinsky uyezd, Poltava province. There they were spared the famine and terror which soon swept the north; their local friends all perished. Preparing for an uncertain future, the Niluses received a blessing from the diocesan bishop, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, to establish a church on the top floor of their house. The future martyr, Abbess Sophia of Kiev, whom they knew from Optina, took an active part in setting up the church and sent some of her nuns to help out.

The Niluses were both readers and singers; others joined them, forming a choir. Most people came to this church only irregularly. But still, they were drawn to the services and obtained spiritual consolation. When times were hard, those who came brought provisions. From abroad letters came with offers to help the Niluses to leave the country. But apart from having no money, they felt that it was not right to abandon their church, where the Lord and the Queen of Heaven had appointed them "guardians, watchmen, readers, chanters and lamp-lighters". "There is no way," wrote Sergius Alexandrovich, "that we can change our assignment; we must stand at our Divine post until the Lord Himself clearly indicates that our mission is finished, or until our death..."

In his memoirs Prince Zhevakov describes an interesting incident from the last years of the life of Sergius Alexandrovich: "S.A. Nilus was preserved by God and after the revolution continued to live in the houses of his friends, in a small two-storey house in the depths of a shady park. On the upper floor of the little house was a house church and the residence of Schema-Archimandrite N., the former superior of one of the neighbouring monasteries which had been destroyed by the Bolsheviks, while on the lower floor lived S.A. Nilus and his wife.

"In those days anyone found in possession of the Protocols (in Near, even at the Doors) would be shot on the spot, while the book became better and better known, being translated into European and Asiatic languages, spreading throughout the world and arousing the satanic spite of the world conspirators. Meanwhile, S.A. Nilus continued to live in one of the wings of an estate seized by the Bolsheviks, where, to cap it all, daily Liturgies were celebrated by a reverend elder-archimandrite who had taken refuge there!

"It goes without saying that none of the local soviets, composed of criminals, caused S.A. Nilus the slightest concern, for, it goes without saying, they did not suspect him of being the publisher of The Protocols of Zion. Some considered that he had died long ago, while others even

thought that he had never existed.

"But the enemy did not slumber. The fact that the 'masters' remained on the estate, even if they had been expelled from the main house, but continued to live in one of the wings, troubled the representatives of the local Soviet, and the evildoers decided at a meeting to kill all those living in the little house in the garden.

"One dark night in November, 1921, at the appointed hour, a band of eight Red Army soldiers under the leadership of the local bandit, armed with guns and knives, penetrated into the park and slowly began to approach the house, stealthily creeping through the bushes and looking around on all sides. They had decided to kill the aged schema-archimandrite first. But the closer they came to the house, the clearer became the sounds of a night watchman's rattle. He was walking round the house and rattling with a wooden crank that had a little sphere attached to it. The evil-doers decided to wait until the night watchman went away. But they had no success that night, and decided to try again the next night, only with ten men this time.

"It seemed as if everything favoured them. Instead of the wind and frosts of the previous night, the weather was wonderful, quiet and almost warm. The moon shone, and everything around was steeped in a deep sleep, but... the hateful old watchman was still fearlessly walking round the house and rattling his rattle, as if he were calling for help, as if he were mocking the criminals.

"'What are you waiting for,' suddenly shouted the leader, losing patience, 'there are ten of us and he's alone, let's go!' And the evildoers, encouraged by their leader and certain of victory, headed with guns on their shoulders towards the old man, considering it no longer necessary to hide themselves from him. They were already within a few strides of him, and they could clearly see him. He was a frail, bent-over old man with a white beard. He was walking confidently round the house and displayed not the slightest fear or concern at their approach.

"'Get him,' commanded the enraged ataman of the band of criminals. And, coming up to the old man, with all his might he struck him on the head with his axe. The blow flew through the air, the old man disappeared, and the evildoer fell as if dead onto the earth, losing consciousness. His comrades, mortally frightened, hurled themselves towards their ataman, who displayed no sign of life, and carried him home. Several days passed, but none of the inhabitants of the house even guessed at their miraculous delivery from the death that threatened each one of them. In fact, no one would probably have known about the attempt if the wife of the criminal had not come to the schema-archimandrite and told him about the crime. Drenched in tears, she besought him to help her husband, who was lying paralyzed.

"If it were not for the night watchman,' she said, 'the criminals would have killed you all. It was only thanks to him that you were saved from death and the souls of the evildoers from eternal damnation.' For a long time they tried to convince the woman that in those times there could be no question of any night watchmen. But she insisted and asked that her husband be brought there, then he himself would tell them everything.

"Bring him here, let him confess, receive Communion, kiss the icon of the God-pleaser St. Seraphim, and then the Lord will release him,' said the archimandrite.

"That day the paralysed criminal was brought on a stretcher to the house-church. But before starting confession, the archimandrite went up to him with the icon of St. Seraphim and asked him to kiss it. The eyes of the criminal met those of the kindly elder and God-pleaser Seraphim, and... a hysterical shout filled the little church.

"It's him, it's him!" shouted the unfortunate criminal, recognizing in the face of St. Seraphim the old watchman walking with his rattle round the garden-house and guarding it. Tears of contrition flowed from his eyes, and the love of God not only healed him instantly, but also completely transformed him. After the Liturgy, in which he was counted worthy to commune of the Holy Mysteries, he stayed for a long time in the church and told everyone present in detail about the miracle of St. Seraphim, after which a moleben of thanksgiving was served to the saint for the miraculous deliverance from death of those living in the house."

The Niluses were too well-known to escape the notice of the new godless authorities. The net began to tighten. Meanwhile, however, their Christian love continued to prove its strength. As one of their guests at Linovitsa later wrote: "In their house there reigned the grace of God; one could sense it upon entering. There was always an atmosphere of joy; no-one ever quarrelled. While I was there it happened that a Bolshevik commissar came to look at the house. Of course, he did not remove his cap; he had an insolent manner and was very crude in his behaviour. S.A. showed him around the whole house and took him into the chapel on the top floor. They were there for a long time. S.A.'s wife decided to have a look and saw that the Bolshevik was crying in the embrace of her husband... S.A. himself was weeping. Evidently he had been able to find words which melted his heart..."

On April 3, 1923 the Niluses were banished from Linovitsa, and it was only through a miracle that they were not executed. Already getting on in years, the couple began to lead a life corresponding to the uncertainty of the time. "We don't think about what is to become of us," wrote Sergius Alexandrovich in a letter abroad. "Let us commend ourselves and one another and all our lives to Christ our God."

They moved to Kiev, where, in August or the beginning of September, 1923 Sergius Alexandrovich was arrested and imprisoned for no reason and without an interrogation. But God was merciful. Describing her husband's circumstances in a letter to her sister, Helen Alexandrovna wrote: "He is calm, as always, cheerful... Only one thing grieves him – the separation from me. We've never been separated before, not once..."

In August, 1924 Sergius Alexandrovich was transferred from Kiev to the prison in the city of Priluki, Poltava province. In the middle of September, however, he was transferred back to Kiev, where he remained in prison until February, 1925. On his release, the couple settled temporarily in a women's convent in Kiev.

Once again, they felt as though they were in Paradise. "It is just the life we love," wrote Helen Alexandrovna. "We have a nice room, and – for nothing! We have only to cross a small courtyard to get to church where there are daily services, splendid, with two choirs and two priests, one better than the other... Everything seems like old times, so you can understand how blessed we are. They show us love in every way, and bring us so much that there's no place to put it..." Sergius Alexandrovich added: "My head is spinning from all the impressions we have experienced and are experiencing. Now with this head and with all my heart I have become absorbed in contacts with people of the same spirit as us... There aren't enough hours in the day to fully and worthily take advantage of this and the more so because Great Lent is here and a lot of time is spent in services."

At the end of September, 1925, Sergius Alexandrovich was arrested again and escorted to prison in Lubyanka prison in Moscow. He was released in February, 1926. For two months they lived in Moscow. But then, on April 6, Sergius Alexandrovich was presented with an order exiling him from Moscow and forbidding him to live in six major cities.

They moved to Chernigov, where they took an active part in church life, organising regular discussions of parishioners with the clergy and the reading of spiritual literature. At one meeting organised by him on December 10, 1926 in the house of the pious parishioner Melnikova, money was collected to send to the exiled Archbishop Pachomius and Bishop Damascene. Also through the Niluses help was sent to the Kiev priest Fr. Demetrius Ivanov and Abbess Sophia and others.

In April, 1927, Sergius Alexandrovich was arrested again. The GPU report says that during the search he was very calm, said that he was happy to suffer for the faith and said to the other members of his household: "Don't worry, everything is from God, He will one day pay back for these unpleasantnesses." At the end of the search the GPU agent told Nilus that he was under arrest and asked him to prepare to follow

him. Nilus asked for time to say goodbye, and after gathering all the member of his household together by the iconostasis "began a whole church service". After prayers Nilus blessed all those present, and they kissed his hand. Before leaving the house Nilus ordered the servants to pour out a bottle of holy water. Taking it with him, he left the house, chanting "Christ is risen". All the members of the household took up the chant as they accompanied him onto the street.

On May 6, 1927 he was released, and for another year they lived in Chernigov.

When Metropolitan Sergius' notorious declaration submitting the Church to the God-hating atheists was published, he opposed it. Thus on January 29 / February 11, 1928 he wrote to L.A. Orlov: "As long as there is a church of God that is not of 'the Church of the evildoers', go to it whenever you can; but if not, pray at home... They will say: 'But where will you receive communion? With whom? I reply: 'The Lord will show you, or an Angel will give you communion, for in 'the Church of the evildoers' there is not and cannot be the Body and Blood of the Lord. Here in Chernigov, out of all the churches only the church of the Trinity has remained faithful to Orthodoxy; but if it, too, will commemorate the [sergianist] Exarch Michael, and, consequently, will have communion in prayer with him, acting with the blessing of Sergius and his Synod, then we shall break communion with it."

In May, 1928 Sergius Alexandrovich was banished from Chernigov and forbidden to live in the Ukraine.

At this stage the strain of the Niluses peripatetic life began to tell on his health. A friend arranged for the couple to move in with his father, the priest **Fr. Basil Smirnov**, in the home of the Orlovs in Krutets, Alexandrovsky uyezd, Vladimir region. They hoped that Sergius Alexandrovich would get better in the fresh country air. The Niluses arrived at the end of April, 1928. But he never recovered his health.

Maria Vasilievna Orlova-Smirnova - later the nun Mariam, the daughter of the martyred **Priest Basil Smirnov** - shared her impressions of the last days of Sergius Alexandrovich, who spent the last two years of his life in her house and died there: "Inwardly, he was a colossus of the spirit, who stood so firmly 'on the rock of faith' that neither persecutions, nor slander were able to shake his faith and love for God. Having chosen his path, he went along it without looking back.

"Sergius Alexandrovich got up very early: at about four o'clock, and when he had finished his special morning rule, at about seven o'clock, Helen Alexandrovna got up and they read the morning prayers together."

The words of Sergius Alexandrovich are both simple and deeply

Orthodox: "Christ the Lord and His Orthodox Church - that is the one truth that makes us free, the one source of every earthly blessing, every true, unbreakable happiness that can be attained on earth and above the earth - in the depth of the endless ages, in the height of the fathomless heavens. For him who, by the mercy of God, attains this truth, who devotes himself unreservedly to its service, life becomes clear; and he sorrows for unsettled contemporary man, who mindlessly and unwittingly drives away from himself the grace of God, without which he is dust and ashes!"

Sergius Alexandrovich died on January 1/14, 1929. On that day, he forced himself, with great difficulty, to go to the church in the village of Krutets, where he was counted worthy to receive the Holy Mysteries. On returning home, he fainted (from a heart attack), after which it was only with difficulty that he recovered consciousness. One hour before his death, he said that difficult times were coming for the Church and that now the doors had been opened for the coming of the Antichrist. Then, pointing at Fr. Basil Smirnov, he said:

"Ah, Father, Father, I am sorry for you."

The last thing he did was bless the little daughter of Maria Vasilievna Orlova. Then, at five in the afternoon, at the very moment when the bells were beginning to ring for the all-night vigil commemorating St. Seraphim of Sarov, he fainted again, and quietly died.

It is obvious that the holy God-pleaser St. Seraphim took care of his great venerator and prayed the Lord that the righteous man should have a peaceful end.

Soviet power did not forgive Fr. Basil for giving shelter to the Niluses. The same year he was driven out of his house, and the following year he was arrested, his property confiscated and his family exiled. Fr. Basil was in exile for five years. In 1936 he returned. In 1937 he was again arrested, and on February 8, 1938 he died.

After the death of Sergius Alexandrovich, Helen Alexandrovna went to Chernigov to live with a little elderly woman, to take care of her. After her repose she lived with the Orlovs in the town of Gorodok in Kalinin province. In 1938 the Orlovs had to move to Moscow, while Helen Alexandrovich was invited by her former landlady in Chernigov to move to Kola in Murmansk district. There she died.

Maria Vasilievna Orlova was born in 1906, the first of six children. She married Lev Alexandrovich Orlov. After the death of her father she remained in Moscow, where she became close to Tatyana Mikhailovna N, a spiritual daughter of Abbess Tamara, the famous "Josephite" and spiritual mother of Hieromartyr Bishop Arsenius (Zhadanovsky). In 1992

Maria Vasilievna joined the "Matthewite" branch of the Greek Old Calendarist Church. In 1995 she received the monastic tonsure with the name Mariam from Bishop Kyrikos of Mesogaia. She died on July 30 / August 12, 1997.

"On the grave of Sergius Alexandrovich," concludes Maria Vasilievna, "my brother placed a cross which he himself had made. On the cross, under the name of the deceased, was written: 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints', and on the other side: 'It is good to keep the secret of a king, but honourable to proclaim the works of God.'"

At the end, or in the preface, of his books Sergius Alexandrovich always asked his readers for their prayers: "In conclusion, I again ask every Orthodox who has a liking for this book to remember the name of its sinful compiler, praying for the time being - for his health and salvation, and in time - for the repose of his soul in the heavenly dwellings of the One Tri-Personal God for the sake of the priceless merits of the One Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be honour and worship and glory to the ages."

14. HOLY HIEROMARTYR SERGIUS, BISHOP OF BUZULUK **and those with him**

Bishop Sergius, in the world Michael Nikolsky, was born in 1892 in the village of Novo-Nikolskoye, Serpukhov uyezd, Moscow province into the family of Protopriest Alexander Isidorovich. His uncle was Metropolitan Isidore (Nikolsky), whose name is linked with the building of the cathedral of the Holy Trinity on Izmailovsky Prospect in St. Petersburg.

He was a handsome, tall and well-built young man, with a fine tenor voice. He had a fiancée, and was about to get married. All the preparations for the wedding had been completed. But this event was averted in the following way. Being an officer in the army, he had to take part in battles. Once he almost lost his life. But God heard his prayer and saved him from death. The young man made a vow to become a monk and consecrate his whole life to God. And he received the monastic tonsure.

Fr. Sergius graduated from a Theological Academy, and on March 3 (according to another source, March 23 / April 5), 1925, he was consecrated to the bishopric of Ephremov, a vicariate of the Tula diocese. The consecration was performed by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, who said on handing him his archpastoral staff:

"The episcopate is a great honour, but great sufferings are also bound up with it. Through sufferings to heavenly glory!"

Bishop Sergius always expressed great love for Patriarch Tikhon, and composed some verses in his honour which have been preserved to this day.

K.S. writes: "I was 12 years old when Bishop Sergius (Nikolsky) appeared in our town of Ephremov. He was close to my parents and often came to our house. From my parents I learned about certain moments in his biography, but basically my recollections are bound up with my personal impressions of church life in our little town..."

"At that time there were seven churches in Ephremov (they were all later destroyed). On Saturdays and Sundays Bishop Sergius served in the main cathedral, while on the remaining days he read akathists in turns in the other churches of the town.

"He was a fine, eloquent preacher. He spoke for a long time, with warmth and animation. His sermons could last half an hour - that was a common occurrence. Through his sermons he tried to instil in the people love for God. He loved his flock, and his flock loved him. He presented the image of an apostle, and that is how he was remembered.

"Some of his sermons were given specially for children. He would say:

"Children, please come further forward.'

"And when they came closer to him, he taught them the word of God. These sermons remained forever in the memory.

"After the all-night vigil Vladyka blessed everyone separately and did not leave until he had blessed the last one.

"I remember that among the parishioners was a fool for Christ - Yegorushka of Zadonsk (he came to Ephremov from Zadonsk). Blue-eyed, dressed in a canvas shirt, he always, winter and summer, travelled barefoot. Once after the all-night vigil all the parishioners went up to Vladyka for his blessing and only Yegorushka remained all the time in front of the icons. The bishop watched him and did not leave. Out of curiosity the others, especially the children, also watched him - what would happen?

"Finally the fool came up to the bishop.

"Yegorushka, were you testing me?' asked the bishop, blessing him.

"The face of the bishop, as always, was kindly and joyful. Yegorushka nodded his head, admitting that he had indeed been testing the patience of Vladyka.

"They used to say that this Yegorushka, at his own request, had allegedly been crucified on some gates by his brothers, and that they had pierced him with nails. It is possible that this was not so, but on his hands and feet there really were wounds from nails.

"I remember another incident, also linked with this Yegorushka. Once at the request of Vladyka the abbess of a Tula monastery, Matushka Metrophania, brought to Ephremov a cross with holy particles of the wood of the Life-creating Cross of the Lord. The cross was of wood, not very large, perhaps about 30 centimetres high. During the night they took it to the homes of pious families, and it also stayed in the family of K.S. Some pious people were gathered there, and Yegorushka also came. Everybody went to bed, but Yegorushka spent the whole night standing in prayer. I remember that the floor in the house was very beautiful and covered with varnish. When everyone woke up in the morning, Yegorushka prepared to leave. When he had left his place, everyone saw on the floor two white footprints - the varnish had vanished there. Throughout the night Yegorushka had not moved, he had not shifted from foot to foot, so that the floor under him had lost its shine. Later, remembers K.S., her father brought her some varnish and covered up the marks of the feet.

"The house in which K.S.'s parents lived was good and spacious, but Yegorushka prophesied:

"You will live in a little shed with two little windows.'

"Soon this prophecy was fulfilled, the family was evacuated and some time later took shelter in a shed.

"The services in which Bishop Sergius took part remained in my memory for the rest of my life. At the Nativity of Christ the boys sang the troparion and kontakion wonderfully from music. Before the feast Vladyka himself rehearsed them.

"In Vladyka's house the tree was lit up already on the eve, after the all-night vigil. This was recounted by his aunt, Anna Antonovna Tiptsova.

"The Paschal Mattins service was wonderful. After the procession with the cross Vladyka struck the door with the cross and cried out: 'Christ is risen!' And in reply the chant of the myrrh-bearing women was borne out of the church three times: 'He is risen indeed!'

"How well the choir sounded in those days! It was directed by a precentor from Moscow, Vissonov. And how the service was beautified by the magnificent voice of Protodeacon Michael!

"Once after the Liturgy on the feast of the myrrh-bearing women, Vladyka together with 12 priests and Protodeacon Michael were in the house of the parents of K.S. for dinner. After dinner, when Vladyka was about to leave, a nun called Maria who was present in the house wanted to give him a rasa, while K.S. by agreement was to give him a staff. The priests were against this, and wanted to vest Vladyka themselves, but he stopped them with the words:

'Today is the feast of the myrrh-bearing women, let them do the serving.'

"The time came when they began to summon Vladyka to the police, frequently. They had talks with him, they noticed his innate gifts, and suggested he go to work... in the theatre. But the local authorities did not succeed in exerting influence over him. And then they called him to Moscow, to imprison him in Butyrki. But after some time they released him from prison, and he returned to Ephremov. Bishop Sergius told the story as follows: 'The rusty lock clanked, everyone pricked up his ears. And the jailor's voice rang out:

"Nikolsky, you're free! Set off for Ephremov."

"And here I am with you again!"

"Vladyka's return elicited such indescribable joy among the people! They wept for joy, especially the children!

"Soon after his return, Vladyka collected the children together and treated them to tea from the samovar, himself pouring the tea into the cups. And he gave them all a book entitled The Young Christian...

"Bishop Sergius returned from Butyrki to Ephremov, but the local authorities did not want to put up any longer with the presence of this fiery preacher and wonderful spiritual pastor in the town. And soon the bishop was exiled to Zadonsk.

[In Zadonsk Vladyka was appointed superior of the women's monastery, the Joy of All Who Sorrow. The cathedral church in the city belonged to the renovationists. On passing by it, Vladyka would bow to the cathedral, but would not enter.]

"The people [of Ephremov] did not abandon their Vladyka, and many travelled to Zadonsk to see him, to receive his hierarchical blessing and to pray with him in the church. K.S. also travelled to Zadonsk with her parents, and there she was present at a service in the women's monastery of the Joy of all who sorrow...

"Vladyka was glad to meet his friends from Ephremov. Again, as in Ephremov, he invited the children to drink tea. And, dressed in a white cassock, he himself poured the tea. The service was just about to begin with the participation of Vladyka, and the children had to go home. Vladyka asked them not to ring the bell for a few minutes so that he could say goodbye to them. As K.S. was leaving, she looked back and saw how Vladyka was blessing her as she disappeared from sight. And only after this did the bell calling the people to the service ring out.

"Bishop Sergius was not long in Zadonsk, they soon summoned him back to Moscow [in 1927]. The bishop asked for permission to pass by Ephremov so as to say farewell to his flock. In the church they did not even allow him to serve a moleben, he could only say farewell to the people. But the bishop did not manage to enter even one of the houses of the close circle of believers. After tea Vladyka gave everyone his last blessing. For everybody he found a good, kind, exhortatory word. He found one also for K.S.:

"Pray, be patient and be strong!" These words were engraved on her memory for the rest of her life.

"On the second or third day after his arrival in Ephremov he left for Moscow. On the platform thousands of people gathered to say farewell to their Vladyka. And he stood at the window in the carriage also saying farewell to the people. Suddenly the light in the carriage was turned off so that those who had gathered should not be able to see Vladyka. Soon the train moved, the people surged forward following him, but what could they do now? The irreparable was quickly accomplished. The people were not

destined to meet the man who had given them all the warmth of his pastor's heart again.

"In Moscow Bishop Sergius was appointed to Buzuluk as vicar of the Samara diocese (1927).

"At this time K.S., who was a fifteen-year-old girl, went to Voronezh to continue her education. On learning about this, Vladyka sent her his photograph from Buzuluk - he was standing near the little house where he lived, and from a window there looked out that same aunt of his - Anna Antonovna Tiptsova. On the back Vladyka had written in his own hand: 'Look where you've flown to, my swallow!'

"Then communication was broken off. It felt as if something had happened to Bishop Sergius.

"Much later, people recounted how in 1927, after Metropolitan Sergius' declaration had been issued, Bishop Sergius had himself taken off his episcopal vestments in the church and refused to follow what he considered to be the anticanonical orders of Metropolitan Sergius..."

Bishop Sergius was arrested on June 22, 1928. On September 28 he was condemned for "anti-Soviet agitation" and sentenced to three years' deprivation of the right to live in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Kiev and Odessa with confinement to one domicile. He went to live in Ufa.

On March 25, 1930 he was arrested again in Ufa and cast into the Domzak in Orenburg. There, at the request of his sister, he was visited by **Nun Irina** (Gladysheva), who was martyred a year later. On April 27 he was condemned to be shot for "participation in a church-sectarian organization, on whose orders he carried out counter-revolutionary activity". On May 16, 1930, Holy Thursday, he was shot on Mayak hill in Orenburg together with **Priest Erastus Kurdyukov, Hierodeacon Lev and Schema-Monk Martyrius.**

"Much later, there was a rumour about the circumstances of his death. My childhood friend, remembers K.S., once confidentially recounted the following story.

"In the thirties she was giving private music lessons to children. One child was always brought by his grandfather. It turned out that he had been a former worker in the police. In a moment of frank conversation he said to the teacher:

"'You knew Bishop Sergius and you would probably be interested to hear the details of his death?'

"According to this man, they brought Bishop Sergius into some sort of cave, where the waters of a turbulent river rushed across some rapids. They

ordered the bishop to go forward, deep into the cave, into the darkness. There, somewhere in the rapids, he probably fell and was carried away by the flood."

According to another source, Bishop Sergius was forced to stand in a metal cage for two days before he was shot.

Schema-monk Epiphanius (Chernov) has given yet another account of Bishop Sergius' death:- "For not recognizing 'our', as the chekist-interrogators called him, Metropolitan Sergius, Bishop Sergius of Buzuluk was arrested together with an igumen whose name has been forgotten. Stirred by the unshakeable firmness of the confessors, they sentenced them to the same cruel punishment: either they would give in or suffer a terrible slow death... They put them into a room full of rats. In this room there was a pool full of water instead of a floor and a large stump of wood capable of supporting several swimming people. And in the walls of the room there were holes in which sat hungry rats ready to fall on the people as on food offered them. No one endured a stay in that room. Everyone, at the sight of those innumerable beasts of prey falling on them incessantly, immediately agreed to take upon themselves any accusation, any demand asked of them by the 'investigators'. Only so long as they were delivered from the rats, from that terrible death. And the executioners, sitting the bishop and the igumen in that rat-room, were convinced that they would obtain their desired result... But the desired result was not obtained!.. The feeding-trough was opened, and through the metal window came the voice:

"Well, have you changed your minds?' asked the supervisor.

"But no answer came.

"Well, we haven't got all day! It's late...!"

"But the confessors of Christ understood that here there awaited them inevitable death, and they turned to God with flaming, tearful prayer. About one thing only: that they might be strengthened to receive the longed-for death for Christ... While they stood the beasts of prey were not able to overpower them. But, tormented by hunger and thirst, they grew weaker and lay down. And then the whole mass of rats around the water hurled themselves upon them. The supervisor saw all this and waited for them to begin to entreat him to save them, but in vain. The holy martyrs preferred death, 'the sweet death for Christ', rather than betray Him and recognize Metropolitan Sergius' treachery to be 'a good deed'. They did not ask for mercy from the torturers, and, strengthened by the grace of God, they were eaten alive by the beasts of prey..."

All accounts agree that Bishop Sergius and his companion(s) received the crown of martyrdom on May 3/16, 1930.

15. HOLY HIEROMARTYR MAXIMUS, BISHOP OF
SERPUKHOV

and those with him

Bishop Maximus, in the world Michael Alexandrovich Zhizhilenko, was born on March 2, 1885 in Kalish, Poland into a noble family. His father was a circuit judge. His elder brother, the professor of criminal law A.A. Zhizhilenko, spoke in defence of Metropolitan Benjamin during his trial in 1922. In 1908 he finished his studies at the St. Petersburg gymnasium and entered the medical faculty of Moscow University. While still a student, in 1911, he married a fellow-student, who died during pregnancy eighteen months later. Bowing to the will of God, both spouses did not want in any circumstances to terminate the pregnancy artificially, although they knew that it threatened almost certain death. Later Vladyka Maximus called his wife a righteous woman.

On graduating from university in 1912 (1911), he worked as a psychiatrist in Sokolniki, but then as a doctor in the ministry of communications in Blagoveshchensk and Moscow. He was a fine musician and composed music. He had a particular veneration for St. Panteleimon the healer. From 1914 to January, 1918 he was a doctor with the Kuban dismounted Cossack regiment in Galicia, on the Austrian front, where he almost died of typhus, being infected by Austrian prisoners of war.

In January, 1918 he became professor psychiatry in a provincial university, then assistant to the chief doctor in the Batrujsky hospital in Moscow, and then, having been mobilized into the Red Army, in May, 1919 he became chief doctor of a field hospital in Kozlov, Tambov province. In August, 1919, he was captured by the Cossacks led by the famous General Mamontov. In 1920 (1921) he became chief doctor in a military hospital in Nizhni-Novgorod, and in 1921, after demobilization, he worked in People's Commissariat of Communications. (According to one source, he was arrested at the beginning of the 1920s and exiled to the north for three years.)

Michael Alexandrovich wrote about this period of his life in his interrogation: "After the death of my wife in 1910 I was constantly drawn to depart from worldly life into monasticism, but the former condition of monastic life did not suit me. I was drawn to Athos, to Greece, but I did not succeed in getting there. After my experiences at the front in the war, I strove to get into a regiment where I could end my life, but I also did not manage that. My desire to withdraw into another, spiritual world grew constantly stronger."

On January 1, 1922 he became chief doctor of the Taganka prison in Moscow, where he won the respect of all, and was nicknamed the prison's angel guardian. He was a great master of the heart, a comforter and a father. Even the most hardened criminals confessed before him as before a priest,

and found not only consolation but a return to an honourable life. He slept on bare boards, ate only prison food, and gave all his pay to the prisoners. In Moscow he was known as "the elder of Taganka".

Since he was always a deeply religious person, Michael Alexandrovich became a close friend of Patriarch Tikhon's while he was still a layman, and was entrusted with many of the Patriarch's most intimate thoughts. Once, not long before his death, the Patriarch confided in his friend that in view of the increasing demands of the Soviet government, it seemed that the only way out for the Church in order to preserve her faithfulness to Christ was to go into the catacombs. Therefore the Patriarch blessed Michael Alexandrovich to become a secret monk and then, if in the near future the highest church authority betrayed Christ and conceded to Soviet power the spiritual freedom of the Church, he was to become a bishop.

He was also highly esteemed by the Patriarch's successor, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, who knew him well. He was a spiritual son of Fr. Valentine Sventitsky.

Michael Alexandrovich saw in Metropolitan Sergius' declaration of 1927 the betrayal of the Church of which the Patriarch spoke, and separated from him on December 17/30, 1927. On that day, the clergy and laity of Serpukhov wrote the following appeal to Metropolitan Sergius which may have been composed under the influence of Michael Alexandrovich:

"Since we find it no longer possible for us to remain on the slippery, ambiguous path on which you have placed the Orthodox Church by your declaration and decrees, following the voice of our conscience and our duty before God and the believers, we the under-signed break canonical communion in prayer with you and the so-called Patriarchal Synod and refuse to recognize you as the Deputy of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens for the following reasons:

"1. Your declarations of July 16 and October 20, and everything that is known about your government of the Church clearly speaks of the fact that you have placed the Church into a position of dependence on the civil power and deprived her of her inner freedom and independence, thereby breaking the church canons and going contrary to the decrees of the civil power.

"2. Thus you are nothing other than the continuer of the so-called renovationist movement, only in a more refined and very dangerous form, for in declaring that Orthodoxy is unshakeable and that you have preserved canonicity, you have clouded the minds of the believers, consciously hiding from them that abyss to which you are inexorably dragging the Church by all your decrees.

"3. The result of your politics is obvious to all of us. The believers of the city of Serpukhov are disturbed by your decrees and very anxious and

perplexed with regard to the destiny of the Holy Orthodox Church. We, their pastors, have been placed by you in an ambiguous position which not only cannot introduce peace into their hearts and minds, but arouses suspicions in them that you have betrayed Orthodoxy and gone over to the camp of the renovationists.

"All this forces us boldly to raise our voices and stop what has now become a criminal silence with regard to your mistakes and incorrect actions and, with the blessing of Bishop Demetrius of Gdov, we wall ourselves off from you and the people around you. In leaving you, we are not leaving the lawful Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Peter, and we submit ourselves to the judgement of a future council."

"In 1927," he said at his interrogation, "while working as a doctor in the Taganka prison, I fell seriously ill, and I was almost sentenced to death by the doctors. In March, 1928 I decided to receive Holy Unction and gave a vow that if I recovered I would accept the priesthood. After Holy Unction I quickly got better, and, having recovered from my illness, I decided to become a priest. My spiritual father was Fr. Valentine Sventitsky, who was serving the church of the Big Cross on Ilyinka. I knew him to be a good preacher and went to the church where he was serving. I went to Demetrius of Gdov in Leningrad on May 19, 1928. With me there went the deacon of the church of the Big Cross, Nicodemus Merkulov, who was ordained to the priesthood. I went to Demetrius of Gdov to become a priest because I considered him to be a truly Orthodox bishop. I gained this conviction that Demetrius of Gdov was a truly Orthodox bishop from my conversations with my spiritual father, the priest Valentine Sventitsky, who was in communion with Demetrius of Gdov and who convinced me that by his actions Metropolitan Sergius was, as the leader of the Orthodox Church, beginning to make advances, as it were, to the authorities. He was trying to adapt the Church to earthly life, and not the heavenly. During my ordination [to the diaconate] in Leningrad in May, 1928 [May 20], in the church of the Resurrection-on-the-blood, when they were congratulating me, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov came up to me to congratulate me. I met him for the first time then. The next day I was ordained to the priesthood, and after that I went to Moscow, and I was in Moscow until September, 1928, continuing to work as a doctor while bearing the rank of priest in my soul. But the most important thing I wanted was not the rank of a priest, but to be a simple monk, and nothing more. So in September, 1928 I again went to Demetrius of Gdov in Leningrad, alone, and began to ask him to tonsure me as a monk. At first he hesitated on canonical grounds, but then he tonsured me and after this I went to Moscow."

It was in 1928, according to one (dubious) source, that Fr. Maximus signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church.

The question of consecrating Maximus to the episcopate arose soon after it became clear to the leaders of the Josephites that the Church would soon not be able to exist openly. In March-April, 1928, there was no more news about

Bishop Arsenius (Zhadanovsky) of Serpukhov, who was frequently in exile. The people thought that he was dead or had been shot. So at the petition of a delegation from Serpukhov led by Protopriest Alexander Kremyshensky, Maximus was secretly consecrated Bishop of Serpukhov on October 12 in the church of St. Panteleimon of the Alexander-Oshevsky podvorye on Piskarevka, by Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov and Bishop Sergius of Narva. This was the first consecration of a catacomb bishop. It elicited the protest of Bishop Arsenius, who was in exile at the time. However, after the arrest of Vladyka Maximus, the two hierarchs asked each other forgiveness and were reconciled.

It was rumoured that Vladyka Maximus was the author of the "Prayer concerning the Holy Church", otherwise known as the "Prayer about the Bolsheviks" which was inserted into the Divine Liturgy by the Catacomb hierarchs of Petrograd.

From the evidence given by Vladyka Maximus at his interrogation: "At the beginning of October, 1928 I received a letter in the post from Demetrius of Gdov, in which he asked me to come to him to be consecrated to the episcopate. The next day I went to him in Leningrad. When I came into his presence, he said that 'I was intending to make you a bishop, but in view of certain doubts this question is to be put aside for the time being', and asked me to come the next day, when the question would be finally decided. I told him that I felt myself to be inexperienced and unworthy of this calling, but he told me that he was convinced I could be in this rank. On October 12 my consecration to the episcopate took place. He told me that I should tell nobody in Moscow that I had been consecrated to the episcopate. After this I was again in Moscow, and on January 8, 1929 a delegation from Serpukhov came to me. It consisted of Protopriest Alexander Vladychinsky and the warden, or warden's assistant, I think Kostin... and Deacon Irinarchus, who told me that 'we turned to Demetrius of Gdov asking for a bishop to administer the diocese, and he directed us to you.' I decided to go, since I concluded that this was being done in the interests of the Orthodox Church. While bishop in Serpukhov, in February, 1929, I went to Demetrius of Gdov and reported that I had entered into the fulfilment of my duties. Besides this, I had a conversation with him on exclusively ecclesiastical matters and details of hierarchical services."

From January, 1929, in addition to leading the Serpukhov Josephites, Vladyka Maximus led the movement in part of the Yaroslavl diocese and, after the arrest of Bishop Alexis (Buj), some of the Voronezh Josephites.

Vladyka Maximus was arrested on May 24, 1929 together with many of his flock in Serpukhov. During the course of the investigation, he behaved very cautiously, and the investigatory organs were not able to incriminate him in anything except the fact of his secret monasticism while working as a doctor in the Taganka prison. During interrogations, Vladyka Maximus constantly repeated one and the same thing:

"I accepted secret monasticism because I did not want to advertise my personal religious convictions before the Soviet authorities."

In reply to the question what diocese he ruled, Vladyka Maximus answered that he had no administrative responsibilities and that he lived like "a retired bishop". He categorically refused to speak about his religious convictions and spiritual life and activity, giving as reason the fact that this constituted "too intimate territory, into which he could not initiate anybody".

On July 5, 1929, the OGPU sentenced Bishop Maximus to five years in the camps "for counter-revolutionary propaganda". He arrived on Solovki at the end of October, 1929. There he worked as a doctor, being in charge of the typhus barracks. I.M. Andreyev writes: "We doctor-prisoners went up to our new comrade in chains and introduced ourselves. Our newly arrived colleague was tall, very strongly built, with a thick beard and grey whiskers and brows which hung severely over kind, light blue eyes.

"Every new arrival was very carefully examined by the doctor-bishop, and the first notes in the history of the disease were always huge. Besides a basic diagnosis of the main illness, Dr. Zhizhilenko always wrote a diagnosis of all the accompanying illnesses and gave a detailed summary of the state of all the organs. His diagnoses were always exact and correct... During later visits it seemed as if he paid little attention to him (the sick man) and stayed at his bedside no longer than a minute, feeling his pulse and looking fixedly into his eyes...

"... The sick always died in his arms. It seemed that he always knew exactly the moment of death. Even at night he would suddenly go to the dying man in his department a few minutes before death. He closed the eyes of every dead man, folded his hands on his breast in the shape of the cross and stood in silence for a few minutes without moving. Evidently he was praying. In less than a year all we his colleagues understood that he was not only a remarkable doctor, but also a great man of prayer...

"... After exchanging names and general questions, all three of us brothers told the new arrival that we knew (through friends in the office of the medical unit) his past and the reasons for his arrest and imprisonment on Solovki. Then we went up for his blessing. The face of the doctor-bishop became concentrated, he knit his grey brows still more tightly, and slowly and triumphantly he blessed us. His blue eyes became still kinder and more welcoming, and they were lit up with a joyful light.

"... The arrival of Vladyka Maximus on Solovki produced great changes in the mood of the imprisoned clergy. At that time in the fourth department of the Solovki camps (that is, on Solovki itself) the same schism could be observed among the imprisoned bishops and priests as had taken place 'in freedom' after the well-known declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. One part

of the episcopate and the white clergy broke all communion with Metropolitan Sergius, remaining faithful to the invincible position of Metropolitans Peter, Cyril, Agathangelus and Joseph, Archbishop Seraphim (of Uglich) and many others who had witnessed to their faithfulness to Christ and the Church by their confession and martyrdom. The other part had become 'sergianists' by accepting the so-called 'new church politics' of Metropolitan Sergius, which founded the Soviet church and introduced a neo-renovationist schism. Most of the prisoners who arrived on Solovki before the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius were 'sergianists'. But on the other hand, most of those who arrived after the publication of the declaration were so-called 'Josephites' (from the name of Joseph, around whom the unshaken and faithful children of the Church mainly grouped themselves). With the arrival of the new prisoners the numbers of the latter became greater and greater.

"By the time of the arrival of Vladyka Maximus, the following 'Josephite' bishops were on Solovki: Bishop Victor of Glazov (the first to come out with a critical letter against the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius), Bishop Hilarion, the vicar of Smolensk and Bishop Nectarius Trezvinsky. The 'sergianists' included Archbishop Anthony of Marioupol and Bishop Joasaph (prince Zhevakhov). Less outspoken, but still a 'sergianist', was Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky, who condemned the declaration, but had not broken communion with Metropolitan Sergius as 'the canonically correct First-Hierarch of the Russian Church'.

"Vladyka Maximus' arrival on Solovki gave an exceptional impetus to the influence of the 'Josephites' (which was dominant even before then).

"When, after the most cruel bans laid by Metropolitan Sergius on the 'disobedient', these latter began to be arrested and shot, then the true Russian Orthodox Church which was faithful to Christ began to depart into the catacombs. Metropolitan Sergius and all the 'sergianists' categorically denied the existence of the Catacomb Church. The Solovki 'sergianists', of course, also did not believe in her existence. And suddenly - a living witness: the first catacomb bishop, Maximus of Serpukhov, arrived on Solovki.

"Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky was soon removed from Solovki, and with him there also disappeared the 'sergianist attitudes' from many. Only Archbishop Anthony and, especially, Bishop Joasaph (Zhevakhov) remained stubborn 'sergianists'. They did not want even to see or talk with Bishop Maximus. However, Bishops Victor, Hilarion (of Smolensk) and Nectarius quite quickly found the opportunity not only to meet, but also to serve with Vladyka Maximus in secret catacomb Divine services in the depths of the Solovki woods. The 'sergianists' behaved too cautiously and never arranged any secret services. But then the camp administration were more condescending to them than to the bishops, priests and laymen about whom it was known that they 'did not recognize' either Metropolitan Sergius or the Soviet church.

"All those arrested for matters relating to the Church (and such constituted up to 20% of those on Solovki according to official statistics) were unfailingly asked during interrogation what their attitude was to 'our' Metropolitan Sergius, who headed the Soviet church. The chekists would demonstrate with evil joy and sarcasm the 'strict canonicity' of Metropolitan Sergius and his declaration, which 'did not violate either the canons or the dogmas'.

"In denying the Catacomb Church, the Solovki 'sergianists' also denied the rumours that reproachful epistles had been written to Metropolitan Sergius and many delegations had gone to protest to him from the dioceses. Once Archbishop Anthony of Marioupol, who was lying ill in the prison hospital, learned that I had participated in one of these delegations as a layman. So he wanted to hear my account of the journey to Metropolitan Sergius together with the representatives of the episcopate and the white clergy. Vladykas Victor (of Glazov) and Maximus (of Serpukhov) blessed me to go to the hospital where Archbishop Anthony lay and tell him about the journey. If, after my account, he declared his solidarity with the protestors against the 'new church policy', I was allowed to take his blessing. But if he remained a stubborn sergianist, I was not to take his blessing. My conversation with Archbishop Anthony lasted more than two hours. I told him in detail about the historic delegation of the Petrograd delegation in 1927, after which the church schism took place. At the end of my account Archbishop Anthony asked me to tell him about the personality and activities of Vladyka Maximus. I replied in a very restrained and short manner, and he noticed that I did not completely trust him. He asked me about this. I openly replied that we catacombers feared not only the agents of the GPU, but also the sergianists, who had often handed us over to the GPU. Archbishop Anthony was very upset and for a long time walked up and down the doctor's surgery to which I, as a consultant doctor had summoned him, as if for a check-up. Then he suddenly and decisively said:

"'But still I will remain with Metropolitan Sergius.'

"I rose, bowed and was about to go. He raised his hand to bless me, but I, remembering the instructions of Vladykas Victor and Maximus, declined to receive his blessing and left.

"When I told Vladyka Maximus about what had happened, he again insisted that I should never receive the blessings of stubborn sergianists.

"'The Soviet and the Catacomb Churches are incompatible,' Vladyka Maximus said significantly, firmly and with conviction.

"And after a pause he added quietly: 'The secret, desert Catacomb Church has anathematized the sergianists and those with them.'

"In spite of the exceptional severity of the Solovki camp regime, which exposed them to the risk of being shot, Vladykas Victor, Hilarion, Nectarius

and Maximus not only often served together in secret catacomb services in the woods of the island, but also carried out secret consecrations of new bishops. Only on the eve of my departure from Solovki did I learn from a close friend, a celibate priest, that he was no longer a priest, but a secret bishop.

"We had several secret catacomb 'churches' on Solovki, but the most 'beloved' were two: the 'diocesan cathedral' of the Holy Trinity and the church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker... Services were more often performed in the church of St. Nicholas. In the 'Trinity diocesan cathedral' services were performed only in summer, on big feasts and, with especial solemnity, on the day of Pentecost. But sometimes, depending on circumstances, strictly secret services were also performed in other places. Thus, for example, on Great Thursday the service with the reading of the 12 Gospels was performed in our doctors' room in the tenth company. Vladyka Victor and Fr. Nicholas came to us supposedly for disinfection. They served with the door bolted. On Great Friday the order went out in all the companies that for three days prisoners were allowed to leave their companies after eight in the evening only in exceptional circumstances, with special written permission from the camp commandant.

"At seven o'clock on Friday evening, when we doctors had just returned to our rooms after a twelve-hour working day, Fr. Nicholas came to us and announced that a plashchanitsa the size of a man's palm had been painted by the artist R., and that the service - the rite of burial - would begin in an hour.

"Where?" asked Vladyka Maximus.

"In the big box used for drying fish which is near the wood not far from such-and-such a company. The sign is three knocks, followed by two. Better come one by one.'..."

"Half an hour later Vladyka Maximus and I left our company and headed for the appointed address. Twice the sentries asked us for our passes. We, as doctors, had them. But what about the others: Vladyka Victor, Vladyka Hilarion, Vladyka Nectarius and Fr. Nicholas... Vladyka Victor worked as an accountant in the rope factory, Vladyka Nectarius was a fisherman, while the others wove nets...

"Here was the edge of the wood. Here was the box, over two metres in length. There were no windows. The door was scarcely visible. It was a radiant twilight. The sky was covered with thick clouds. We knocked three times and then twice. Fr. Nicholas opened. Vladykas Victor and Hilarion were already there... A few minutes later Vladyka Nectarius also came. The inside of the box was converted into a church. The floor and the walls were made of spruce branches. A few candles were burning. There were some small paper icons. The small burial shroud the size of a palm was drowning in green branches. There were about ten worshippers. Four or five came later, including two monks. The service began. In a whisper. It seemed that we had

no bodies, only ears. Nothing stopped or hindered us from praying. I don't remember how we returned 'home', that is, to our companies. The Lord protected us.

"The Mattins of Pascha was to be served in our doctors' room. By twelve midnight all those who were intending to come had arrived - without written permission, on one of another urgent excuse connected with the medical section. There were about fifteen people. After the Mattins and Liturgy we sat down to break our fast. On the table were cakes, pascha, coloured eggs, snacks and wine (liquid yeast with cranberry extract and sugar). At about three in the morning everyone dispersed. The camp commandants made his control inspections of our company before and after the service, at eleven in the evening and four in the morning... Finding us, four doctors with Vladyka Maximus at our head, still awake, the commandant said:

"'What, aren't you sleeping, doctors?' And he immediately added: 'What a night! One doesn't want to sleep.'

"And he left.

"'Lord Jesus Christ, we thank Thee for the miracle of Thy mercy and strength,' said Vladyka Maximus with emphasis, expressing the feelings of all of us.

"The white Solovki night was on its way out. The tender, rosy Solovki paschal morning with its playfully joyful sun met the monastery-concentration camp, turning it into an invisible city of Kitezh and filling our free souls with quiet, unearthly joy. Many years have passed since that time, but the fragrance of this tender paschal morning is unforgettably alive, as if it were only yesterday. And the heart believes that it was holy between us then...

"On July 5/18, 1930, the feast of St. Sergius of Radonezh, our friends from the office of the medical section informed me that I would be arrested that night and sent with a special convoy to Leningrad 'in connection with a new affair'. Being warned, I got ready, said goodbye to my friends, and without lying down to sleep, began to wait for my arrest. At two o'clock in the morning I heard a noise and steps below (our room was on the second floor). I bowed to the ground before Vladyka Maximus (who had also not slept) and asked him to bless me and pray that the Lord would send me strength to bear the coming sorrows and sufferings, and perhaps - tortures and death. Vladyka got up from his bed, stood to his full, knight-like height, and slowly blessed me, kissed me three times and said with emphasis:

"'You will have many sorrows and heavy trials, but your life will be preserved and in the end you will get out into freedom... As for me, in a few months they will also arrest me and... shoot me. Pray also for me, both while I am alive and, especially, after my death.'"

This prophecy was fulfilled exactly, both in regard to I.M. Andreyev and to Bishop Maximus himself.

With regard to the future, "Vladyka Maximus... remained a pessimist, or, as he defined himself in the words of K. Leontiev, 'an optimistic pessimist'. The tragic end of world history is drawing near, and for that reason, according to the word of the Lord, it is necessary to 'raise our heads' in expectation of the certain triumph of Christian truth..." In this respect he had had a certain disagreement even with Patriarch Tikhon, who was more optimistically inclined.

Meanwhile, on August 19, there began the investigation of the affair of "the church-monarchist organization 'True Orthodoxy' in Moscow region". The OGPU claimed that this organization occupied itself with "anti-Soviet activity under the flag of the defence of true Orthodoxy from the 'Godless' authorities". Between August and January more than one hundred people were arrested. When the OGPU in Moscow region heard about the arrests of the clergy in Tver, they immediately understood that it was possible to link these two cases and initiate a big trial. They demanded that their Tver colleagues give them the material on the investigation and, besides, they insisted that they "obtain the confession of those who have been arrested that they had links with Kolomna, Serpukhov, Orekhovo-Zuyevo and Moscow". Having arrested more than 60 clergy and believers from Moscow and the region around Moscow, the OGPU workers prepared standard forms, on which they had to fill in only their surnames, the date and their signatures. The OGPU workers did not put great effort into collecting proofs, since they well knew that the story of a "counter-revolutionary" plot was quite enough to please the authorities, and would therefore bring them no little profit.

One of those arrested in this swoop was Bishop Maximus. On October 28 his sentence had been increased by five years and he had been sent to the camps on the White Sea - Baltic canal. There he was arrested on November 27 and taken to Moscow. On January 27, 1931 he was cast into Butyrki prison. He was accused of being "the leader of the Serpukhov branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church". On February 4 1931, in the group case entitled, "The Case of the True Orthodox Church: Moscow, Tver and Serpukhov branches, 1931", indictments were delivered against sixty-three people (seventeen priests, twenty-three monastics and twenty-three laymen).

Bishop Maximus was sentenced to death on February 18, and he was shot on June 4 (according to another version, July 6). He was buried in the Vagankovskoye cemetery in Moscow.

16. HOLY HIEROMARTYR BENJAMIN, BISHOP OF RYBINSK **and those with him**

Bishop Benjamin, in the world Basil Konstantinovich Voskresensky, was born on January 15, 1871 in the village of Pereslavstevo, Uglich uyezd, Yaroslavl province into the family of a village priest. Two of his brothers were priests. In 1892 he finished his studies at the Yaroslavl theological seminary, and in 1896 graduated from Moscow Theological Academy. He was ordained as a hieromonk in the same year. According to one source, he then went to teach in the Yaroslavl theological seminary. In 1897 he went to teach Russian literature and history in Kutaisi theological seminary. On July 2, 1901 he became a teacher in the Tiflis theological seminary. At the same time he studied the theory of music at the Imperial musical school in Tiflis. On March 10, 1908 he was transferred to the Vyatka theological seminary, and on May 5, 1909 - to the Vologda theological seminary. On April 4, 1911 he became teacher of Holy Scripture in the Yaroslavl theological seminary. From 1916 to 1919 he was a teacher in the Yaroslavl railway school.

On June 4, 1921, at a congress of the clergy of Romanovo (Tutayevo) uyezd, he was elected as first candidate for the see of Romanovo. On October 9, 1921, he was consecrated Bishop of Romanovo (Tutayevo), a vicariate of the Yaroslavl diocese. In the summer of 1922 he was arrested for "keeping stamps and blanks" and for "not carrying out the orders of Soviet power", and was cast into prison in Yaroslavl. On October 28 he was convicted of "using the religious prejudices of the masses in order to overthrow the Workers and Peasants' Power", and in accordance with article 119 was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. In 1926 he was freed on amnesty.

On June 11 (or 14), 1927 Vladyka Benjamin was arrested in Poshekhonye (or Tutayevo) for "anti-Soviet agitation" or "monarchist agitation" and cast into Yaroslavl special isolator. This "monarchist agitation" consisted in the deacon saying during a hierarchical liturgy: "O Lord, in Thy strength the king shall be glad, and in Thy salvation shall he rejoice exceedingly" (Psalms 20.1). He was accused that "in his entourage and during services he conducted anti-Soviet agitation, and expressed dissatisfaction with measures taken in relation to the Church". "On June 11 he gave a sermon, whose content came down to a sharp criticism of the Communist party, which was inducing mistrust in the broad masses of the people. In it he also referred to Edison and other scientists who firmly believed in and recognized God..." On September 23, he was sentenced in accordance with article 58-10 to three years' exile in Kazakhstan in "The Case of Bishop Benjamin (Voskresensky), Priest V.I. Stratilatov and others, Yaroslavl, 1927". He was exiled to Dzhambeit and then Kara-Tobe in Western Kazakhstan.

According to one source, from 1927 to 1930 he was counted as Bishop of Rybinsk.

During his exile (probably at the beginning of 1929) Vladyka Benjamin separated from Metropolitan Sergius. "The 'Declaration' has placed the Church in a relationship to the contemporary State that it cannot accept while remaining the Church. Our state has unfurled before the whole world a banner with the inscription - atheism and the struggle with religion - with Orthodoxy in particular.

On June 3/16, 1929 he wrote to Bishop Paul (Borisovsky) (according to another version, Fr. Flegont): "Metropolitan Sergius has begun an undertaking that is complex and difficult in its spiritual basis. Aiming to legitimize the civil situation of the Church in the contemporary State, the metropolitan has done something without precedent in the history of the Church - an experiment in joining two mutually denying elements - the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of atheism, the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of antichrist. Metropolitan Sergius has always been noted for his well-known suppleness of mind. Here he has taken this suppleness beyond its measure and become its victim.

"The declaration has placed the Church in a position in relation to the contemporary State that she cannot accept while remaining the Church. Our State has openly, in front of the whole world, inscribed on its banner atheism and the struggle with religion, with Orthodoxy in particular. It is a struggle until final victory, until the complete death of religion. The Church can never say to such a government: 'I am with our government', and to the atheist people: 'I am with our people'. The Church can never say: 'the joys and successes of our civil homeland are our joys and successes, and its failures - our failures.' Our Christian homeland under the leadership of the God-fighting government is being systematically and swiftly reconstructed. It is already something new, its building in all branches of its life is atheist and antichristian, an atheist homeland is being formed. The joys and successes of its atheist construction cannot be the joys of the Church. The concept of the homeland is complex. It is composed of geographical, national, political, social, everyday and religious elements. Of these only one has so far remained untouched for us - the geographical. And not even that entirely. Atheism is defiling even the land. The atheist homeland is no longer a sacred homeland. For the Christian it has ceased to be the homeland. The Christian cannot call the atheistically constructed homeland his homeland, and still less can he rejoice in its joys and successes. The joys and successes of the atheist homeland strengthen the atheism of the homeland and for that reason cannot be the joys of the Christian.

"Metropolitan Sergius, by standing up for atheism and the God-fighting government, by assuming to himself the joys and successes of the atheistically constructed, God-fighting homeland, has 'bowed' the Church of Christ under a foreign yoke with unbelievers. They say: it is possible to distinguish the civil element from the religious. That is either an error or a sophism. Socialism understood in an abstract sense is a purely economic system. For that reason many think that it is possible to construct economic life without touching on

religion at all. That is absurd. When the unbeliever constructs life, he will not be able to take only a part of life for his purely economic construction. He will unfailingly strive to take the whole of life for irreligious construction. The unbelieving builders are generous in their promises of complete religious freedom, that is, they are very loquacious, promising to present a certain part of life for any religion so that the whole of the rest of life may be filled with an exclusively irreligious content. But such promises are unacceptable, first, because of their very nature – their irreligiosity,... and secondly, they will never be fulfilled by the unbelieving builders of life.

“But let us imagine an atheist government that is ideally tolerant towards religion. That does little to change the situation. The Christian, like the believer of any other religion, can never be satisfied and reconciled with atheist government.

“He knows that ‘if the Lord builds not the house, they labour in vain that build it’. Therefore the irreligious tone of life, even if it is most tolerant of religion, is unacceptable as a matter of principle for the Christian and for a person of any other religion.

“Our State is carrying out the first experiment in the world; a similar process, at a lower level, is taking place in other States – there where there is separation of the Church from the State.

“The atheization of mankind is growing. Its limits are unknown. The ideological exodus for the Christian in the atheist State is a departure from the world, but there is nowhere to depart to. It is left to the Christian to sorrow and suffer, to submit to reality. He does not submit ideologically, but preserves his principles as holy objects...”

Vladyka Benjamin was considered to be a great man of prayer, an ascetic elder and a clairvoyant. He had many spiritual children.

On April 1, 1930, Vladyka was arrested in exile in connection with the Yaroslavl branch of the True Orthodox Church. (According to one source, on May 28, he was condemned to deprivation of the right to live in eight provinces, and was confined to one domicile.) On January 10 (or September 10), 1931 he was arrested and sentenced to ten years in the camps. On October 5, 1932 he died in prison near the city of Krasnovodsk in Turkmenistan while he was being interrogated.

Vladyka’s clergy who suffered for the faith included **Protopriest Flegont Nikolayevich Pongilsky, who** was born in 1871 in the village of Karyayevo, Uglich *uyezd*, Yaroslavl province, in the family of a priest. He finished his studies at the Yaroslavl theological seminary and served in the church of the Mother of God in Yaroslavl. He was the dean of the churches of Rybinsk, and demonstrated great care for the exiled Vladyka Benjamin. In 1928 he sent him 1000 roubles from faithful Christians. In a letter from his son Leonid to Bishop

Benjamin dated September 5, 1929 we learn that Fr. Flegont was thinking of spending the winter in Petrograd with the Catacomb Archbishop Demetrius and receiving consecration to the episcopate from him. However, on August 8 (September 7), 1929 he was arrested for being “a participant in the Yaroslavl branch of the counter-revolutionary, monarchist church organization, True Orthodox Church”, and on January 3, 1930 he was sentenced to three (or five) years’ exile in the north in accordance with article 58-10. On August 8, 1933 (or in the autumn of 1934) he was released from exile and returned to Yaroslavl (Ivanovo province). In 1937 he was arrested, sentenced to death and shot.

Protopriest Nicholas Nikolayevich Pongilsky was born in 1879 in the village of Karyayevo, Uglich uyezd, Yaroslavl province. He went to a theological seminary, and served as the rector of a church in Rybinsk and, from the end of the 1920s, as dean of the district. On September 7, 1929 he was arrested for being “a participant in the Yaroslavl branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church”, and on January 3 was sentenced in accordance with article 58-10 to five years in the camps and sent to Sibltag. In the autumn of 1934 he was released from camp and settled in the village of Bolshoye Titovskoye, Tutayevo region, serving in the church of the Nativity of Christ in the Artemyevsky village soviet, Tutayevo region. On October 28, 1940 he was arrested for conducting anti-Soviet agitation among the worker-builders on the Yaroslavl-Rybinsk railway, and on January 11, 1941 was sentenced to ten years in the camps and sent to a camp. On February 12, 1941 the sentence was upheld. He died on August 6, 1942 in Yaroslavl’s corrective labour colony number 3.

Priest Leonid Flegontovich Rozov was the son of Protopriest Flegont. He was born in 1890 in the village of Petropavlovskoye, Danilovsky uyezd, Yaroslavl province. He went to a theological seminary, was ordained to the priesthood in 1901, and was appointed to the church of St. George in Rybinsk. In a letter to Vladyka Benjamin dated November 25, 1928, he wrote: “We are all inspired by a rejection of Sergianism as a world-view, and cannot allow the imposition of this system within the bounds of the Yaroslavl ecclesiastical district.” He was arrested in Rybinsk on September 7, 1929 and cast into the House of Arrest in Ivanovo province for being “a participant in the Yaroslavl branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church”. The investigation found that Fr. Leonid was one of “the representatives of the Church who took a particularly irreconcilable position in relation to Metropolitan Sergius after the publication of his letter in which he calls for the introduction of a prayer for the ruling authorities in the churches. These people conducted illegal assemblies at which they studied the letters of exiled bishops and worked out ways of struggling against Sergianism.” On January 30 (3), 1930 he was convicted by the OGPU of “anti-Soviet agitation” and sentenced to five years in the camps in accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11. He was sent to a camp. His was part of the group case, “The Case of the Clergy of Ivanovo Industrial Province, 1930”. Nothing more is known about him.

17. HOLY HIEROMARTYR STEPHEN, BISHOP OF IZHEVSK **and those with him**

Bishop Stephen (in the world, Valerian Stepanovich Bekh) was born on September 13, 1872 in Zhitomir (according to another source, in the 1870s in Vologda province, and according to a third – in St. Petersburg) in a noble family. He graduated from the juridical faculty of St. Petersburg Imperial University in 1897. On November 8, 1897 he entered Moscow Theological Academy. A year later, when he was to be transferred to the second course, he was released from the Academy at his own request. On July 1, 1899 he was appointed zemstvo leader of the second district of the Yarensk uyezd, Vologda province. On August 15, 1900 he retired from the service, and on January 16, 1901 he was appointed teacher of the Law of God in church-parish schools. In September, 1903 he was again received into the number of the students of the second course at the Moscow Theological Academy.

"This is how Vladyka Stefan became a monk. The future Vladyka Stefan, then a young student, was walking along the street. He saw a big crowd in one entrance and asked:

"'What's going on?'

"'We're waiting for our dear Father John of Kronstadt.'

"A carriage came up. The crowd rushed up to it and pushed the young future bishop so powerfully that he felt himself moving towards Fr. John, who was just getting out. He looked at him attentively and went into the house. The crowd remained outside the house. The future bishop also remained, although he didn't know why. Suddenly an unknown person came out of the house and asked:

"'Is so-and-so here?' giving Vladyka Stefan's name in the world.

"'That's me,' said the amazed youth.

"'Batyushka is calling you.'

"His amazement increased. He followed the man who had been sent for him. Fr. John got up to meet him, calling him 'Vladyka!...'"

On December 20, 1903 he was tonsured into monasticism. On November 5, 1906 he was ordained to the priesthood. In 1907 he graduated from the Academy with the degree of candidate of theology. On October 11, 1908 he was appointed assistant supervisor of the Solikamsk theological school. From July 28, 1911 he was supervisor of the Mengrelia theological school with the rank of archimandrite. (According to another source, he was ordained to the priesthood and became an archimandrite in about 1919.) From October 8,

1913 he was supervisor of the Bezhetsk theological school. On October 8, 1914 he retired from service in the theological schools and was appointed protopresbyter in the Army and Navy clergy. From October 28, 1915 he was supervisor of the Kargopol theological school. From 1918 to 1920 he was an archimandrite of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. In 1919 he was arrested in Petrograd, but soon released.

On September 26 / October 9, 1921 he was consecrated Bishop of Izhevsk, a vicariate of the Sarapul diocese. He is also mentioned by one source as having been temporary administrator of the Kirov diocese. On November 9, 1922 he was arrested in Izhevsk and cast into Butyrki prison in Moscow. On December 27 he was sentenced to two (or three) years' exile in Narymsk region for "counter-revolutionary activity". At the beginning of 1924 (according to another source, on March 21, 1923) he was again arrested and put in the Taganka prison in Moscow. From there he appealed to E.A. Peshkova of the Political Red Cross to give him a sheepskin coat since "the frosts in Narymsk are savage". On March 26 he wrote again to Peshkova thanking her and congratulating her on the feast of Holy Pascha. He was sentenced to two years in the camps and sent to Solovki.

In August, 1926 he was released, but encountered problems in Izhevsk, where Bishop Alexis (Kuznetsov) of Sarapul objected to Metropolitan Sergius' decision to re-open the Izhevsk diocese and succeeded in making Metropolitan Sergius reverse his decision. Although a part of the clergy and laity in Izhevsk did not want to submit to Bishop Alexis, suspecting him because of his temporary fall into renovationism, Bishop Stefan found it difficult to serve in the circumstances and in the autumn of 1926 went into retirement in Petrograd. There he served in the church of St. Alexis the Man of God and, from September 21, 1927, in the church of the Transfiguration.

Protopriest Fr. Basil Bondyrev, who had been with Vladyka Stephen during his first exile and was later shot, told the following story: "A huge bear lumbered up to us while we were preparing timber. He filled all of us with terror. At that time Vladyka Stephen and I and the other exiles were going to cut timber. Once we were working when we suddenly heard someone crashing through the grove. A bear! We all ran off in different directions. I, too, hid. Then I looked out and saw Vladyka Stephen standing where he was and the bear stretched out at his feet. Vladyka was feeding him with some bread and stroking him. And from that time the bear became completely tame; he would come up and lie down beside Vladyka, who would feed him."

Bishop Stephen enjoyed great authority among the believing people. He was considered to be a clairvoyant elder. He had the courage to tell people exactly what he thought of them.

He was in opposition to both the renovationists and the sergianists, and was the spiritual father of the first bishop who came out openly against Metropolitan Sergius' declaration - **Hieromartyr Victor of Glazov**. At the

beginning of 1928 he was banned from serving by Sergius. According to one (dubious) source, he participated in the "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church in 1928 through Monk Obadiah.

He served in various churches in Petrograd. Natalia Georgievna Kiter tells the following story about him:-

"Mama and I arrived in Petersburg in 1930, after a ten-year absence. Mama was a pensioner (she had been a teacher for many years), and received a pension, I don't remember exactly, of either 12 or 18 roubles a month. She went out one dark and frosty morning and returned only late in the evening, half-dead from tiredness. She hadn't eaten a thing all day.

"The doctor discovered that I have cancer and has ordered me to have an operation immediately,' she said, dropping exhausted onto the bed.

"My heart trembled, but I tried to say with complete calm:

"We shall go tomorrow. If one catches it early, it's not dangerous.'

"I spoke confidently in this vein. Mama was calm. I managed to get her into the hospital without any particular difficulty. In the evening I was visited by my neighbour, a very believing and intelligent old woman, Vera Alexandrovna Arbuzova, who lived with her daughter, Musya, a nurse.

"At this time I had no idea of true spiritual life, and only recently, 'to spite the Bolsheviks', I had begun to go to church. My soul had been searching for something for a long time, life seemed pointless. At the age of 18 I had suddenly been attacked by a terrible thought which deprived me of the strength to live. What was the point of working, of studying, of seeking, of hoping for anything, if everything ended in death? At this point my path crossed with that of the theosophists, and their teaching seemed to me, who did not know the truth, to be a revelation. I must add that from the age of 9 I had grown up without the beneficial influence of my deeply and sincerely believing parents. When the persecutions against the Church began, I, out of a confused feeling of protest, began to go to church. There I found rest to my soul, although I had no idea about the true life of the spirit. But the church was the only place where I felt in Russia, where the present disappeared without a trace.

"And now Vera Alexandrovna tried to direct me along the right path. But I didn't give in to her, relying self-confidently on my experience alone.

"You know, Nata,' she turned to me. 'I want to suggest that you ask Vladyka Stephen. Remember, I told you about him, that he could pray for your mama. Let's go to Pesochynaya tomorrow, to the church where he is.'

"I put no particular hope on the prayers of an unknown bishop, but you clutch onto anything when grief comes.

"The next morning the three of us set off for the Liturgy. During the service I noticed, not far away, among the worshippers, an old, thin monk in a tattered old ryasa. His pale face looked ascetic, and there were straggly strands of grey hair sticking out from under his old skufya. Something drew me to look in his direction.

"After the service Vera Alexandrovna said to me, pointing at the elder:

"That's Vladyka.'

"The people began to crowd up to him, asking for his blessing. A long queue was formed. We got up. Never before had I kissed the hands of a priest, and I immediately noticed that most people not only kissed Vladyka's hand, but also bowed to the ground before him. I was upset. All this seemed strange and barbarian to me. I was perplexed. How could this be?

"But while I was hesitating, I suddenly saw myself already standing in front of Vladyka. I raised my eyes to him and met his glance. What happened to me then! His glance penetrated into the very depths of my soul and immediately enlightened it, like a flash of lightning. I immediately saw its blackness and all his holiness. Suddenly I felt holiness. This was a new and unusual feeling for me, and I was struck, as if hit by something. Weeping, I fell at his feet and couldn't regain my calm. And to his sympathetic question I could only mutter:

"Vladyka, pray for mama.'

"And what is her illness?'

"I told him. He knitted his brow and shook his head.

"Alright, but you also pray.'

"I can't, Vladyka.'

"Pray as you are able. We shall pray together.'

"I returned home somewhat calmer. The operation was appointed for the morning, just at the time of the Liturgy. I rushed straight from the church to the hospital. Would she be alive? In fear and anxiety I went into the ward. From a cot in the distance mama nodded to me, smiling. She was weak, but in full consciousness and kind as always. Musya Abramova told me that the doctor had warned her, since she was a nurse, that he feared that the sick woman would die under the knife... The last words that mama heard were the word of the professor:

"We must be quick here.'

"But the operation not only went well, there was not even any of the festering from which so many sick people die, and her temperature did not even go up. Mama was released from hospital two weeks later. The stitches healed as if after a shallow cut in a young and healthy person.

"I don't understand a thing,' said the professor, spreading his hands. It couldn't end like that. The sick said that they were struck how calmly and happily mama went to the serious operation, as if she were going on a walk.

"Mama's first outing was to the church on Pesochneya. After the service Vladyka had a long, tender conversation with us. He joked, and tried to encourage us. We both wept. We quietly left the church. Vladyka caught up with us; he greeted us, smiling radiantly. His tall figure could be seen for a long time at the end of the alley.

"We didn't see him again. Shortly after this they arrested and exiled him. The accusation was: 'Opium for the people'. And - evidently through the prayers of Vladyka Stephen - mama was given two more years so as to receive a crown to her life so full of harsh suffering - an angelic, monastic crown [with the name Eugenia]....

"Vera Alexandrovna told me how Margarita Jul. Mei had seen mama in a dream on the very day of her death lying in the grave. Beside her stood an unknown elder-monk who was praying fervently. Vera Alexandrovna had had the thought of showing her the photograph of Vladyka Stephen.

"That's him! That's him!' shouted Margarita Jul., although she had never once seen Vladyka Stephen in the flesh.

"They say that during the fast Vladyka ate nothing except one prosphora a day with holy water.

"Receive Communion while there is the Chalice,' were his constant words.

"Vera Alexandrovna told the following stories from her life:

"1. Once we were standing in the church. Vladyka Stephen was at the other end blessing the people. I also went up. But Musya said:

"Wait, let him finish blessing all the women first.'

"Finally we went up. Vladyka smiled and said to us:

'I've finished blessing all the women, now I can bless you, too.'

"Vladyka could not possibly have heard the words that were said in a whisper at the other end of the church. Musya was ready to fall through the earth out of shame! What clairvoyance from the Lord!

"2. There was a lady staying with us, not a church person. Once she said:

"You keep saying about your bishop that whatever he prays for he receives. I shall go to him. Let him pray that so-and-so gives up his wife and marries me.'

"Well, you know, I wouldn't advise you to go with such requests to Vladyka.'

"She went. She went ahead of us to receive his blessing. She had hardly opened her mouth when the tenderly smiling face of Vladyka suddenly darkened, he frowned and, without saying a word, turned away from her, and turned to the next person. The lady was very upset both with us and with Vladyka."

Vladyka Stefan was arrested in Petrograd in 1929, and was sentenced in accordance with article 58-10 to three years' exile in the village of Pomozdino, Ust-Kulomsky region, Komi ASSR. On September 7, 1932 he was arrested in the village of Bad-Yel, Ust-Kulomsky region, and was cast into prison in Syktyvkar. On April 21, 1933 he was sentenced to be shot in accordance with articles 58-10 part 2 and 58-11 for creating a counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, 'The Union of Peasants', and leading this organization". This was part of the group case, "The Case of the Church Counter-Revolutionary Organization, 'The Union of Peasants', Komi, 1933". The sentence was changed to ten years in prison. However, before the sentence could be passed, Bishop Stephen died in prison on March 26 (or, according to another source, April 13/26), 1933.

Natalya Kieter continued her reminiscences: "A year passed. I had a dream. A door opened quickly and Vladyka Stephen entered in a fur coat. I had never seen him dressed like that, and he said:

"I remember, Natalya, I remember.'

"That was all. I woke up. Immediately the news came of his death in exile..."

18. HOLY HIEROCONFESSOR VICTOR, BISHOP OF IZHEVSK AND VOTSK

and those with him

Bishop Victor, in the world Constantine Alexandrovich Ostrovidov, was born on May 20, 1875 in the village of Zolotoye, Kamyshinsky uyezd, Saratov province, into a peasant family. His father, Alexander, was a church reader. His mother was called Anna Ivanovna (born 1853). In 1893 he finished his studies at the Kamyshinsky theological school, and in 1899 - at the Saratov theological seminary. In 1903 he graduated from the Kazan Theological Academy. On June 28, 1903 he was tonsured by Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), the rector of the academy, and in the following days was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood.

In August, 1903 Fr. Victor was sent to serve in his native Saratov diocese, and in September was appointed by Bishop Germogen as superior of the Holy Trinity podvorye of the Saratov Spaso-Preobrazhensky monastery in Khvalynsk. This podvorye was founded in order to struggle with the Old Ritualists in Khvalynsk uyezd, and Fr. Victor was soon displaying exceptional talents as a missionary. However, he was transferred - to the great sorrow of the people - from the podvorye to Saratov, where in March, 1904 he was appointed diocesan missionary for the non-Russians - that is, the Chuvash. Before that, in February, Fr. Victor also delivered three lectures on the works of Maxim Gorky.

On January 25, 1905 Fr. Victor was appointed senior hieromonk of the Jerusalem Spiritual Mission. However, Fr. Victor was not happy in this post, and asked Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) whether he could be transferred back to Khvalinsk; but his requests were refused. He explained his reasons at the Fourth Missionary Congress in Kiev in July, 1908, at which Archbishop Anthony, the organizer of the Congress, had asked him to speak. The Mission, thought Fr. Victor, was in an ambiguous situation canonically and had no clear functions. He was also unhappy at the degree of cooperation with the other Orthodox Churches in the region.

On January 13, 1909 Fr. Victor was appointed supervisor of the Archangelsk theological school, and on March 4 he was appointed to work in the commission for the affairs of the Old Ritualist schism by Bishop Micah (Alexeyev) of Arkhangelsk. However, neither appointment appears to have satisfied him, and in September he petitioned Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg to be numbered among the brothers of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. His petition was satisfied on October 15, 1909.

Fr. Victor arrived in St. Petersburg in November, but a year later, on November 22, 1910, he was appointed superior of the Zelenets Holy Trinity monastery (Saint Petersburg diocese) in the rank of archimandrite.

After eight years' peaceful activity in this monastery, in September, 1918 he was appointed deputy of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra by Metropolitan Benjamin. In 1919, according to one source, he was arrested, but then released.

On December 26 (15), 1919 Fr. Victor was consecrated first bishop of the newly created see of Urzhuma, a vicariate of the Vyatka diocese, in Petrograd. He arrived in January, 1920, but in May was arrested and imprisoned by the Vyatka revolutionary tribunal for anti-Soviet agitation – or, as Vladyka put it later, for “agitation against medicine”! What had happened in fact was that during an epidemic of typhus Vladyka had called on the people to repent and advised them to sprinkle their homes with holy water. He was sentenced to imprisonment until the end of the war in Poland.

After five months, in November, he was released. Apparently the authorities did not allow him to return to Urzhuma, and he remained in Vyatka. Eventually he was appointed Bishop of Sloboda, a vicariate of the Vyatka diocese. On January 9, 1921 Vladyka was appointed temporary administrator of the Vyatka diocese (the ruling hierarch, Bishop Nicander (Fenomenov) was at this time in exile), while the former temporary administrator, Bishop Eusebius (Rozhdestvensky) was released from the post at his own request. However, Bishop Eusebius continued to live in Vyatka and tried to persuade the people to petition for his appointment as diocesan hierarch. Many in Vyatka were unhappy with this, and it reached the point where the parishioners of the cathedral of the Forerunner expelled Bishop Eusebius from the church, forbidding him to serve there.

This made for difficult relations between Bishops Victor and Eusebius. According to one source, Bishop Victor was appointed temporary administrator of the Tomsk diocese in April, 1921. But the disturbances ended when Bishop Paul (Borisovsky) was appointed ruling Bishop of Vyatka on May 13, 1921.

On September 14, 1921 he was appointed Bishop of Glazov, a vicariate of the Vyatka diocese. He lived in the Vyatka St. Tryphon monastery with the rights of superior. “In Vyatka Vladyka was surrounded by the people, who saw in the firm and never despondent archpastor a support for themselves in the disorders and troubles of life. After each service the people surrounded him and accompanied him to his cell in the St. Tryphon monastery. On his way he did not hurry, but answered all the many questions put to him, always and in all circumstances retaining the spirit of goodwill and love.” In return, Vladyka greatly valued his Vyatka flock. “You won't find people like the Vyatkians anywhere,” he said. “There are no such people as the Vyatkians anywhere in Russia!”

In March, 1922 the Bolsheviks started their campaign for the

requisitioning of church valuables. It went smoothly in Vyatka – it turned out that the people did not know about the Patriarch’s epistle on the subject, because it had been concealed by the president of the Diocesan Council, Protopriest A.A. Popov. And when there was a meeting of the clergy in Vyatka on March 3 under the presidency of Bishop Paul, all its participants unanimously voted to support the government campaign. It began on March 7 without excesses or any active opposition.

However, in April, 1922 Bishop Paul was arrested for “not handing over enough from the list of church valuables”. At that point Protopriest Popov showed Bishop Victor “in secret” the epistle of the Patriarch, explaining that he had concealed the epistle because “it was late and was similar in character to his previous epistles with their sorrowful consequences for the clergy”. On April 25 Bishop Victor wrote to Patriarch Tikhon asking forgiveness for himself and the other clergy and laity for their sin of ignorance. He said in the city of Vyatka the clergy had been prepared to give away everything, even the holy chrism, considering them to be “trifles”. The only exception, he said, had been Fr. Basil Perebaskin, and he asked that only Fr. Basil should be awarded with promotion so as to warn the others not to act so lightmindedly in matters of the faith and the Church.

In May the administration of the Church was unlawfully seized by the “Living Church” renovationists. Bishop Victor condemned them in an epistle, comparing them to Kore, Dathan and Abiran, who rose up against Moses and Aaron. Addressing his flock, Bishop Victor urged them not to follow the renovationists, who, far from being a “living church”, were in fact “a stinking corpse”, being false bishops and false priests. At the same time, he urged them to display civic loyalty to the government.

Bishop Victor categorically refused any cooperation with the renovationists, even refusing to allow their representative to cross his threshold.

On August 25, 1922 Bishop Paul, having been released from exile, ordered that all the Vyatka uyezd sees should be raised to the rank of independent sees while remaining in canonical communion with the Vyatka Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Thus Bishop Victor was made Bishop of Orlov, a vicariate of the Vyatka diocese, while continuing to live in Vyatka, with the rights of an independent bishop for the administration of the affairs of the Orlov uyezd. He was also entrusted with the legal and marital affairs of the Vyatka uyezd. Until the see of Glazov was filled, he also administered its affairs. Bishop Paul remained in charge of Church affairs in the cities of Vyatka, Sloboda, Kotelnich and Nolinsk with their uyezds. And the Urzhuma diocese was in the administration of Bishop Sergius of Yaransk. Bishop Paul’s epistle was probably written by Bishop Victor.

On the next day, August 26 Bishops Paul and Victor were arrested together with Protopriests A. Popov, V. Perebaskin, N. Tikhvinsky and Tikhonitsky. On August 28 the arrested were interrogated, as a result of which Protopriests Tikhvinsky and Tikhonitsky were released. On September 5 Protopriest Popov was also released. On the same day the two bishops were accused of violating the resolution of August 24, 1918 on the carrying out of the decree "On the Separation of the Church from the State and the School from the Church", which was expressed by their "interfering in secular matters, assuming to themselves judicial functions, re-resolving marital-divorce cases, carrying out investigations into these matters, and having a special apparatus for this". Besides, they were accused of "links with underground monarchist groupings" and for "distributing the illegal appeals of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Agathangelus and the Brotherhood of the Zealots of Orthodoxy". Then they were cast into the Butyrki prison in Moscow together with Alexander Bonifatyevich Yechugin, the secretary of the Vyatka governing council of people's judges. On February 23, 1923 they were sentenced by the OGPU to three years in exile in the Narymsk region in Siberia. This was "The Case of Bishops Paul (Borisovsky) and Victor (Ostrovidov), Vyatka, 1923".

Vladyka was exiled to a very small and remote village. He was accompanied by **Nun Maria** (Tomilova). Together they carried out the Divine Liturgy, refusing to go to the local church whose priest, as Vladyka wrote, "has gone over to the side of the heretical antichurchmen (the livingchurchmen), but communion in prayer with heretics is destruction for the soul". In a letter written from exile in 1923 to his "Vyatka friends and beloved in the Lord", Bishop Victor called the livingchurchmen "the most dangerous heretics that the Orthodox Christian world has ever known", "new blasphemers, savage wolves, who have stolen for themselves the name of an Orthodox Church".

In Vyatka, meanwhile Bishop Sergius of Yaransk and a large part of the clergy joined the renovationists. However, in August, 1923 there began a return of parishes to the Patriarchal Church. A large part in this was played by the clergy of the Resurrection cathedral, especially Fr. Gregory Popyvanov, who spoke against renovationism and summoned a parish meeting that expelled the renovationist priests Tikhvinsky and Favorsky.

On February 23, 1926 Vladyka Victor's exile came to an end and on March 29 he returned to Vyatka. The next day he and Archbishop Paul, who had also just returned from exile, were forced to sign that "until the organization of a Vyatka diocesan administration and its registration in the Vyatka Gubispolkom, he would not rule the diocese - in particular, not appoint, move or remove priests, and not sent appeals round the dioceses in the name of the administration of the diocese".

In spite of this, Archbishop Paul and Bishop Victor carried on a fierce struggle against the renovationists, insisting on their public repentance on

returning to the True Church. On May 14 Archbishop Paul was arrested in Vyatka, and Bishop Victor - on the train to Petrograd as it was passing through Vologda. On May 16 the two bishops were accused of "(1) non-submission to the decrees of the organs of Soviet power, (2) propaganda and agitation among the believing population of the province against the state structure existing in the USSR, and (3) grouping around themselves elements hostile to Soviet power and introducing church-reactionary activity into the province in forms that violate social peace and order in the province". Bishop Victor was accused of assisting Archbishop Paul in his undertakings and of giving sermons which, in the opinion of the authorities, were counter-revolutionary in content.

On May 20 both hierarchs were cast into the Butyrki prison in Moscow. On August 20 Bishop Victor was convicted of "resisting the renovationists" and "creating an illegal diocesan chancellery". In accordance with article 69 he was forbidden from living in six major cities in the USSR and also in Vyatka.

On August 24 Bishop Victor was released. Not being allowed to go to Vyatka, he travelled instead to Glazov, which since 1920 was not part of Vyatka province but of the Votkinsk autonomous district. This was appropriate, for he had borne the title of Bishop of Glazov since 1921. On the way to Glazov Vladyka visited Metropolitan Sergius in Nizhni Novgorod, and was appointed by him temporary administrator of the Vyatka diocese. On August 31 Bishop Vyatka left Moscow for Glazov. Very soon, on September 3/16, another decree came to him from Metropolitan Sergius ordering him to turn the Izhevsk vicariate of the Sarapul diocese into an independent diocese and decreeing that "from now until the appointment of a hierarch for the vacant Izhevsk diocese his Grace Bishop Victor of Glazov should be entrusted with the re-opened diocese".

Metropolitan Sergius had been coming to the decision to make Izhevsk into an independent diocese already at the beginning of the year. However, at that time Bishop Alexis (Kuznetsov) of Sarapul had objected to Metropolitan Sergius' decision to re-open the Izhevsk diocese and succeeded in making him reverse his decision. So when Bishop Stefan (Bekh) of Glazov returned from exile in Solovki to take back the administration of the diocese, he encountered opposition from Bishop Alexis. Although a part of the clergy and laity in Izhevsk did not want to submit to Bishop Alexis, suspecting him because of his temporary fall into renovationism, Bishop Stefan found it difficult to serve in the circumstances and early in the autumn of 1926 went into retirement in Petrograd.

At first Bishop Victor could not obtain permission to leave Glazov to take Bishop Stefan's place in Izhevsk. But, on receiving a telegram from the president of the parish council of the cathedral Shishkin that all

formalities had been settled, he arrived in Izhevsk on October 10. However, it turned out that Shishkin had not completed the formalities correctly, and so Bishop Victor, much to his annoyance, was forced to leave the city on October 13. When Metropolitan Sergius tried to find out what had happened, he was told by Protopriest N. Tonkov of the Mikhailov church in Izhevsk that Bishop Victor had shown no desire to take over the diocese. Misled by this false information, Sergius then suggested to Bishop Simeon (Mikhailov), who had been petitioning for the post, that he take over the Izhevsk diocese. However, the parishioners of the Alexander Nevsky church in Izhevsk did not accept Bishop Simeon, who immediately left. Finally, with Metropolitan Sergius' blessing, Bishop Victor took over the administration of the Izhevsk diocese.

On January 20, 1927 Bishop Victor accepted the village of Starie Zyatsy from the Sarapul into the Izhevsk diocese. This annoyed Bishop Alexis of Sarapul, who then accused Bishop Victor of violating the canons and also of unlawfully occupying the Izhevsk diocese, which should belong to Bishop Simeon. Bishop Victor replied that the purpose of the creation of the Izhevsk was to make its boundaries coincide with the Votsk autonomous diocese, which would aid the conversion of the Votsk (Udmurt) people. Moreover, he said that Metropolitan Sergius had permitted him to administer the diocese in November, and that it was also with Sergius' permission that the Starie Zyatsy and other parishes in the Votsk autonomous region were allowed to join the Izhevsk diocese. The quarrel could not be resolved by Metropolitan Sergius since he had been in prison since December. Bishop Victor advised the dean of Izhevsk to write a protest to Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, who was now the deputy of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens. However, Archbishop Seraphim was not able to help because he was forbidden to occupy himself with administration of the Church.

On March 25 Bishop Victor, as temporary administrator of the Vyatka diocese and Bishop of Glazov, blessed the decree of the Glazov administration that the Glazov vicariate should be separated from the Vyatka diocese and enter the new Votsk diocese, since there were many Votsk people living in Glazov. He sent a report about this to Metropolitan Sergius, and on May 3 Sergius, having recently come out of prison, confirmed the formation within the boundaries of the Votsk autonomous region of an independent Votsk diocese with its see in the city of Izhevsk and with the retention of a semi-independent see in Glazov. Parishes not in the Izhevsk and Glazov dioceses but on the territory of the Votsk autonomous region could petition to join the newly formed Votsk diocese. On May 4 Bishop Victor was appointed Bishop of Izhevsk and Votsk by Metropolitan Sergius. In this way, it seemed, the quarrel with Bishop Alexis was resolved.

However, it was not to be. On May 10 Bishop Victor received three parishes from the Votkinsk diocese, about which he informed Bishop

Onesimus (Pylaev) of Votkinsk. Bishop Onesimus objected and placed the clergy of the parishes under ban. On May 24 Bishop Victor wrote to Bishop Onesimus explaining that he was not acting wilfully but with the blessing of the Higher Church Authority, which he was obliged to submit to. Bishop Onesimus then protested to Archbishop Alexis of Sarapul, who was also experiencing problems with the parish of Novie Zyatsy, which on May 14 had joined the Votksk diocese, and with the deanery of Seltinsk, which had petitioned for such a transfer. Both bishops appealed to Metropolitan Sergius.

In about July, 1927 Bishop Victor was appointed Archbishop of Omsk and Pavlodar, but was not allowed to leave for the Urals. On August 31, at a session of his temporary synod that reviewed the administrative chaos in the Vyatka and Votkinsk dioceses, Metropolitan Sergius decreed that Archbishop Victor had acted hastily, and that petitions for parishes to join the Izhevsk diocese could not be decided by one bishop only. Archbishop Victor should have consulted more with the bishops of the neighbouring dioceses, and the final decision rested with the Higher Church Authority. So until a final decision of the question of the three parishes of the Votkinsk diocese and the Seltinsk deanery, they were to remain in their former administration.

These administrative difficulties were not entirely the fault of any one or more bishops, and were complicated by the fact that the authorities continued to forbid the bishops from carrying out any administrative activity until the registration of the Churches. It is understandable, therefore, that Bishop Victor should have expressed the hope, in a letter to Bishop Alexis dated May 30, that the registration of a temporary synod under Metropolitan Sergius would bring the beginnings of church peace. "The possibility is opened also of our diocesan registration. Then the [renovationist] heretics will have no way of enticing and deceiving the weak in spirit..."

However, in July, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius issued a "declaration", which dashed these hopes by placing the Russian Church in more or less unconditional submission to the militant atheists, Bishop Victor refused to allow it to be distributed among his flock. In "Thoughts of an Orthodox Christian with regard to the Epistle of Metropolitan Sergius of July 16/29, 1927", he wrote: "The aim of the epistle is clear. In the first place, it is to declare and establish the political attitudes and relationship of the Orthodox Church to the Soviet government, with the clear recognition that this relationship was mistaken and false in the past, and with a direct attack on the servants of the Orthodox Church for their striving towards monarchism and for their participation in word and deed in counter-revolution. Special emphasis is made on the political speeches of the clergy abroad against Soviet power. Secondly, it is to declare not only his own loyalty and non-participation from now on in any speeches against Soviet power, but also his inner union with it against its foreign and internal

enemies, as being his own enemies, that is, the enemies of the Orthodox Church.”

To the question: what should be our attitude to this epistle, Bishop Victor replied: “What is written in the epistle does not correspond to the truth and reality: the True Orthodox Church always had to be apolitical and spiritual, and for that reason it was not and cannot be in any active external struggle with Soviet power. But clergy can be subject to punishments either as private citizens for their political crimes outside their relationship to the Church, or as confessors of the Orthodox Church. As regards the union of the Church and Soviet power on the basis of spiritual interests and needs, sympathies and shared joys, etc., there never can be anything of the sort, since the views on life of the Church and Soviet power are diametrically opposed to each other. The aims of the activity of Soviet power are exclusively material-economic and are foreign to faith in God, while the aims of the activity of the Church are exclusively spiritual-moral, and through faith in God they raise man beyond the bounds of earthly life to attain the eternal heavenly good things. Therefore in defining the mutual relations of the True Church and every state, we can talk only about a relationship in the plane of civil duty and obligation, and this not out of fear but for conscience’s sake.

“... The epistle, by covering itself with the words of Holy Scripture and reasonings from the sphere of the spiritual interests of man, masks the drawing of the Church into the sphere of earthly tasks, thereby diminishing the Holy Orthodox Church, humiliating it and inexorably pushing it onto the path of new earthquakes and divisions. Therefore it demands not only careful attention, but outright rejection.”

In the autumn of 1927 it appears that Metropolitan Sergius sent Bishop Victor a decree abolishing the Votkinsk diocese. In October Bishop Victor wrote to Metropolitan Sergius asking him to confirm the existence of the newly-created Votkinsk diocese and not allow the Votkinsk flock to be divided administratively “into five parts”. He wrote: “I am writing this out of sorrow for the Holy Orthodox Church.

“Dear Vladyko! You know, it is not so long ago that you were our brilliant helmsman, and for all of us our most longed-for first pastor, and the mere mention of your most holy name poured strength and joy into our hearts. And suddenly – such a sad change for us. Our minds are wavering, our hearts have lost their support, and we feel that we are again without a leader and defender from those who attack us, and this is from the time that your counsellors surrounded you. Our souls are exhausted, we are horrified at the sight of what is now happening around us in the Church, it’s oppressing us like a nightmare, and everyone is overwhelmed by a terrible fear for the future of the Church. There distant Tashkent has for some time been thinking of separating, here Petrograd is seething and grumbling. There Votlandia is groaning and crying out to heaven, and

Izhevsk is again rebelling, while Vyatka, Perm and many other cities have collapsed in sorrow and perplexity. And over and above all these Moscow is just now preparing to utter its deciding voice. After all, everywhere the Church is just being destroyed, and this is 'by administrative means'. What is this? Why? Has the Holy Church suffered only a little from 'outsiders'? What can be the use of these destructive measures which are ruining our peace? Take our Votkinsk diocese which has hardly seen the light. How glad the people were, and how great were the possibilities of the development of church life in her. Then suddenly, to please 'an evil genius', for the sake of his avaricious and malicious aims and intrigues (I have in mind a bishop), and also for the sake of the personal desires of Ar., this diocese which had scarcely begun to live through you is being destroyed. Would it not be more just before God and men to confirm its existence by your decree alone within the territorial bounds of the Votkinsk region, for which Heaven and earth would bless you. After all, the Truth itself speaks in favour of this: a people united in the civil sense should necessarily be united in the ecclesiastical sense, and should not be given to dividing up into five parts out of mercantile considerations.

"Vladyko, spare the Russian Orthodox Church. She is entrusted to you, and much depends on you to see that she is not given over to destruction 'by administrative means'. May your all-honourable head not be subjected to reproof, and may it not be a cause of schisms and fallings away from the Church. But if this is not done and observed, then God and His Angels are witness that a great schism will take place in the Church, from which even the suggested Council will not save her, the Council which already now beforehand is being called by a name which should not be pronounced..."

It is not known how Metropolitan Sergius replied to this letter. But, according to Metropolitan Ioann Snychev, the Synod now warned "Bishop Victor" (although they had made him an archbishop in the summer) that he, as a vicar-bishop, should know his place and submit in all things to his ruling hierarch. Then, a little later, there follow a decree transferring him to the Sverdlovsk diocese as Bishop of Shadrinsk.

Bishop Victor refused to submit to this decree. He was immediately supported by four churches in Vyatka: the Resurrection cathedral (**Fr. Gregory Popyvanov** and **Fr. Michael Glushkov**), the St. Seraphim church (**Fr. Alexander Shirokikh**), the church in Fileiki (**Fr. Leonid Yuferev**) and the Alexander Nevsky cathedral (**Fr. Nicholas Zhilin**). He was also supported by **Abbess Emilia** and forty nuns from Fileiki and **Abbess Febronia** and her nuns, who had moved to Vyatka from the Pokrov monastery.

On December 16/29, Bishop Victor wrote to an unknown person in Moscow: "I sent back the 'appeal' to Moscow, and for that reason it is completely unknown to the majority in our Votkinsk diocese. In Vyatka four churches, including the two main cathedrals, also did not accept it at

first, although they did not break communion with Archbishop Paul, but commemorated him during services. The believing people began to group around these churches and distance themselves from those who had accepted (signed) the 'appeal' and ceased to commemorate my name. Soon a fifth church was joined to the four. Imagine the commotion among those deceived in Vyatka! Following the example of their kinsmen, the renovationists, they rushed to the civil authorities for help - but they did not help. Then they resorted to insinuations and accusations of counter-revolution - but nothing came of that. Glory to God! One recourse remained: they went to you in Moscow and tried to save the position of Archbishop Paul. This pastor was in a great fury. The souls of the Orthodox trembled at his arrival, expecting all kinds of repressions, and they telegraphed me asking for my advice and help. I was no less alarmed for them and did not know what to do. At two o'clock at night my heart unexpectedly rejoiced, one thought and one decision calmed me. I got up and wrote this telegram to one of the Orthodox priests: 'In view of the arrival of Archbishop Paul in Vyatka, it is necessary to suggest to him that he offer repentance and renounce the appeal as being a defilement of the Church of God and a deviation from true salvation. Only if he fulfils this condition is it possible to enter into communion of prayer with him. If he is stubborn, stop commemorating his name during Divine services.' That is what the pastors did. And how pitiful were his justifications, and how meagre his reasoning on this subject."

On January 11, 1928 Bishop Victor gave some more details about these "pitiful justifications": "I wrote to you that Archbishop Paul came to 'punish', but he was met with the suggestion that he repent and renounce 'the appeal of July 16'. He refused, and his justification was very pitiful - in that case, he said, I can expect prison and all kinds of privations. One of the priests guaranteed him complete security, but he did not agree. From the questions put to him it became clear that they are acting without the blessing of Metropolitan Peter and are conscious that if he were to arrive, he would remove them, 'and we will go', he said. But he didn't bat an eyelid at the fact that in that time they would impose so much evil and destroy thousands of souls. He admitted that they had done this at the insistence of the civil authorities, and to the question what had they achieved, he replied that now he felt himself to be a hierarch. O what blindness! He does not feel that he has been erased from the book of life..."

On December 14 Archbishop Paul wrote to the clergy and believers of Vyatka diocese: "In order to avoid misunderstandings, to calm minds, to give a warning and put an end to the vain rebellion and disturbances among the Orthodox (patriarchal) parishes of the Vyatka diocese entrusted to me, I consider it my service duty briefly to acquaint you with the content and direction of the activity of the Temporary Patriarchal Synod headed by the Deputy of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, his Eminence Sergius, Metropolitan of Nizhegorod." Being not only a member of

Metropolitan Sergius' synod, but also one of the active defenders of his politics, Archbishop Paul hastened to calm his flock and "rejoice in a certain success achieved in the past six months for the good of the Church of Christ": "The appeal of July 16/29 of this year, in which Metropolitan Sergius and the members of the Synod definitively declared their complete loyalty and sincere submission to the Soviet Government, has created for Metropolitan Sergius and the Sacred Patriarchal Synod a condition of completely peaceful work for the good of the Church that is hindered by nothing and nobody under the protection of Soviet legislation which envisages the self-definition of cult associations in their religious life in their inner church discipline."

Archbishop Paul went through some of the Synod's administrative decisions, including the transfer of bishops from one see to another, and called them also "success for the good of the Church".

And all this at a time when the persecutions against the Church were increasing steadily...

"Truly," writes Fr. Alexander Mazyrin, "the July Declaration provided the opportunity for 'a peaceful and undisturbed life' not so much for the Russian Church as a whole, so much as for the Synod of Metropolitan Sergius (and that not for long: as is well-known, even his Eminence Paul himself, together with the majority of the other members of the Synod, were shot in 1937.) However, besides Archbishop Paul, none of the members of the Synod publicly spoke out with such a sincere acknowledgement of what had finally been achieved thanks to the declaration that introduced so many disturbances into church life.

"Archbishop Paul's admission elicited the most shocked reactions. Thus, for example, **Bishop Paul** (Kratirov), while citing this place in the Vyatka archbishop's epistle, wrote: 'It is difficult for me to resolve the question who uttered this: a scoundrel, a church rascal, or a fool... I would never have believed that this phrase could belong to an Orthodox, as he calls himself, archbishop, a member of the sergianist synod, if I had not read this disgusting, idiotic epistle with my own eyes.'"

In any case, the epistle did not succeed. As Bishop Victor noted, Archbishop Paul's attacks on the True Orthodox and on himself, "and his unsuccessful attempts to prove that he is not a renovationist, have finally torn his flock away from him, and the movement against the 'appeal' has encompassed the whole diocese".

In the same month of December Bishop Victor wrote a "Letter to those close to me": "Let everyone know that the recent declaration-appeal of Metropolitan Sergius of July 16/29 is a clear betrayal of the truth. 'Whom have those who signed the "appeal" betrayed, and whom have they renounced?' They have renounced the Holy Orthodox Church, which is at

all times and in all things pure and holy. They have condemned it openly, before the whole world, they have bound it and handed it over to be mocked by outsiders as an evil-doer, as a criminal, as a traitor to its Most Holy Bridegroom Christ – the Eternal truth, Eternal justice. What horror!...

“The Holy Church, which the Lord acquired for Himself from this world through His own Blood (Acts 20.28), and which is His Body (Colossians 1.24), but which is for all of us the house of eternal, Grace-filled salvation from this destroying life – now this holy Church of Christ god is being adapted to serve interests that are not only foreign to her, but even completely incompatible with her Divinity and spiritual freedom...

“The Church of Christ in its essence can never be any kind of political organization, otherwise it ceases to be the Church of Christ, the Church of God, the Church of eternal salvation. And if now, through this ‘appeal’, the Church is united with the civil authorities, this is not simply an external manoeuvre, but at the same time a terrible defilement and destruction of the Orthodox Church, Here there has also been committed the great sin of the renunciation of the truth of the Church, which no attainment of earthly goods for the Church can justify...

“Don’t tell me that in this way a Central Administration has been formed for us, together with local administrations, and that an appearance of external calm has been acquired for the Church, or, as the appeal says, ‘the lawful existence of the Church’ – this and similar things all those love to say who have already been caught by the enemy-devil in falling away from the Orthodox Church. What good is it if we, having become and being called the Temple of God (II Corinthians 4.16), have become useless and disgusting in the eyes of God, while acquiring an external administration for ourselves?

“This lie, alas, is for us sinners much bitterer than the three preceding ones: the livingchurchmen, the renovationists and the Grigorians, whose madness was evident to all without difficulty, while the destructiveness of the last lie cannot be discerned by everybody, and it is especially difficult for those whose mind and heart are turned to earthly things, for the sake of which people are accustomed to renounce the Lord.”

Sergius’ Synod wrote to Bishop Victor asking him why he was not leaving Glazov, and on what basis he was looking after the affairs of Vyatka.

He replied with a second letter to Metropolitan Sergius: “In the month of October I with filial love was bold enough to express to your Eminence my sorrow with regard to the ruinous destruction of the Orthodox Church that was beginning ‘by administrative means’.

“Such a destruction of the Church of God is a completely natural and

inevitable consequence of the path on which your 'appeal of July 16 [/29]' has placed you and which is completely unacceptable for us humble and God-fearing people and for all those who love Christ.

"From beginning to end it is filled with terrible untruth. It is an insult to the Holy Orthodox Church, and to our confession for the truth of God, that disturbs the soul of the believer. Through betraying the Church of Christ to mockery by 'outsiders' it is a most sorrowful renunciation of your own salvation or renunciation of the Lord Saviour Himself.

"This sin, as the Word of God witnesses, is not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the unlying word: 'Whosoever shall deny Me before men...' (Matthew 10.33), etc.

"Insofar as we have been able we have protected ourselves and our flock so as not to become partakers of this sin, and for this reason we have sent the appeal itself back. Acceptance of the appeal would be a witness before God that we are indifferent in relation to the Most Holy Church of God, the Bride of Christ.

"In accordance with the fear of God I also cannot accept your order for my transfer: 'I fear,' as one hierarch writes to me, 'that the expression of obedience on our part will be considered by "them" (the Synod) as an approval of what "they" have done. And for that reason, if I were given full freedom of movement, which I do not have as being in administrative exile, I would ask myself: will I not have to answer before God for this obedience, for it in essence unites me with people who have been alienated from God. But I have expressed my thoughts that the appeal is truly worthy of many tears, and that it alienates a man from God in the form of a letter to those close to me, which is here attached.

"What of the future? In the future I would beseech God, and not only I, but the whole of the Orthodox Church, that he not harden your heart as He once hardened the heart of Pharaoh, but that He give you the grace to understand the sin you have committed and repent for the rest of your life. Then all the believers would thank God in joy and tears, and would again come to you as to a father and pastor - as to the first pastor, and the whole of the Russian Church as to her sacred head. The enemy has lured and deceived you for a second time with the idea of an organization of the Church. But if this organization is bought for the price of the Church of Christ Herself no longer remaining the house of Grace-giving salvation for men, and he who received the organization ceases to be what he was - for it is written, 'Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take' (Acts 1.20) - then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization.

"What is the benefit if we, having become by God's Grace temples of

the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he who presents such external pretexts for sin will be subjected.

“But if the hardening of your heart has gone so far, and there remains no hope of repentance, then in this case we have a word to enlighten us: ‘Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and do not touch their impurity, and I will receive you, and I will be to you and a Father and you will be to as sons and daughters’ (II Corinthians 6.17-18).”

And he concluded that Sergius’ pact with the atheists was “not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the unlying word: ‘Whosoever shall deny Me before men...’ (Matthew 10.33).”

In this second letter to Metropolitan Sergius, Bishop Victor still addressed him respectfully, as “Merciful Archpastor, Deeply Revered and Dear Vladyko”. Nevertheless, on December 10/23 Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod decreed: “Taking into account not only his disobedience to Higher Church Authority, the refusal of Bishop Victor to accept the appointment given him and the disturbance spread by him among the people by the distribution of his epistles, but also his slander against the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, to relieve his Grace Victor immediately of the administration of the Shadrinsk vicariate and the Sverdlovsk diocese and hand him over to a canonical trial of bishops, forbidding him to serve until the conciliar judgement on him, his repentance and recognition of his guilt.”

Bishop Victor therefore became the first bishop to be banned by the sergianists for rejection of the declaration of July 16/29. He rejected the ban, and at the end of December, as the ruling Bishop of Izhevsk and Votsk, separated from Metropolitan Sergius.

On December 22 / January 4, 1928 the Glazov Diocesan Administration met to discuss the note of the chancellery of Bishop Onesimus of Votkinsk dated December 15 “On the Acceptance by the Bishop of Votkinsk of the Temporary Administration of the Votkinsk Diocese”. They listened to Metropolitan Sergius’ declaration of July 16/29, and Bishop Victor’s letters to him about it. Then they decreed: “Temporarily, until the repentance of Metropolitan Sergius and his renunciation of the ‘Appeal’ he has issued: (1) To refrain from communion with him and the bishops with him; (2) To recognize Bishop Victor as our spiritual leader, chosen by the whole of the Glazov diocese in 1924; and (3) To call him Bishop Victor of Glazov and Votkinsk. Bishop Victor, Metropolitan Sergius and Bishop Onesimus of Votkinsk, together with the deans of the Glazov diocese, are to be informed of this.”

On the same day Bishop Victor wrote on this protocol: "I rejoice in the Grace of God, which has enlightened the hearts of the members of the Spiritual Administration in this difficult and great work of choosing the way of truth. May its decision be blessed by the Lord, and may it be to the joy and consolation of the Holy Orthodox Church. With regard to the third resolution on the renaming of my title, [I have decided that it should] remain as before, 'of Izhevsk and Votkinsk' until a resolution of this question by a general Diocesan Congress."

Three days later, on Christmas Day, Bishop Victor wrote to Igumen Arcadius of the Pokrov cathedral in Izhevsk: "The bans of Onesimus and other hierarchs who have fallen away from the Orthodox Church through the appeal can have no significance for us, but rather fall on their heads. Serve in the peace of the Holy Spirit."

On December 29 / January 11 Bishop Victor wrote a second letter to Moscow: "I wrote to you that Archbishop Paul came to punish, but he was met by the suggestion: repent and renounce the 'appeal' of July 16..."

"So as to protect themselves from all the mad bans, the parishes together with their pastors separating themselves beforehand from him through decisions of parish councils and choosing or asking me to accept them under my spiritual archpastoral leadership before God and men. Our Spiritual Administration has done something similar in relation to Metropolitan Sergius in the name of the whole of the Votksk Diocese, placing it out of communion with Metropolitan Sergius until his repentance and renunciation of the 'appeal', of which they have informed him. The decree is attached..."

"It is necessary that Moscow should begin to act, and not merely passively endure their insults to the Orthodox Church. Then other dioceses will be encouraged. Our Votksk diocese is not authoritative for those who are accustomed to establish themselves, not on the truth, but on authority."

On January 15 Vladyka wrote to Bishop Abraham: "Outside the Orthodox Church there is no Grace of God, and consequently, no salvation either. Nor can there be any true temple of God, but it is simply a house, according to the word of St. Basil the Great. In my opinion, without the Grace of God, a temple becomes a place of idolatry, and the most holy icons, when stripped of their Divine Grace, become dead idol-boards. And suddenly you write that you would like to pray in every place that the name of God is praised. But don't you know, if you go on further, you will fall not only in with all kinds of heretics, but also with Mohammedans, Buddhists, etc., for the name of God is praised among them, but you yourself see that such thoughts of complete indifference destroy not only the meaning and significance of the Orthodox Church, but also

Christianity itself. And what use then is our confession for the truth of the Orthodox Church? For what do we suffer deprivations, sufferings, and perhaps we shall have to endure death itself!...

“This from your first letter, and now from your second you mention schism, the Catharoi, etc., as if, between the lines, you are ascribing this to us. Against this destroys all your praises of us for the true word of ours which, in your opinion, we should have said.

“No, sacred head, we are not renegades from the Church of God and we are not schismatics that have cut ourselves off from her: may this never happen with us. We reject neither Metropolitan Peter, nor Metropolitan Cyril, nor the most holy Patriarchs, and it goes without saying that we with blessing preserve all the teaching on the faith and structure of the Church that has been passed down to us by the Father, and in general we are not crazy and do not blaspheme the Church of God.

“Look, in 1923 we confessed the truth of the Church in exactly the same way, and we attained by our sufferings that the impious should be expelled from the Church of God and form their ‘renovationist’ meeting separately from us. So, in your opinion, we were schismatics at that time in our confession? I don’t think that you thought that, for you yourself blessed us and kissed our wounds. It was the traitors of the Church who taught that about us, saying that we were schismatics deceived by the devil. In this way they wanted to defend their own abdication and fall. The people who accuse of schism now are doing exactly the same thing. But we are not creating a schism in the Church, but are only demanding that the traitors of the Church of God should leave their places and hand over the administration into other hands or repent with tears for the evil they have done. Or do you think that Sergius is better than [the renovationist] Antonin? His errors with regard to the Church and the salvation of man in her were clear to me already in 1911, and I wrote about him [under the pseudonym ‘Wanderer’] in an Old Ritualist journal [*The Church*], that there would come a time when he would shake the Church. That is what happened. And we have to take all measures to protect and preserve the sheep of the Orthodox Church from the new deception. And it is not only we who are striving for this: the council of the Solovki bishops (26) is with us, the great majority of the servants of God is with us. The horror at the evil that these wolves are producing within the fold of Christ has suppressed fear of them of the masters of the House of God, although they are not the masters. Metropolitan Peter blessed neither the ‘Synod’ nor the ‘appeal’ not the acts whereby Metropolitan Sergius has increased his prerogatives. - And now in various parts of the Russian Orthodox Church voices have been raised reproaching the traitors, and there have been attempts, as in 1923, to remove them from leadership. But the destroyers of the Church hope that Metropolitan Peter will not return to ‘life’ - just as the previous apostates from the Church, the living churchmen, hope that his holiness the Patriarch would not be resurrected. But we have a

different hope, that their very memory will perish noisily, since they have defiled Christian souls.

“With childlike simplicity we believe that the strength of the Church is not in organization, but in the Grace of God, which cannot exist where there is betrayal and renunciation of the Orthodox Church, even if it is under the guise of the attainment of the external good of the Church. After all, here we do not have simply a [personal] sin of M. Sergius and his advisors. If it were only that! No! Here we have the systematic destruction of the Orthodox Russian Church according to a definitely thought-through plan, the striving spiritually to mix up, defile and degrade everything. Here is laid the destruction of the whole of the Orthodox Church, and precisely her conscious adaptation – of the Heavenly Bride of Christ – to the service of evil, for the world lies in evil.

“Truly, these evil intentions against the Church are not from man, but from him who from the beginning was the murderer of man and who thirsts for our eternal destruction. The new traitors have become his servants, subverting the very essence of the Orthodox Church of Christ; they have changed her from being heavenly to being earthly, and turned her from being a Grace-filled union into a political organization.

“‘Be not yoked together with unbelievers’, etc., commands the holy apostle (II Corinthians 1.14-18). But these teach the opposite. And all this has to spread through the Orthodox Russian Church, for everybody must approve of the new impiety, otherwise – bans, for, they say, ‘we are the bosses’. O, what blindness of mind! O, what horror we are living through!

“During the trial of 1923 and later it was clearly revealed that the support of the Orthodox Church was the confessors of the Truth – the Bishops who were bound by indissoluble grace-filled bonds and love with their flocks. But what are the new enemies of Orthodoxy doing? They are moving these Bishops from their sees and their places are being taken by their appointees. And there are not just one or two cases of this; it is being accomplished in accordance with a definite system throughout the Russian Church. You can imagine what groans and crying and horror has covered the Orthodox Church, when this cutting asunder of the indivisible has begun.

“The Petrograd clergy and laity have asked Metropolitan Sergius how he can explain this evil act, and he naively replies that it is not the Church that is suffering here, but the bishops and the flock. – But is this not the Little Church? Is it not a cell of the Universal Church? But this is necessary, in the words of Metropolitan Sergius, for the supposed revealing of loyalty in relation to the civil authorities. – What madness! Revealing the loyalty of the Church by killing her!

“Then the second support of Orthodoxy turned out to be the parish

councils. And what are these new enemies of Orthodoxy doing? They are giving orders to reduce the significance of these parish councils to nothing, and this in order their appointee-bishop may distribute the clergy places at their own discretion. What a defilement of souls is now being begun by impious clergy whom the bishops will stuff everywhere; and others, not recognized by the believing people, will produce a terrible dissolution of faith and fall of religious life.

“In conclusion, I beseech you, as a friend whom I venerate for your piety, to flee from the poisonous seductive speeches (letters) that are tempting you like snake, and wish to separate you from the live-giving tree of the Truth.

“Let us remain firm and unbending in our confession for the Truth of God that we undertook in 1922, so that the Lord may not refer to us the voice of the prophet: ‘My priests have rejected My law and defiled My holy things. They do not distinguish between the holy and the defiled. They are all the same for them’ (Ezekiel 22.26).

“Remember the great confessor Theodore the Studite, whom we read together. He ceased communion with the Patriarch only because the patriarch did not want to defrock a priest who had consciously carried out an unlawful crowning. But there is no way that you can want the destruction of the whole Orthodox Church by these spiritual robbers, and only because they have put on the mask of masters of the House of God, although you yourself know that they are criminals.

“No, this will be, not a blinding of the heart, but the opposite – the defence of the Truth of God, and not a schism. Remember also the words of another confessor, St. Maximus, who said: ‘Even if the whole inhabited earth were to commune with the apostate Patriarch, I alone will not commune with him to the end of the age.’ By the Grace of God we shall imitate this confessor...”

On January 18, Bishop Victor was summoned to the Vyatka OGPU, but was released after answering a series of questions. On returning home, he wrote “The Replies of his Grace Victor to 15 questions put to him by the OGPU”. He gave this document to his acquaintances, “for information on the new synodal movement”. The first two questions and replies were as follows:

“How would you interpret, from the civil and ecclesiastical points of view, the appearance of the new church tendency – the platform of the Declaration of July 29, 1927?”

From the ecclesiastical point of view: as an incorrect teaching on the Church and on the matter of our salvation in Jesus Christ – an error of principle by Metropolitan Sergius...

“How do you look at the ‘Declaration’? etc.”

From the Church point of view it is an incorrect teaching on the Church and on the matter of our salvation in Jesus Christ (Metropolitan Sergius’ error in principle), while from the civil point of view it is the desire to be freed from this oppressive and disturbing situation in which the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church find themselves.

*The ‘Declaration’ is a separation from the truth of salvation. It looks on salvation as on a natural moral perfection of man (a pagan philosophical doctrine of salvation), **or otherwise as the foundation of the Kingdom of God on earth**, and for its realization an external organization is absolutely essential. In my opinion, this is the same error of which, as early as 1912, I accused Metropolitan Sergius, warning that THROUGH THIS ERROR THEY WOULD SHAKE the Orthodox Church. I said this in the article, ‘The New Theologians’, published in the Old Ritualist journal “The Church” N 16 for 1912, signing it with the pseudonym ‘Wanderer’. They knew who printed this, and for a long time I experienced their ill disposition towards me. By dint of this error of theirs, they cannot even THINK of the Church without an external organization, and since the authority of the USSR as a civil political organization is unacceptable for them in this respect (since it has suppressed various of their external activities and diminished their external position), it is entirely possible that they will oppose this authority. Then they repented of this and recognized their mistake, or rather, the uselessness of OPPOSITION.*

The personal composition of the Synod has no great significance as regards its acceptability. It is the very platform [of this Synod] that is unacceptable, for it sees in the Church an external political organization which is united with the civil organization of the authorities of the USSR, and in accordance with this aims for a corresponding external political activity for the Orthodox Church, and thereby pushes the Church onto the path of new upheavals and surprises, at the same time distorting THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH.

Bishop Victor was loyal to the civil authorities. But he understood this loyalty in a quite different way from Metropolitan Sergius, as he made clear in the epistle he wrote to his flock on February 28 / March 12, 1928 (new calendar): "Judge for yourselves: what significance, for example, can the bans of Catholics, Protestants, living churchmen and others have for an Orthodox priest if they were to think of applying them to us? None at all. It’s exactly the same here. The only difference is that the Catholics, Protestants and others fell away earlier from the Church of God, while the apostates (antichurchmen) have only now, in our time, been deceived by the devil, ‘who has taken them captive at his will’ (II Timothy 2.26). And this fall of theirs is not little and not secret, but very great and evident to all those who have sense (I Corinthians 11.16). It was revealed in the well-known ‘appeal’ of July 16/29 and the bold destruction of the Orthodox Church which followed it. The ‘appeal’ is a disgusting sale of that which

cannot be sold and is priceless - that is, our spiritual freedom in Christ (John 8.36); it is their attempt, contrary to the word of God, to unite that which cannot be united - the portion of the sinner with the work of God, God and Mammon (Matthew 6.24), light and darkness (II Corinthians 6.14-18).

“The apostates have transformed the Church of God from a Grace-filled union of the salvation of man from sin and eternal destruction into a political organization, which they have united with the organization of civil power in the service of this world which lies in evil (I John 5.19). The loyalty of individual believers to the civil authorities is one thing, and the inner dependence of the Church herself on the civil authorities is quite another. In the first situation the Church preserves her spiritual freedom in Christ, while the believers become confessors under persecution for the faith; in the second situation, she (the Church) is merely an obedient weapon for the realization of the political ideas of the civil power, while the confessors for the faith are here state criminals. We see all this in the activity of Metropolitan Sergius, who by dint of his new relationship to the civil authorities has been forced to forget the canons of the Orthodox Church, and in spite of them he has removed all the confessor-bishops from their sees, considering them to be state criminals, and in their place he has of his own will appointed other bishops who were not and are not now recognized by the believing people. For Metropolitan Sergius now there can no longer be any exploit of confession of the Church, and for that reason, in his conversation with regard to the 'appeal', he declares that every cleric who dares to say anything in defence of THE TRUTH OF GOD against the civil power is an enemy of the Orthodox Church. Is this not madness, madness that has overtaken a man in spiritual deception? You know, if we think like that, then we shall have to consider as an enemy of God - the hierarch Philip, for example, who once rebuked Ivan the Terrible and was strangled for that. Moreover, we shall have to count among the enemies of God the great Forerunner himself, who rebuked Herod and was beheaded for that.

“To such a sorry state have the apostates been brought that they have preferred an external earthly freedom - for the sake of a specious earthly prosperity joined to it - to our spiritual freedom in Christ. And if Archbishop Paul shouts and swears that he, in signing the 'appeal', was thinking that he was not violating the dogmas and canons of the Orthodox Church and that he had not renounced her, then may [God] forgive him - Pilate, too, by his words claimed that he was innocent in the killing of Christ, while with his quill (pen) he confirmed His death. For the antichurchmen, the apostates from the Church, their preservation of the dogmas and canons is a comparatively small matter. He who has cut off someone's head is not justified by the fact that he did not harm any of the hairs on the head: to think otherwise is risible. But they all affirm: 'Everything with us is in the old style'. True, their appearance has remained Orthodox, and this disturbs many; but they do not have THE

SPIRIT OF LIFE, THE GRACE OF GOD, and consequently the eternal salvation of man. That is why this deception is bitterer than the first ones.

“Christ did not bow down to Beliar when he was tempting Him in the desert and offered him all the power of this world – provided, he said, you bow down before me (Matthew 4.8). But they have bowed down. And, being a spiritual authority, they have forcibly drawn all the rest into their sin, their destruction. But only lack of faith in the grace of God and a lack of understanding of our salvation in it and through it can force a man to set out of the path of union with apostates. For all their proofs in defence of the ‘appeal’ are words ‘sounding from the earth’ (Isaiah 29.4), from foreign laws and the crowd stirred up by human fear to say everything. But their threatening with canonical sanctions is only a trap for the ignorant and fainthearted. After all, the canons of God were not given by the Holy Fathers so that by their means, as with a whip, to drive to their destruction those who declare that they, out of fear of God, cannot follow someone caught by the enemy-devil.

“Moreover, the very content of the canons to which the apostates refer cannot according to their meaning be applied to us in any way. For example, what do Canons 13, 14 and 15 of the First-and-Second Council [of Constantinople in 869], and other similar ones they refer to, talk about? – The Canons says that if a PERSONAL misunderstanding arises between one of the clergy and his bishop, or between a bishop and the metropolitan of the province, or between a metropolitan and a patriarch, or if a local bishop expresses a PERSONAL opinion on questions of faith and piety that is doubtful, then in all such cases, first, it is necessary to pass this matter on to the review of a higher authority, and secondly, nobody on account of these PERSONAL matters of his or BECAUSE OF DOUBTFUL OPINIONS must break canonical communion with his president.

“How can these canons now apply to the matter of our confession... [*a gap in the text*] [when] neither do you have any personal misunderstandings with your bishop, nor me with Metropolitan Sergius? Our case is not personal and does not touch on local interests, or any dubious unproven opinions, but it concerns the immediate practical destruction of our common eternal salvation by the ecclesiastical authorities themselves through their substitution of the false church, the great harlot (Revelation 17,1) for the true Church, the woman clothed with the Sun (Revelation 12.1). In other circumstances of church life Metropolitan Sergius and all his accomplices would be subject to immediate trial by the Orthodox Church in the form of a local council. But not that council which is being prepared by the apostates from the True Church themselves, and which will be an offshoot of the ‘robber council’ of 1923. It is necessary that the council should be perfect, that is, with the participation of all the Orthodox Bishops, and most of all the confessors of the Church. But such a council can never take place in the present conditions. And in reality in the conditions that have been created we do

not even have the possibility of complaining to anyone against the apostates from the true Church.

“So what must we do now? In the opinion of the apostates themselves, we must as it were become accomplices in their crime against the Orthodox Church, and consequently, we, like they, must subject ourselves to God’s judgement and even before the judgement deprive ourselves of the Grace of salvation. But how can we justify ourselves before God for participating in sin?

“True, we, as men, are subject to spiritual authority. But at the same time each one of us is directed in his life by the commandments of God, in accordance with which we shall be judged, and if we turn out to be accomplices in the impiety of our spiritual authorities, even that should be in the person of the Patriarch himself, then in no way can we be justified before God. For the commandment of God declares: ‘He who renounces Me before men, I will renounce before My Heavenly Father’ (Matthew 10.33).

"That is why, when they tried to persuade St. Maximus the Confessor by means of terrible tortures to enter into communion of prayer with a wrong-thinking patriarch, he cried out: 'even if the whole universe begins to have communion with the patriarch, I alone will not communicate with him'. Why was that? Because he feared to destroy his soul through communion with a patriarch who had been drawn into impiety, although at that time he had not yet been condemned by a council and was, on the contrary, supported by the majority of the bishops. You know, the ecclesiastical administrative authority, even in the person of councils, did not always defend the truth in former times, to which clear witness is borne by the story of the hierarch Athanasius the Great, John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Theodore the Studite and others. How, then, can I remain unreasonable and indifferent? That cannot be. That is why we have set out on the only possible way out in our present situation - the way of the confession of THE TRUTH OF SALVATION. This way is difficult, it is the way of exploit [podvig]; but we do not trust on our own strength, but look to the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12.2). And our action is not a separation for the Church, but the defence of the truth and justification of the Divine commandments, or - still better - THE PRESERVATION OF THE WHOLE ECONOMY OF OUR SALVATION. That is why a whole pleiad of archpastors have rebuked Metropolitan Sergius: Metropolitans Joseph, Agathangel and Arsenius, Archbishops, Bishops and a multitude of individual pastors, who have told Metropolitan Sergius that they can no longer recognize him to be the leader of the Orthodox Church, and will rule independently for the time being..."

On April 4, 1928 Bishop Victor was arrested in Glazov and cast into Butyrki prison. He was accused of “systematically distributing anti-Soviet

documents composed by him and printed on a typewriter. The most anti-Soviet of them in content was the document, 'Epistle to Believers' with an appeal to them not to fear and not to submit to Soviet power as being the power of the devil, but to suffer martyrdom from it, just as Metropolitan Philip or John, the so-called 'baptist' suffered martyrdom for the faith in their struggle with the power of the state".

A week later the sergianist synod decreed: "To keep in force our resolution concerning the former vicars of the Leningrad diocese, Bishops Demetrius of Gdov and Sergius of Kopor, the former Bishop Victor of Shadrinsk and the former Bishop Alexis of Urazov, the more so in that the mentioned bishops not only have not repented of the sin of creating a schism, but by their activities, speeches and epistles continue to sow disturbance, undermining the faith of the Church of Christ. They send a prepared text renouncing Metropolitan Sergius and the Patriarchal Synod for signature, calling of them to unite with them, while Bishop Victor, although banned from serving, ordains clergy for dioceses not subject to him."

On May 18 Bishop Victor was sentenced to three years on Solovki. Before leaving, he entrusted his Vyatka flock to Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov. On June 14, 1928 M.A. Novoselov wrote to V.M. Loseva: "Bishop Victor is here. The other day they sent him to Solovki for ten years. Now there will be three decisive anti-sergianists here, and they, I hope, will leave the local Christians with a good leaven."

According to one (doubtful) source, Vladyka Victor signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church, which took place in various places between March and August, 1928, through the reader Athanasius Beregovy.

At some time in 1928 Bishop Victor wrote: "In his scattering of the Church together with his treachery, Metropolitan Sergius has also committed a terrible blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which according to the unlying word of Christ will never be forgiven him, neither in this life, nor in the life to come.

"'He who does not gather with Me,' says the Lord, 'scatters.' 'Either recognize the tree (the Church) as good and its fruit as good, or recognize the tree as bad and its fruit as bad' (Matthew 12.33). 'Therefore I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto me, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto me' (Matthew 12.31). 'Fulfilling the measure of his sin,' Metropolitan Sergius together with his Synod, by his ukaz of October 8/21, 1927, is introducing a new formula of commemoration.

"'Mixing together into one, despite the word of God, the 'faithful with the unfaithful' (II Corinthians 6.14-18), the Holy Church and those fighting

to the death against her, in the great and most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the metropolitan by this blasphemy of his destroys the prayerful meaning of the great sacrament and its grace-filled significance for the eternal salvation of the souls of Orthodox believers. Hence the service becomes not only graceless because of the gracelessness of the celebrant, but an abomination in the eyes of God, and for that reason both the celebrant and he who participates in it subject themselves to severe condemnation.

"Being in all his activity an anti-church heretic, as transforming the Holy Orthodox Church from the house of the grace-filled salvation of believers into a graceless, carnal organization deprived of the spirit of life, Metropolitan Sergius has at the same time, through his conscious renunciation of the truth and in his mindless betrayal of Christ, become an open apostate from God the Truth.

"Without a formal external trial by the Church (which cannot be carried out on him), he 'is self-condemned' (Titus 3.10-11); he has ceased to be what he was - a 'server of the truth', according to the word: 'Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one live in it; and his office let another take' (Acts 1.20).

"A series of archpastors, God-wise fathers and Orthodox men of the Church have in the course of many years exhorted him, but to no effect - they did not bring Metropolitan Sergius to a consciousness of the sin he had committed and did not elicit repentance in his heart.

"For that reason, we, by the grace given us by our Lord Jesus Christ, 'by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ' (I Corinthians 5.4), declare the former Metropolitan Sergius deprived of prayerful communion with us and all those faithful to Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church, and give him up to the judgement of God: 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord' (Hebrews 19.30).

"This present act, in addition to our earlier declarations made in 1927 and 1928, we carry out in strict consciousness of our archpastoral duty before our flock, all the faithful children of the Orthodox Church, in obedience to the Church of Christ, in dutiful submission to the canons of the Ecumenical Councils and the Council of the Russian Church of 1917-1918, which is headed today by the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa and his deputy, Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich.

"Fear not, little flock! For your Father has determined to give you the Kingdom!" (Luke 12.32)."

In another document Archbishop Victor wrote: "Metropolitan Sergius' crime consists not only in canonical transgressions in relation to the Church order, but, as has already been demonstrated more than once in

various addresses to him,... it touches the very essence of the Church. It is precisely in his declaration that Metropolitan Sergius as it were confessed, and in his deeds is carrying out a lawless merging of that which is God's with that which is Caesar's, or rather, that which is Christ's with that which is Antichrist's, which is a dogmatic sin against the Church and is defined as the sin of apostasy."

From 1928 to 1930 Archbishop Victor was on the main island of Solovki. He worked as an accountant in the Solovki rope factory. Academician Demetrius Sergeyeovich Likhachev, who knew Vladyka Victor on Solovki, said that he was a highly educated man with several theological publications to his credit, but he looked like a village priest. He had a sparse beard, rosy cheeks and dark blue eyes. He met everyone with a broad smile, and radiated kindness and joy. He tried to help everyone, and was truly able to help them, because everyone thought highly of him and trusted him.

When, writes Likhachev, "during the winter of 1929 I returned from the typhus 'brigade of convalescents', he sent me some green onion and cream through Fedya Rozenberg. How tasty that onion and cream was! Once I met Vladyka (among ourselves we used to call him 'Vladychka') in a particularly radiant and joyful state. It was on the square in front of the Transfiguration cathedral. An order had been issued that all the prisoners should have their hair cut and were not to wear long clothes. Vladyka Victor refused to carry out this order, so they took him into the lock-up, forcibly shaved him, in the process seriously wounding his face, and cut his clothes crookedly from below. He walked towards us with a towel wrapped round his face and smiling. He said that they had dragged him into the lock-up in order to shave him, and had bound him, but that he had demanded that they first cut the long 'chekist' greatcoat (in the style of that in which Dzerzhinsky is depicted on the Lubyanka) of the escort who had dragged him into the lock-up. I think that Vladyka had resisted without spite and that he considered his suffering to be the mercy of God."

Professor I.M. Andreyev remembers that "Vladyka Victor was short, stocky, kind and welcoming to everyone, with an unchangingly radiant and joyful subtle smile and radiant eyes. 'One must comfort everybody in some way,' he used to say, and he had the ability to comfort each and every one. He had a welcoming word for every person he met, and often even a little gift... Within a few days Vladyka would distribute all his parcels, leaving almost nothing for himself. He 'comforted' very many, often prisoners whom he did not know at all, taking special pity on the 'urkas'.., that is, the petty thieves who had been sent as 'socially harmful' elements into isolation, according to article 48.

"... Both Vladykas (Victor and Maximus) loved each other; unhurriedly, without ever quarrelling or getting irritated, but attentively they studied a single complicated phenomenon from *different* points of view. Vladyka

Maximus was a pessimist and was getting ready for the heavy trials of *the last times*, not believing in the possibility of a regeneration of Russia. But Vladyka Victor was an optimist and believed in the possibility of a short, but radiant period, as a final gift from heaven for the tormented Russian people. At the end of 1930 Vladyka Victor completed his three-year term, but instead of being released was sent to Mai-Guba."

Bishop Victor's sentence ended in the spring of 1931, but he was not released. On April 10, 1931 his case was reviewed, and according to one source he was sentenced to three years' exile in Onega, Archangelsk district. From Solovki he was taken to the mainland, to Mai-Guba (according to I.M. Andreyevsky, this was already in the autumn of 1930). Vladyka worked as an accountant at Mai-Guba, and then, in November, 1931, or perhaps earlier, was sent to the north. According to one source, he was sent to Novaya Birzha on the White Sea - Baltic canal. According to another source, in the summer or early autumn of 1931 he was sent to Ust-Tsilma, Komi province via Arkhangelsk, the White and Barents Seas and the Rivers Pechora and Tsilma. There he found the "Victorites" **Protopriest John Fokin** and **Nuns Angelina** (Tomilova) and **Alexandra** (Lopatina).

He was arrested again on the night of December 12-13, 1932, and the next day was sent with ten others (four priests and six laymen) to prison in Syktyvkar.

On December 22 he was interrogated and accused that, "living on the territory of the Ust-Tsilma region, he joined a monarchist counter-revolutionary grouping which under the guise of religious prejudices conducted counter-revolutionary work against the undertakings of Soviet power". The monarchist organization created by them was supposedly descended from one before the revolution, "The White Sea - Karelia Society of the Archangel Michael", and, in 1918-1919, from "The Patriotic Society" and "The Union of Clergy". The protocol ends with the following declaration of Bishop Victor: "According to my religious convictions, I am a follower of Patriarch Tikhon. I do not recognize renovationism or sergianism."

L.A. Sikorskaya writes: "The initiator of the creation of the 'counter-revolutionary organization' was named as the exiled Ekaterina Ivanovna Povarova, who organized material help for the exile through people she knew in Arkhangelsk. Her correspondence with Bishop Apollos (Rzhanitsyn), who blessed her activity, Anna Vasilyevna Morgunova, the warden of the central church, and the active parishioners Elena Konstantinovna Veshnyakova and Ekaterina Akindinovna Tsvetkova, who sent help to the exiles in Ust-Tsilma, was sufficient for them to be drawn into the group case as 'participants in the counter-revolutionary group'. Bishop Apollos, E.E. Veshnyakova and E.A. Tsvetkova were arrested in Arkhangelsk at the end of January or the beginning of February, 1933. A.V. Morgunova managed to hide and a search was

initiated for her.

“Many ‘witnesses’ at the interrogations affirmed that, on the instructions of the accused Bishop Apollos (Rzhanitsyn), his parishioners went from Arkhangelsk to Ust-Tsilma and brought money, food and clothing to help those priests and laity in administrative exile as ‘suffering for religion’. The ‘witnesses’ and some of the accused gave testimony that the exiles conducted active agitation that people should leave the collective farms and refuse logging work, and that they spread provocative rumours. Maria Nuromskaya [the daughter of Archbishop Anthony of Arkhangelsk, who died in 1931] was also accused of deliberately giving the administrative exiles certificates that they were freed from work, by means of which she supposedly ‘systematically weakened the working strength’.

“The main information for the investigation’s version of events was given at the interrogations of the accused priests. Thus A.D. Nechaev detailed by name, in his own words, ‘the undoubted participants in our counter-revolutionary grouping’ – ten people in Ust-Tsilma, including Victor Alexandrovich Ostrovidov, and five people in Arkhangelsk. I.A. Nikolsky told in detail, point by point, about ‘the practical counter-revolutionary activity of the participants in our grouping’, and these points were transferred in the same words into the ‘Concluding Indictment’. Apparently, such testimonies were demanded of Bishop Victor, but Vlayka did not recognize his guilt in the writing of the ‘novel’ thought up by the investigation.”

On March 23 Bishop Victor and six others were formally accused that: “(a) they were active participants in a counter-revolutionary grouping of administratively exiled clergy and churchmen in the village of Ust-Tsilma; (b) they took part in group meetings conducted by the leadership of the grouping in which general methods and tactics of counter-revolutionary work were worked out; (c) in the mass of the peasantry they conducted daily anti-soviet agitation directed at the undermining of the enterprises of Soviet power; and (d) they spread provocative rumours about the inevitability of a war and the destruction of Soviet power with the aim of strengthening defeatist sentiments.”

On May 10, 1933 he was sentenced in accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11 to another three years in exile. First he spent at least another three months in an isolator in Syktyvkar, where he miraculously found an icon of Christ lying on the ground – it was a copy of the wonder-working icon from the Holy Trinity – St. Stephen monastery in Ust-Sysolsk uyezd. Vladyka brought it into his cell and prayed: “Lord, Thou has appeared to me. So intercede for me!” Soon he was freed.

After prison Vladyka served several liturgies with other exiled priests in the flat of the exiled Fr. Nicholas in Arkhangelsk. “What a joy it was for

us!" said Vladyka. "And then the icon was with us."

Then he was sent to the village of Neritsa, some thirty kilometres from Ust-Tsilma. Here he was surrounded by atheists, who followed his every movement. Vladyka arrived in a sad mood. But the believers in Ust-Tsilma, who were now free, promised not to abandon him. Although no parcels could be sent directly to him in Neritsa, the Vyatka and Glazov parishioners constantly sent him things, which he immediately distributed to the needy villagers (there was a famine in the winter of 1933-1934). He prayed for the sick twelve-year-old daughter of the man in whose house he lived, and she recovered. Vladyka's neighbour, a communist, was constantly playing something on the gramophone very loudly. Vladyka went up to the wall, made the sign of the cross on it - and the gramophone fell down. There was no more noise...

A little more than two months before his death, on February 23, 1934, Vladyka wrote a letter to Ekaterina Pavlovna Peshkova of the Political Red Cross asking for help, since he was in a difficult situation. Peshkova's reply was dated May 8. In August it was returned again to Moscow with the note: "Returned to the sender because of the death of the addressee".

At the beginning of spring, Vladyka would go out into the woods to pray. He helped in the cutting of wood and the carrying of water. According to one source, Vladyka talked about the faith with some Old Ritualists living in the region.

Before his death Bishop Victor entrusted his followers to Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich. This is witnessed by Bishop Damascene of Glukhov, whom Archbishop Seraphim, in his turn, asked to be useful to his "Vyatka children" in the summer of 1935.

Vladyka often went into the taiga to pray. At the end of April, 1934 he caught a cold and pneumonia - according to another source, meningitis. He could not be sent to the regional centre because the river had overflowed its banks. Two days before his death Nun Angelina came to visit him. On May 2, 1934 he reposed in the Lord. On that same day a woman called Nastya went into his former room in Ust-Tsilma and smelt incense...

Mother Angelina carried the body away on a sledge, pretending he was ill. But, being unable to cross the river on which the ice was beginning to melt, she had to send back to Neritsa for help. Eventually some men came, brought the body back to Neritsa and buried him there. No priest could go to the village, so Fr. Nicholas carried out the funeral service for him in Arkhangelsk.

On the fortieth day after Vladyka's death the nuns asked one of the men in whose house he had lived to catch fish for his commemorative meal. He

was at first unwilling, but then Vladyka Victor appeared to him in a vision and asked him to do this. He set off, and he caught a huge of fish. "It was not a simple man who lived with us," he said in amazement to his wife.

On July 1, 1997, the incorrupt relics of Archbishop Victor were revealed in Neritsa. The witnesses among the villagers were so amazed by what they saw that they immediately asked to be baptized. They were baptized the next day.

The fragrant relics of the saint were taken to Moscow, and then, on December 2, 1997, to the St. Alexander Nevsky church of the Holy Trinity-Macarius monastery in Vyatka. All his life St. Victor had served in churches dedicated either to the Holy Trinity or to St. Alexander Nevsky...

In 2005 the holy relics were transferred to the Holy Transfiguration monastery in Vyatka.

Many miracles of healing have been recorded at the shrine of St. Victor.

19. HOLY HIEROMARTYR JOHN, ARCHBISHOP OF RIGA

Early Years

Archbishop John, in the world Janis Andreyevich Pommer, was born in Latvia, in Venden (Tsis) uyezd, Praulenskaya volost, Lazdonsky parish, into a Latvian peasant family. He had no Russian blood. The peasants of that region had begun to show an interest in Orthodoxy in the middle of the nineteenth century, thanks to the preaching of the faith in their native language; and Janis' great-grandfather had been one of the first to accept Orthodoxy in the region, for which he was subjected to persecution by the local German landowners. When he died he was buried outside the bounds of the local Lutheran cemetery (there were no Orthodox cemeteries at that time) as the leader of the "rebels". The native peasants raised a mound over the place of his burial and put an eight-pointed star on top of it, but both the mound and the cross were removed by the Lutheran authorities.

During his childhood the future archbishop helped his parents in the fields, and his first "obedience" was to look after the sheep. He was taught to read and write by his father, and was so outstanding in his studies that he skipped primary school and went straight into the state upper school. From his first year of study he so distinguished himself that the teachers fervently recommended that his parents send him either to the gymnasium or to a seminary school. On the advice of a local priest, the latter course was adopted. Having passed the entrance examination, the future bishop joined the Riga theological school in August 1887. In 1891 he went to the Riga theological seminary. Owing to his success in his studies and his exemplary behaviour he was granted a scholarship, so that his parents did not have to pay anything for his education. He unfailingly spent his summer holidays at home, helping his parents in their work.

In 1897 he finished his seminary education brilliantly, but owing to the disturbances taking place in the educational system at that time he was not able to continue his higher education immediately. In 1897 he became a teacher in the church-parish school in the village of Lazdon. In 1899 he became a reader in the cathedral in Libava (now Liepaya), while working at the same time as a teacher in the church-parish school in Libava. In 1898 and 1899 was given awards for his labours.

In 1900, having passed the entrance examinations brilliantly, he became a student at the Kiev Theological Academy, where he was popular both for his academic achievements and for his prowess at sport. However, he never tried to use his physical abilities for his own ends, but only in order to support the weak.

Those who knew well were not surprised when, in 1903, he was tonsured as a monk in the Archangel Michael monastery in Kiev. Even before his

tonsure his friends had called him "monk" because of his great sobriety and abstinence. On September 23, 1903 he was ordained to the diaconate, and on June 13, 1904 - to the priesthood.

He finished his studies at the Academy so brilliantly that he was given a choice between a career as a scholar and practical work as a teacher. He chose the latter, working as a teacher of Holy Scripture in the Chernigov theological seminary. Here he had such success in motivating and interesting his students in the subject that several of them later devoted their whole lives to the study of Holy Scripture (for example, Uspensky and Bessarabov).

In 1906 he was transferred to the post of inspector of the Vologda theological seminary. Here he continued to teach Holy Scripture, and among his pupils was the noted scriptural expert and Hebraist Prakhov. But he was also given administrative work in the seminary, and his success in rapidly introducing order into the large and ill-disciplined Vologda seminary was such that in the next academic year, in spite of his young age, he was entrusted with the post of rector of the Vilnius theological seminary and superior of the Vilnius Holy Trinity monastery. On September 26, 1907 he was raised to the rank of archimandrite.

He was the first priest in the history of Vilnius who organized cross processions to village churches with the "Hodigitria" icon of the Mother of God. The worshippers accompanying the processions attained ten thousand. This elicited the gratitude of the simple people and cross processions from the village churches to Vilnius. Fr. John showed great simplicity in his dealings with people, and was very responsive to the needs of the poor. He was especially valued by the Russian and Belorussian poor, who received through him work and support wherever it was required.

Already in his previous posts in Chernigov and Vologda, the future bishop had been given responsible assignments in diocesan government. And the same took place in Vilnius. He was made president of the educational council administering the people's schools throughout the extensive north-western region, and he was elected president of almost all the church-educational and charitable institutions of the region. He also administered local societies fighting alcoholism and helping the neediest acquire work.

First Episcopal Service

On March 12, 1912 Fr. John was consecrated Bishop of Slutsk, a vicariate of the Minsk diocese, in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg. He was then the youngest bishop in Russia. Almost immediately he moved to Minsk to help the ailing Archbishop Michael of Minsk. On the way he participated in the canonization of St. Joasaph of Belgorod. When Archbishop Michael died, the clergy and laity unanimously petitioned that Bishop John be made diocesan bishop in his stead. However, the petition was refused on the

grounds that the diocese was considered one of the oldest in Russia, while Bishop John was at that time the youngest bishop in Russia.

Instead, on April 4, 1913, Bishop John was sent to Odessa as Bishop of Taganrog and vicar of Archbishop Demetrius of Kherson and Odessa, who had been rector of the Kiev Academy when John was studying there. On April 4, 1913, on the death of Archbishop Demetrius, Bishop John was sent to establish good order in the newly opened diocese of Priazovsk. His place of residence was Taganrog. On October 5, 1916 he was appointed Bishop of Priazovsk and Taganrog.

The best evidence of the good relationship between the archpastor and his flock here was the fact that Priazovsk was the only see in Russia whose upkeep - the salaries of the bishop and clergy - the local Christians took upon themselves. Bishop John took part not only in all the spiritual institutions of the diocese, but also in all its educational and charitable institutions. Here, too, his labours were crowned with success. In the four years of his rule there (from 1913 to 1917) he visited every corner of his diocese, paying attention not only to his flock's spiritual needs but also to their social and economic needs, which became especially pressing because of the war. There were cases when the bishop was chosen as mediator in conflicts between employers and workers, and his decisions were always accepted without a murmur by both sides. In gratitude the workers elected him to honorary posts in their organizations and looked on him as the best defender of their interests, resorting to his mediation before both the local and the central authorities.

A wave of refugees from the war came right up to "the quiet Don". Thousands of refugees from Galicia and what is now Czechoslovakia settled on the Don, and these people found in Bishop John one who cared for their needs. Under his immediate supervision schools and shelters for the refugees were established. Hundreds of Galicians and Czechoslovaks gratefully converted to Orthodoxy, including many intelligentsy.

When the revolution broke out in February, 1917, the revolutionaries wasted no time in attempting to dispose of Bishop John. They stirred up complaints against him, and Bishop John demanded a trial. When Metropolitan Plato came to investigate the complaints, he found in favour of Bishop John. However, open and secret revolutionary agents followed the bishop everywhere, led by Commissar Pelikh. But they could find nothing to accuse him of. However, Bishop John was cast into prison in Taganrog, in response to which the people organized a cross procession to the prison demanding his release. The gates opened and the bishop came out. As he blessed them, hundreds of hands lifted him up and placed him in an adorned truck, which took him, to the accompaniment of chanting and prayers, to the cathedral to serve a moleben. Then volunteers from among the workers and soldiers organized watches to guard the bishop day and night. On his way to and from services he was accompanied by vast crowds of people ready to defend their pastor by force. This created a delicate situation for the

authorities, from which they devised the following escape: Bishop John's transfer, on September 7, 1917, to the Staritsa diocese, a vicariate of the Tver diocese. However, this device also failed; for after a farewell service in the cathedral the people surrounded him in such a way as to prevent his departure or removal. All the authorities could do was to beseech the bishop, for the sake of preserving their own authority, to depart for a time to Moscow. They guaranteed him a safe and honourable return to his flock. Then Bishop John persuaded his guard to let him go to Moscow to sort the matter out in the centre.

He departed, but the conflict between the local authorities and the people did not end there. Representatives from the clergy, laity, soldiers and Cossacks went with Bishop John to Moscow so as to protest against the behaviour of the local revolutionary authorities, and in Priazovsk it was decided to make a protest in the form of daily gatherings in the churches to pray for the successful return of the bishop to Taganrog. Meanwhile, the delegation in Moscow obtained a favourable response from both the spiritual and the secular authorities.

However, this favourable response coincided with the October revolution, and Bishop John's return to Taganrog became impractical. In Tver he soon won the love and esteem of his flock and was able to put in order the diocesan administration that had been destroyed by the crude expulsion from Tver of Bishop Seraphim. He said of the Bolsheviks: "They have put Marx in the dust-jacket of the Gospel and think that the people will accept it instead of the Gospel. They have dressed commissars in sacred vestments and think the Orthodox will accept them as their pastors and follow them. They have substituted the portrait of Lenin for the icon of Christ in the icon-cases and expect the people to come up to kiss it. Ilyich is not at all like Christ. It is impossible to put Marxism in the place of Christianity, whatever vestments the preachers of Marxism put on. The blasphemous utterance of the name of Marx from the church kathedra only emphasizes more vividly the irreconcilable contradiction between Christ and Marx. Here is love incarnate, pouring out its blood for its guilty brethren. There - satanic malice pouring out the blood of brothers guilty of nothing like water."

Persecution in Penza

On April 22, 1918 Bishop John was transferred to the see of Penza and Saransk, with promotion to the rank of archbishop. He was sent during a time of troubles caused by the defrocked former archbishop Vladimir (Putyata-Grinstein). While the local authorities, who supported Putyata, were extremely hostile to the newly arrived archpastor, the people showed their love for him by organizing guards to defend him from his enemies. Immediately after his arrival, the local cheka searched and interrogated him. But no reasons for repressing him were found.

Irritated by his popularity with the people, the authorities decided to mark Pascha, 1918 by killing him. On Bright Thursday evening the former officer Rudakov and the worker Dubovkin appeared at his residence in the Transfiguration monastery armed to the teeth, and began to demand that they be allowed to see him. The guard composed of believers sounded the alarm, and at the sound of the alarm the chekist Dubovnik took to his heels. But Rudakov broke down the door of the archbishop's cell and fired several times. Fortunately, he missed, only wounding the archbishop slightly in the leg, and he was disarmed by the archbishop himself. Then the people ran up, making it clear that they wanted to lynch the chekist. He was saved only by the vigorous intervention of the archbishop. At this point - wonder to behold! - Rudakov fell on the neck of the archbishop, crying "Christ is risen!" He then claimed that his attempt on the life of the archbishop had been instigated by the authorities. The authorities denied this, but Rudakov had proof of the truth of his words in the form of a mandate signed by them. Rudakov was arrested and put on trial, but the trial did not take place because Rudakov, overcome by his experiences, fell ill and died in prison.

This incident served to unite the flock of Penza diocese still more tightly round their archpastor, and the authorities, taking note, abstained from open demonstrations against the archbishop for the time being, which gave him the opportunity to organize the believers in parishes and other church organizations. The liberal intelligentsia, which had previously been indifferent to the Church, began to return to the Church. Among them was the lawyer V.A. Bezsonov, who became the archbishop's subdeacon and as his legal adviser was of great service to him. The workers, led by Z.Z. Pozdnyakov and A.S. Baikov, who had been among the best known fighters against alcoholism in Petrograd, attached themselves to the archbishop. As for the clergy, they gave an excellent example everywhere, and church life began to revive and get stronger throughout the diocese. Church feasts and meetings began to be carried out with exceptional exaltation of spirit.

In May, 1918, a regiment of Czechoslovaks who were on their way from the Don to Siberia passed through Penza. During a battle with the Bolsheviks, the latter's artillery suddenly for no reason began to fire on the Transfiguration monastery where the archbishop was living. Several shells fell on buildings adjoining the bishop's cell. The Bolsheviks tried to explain this incident by reference to a misunderstanding, but the people interpreted it as an attempt on the life of the archbishop, and registered a strong protest with the authorities.

On September 7, 1918, the Cheka carried out an extensive search in the cell and offices of the archbishop. They found nothing incriminating, but after the search they took him for a confrontation with one of the prisoners who had been condemned to death. This meant that the archbishop could not arrive on time for the All-Night Vigil for the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God; and when the people arriving for the service learned that the archbishop had been taken away "to the house of no return", and, moreover, on the day when

executions were carried out, they decided that he had been shot together with the others condemned to death. An expedition was quickly organized, which confirmed the theory about his execution. Thus when Archbishop John arrived very late for the service, he found, not an All-Night Vigil in progress, but a pannikhida for "the newly departed Archbishop John".

On October 12, 1918, the archbishop was serving in the Peter and Paul church in Penza in the presence of a huge crowd of people. During the service "Archbishop" Vladimir Putyata arrived and tried to enter the church together with his supporters. The people forcibly prevented him doing this, and there were disturbances around the church. As a result of this, the archbishop was put in prison for a whole month and sentenced to death. His innocence was obvious to everyone, even to the Cheka, but evidently it had been decided to conduct an experiment to see how the people would react to the removal of the archbishop. They reacted by besieging the Cheka headquarters with delegations of believers demanding the archbishop's release. The local German consul noted that among those under arrest was a native of the Baltic region, which was then under German occupation, and demanded an explanation from the Cheka. This compelled the chekist to free the archbishop in the following manner.

On October 14 at midnight they began to summon the prisoners one by one into the hall where the tribunal was sitting in order to listen to and sign the tribunal's sentence. It was a Saturday, the day on which executions were usually carried out, and those who were called out on the list went away and did not return. This meant that after the explanation of the sentence they had been handed over to the executioners for the carrying out of the sentence. On the long list of the doomed, Archbishop John's name was the last. Evidently they were forcing him to go through everything that the prisoners about to be executed went through. At about one o'clock in the morning Archbishop John was told that he was free.

On leaving the Cheka headquarters, Archbishop John learned that all the diocesan organs of administration had been dissolved by the authorities. This meant that he had to take the whole administration of the huge diocese upon himself. Only on February 19, 1919 did he succeed in securing the restoration of the diocesan council and the other organs of diocesan administration.

On July 28, 1919, Archbishop John was summoned to the military commissariat and subjected to a medical examination, after which he was pronounced fit for military service. He was appointed to a regiment in the rear. However, a collective appeal by the parishes of the diocese delayed his enlistment for two months. At the end of this period the parishes had to repeat their appeal, a procedure which had to be repeated regularly.

It was characteristic that while the archbishop was registered on all military documents as "John, Archbishop of Penza and Saransk", when he

was given a mandate to visit the parishes of his diocese, he was called "citizen John Andreyevich Pommer".

Towards the end of 1919, the Whites began to approach the borders of the Penza district from the south. At this point the authorities began to get very nervous, which was reflected in the first place in blows directed against the Church. Prominent church workers were arrested and kept in the Cheka prison. At the invitation of the parishes, the archbishop set out on a long journey round the diocese. Everywhere a heightened religious mood was observed. The people flowed in huge masses to the archbishop's services with striking fervour. Meanwhile, the authorities were quiet.

But when the archbishop returned to Penza on November 11, he found the way into his cell barred by the chekists, who subjected him to a body search and then searched his cell which had been searched so many times already. Although the search, as before, produced no results, the archbishop was arrested for "participation in a counter-revolutionary organization² and taken to the Cheka headquarters. There it turned out that a certain mythical counter-revolutionary organization had been uncovered, tens of members of which had already been shot (including Vladyka's subdeacon and legal adviser, **V.A. Bezsonov**). Evidently, the same fate now awaited the archbishop.

The archbishop categorically protested against both the accusation and the sentence, and demanded that his case be reviewed in Moscow - which it was, by the famous Latsis, the president of the secret operations department of the Cheka. Latsis immediately broadened the scope of the accusation to include everything that might be hurled at the archbishop in the course of his whole life. The gathering of this material took three months, the whole of which period the archbishop spent in the Cheka prison. On February 11, 1920, Archbishop John gave explanations concerning the whole of this material to the terrible Latsis himself. The accusation that he belonged to a counter-revolutionary organization was not supported, for the Cheka could provide no proofs. The material gathered from the places where the archbishop had previously served were so trivial that even the conscience of the chekist was forced to renounce their use as evidence against him. Even the press, which was not noted for its squeamishness in the use of material that could be used against the clergy recognized its inferiority and did not begin to use it. (Later, these accusations were seized on and published by the Social-Democrats in Latvia.)

On March 11, 1920, the cheka pronounced the archbishop innocent on all counts and gave him a certificate allowing him to carry out his archpastoral service without hindrance.

Thus the future martyr's service in Penza immediately after the October revolution turned out to be one of the most trying periods of his life. Some years later, on the tenth anniversary of his episcopate in Riga, his former

parishioners in Penza recorded the following reminiscences of his life and work in Penza: "Your stay in Penza coincided with the moment when the furious attacks of the forces inimical to the Church were turned into open warfare against her servants and representatives which threatened violence in all its forms and from all sides. In opposition to this you displayed the greatest strength of spirit and power of will. These powerful foundations of your strong character enabled you to survive and overcome all those extraordinarily burdensome conditions of life which fell to your lot in recent years. Following every step of your thorny path in life, we can only marvel at your spiritual firmness and the unusual restraint with which you encountered the trials and sufferings sent you by destiny. We clearly and vividly remember all the physical and moral torments which you endured in Penza in the years of savagery and, at the same time, the spiritual solidarity and unity of the people of Penza which served as a support for you in your terrible struggle legality and righteousness and which placed you at an unattainable spiritual height before the face of the whole population. Those who attended services in the Penza Pokrov church between 1918 and 1920 know what spiritual authority and love from all was enjoyed by our adored Archbishop John. They also will not forget you, your Eminence, who took part in the cross procession at the Penza cemetery of the holy myrrh-bearing women, which symbolized that way of the cross which the physically exhausted, spiritually suffering and morally tormented people had to tread. At that holy and heavy hour all eyes and hopes were trained directed on the man who in the name of the Lord called the people to obedient patience and expectation of the resurrection of a Russia cleansed from the sins of the past, for which she had to pay so dearly and cruelly.

"The people well recognized and felt that in their prayers and petitions to the Lord, Vladkya would not forget those dreams of freedom from the yoke and violence by which crucified Russia had lived and meditated, and those righteous sons of hers who by their sufferings and blood had atoned the guilt of the evil-doers who did not know what they were doing. This spiritual sympathy was the basis for that huge moral force which bound you, your Eminence, with the people by bonds of unseen but powerful kinship and closeness.

"Therefore, wherever you may be, the people of Penza will always nourish towards you a feeling of great gratitude and the deepest devotion and attachment..

"No dark powers can cast a shadow over your exceptionally profitable and beneficial activities, which always remain in the memory of a people grateful to you... If there are people for whom your radiant life is harmful, and they wish to discredit you in the eyes of the people, even if it is for political reasons, then they are terribly wrong in thinking that they can attain their end by slander. The work of your slanderers and political adversaries has always produced the opposite effect: the more they have striven to slander and

offend you, the higher and nearer and dearer the devoted and loving people has valued you."

Archbishop of Riga

On February 23, 1920, a council of the Latvian Orthodox Church elected Archbishop John to the see of Riga. Patriarch Tikhon could not find anyone to take his place in Penza for the time being. On April 14, 1921, after a second petition from the Latvian Orthodox Church, the Patriarch blessed Archbishop John to go to Latvia. But on May 23 he had to rescind his decision at the request of the clergy and laity of Penza. It was only on July 6/19, 1921 that, "in view of the persistent request of the Latvian Church", he gave his final consent to Archbishop John's departure for Latvia, bestowing on him a gramota expressing his gratitude for his self-sacrificial and fruitful labours in various places in Russia.

Before his departure, Patriarch Tikhon, in agreement with the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, gave Archbishop John the widest canonical autonomy in administering the Latvian Orthodox Church. This act was the expression of the high degree of trust which they had for the archbishop, both as a man and as a church server. The further life and activities of Archbishop John showed that he was completely worthy of this trust: by his martyr's end he witnessed to his faithfulness to the behests of the confessor Patriarch.

Finally, on July 24, 1921, Archbishop John arrived in Riga and began to administer the Orthodox Church of Latvia. He was met at the railway station and conducted to the cathedral church by the Orthodox clergy and people, with crosses and sacred objects from all the Orthodox churches. Even while he was serving in the cathedral (where an Orthodox hierarch had not celebrated since 1917), the local Orthodox leaders had no idea where he was going to live, since the bishop's residence had just been seized by the government. But at the conclusion of the service, after giving his blessing to the people, Archbishop John, to the astonishment of everyone present, went to the basement of the cathedral and said: "I will live here."

In this way he testified to the persecution of the Latvian Church and made the cathedral the centre of his struggle to restore the rights of the Orthodox Church in Latvia. And the fact that he lived there was a decisive factor that prevented the realization of the campaign conducted by the Latvian government and in the Latvian press to have the cathedral demolished.

His arrival marked the beginning of a new era in the life of the Latvian Church. Vladyka succeeded in getting a law on the position of the Orthodox Church passed. This regulated the relations between the Church and the State and provided the Church with a series of rights - in particular, substantial subsidies from the State. Finally, an end was put to the transfer of the property of the Orthodox Church to the heterodox, in particular the Catholics, who had already seized the Alexeyev monastery.

With Vladyka's arrival the senseless destruction of the Orthodox holy things - for example, the removal of the chapel in front of the main railway station in Riga - was halted. In general, the situation of the Church was piteous: churches had been sacked in part during the First World War and in part during the Civil War. They needed repairs, objects used in Divine services and church-servers: most of the parishes were widowed, and there were no candidates for the priesthood. Besides, in everything that concerned the Orthodox Church arbitrariness reigned; she was seen as doomed to extinction. The first leaders of the Latvian Church were not admitted into Latvia since it was considered expedient to keep the Orthodox Church without a head.

Even after the arrival of Archbishop John the situation in Latvia was such that support from outside was not to be expected; the existence of the Church depended, in general, on the solidarity and organization of all her inner resources. This was the immediate aim that the archpastor set in front of him. It was necessary to liquidate the dissension between the Orthodox Russians and Latvians. In spite of opposition from various quarters, Vladyka succeeded in this, the decisive factor being the fact that both the Russians and the Latvians considered him to be their own. Already by the council of 1923 there was complete unanimity between the Russian and Latvian parishes. A "Statute of the Orthodox Church in Latvia" worked out by Vladyka was accepted by all. This guaranteed the children of the Church the rights stipulated by the canons without regard for nationality. The enemies of the Church made attempts to hinder the union of all the Orthodox, but without success. The Church felt united in herself and began to get stronger.

In 1925, Vladyka became the representative of the Russians in the Seim, the Latvian Parliament. From this moment his activity took on enormous dimensions. He managed to obtain the return from the Soviet Union of Church holy objects and property for great sums of money. Orthodox Latvians, who before Archbishop John's arrival had largely concealed themselves "for fear of the Jews", now stepped out boldly behind their fearless pastor, and the Latvian Church experienced the best years of her brief existence. This is shown by the fact that whereas in 1922 the Orthodox in Latvia numbered 138,803, by 1935 they numbered 174,389. The Russian department of the ministry of education witnessed to his heroic efforts, often at great risk to his personal safety, to defend the Church and Russian culture from the attacks of its enemies, to provide Russian schools and subsidies for them, and to broaden the political, national, cultural and economic rights of the Russian population in Latvia. The churches destroyed in the war were repaired, and the unfinished buildings were completed. The theological seminary was re-established, and there began a flow of candidates for the priesthood. In a few years, according to official statistics, the Orthodox population increased by twenty per cent; thirteen new churches were built and consecrated, and four others were under construction, with still others planned, when the archbishop was martyred.

Vladyka served triumphantly and majestically. His powerful voice became softer when he pronounced the humble litanies. The prayers were said with great feeling which produced an ineradicable impression on those praying, filled as they were with a deep spirit of prayer.

There were few Russian families in the country whom Vladyka did not benefit in one way or another. He also helped foreigners. He was truly the father and defender of his flock. Most of the "state people" of Latvia were his colleagues from the seminary - the wise Tsarist government used to give free education in the seminaries, which was the stepping-stone to entrance into higher educational institutions, and many ministers and directors of departments in Latvia did not forget their old friendship and carried out Vladyka's requests.

In 1927 Metropolitan Sergius issued his notorious declaration, which placed the Russian Church in submission to the God-hating atheists. Archbishop John was one of the first to react negatively to this declaration. He explained his reasons for rejecting the declaration in a letter to Archbishop Eleutherius of Lithuania dated November 2, 1927. Archbishop John continued to have good relations with the Russian Church Abroad, who also opposed Metropolitan Sergius. In 1931, on the tenth anniversary of Vladyka's episcopate in Riga, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), first hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, called him "a courageous defender of Orthodoxy".

Neo-Silvester writes: "Numerous enemies, mainly political ones, energetically worked to weave a thick net of intrigues around him, spreading disgusting slanders against him round the city and defiling his good name, not only as a pastor of the Church, but also as a man. It is difficult to say who precisely occupied himself with this disgusting work. At that time Riga was teeming with Soviet spies, international adventurers and in general seekers of adventures who were ready to commit any abomination for dollars." Intrigues were woven even in the cathedral, a question arose about a shortfall of money in the cathedral cash-box, and there were other attacks. However, "when these and other unconfirmed denunciations failed to shake the trust and respect of the parishioners for the archpastor, the secret enemies turned from complicated intrigues to helping hired thieves and robbers."

Certain secret forces cleverly and systematically led the persecution against Vladyka: breaking off from one form of attack, they quickly turned to another. They must have employed no small amount of energy and money on blackening the great archpastor, and, alas, they had some success.

In the last years of his life, the persecution against Vladyka was conducted mainly through the so-called Russian Christian Student Union or Movement. Vladyka himself, who very much loved children and young people, gladly received the representatives of the young, so groups and even whole classes of students (there were more than a dozen Russian elementary schools and

several gymnasia in Riga at that time) often visited him. At the beginning Vladyka was very sympathetic to the newly formed Union. However, as time went on and the essence of this organization with its international links became clear, he left it. The members of the Union resorted to persecution (without being its leaders). Things reached such a pass that at one of the twelve main feasts it was decided, on going up for Holy Unction, not to kiss his hand in a demonstrative way. This plot did not succeed only because Vladyka had been warned and went away into the altar, entrusting the unction to the senior priest.

This persecution became particularly intense after Archimandrite John (Shahovskoy), the future archbishop of San Francisco for the schismatic "Orthodox Church of America", stayed in Riga. Vladyka did not allow him to serve in Riga, evidently because he rightly judged that such a disobedient clergyman must not be encouraged. It seems that the archimandrite went away in a rage. Perhaps this was the first time he had been affronted in such a way in his life. And his pride made the blow still more painful. Although he left, his numerous supporters (mainly female admirers), who constituted the majority of the Union, applied all their efforts to poison Vladyka's life.

His political enemies went so far as to set hooligans on him as he was returning to his dacha one evening. He was walking, as was his wont, the several kilometres from the last tram stop when the hooligans attacked him. However, they had not reckoned with the physical strength of their adversary. Having knocked their heads together so that they saw sparks, he so talked with them that they repented and became his friends. And this was not the only incident of this kind.

A certain Snegiver bought an evening newspaper in Riga and immediately set about using it to attack Vladyka. He wrote an article attacking Vladyka's candidature to the Seim and brought it to the maker-up. But the maker-up brought it to others who reworked it in such a way that it became a hymn of praise to the archbishop's pastoral and social activity. On reading the article, Snegiver went red in the face, beat his fist on the table and shouted that as the publisher he had editorial rights. Vladyka said about Snegiver with his innate wit: "Snegiver is a greyish bird, but its breast is red..."

Again, a certain hysterical young woman brought an action against Vladyka in court saying that he had raped her. The procurator asked her under what circumstances this had taken place. She replied that she had been invited to Vladyka together with a group of young people, and while the other young people had been in the next room he had raped her. The procurator drily explained that this was not called rape. But the slander continued to go the rounds in the city, and someone sent Vladyka postcards written in a woman's handwriting and containing indecent and, of course, completely false details of their "meetings".

Of course, all this could not fail to have an adverse effect on Vladyka's health. His hair began to go grey, deep wrinkles appeared, he became thinner, and his eyes lost their previous glitter. But he patiently bore his cross, following Christ. He probably suffered in soul for the fate of his slanderers and those "little ones" deceived by them.

One of Vladyka's most vivid speeches in the Seim was "In defence of pensions for the clergy". The communist fraction in the Seim had put forward the suggestion that the clergy be deprived of their pensions (the Orthodox Church, like the other Churches, was a State Church, and the priests were usually teachers of the Law of God in schools). The local communists naturally spoke under the slogan: "Why feed these idlers in vain?" Vladyka objected and delivered a brilliant speech. As a result the arguments degenerated into personal attacks against the archbishop, and someone cast aspersions on his past. Vladyka replied that his activities, like those of the whole Latvian clergy, were well-known to all: he organized the Latvian Church, and the priests served it. Then he in his turn posed a question: what does this deputy who has raised this question do? At this point he pulled out a newspaper, in which was printed the order to shoot several Latvians during the Civil War under the signature of this same communist deputy.

Vladyka ended his speech approximately as follows: "I have tried, as far as I have been able, to be of use to the Church and the country, while you have been shooting honourable Latvian patriots!"

What an uproar there was then! The communist fraction showered blows on Vladyka, while he, following the Gospel commandment (Luke 6.29), accepted the blows without defending himself. Finally, one of the Russian deputies came to his aid. The session was adjourned. As a result the law on the pensions of the clergy was passed, and Vladyka's prestige only increased.

Neo-Silvester describes an incident which probably hastened Vladyka's end. It took place once again in the Seim, and Vladyka had delivered a thunderous speech against the leaders of the extreme left parties, unmasking their treachery in favour of the Bolsheviki. Again he waved a sheaf of papers, indicating that they contained deadly documents revealing the base work of the Latvian Marxists and their supporters, even on the right.

"The day will come when these documents here will become public knowledge and the people will know those who are guilty of its woes, will be horrified and will be filled with wrath."

An extraordinary scandal broke out: the Social-Democrats jumped from their seats, shouting: "Out! Out!", while some of them, shaking their fists, hurled themselves menacingly at the orator.

The archbishop stayed calmly in his place, waiting for the passions on the leftist benches to die down. When the president of the Seim had finally introduced order, the orator continued with a smile:

"This whistling, noise and whooping remind me of an incident which took place a very long time ago in one of the villages in the south of Russia. One night a young peasant came for me - I was then a young priest still - and took me to his dying mother. On entering one of these villages, the dogs fell on us with ferocious barks and howls, evidently wanting to throw themselves on me and tear me to pieces.

"Fear not, father,' said my driver, 'they're welcoming you in their doggy language.'

It was impossible to make out what else the orator said because of the extraordinary noise, which drowned even the tinkling of the president's bell...

Martyrdom

In the life of Archbishop John there were some circumstances which for a while seemed enigmatic. For a long time his slanderers reproached him for the fact that he lived alone, without a cell-attendant. "He is afraid of witnesses," they said.

But when his well-wishers asked him about this, he replied that it was better for him to live alone. Various people came to him, and, besides, he did not want to subject anyone to danger. The meaning of these words became clear only after his martyric death.

And indeed, people of the most various sorts would come to see the archbishop. Famous foreign prelates would come, and poor people and some suspicious-looking ragged creatures. To the end he maintained some sort of underground ties with Russia, and he received information from there by ways known to him alone. No matter how hard the communists tried to seal Russia hermetically, still people would go there and back, and Archbishop John was some kind of transfer point. But he knew how to keep quiet, and hardly anyone knew the details of this aspect of his activities.

Archbishop John was dangerous to the Bolsheviks not only because of his outspoken attacks on them in the Seim and in his sermons, but also because of these "catacomb" activities. And they considered him so dangerous that they killed him. The generally accepted version of his death, which comes from his brother, Anton Pommer:-

Archbishop John was living in his archiepiscopal dacha on Kish lake, where he used to go to recover from the rheumatism he suffered from living in the damp cathedral cellar. Sobinov, a famous singer and a friend of the archbishop's, was passing through Riga. He called on the archbishop, and

when the archbishop let him in - his murderers also pushed their way in. Sobinov died the same day in his hotel in mysterious circumstances.

Firemen were called at two o'clock in the morning, and found the archbishop's residence in frightful disorder: cupboards and drawers had been thrown out, the desk had been rummaged, and furniture had been overturned. The archbishop had evidently been wounded in the hall, had been carried on the leaf of a door to the attic, had been tied down on the carpenter's bench (Vladyka liked to do carpentry in his free time), had been tortured and then set alight with kerosene. An examination of his lungs revealed that he had still been alive at this time, for there was smoke in his lungs. Both stoves in the hall were burning, and in them some papers (probably papers incriminating the Latvian communists in treasonable activity) had been burned. The dacha itself was greatly damaged by fire.

The crime was never properly investigated or explained. But the people knew the truth. At the funeral the whole city was in mourning; 100,000 people - about a quarter of the population of Riga - were in the streets, and over one hundred Orthodox priests together with several representatives of other faiths were present.

A Russian student, M.I. Dobrotvorsky, saw the archbishop, vested and surrounded by unknown worshippers with shining faces, praying beside his body. The body of the archbishop was accompanied by a vast crowd from the cathedral to the Holy Protection Cemetery, where a small chapel was later raised over the grave. Archbishop John died for Christ and the Orthodox Faith on October 12, 1934.

20. HOLY HIEROMARTYR DEMETRIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF GDOV

and those with him

Archbishop Demetrius (Lyubimov) was born on September 15, 1857 in Oranienbaum into the family of Protopriest Gabriel Markovich Lyubimov (1820-1899), a well-known benefactor and outstanding church-builder and friend of St. John of Kronstadt. The Lyubimovs were from Tambov province.

The future archbishop finished his studies at the St. Petersburg Theological seminary in 1878, and then graduated from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy in 1882 with the degree of candidate of theology. On graduating from the academy he was appointed reader at the Russian church of St. Nicholas in Stuttgart, where the priest was his elder brother Sergius, who later became the rector of the Russian church in Nice. After serving for two years in Stuttgart, Demetrius returned to Oranienbaum, and on September 11, 1884 was appointed teacher of Latin in the local St. Demetrius theological school.

Having married Agrippina Ivanovna Chistyakova, the young teacher was ordained to the priesthood on May 6, 1886 in St. Isaac's cathedral in St. Petersburg by Archbishop Palladius (Rayev) of Kazan and Sviyazhsk, and at the request of his father was appointed to the palace church of St. Panteleimon in Oranienbaum. From September 5, 1895 he took the place of his father as rector of the city church of St. Michael the Archangel.

By 1898 Fr. Demetrius had five children: Sergius, Demetrius, Anna, Gabriel and Nadezhda. A younger son Demetrius may have been born later.

On September 12, 1898 Fr. Demetrius was transferred to St. Petersburg to the big parish church of the Protection of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Kolomna (Sadovaya street), St. Petersburg, where he served until 1925. This church carried out a wide range of charitable works; it ran an orphanage, old age homes, schools, etc. It was located near Senny marketplace, made famous by Dostoyevsky's writings, where the poor and outcasts of society were to be found. Fr. Demetrius had a great love for the poor and his selfless labours for them well justified his surname Lyubimov, meaning "beloved".

On May 14, 1903 he was raised to the rank of protopriest.

After the revolution Fr. Demetrius' wife died. His surviving children were looked after by **Schema-Nun Anastasia** (in the world Alexandra Georgievna Kulikova). By 1935 only Vera remained alive.

On September 6 (5), 1922, Fr. Demetrius was arrested for resistance to renovationism and on September 14 was sentenced to three years' exile. On September 26 he was sent to Uralsk, and at the beginning of 1923 was

transferred to Tedzhen in Turkestan. On March 1, 1925 he was released, and on March 31 returned to Petrograd. In July, 1925, Fr. Demetrius was tonsured into the mantia in the Danilov monastery in Moscow and raised to the rank of archimandrite.

On December 30 / January 12, 1925/26, he was consecrated Bishop of Gdov, a vicariate of the Petrograd diocese by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and other bishops, but continued to serve in the church of the Protection.

In July, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius issued his famous declaration submitting to Soviet power. In the middle of August Bishop Demetrius, Protopriest Alexander Sovetov and other clergy of the Leningrad diocese sent a letter to Metropolitan Joseph expressing their disagreement with the church position of Metropolitan Sergius. While continuing to serve in the Protection church, Bishop Demetrius now preferred to serve in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, where they did not commemorate Metropolitan Sergius' supporter, Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) of Peterhof, commemorating instead Metropolitan Joseph. In December he wrote to the clergy of Siverskaya station: "We had to change our relationship to him [Metropolitan Sergius] only when it was discovered that the epistle [Declaration] was beginning to exert a powerful influence on purely church affairs and to distort the face of the Church not only canonically, but also dogmatically."

On December 12, 1927, Bishop Demetrius, Protopriest Basil Veryuzhsky, I.M. Andreyevsky and Professor Sergius Semyonovich Abramovich-Baranovsky were received in Moscow by Metropolitan Sergius. Bishop Demetrius handed him an appeal by six Petrograd bishops; Fr. Basil gave him one written in the name of the clergy, which had been written by Protopriest Theodore Andreyev; and Andreyevsky gave him one written in the name of the church intelligentsia and written by Professor Abramovich-Baranovsky. The letters called on Sergius to abandon his present church policy, stop transferring bishops arbitrarily and return to the position adopted by Patriarch Tikhon.

Sergius read everything slowly and attentively, but occasionally broke off to make a comment.

"Here you are protesting, while many other groups recognize me and express their approval," he said. "I cannot take account of everyone and please everyone and each group. Each of you judges from your bell-tower, but I act for the good of the Russian Church."

"We also, Vladyko," we objected, "want to work for the good of the whole Church. And then: we are not just one of many small groups, but express the church-social opinion of the Leningrad diocese composed of eight bishops - the better part of the clergy. I express the opinion of hundreds of my friends

and acquaintances and, I hope, thousands of likeminded scientific workers of the Leningrad diocese, while S.A. represents broad popular circles.

“You are hindered in accepting my appeal by a counter-revolutionary political ideology,” said Metropolitan Sergius, “which was condemned by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon,” and he got out one of the papers signed by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon.

“No, Vladyko, it is not our political convictions, but our religious conscience that does not allow us to accept that which your conscience allows you to accept. We are in complete agreement with his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon (in the indicated paper). We also condemn counter-revolutionary speeches. We stand on the point of view of the condemnation of your declaration made by Solovki. Do you know this epistle from Solovki?”

“This appeal was signed by one man (Bishop Basil Zelentsov), but others approve of me. Do you know that I was accepted and approved by Metropolitan Peter himself?”

“Forgive us, Vladyko, that is not quite right. It was not the metropolitan himself. But did you hear this through Bishop Basil?”

“Yes, but how do you know?”

“We know this from the words of Bishop Basil. Metropolitan Peter said that he ‘understands [ponimaiet]’, but does not ‘accept [prinimaiet] you. But has Metropolitan Peter not written anything to you?”

“You must know that I have no communications with him!” said Metropolitan Sergius.

“They why, Vladyko, do you say that Metropolitan Peter himself recognized you?”

“Well, what’s special in commemorating the authorities?” said Metropolitan Sergius. “Since we recognized them, we also pray for them. Did we not pray for the tsar, for Nero and the rest?”

“But is it possible to pray for the Antichrist?” we asked.

“No, that is impossible.”

“But can you vouch that this is not the power of the Antichrist?”

“I can vouch for it. The Antichrist must come for three and a half years, but in this case ten years have already passed.”

“But after all, is this not the spirit of the Antichrist, who does not confess that Christ has come in the flesh?”

“This spirit has always been with us from the time of Christ to our days. What antichrist is this, I do not recognize him!”

“Forgive us, Vladyko, you ‘do not recognize him’. Only an elder can say that. But since there is the possibility that this is the antichrist, we do not pray [for him]. Besides, from the religious point of view our rulers are not an authority.”

“How not an authority?”

“A hierarchy is called an authority when not only someone is subject to me, but I myself am subject to someone higher than myself, etc., and all this goes up to God as the source of every authority!”

“Well, that’s a subtle philosophy!”

“The pure in heart simply feel this. But if one reasons, then one must reason subtly, since the question is new, profound, complex and subject to conciliar discussion, and not such a simplified understanding as you give it.”

“But prayer for those in exile and prison is excluded because they have made a political demonstration out of this.”

“And when, Vladyko, will the tenth beatitude be repealed? After all, it, too, can be seen as a demonstration.”

“It will not be repealed, it is part of the liturgy!”

“Prayer for the exiles is also part of the liturgy!”

“My name must be raised in order to distinguish the Orthodox from ‘Borisovschina’, who commemorate Metropolitan Peter but do not recognize me.”

“But do you know, Vladyko, that your name is now pronounced in the renovationist churches?”

“That’s only a trick!”

“Then ‘Borisovschina’ is also a trick!”

“Well, what about the Synod, what don’t you like about it?”

"We do not recognize it, we don't trust it, but we trust you for the time being. You are the deputy of the Patriarchal locum tenens, but the Synod is some kind of personal secretariat attached to you, is it?"

"No, it is a co-ruling organ."

"So without the Synod you yourself can do nothing?"

"[after a long period not wanting to reply] Well, yes, without conferring with it."

"We ask you to report nothing about our matter to the Synod. We do not trust it and do not recognize it. We have come personally to you."

"Why don't you like Metropolitan Seraphim?"

"Can it be that you don't know, Vladyko?"

"That's all slander and gossip."

"We haven't come to quarrel with you, but to declare to you from the many who have sent us that we cannot, our religious conscience does not allow us to recognize, the course that you have embarked on. Stop, for the sake of Christ, stop!"

"This position of yours is called confessing. You have a halo..."

"But what must a Christian be?"

"There are confessors and martyrs. But there are also diplomats and guides. But every sacrifice is accepted! Remember Cyprian of Carthage."

"Are you saving the Church?"

"Yes, I am saving the Church."

"The Church does not need salvation, but you yourself are being saved through her."

"Well, of course, from the religious point of view it is senseless to say: 'I am saving the Church'. But I'm talking about the external position of the Church."

"And Metropolitan Joseph?"

"You know him only from one side. No, he categorically cannot be returned."

According to another account, Bishop Demetrius - who was then 70 years old - fell to his knees before Sergius and exclaimed:

"Vladyka! Listen to us, in the name of Christ!"

Metropolitan Sergius immediately raised him up from his knees, seated him in an armchair, and said in a firm and somewhat irritated voice:

"What is there to listen to? Everything you have written has been written by others earlier, and to all this I have already replied many times clearly and definitely. What remains unclear to you?"

"Vladyka!" began Bishop Demetrius in a trembling voice with copious tears. "At the time of my consecration you told me that I should be faithful to the Orthodox Church and, in case of necessity, should also be prepared to lay down my own life for Christ. And now such a time of confession has come and I wish to suffer for Christ. But you, by your Declaration, instead of a path to Golgotha propose that we stand on the path of collaboration with a God-fighting regime that persecutes and blasphemes Christ. You propose that we rejoice with its joys and sorrow with its sorrows... Our rulers strive to annihilate religion and the Church and rejoice at the successes of their anti-religious propaganda. This joy of theirs is the source of our sorrow. You propose that we thank the Soviet government for its attention to the needs of the Orthodox population. But how is this attention expressed? In the murder of hundreds of bishops, thousands of priests, and millions of faithful. In the defilement of holy things, the mockery of relics, in the destruction of an immense number of churches and the annihilation of all monasteries. Surely it would be better if they did not give us such 'attention!'"

"Our government," Metropolitan Sergius suddenly interrupted the bishop, "has persecuted the clergy only for political crimes."

"That is a slander!" Bishop Demetrius cried out heatedly.

"We wish to obtain a reconciliation of the Orthodox Church with the governing regime," Metropolitan Sergius continued with irritation, "while you are striving to underline the counter-revolutionary character of the Church. Consequently, you are counter-revolutionaries, whereas we are entirely loyal to the Soviet regime!"

"That is not true!" exclaimed Bishop Demetrius heatedly. "That is another slander against the confessors and martyrs, those who have been shot and those who are languishing in concentration camps and in banishment... What counter-revolutionary act did the executed Metropolitan Benjamin perform? What is 'counter-revolutionary' in the position of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa?"

"And Karlovtsy Council [of the Russian Church in exile], in your opinion, also did not have a political character?" Metropolitan Sergius interrupted him again.

"There was no Karlovtsy Council in Russia," Bishop Demetrius replied quietly, "and many martyrs in the concentration camps knew nothing of this Council."

"I personally," continued the bishop, "am a completely apolitical man, and if I myself had to accuse myself to the GPU, I couldn't imagine anything of which I am guilty before the Soviet regime. I only sorrow and grieve, seeing the persecution against religion and the Church. We pastors are forbidden to speak of this, and we are silent. But to the question whether there is any persecution against religion and the Church in the USSR, I could not reply otherwise than affirmatively. When they proposed to you, Vladyka, that you write your Declaration, why did you not reply like Metropolitan Peter, that you can keep silence, but cannot say what is untrue?"

"And where is the untruth?" exclaimed Metropolitan Sergius.

"In the fact," replied Bishop Demetrius, "that persecution against religion, the 'opium of the people' according to Marxist dogma, not only exists among us, but in its cruelty, cynicism and blasphemy has passed all limits!"

The two-hour interview failed to convince Metropolitan Sergius. And so, on December 26, in his flat at Kanonerskaya street 29, Bishop Demetrius together with Bishop Sergius of Narva signed an act breaking communion in prayer with Metropolitan Sergius until such time, as he wrote to the priests of the diocese on January 4/17, "as a complete Local Council of the Russian Church, at which will be represented the entire active episcopate - i.e. the present exile-confessors - shall justify by its conciliar authority our way of acting, or until such time as Metropolitan Sergius will come to himself and repent of his sins not only against the canonical order of the Church, but also dogmatically against her person (blaspheming against the sanctity of the exploit of the confessors by casting doubt on the purity of their Christian convictions, as if they were mixed up in politics), against her conciliarity (by his and his Synod's acts of coercion), against her apostolicity (by subjecting the Church to worldly rules and by his inner break - while preserving a false unity - with Metropolitan Peter, who did not give Metropolitan Sergius authorization for his latest acts, beginning with the epistle (Declaration) of July 16/29, 1927). 'Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions' (II Thessalonians 2.15)."

Vladyka Demetrius also considered that "only royal power can be a lawful power". And at his interrogation he said of Soviet power: "We consider that Soviet power, according to our religious reasoning, is not for us a State power that we can submit to. For us an authority is a hierarchy, when not only is someone subject to me, but I myself am subject to someone higher than

myself, that is, everything goes up to God, as the source of every authority. In other words, such an authority is the anointed of God, the monarch... We have not hunted after quantity of believers. For us it was important that the members of our organization and our supporters should remain firm, fearing nothing. Our directive, that is, the necessity, if need be, of 'suffering until blood', must be understood in the sense of martyrdom."

On December 30, Sergius banned Bishop Demetrius from serving. Bishop Demetrius expressed his attitude to this ban in a letter to **Fr. Alexander Sidorov**, rector of the church of the Elevation of the Cross on Vozdvizhenka, Moscow, as follows: "Do not be disturbed by any restrictions that the apostates from the Christian Faith are preparing for you. No interdicts or ejections of you from your rank by Metropolitan Sergius, his Synod or his bishops are valid for you. As long as there remains just one firmly Orthodox bishop, have communion with him. If the Lord permits it, and you remain without a bishop, then may the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, be with you all, inspiring you to solve all the questions which you may encounter on your path in the spirit of True Orthodoxy."

At this time Bishop Demetrius was supported by **Bishop Sergius** (Druzhinin) of Kopor, **Bishop Basil** (Dokhturov) of Kargopol and **Bishop Barsanuphius** (Vikhvelin) of Nikolsk. To these should be added the former Petrograd vicar, **Archbishop Gabriel** (Voyevodin) of Yamburg, who was living in retirement in Vitebsk. In exile at that time were other bishops who thought like him: **Bishop Victor** (Ostrovidov) of Glazov and **Bishop Maximus** (Zhizhilenko) of Serpukhov, and in freedom still – **Bishop Ioasaph** (Popov) of Dmitriev, who was living in Yekaterinoslav (then Dnepropetrovsk). He was also in contact with the canonical head of the Russian Church, **Metropolitan Peter** (Polyansky) of Krutitsa, who was in exile in Siberia at the time and who wrote to Metropolitan Joseph: "We bishops must ourselves reject Metropolitan Sergius".

Vladyka Demetrius was also supported by forty-two churches in the Petrograd diocese (including monasteries and monastic podvoryes), and in the Novgorod diocese – by the parish of the Spassky church in Novgorod, the churches in the villages of Velebitsy and Makovishchi, and the men's Theophany Perekom monastery on Ilmen lake.

On January 4/17, 1928 Bishop Demetrius wrote "to Father Superiors": "Metropolitan Sergius... has sinned not only against the canonical order of the Church, but also dogmatically against her person, blaspheming the holiness of the exploit of her confessors by suspecting that their Christian convictions were impure and supposedly mixed with politics, against her Catholicity – by their and the synod's violent actions, against her Apostolicity – by subjecting the Church to secular orders and by the inner break with Metropolitan Peter (while preserving a false unity), who did not give Metropolitan Sergius the right to carry out his recent actions..."

On January 25, Metropolitan Sergius retired Vladyka while keeping him under ban, mercilessly declaring that for insubordination "our Church threatens direct excommunication and anathema, depriving those guilty of even the right to a conciliar judgement (!)". On February 8, Metropolitan Joseph appointed him temporary administrator of the Petrograd diocese. With the agreement of Metropolitan Joseph, whose advice he always sought, he also accepted many other parishes under his omophorion from as far afield as the Urals, Krasnoyarsk and Archangelsk. Indeed, until his arrest Archbishop Demetrius was the most active and authoritative of all the bishops of the Catacomb Church who were still in freedom.

On March 27, Vladyka Demetrius was again retired and placed under ban by Metropolitan Sergius. In this decree Vladyka was accused of "deviating from Orthodoxy", of calling on the people "to break canonical communion in prayer with Metropolitan Sergius... and the bishops who think like him", and of calling all the sergianist churches "neo-renovationist churches".

According to one (doubtful) source, Vladyka Demetrius signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church, which took place between March and August, 1928, through **Protopriest Victorin Dobronravov**.

On Christmas Day, December 25, 1928 Bishop Demetrius was raised to the rank of archbishop by Metropolitan Joseph.

At the beginning of 1929, the Bolsheviki had laid a tax on the sale of candles in churches. The churches which had separated from Metropolitan Sergius then refused to sell candles. This served as an excuse for the arrest of Archbishop Demetrius on the night of November 28-29, 1929. At that time he was living in a two-storeyed house on Segalevskaya (then - Yunij Proletarij) street in the village of Taitsy, not far from Gatchina. This belonged to the young priest Fr. Peter Belavsky, the rector of the local church of St. Alexis of Moscow. Together with them the chekists also took Protopriest Peter Ivanovich Belavsky, Vladyka's cell-attendant **Deacon Paul Morozov** and his faithful housekeeper, **Nun Anastasia** (Kulikova).

At dawn, as they were being taken to the railway station, parishioners who met them silently bowed to them. Suddenly Vladyka Demetrius said:

"Forgive me, Father Peter, that you also have come into suffering because of me!"

The chekists had "mercifully" allowed Fr. Peter's wife, Xenia, to accompany her husband. At the crossroads she parted from them and received Vladyka's last blessing. On returning to her emptied house and her two daughters, matushka sat by their beds and explained to the elder daughter, Xenia, what had happened...

That evening and the following day all the clergy of the Petrograd cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ ("The Saviour on the Blood") were arrested: **Protopriests** Basil Veryuzhsky, **John Nikitin, Alexander and Sergius Tikhomirov, Priests** Nicephorus Strelnikov and Nicholas Prozorov from the St. Panteleimon church on Piskarevka, **Hieromonk Gabriel (Vladimirov), Fr. Nicholas Zagovorsky, Fr. Sergius Alexeyev, Fr. Basil Vertosky,** and also many monastics, including **Nun Cyra,** and about **15 laypeople.** The arrests continued until March, 1930 and included among others **11 monks** of the Theophany Perekom monastery near Novgorod, and also **clergy and laity** of the Pskov diocese. In all forty-six people were indicted under article 58-10-11 of the criminal code, as belonging to the fictitious "All-Union counter-revolutionary church-monarchist organization 'The True Orthodox Church'". Vladyka himself was accused of being "the leader of the church group, 'Defence of True Orthodoxy'". The operation began throughout the whole country in the spring of 1929 and ended in 1932.

Vladyka was put in solitary confinement in the prison on Voinova (the former Shpalernaya) street. He was charged with counter-revolutionary activity as the head "of the centre of a counter-revolutionary monarchist organization of churchmen calling themselves 'Josephites'". From April he was placed in solitary confinement in Butyrki prison, Moscow in connection with the affair of the "All-Union Centre of the True Orthodox Church".

On August 4/17, 1930, he was sentenced to ten years in a political isolator in Yaroslavl. In the autumn of 1930 Archbishop Demetrius was investigated in connection with the affair of "the All-Union Centre of the True Orthodox Church". On September 3, 1931 he was sentenced to be shot. However, "in view of his advanced age", the sentence was commuted to ten years in prison. According to the witness of one Catacomb Christian, he was savagely tortured in prison. According to a sergianist source, Vladyka "behaved calmly and firmly during interrogations". From 1931 to 1935 he was in Yaroslavl isolation prison, and in December, 1935 the Political Red Cross told his daughter, Vera Dmitrievna, that he had died on May 17, 1935 - according to one source, in the arms of **Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin),** the future hieromartyr. His body was buried in a cemetery next to the prison.

21. HOLY HIEROMARTYR SERAPHIM, BISHOP OF DMITROV **and those with him**

Bishop Seraphim, in the world Nicholas Ioannovich Zvezdinsky, was born on April 7, 1883, into a family of yedinovertsy, converts from the Old Ritualists. His father had secretly left his father, a prominent member of the priestless sect of the Old Ritualists, and then been ordained at a young age in St. Petersburg. John Zvezdinsky set about converting his erring brothers to the Church of Christ. Soon his zealous words had won him many followers. His brothers became yedinovertsy, and in Moscow the schismatics joined the Orthodox yedinovertsy Church in their thousands.

Seraphim was called Nicholas in Holy Baptism in honour of the hierarch St. Nicholas. In the second year of his life he lost his meek and prayerful mother. Thereafter he lived under the supervision of his father, his kind nurse and his sister. Early in the morning he would be brought into the church for Mattins, where he would go to sleep. His father was very insistent that he should not remain at home, saying:

"Let him sleep, but in the church."

The strict customs of yedinovertsy worship instilled in the young Nicholas the habit of attending services without laziness; he learned chanting and reading on the kliros. He would stand on a little stool by the analoy, look into the Psalter and clearly and loudly read the words of the Prophet David. Once he went through the royal doors into the altar, to the astonishment of his father, who was standing by the altar. The people praying were not offended, but saw in this a sign from God that the young boy would himself become a church-server standing before the altar of God.

After leaving primary school near the yedinovertsy church in 1895, Nicholas was transferred to the Zaikonospasskoye school in Nikolskaya street in Moscow. On the way to the school there were many chapels, and the young pupil and his companions did not pass them by but went into all of them, praying for success in their studies. With the kopeks given to him for his breakfast, Nicholas would buy candles and place them before the wonderworking icons: to the All-good Quick Hearer, to the Great Martyr Panteleimon in his chapel, to the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God at the Vladimir gates, to St. Sergius at the Elijah gates, or to St. Nicholas in Nikolskaya street.

Kolya was good at his studies, but suffered a lot from his boisterous school-fellows, who, seeing his quiet and meek bearing, would take away his breakfast or the little money which his father had given him for his schooling and food.

After leaving the school in 1899, Kolya entered Moscow theological seminary. Two of his peers there were the future bishops Gabriel Krasnovsky and Nicanor Guduchi. The young Kolya was very attracted to another quiet orphan brought up without a mother by a nanny - Tanya, the daughter of some neighbouring factory-owners who considered themselves higher than clergy children. Kolya did not draw close to Tanya, but only admired her from a distance.

At this point the Lord visited Kolya with a wonderful visitation. Kolya fell ill with inflammation of the lymph glands. This illness had carried a classmate of his to the grave, and the young Nicholas was bound to go the same way. He suffered unbearable pain. For two months he could not sleep. His temperature was high. The doctors explained to the sorrowing father that the infection of the blood was irreversible and they had no way of saving him.

Having lost his wife, and standing now at the death-bed of his beloved son, the father sobbed inconsolably, begging the Lord to save the life of his son. The Lord heard his prayer.

The abbot of Sarov used to visit Fr. John in connection with the conversion of the schismatics, of whom there were many near Sarov. This time the igumen brought with him an icon of the God-pleasing Sarov elder Seraphim who was beginning to be glorified throughout Russia by his miracles.

"Father Protopriest!" said the igumen. "Do not despair of the life of your son. The elder Seraphim works glorious miracles and is able to intercede before the Lord for the healing of your Kolya. Ask him - he will console you!"

Touched, the father went up to the bed of his suffering son Kolya and said to him:

"Here's your doctor, Kolya, ask him, and he will heal you!"

And the dying youth quietly and firmly took hold of the icon of the elder Seraphim in his hand and tearfully began to pray for help and healing. His prayer was heard. He had not slept for two months already, but now in his tears he softly fell into a peaceful sleep. And, O wonder! On waking, he did not feel the slightest pain, but everything around him was wet from the pus which had flowed out.

"What's this?" the thought flashed through his head. "Am I healed?"

And he felt a heavenly sweetness in his heart and clearly knew that he was delivered from the terrible disease.

The news of the miraculous healing through the prayers of the elder Seraphim were immediately sent to Sarov: "To his Reverence, the Abbot of the Sarov monastery, Igumen Hierotheus. Your Reverence, deeply respected

Igumen Hierotheus! It is good to keep the secret of the king, but it is commendable to preach the wonderful works of God, says the Scripture.

"I have the honour to inform your Reverence of the following event in my family: my son Nicholas, 18 years of age and a pupil in the third class of the Moscow theological seminary, fell ill this last January 12, 1902 with a swelling under the right armpit (lymphatic inflammation). At that time I informed you of my son's illness and suffering. His illness got worse from hour to hour, and the patient became exhausted and began to have fainting spells. This lasted until January 28. On that unforgettable day, at six o'clock in the evening, I received from your Reverence the book The Life of the Elder Seraphim and his icon on white tin-plate. I brought this icon to my suffering son; I asked him to cross himself and with faith to kiss the image of the saint. With difficulty he crossed himself, kissed the icon and placed it on the painful place... O wonderful miracle! The illness disappeared, the sufferings ceased, the patient became calm. During the night, as he was sitting in his bed, he was praying and several times kissed the icon. At 5 o'clock in the morning he lost consciousness and fell asleep; an hour later he woke up and asked for his sister, saying:

"'I'm all wet, I must have been sweating profusely'.

"But she saw that the abscess had burst, and that the bed and the bedsheets were all covered with pus. At the present time my son is completely healed.

"Such is the mercy of God which has been shown to my son Nicholas through the prayers of the holy Elder Seraphim. I and my children witness to this with our signatures and the seal of our names. Your Reverence's fervently grateful fellow-struggler in prayer and obedient servant, Protopriest John Zvezdinsky, dean of the yedinovertsy churches and of the Moscow yedinovertsy church of the Holy Trinity.

"July 30, 1902, No. 144, Moscow. Nicholas Zvezdinsky, Michael Zvezdinsky, Anna Zvezdinsky."

This healing was the more miraculous in that, as became clear at the inquiry, two doctors, an allopath and a homeopath, were called to the side of the sick youth. Both witnessed to the seriousness of the patient's condition. But their remedies did not help him, and the doctors themselves did not ascribe the healing to them. The witnesses of the event and the sick youth himself firmly believed that the healing was the work of God through the prayerful intercession of the God-pleaser Seraphim.

The doctors gave their witness concerning the miraculous recovery under oath.

On receiving the news, the Holy Synod petitioned the emperor concerning the opening and glorification of the holy relics of the Elder Seraphim, who

was unceasingly pouring forth streams of miraculous help to all those who called on him with faith. When the emperor acceded to their request, the Synod ordered Protopriest John Zvezdinsky to compose the service to the God-pleasing wonderworker Seraphim of Sarov, which Fr. John did with zeal, displaying a wonderful gift and warmth of faith and love for the Elder Seraphim.

The troparion and kontakion were composed by Fr. John in gratitude for the saving of the life of his son.

The youth Nicholas, who had been healed in body, was also healed in soul. His heart no longer yearned for Tanya, it burned with love for God and his merciful healer, it burned with desire to give his miraculously prolonged life to the glory of God.

Soon he became a reader in the seminary and began to preach to the glory of the Holy Trinity.

His fiery words set the hearts of people on fire, his listeners burned with love for God and the Church of Christ. Hierarchs, teachers and students marvelled at the depth of his words. He was particularly eloquent when speaking about Holy Communion.

Nicholas Zvezdinsky graduated as one of the best students, and in 1905 entered the Moscow Theological Academy.

In his third year Kolya lost his father, who died on January 6, 1908. His father's house was occupied by his successor, another rector of the Trinity-Vvedensky church. His sister was living with her husband, and his nanny went to live in the country.

At this point the Lord sent Nicholas a spiritual father who took the place of his father. Near the Holy Trinity Lavra in the quiet Zosima hermitage there lived a hermit, **Hieroschemamonk Fr. Alexis**. The fiery student was led to him.

Fr. Alexis embraced his young spiritual son with all his heart, took him completely under his direction and became his elder. Kolya felt that through the power of the prayers of the holy hermit everything earthly had left him and his spiritual heart was set on fire. He conceived a desire for a pure monastic life. At the shrine of St. Sergius, Kolya, together with two student friends of his from the Academy, vowed to devote the whole of his life to God in monasticism.

The first student received the tonsure and became the future Archbishop Philip of Astrakhan. The second was attracted by a girl and broke his vow. But just before his marriage he unexpectedly fell down dead.

"God exists, and is a jealous God," said the rector of the Academy in his funeral speech.

The youth who had vowed to betroth himself to God was not allowed by God to betray Him, and the jealous God took him to Himself before he could betray Him. The sorrowful bride decided to devote herself to God for her betrothed; she took the tonsure and by her strict fulfilment of her monastic vows strove to redeem her guilt before God of having drawn the youth onto another path than that which he had sworn to follow.

The young Nicholas Ivanovich fulfilled the oath that he had made at the shrine of St. Sergius.

On September 26, 1908, he received the monastic tonsure and was ordained to the diaconate. The enemy fought strongly against the ascetic, not wanting him to become a monk. By night he was assailed by fears with regard to everything spiritual. When this did not work, the devil used the girl whom Nicholas Zvezdinsky had loved so long and so tenderly. Unexpectedly she began to look for him. But although the young student felt drawn towards her and earthly happiness, still, calling on God, he rejected this temptation and hastened his steps to the elder Alexis, who in his hermit's cell blessed him not to delay in taking the tonsure.

On September 26, the rector of the Academy Eudocimus tonsured the third-year student Nicholas Zvezdinsky in the Academy church dedicated to the Protecting Veil of the All-Holy Mother of God during the all-night vigil. He gave his vows loudly, and was vested in everything monastic. His face shone with an unearthly light, and the Holy Spirit played on his ascetic face.

On October 22, the feast of the Mother of God of Kazan, he was ordained to the diaconate. And on July 8, 1909, the other feast of the Kazan Mother of God, he was ordained to the priesthood.

But soon the enemy took up arms against the warrior of Christ. Terror, fear, anguish, darkness and the despondency of solitude rolled in waves over his soul. Hell came up to his heart... then a terrible crash, the church collapsed, falling through onto the ground floor, the iconostasis was in pieces. The monk trembled, crossed himself and suddenly a terrible guffaw rent the air. The ascetic came to - everything was in its place, the church was intact, a quiet prayerful twilight and a grace-filled warmth filled the church.

In 1909, Hieromonk Seraphim graduated from Theological Academy with the degree of master of theology. Since he was the best preacher and a well-known ascetic, Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow, the future hieromartyr, left him in the Moscow diocese as a teacher of church history in the Bethany seminary. There Fr. Seraphim won the hearts of the students by his example and words; like their teacher they burned with desire to be faithful servers of

the altar of God until their death. He was also a teacher in the Moscow theological seminary.

But the enemy did not sleep. He wanted to change the students' good opinion of their teacher. He insinuated into their midst an adulterous woman of great physical beauty, high rank and subtle charms. Under the guise of spiritual striving she tried to win over the ascetic Fr. Seraphim, loading him with valuable gifts and presents. But the warrior of Christ was very attentive to himself and did not give in to Satan's charms and wiles. He understood his subtle nets and guarded himself in a cell inaccessible to the female sex. And he refused to accept her rich gifts. Everybody condemned her and sincerely took pity on him. The devil, who wanted to become master in the academic institutions, could not stand Fr. Seraphim, who was a model of meekness, a rule of faith and abstinence, and a fine teacher.

In his sorrows Fr. Seraphim found joy under the roof of the Chudov monastery, where his spiritual father and friend Archimandrite Arsenius (Zhadanovksy), the future hieromartyr, was living. Always immersed in prayer and examining himself, the good pastor of a numerous monastic flock, Fr. Arsenius was of the same mind in everything with Fr. Seraphim. After the noisy worldliness of the seminary, Fr. Seraphim found here the monastic discipline and prayer-life that he was looking for. Fr. Arsenius immediately embraced him as a friend, and the elder of the Chudov monastery, Igumen Gerasimus, prophesied to Nicholas Ivanovich that he would become the abbot of the monastery.

On September 21, 1912, Fr. Seraphim was given the post of teacher of homiletics, liturgics and pastorship in the Moscow theological seminary.

It was 1914. Fr. Arsenius was consecrated bishop of Serpukhov. A successor was needed for the Chudov monastery. The choice fell on Fr. Seraphim, who was well-known for his fiery sermons within the walls of the monastery, and on June 13 (10), 1914 he was appointed to this post with promotion to the rank of archimandrite, being at the same time inspector of the church schools of Moscow. From 1915 to 1916 he was also president of the Moscow section of the Orthodox Kamchatka Brotherhood.

Vladyka Arsenius saw in him a faithful helper, fellow struggler in prayer and friend; the brotherhood - a good leader and a lofty example of the monastic life; the parishioners - a wonderful consoler, director and teacher. But the temptress Eve came here, too, and tried to turn Fr. Arsenius and the brotherhood against the abbot. She embarrassed everyone by her presence, always appearing near Archimandrite Seraphim. But God preserved His warrior - everyone saw that he was chaste.

The revolution broke, and the Church was not unaffected. Soon the order came to abandon the Chudov monastery. The Kremlin came under bombardment, and the brotherhood of the monastery and the representatives

of the higher clergy of the Local Council of the Russian Church were escorted into the basement of the Chudov monastery, where, 300 years before, Patriarch Hermogenes, the pillar of the Orthodox Church and the single upholder of Orthodoxy in the whole of Russia, had been starved to death by the Poles. Here unceasing prayer was sent up for the salvation of the Orthodox Fatherland; everyone wept, fasted and prepared for Communion. Here, too, St. Alexis was brought in his simple white coffin; by his relics he was as if present with them praying for his Russian flock...

In August, 1918, the Chudov monastery was deserted. Fr. Seraphim sealed the precious remains of St. Alexis with his abbot's seal, as if wishing to preserve the valuable treasure from his enemies. In tears he said farewell to his guide and the founder of the monastery.

The brotherhood was transferred to the Novospassky monastery, but they were not given accommodation. Vladyka Arsenius and Fr. Seraphim thought of staying in the Zosima hermitage, but the monks there were frightened of them, as if with the arrival of the well-known people from the Kremlin their monastery, too, would be closed. They had to settle, in August, 1919 (1918), in a small house in the Seraphim-Znamensky skete of the women's community of the Protecting Veil under the solicitous care of the abbess of the skete, Matushka Tamara. There, in the woods, was a house-church in the name of St. Arsenius the Great. Vladyka Arsenius celebrated the Liturgy there everyday, while Fr. Seraphim was the chanter; no-one else was present.

And so the two friends prayed for all their children, for Orthodox Russia, for everyone. Soon their spiritual children from the Chudov monastery began to visit them. At this time Fr. Seraphim took no confessions. Vladyka Arsenius was the spiritual father of everyone. In this remote hermitage Fr. Seraphim imitated his heavenly protector, St. Seraphim. He devoted himself to prayer, reading the whole of the New Testament during the week - exactly as is written in the life of St. Seraphim. He also did physical work, chopping wood for fuel and making charcoal for the censer. In this way he prepared himself for the lofty apostolic feat that lay ahead of him.

In October, 1919, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon called him to himself. Bishop Eudocimus of Nizhegorod had asked the patriarch to give his agreement to the consecration of Fr. Seraphim Zvezdinsky to the see of Arzamas. However, the authorities did not allow him to go to Arzamas. So the patriarch, who was at that time choosing helpers, said:

"I need you," and appointed him bishop of Dmitrov, a vicariate of the Moscow diocese.

The day before the consecration, on the feast of St. Ignatius the Godbearer, Fr. Seraphim vividly described the thorny path of the hierarch of Christ.

"Batyushka," said his spiritual children, "why did you preach such a sorrowful sermon on such a significant and joyful day in your life?"

"Because it will be sorrowful," said Fr. Seraphim firmly.

On December 15 (21), Patriarch Tikhon and other hierarchs consecrated Fr. Seraphim to the episcopate in the Trinity podvorye. After the Liturgy, Patriarch Tikhon pointed out that it was the feast of St. Peter, the first metropolitan of All Russia, and expressed the desire that Vladyka Seraphim would be like him:

"Just as the Hierarch Peter was the support of the city of Moscow, so you must be the support of the city of Dmitrov."

After saying farewell to his friend Vladyka Arsenius, Vladyka Seraphim left for the city of Dmitrov. When the patriarch saw him off, he said: "Go along the apostolic path, do not be upset by the inconveniences of life and the lack of necessities, but endure everything that comes your way."

On arriving in Dmitrov, Bishop Seraphim found himself a place to live, built a house church in the name of St. Seraphim and organized church services. These services attracted many people. Soon the new archpastor's love for his flock and devotion to God raised the souls of the worshippers, and church life in Dmitrov began to flourish.

Where Vladyka served, there were his spiritual children. In Great Lent they stood in the church from morning to evening without feeling tired, and would not be parted from their father even for an hour. They accompanied him to his house, chanting and praising Christ, and could not be persuaded to leave until the door of the house closed behind him.

Vladyka gave himself totally to his flock. From the morning, after the daily Liturgy, crowds of people of all ranks and stations in life would come to him for advice and consolation. There were more than a hundred churches in his diocese, 300 hundred priests, 250 deacons and three monastic communities - for all he was father, comforter and pastor.

Even thirty years after he had been driven from the town into exile, people remembered his words and passed them on from mouth to mouth. One would recite his sermons by heart, another would recount incidents in his life in Dmitrov. There was no house in which his name was not known and practically none in which his portrait did not hang.

On December 12, 1921 Bishop Seraphim was arrested in Moscow and cast into Butyrki prison.

In January, 1922, Bishop Seraphim founded the brotherhood of the Life-creating Cross of the Lord in Dmitrov. Patriarch Tikhon had given his

blessing to the formation of brotherhoods, which were not meant to replace, but to complement the parishes in the new conditions of Soviet life. Vladyka knew and loved each one of his flock, and was constantly visiting them. His cell-attendant, who was used to these wanderings of his, used to say to him as they were walking together through the streets of Dmitrov:

"Vladyka, there's a light, aren't they waiting for us? We haven't managed to visit everyone!"

The bishop was assiduous in serving, and considered it his duty to confess everyone - he was never content with the practice of general confession that was beginning to spread everywhere in the 1920s. And he would say to his children:

"Never and nowhere, under no circumstances of life must the members of the brotherhood be ashamed of their holy Orthodox Faith..."

His zeal did not go unnoticed, and on November 29, 1922, he was arrested and imprisoned in a subterranean prison in Moscow. He was accused, in particular, of firmly resisting the renovationists, to whom he surrendered not even a single church in his diocese. For nine days Vladyka ate nothing, being fortified only by the Holy Gifts. Then he was transferred to Butyrki prison for five months. Here he experienced sufferings similar to those experienced by the martyrs of the first Christian centuries. Insects gnawed at his flesh, which tore away in chunks; his whole body was one bare lump of meat. But the Lord appeared to His suffering servant in prison and strengthened him, in memory of which he wrote an akathist to the Suffering Christ the Saviour which contained the following words: "Strengthen me, who am thoroughly exhausted, in the bearing of the saving cross which Thy right hand hath sent to me."

He was transferred to hospital. His heart began to fail, but the Lord preserved his life since it was needed for the Church and his beloved flock, who unceasingly prayed for him with tears. The parcels they sent were so big that the hierarch was able to feed many prisoners on them. And even here he did not cease to catch souls by his love for Christ. People who had apostasized from Christ the Saviour, who had not approached the Holy Mysteries for thirty years, confessed their sins to him and were again united to Christ.

He was in this prison for five months. On March 30, 1923 he was sentenced to two years' exile in the north and sent to the village of Vizinga, Zyryan region. In April, 1923 he was transferred to the Taganka prison. On May 1 he set off on his first exile, accompanied by several of his spiritual children. A large crowd of people accompanied their archpastor to the station, and for a long time his children lay on the ground, giving him their last earthly bow, until the train disappeared from view. Two nuns accompanied him on his journey, providing him with food and seeing to his clothing. The hierarch had

given away almost all his clothing to his fellow-prisoners. From Kotlas to Ust-Sysolsk he journeyed with Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich). In Ust-Sysolsk, where he arrived on May 16, he met Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, and also the Fudel family: Sergius and his sister Marusya. The hierarchs comforted each other and then parted again. Vladyka Seraphim was sent to the remote village of Vizinga, arriving on May 27. There, in a simple peasant's hut in an ocean of forests, the hierarch. He was accompanied by Monk Philaret of the Chudov monastery, and Fr. Ivan Suraviev, the dean of Dmitrov, who had been condemned with him. Soon a house church was built, and the everyday services took up all their free time. The exiled hierarch gave himself to prayer for his flock, while his flock remained faithful to their lawful hierarch, not joining the renovationists.

"Only here, in saving exile," wrote Vladyka Seraphim to his friend Vladyka Arsenius, "have I learned what seclusion and prayer is."

And here he received food and clothing from his spiritual children, who wrote to him about their sorrows and needs. Vladyka replied to them in writing, comforting them and not allowing the renovationists to build their nest in his diocese.

Thus passed two years.

On the day of the Annunciation, April 7, 1925, Vladyka Seraphim rejoiced at the news that he had been freed from exile. On the next day, however, he was greatly saddened to hear that the patriarch had died. On May 4, he arrived in Moscow, having stopped at Sergiev Posad for confession with his elder, Fr. Alexis. (According to one source, he signed the Act of April 12 handing over ecclesiastical power to Metropolitan Peter.)

The Church in Moscow was in a pitiful state. Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, the patriarch's successor, was not trusted by many of the pastors and archpastors of Moscow, and the venerable hierarchs did not want to submit to a hierarch who had only just become a monk. But the pure-hearted Vladyka Seraphim understood that the metropolitan was the most worthy successor to the patriarch. He knew that Patriarch Tikhon had been greatly comforted by Metropolitan Peter's devotion, faithfulness and love for him. And by supporting the locum tenens in his turn, Vladyka Seraphim helped to reconcile the Muscovite clergy with Metropolitan Peter.

Vladyka Seraphim spent the summer in the Borisoglebsk Anosin monastery in Moscow diocese. On November 11 Metropolitan Peter appointed Vladyka Seraphim, together with other vicar-bishops, to take his place in Moscow. He knew that he would not betray the Church of Christ.

In December, Vladyka retired to a wooded retreat twenty versts from Kubinki station in Zvenigorod uyezd, where there was a house church in honour of St. Sabbas of Zvenigorod. Quiet prayer gave peace to the soul of the

archpastor, and he clearly understood that the enemy would not allow Metropolitan Peter to take the helm of the Church again. And in order to preserve his independence, Vladyka Seraphim retreated further into the catacombs.

On June 13 (July), 1926 he was exiled to Arzamas. On July 5, 1926, he made a pilgrimage to Diveyevo. The timid abbess took fright at the unexpected arrival of the popular hierarch and began to constrain him and prevent him from performing Church services. Vladyka Seraphim suffered this for a long time, but finally by his humility and prayers he won over the abbess. And so every day he would celebrate the Liturgy behind closed doors in the underground church of the Mother of God "Console my Sorrow", praying for the monastery and his orphaned flock. After the Liturgy he would go round St. Seraphim's canal and recite "Virgin Mother of God, rejoice!", in accordance with St. Seraphim's rule, 150 times.

Every day he prayed in St. Seraphim's hermitage. And on July 19, the feast of the opening of the relics of St. Seraphim, he served in Sarov. (St. Seraphim's relics had been removed from the monastery in March, 1926.) Thousands of pilgrims participated in the festivities. But soon Vladyka was given the order to leave Sarov. Thus just as the first celebration of St. Seraphim at Sarov was linked with Fr. John and his son, the future Vladyka Seraphim, so the last hierarchical Liturgy in Sarov was celebrated by Vladyka Seraphim on August 15, 1926.

"Where do you want to go?" they asked the exiled archpastor.

"Only back to my diocese," replied the hierarch.

"That is impossible!" they replied.

September 22 was Vladyka's last day in Diveyevo. During the night he was ordered to go he did not know where. Then in pouring rain he and other members of the Diveyevo community, including Abbess Alexandra, were brought to Arzamas. Late at night the damp, dark walls of Arzamas prison received the tormented prisoners. In the morning the nuns who accompanied him brought him dry, clean clothing. Soon the prisoners were taken to Nizhni-Novgorod, where the basement of a threatening institution hid the archpastor from the eyes of those who loved him. In these difficult trials his gallstone illness got worse, and he was given over into the care of a nun who was his adopted daughter. He was released on October 8, and on October 17 he was ordered to appear before Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow

Vladyka Seraphim categorically refused to accept Sergius' infamous "declaration" of July, 1927, which placed the Church in more or less complete submission to the atheists.

"I am morally incapable of doing that which those who do not love Christ the Saviour want," was the reply of the wise confessor.

"Agree with the proposal," said Metropolitan Sergius, "otherwise you will not only land up beyond the Arctic circle, but your lot will be three times as bad as that of Metropolitan Peter."

At this point Vladyka produced a petition that he be retired, expressing thereby his refusal to submit his rank and conscience to those who did not love the Son of God and His glory.

Sergius, stunned by the decisive departure of the archpastor, hid Vladyka Seraphim's decision from all those round him in order that others should not follow his example and retire. According to Metropolitan Manuel, Archbishop Zenobius of Tambov was also present at this meeting. The two bishops refused to accede to Sergius' demand that they read out his declaration from the ambon to their flocks, which would have meant that they agreed with the declaration. Instead, the confessing bishops produced (from the sleeves of their cassocks) their petitions, which they had prepared earlier just in case. It was at that point that Metropolitan Sergius mentioned the Arctic circle, and the island of Khe on which Metropolitan Peter was exiled. Apparently, after this the bishops were given some time to consider their response. It is not known what Archbishop Zenobius did. But Vladyka Seraphim, who had been given the choice of returning to his flock or exile in the town of Melenki (on the river Unzhe in Vladimir province) if he did not accept the conditions, asked the advice of an elder. The elder said:

"Go to Melenki, and you will be beloved of God."

Soon Vladyka was ordered to leave Moscow and go to Melenki, where his new life in retirement began in October, 1927. For five years he did not leave his house, but lived a life of prayer in strict accordance with the typikon. Faithful pastors came to seek his advice from Moscow, and his spiritual children also visited him. (According to one source, Vladyka Seraphim lived with Vladyka Arsenius in the St. Catherine's women's monastery until its closure.)

According to one (dubious) source, Vladyka signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church, which took place in various places between March and August, 1928, through Protopriest Paul Borotinsky.

He also wrote (although these words may belong to Hieromartyr Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich): "Metropolitan Sergius has fallen away from the Church, that is, by his actions he has transgressed the Church canons. Metropolitan Sergius no longer remains in the bosom of the Orthodox Church. The Church which has recognized righteousness in communism is

not a Church... An 'organization bought at the price of bowing down to the Antichrist is unworthy of the Church."

On April 11 (25), 1932 Archbishop Seraphim was arrested in Melenki in connection with the Moscow branch of the True Orthodox Church, and taken to Moscow. He was cast in Lubyanka prison. There he sat together with Vladyka Arsenius, who was soon released, while Archbishop Seraphim was transferred to the Butyrki prison. For three months he remained in Butyrki, sick and weak. On July 7 he was convicted of being "a member of a church-monarchist counter-revolutionary organization, 'The True Orthodox Church'", and was sentenced to three years' exile in Kazakhstan.

On August 1 Archbishop Seraphim was taken out of prison and put on a train, where his spiritual daughter, a nun, was waiting for him. They were taken to Alma-Ata, which was overflowing. For two months the hierarch could not find a place to stay. He lived on the roof of a poor old man's store-room. He had hardly had time to rest on the shed, which was quickly converted into living accomodation, when he was again taken away seven thousand kilometres through Syzran, Penza, Saratov and Uralsk to Guryev.

The unendurable heat of the Caspian played havoc with his health, and after seven months he was again taken on a very hard journey to Uralsk, arriving on August 1, 1933. Here the sufferer found shelter in a humble little cottage, where he fell victim to a bout of malaria that nearly killed him. After recovering from this illness, at the beginning of 1935, he was arrested and sentenced to three years' exile in Ishim. Sick, and without money or shelter, the exile arrived in Ishim. Having settled with his companions in the house of an old man, Vladyka gave himself up to prayer and the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. Here in his distant exile he was visited by his spiritual children.

On the night of June 23-24 (August 2), 1937, Bishop Seraphim was arrested in Ishim with 74 other priests. Soon the news came from prison that Vladyka was barely alive. To his heart illness were added kidney and liver pains. When his spiritual children came to him, he said: "Say goodbye forever..." On July 28 he was transferred to Omsk. On August 23 he was sentenced to death in accordance with article 58-10. On August 26 he was shot in Omsk prison and buried in a common grave.

22. HOLY HIEROMARTYR HILARION, BISHOP OF PORECH

Bishop Hilarion (in the world Ivan Ivanovich Belsky) was born on March 20, 1893 in the family of a Petrograd protopriest in Olonets province. He finished his studies at Olonetsk theological seminary in 1915 and from 1917 was serving in a theological school in Petrozavodsk. Then he went to Petrograd and joined the brotherhood of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, being tonsured into the mantia with the name Hilarion on August 12 (or July 3), 1919. According to one source, he also entered the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy. On July 13, according to one source, he was ordained to the diaconate. In 1922 he was ordained to the priesthood, and served in the church of SS. Boris and Gleb, while carrying out the duties of administrator of the affairs of the Lavra's spiritual council and steward of the Lavra. He showed great firmness in the struggle against renovationism in Petrograd, and at the beginning of June, 1922 he was arrested in connection with the case of the "Brotherhood" of Religious Organizations. He was also accused of hiding **Hieromonk Lev** (Yegorov). However, the case was closed on September 13, and he was released. By October, 1924 he was an igumen of the Lavra and rector of the church of SS. Boris and Gleb on Kalashnikov naberezhye.

On October 1/14, 1924 Patriarch Tikhon consecrated him Bishop of Kargopol, a vicariate of the Olonets diocese, although he was only 30 years old. From 1924 he was in exile in Smolensk. On April 12, 1925 he signed the act transferring leadership of the Church to Metropolitan Peter. In 1925 he was transferred to Smolensk with the title of Bishop of Porech, a vicariate of the Smolensk diocese, and administered the affairs of the Smolensk diocese. According to another source, this took place for one year and eight months from 1926 to 1927.

On February 5, 1927 he was arrested "for links with active members of the Sychevka monarchical grouping". On August 29 he was sentenced to ten years in the camps and sent to Solovki. By the beginning of 1928 he was on Solovki.

On March 4, 1928 Bishop Hilarion and **Bishop Nectarius of Yaransk**, the future hieromartyr, declared their separation from Metropolitan Sergius, and joined the branch of the Catacomb Church led by Bishop Victor of Glazov. On Solovki he was one of those who were forbidden from working in their speciality, and had to do the heaviest manual labour. He took part in secret services with the Catacomb bishops on Solovki from January to October, 1928, and in 1928, according to one (dubious) source, signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church through the priest Anthony (Elsner?). However, on October 1, under pressure from the sergianist bishops, he served in the cemetery church, commemorating the name of Metropolitan Sergius.

What happened next was described by Hieromartyr Nectarius, Bishop of Yaransk, his fellow-prisoner on Solovki, who heard it from Vladyka Hilarion himself: "Shortly before this [service in the cemetery church], he had a very frightening dream. It was as if he trampled the Smolensk Hodigitria icon of the Mother of God under foot. And what then? After serving the liturgy with the sergianist bishops, instead of receiving spiritual consolation and joy, he began to feel terrible pangs of conscience and depression of spirit, 'and the sergianist apostasy,' he told me, 'became quite clear to me - I had turned out to be a participator in the sergianist crimes against the Orthodox Church.' And what then? At that very moment he declared to the sergianist bishops that he was leaving them and returning to his former ecclesiastical position with Bishops Victor, Nectarius, Demetrius and the others."

At the end of 1930 Bishop Hilarion was sent to Anzer, and in September, 1931, he, together with Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich and Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov, were sent to work on the White Sea canal. In 1933 he was released on amnesty, and settled in Kozmodemyansk in the Mari autonomous republic. He was arrested on May 24 (or April 25), 1934 for being "a participant in a counter-revolutionary organization of churchmen, the followers of the True Orthodox Church". On July 13 the case was shelved for lack of material, and he was released from prison. However, on August 24 he was again arrested, and released on October 13 after signing that he would not leave. On October 17 the case was shelved for lack of evidence of a crime. From 1935 to 1937 he was in exile in Kosmodemyansk, where he served in secret. He did not recognize the sacraments of the sergianists, and used to repeat the sacraments of baptism and marriage performed by sergianists. In the summer of 1937 he visited Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin) in exile and urged him to remain faithful to Orthodoxy. On August 25 he was arrested, and on August 28 was sentenced to be shot. The sentence was carried out on August 31, 1937 (new style) in Yosh-kar-Ola.

23. HOLY HIEROMARTYR SINESIUS, BISHOP OF IZHEVSK

Bishop Sinesius, in the world Sergius Grigoryevich Zarubin, was born in the village of Panino, Saltykovskaya volost, Moscow province in 1886. He finished art school, and from 1906 to 1917 was a teacher in a craft school in Irkutsk. He joined the Starogolutvin monastery and was tonsured with the name Sinesius. Later, in 1918, he was ordained to the priesthood, and served in Omsk, Tyumen, Irkutsk and Urazov. From 1917 he was teaching in theological schools. On October 4, 1922 he was arrested "for anti-Soviet agitation", but on November 1 the case was shelved and he was released. From the middle of the 1920s he was archimandrite of the Spaso-Golutvin monastery.

On May 31 / June 13, 1926, he was consecrated to the see of Ostrog, a vicariate of the Voronezh diocese, but in the same year he was renamed Bishop of Urazov, a vicariate of the same diocese. In December, 1926, he became Bishop of Kolyma, a vicariate of the Yakutsk diocese, and then Bishop of Yakutsk and Vilyusk. In 1928 he became Bishop of Izhevsk. He was disenfranchised.

After the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius he entered into opposition to him. In 1928, according to one (dubious) source, he signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church. He joined the Catacomb group led by Bishop Victor of Glazov, the future hieromartyr. On February 26, 1930, he retired, and lived in Izhevsk, not hiding his disagreement with, and separation from, Metropolitan Sergius. He continued to serve in the Assumption church without the permission of the ruling bishop. However, according to one source, in February, 1930 he was arrested in connection with the True Orthodox Church and sentenced to five years in the camps on the White Sea canal.

He was an original hierarch. He used to give two-to-three hour sermons, not noticing whether there was anybody in the church or not. Once it happened that he delivered a sermon, and the worshippers, tired of its length, all left the church. But he continued to talk. Finally, the church warden came up to him and said:

"Enough."

Only then did he, astonished by the words of the warden, finish his sermon in the empty church.

On May 9, 1930 he was banned by Metropolitan Sergius, and on June 4 was submitted to a hierarchical trial, but continued to serve, not considering himself to be a sergianist bishop.

As Metropolitan Sergius, relying on the Soviet authorities, increased the pressure on those who did not recognize him, Bishop Sinesius departed into the catacombs. He took on the appearance of a wanderer. He travelled round what was once Holy Russia, but which was now fallen, full of sin, in bast sandals with a rope belt round his waist, his hair and beard sticking out in wisps, a knapsack on his back... Who would have thought that he was an archpastor! In these difficult conditions he taught and instructed Orthodox Christians on the way to salvation. He spoke about the Jesus prayer as a convenient and indispensable work... He also spoke about the external conditions of the persecuted Church:

"From now on don't go into the open churches. They are snares. There is no Orthodoxy there. Only the form without the content... There it is as the Lord said: 'Your house is left to you empty!' (Luke 13.35). The Lord has punished us for our sins. The Church of Christ is not there - only a sham appearance remains. The true pastors have been annihilated, imprisoned, exiled, put to flight. While the 'priests' that have remained are, as a rule, party members, atheists. And these priests are creating there what the Holy Gospel calls 'the abomination of desolation'. And we are told to 'flee into the mountains' from this 'desolation'. And this is the same as that which Revelation refers to as 'fleeing into the wilderness'... Flee by praying to God! He is the Most High, He will not leave us who hope on Him as orphans. He is powerful to defend us, to preserve us from all evil, from enemies visible and invisible... Save us!"

The Lord gave him the gift of clairvoyance, but he hid it by playing the fool. Because of his foolishness for Christ's sake, there were some who did not understand this feat and laughed at him.

His prophecies were sometimes realized many years later. Once he gave a nun some children's swaddling clothes. She was indignant:

"What's this?"

But he answered: "It will come in handy!"

And ten years later she was put in camp... And her swaddling clothes "came in handy"!

On May 24, 1931 he was arrested for being "the leader of the Udmurtia branch of the counter-revolutionary church-monarchist organization, the True Orthodox Church", and on January 26, 1932 was sentenced to ten years in the camps. He was sent to the camps on the Baltic-White Sea canal, arriving there on March 17. He was accused of inciting counter-revolutionary agitation among the prisoners, and on September 20, 1937 was sentenced to be shot by the Karelian NKVD. The sentence was carried out on September 27 in Sandormokh grove. According to another source, he was shot on October 15.

24. HOLY HIEROMARTYR AMPHILOCHIUS, BISHOP OF
KRASNOYARSK
and those with him

Bishop Amphilochius, in the world Alexander Yakovlevich Skvortsov, was born on February 17, 1885 in the family of a church reader of the village of Nurvash (or Norvashi), Tsivilsk uyezd, Kazan province. He graduated from the Kazan Theological seminary and Academy. He chose as his speciality Orthodox missionary work. On March 22, 1907 he was tonsured into monasticism. In 1908 (according to another source, 1907) he was ordained to the diaconate. In 1909, as a third-year student, he was sent during the summer holidays to the Astrakhan Kalmyk steppe to study the Kalmyk language and Orthodox missionary work. In 1910 he brilliantly defended his candidate's dissertation on a missionary subject, and was ordained to the priesthood in the same year.

In 1910-11 he attended lectures at the eastern faculty of the St. Petersburg University so as to study the Mongolian language and freely understand the sacred scriptures of Lamaism. From August 16, 1911 until 1917 he was a teacher in the faculty of Mongolian and Lamaism in the Kazan Academy. From August 15, 1912 to August 15, 1914 he went, at his own request, to Mongolia and Trans-Baikal to study the Tibetan language and the theological literature of Lamaism. He was raised to the rank of archimandrite. According to one source, he was also sent to China.

In 1922 he was consecrated bishop of Melekess, a vicariate of the Ufa diocese, by Archbishop Andrew of Ufa and, perhaps, Patriarch Tikhon. He remained there until 1923. He struggled with renovationism. In 1923 he was arrested, sentenced to three years' exile and sent to Krasnoyarsk region. In November, 1924 he was arrested for "participation in resistance to representatives of the authorities during the transfer of the cemetery church to a renovationist group". However, the case was shelved. In 1925, when invited to join a planned commission for reconciliation between Orthodoxy and renovationism and participation in the council of 1925, he wrote in reply: "We can be reconciled with you only when you renounce your errors and repent before the whole people."

In March or April, 1925, he became Bishop of Krasnoyarsk, and on July 14, 1926 he was arrested in the city of Tsivilsk in Chuvashia. On July 17, 1926 he was sentenced to three years in the camps and sent to Solovki, where he worked as a warehouseman. Also arrested with the bishop was **Eudocia Petrovna Zonova**, the daughter of a trader, who since 1922 had been in the community in Krasnoyarsk led by **Hieromonk Plato** (Shkarpitsky), who in 1925 came under the omophorion of Bishop Amphilochius. She was released after promising not to leave the city. On December 17, 1926 she was arrested again, and accused of "taking part in a monarchist-Black Hundredist counter-revolutionary grouping created around Bishop Amphilochius (Skvortsov)".

This was the group case, "The Case of the Monarchist-Black Hundredist Counter-Revolutionary Grouping of Bishop Amphilochius (Skvortsov), Krasnoyarsk, 1926". She was released for lack of incriminating evidence.

On February 17, 1928 Bishop Amphilochius' case was reviewed and quashed. On March 31 he was released early. In April, on returning from exile, he became bishop of the Don and Novocherkassk.

He rejected Metropolitan Sergius' declaration, and according to one (dubious) source signed the acts of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church in 1928. From 1929 to 1930 he was Bishop of Krasnoyarsk and Yeniseisk, but, disagreeing with Metropolitan Sergius' course, he left his see - according to one source, on the advice of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan - and in 1931 went with a group of "non-commemorators" into the woods of Siberia, where he founded a skete. The skete consisted of ten nuns, and was situated in the village of Anzhul (or Antul), Tashtypsky region, Khakassia.

On April 30, 1931 Bishop Amphilochius, **Hieromonk Seraphim**, who lived in the village, and the skete-dwellers, who included Fr. Seraphim's daughter, **Nun Alexandra, Matrona Artamovicha Stepanova** (born in 1866 in Vyatka province) and **Athanasia Petrovna Lysova** (born in 1889 in Yeremakovsky region, Krasnoyarsk district), were arrested for "conducting anti-Soviet agitation", and cast into a prison in Minusinsk, Krasnoyarsk district. On November 16, 1931, in "The Case of Bishop Amphilochius (Skvortsov) and others, Khakassia, 1931", they were condemned for "anti-Soviet agitation" by the OGPU and were sentenced to five years' exile in Eastern Siberia. Bishop Amphilochius was sent to the Osinnikovo section of Siblag. At some stage he went to Barnaul area and lived next to his relative **Catherine Ivanovna Samonkina**. He struggled with the schismatics of Siberia, and once converted three Chinese to the faith.

In May, 1933 he was arrested again for being "a participant in a church-monarchist counter-revolutionary group, the True Orthodox Church", and on January 28, 1934 was sentenced to transfer to a punishment isolation cell for two years. By this time, according to Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, he was known throughout Siberia as a fearless rebuker of the deeds of Metropolitan Sergius. The people loved him. His sermons against atheism and the atheist authorities were so fierce that the people expected his arrest at any minute. One woman shouted during one of his sermons:

"Is that really possible? Well, then, they'll arrest you!"

"That's how it has to be, Catherine," he replied.

There are different accounts of his death. According to one source, he was imprisoned at Yaia station, where he was later shot. According to another, he was arrested in 1934, sentenced to five years in the camps, and shot on

October 1, 1937 in the Mari camps in Western Siberia before being buried in an unmarked grave. According to yet a third source, he was arrested in camp in 1938, sentenced to death and shot. According to yet another source, he was arrested in the 1940s and died in 1946.

25. HOLY HIEROMARTYR PETER, METROPOLITAN OF KRUTITSA

and those with him

Metropolitan Peter, in the world Peter Fyodorovich Polyansky, was born on June 28, 1862 in the village of Storozhevoye, Korotoyansky uyezd, Voronezh province into the family of a village priest, Fr. Theodore Yevgrafovich Polyansky. His brother was Protopriest Basil Fyodorovich. He finished his studies at the Voronezh theological seminary in 1885, and then served as a reader in a village in Voronezh province for three years. In 1888 he entered the Moscow Theological Academy. On graduating in 1892 as a candidate of theology, Peter Polyansky remained in the Academy as the second assistant of the inspector. He also taught at the Zvenigorod theological school. Meanwhile he worked on a dissertation devoted to the first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to Timothy. This major work, for which the author was awarded the degree of master of theology on March 4, 1897, is still considered one of the best works on the hermeneutics of the New Testament.

In 1896 (1897) Peter Fyodorovich was appointed supervisor of the Zhirovitsky theological school. It was in this period that he met the future Patriarch Tikhon. On July 15, 1906 (1909), considering his work at the Zhirovitsky school to be exemplary, the Holy Synod invited him to work in the rank of state councillor on the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod, where he served as inspector of the theological educational institutions until the revolution. In this capacity, Peter Fyodorovich travelled to many dioceses and became well-known among the professors and senior clergy. Intelligent, full of life and sociable, tactful but firm, he greatly influenced the development of theological education in Russia.

In 1917-18, Peter Fyodorovich was a delegate to the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, and on September 20, 1918 he was appointed to work in the secretariat of the Holy Synod. He also worked as manager of the factory "Bogatyr". In 1920 Patriarch Tikhon suggested that he accept monastic tonsure, the priesthood and the episcopate and become his helper in the administration of the Church. On coming home he said: "I cannot refuse. If I refuse, I will betray the Church. But when I agree, I know that I will be signing my death warrant." On October 8, 1920, after being tonsured into monasticism by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), he was consecrated Bishop of Podolsk, a vicariate of the Moscow diocese, by Patriarch Tikhon.

Almost immediately after his consecration he was arrested and cast into Butyrki prison, where he remained for two months. He was exiled for three years to Velikij Ustyug, where he lived with a priest. Then he moved to a lodge attached to the cathedral. He often served with the local clergy.

In 1923 the foreign journal Tserkovnye Vedomosti wrote: "Bishop Peter of Podolsk has been arrested several times, the last time on August 21, 1921."

In the second half of 1923 he was released, whereupon Patriarch Tikhon raised him to the rank of archbishop. And after the arrest of Bishop Hilarion (Troitsky) the Patriarch made him his closest assistant, raising him to the rank of metropolitan of Krutitsa in the spring of 1924. Many years later Protopriest Basil Vinogradov recalled of that time: "No member of the Patriarch's administration, on going to work in the morning, could be sure that he would not be arrested for participating in an illegal organization, or that he would not find the Patriarch's residence sealed."

On April 7, 1925, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon reposed in the Lord. On April 12, the deceased Patriarch's will dated January 7, 1925 was discovered and read out. It said that in the event of the Patriarch's death and the absence of the first two candidates for the post of patriarchal locum tenens, "our patriarchal rights and duties, until the lawful election of a new patriarch,... pass to his Eminence Peter, metropolitan of Krutitsa." At the moment of the Patriarch's death (as the rumour went, by poisoning), the first two hierarchs indicated by him as candidates of the post of locum tenens, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Agathangelus of Yaroslavl, were in exile. Therefore the 59 assembled hierarchs decided that "Metropolitan Peter cannot decline from the obedience given him and... must enter upon the duties of the patriarchal locum tenens."

Almost immediately the renovationist schismatics, encouraged by the Patriarch's death, energetically tried to obtain union with the Orthodox Church in time for their second Council, which was due to take place in the autumn of 1925. Their attempts were aided by the Soviet authorities, who put all kinds of pressures on the hierarchs to enter into union with the renovationists. A firm lead was required from the head of the Church, and in his proclamation dated July 28, 1925 this is exactly what Metropolitan Peter provided. After protesting against the propaganda of the uniates and sectarians, which was diverting attention away from the main battle against atheism, he turned his attention to the renovationists: "At the present time the so-called new-churchmen more and more discuss the matter of reunion with us. They call meetings in cities and villages, and invite Orthodox clerics and laymen to a common adjudication of the question of reunion with us, and to prepare for their pseudo-council which they are calling for the autumn of this year. But it must be clearly recalled that according to the canonical rules of the Ecumenical Church such arbitrarily convened councils, as were the meetings of the 'Living Church' in 1923, are illegal. Hence the canonical rules forbid Orthodox Christians to take part in them and much more to elect representatives for such gatherings. In accordance with the 20th rule of the Council of Antioch, 'no-one is permitted to call a Council alone, without those bishops who are in charge of the metropolitan sees.' In the holy Church of God only that is lawful which is approved by the God-ordained ecclesiastical government, preserved by succession since the time of the Apostles. All arbitrary acts, everything that was done by the new-church party without the approval of the most holy Patriarch now at rest with God, everything that is

now done without our approval - the approval of the guardian of the Patriarchal Throne, acting in conjunction with all lawful Orthodox hierarchy - all this has no validity in accordance with the canons of the holy Church (Apostolic canon 34; Council of Antioch, canon 9), for the true Church is one, and the Grace of the Most Holy Spirit residing in her is one, for there cannot be two Churches or two Graces. 'There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one God and Father of all' (Eph. 4.4-6).

"The so-called new-churchmen should talk of no reunion with the Orthodox Church until they show a sincere repentance for their errors. The chief of these is that they arbitrarily renounced the lawful hierarchy and its head, the most holy Patriarch, and attempted to reform the Church of Christ by self-invented teaching (The Living Church, nos. 1-11); they transgressed the ecclesiastical rules which were established by the Ecumenical Councils (the pronouncements of the pseudo-Council of May 4, 1923); they rejected the government of the Patriarch, which was established by the Council and acknowledged by all the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs, i.e., they rejected what all Orthodoxy accepted, and besides, they even condemned him at their pseudo-Council. Contrary to the rules of the holy Apostles, the Ecumenical Councils and the holy Fathers (Apostolic canons 17,18; Sixth Ecumenical Council, canons 3, 13, 48; St. Basil the Great, canon 12), they permit bishops to marry and clerics to contract a second marriage, i.e., they transgress what the entire Ecumenical Church acknowledges to be a law, which can be changed only by an Ecumenical Council.

"The reunion of the so-called new-churchmen with the holy Orthodox Church is possible only on the condition that each of them recants his errors and submits to a public repentance for his apostasy from the Church. We pray the Lord God without ceasing that He may restore the erring into the bosom of the holy Orthodox Church."

This epistle had a sobering and strengthening effect on many wavering clerics. As the renovationist Vestnik Svyashchennago Synoda was forced to admit: "Immediately after Peter's appeal came out, the courage of the 'leftist' Tikhonites disappeared." So at their council in the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow the schismatics planned their revenge. "Metropolitan-Evangelist" Vvedensky publicly accused Metropolitan Peter of involvement with an emigre monarchist plot. In support of this claim he produced a patently forged denunciation by the renovationist bishop of Latin America Nicholas, a very dubious person who had several times crossed into schism and back into the Church.

The Bolsheviks gave ready support to the renovationists in their battle against Peter. Thus Savelyev writes: "On November 11, 1925, Yaroslavsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov and Menzhinsky were discussing Tuchkov's report 'On the future policy in connection with the death of Tikhon'. A general order was given to the OGPU to accelerate the implementation of the schism that had

been planned amidst the supporters of Tikhon. Concrete measures were indicated with great frankness: 'In order to support the group in opposition to Peter (the patriarchal locum tenens...) it is resolved to publish in Izvestia a series of articles compromising Peter, and to use towards this end materials from the recently ended renovationist council.'.. The censorship and editing of the articles was entrusted to the party philosopher Skvortsov-Stepanov. He was helped by Krasikov (Narkomyust) and Tuchkov (OGPU). This trio was given the task of censuring the declaration against Peter which was being prepared by the anti-Tikhonite group. Simultaneously with the publication in Izvestia of provocative articles against the patriarchal locum tenens, the Anti-Religious commission ordered the OGPU 'to initiate an investigation against Peter'."

Meanwhile, Tuchkov initiated discussions with Peter with regard to "legalizing" the Church. This "legalization" promised to relieve the Church's rightless position, but on the following conditions: 1) the issuing of a declaration of a pre-determined content; 2) the exclusion from the ranks of the bishops of those who were displeasing to the authorities; 3) the condemnation of the émigré bishops; and 4) the participation of the government, in the person of Tuchkov, in the future activities of the Church. However, Metropolitan Peter refused to accept these conditions and also refused to sign the text of the declaration Tuchkov offered him. And he continued to be a rock in the path of the atheists' plans to seize control of the Church. For, as he once said to Tuchkov:

"You're all liars. You give nothing except promises. And now please leave the room, we are about to have a meeting."

Metropolitan Peter must have foreseen his fate. For on December 5 (6), 1925 he composed a will concerning the transfer of ecclesiastical authority, and wrote: "I expect toil and the speedy, if not always merciful, condemnation of men. I do not fear toil - I have loved it and love it now, and I do not fear the condemnation of men - their disdain has been experienced by incomparably better and more worthy persons than myself. I fear only one thing: mistakes, omissions and involuntary injustices... If the distinguishing mark of the disciples of Christ, according to the word of the Gospel, is love, then it must penetrate the whole activity of the servant of the altar of the Lord, the servant of the God of peace and love. May the Lord help me in this! I ask you to carry out with love, as obedient children, all the rules, decrees and resolutions of the Church... I, the unworthy pastor, will pray that the peace of God many dwell in our hearts throughout our lives."

On December 9, the Anti-Religious Commission (more precisely: "the Central Committee Commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of Church and State") met and approved of the activities of the OGPU in inciting the Church groupings against each other. They also determined the timing of Metropolitan Peter's arrest. And on the night from December 9^h to 10 he was placed under house-arrest by a certain Kazansky. The order was signed by G. Yagoda.

Metropolitan Peter was taken to the inner prison at the Lubyanka. At the same time a group of bishops living in Moscow whom the GPU considered to be of like mind with him were also arrested: Archbishops Nicholas of Vladimir, Pachomius of Chernigov, Procopius of the Chersonese and Gurias of Irkutsk, and Bishops Parthenius of Ananiev, Damascene of Glukhov, Tikhon of Gomel, Barsanuphius of Kargopol and others. About forty people in all were arrested, including the layman A.D. Samarin, the former over-procurator. This was called the case of "The Danilovite Synod" because the conservative wing of the Russian Church gathered around its leader, Archbishop Theodore, the superior of the Danilov monastery.

The events that followed Peter's arrest and imprisonment are not at all clear. We know that a struggle for power took place between Archbishop Gregory (Yatskovsky) of Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk) and a group of bishops, on the one hand, and Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod (Gorky), on the other, which Sergius eventually won. The most widely accepted version of events goes something like this.

On December 14, although unable to leave Nizhni-Novgorod at the time, Metropolitan Sergius announced that he was taking over the Church's administration in accordance with Metropolitan Peter's instruction. However, Metropolitan Sergius was prevented by the OGPU from coming to Moscow, and on December 22, 1925, a group of nine bishops led by Archbishop Gregory of Yekaterinburg gathered at the Donskoy monastery. The Gregorians, as they came to be called, then declared that since Metropolitan Peter's activity was counter-revolutionary, and since with his arrest the Church was deprived of direction, they were organizing a Higher Temporary Church Council. This organization was legalized by the authorities on January 2.

On January 14, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Archbishop Gregory demanding an explanation for his usurpation of power. Gregory replied on January 22, saying that while they recognized the rights of the three locum tenentes, "we know no conciliar decision concerning you, and we do not consider the transfer of administration and power by personal letter to correspond to the spirit and letter of the holy canons."

Sergius wrote again on January 29, impeaching Gregory and his fellow bishops, banning them from serving and declaring all their ordinations, appointments, awards, etc., since December 22 to be invalid. On the same day, three Gregorian bishops wrote to Metropolitan Peter claiming that they had not known, in their December meeting, that he had transferred his rights to Sergius, and asking him to bless their administration. The free access the Gregorians had to Peter during this period, and the fact that Sergius was at first prevented from coming to Moscow, suggests that the OGPU, while not opposing Sergius, at first favoured the Gregorians as their best hope for dividing the Church.

Fearing anarchy in the Church, Metropolitan Peter went part of the way to blessing the Gregorians' undertaking. However, instead of the Gregorian Synod, he created a temporary "college" to administer the Church consisting of Archbishop Gregory, Archbishop Nicholas (Dobronravov) of Vladimir and Archbishop Demetrius (Belikov) of Tomsk, who were well-known for their firmness. This resolution was made during a meeting with the Gregorians in the GPU offices on February 1. Tuchkov, who was present at the meeting, was silent about the fact that Nicholas was in prison. He agreed to summon Demetrius from Tomsk, and even showed Peter the telegram. But he never sent it. When Peter, feeling something was wrong, asked for the inclusion of Metropolitan Arsenius (Stadnitsky) in the college of bishops, Tuchkov again agreed and promised to sign Peter's telegram to him. Again, the telegram was not sent.

Now it has been argued by Regelson that Metropolitan Peter's action in appointing deputies was not canonical (as the Gregorians also implied), and created misunderstandings that were to be ruthlessly exploited later by Metropolitan Sergius. A chief hierarch does not have the right to transfer the fullness of his power to another hierarch as if it were a personal inheritance: only a Council representing the whole Local Church can elect a leader to replace him. Patriarch Tikhon's appointment of three locum tenentes was an exceptional measure, but one which was nevertheless entrusted to him by - and therefore could claim the authority of - the Council of 1917-18. However, the Council made no provision for what might happen in the event of the death or removal of these three. In such an event, therefore, patriarchal authority ceased, temporarily, in the Church; and there was no canonical alternative, until the convocation of another Council, but for each bishop to govern his diocese independently while maintaining links with neighbouring dioceses, in accordance with the Patriarch's ukaz no. 362 of November 20, 1920.

In defence of Metropolitan Peter it may be said that it is unlikely that he intended to transfer the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Sergius, but only the day-to-day running of the administrative machine. Thus in his declaration of December 6, 1925, he gave instructions on what should be done in the event of his arrest, saying that even a hierarchical "college" expressing his authority as patriarchal locum tenens would not be able to decide "the principal questions affecting the whole Church, whose realization in life could be permitted only with our blessing". He must have been thinking of Patriarch Tikhon's similar restrictions on the renovationists who tried to take over the administration in May, 1922.

Moreover, he continued to insist on the commemoration of his name as patriarchal locum tenens in the Divine services. This was something that Patriarch Tikhon had not insisted upon when he transferred the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Agathangelus. The critical distinction here is that whereas the patriarchal locum tenens has, de jure, all the power of a canonically elected Patriarch and need relinquish his power only to a

canonically convoked Council of the whole local Church, the deputy of the locum tenens has no such fullness of power and must relinquish such rights as he has at any time that the Council or the locum tenens requires it.

Why, then, did Metropolitan Peter not invoke ukaz no. 362 and bless the decentralization of the Church's administration at the time of his arrest? Probably for two important reasons. (1) The restoration of the patriarchate was one of the main achievements of the Moscow Council of 1917-18, and had proved enormously popular. Its dissolution might well have dealt a major psychological blow to the masses, who were not always educated enough to understand that the Church could continue to exist either in a centralized (though not papist) form, as it had in the East from 312 to 1917, or in a decentralized form, as in the catacombal period before Constantine the Great and during the iconoclast persecution of the eighth and ninth centuries. (2) The renovationists - who still constituted the major threat to the Church in Metropolitan Peter's eyes - did not have a patriarch, and their organization was, as we have seen, closer to the synodical, state-dependent structure of the pre-revolutionary Church. The presence or absence of a patriarch or his substitute was therefore a major sign of the difference between the true Church and the false for the uneducated believer.

Let us now return to the sequence of events. On February 4, 1926, Metropolitan Peter, fell ill and was admitted to the prison hospital. A war for control of the Church now developed between the Gregorians and Sergius. The Gregorians pointed to Sergius' links with Rasputin and the "Living Church": "On recognizing the Living Church, Metropolitan Sergius took part in the sessions of the HCA, recognized the lawfulness of married bishops and twice-married priests, and blessed this lawlessness. Besides, Metropolitan Sergius sympathized with the living church council of 1923, did not object to its decisions, and therefore confessed our All-Russian Archpastor and father, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, to be 'an apostate from the true ordinances of Christ and a betrayer of the Church', depriving him of his patriarchal rank and monastic calling. True, Metropolitan Sergius later repented of these terrible crimes and was forgiven by the Church, but that does not mean that he should stand at the head of the Church's administration."

However, these arguments, well-based though they were, were not strong enough to maintain the Gregorians' position, which deteriorated as several bishops declared their support for Sergius. Yaroslavsky, Tuchkov and the OGPU had already succeeded in creating a schism between Metropolitan Sergius and the Gregorians. They now tried to fan the flames of schism still higher by releasing Metropolitan Agathangelus, the second candidate for the post of patriarchal locum tenens, from exile and persuading him to declare his assumption of the post of locum tenens, which he did officially from Perm on April 18. They also decided, at a meeting in the Kremlin on April 24, to "strengthen the third Tikhonite hierarchy - the Temporary Higher Ecclesiastical Council headed by Archbishop Gregory, as an independent unit."

On April 22, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter at the Moscow GPU, as a result of which Peter withdrew his support from the Gregorians, signing his letter to Metropolitan Sergius: "the penitent Peter". It would be interesting to know whether Sergius knew of Metropolitan Agathangelus' declaration four days earlier when he wrote to Peter. Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky) claims that Agathangelus did not tell Sergius until several days later - but the evidence is ambiguous. If Sergius already knew of Agathangelus' assumption of the rights of locum tenens, then his keeping quiet about this very important fact in his letter to Metropolitan Peter was dishonest and misleading. For he must have realized that Metropolitan Agathangelus, having returned from exile (he arrived in his see of Yaroslavl on April 27), had every right to assume power as the eldest hierarch and the only patriarchal locum tenens named by Patriarch Tikhon who was in freedom at that time. In fact, with the appearance of Metropolitan Agathangelus the claims of *both* the Gregorians *and* Sergius to first-hierarchical power in the Church collapsed. But Sergius, having tasted of power, was not about to relinquish it so quickly. And just as Metropolitan Agathangelus' rights as locum tenens were swept aside by the renovationists in 1922, so now the same hierarch was swept aside again by the former renovationist Sergius.

The chronology of events reveals how the leadership of the Russian Church was usurped for the second time. On April 30, Sergius wrote to Agathangelus rejecting his claim to the rights of the patriarchal locum tenens on the grounds that Peter had not resigned his post. In this letter Sergius claims that he and Peter had exchanged opinions on Agathangelus' letter in Moscow on April 22 - but neither Sergius nor Peter mention Agathangelus in the letters they exchanged on that day and which are published by Gobunin. Therefore it seems probable that Peter's decision not to resign his post was based on ignorance of Agathangelus' appearance on the scene.

On May 13, Agathangelus met Sergius in Moscow (Nizhni-Novgorod, according to another source), where, according to Sergius, they agreed that if Peter's trial [for unlawfully handing over his authority to the Gregorians] ended in his condemnation, Sergius would hand over his authority to Agathangelus. However, Sergius was simply playing for time, in order to win as many bishops as possible to his side. And on May 16, he again wrote to Agathangelus, in effect reneging on his agreement of three days before: "If the affair ends with Metropolitan Peter being acquitted or freed, I will hand over to *him* my authority, while your eminence will then have to conduct discussions with Metropolitan Peter himself. But if the affair ends with his condemnation, you will be given the opportunity to take upon yourself the initiative of raising the question of bringing Metropolitan Peter to a church trial. When Metropolitan Peter will be given over to a trial, you can present your rights, as the eldest [hierarch] to the post of Deputy of Metropolitan Peter, and when the court will declare the latter deprived of his post, you will be the second candidate to the locum tenancy of the patriarchal throne after

Metropolitan Cyril." In other words, Sergius in a cunning and complicated way rejected Agathangelus' claim to be the lawful head of the Russian Church, although this claim was now stronger than Metropolitan Peter's (because he was in prison and unable to rule the Church) and much stronger than Sergius'.

On May 20, Agathangelus sent a telegram to Sergius: "You promised to send a project to the Bishops concerning the transfer to me of the authorizations of ecclesiastical power. Be so kind as to hurry up." On the same day Sergius replied: "Having checked your information, I am convinced that you have no rights; [I will send you] the details by letter. I ardently beseech you: do not take the decisive step." On May 21, Agathangelus sent another telegram threatening to publish the agreement he had made with Sergius and which he, Sergius, had broken. On May 22, Sergius wrote to Peter warning him not to recognize Agathangelus' claims (the letter, according to Hieromonk Damascene, was delivered personally by Tuchkov). However, Peter ignored Sergius' warning and wrote to Agathangelus, congratulating him on his assumption of the rights of patriarchal locum tenens and assuring him of his loyalty. At this point Sergius' last real canonical grounds for holding on to power - the support of Metropolitan Peter - collapsed. But Agathangelus only received this letter on May 31. The (OGPU-engineered?) delay proved to be decisive. For on May 24, after Sergius had again written rejecting Agathangelus' claims, the latter, according to Regelson, wrote: "Continue to rule the Church. For the sake of the peace of the Church I propose to resign the office of locum tenens."

On the same day Sergius, savagely pressing home his advantage, wrote to the administration of the Moscow diocese concerning the handing over of Agathangelus to a trial by the hierarchs then resident in Moscow. On June 9 Metropolitan Peter wrote to Metropolitan Agathangelus that if Agathangelus refused to take up the position, or was unable to do so, the rights and duties of the locum tenancy would revert to him, Metropolitan Peter, and the deputyship to Sergius. However, on June 12 Metropolitan Agathangelus wrote to Peter renouncing the post of locum tenens. The way was now open for Sergius to resume power.

In June, 1926 Metropolitan Peter was transferred from Moscow to a solitary cell in the political isolator in the Spaso-Yefimiev monastery in Suzdal. Then, in November, he was transferred from Suzdal to the inner prison of the OGPU in the Lubyanka. On November 5 he was convicted by the OGPU of "being an assistant and concealer of a blackhundredist church organization that has set as its aim the use of the Church for consolidating the reactionary element and conducting anti-Soviet agitation..." The indictment read: "A blackhundredist church grouping was created in Moscow which strove to ignite and support a constant state of tension between the Church and Soviet power, in the hope of obtaining foreign support in defence of the former or for an intervention." This grouping was called "The Sergievo Samarin Grouping" after the surname of the former over-procurator, A.D. Samarin,

who supposedly headed it, including the so-called "former people" - the inhabitants of the town of Sergiev Posad, P.B. Mansurov, P.B. Istomin and others. Samarin and another former over-procurator, Vladimir Sabler, were supposed to have control over the bishops, influencing them to make "counter-revolutionary decisions", such as the one to leave Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) in his see in Kiev. Metropolitan Peter was condemned for the supposed fact that, "having submitted to the leadership of the monarchists, he conducted his activity in administering the Church in accordance with their orders and decrees, striving to move the Church into the position of an illegal anti-soviet organization". On November 5, in accordance with article 68, Metropolitan Peter was sentenced to three years' exile in Abalak in the Urals. This was "The Case of Metropolitan Peter (Polyansky) and others, Moscow, 1926".

In December Tuchkov proposed that that he renounce his locum tenancy. Peter refused, and then sent a message to everyone through a fellow prisoner that he would "never under any circumstances leave his post and would remain faithful to the Orthodox Church to death itself". Then he was transferred from Moscow via Vyatka, Perm and Sverdlovsk to the closed monastery of Abalak in Tobolsk province, arriving in February, 1927. On January 1, while in prison in Perm, he confirmed Sergius as his deputy. Apparently he was unaware of the recent changes in the leadership of the Church. In any case, he was to have no further direct effect on the administration of the Church, being subjected, in the words of Fr. Vladimir Rusak, to "12 years of unbelievable torments, imprisonment, tortures and exile beyond the Arctic Circle."

Fr. Vladimir tells the following story about Metropolitan Peter when he was on his way to exile in Siberia. One dark night "he was thrown out of the railway carriage while it was still moving (apparently more than one bishop perished in this way). It was winter, and the metropolitan fell into a snow-drift as if into a feather-bed, so that he did not hurt himself. With difficulty he got out of it and looked round. There was a wood, and snow, and no signs of life. For a long time he walked over the virgin snow, and at length, exhausted, he sat down on a stump. Through his torn rasson the frost chilled him to the bone. Sensing that he was beginning to freeze to death, the metropolitan started to read the prayers for the dying.

"Suddenly he saw a huge bear approaching him.

"The thought flashed through his mind: 'He'll tear me to pieces'. But he did not have the strength to run away. And where could he run?

"But the bear came up to him, sniffed him and peacefully lay down at his feet. Warmth wafted out of his huge bear's hide. Then he turned over with his belly towards the metropolitan, stretched out his whole length and began to snore sweetly. Vladyka wavered for a long time as he looked at the sleeping bear, then he could stand the cold no longer and lay down next to him,

pressing himself to his warm belly. He lay down and turned first one and then the other side towards the beast in order to get warm. Meanwhile the bear breathed deeply in his sleep, enveloping him in his warm breath.

"When the dawn began to break, the metropolitan heard the distant crowing of cocks: a dwelling-place. He got to his feet, taking care not to wake up the bear. But the bear also got up, and after shaking himself down plodded off towards the wood.

"Rested now, Vladyka went towards the sound of the cocks and soon reached a small village. After knocking at the end house, he explained who he was and asked for shelter, promising that his sister would pay the owners for all trouble and expenses entailed. They let Vladyka in and for half a year he lived in this village. He wrote to his sister, and she arrived. But soon after her other 'people' in uniform also came..."

In March, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius was released from prison. He immediately formed a "Synod" of twelve of the most disreputable bishops in Russia. And then, in July, he issued his famous declaration in which he placed the Church in more or less complete submission to the atheists.

From February to April, 1927, Metropolitan Peter was in exile in the closed Abalak monastery. He cooked his own food, put wood in the stove and cleaned his clothes. While he was in Abalak, his cell-attendant came to him, and Metropolitan Peter asked him whether he had come with the knowledge of the authorities. On receiving a negative reply, he told him to go and inform the authorities of his arrival. For this, both Metropolitan Peter and his cell-attendant were arrested and thrown into prison in Tobolsk.

While there, he heard that they wanted to issue a decree stopping the commemoration of his name in the churches. "It is not wounded self-love," he said, "nor resentment which forces me to be anxious about this, but I fear that if my name ceases to be commemorated it will be difficult to distinguish between the Tikhonite and renovationist churches." He added that the investigator Tuchkov was in charge of church affairs, which was impermissible, and that he would remain alone like St. Athanasius.

On July (August) 9, Metropolitan Peter was exiled along the river Ob to the Arctic settlement of Khe, which was in the tundra two hundred versts from Obdorsk. There, seriously ill and deprived of the possibility of communicating with the world, he was doomed to a slow death. His only communications were with three renovationist priests, who persecuted him. On September 11, he suffered his first attack of angina and from that time never left his bed. He was taken to Obdorsk, where he was advised to petition for a transfer to another place with a better climate. But his petition was refused, and he remained in Khe for the time being. Then he was transferred to Tobolsk prison, where Tuchkov offered him his freedom if he would

renounce his locum tenancy. Metropolitan Peter refused and on May 11, 1928 he was returned to Khe, with the period of his exile extended by two years.

According to the Sergianist Metropolitan Manuel (Lemeshevsky), during his exile Metropolitan Peter composed a moleben for the suffering world and a short blessing of the water with a special prayer.

On January 22, 1928 Metropolitan Peter expressed his opinion on Metropolitan Sergius' notorious declaration of July, 1927 in a letter to a certain N.: "For a first-hierarchy such an appeal [as Sergius' declaration] is *inadmissible*. Moreover, I don't understand why a Synod was formed from (as I can see from the signatures under the appeal) unreliable people. Thus, for example, Bishop Philip is a heretic... In this appeal a shadow is cast upon me and the patriarch, as if we had political relations with abroad, whereas the only relations were ecclesiastical. I do not belong to the irreconcilables, I allowed everything that could be allowed, and it was suggested to me in a more polite manner that I sign the appeal. I refused, for which I was exiled. I trusted Metropolitan Sergius, and I see that I was mistaken."

There is evidence the Bolsheviks arranged a secret meeting between Metropolitan Peter and Metropolitan Sergius, during which the latter tried to persuade him to accept his Church "platform". But Metropolitan Peter refused. Then Metropolitan Sergius shouted at him:

"Well, then, you will rot in exile!"

To which the holy confessor replied:

"I will rot, but with Christ, and not with you, you Judas-traitor!"

According to Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, Metropolitan Peter wrote to Sergius, saying that if he did not have the strength to defend the Church he should hand over his duties to someone stronger. Similar information was provided by the Priests Elijah Pirozhenko and Peter Novosiltsev after they had visited Metropolitan Peter. In May, 1929, Bishop Damascene of Glukhov sent a messenger to Metropolitan Peter, and from his reply was able to write: "Granddad (i.e. Metropolitan Peter) spoke about the situation and the further consequences to be deduced from it almost in my own words".

On September 17, 1929, Protopriest Gregory Seletsky wrote to Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd on behalf of Archbishop Demetrius (Lyubimov): "I am fulfilling the request of his Eminence Archbishop Demetrius and set out before you in written form that information which the exiled Bishop Damascene has communicated to me. He succeeded in making contact with Metropolitan Peter, and in sending him, via a trusted person, full information about everything that has been taking place in the Russian Church. Through this emissary Metropolitan Peter orally conveyed the following:

"1. You Bishops must yourselves remove Metropolitan Sergius.

"2. I do not bless you to commemorate Metropolitan Sergius during Divine services.

"3. The Kievan act of the so-called "small council of Ukrainian bishops" concerning the retirement of 16 bishops from the sees they occupy is to be considered invalid.

"4. The letter of Bishop Basil (the vicar of the Ryazan diocese) gives false information. [This refers to a forgery concocted by the sergianists which purported to show that Metropolitan Peter recognized Metropolitan Sergius.]

"5. I will reply to questions in writing."

In December, 1929 Metropolitan Peter wrote to Sergius: "Your Eminence, forgive me magnanimously if by the present letter I disturb the peace of your Eminence's soul. People inform me about the difficult circumstances that have formed for the Church in connection with your exceeding the limits of the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to you. I am very sorry that you have not taken the trouble to initiate me into your plans for the administration of the Church. You know that I have not renounced the locum tenency, and consequently, I have retained for myself the Higher Church Administration and the general leadership of Church life. At the same time I make bold to declare that your remit as deputy was only for the management of everyday affairs; you are only to preserve the status quo. I am profoundly convinced that without prior contact with me you will not make any responsible decision. I have not accorded you any constituent right as long as I retain the locum tenency and as long as Metropolitan Cyril is alive and as long as Metropolitan Agathangelus was alive. Therefore I did not consider it necessary in my decree concerning the appointment of candidates for the deputyship to mention the limitation of their duties; I had no doubt that the deputy would not alter the established rights, but would only deputize, or represent, so to speak, the central organ through which the locum tenens could communicate with his flock. But the system of administration you have introduced not only excludes this: it also excludes the very need for the existence of the locum tenens. Such major steps cannot, of course, be approved by the consciousness of the Church. I did not admit any qualifications limiting the duties of the deputy, both from a feeling of deep reverence and trust for the appointed candidates, and first of all for you, having in mind at this point your wisdom. It is burdensome for me to number all the details of negative evaluations of your administration: the resounding protests and cries from believers, from hierarchs and laypeople. The picture of ecclesiastical division that has been painted is shocking. My duty and conscience do not allow me to remain indifferent to such a sorrowful phenomenon; they urge me to address your Eminence with a most insistent demand that you correct the mistake you have made, which has placed the

Church in a humiliating position, and which has caused quarrels and divisions in her and a blackening of the reputation of her leaders. In the same way I ask you to suspend the other measures which have increased your prerogatives. Such a decision of yours will, I hope, create a good atmosphere in the Church and will calm the troubled souls of her children, while with regard to you it will preserve that disposition towards you which you deservedly enjoyed both as a Church figure and as a man. Place all your hope on the Lord, and His help will always be with you. On my part, I as the first-hierarch of the Church, call on all clergy and church activists to display, in everything that touches on the civil legislation and administration, complete loyalty. They are obliged to submit unflinchingly to the governmental decrees as long as they do not violate the holy faith and in general are not contrary to Christian conscience; and they must not engage in any anti-governmental activity, and they are allowed to express neither approval nor disapproval of their actions in the churches or in private conversations, and in general they must not interfere in matters having nothing to do with the Church..."

On February 26, 1930, after receiving news from a certain Deacon K. about the true state of affairs in the Church, Metropolitan Peter wrote to Metropolitan Sergius, saying: "Of all the distressing news I have had to receive, the most distressing was the news that many believers remain outside the walls of the churches in which your name is commemorated. I am filled with spiritual pain both about the disputes that have arisen with regard to your administration and about other sad phenomena. Perhaps this information is biased, perhaps I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character and aims of the people writing to me. But the news of disturbances in the Church come to me from various quarters and mainly from clerics and laymen who have made a great impression on me. In my opinion, in view of the exceptional circumstances of Church life, when normal rules of administration have been subject to all kinds of distortion, it is necessary to put Church life on that path on which it stood during your first period as deputy. So be so good as to return to that course of action which was respected by everybody. I repeat that I am very sad that you have not written to me and have confided your plans to me. Since letters come from other people, yours would undoubtedly have reached me..."

After this letter was published, the authorities again tried to force Peter to renounce the locum tenancy and become an agent of the OGPU. But he refused.

On August 17, 1930, he was arrested in Khe and cast into solitary in Tobolsk prison. In November he was moved to prison in Yekaterinburg in solitary confinement with no right to receive parcels or visitors. In the same month a new case was started against him. He was accused that, while in exile, he conducted "defeatist agitation among the surrounding population, talking about an imminent war and the fall of Soviet power and the necessity of struggle with the latter, and also tried to use the Church to conduct a struggle with Soviet power". Vladyka Peter completely rejected these

accusations, and continued his martyric path. In prison the crowns of his teeth broke, but the authorities paid no attention to his request for a dentist. As a result, all eating became for him a real torment. His health, which had once been strong, was undermined. He lay down to sleep at night wondering whether he would wake up the next day. He would have fainting spells and lie for a long time on the prison floor.

On March 11, 1931, after describing the sufferings of his life in Khe (which included the enmity of three renovationist priests), he posed the following question in a letter to "comrade J.B. Polyansky", who had suggested that he renounce the locum tenancy: "Will not a change in locum tenens bring with it a change also in his deputy? Of course, it is possible that my successor, if he were to find himself incapable of carrying out his responsibilities directly, would leave the same person as his deputy - that is his right. But it is certain, in my opinion, that the carrying out of his duties by this deputy would have to come to an end at the same time as the departure of the person for whom he is deputizing, just as, according to the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, with his departure the synod created by him would cease to exist. All this and other questions require thorough and authoritative discussion and canonical underpinning... Be so kind as to bow to Metropolitan Sergius on my behalf, since I am unable to do this myself, and send him my fervent plea that he, together with Metropolitan Seraphim and Archbishop Philip, to whom I also bow, work together for my liberation. I beseech them to defend an old man who can hardly walk. I was always filled with a feeling of deep veneration and gratitude to Metropolitan Sergius, and the thought of some kind of worsening of our relations would give me indescribable sorrow."

This letter suggests a softening of Metropolitan Peter's attitude to Sergius and his synod. However, this is not necessarily the case. Knowing that there was no way that he could remove Metropolitan Sergius from his post while he, Metropolitan Peter, was still in prison, he may have been appealing to their humanity in order to get him released first. Then, having arrived in Moscow, he could have taken the reins of the administration of the Church into his own hands again. However, it seems that the Bolsheviki saw through his ruse, because they (and Metropolitan Sergius) continued to show him no mercy, did not allow him to return to Moscow and continued to insist on his renouncing the locum tenancy.

On March 27, 1931 Metropolitan Peter wrote to B.P. Menzhinsky: "I was given a five-year exile which I served in the far north in the midst of the cruellest frosts, constant storms, extreme poverty and destitution in everything. (I was constantly on the edge of the grave.) But years passed, and there remained four months to the end of my exile when the same thing began all over again - I was again arrested and imprisoned by the Urals OGPU. After some time I was visited by comrade J.V. Polyansky, who suggested that I renounce the locum tenancy. But I could not accept such a suggestion for the following reasons which have a decisive significance for me. First of all I would be transgressing the established order according to

which the locum tenens must remain at his post until the convening of a council. A council convened without the sanction of the locum tenens would be considered uncanonical and its decisions invalid. But in the case of my death the prerogatives of the locum tenens will pass to another person who will complete that which was not done by his predecessor. Moreover, my removal would bring in its wake the departure also of my deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, just as, according to his declaration, with his departure from the position of deputy the Synod created by him would cease to exist. I cannot be indifferent to such a circumstance. Our simultaneous departure does not guarantee church life from various possible frictions, and, of course, the guilt would be mine. Therefore in the given case it is necessary that we discuss this matter together, just as we discussed together the questions relating to my letter to Metropolitan Sergius dated December, 1929. Finally, my decree, coming from prison, would undoubtedly be interpreted as made under pressure, with various undesirable consequences."

Of course, Metropolitan Peter was right, from a strictly canonical point of view, that with his departure or death, Metropolitan Sergius' rights would disappear. But he also knew - as did, of course, the Bolsheviks - that de facto his position would become much stronger, in fact unassailable. That is why he did not want to resign, but wanted rather to return to Moscow to reassume the reins of power. And that is why the Bolsheviks were determined not to let him return. For they knew, from his letter of December, 1929, that he was still an anti-sergianist. So the stalemate continued, with Peter refusing to resign and the Bolsheviks refusing to let him return to Moscow...

In the spring of 1931 Tuchkov suggested to Metropolitan Peter that he work as an informer for the GPU, threatening to give him another term in prison if he refused. On May 25, Metropolitan Peter wrote to Menzhinsky that "such an occupation is incompatible with my calling and is, besides, unsuited to my nature." And again he wrote to Menzhinsky: "In our weakness we fall more or less short of that ideal, that truth, which is enjoined upon Christians. But it is important not to be burdened only by earthly matters and therefore to refrain from violently murdering the truth and departing from its path. Otherwise it would be better to renounce God altogether... In this matter one would come up against two completely contradictory principles: Christian and revolutionary. The basis of the former principle is love for one's neighbour, forgiveness of all, brotherhood, humility; while the basis of the latter principle is: the end justifies the means, class warfare, pillage, etc. If you look at things from the point of view of this second principle, you enter upon the revolutionary path and hurl yourself into warfare, and thereby you renounce not only the true symbol of the Christian Faith and annihilate its foundations - the idea of love and the rest, but also the principles of the confession of the faith. There is no need to say how this dilemma - between love for one's neighbour and class warfare - is to be resolved by a seriously believing person who is, moreover, not a hireling, but a real pastor of the Church. He would hardly know any peace for the rest of his life if he

subjected himself to temptation from the direction of the above-mentioned contradictions."

Metropolitan Peter's sufferings after the visits of Tuchkov were so acute that for some days his right arm and leg were paralyzed. And Tuchkov fulfilled his threat: on July 23, 1931, the OGPU condemned Metropolitan Peter to five years in a concentration camp "for stubborn struggle against Soviet power and persistent counter-revolutionary activity". Immediately after this sentence had been passed, OGPU agents Agranov and Tuchkov sent the administration of the Yekaterinburg prison a note recommending that Metropolitan Peter be kept under guard in the inner isolation-cell. Later, they moved the metropolitan to an isolation cell in a prison of special assignment in Verkhneuralsk.

In the summer of 1933 they increased the pressure on the metropolitan still more: they substituted his walks in the common courtyard with walks in a tiny, separate courtyard which was like a damp cellar whose floor was constantly covered with pools of rain-water and whose air was filled with smells from a latrine just next to the courtyard. When Vladyka saw this place he had an asthma attack and barely made it to his room. Soon the prison administration told him that the money which had been given for him had been spent and that they would no longer be providing him with additional food from the refectory. Vladyka was strictly isolated. The doctor's assistant who was in the room next to him was strictly forbidden to enter into any kind of relations with him, and his request to meet the local bishop was refused.

In August, 1933, Vladyka wrote to the authorities: "In essence, the *locum tenency* is of no interest to me personally. On the contrary, it constantly keeps me in the fetters of persecution. But I am bound to reckon with the fact that the solution of the given question does not depend on my initiative and cannot be an act of my will alone. By my calling I am inextricably bound to the spiritual interests and will of the whole Local Church. So the question of the disposal of the *locum tenency*, not being a personal question, cannot be left to my discretion, otherwise I would turn out to be a traitor of the Holy Church. By the way, in the act [of my entry into the duties of *locum tenens*] there is a remark to the effect that I am bound not to decline from fulfilling the will of Patriarch Tikhon, and consequently the will of the hierarchs who signed the act..., as well as the will of the clergy and believers who have been in communion of prayer with me these last nine years."

Metropolitan Peter's heroic refusal to renounce his post as *locum tenens*, or sign a pact with the authorities on the lines of Metropolitan Sergius' declaration, meant that the official Russian church did not lose its last links with the true apostolic succession until his death in 1937 – or Metropolitan Sergius' illegal assumption of the *locum tenency* and the see of Kolomna in 1936.

Protopresbyter Michael Polsky cites the words of one witness that Metropolitan Peter had secret links with Metropolitan Joseph, who was in exile in Chimkent. Polsky also writes that Peter was freed for a short time in 1935. This fact was confirmed by the Paris newspaper Vozrozhdenie, which said that Peter refused to make concessions in exchange for the patriarchal throne and was again exiled. Another Paris newspaper, Russkaya Mysl' wrote that Peter demanded that Sergius hand over the locum tenancy to him, but Sergius refused.

More light on this crucial meeting has been cast by Protopriest Lev Lebedev, who writes: "In 1935 there came to an end the term of exile of the lawful locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter, to whom Sergius was obliged to hand over the administration of the Church... All now depended on how and what Sergius would choose. Sergius chose. He wrote a letter to the NKVD (its text was published on television not so long ago), in which he said that if the administration were transferred into the hands of Metropolitan Peter 'the building (of cooperation of the Church with Soviet power), which had been constructed with such labour (!), would collapse'. The suggestion was understood and accepted. After a few days Metropolitan Peter was arrested and sent to a new place of imprisonment in Magnitogorsk... There are some basic data to the effect that Vladyka Peter even returned from exile, lived in Kolomna and came to Sergius in Moscow, so as to take over the administration. But Sergius did not hand over the administration, and wrote this same letter to the NKVD."

Vladyka was again transferred to the special purpose Verkhne-Uralsk prison, put in an isolated cell and given the number 114 instead of being given a name, so that no one should know about the fate of the locum tenens.

On the evening of August 2, 1936, Metropolitan Peter asked to have a talk with the head of the prison Artemyev. On the next day, Artemyev made a report in which his deputy Yakovlev called for Metropolitan Peter to be brought to trial on the grounds that he "made an attempt to establish links with the outside world". Then Artemyev and Yakovlev declared that Metropolitan Peter was an "irreconcilable enemy of Soviet power and slanders the existing state structure..., accusing it of 'persecuting the Church' and 'her workers'. He slanderously accuses the NKVD organs of acting with prejudice in relation to him... He tried to make contact with the outside world from prison, using for this person the medical personnel of the prison, as a result of which he received a prosphora as a sign of greeting from the clergy of Verkhne-Uralsk."

On August 25 (July 9), 1936 he was given another three-year term. From this time the conditions of his imprisonment became still stricter, he hardly saw anyone except the head of the prison and his deputy.

On September 11, 1936 an official announcement falsely declared the death of Metropolitan Peter. On December 27 Metropolitan Sergius assumed the

title of locum tenens of the patriarchal throne and Metropolitan of Krutitsa - although, as he himself had admitted, the rights of the deputy of the locum tenens ceased immediately after the death of the locum tenens himself, and as Metropolitan Peter had written in 1931, "*my removal would bring in its wake the departure also of my deputy, Metropolitan Sergius.*"

But Metropolitan Peter was not dead. His execution came later: "On October 2, 1937, the troika of the UNKVD for Chelyabinsk region decreed the execution by shooting of Peter Fyodorovich (Polyansky), metropolitan of Krutitsa. The sentence was carried out on October 10, 1937 at 16.00 hours. Head of the UGB of the UNKVD, security forces Lieutenant Podobedov." He was buried in Magnitogorsk.

26. HOLY HIEROMARTYR JOSEPH, METROPOLITAN OF PETROGRAD

and those with him

Metropolitan Joseph, in the world Ivan Semyonovich Petrovykh, was born on December 15, 1872 in Ustyuzhna, Novgorod province, in a lower middle class family. He finished his studies at the Ustyuzhna theological school and Novgorod theological seminary and then, in 1895, entered the Moscow Theological Academy. In 1899 he graduated from the Academy with the degree of candidate of theology and a professor's scholarship. On September 9, 1900 he was confirmed as lecturer of the Academy in the faculty of Biblical history. On August 26, 1901, he was tonsured as a monk by Bishop Arsenius (Stadnitsky), the rector of the Academy, in the Gethsemane skete. Bishop Arsenius' words at his tonsuring had a great significance for Fr. Joseph in his future life: "Now, when the name of God is blasphemed, silence is shameful and will be counted as pusillanimity or insensitive coldness with regard to the faith. May this criminal lukewarmness, which the Lord warns against, not be in you. Work burning with the Spirit of the Lord."

On September 30, 1901, Fr. Joseph was ordained to the diaconate, and on October 14 - to the priesthood. In February, 1903, he was awarded the degree of master of theology for his dissertation, "The history of the Jewish people according to the archaeology of Joseph Flavian". On December 9, 1903 he was made inspector and extraordinary professor of the Moscow Academy. On 18 January, 1904 he was raised to the rank of archimandrite.

While teaching Biblical history at the Moscow Academy, Fr. Joseph came up against a powerful anti-monastic tendency in the professorial body. "This polemic between the professors of the Academy and the steward of the Holy Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra, Archimandrite Nikon (Rozhdestvensky) began already in 1902 and unfolded on the pages of the journals *Soul-Profiting Reading* and *The Theological Herald*. The professors subjected monasticism in its contemporary form to sharp criticism and called on the monks to carry out in a practical way the commandment of love for one's neighbour in the form of social service. Archimandrite Nikon defended the contemplative character of monasticism. The articles on both sides were quite sharp in character. In March, 1904 Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow banned an article by the Academy Professor N.F. Kapterev, which was being prepared for the press as a reply to Archimandrite Nikon. On March 18 an extraordinary session of the Academy Council took place for this reason. The decision was taken to protest against the metropolitan's ban. Archimandrite Joseph did not agree with this decision, supported the ban on the publication and expressed himself against N.F. Kapterev's article because of its unbecoming and sharp attacks and even 'the poison of barbs, mockeries and insults directed not only against opponents but also against monasticism itself, but very well concealed under an external mask of objective scholarship'.

“For his words Archimandrite Joseph was publicly and coarsely reproached by the offended N.F. Kapterev, after which he left the meeting. The scene made a bad impression on everyone, but Fr. Joseph was not spared – it was considered that he had received his due for his conceit and his speech against the professorial corporation and one of its most senior members. Professor I.V. Popov in a letter of April 16, 1904 wrote: ‘Joseph set off straight from the meeting to the elders at the skete. There he wept and wrote a petition for his retirement...’ At Pascha a deputation from the professors was received by Metropolitan Vladimir, who also summoned Archimandrite Joseph. In spite of the warm reception and long conversation with the professors, the ban was not removed, and Kapterev’s article was not printed.”

On June 30, 1906 Fr. Joseph was appointed superior of the Yablochinsky St. Onuphrius monastery in Kholm diocese. The monastery was in a very poor, run-down condition, and the Orthodox in the area were surrounded by hostile Catholics. However, the young archimandrite succeeded in bringing the monastery into a flourishing condition.

In November, 1907 he was appointed to the Yuriev monastery in Novgorod diocese. In 1909 he wrote prophetically: “Now many are complaining about the hard times for the Church... Remembering the words of the Saviour with complete accuracy, we must expect still worse times for the Church... Without any exaggeration, she must truly live through a condition close to complete destruction and her being overcome by the gates of hell. Perhaps with us, exactly as in the land of freedom, America, they will drive the Name of Christ out of the schools. They will adapt prayer assemblies into ordinary meetings permitted by the police, as in that other land of freedom, France, and will convert the heritage of the Church, together with the very right of faith, into the property of the state. Perhaps the faith of Christ will again hide in the woods, the deserts, the catacombs, and the confession of the faith will be only in secret, while immoral and blasphemous presentations will come out into the open. All this may happen! The struggle against Christ will be waged with desperation, with the exertion of the last drop of human and hellish energy, and only then, perhaps, will it be given to hell and to mankind to assure us with complete obviousness of the unfailing power and might of the priceless promise of Christ: ‘I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her’ (Matthew 16.18).”

On February 27, 1909 Fr. Joseph was appointed superior of the Spaso-Yakovlevsky monastery in Rostov. He did much for this monastery. In 1909 he consecrated a church in honour of the Tolga icon of the Mother of God, and restored the Conception church. At Pascha, April 1, 1912, he consecrated the church of the Resurrection of Christ, which had been built on his initiative. In 1913 Bishop Joseph met the Emperor Nicholas in the monastery, and a little later - Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna. In 1916 he consecrated a chapel in honour of the Vatopedi icon of the Mother of God, and in 1917 - a church in honour of the Mother of God, "the Joy of all who Sorrow".

On March 15, 1909, Fr. Joseph was consecrated Bishop of Uglich, a vicariate of Yaroslavl diocese in the Holy Trinity cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra by Metropolitans Anthony of Petersburg, Vladimir of Moscow, Flavian of Kiev and others. He was in the see of Uglich for many years as the vicar of Archbishop Tikhon (Bellavin), and from 1913 - of Archbishop Agathangelus (Preobrazhensky).

From August 25 to September 16, 1914 Bishop Joseph was temporary administrator of the Kostroma diocese. During this period, short though it was, he did much to help the Russian soldiers and their families at the beginning of the war. Bishop Joseph's influence persisted, for in 1946 the Moscow Patriarchate Bishop Anthony reported that "the Kostroma region is steeped in the Josephite spirit", and that "to uproot this it is necessary to open a series of churches that have been preserved".

Between 1905 and 1910 he published In the Embrace of the Father. The Diary of a Monk in 12 volumes (St. Petersburg). He wrote and published about 80 works in all. He very much loved the Liturgy and served every day. He was an expert in church chanting, and in 1911 went to Mount Athos in order to acquaint himself better with the subtleties of ancient church chant.

Bishop Joseph was a member of the Local Council of the Russian Church in 1917-18. From December 1, 1917 to January 20, 1918 he was temporary administrator of the Riga diocese.

On April 26, 1919 the relics of Saints Isaiah, Ignatius, Abraham, Euphrosyne of Polotsk and Demetrius of Rostov had been uncovered by order of the uyezd congress of soviets. Vladyka Joseph organised a cross procession to protest against the uncovering of the holy relics. On July 7, 1919 he was arrested for "breaking up the campaign to uncover the relics in his diocese by means of ringing of bells and cross processions". While he was in prison in Yaroslavl thousands of his admirers signed a petition for his release. On July 18 he was transferred to the inner prison of the Cheka in the Lubyanka in Moscow. He was released in August and the case was shelved for lack of evidence.

On January 22, 1920 Bishop Joseph was promoted to the rank of Archbishop of Rostov, a vicariate of the Yaroslavl diocese, and lived in the Spaso-Yakovlevsky monastery. In the same year he became temporary administrator of the Novgorod diocese (until 1925). On July 8 he was arrested for "anti-Soviet agitation", and on July 26 was sentenced to one year in the camps (conditional).

During the renovationist heresy, Archbishop Joseph shut himself up in the monastery and ruled his dioceses from there.

In May, 1922 he was arrested, and on June 19, 1922 the Yaroslavl revolutionary tribunal sentenced him to four years' deprivation of liberty for

resisting the requisitioning of church valuables. He was released on January 5, 1923 on the orders of Kalinin and went to live in the Alexeyev monastery in Uglich. From 1923 to 1926 he was unofficial administrator of the Yaroslavl diocese.

On May 21, 1924 Patriarch Tikhon appointed him a member of the Holy Synod. From the autumn of 1924 he was administering the Novgorod diocese. On April 12, 1925 he took part in signing the act transferring the leadership of the Church to Metropolitan Peter. On December 6, 1925 Metropolitan Peter appointed him third candidate for deputy patriarchal locum tenens after Metropolitan Michael (Yermakov) and Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky).

On August 26, 1926 he was appointed Metropolitan of Petrograd – in the words of the ukaz, “as a consequence of the insistent request of the believers”. He was living in Novgorod at the time, and was informed of his new appointment by Bishop Alexis of Khutyn, the future Soviet “patriarch”, who now became temporary administrator of the Novgorod diocese. Bishop Alexis had himself been considered for the Petrograd see, but had been passed over because of the people’s strong suspicion that “he could unite with the renovationists”.

Metropolitan Joseph accepted the appointment “out of obedience”, but objected to being called metropolitan “of Leningrad”, rather than the pre-revolutionary name of Petrograd. On September 11 he arrived in the city. That evening and the following morning, the feast of St. Alexander Nevsky, he celebrated services in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra.

Fr. Michael Cheltsov wrote: “there were no bounds to the jubilation and compunction, joy could be heard everywhere and could be seen on the faces. There were the most lively conversations and prayers of gratitude to God.” Metropolitan Joseph served with Bishops Alexis, Gabriel (Voyevodin), Nicholas (Yarushevich), Stefan (Bekh), Gregory (Lebedev), Sergius (Druzhinin) and Demetrius (Lyubimov). Of these, two (Alexis and Nicholas) became pillars of the post-war Soviet church, while all the others suffered martyrs’ deaths.

“The new metropolitan was tall, grey-haired, with glasses, serious-looking, somewhat unsociable, as if strict. He has something in common in his external appearance with Metropolitan Benjamin. He walks with something of a stoop. He doesn’t talk with anyone in the altar. He even sent a message through Bishop Gregory to one of the clergy who was ‘conversing’ in the altar that he should be ‘quieter’. The clergy and bishops immediately felt that the ‘master’ had arrived: they all pulled themselves together. His voice was high, quite tender, pleasant, with a pure diction. In general he created a good, pleasant impression.

“From a first glance at him, Metropolitan Joseph inspired trust and sympathy... The monk with the completely ascetic appearance attracted and

pleased people; there was nothing affected in his serving: it was simple and prayerful... People spoke of him as of a true monk, a kind man, a fervent man of prayer who was responsive to the needs and woes of others; one wanted to be near him and listen to him... And it seemed to us clergy that he was precisely the man we needed, that he was the man who could display that authority that compels to obedience, disperses opposition, teaches order and disciplines with a single glance - in a word, that real life would begin with him, that he would be Vladyka and Father amongst us."

On September 13 in the evening Metropolitan Joseph left Petrograd for Moscow, leaving Bishop Gabriel as his vicar. But he never returned; for while in Moscow, he was summoned to the OGPU. On expressing a negative opinion concerning the planned legalization of the Church to the OGPU departmental head of the Church division, Eugene Tuchkov, he was sent to Rostov and forbidden to leave that city. The OGPU justified their action on the grounds that he was "a Johnnite", who "secretly ordained people belonging to that sect". As Fr. Michael Cheltsov put it more truly, "Soviet power couldn't leave us with even a little well-being."

Two weeks after his departure, the liberal clergy of Petrograd addressed Metropolitan Joseph with the following requests: "1) that he declare to the Administrative section concerning his agreement with our memorandum [about the convening of a diocesan congress]; 2) that he choose new vicars without a 'past' and acceptable for the authorities; 3) that he try to remain neutral among the clergy groupings; 4) that he leave his Eminence Alexis as vicar here; and 5) that he order that his name be commemorated as 'of Leningrad', which, apparently, the rightists are trying to escape."

On September 28 Metropolitan Joseph was summoned to the OGPU agent Tuchkov in Moscow and was offered three places of exile (Archangelsk and two other places) for three years. Soon it was rumoured in Petrograd that this was all the work of the liberal clergy, who were trying to replace Metropolitan Joseph with Bishop Alexis. Indeed, Metropolitan Joseph's vicar, Bishop Gabriel, petitioned to be replaced by Bishop Alexis or Bishop Nicholas because of the liberal clergy's disenchantment with him. However, Metropolitan Sergius did not agree to this because Tuchkov was still conducting negotiations with Metropolitan Joseph, whose popularity was increasing all the more as a result of all that had happened.

On December 8 (or November 25), following the arrest of Metropolitan Sergius, Metropolitan Joseph became temporary leader of the Russian Church as deputy of the patriarchal *locum tenens*, Metropolitan Peter. The same day he appointed his own deputies as deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens.

On December 16 Metropolitan Joseph was summoned to the Lubyanka, and on December 28 he was arrested and told to live, without right of departure, in the former Modensky Nikolayevsky monastery near his native Ustyuzhna in Novgorod (or Cherepovets) diocese. According to another

source, he was arrested on December 9 and sent to the monastery on December 29.

In March, Metropolitan Sergius was released from prison and immediately began on his pro-Soviet course. On May 10 Bishop Alexis, who had been forbidden to serve in Petrograd by Metropolitan Joseph, appealed to Metropolitan Sergius to put his comrade, Bishop Nicholas of Peterhof, in charge of the diocese. Metropolitan Sergius replied that "it is first necessary to clarify the question of the position of Metropolitan Joseph - whether he will be given the opportunity to return to Leningrad or not..." In other words, Metropolitan Sergius already made no appointments without the approval of the authorities.

In July, 1927 Metropolitan Sergius issued his well-known declaration, which placed the Russian Church in submission to the Soviets, and in the middle of August Bishop Demetrius of Gdov, Protopriest Alexander Sovetov and other clergy of the Petrograd diocese sent a letter to Metropolitan Joseph expressing their disagreement with the church position of Metropolitan Sergius.

On September 17, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius, probably acting under pressure from the authorities, transferred Metropolitan Joseph from Petrograd to Odessa. This aroused the extreme dissatisfaction of the Petrograd flock, and in many churches it was openly said that "Metropolitan Joseph has been transferred wrongly in accordance with the report of Bishop Nicholas, who has evidently slandered him."

On September 28, Metropolitan Joseph wrote to Sergius that he refused to accept it, saying that he saw in it "an evil intrigue by a clique which did not want him to be in Leningrad". Then he wrote to Tuchkov asking that he be allowed to administer the Leningrad diocese. Finally he wrote to Sergius again rebuking him and his Synod for "a woefully servile obedience to a principle alien to the Church". He said that he regarded his transfer as "anti-canonical, ill-advised and pleasing to an evil intrigue in which I will have no part". He clearly saw in it the hand of the OGPU, to which Metropolitan Sergius was simply giving in.

Certainly, the fact that more than forty bishops were transferred by Sergius in this period was one of the main complaints of the confessing bishops against him, and seems hard to justify by any purely ecclesiastical considerations.

However, on October 25 Sergius' Synod confirmed the decision to transfer Metropolitan Joseph, and appointed Metropolitan Sergius himself to the see of Petrograd. In the same decision Bishops Demetrius and Seraphim were forbidden to leave the diocese "without the knowledge and blessing" of Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich). Metropolitan Joseph heard about all this through messengers.

On October 25, Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) proclaimed in the cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Petrograd the decision of the Provisional Synod to transfer Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) from Petrograd to Odessa (the secular authorities had already forbidden Metropolitan Joseph to return to the city). This caused major disturbances in Petrograd. The discontent of the faithful was compounded by the fact that on October 21 Sergius had ordered that the civil authorities be prayed for during the Divine services, and prohibited prayer for the bishops in exile.

Metropolitan Joseph moved to Rostov (taking the place of an absent hierarch), and then, on October 30, he wrote to Sergius: "You made me metropolitan of Leningrad without the slightest striving for it on my part. It was not without disturbance and distress that I accepted this dangerous obedience, which others, perhaps wisely (otherwise it would have been criminal) decisively declined... Vladyko! Your firmness is yet able to correct everything and urgently put an end to every disturbance and indeterminateness. It is true, I am not free and cannot now serve my flock, but after all everybody understands this 'secret'... Now anyone who is to any degree firm and needed is unfree (and will hardly be free in the future)... You say: this is what the authorities want; they are giving back their freedom to exiled hierarchs on the condition that they change their former place of serving and residence. But what sense or benefit can we derive from the leap-frogging and shuffling of hierarchs that this has elicited, when according to the spirit of the Church canons they are in an indissoluble union with their flock as with a bride? Would it not be better to say: let it be, this false human mercy, which is simply a mockery of our human dignity, which strives for a cheap effect, a spectre of clemency. Let it be as it was before; it will be better like that. Somehow we'll get to the time when they finally understand that the eternal, universal Truth cannot be conquered by exiles and vain torments... One compromise might be permissible in the given case... Let them (the hierarchs) settle in other places as temporarily governing them, but let them unflinchingly retain their former title... I cannot be reconciled in my conscience with any other scheme, I am absolutely unable to recognize as correct my disgustingly tsarist-rasputinite transfer to the Odessa diocese, which took place without any fault on my part or any agreement of mine, and even without my knowledge. And I demand that my case be immediately transferred from the competence of your Synod, in whose competence I am not the only one to doubt, for discussion by a larger Council of bishops, to which alone I consider myself bound to display my unquestioning obedience."

In November several parishes in Petrograd stopped commemorating Metropolitan Sergius. On November 24 an important meeting took place in the flat of Protopriest Theodore Andreyev, at which it was decided to write several letters to Sergius. A few days later one such letter, composed by Fr. Theodore and Bishop Mark (Novoselov), was read out in the flat of Bishop

Demetrius. On December 12 a delegation headed by Bishop Demetrius went to Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow and handed him three letters, one of which was signed by six of the city's eight bishops. The petitions contained demands that Metropolitan Joseph be restored to the see of Petrograd and that the decree of October 21 be rescinded.

On December 23, in response to a report by his vicar-bishops, Metropolitan Joseph declared: "In order to condemn and render harmless the latest actions of Metropolitan Sergius, we have no other resort in the present circumstances than decisively to depart from him and ignore his directives."

On December 26, Bishops Demetrius, Sergius, Gregory, Gabriel and Stefan, together with the priests Veryuzhsky, Dobronravov, Rozhdestvensky, Nikitin, Andreyev, Venustov and thirty to forty others, signed an act breaking communion with Metropolitan Sergius, with the blessing of Metropolitan Joseph. Four days later some of these signatories were banned from serving by Metropolitan Sergius' synod.

On February 2, 1928, Archbishops Anatolius (Grisiuk) of Odessa, Silvester (Bratanovsky) of Vologda and Sebastian (Vesti) of Kostroma were sent by Metropolitan Sergius to Metropolitan Joseph in Rostov to ask him: a) whether it was with his knowledge and blessing that Bishop Demetrius of Gdov and Sergius of Narva were calling on people to break communion with Sergius, and b) whether he separated himself from those bishops. However, Metropolitan Joseph stood firm. He refused to re-enter communion with Sergius or submit to his Synod, and announced that he was taking upon himself the administration of the diocese.

Then, on February 6, 1928, he, together with the hierarchs of the Yaroslav diocese, signed a formal act of separation from Sergius. Two days later he announced to his Leningrad vicars, pastors and flock that he was taking upon himself the leadership of the Leningrad diocese. This persuaded the authorities to arrest him, on February 29, and send him again to the Nikolo-Modensky monastery. On March 11 Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod placed Metropolitan Joseph under ban.

As Metropolitan Joseph's supporters in Petrograd were continuing to grow, Metropolitan Sergius sent Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov) there on February 19. However, the new hierarch (who had laid down as a condition of his journey to Leningrad that Tuchkov "not admit Metropolitan Joseph there") was unsuccessful. And so, on March 27 (April 11) Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod retired Metropolitan Joseph and his fellow-bishops and banned them from serving. This was ignored by them.

On August 6, 1929 Metropolitan Sergius' synod declared: "The sacraments performed in separation from Church unity... by the followers of the former Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad, the former Bishop Demetrius (Lyubimov) of Gdov, the former Bishop Alexis (Buj) of Urazov, as also of

those who are under ban, are also invalid, and those who are converted from these schisms, if they have been baptized in schism, are to be received through Holy Chrismation." This decree was also ignored by the Josephites.

Metropolitan Joseph wrote to Bishop Demetrius "that we should each rule independently, directing our whole gaze and all our hopes to the only lawful locum tenens, Metropolitan Peter, and to the future Local Council of all our Hierarchs, and not of a chance selection of them by individual people. It is only this lawful Council that all the rulers and Synods must aim for now."

When Archimandrite Lev (Yegorov) accused him of being a schismatic, Metropolitan Joseph replied: "We can only marvel at the indifference and blindness of those others who still suppose that those who permit and carry out this iniquity are doing the work of God, 'saving' and ruling the Church, and not crudely offending and mocking it, inscribing themselves into the numbers of its enemies and removing themselves from it rather than cutting off who can no longer stand this bacchanalia, crude violence and iniquitously blasphemous politics.

"... We will not give the Church as a sacrifice and victim of the traitors and disgusting intriguers and agents of atheism and destruction. And by this protest we do not ourselves cut ourselves off from it, but cut them off from ourselves and boldly say: not only have we not left, are not leaving and never will leave the depths of the true Orthodox Church, but we consider its enemies, betrayers and murderers to be those who are not with us and not for us, but against us. It is not we who depart into schism by not submitting to Metropolitan Sergius, but you who obediently follow him into the abyss of the Church's condemnation..."

"1. I am not at all a schismatic, and I call not to a schism, but to the purification of the Church from those who sow real schism and provoke it.

"2. Indicating to another person his errors is not schism, but, to put it simply, putting an unbridled horse back into the shaft.

"3. Refusing to accept sound reproaches and exhortations is the real schism and a trampling on the truth.

"4. The participants in the construction of Church life are not only the people at the top, but the whole Church body, and the schismatic is he who takes to himself rights that exceed his prerogatives, and who dares to speak in the name of the Church that which his brothers do not share.

"5. Metropolitan Sergius has shown himself to be such a schismatic. He has far exceeded his prerogatives and rejected and despised the voice of many hierarchs who retained the pure truth among themselves.

"In passing you mention among the ways to the truth 'Christ indicated to us yet one more, new path: that you love one another', which way, it would seem, you consider that I have left out of sight in my actions. In reply I would remind you, Father, of the wonderful conclusion of Metropolitan Philaret in his sermon on love for one's enemies: 'Despise the enemies of God, strike the enemies of the fatherland, love your enemies'.

"The defenders of Sergius say that the canons allow one to separate oneself from a bishop only for heresy which has been condemned by a council. Against this one may reply that the deeds of Metropolitan Sergius may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in view such an open violation by him of the freedom and dignity of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

"But beyond this, the canons themselves could not foresee many things, and can one dispute that it is even worse and more harmful than any heresy when one plunges a knife into the Church's very heart - Her freedom and dignity?.. 'Lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His own Blood' (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council)...

"Perhaps I do not dispute that 'there are more of you presently than of us'. And let it be that 'the great mass is not for me', as you say. But I will never consider myself a schismatic, even if I were to remain absolutely alone, as one of the holy confessors once was. The matter is not at all one of quantity, do not forget that for a minute: 'The Son of God when He cometh shall He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18.8). And perhaps the last 'rebels' against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of her ruin will be not only bishops and not archpriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him."

Metropolitan Joseph continued this theme in a letter "to a soul languishing amidst the adversities and storms of the sea of the present world": "The word of the Lord did not lie when He promised that He would be with us to the end of the world and preserve His Church not overcome by the gates of hell, that is, on the edge of destruction. Yes, we are now on the edge of destruction, and many, perhaps, will perish; the Church of Christ will become smaller, perhaps reduced again to the twelve, as at the beginning of her foundation. After all, these words of the Lord also cannot fail to be fulfilled: 'The Son of God when He cometh shall He find faith on the earth?'

"Everything happens in accordance with the foreknowledge of the Lord. People cannot add or take away one iota from it. Those who do not wish to perish are more insured against destruction and one can say: hell will be only for those who themselves want it. May this truth remain first of all as a comfort and encouragement for those who are despondent from the events of this world. Being deprived of the churches of God and the former magnificent

services with their abundance of worshippers and glittering hosts of clergy, the angelic chanting of the choirs, etc. – this is, of course, sad and regrettable. But we have not been deprived of the inner service of God in quietness and compunction and concentration of the spirit within itself. Just as the well-known explorers who, deprived of the ship on which they were travelling, nevertheless did not perish but were able to create a tolerable life for themselves even on chunks of deceptive ice until they were raised from the abyss that was threatening to engulf them on the wings of aeroplanes, so we, after the pitiful fall of our spiritual ships, must not give in to panic and lose our self-control and hope of salvation, but must calmly begin our prayerful labour of serving the Lord and taking our delight in him ‘in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’, as the Apostles and all the believers prayed at the beginning.

“Did our majestic churches, bell-towers and magnificent services exist then? And did the absence of all this hinder them from being inflamed with such a love for the Lord as no succeeding age has attained?...”

In fact, fifteen out of the eighty-five churches of Petrograd declared in favour of Metropolitan Joseph. Of these only four later changed and joined Metropolitan Sergius under threat of liquidation, while eleven were closed by the authorities. Metropolitan Joseph ruled his flock through his vicar-bishops Demetrius of Gdov and Sergius of Narva; and his supporters could visit him in the Nikolo-Modensky monastery.

During his interrogation, Metropolitan Joseph said: “The matter in connection with which I have been charged is based on the opinion of me as the leader of a particular tendency in our Church, which arose four years ago in connection with the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, who crudely violated, in the opinion of believers, the deepest foundations of the structure of Church life and administration,... and elicited, simultaneously and everywhere, independently of any personalities, a correspondingly strong reaction in Church circles without any participation or influence on my part...”

“This tendency has been quite unjustly named ‘Josephism’, an injustice which Metropolitan Sergius himself has pointed to in his correspondence. It could with much more justice be called ‘antisergianism’. Moreover, I myself was drawn into this tendency significantly later; it did not follow after me, but rather I was drawn in its wake, and I did not agree with many of its deviations to the right and to the left. And even if I and my participation in this movement were completely eliminated, it would go on without stopping and without the least possibility of its being completely eradicated...”

“This movement could not be stopped even by the name and authority of our chief leader, Metropolitan Peter. Every attempt of this kind would be interpreted as a departure from sound reasoning, from the truth, and would unfailingly end only in the falling away of the believing masses from Metropolitan Peter himself.”

Concerning the role of his deputy, Bishop Demetrius, Metropolitan Joseph said: "At first Bishop Demetrius was my deputy only in the Leningrad diocese, but later, when the antisergianist movement had spread far beyond the bounds of the Leningrad diocese, I could not forbid him, and myself agreed with him, to counsel all those who came to him for direction. Bishop Demetrius himself kept me informed with regard to all questions; he asked for advice and directions from me, as his metropolitan."

On July 24 / August 6, 1928, Metropolitan Joseph wrote to Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov with regard to the "capitulation" of the Yaroslavl hierarchs to Metropolitan Sergius: "There were also those who fell away from the Lord, going away from Him and leaving Him in the amazing minority of twelve. Then these twelve (however, even in this small number there later turned out to be a 'devil' (John 6.66-71)) then grew into what we now so carefully wish to preserve and protect from new traitors and destroyers, which these destroyers have again managed to reduce to an 'insignificant minority'. But let that not disturb us! Let us firmly remember that the Truth Himself was crucified by a majority (an overwhelming majority) of votes, and let those who now refer in their own justification to the majority rather read in this a terrible reproach and rebuke for themselves, that in their 'majority' Christ the Truth is again crucified!"

On September 12 (9), 1930 Vladyka Joseph was arrested in the Modensky monastery as part of "The Case of the All-Union Centre of True Orthodoxy, 1931" and cast into the Domzak in Petrograd. In December he was transferred to the inner prison of the OGPU in Moscow. On September 3, 1931 he was convicted of being "the leader of the church-administrative centre of the All-Union counter-revolutionary monarchist organization, 'The True Orthodox Church'". The indictment declared that "the leadership of the anti-Soviet activity was carried out on the orders of the participant in the church-political centre, M.A. Novoselov. The anti-Soviet activity was directed by his deputy in leading the organization, Bishop Demetrius (Lyubimov). He received and instructed the leaders of the branches and cells of the organization that came to him, giving them instructions on the direction and methods of counter-revolutionary activity and recommending them to prepare to support intervention". In accordance with article 58-11 Metropolitan Joseph was sentenced to five years in the camps commuted to exile to the desert of Kazakhstan for five years. He lived first in Dzhambul (now Aulie-Ata), and then, from 1935, in the Mirzoyan area near Chimkent in Southern Kazakhstan.

Condemned at about this time with Metropolitan Joseph in the group case, "The Case of Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh), Leningrad, 1931", were:-

Hieromonk Habbakuk, in the world Nicholas Petrovich Sutiev (Sutiev). He was born in October, 1897 in St. Petersburg in the family of a bureaucrat. In 1914 he became a student, and in 1915 joined the tsarist army. In 1918 he joined the Red Army. From August, 1919 to January, 1923 he was a member

of the communist party, but was excluded from the party because of his religious convictions. He became a monk in 1923 and was ordained to the priesthood. According to one source, he was a renovationist priest from 1923 to 1925, but in 1925 was received into the Orthodox Church by repentance and was sent to serve in the St. Michael cathedral in Oranienbaum. In 1928 he joined the Josephites. On September 26, 1930 he was arrested in connection with the Petrograd branch of the True Orthodox Church, and on April 12, 1930 was convicted by the OGPU of "participation in a counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization". In accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11 he was sentenced to ten years in the camps. He was sent to Solovki. Nothing more is known about him.

Together with Metropolitan Joseph from about 1935 was **Archimandrite Arsenius** (Kordi). Protopresbyter Michael Polsky quotes an eyewitness account of Metropolitan Joseph's life in exile:- "In August, 1936, there lived in Alma-Ata a comparatively young archimandrite, Arsenius. From him I first heard that there existed a secret, underground Church led by Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and organized by him with the blessing of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa with whom he, living in exile in Chimkent, about 100 versts from Alma-Ata, had secret communications all the time. Arsenius was ordained by the metropolitan and had the happiness of supporting him materially, earning his living by the sale of models of various figurines and knick-knack for museums. He had a church deep under the earth and Metropolitan Joseph served in it. The metropolitan also consecrated it secretly on one of his occasional visit from Alma-Ata. Father Archimandrite dug out this church with great and lengthy labour.

"We greatly respected Archimandrite Arsenius, the more so that he was loved by Metropolitan Joseph and through him we could have a link with him. At that time the metropolitan lived in Chimkent. Before then, from the very beginning of his exile, he lived in the small town of Auliet, where he was not allowed to live in a room, but they put him up in a shed with cattle, partitioning off a hammock with poles.

"The church dug in the earth was in the room of Archimandrite Arsenius. In the ante-room there was a hatch covered with a carpet. The cover was taken away and underneath a stairway led to the church. In the cellar in a corner there was an opening in the earth filled with stones. When the stones were taken away one had to crawl, bent down, for three paces and there was the entrance to the temple. There were many icons, and oil-lamps burned. Metropolitan Joseph was very tall, and when I was there he went there twice altogether and entered the church. A special atmosphere was created, but I shall not conceal the fact that fear manifested itself during the time of the Divine service, especially at night - it was difficult to overcome this feeling. When a big watchdog began to bark, albeit at a distance, outside, everything was audible under the earth, and everyone expected the shouting and stamping of the GPU. Throughout 1936 and until September, 1937, everything worked out well. My son chanted there with a nun. On August 26

Metropolitan Joseph arrived and granted us a visit on the day of my angel. What a wonderful, humble, unshakeable man of prayer! This was expressed in his appearance and in his eyes as in a mirror. He was very tall, with a great white beard and an unusually fine face. One could not help being attracted to him, and would wish never to be parted from him. His monastic clothing was covered, as was his hair, otherwise they would have arrested him while he was still in the street; for they shadowed him and he did not have the right to leave... He said privately that Patriarch Tikhon had proposed, shortly after his election, to appoint him as his first deputy. For some reason this fact is nowhere mentioned in the history of the locum tenancy in the Church...

"He recognized Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa as the lawful head of the Church, and right until his last arrest in September, 1937, he had secret relations with him at a time when rumours were spreading everywhere that Metropolitan Peter was dead. Concerning his 10-year exile, he said that up to that time it had been exceptionally hard. He lived on bread with pigs in a wattled shed, and slept on boards, separated from the pigs by a few poles. He bore cold and heat, every kind of bad weather and the oppressive atmosphere in these conditions. Once a snake, clinging onto a pole from the ceiling, fell on his head. These conditions were evidently the reason for his illness. At times he suffered very much from an ulcer in the bowels, or he had some kind of interior tumour, perhaps cancerous, and he was on a diet which Archimandrite Arsenius helped him to carry out. He bore everything as a righteous man and if he spoke about his difficult persecutions, it was only because we were all recalling the cruelties of the GPU.

"Father Archimandrite told us about one form of torment and humiliation. 'When they took us through Siberia, the frost was cruel. In the train there was a bath-compartment. They drove us completely naked through the compartments to the bath. Joyfully we poured the hot water over ourselves and warmed ourselves a little, since the compartments were almost unheated. Then they drove us back, not giving us anything to dry ourselves with, our heads wet. They deliberately kept us on the iron platform, and our wet feet, momentarily froze to the iron. At the command: "Forward!" we tore our frozen, bloody feet away'...

"The next day, having spent the night at the archimandrite's, the metropolitan departed to his own place. Now he lived in different conditions. After many years we had been allowed to find him a flat in Chimkent. Archimandrite Arsenius built him a room where he could live undisturbed and took care about his food, making sure not only that he got enough but also that he kept to the diet. First he got him a zither, then a harmonium, with which the metropolitan, a great musician, was very pleased. He set psalms to music and chanted.

"On September 23, 1937, in the neighbourhood of Alma-Ata and in Kazakhstan, all the clergy of the secret 'Josephite' churches were arrested. They left for voluntary exile for refusing to recognise the 'Soviet church'. All were

sentenced to ten years without right of appeal, and, as I learned later, the metropolitan was also among them. He was arrested with Archimandrite Arsenius. After the arrest of my son, I ran distractedly to his house and, as I came up, saw a car and the GPU going in. Happily, they did not notice me. The catacomb church of Fr. Arsenius was opened. Once he had carelessly revealed its secret to what seemed to be an honourable elderly man, but who turned out to be a chekist.

"Returning to Moscow after my three-year voluntary exile with my son, I soon found about the existence of secret 'Josephite' churches here - that is, not churches, but services in hidden rooms where sometimes 20-25 people gathered. The service went on in a whisper, with strict control of the worshippers, because of the possibility of betrayal. They usually came to the meeting according to an agreed sign, knocking carefully at a water-pipe by the window, where someone was standing listening.

"One old priest monk, **Fr. Alexander Gumanovsky**, selflessly travelled everywhere that he was called, and the Lord even managed that he should give communion to the sick in hospitals. Sitting by them like a visitor, he confessed them and then, as if giving them some medicine or food, gave them Holy Communion."

According to **Nina Alexeyevna Kitayeva**, Metropolitan Joseph lived on the outskirts of Chimkent, in Poltoratskaya street, near an irrigation canal beyond which stretched the untilled steppe. He had a room in a small Kazakh house with a light in the ceiling, a chair, a trestle bed on which he slept and a pair of chairs. He got up at six o'clock, served at his anoly behind which he placed a carved folding icon, went to the market to buy some things, had breakfast, rested a little and then sat down to read. The local exiles sent him books. Parcels and money came to him from Russia on occasion. Sometimes exiles would visit him, and he went out into the steppe to talk with them.

He was served by **Nun Maria** (Ivanovna Koronatova). She was born in 1877 in St. Petersburg province and had known Vladyka since childhood. She worked as a teacher in Ustyuzhna. In September, 1929 she accompanied Vladyka into exile. On January 7, 1931 she was arrested in Ustuyzhna and sent to prison. Three months later she was given "voluntary exile" to Western Siberia, first to Novosibirsk, and then to the transit camp in Tomsk. In 1933, probably through the intercession of E.P. Peshkova of the Political Red Cross, she was living in Kazakhstan, and was able to look after Vladyka. On November 20, 1937 she was arrested and on December 10 was sentenced to ten years in the camps. She served her term at colony no. 9, Chamolgan station, on the Turkestan-Siberian railway. She fell ill and died in 1942.

On April 9, 1935 Metropolitan Joseph was released from exile, but had to remain in Kazakhstan without the right to leave. From there, in January, 1937, he wrote to Metropolitan Cyril through Archimandrite Arsenius expressing his "deepest respect" and that he bowed "before his courageous stand in his

struggle for the interests of the Church". Archimandrite Arsenius brought back Metropolitan Cyril's reply, which, in the words of Metropolitan Joseph, "completely satisfied me".

On June 24 (or September 23), 1937 Metropolitan Joseph was arrested on a charge of "counter-revolutionary activity". Metropolitan Cyril was arrested on the same day and on the same charge. The previous day the NKVD Administration for the Chimkent procurator had announced: "In South Kazakhstan province there exists a counter-revolutionary organization among the churchmen whose centre is in Chimkent. The task of the counter-revolutionary organization is to prepare counter-revolutionary cadres for the overthrow of Soviet power. Among the active members of the organization we find the names of Metropolitan Joseph, Metropolitan Cyril and Bishop Eugene (Kobranov)."

"During the search and arrest," writes A.V. Zhuravsky, "Metropolitans Cyril and Joseph behaved calmly and with dignity. Metropolitan Joseph even wrote in his own hand on the order presented to him: 'I have read the order and am perplexed why there are no sanctions from the procurator. I.S. Petrovykh.' The correspondence removed (121 pages from Metropolitan Joseph) was attached to the investigatory case initiated by the authorities."

On July 7 the three bishops were formally accused. Metropolitan Joseph refused to sign the accusation presented to him. Instead of his signature, the investigator wrote: "counter-revolutionary".

"The conditions of the prisoners' detention in Chimkent prison were unendurable. The prison guards, carrying out the commands of the investigators, did not allow the prisoners to sleep, trying to bring the arrestees to extreme exhaustion. The food was intolerable, the water smelt of clay. It was through these conditions that the prisoners were prepared for interrogation. It is known that some of them gave in at this stage and signed any 'confessions', just so as to be condemned as quickly as possible and thereby avoid the terrible conditions in the prison."

The first to be summoned for interrogation was Bishop Eugene. The next was Metropolitan Joseph. "The interrogation, which took place on July 14, brought the investigation only one result - Vladyka Joseph admitted his guilt in the leadership of 'an illegal religious organization'. He did not admit the political accusations (anti-Soviet or counter-revolutionary activity). To the question in what did his leadership of the illegal organization consist, Metropolitan Joseph replied: 'in leading the local religious organizations and in helping them; in relations with the leaders of these local organizations; in an underground form of carrying out religious rites'. Nine days later (on July 23) there appears in the investigatory case a document with the title 'Testimony of the accused Joseph Petrovykh', where there are neither questions nor replies. The document is presented as, supposedly, 'the

heartfelt confession' by Metropolitan Joseph 'of counter-revolutionary activity' and his leadership 'of a counter-revolutionary organization'.

"From the bureaucratic style of the letter and its form, which was standard for such 'confessions', this testimony must without doubt be assigned to the creativity of the investigators themselves. The document contains not one new witness by comparison with Metropolitan Joseph's previous testimonies, and, consequently, anybody could have composed such a paper. The servile self-slander makes it in general impossible to recognize in it Metropolitan Joseph's authorship. In other words, we boldly assign the given document to the compartment 'spuria' (fabricated). The only question is: whose signature is under this falsified document? Was it that of Metropolitan Joseph, forced out of him (by various methods of 'investigatory inquiry')? Or is this signature just as fabricated as the authorship of 'the accused's testimony'? A final resolution of this problem will require, of course, a corresponding expertise, but even without expertise the signature below this 'testimony' elicits doubts with regards to its belonging to Metropolitan Joseph. The doubts intensify if one were to remember that Metropolitan Joseph refused to put his signature under the accusation presented to him when he was brought in the capacity of accused."

For, as M.S. Sakharov and L.E. Sikorskaya comment: "We shall never know the whole truth about the last days in the lives of many new martyrs from the documents of the punitive organs. For, by contrast with the documents of the persecutions of the first ages of Christianity (Roman judicial acts became the basis for the composition of the martyrologies of the Church), the documents of the persecutions of the last times were founded on lies from the beginning, as was the whole system of power that engendered them, and were thoroughly soaked in falsehood."

There is some evidence that in his last years Metropolitan Peter had appointed Metropolitan Joseph as "Extraordinary Locum Tenens", in accordance with a little-known decision of the Council of 1918 and with the approval and support of Metropolitan Cyril. If so, then Metropolitan Joseph became leader of the Russian Church for 42 days after the death of Metropolitan Peter and until his own death. For, as KGB archives confirm, Metropolitan Joseph was first sentenced on November 19, and then was shot at midnight on November 20-21, together with **Metropolitan Cyril, Bishop Eugene (Kobranov) of Rostov** and about **150 other Christians**.

As Fr. Epiphanius Chernov writes: "In Chimkent, Metropolitan Joseph met Metropolitan Cyril, lived together with him under arrest and received with him a martyric death... This fact was known in the Catacomb Church in Moscow. This detail was told to the author of these lines in prison by a Moscow priest. Every day, when they let Metropolitan Cyril and Joseph out for a walk, they walked side by side, pressed against each other. Now Metropolitan Joseph was tall, and by comparison with him the stocky Metropolitan Cyril was short. As they walked in a circle, they were always

engaged in concentrated conversation. Evidently there, in the open air, no one could overhear them. And these two figures, as if fitting into each other, gave a touching demonstration of the 'two-in-one' nature of these hierarchs. And this walk of the metropolitans was watched by some catacomb nuns from a hill. This was not without danger. It was necessary to disguise it, so that the authorities should not notice this secret signalling. And it came to the point where the metropolitans gave them their blessing at the beginning and at the end of their walk. I heard this detail from inhabitants of Chimkent both in captivity and in freedom. So there can be no doubt about this sojourn of Metropolitan Cyril with Metropolitan Joseph in the autumn of 1937. Both 'Moscow' and 'Chimkent' witness to it. Now there are no traces left of the little house in which the hierarch-confessors were kept. They demolished it when they noticed that the place enjoyed special veneration from the believers..."

Among those shot with Metropolitan Joseph was **Hieromonk Gabriel**, in the world Gregory Petrovich Vladimirov. He was born in January, 1873 in the village of Kotlyarovka, OPOCHKINSKY UYEZD, Pskov province into a peasant family. He joined the monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos, where he was tonsured into the mantia with the name Gabriel and then ordained to the priesthood (according to one source, in the Mikhailovsky Skovorodsky monastery near Novgorod in 1917). From 1914 to 1918 he was serving at the front as a military priest of the Taman regiment. From 1918 he was working as an agitator of the department of popular education in Novgorod province. In 1923 he joined the Mikhailovsky Skovorodsky monastery near Novgorod. In 1927 (or 1928) he became a convinced Josephite, and often served molebens in cemeteries and secret services in the homes of believers in Petrograd and Novgorod provinces. Then he began to do the same in the Pskov district. He also collected signatures for the building of a prayer house. On December 8, 1929 he was arrested in Novgorod in connection with the Petrograd branch of the True Orthodox Church, and on August 3, 1930 was sentenced in accordance with articles 58-10 and 11 to ten years in the camps. In September he was sent to Solovki. Later he was sent to Kazakhstan. In 1937 he settled in Chimkent, and on September 9, 1937 he was arrested for being "a participant in the counter-revolutionary organization organized by its leader, Joseph Petrovykh". On November 19 (or 18) he was sentenced to death, and was shot on the same day.

27. HOLY HIEROMARTYR CYRIL, METROPOLITAN OF KAZAN

and those with him

Metropolitan Cyril, in the world Constantine Ilarionovich Smirnov, was born in the city of Kronstadt, St. Petersburg province, on April 26, 1863 (according to another source, 1862), in the family of a Church reader. After graduating from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy in 1887 with the degree of candidate of theology, he married; and on November 21, 1887 he was ordained to the priesthood and was appointed to serve in the St. Petersburg Resurrection church of the temperance society (by the Warsaw station). He was also a teacher of the Law of God in the Elizabeth gymnasium. In 1894 he became rector of the Kronstadt Holy Trinity cemetery church, and a teacher of the Law of God in secondary school number 2 of Saint Petersburg. On October 1, 1900 he became superior of the Holy Trinity church.

In 1902 Fr. Constantine's daughter Olga died tragically after swallowing a needle, and then his wife, also called Olga, died from grief. On May 10 Fr. Constantine received the monastic tonsure with the name Cyril in honour of the enlightener of the Slavs. Then he was appointed head of the Orthodox Mission in Urmia (Persia) and was raised to the rank of archimandrite. On August 6, 1904 he was consecrated Bishop of Gdov, a vicariate of the Petersburg diocese. On October 31, 1905 he became the second vicar of the Petersburg diocese, and on February 15, 1908 - the first vicar. (According to another source, he was consecrated Bishop of Narva in 1907.)

Bishop Cyril introduced chanting by the whole congregation in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. Being a monarchist, he did not approve of the revolutionary spirit which burst out during the abortive 1905 revolution. He was a member of the Pre-Conciliar Council.

Bishop Cyril was a close friend of the great luminary of the Orthodox Church, St. John of Kronstadt. In his will St. John asked that he be buried by Bishop Cyril, and Cyril fulfilled this request. In 1908, he was the chief celebrant in the funeral services and placed the body in the coffin.

During Theophany, 1909, it was decreed that because of an outbreak of cholera all water which was blessed for the feast in Petersburg should be boiled beforehand, and that the blessing of the waters should be performed over steaming pots. A church newspaper wrote: "More faith was shown in the firewood necessary to boil the water and kill the germs than in God. Fortunately, however, not everyone stepped away from the anchor of our salvation, and in the same Petersburg the Lord preserved for His chosen ones a single bishop who did not agree to yield his faith for the sake of peace with the enemies of Christ's Church. If these notes ever see the light of print, let them preserve the name of this loyal servant of God and archpastor, for the

strengthening of faith and piety in my overburdened brethren. The name of this bishop is Cyril of Gdov. May his name be blessed from generation to generation." Defying the warnings of the police, and in the presence of the Royal Family, Bishop Cyril had blessed the water of the Neva at the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra through a hole in the ice. The local police, however, took measures to ensure that no one was allowed to take water from the "Jordan".

Perhaps as a result of this incident, Bishop Cyril was transferred to the diocese of Tambov and Shatsk on December 31, 1909. On May 6, 1913 he was made an archbishop. It was on the initiative of Archbishop Cyril that the glorification of St. Pitirim of Tambov took place in the cathedral in Tambov in July, 1914.

Archbishop Cyril spent a large part of his time going round his large diocese. He always appeared suddenly, when he was not expected. In his sermons he showed a good knowledge of the life of the people: common themes of his were their drunkenness, foul language and prejudice against literacy and schooling. The fundamental aim of his life was the enlightenment of the people in the spirit of the Orthodox Church.

He was very exacting towards the clergy. It was enough for him to notice two deacons talking during a service for their names to appear in the local diocesan newspaper. But at the same time he was very merciful to the poor.

He was an energetic, practical person. Once he heard that several severely ill parishioners could not visit the cathedral. So he had telephones installed in their flats and in the cathedral so that they could hear the service in bed.

Archbishop Cyril took a leading part in the Local Church Council of 1917-18, being president of the section on the teaching of the Law of God. In this capacity he made a report which unmasked the antichristian plans of the Provisional Government for the education of children. He was the leader of the Council delegation which went to Kerensky with the demand for the re-establishment of the patriarchate, was elected to the Sacred Synod and was one of the 25 candidates for the patriarchate.

On March 19 / April 1, 1918, he was appointed Metropolitan of Tiflis and Baku and exarch of the Caucasus. However, he did not succeed in reaching his see.

In November, 1919 he was arrested in Moscow on a charge of "counter-revolutionary agitation by means of the distribution of appeals and relations with Kolchak and Denikin". He was imprisoned in the Cheka prison in Moscow, but was released after two months.

Characteristic of him was his attitude towards the Soviet "authorities", whom he openly refused to recognize.

In April, 1920 he was appointed Metropolitan of Kazan, and in May he became a member of Patriarch Tikhon's Synod. He arrived in Kazan on July 9, but was arrested again on August 19 because he "left Moscow for the city of Kazan without the permission of the Cheka". On August 27 he was sentenced for "counter-revolutionary activity" to imprisonment in a camp until the end of the Civil War, but this was changed to a five-year sentence. From October 5, 1920 he was in the Taganka prison in Moscow in one cell with Bishops Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) and Gurias (Stepanov).

On November 7, while in prison, Metropolitan Cyril was elected an honorary member of the Kazan Theological Academy.

Abbess Juliana, whose particular duty was to supply food and help to imprisoned bishops, wrote: "In about 1919 Bishop Gurias was arrested; he was protector [of the Academy] in Kazan when Metropolitan Cyril was rector. Therefore the Metropolitan [who was in Moscow] called me in connection with sending some things to Vladyka Gurias. As it turned out, he had agreed with him beforehand as to how the Holy Gifts were to be sent to him in prison. For this he gave me a little box with what seemed to be small white pieces of bread, and he said that these should be registered among the other supplies which were to be given. I was upset at taking the Holy Gifts with me, and in general at the idea of carrying them at all, and I told this to Vladyka. To this he answered me:

"What business is that of yours; I am sending you.'

"But having thought a little, he offered that I take the Holy Gifts from him early in the morning on the same day when I would be going with the packages for Vladyka Gury in the Butyrki prison. This was done. Soon I was going with packages for Vladyka Cyril himself, but not for long. In 1920 Metropolitan Cyril was in the Taganka prison; in the same prison at that time, perhaps even in the same cell, were Vladykas Theodore [Pozdeyevsky] and Gurias. In the Taganka prison the old rules were still in effect: for good behaviour prisoners were called or went over to the category of the 'reformed', and they enjoyed certain privileges. In the Taganka prison there were five prisoners in this category: Metropolitan Cyril, Archbishop Theodore, Bishop Gurias, Alexander Dmitrovich Samarin and Vladimir Fyodorovich Dyunkovsky. Besides the usual general visits, they were allowed once a week on a certain day to have visitors with the grating lifted. Usually, at the general visits, when many people were speaking with the prisoners through a double grating, it was almost impossible to converse because of the noise and shouting. Besides that, these meetings lasted only five minutes. On the other hand, visits to the 'reformed' lasted for fifteen minutes, and one could even give things right into the hands of the prisoners. Under these circumstances I had to speak with and give things to Metropolitan Cyril many times. When the Metropolitan was in exile we were able to help him not only with parcels but also by furnishing church service books."

On December 24, 1921 Metropolitan Cyril was released, and on January 18, 1922 he arrived in Kazan. He was met at the station by Bishops Joasaph and Athanasius and a crowd of joyful Christians. In April the Bolsheviks carried out their requisitioning of the valuables of the Kazan churches supposedly "for the benefit of the starving". However, on August 15 (or 1 or 21) Vladyka Cyril was arrested (he had already been arrested in April) for his involvement with the American Relief Organization which supplied food to the starving. After a spell in prison in Moscow, in January, 1923 he was exiled first to the province of Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, then to Ust-Sysolsk (Syktyvkar), then to Ust-Kul (Komi SSR) and finally to Kotelnich (Vyatka province).

During this period Patriarch Tikhon, too, was imprisoned, which gave the renovationist heretics the opportunity to seize control of the central administration of the Church. Even after the Patriarch was released from prison in 1923, the GPU tried to persuade the Patriarch to enter into negotiations with the renovationists, promising that if he did many hierarchs languishing in prison and exile would be freed. So in May, 1924, the renovationist leader Krasnitsky was admitted briefly into the Patriarch's Higher Ecclesiastical Council.

In the same month, however, Metropolitan Cyril was summoned to Moscow for negotiations with the GPU agent Tuchkov. Since he refused to recognize the renovationists, Tuchkov threatened to let him rot in prison. But Vladyka Cyril did not give in.

Vladyka then went to the Patriarch, who asked him his opinion about admitting Krasnitsky into the Council. He replied:

"Your Holiness, don't think about us hierarchs. There's no need to take pity on them, they are strengthening the Church. But you must not compromise with Krasnitsky."

Strengthened by Metropolitan Cyril, the Patriarch struck Krasnitsky's name off the list of the Council members. As a result of this, in July Metropolitan Cyril was again exiled, first to Yelsk and then to Perevolok. On January 7, 1925, Patriarch Tikhon appointed Metropolitan Cyril first locum tenens of the patriarchal throne although he was still in exile.

In the spring of 1925 he was in exile in Zyryansk region. As Protopresbyter Michael Polsky writes, he came "to some dense forest at which he arrived only after two weeks of travelling in a boat on a river. He was not given anything to eat, he was left to sleep in the cold outside the forest cabins in which the agents themselves lodged, he was dragged by the beard and mocked in such a way that he began to ask for death for himself. He spent a year under the rule of a communist in a forest where there were only two hunting cabins."

During this period, Vladyka governed his diocese through his vicars, Bishops Joasaph, Athanasius and Andronicus.

On March 25 / April 7, 1925, Patriarch Tikhon died. In his will, which was read out in the presence of 60 hierarchs in the Donskoy monastery, it was revealed that he had appointed Metropolitan Cyril as the first of three hierarchs who were empowered to become locum tenens of the patriarchal throne and take over the leadership of the Russian Church until a new patriarch could be elected. Since Metropolitan Cyril was not allowed to return to Moscow take up the locum tenancy, and since the second candidate, Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslavl, was also in exile, the post fell to the third candidate, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa.

In December, 1925, Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned for rejecting the GPU's terms for legalization of the Church. In the event of his death he appointed Metropolitan Cyril as the first candidate to the locum tenancy. And so the GPU agent Tuchkov went to Metropolitan Cyril and put the same terms for the legalization of the Church to him.

When Metropolitan Cyril refused to accept the locum tenancy on the GPU's terms, he was sent back to Turukhansk. However, Tuchkov did not leave him alone. According to Matushka Seraphima Bulgakova, a former cell-attendant of Metropolitan Cyril, "at the beginning of his locum tenancy Metropolitan Sergius had been firm and uncompromising. At that point Tuchkov went to Metropolitan Cyril, who was in exile at that time, in the hope that the latter, tormented by prisons and exiles, would make a compromise. He even succeeded in persuading the metropolitan to take up his post of locum tenens (he was the first candidate according to Patriarch Tikhon's will). Metropolitan Cyril left his place of exile, but, on arriving in Rybinsk, he stopped and sent his cell-attendant to an ascetic nun [Blessed Xenia] living in Rybinsk, and asked her what he should do. She replied that if he went to Moscow and accepted Tuchkov's offer, he would lose everything (spiritual) that he had gathered throughout his life. And the metropolitan went back into exile."

While he was there, in November, 1926, a secret ballot of 72 bishops elected him as the best candidate for the patriarchate (Metropolitan Sergius received not more than one vote). "And so," writes a sergianist source, "Metropolitan Cyril was elected Patriarch. But his enthronement did not take place." For almost immediately, on December 21, 1926, he was arrested in Kotelnich and cast into the special isolator in Vyatka.

In February, 1927 Tuchkov arrived in Vyatka and met Metropolitan Cyril. He offered him freedom and the possibility of heading the Church administration, but with the following condition:

"If we have to remove some hierarch," asked Tuchkov, "will you help us in this?"

"Yes, if the hierarch appears to be guilty of some ecclesiastical transgression... In the contrary case, I shall tell him directly, 'The authorities are demanding this of us, but I have nothing against you!'"

"No!" replied Tuchkov. "You must try to find an appropriate reason and remove him as if on your own initiative."

To this the hierarch replied: "Eugene Nikolayevich, you are not the cannon, and I am not the bomb, with which you want to blow up our Church from within!"

On March 23, 1927, in accordance with article 58-6, he was sentenced to three years in exile in Siberia in "The Case of Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov) and Protopriest Alexander Agafonnikov, Vyatka province, 1927". The OGPU found that "Citizen Smirnov, while in Komi province in 1926 and later in Vyatka province, had relations with church activists with the purpose of consultation on church matters and exerting influence on them, while most recently he contacted a group of blackhundredist bishops whose aim was to give the Church the character of an anti-Soviet organization. Citizen Smirnov was planning to head this latter group, summoning it to church activity and bringing its anti-Soviet programme into life." "The group of blackhundredist churchmen, who are being investigated in case N 39960, headed by Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky, the patriarchal locum tenens, decided finally to give the Church the character of a definitely anti-Soviet organization, and with this aim give it a patriarch as its head. They carried out elections for him [the patriarch] and indicated as a candidate the person who was the most anti-Soviet. The group set about the election in a very conspiratorial way. Moreover, the voting by sealed ballots was carried out only among the episcopate. A special 'Address of the Orthodox Church to the Soviet Government' was worked out, which had a directly counter-revolutionary and threatening character. This declaration was to be given out in the name of the new Patriarch and under his signature. The group indicated as their most desired candidate Constantine Ilarionovich Smirnov (Metropolitan Cyril), and contacted him for this reason although he, from 1919 until the present time, with a few breaks when he was subject to repressions because of his anti-Soviet activity, has been the most blackhundredist and counter-revolutionary churchman. At this time Smirnov, for the ending of his administrative exile, had been transferred to Kotelnich, where he came into close contact with the local priest Agafonnikov... Cyril and Agafonnikov, the first personally and the second in writing, received news from the already mentioned grouping concerning Cyril's appointment as patriarch... But he received for Cyril the indication that 'the bishops who are exiled and have suffered for the faith are against any degree of legalization,' that is, in other words, they decided to continue conducting church politics in an anti-Soviet spirit. This was as it were a precondition for Cyril's signing of the above-mentioned anti-Soviet declaration. Cyril immediately began having receptions as if he were the patriarch. Moreover,

they were staged in an extremely conspiratorial way, with the doors locked and conversations conducted in a whisper. The visits by churchmen acquired a mass character: up to five people came to him at once. On the basis of the above Smirnov and Agafonnikov were arrested together with the blackhundredist grouping of churchmen. Since the investigation in the present case is finished, I suggest it should not be joined to case N 36960, whose investigation is still continuing. I suggest that the guilt of Smirnov and Agafonnikov be considered proven."

Metropolitan Cyril was sent to Khantaika, Turukhansk region, in north-western Siberia. Ten days after his condemnation, Metropolitan Sergius, the deputy of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, was released from prison. Very probably the GPU's conditions which Metropolitan Cyril had rejected were accepted by Metropolitan Sergius...

It was while Metropolitan Cyril was in exile that he heard of Metropolitan Sergius' infamous declaration of July 16/29, 1927, which placed the Church in the same position of servitude that Metropolitan Cyril had rejected. Cyril rejected the declaration and broke communion with Sergius.

From May to December, 1929, Metropolitan Cyril was in exile in Yeniseisk. From there he immediately wrote a letter to Sergius, denouncing him as a usurper who had overstepped the bounds of his authority by instituting a new church policy not approved by Metropolitan Peter. Although they exchanged several letters, Metropolitan Cyril did not succeed in persuading Sergius to change his course. On January 2, 1930 Metropolitan Sergius subjected Metropolitan Cyril to the judgement of a Council of bishops and removed him from his see, but with the right to serve if the local diocesan bishops allowed it. This decree was to come into force on February 15 unless Metropolitan Cyril indicated before that date that he had broken communion with the Catacomb bishops. However, Metropolitan Cyril maintained his position, and in January was taken from Yeniseisk to exile in Turukhansk region. On April 23, 1930, in "The Case of Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov) and Protopriest Alexander Agafonnikov, Vyatka province, 1930", he was sentenced in accordance with article 58-10 to deprivation of the right to live in Moscow and Petrograd provinces, and in Kharkov, Odessa, Dagestan and Tataria for three years. He was again sent into exile in the Turukhansk region for three years.

Several points were made by Metropolitan Cyril in his correspondence with Metropolitan Sergius which are of vital importance in evaluating the significance of the various schisms that have taken place in the Orthodox Church in this century. The first is the priority of "the conciliar hierarchical conscience of the Church". As he wrote in 1929: "Church discipline is able to retain its validity only as long as it is a true reflection of the hierarchical conscience of the Conciliar [Sobornoj] Church; discipline can never take the place of this conscience". Sergius violated the hierarchical, conciliar

conscience of the Church by his disregard of the views of bishops equal to him in rank.

The second is that a hierarch is justified in breaking communion with a fellow hierarch, not only for heresy, but also in order not to partake in his brother's sin. Thus while Metropolitan Cyril did not consider Sergius to have sinned in matters of faith, he was forced to break communion with him because "I have no other means of rebuking my sinning brother". If clergy have mutually opposing opinions within the Church, then their concelebration is for both "to judgement and condemnation".

Thus in November, 1929, Metropolitan Cyril refused to condemn Metropolitan Joseph and his supporters, who had broken communion with Sergius; and he did not agree with the bishops in exile in Tashkent - Arsenius (Stadnitsky), Nicodemus (Krotkov), Nicander (Fenomenov) and others - who condemned Joseph, considering their hopes of convening a canonical Council to be "naivety or cunning".

A third point made by Metropolitan Cyril was that even when such a break in communion occurs between two parties, both sides remain in the Church so long as dogmatic unanimity is preserved. But this immediately raised the question: had Sergius only sinned "administratively", by transgressing against the canons, as Metropolitan Cyril claimed (until 1934, at any rate), or had he sinned also "dogmatically", by transgressing against the dogma of the One Church, as Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov, among others, claimed?

On August 19, 1933 Metropolitan Cyril was released and went to live in the town of Gzhatsk, from where he continued secretly to lead the opposition to Metropolitan Sergius. During this period, while refraining from saying that the sacraments of the sergianists were graceless, Metropolitan Cyril nevertheless considered that those who partook of them knowing the unrighteousness of Sergius' position partook of them to their condemnation. Thus he wrote to an unknown hierarch: "It seems to me that both you yourself and your correspondent do not distinguish those actions of Metropolitan Sergius and his partisans, which are performed by them in proper order by the power of those grace-given rights received through the mystery of the priesthood, from those other activities which are performed with an exceeding of their sacramental rights and according to human cunning, as a means of protecting and supporting their self-invented rights in the Church. Such are the actions of Bishop Zacharius and Priest Patapov of which you speak. These are sacramental acts only in form, while in essence they are a usurpation of sacramental activity, and therefore are blasphemous, without grace, non-ecclesiastical. But the Mysteries performed by Sergianists who are correctly ordained and not prohibited to serve as priests, are undoubtedly saving Mysteries for those who receive them with faith, in simplicity, without deliberations and doubts concerning their efficacy, and who do not even suspect anything incorrect in the Sergianist order of the

Church. But at the same time, they serve for judgement and condemnation for the very performers of them and for those who approach them well understanding the untruth that exists in Sergianism, and by their lack of opposition to it reveal a criminal indifference towards the mocking of the Church. This is why it is essential for an Orthodox Bishop or priest to refrain from communion with Sergianists in prayer. The same thing is essential for laymen who have a conscious attitude to all the details of church life."

These letters make clear that while Metropolitan Cyril was quite prepared to say of certain hierarchs (the renovationists, Bishop Zacharius) that they were deprived of the grace of sacraments, he was not prepared to say this - yet - of Metropolitan Sergius, "until a lawful Council by its sentence shall utter the judgement of the Holy Spirit concerning him". He gave as one reason for his hesitation - or "excessive caution", as his correspondent put it - "an incomplete clarification of the conditions which surround me and all of us". Another reason was his ignorance of the position of Metropolitan Peter - an ignorance engineered, of course, by the Bolsheviks. Thus "for me personally," he wrote, "it is impossible at the present time to step forth, since I am entirely unsure of the character of the attitudes of Metropolitan Peter, in order to be convinced of his actual views and to decide how to act..."

In about the middle of the 1930s Metropolitan Cyril issued an epistle in which he called on the Catacomb hierarchs to confirm his candidacy as lawful patriarchal locum tenens in the case of the death of Metropolitan Peter. We know the reaction of one hierarch, Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, to this epistle. He was not enthusiastic, because he considered that in times of persecution a centralized administration was not obligatory for the Church. According to another account, however, a "little Council" of hierarchs meeting in Arkhangelsk at the end of 1933 or 1934, and including Archbishop Theodore, offered the locum tenancy to Metropolitan Cyril, but he refused.

According to the witness of his spiritual daughter, he once went to meet Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow. A guard stopped him from entering the building, but Metropolitan Cyril pushed past him and went into Metropolitan Sergius' study. A few seconds later, he came out again. "Evidently," writes a sergianist source, "everything had now become clear to him."

On July 14, 1934 he was arrested on a charge of "counter-revolutionary activity" and was transferred to the inner isolator in the Butyrki prison in Moscow, where, on December 2, he was convicted of "counter-revolutionary activity" and sentenced to three years' exile in Yany-Kurgan in Southern Kazakhstan. All attempts to find out where he was from the woman who had served him in her house proved fruitless, and ended with the disappearance of this woman, too.

In August, 1936 the Bolsheviks spread the false information that Metropolitan Peter had died. Immediately Metropolitan Sergius quite illegally assumed to himself Peter's title of Metropolitan of Krutitsa. From this time, a distinct hardening in Metropolitan Cyril's position is noticeable.

Thus in March, 1937 he wrote: "With regard to your perplexities concerning Sergianism, I can say that the very same questions in almost the same form were addressed to me from Kazan ten years ago, and then I replied affirmatively to them, because I considered everything that Metropolitan Sergius had done as a mistake which he himself was conscious of and wished to correct. Moreover, among our ordinary flock there were many people who had not investigated what had happened, and it was impossible to demand from them a decisive and active condemnation of the events. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge. The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius would correct himself have not been justified, but there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incitement and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened; and very many have both investigated and understood that Metropolitan Sergius is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox. The recent events have finally made clear the renovationist nature of Sergianism. We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgiveable craftiness to close one's eyes to this unrighteousness and seek there for the satisfaction of one's spiritual needs when one's conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin... I am in fraternal communion with Metropolitan Joseph, and I gratefully esteem the fact that it was precisely with his blessing that there was expressed the first protest against Metropolitan Sergius' undertaking from the Petrograd diocese..."

On July 7, 1937, Metropolitan Cyril was arrested in Yany-Kurgan and imprisoned in Chimkent on a charge of "participating in a counter-revolutionary underground organization of churchmen" together with Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd.

According to Schema-Monk Epiphanius Chernov, Metropolitan Cyril met Metropolitan Joseph in Chimkent, "lived together with him under arrest and received with him a martyric death. In any case, this fact was known in the Catacomb Church in Moscow. This detail was told to the author of these lines in prison by a Moscow priest. Every day, when they let Metropolitan Cyril and Joseph out for a walk, they walked side by side, pressed against each other. Now Metropolitan Joseph was tall, and by comparison with him the stocky Metropolitan Cyril was short. As they walked in a circle, they were always engaged in concentrated conversation. Evidently there, in the open

air, no one could overhear them. And these two figures, as if fitting into each other, gave a touching demonstration of the 'two-in-one' nature of these hierarchs. And this walk of the metropolitans was watched by some catacomb nuns from a hill. This was not without danger. It was necessary to disguise it, so that the authorities should not notice this secret signalling. And it came to the point where the metropolitans gave them their blessing at the beginning and at the end of their walk. I heard this detail from inhabitants of Chimkent both in captivity and in freedom. So there can be no doubt about this sojourn of Metropolitan Cyril with Metropolitan Joseph in the autumn of 1937. Both 'Moscow' and 'Chimkent' witness to it. Now there are no traces left of the little house in which the hierarch-confessors were kept. They demolished it when they noticed that the place enjoyed special veneration from the believers..."

When the KGB archives were opened in January, 1992, it was discovered that after his arrest Metropolitan Cyril had been accused of leading "all the counter-revolutionary clergy", but that he had conducted himself with great courage and had taken all the responsibility upon himself. On September 23 he was joined in prison by Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. The two outstanding hierarchs were condemned by a troika of the South Kazakhstan region on November 6/19, and were shot together on November 7/20, 1937 in Lisiy ovrag, near Chimkent. They were buried in Lisiy ovrag.

28. HOLY HIEROMARTYR MARK, BISHOP OF SERGIEV POSAD

Bishop Mark, in the world Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov, was born in June, 1864 in the village of Babye, Domoslavskaya volost, Vishnevolochok uyezd, Tver province, into a family which had been linked for generations with the Orthodox country clergy. His mother, Capitolina Mikhailovna, was the daughter of the priest Fr. Michael Vasilyevich Zashigransky. His father, Alexander Grigoryevich (1834-1887), of noble descent, was also the son of the priest, and became a well-known teacher, the director of the Tula, and then of the fourth Moscow classical gymnasium.

Michael Alexandrovich lived with his parents in Tula, and received an excellent education, graduating from his father's school with a gold medal. He was well-built, and was renowned in Tula as a boxer. In 1886 he graduated from the historical-philological faculty of Moscow Imperial University. It was at this point that he got to know the famous novelist Lev Tolstoy, who often visited his father when he lived in Tula. Michael Alexandrovich became a close friend and disciple of Lev Tolstoy, and there exists a copious correspondence between them from the period 1886-1901. He was arrested on December 27, 1887, together with some young friends who had been infected with the ideas of the "People's Will" movement, for possessing some literature of this movement as well as Tolstoy's brochure "Nicholas Palkin", and might well have been sent to Siberia if it had not been for the intervention of Tolstoy himself. In February, 1888, Michael Alexandrovich was released but forbidden to live in the capitals.

Abandoning any thought of a career in teaching, Michael Alexandrovich bought some land in the village of Dugino, Tver province, and created one of the first Tolstoyan land communes in Russia. It existed for two years. However, the peasants' refusal to accept the commune, and their patient endurance of their hard life, gradually led Michael Alexandrovich to question his own beliefs and pay more attention to the world-view of the peasants - Orthodoxy. Moreover, on one point he could never agree with Tolstoy - his rejection of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the element of mystery in human life. Finally, after responding to his appeal to help the starving in Ryazan province (at the end of 1891 to 1892), he broke with Tolstoy, and spoke against his teachings for the rest of his life, while acknowledging the very significant influence he had had on him. Tolstoy's last letter, written in Optina desert, was addressed to M.A. Novoselov. Michael Alexandrovich did not succeed in replying to it, but much later said that if he had been able, he probably would not have replied.

After the break with Tolstoy, he became very close to St. John of Kronstadt, and then to the elders of Optina and Zosima deserts. His spiritual father was Igumen Herman of Zosima desert. Under their influence, he gradually acquired a firm, strictly Orthodox world-view, based exclusively on the

teachings of the Holy Fathers. Michael Alexandrovich was a brilliant professor of classical philology at Moscow University. He was widely known in Russia as the publisher and editor of the so-called "Moral-Religious Library", the first volume of which, entitled "The Forgotten Path", was published in 1902 in Vyshny Volochok, where Michael Alexandrovich was living at the time. His publishing activity continued right up to the revolution - first in Vyshny Volochok, and then in Moscow and Sergiev Posad.

The philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev described Michael Alexandrovich as "a very strong believer, completely devoted to his idea, very active, even restless, very sympathetic to people, always ready to help, especially in a spiritual way. He wanted to convert everybody. He produced the impression of a secretly tonsured monk."

Michael Alexandrovich taught Greek in the fourth Moscow gymnasium until 1916, and was professor in the faculty of classical philology in Moscow University. His merits in the field of spiritual education and Christian apologetics were so great that in 1912 he was elected an honorary member of the Moscow Theological Academy. For several years he was a member of the Educational Council attached to the Holy Synod. In 1918, during the Local Council of the Russian Church in Moscow, he was invited to take part in the work of the section on theological educational institutions, which was to seek out new ways of developing theological education in the country.

From 1905 Michael Alexandrovich was at the centre of the movement for Church reform, the convening of a Church Council and the restoration of the parish community. However, he was against convening a Council hastily, without proper preparation and the canvassing of the opinions of both clergy and laity. And he was therefore in favour of a Pre-Conciliar Preparatory Convention, which in fact took place in 1906.

In 1907, he founded a religious society called the "Circle of those seeking Christian Enlightenment", which met in Moscow and numbered about 200 people. They included Fr. Paul Florensky, Fr. Joseph Fudel, Sergius Nikolayevich Bulgakov, Vladimir Alexeyevich Kozhevnikov, Paul Demetrievech Mansurov, Theodore Dmitrievich Samarin, Sergius Nikolayevich Durylin, Vladimir Frantsevich Ern, Theodore Konstantinovich Andreyev, and others. This was not his first foray into this kind of activity. He had attended the meetings of the Petersburg "Religio-Philosophical Meetings" (1901-1903), at which he always expressed a strictly Orthodox position in opposition to Merezhkovsky and Rozanov. And he had also participated in the work of the Moscow religio-philosophical society dedicated to the memory of his friend Vladimir Soloviev (1905-1918). According to Constantine Sergeyevech Rodionov, "all the members of his society regularly went to church. They prayed in the church, and then read lectures in the society and discussed them. This was a purely Orthodox society, and M.A. Novoselov was the ideological leader of Orthodoxy in Moscow. The meetings

of the members of the society took place in his flat. He lived with his mother opposite the cathedral of Christ the Saviour."

The society enjoyed the protection of the rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and future hieromartyr of the Catacomb Church, Bishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky), and was spiritually led by the elders of the Zosima Hermitage.

According to Rozanov, "the essence of the bond of this circle is personal and moral. Its highest quality is considered not to put oneself forward, not to quarrel, and to publish as little as possible. But instead of that - to see each other more often, to mix, to live a certain common, or almost common life. Without any conditions or qualifications they call the one who is almost the oldest among them, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov, 'Abba Michael'. And although some of them are immeasurably more learned and in general 'intellectual' than the honoured and dear M.A. Novoselov, nevertheless they revere him 'as a father' for his clear, kind character, for the purity of his soul and intentions, and not only listen to him, but almost obey him."

Michael Alexandrovich became one of the firmest and most clear-thinking Orthodox thinkers who were struggling with the poison of modernism. In this respect he undoubtedly betrayed the influence of his spiritual instructor, Vladyka Theodore. He was a conservative and a monarchist, but at the same time was prepared to fight the Church hierarchy when necessary.

Thus when, at the end of 1911, the affair of Bishop Hermogenes and Heliodorus became well known, and rumours spread about the possibility of Rasputin being ordained, Michael Alexandrovich, with the help of Grand Duchess Elizabeth, published a brochure exposing Rasputin, in which he said: "Why do the bishops, who are well acquainted with the activities of this blatant deceiver and corrupter, keep silent?... Where is their grace, if through laziness or lack of courage they do not keep watch over the purity of the faith of the Church of God and allow the lascivious khlyst [sectarian] to do the works of darkness under the mask of light?" Of course, the brochure was forbidden and confiscated while it was still at the printer's, and the newspaper The Voice of Moscow was heavily fined for publishing excerpts from it.

In 1912 there arose the movement of the "name-worshippers" among the Russian monks of Mount Athos. These monks were condemned as heretics by the Holy Synods of the Constantinopolitan and Russian Churches. However, Michael Alexandrovich defended them. For this reason he is sometimes considered to have been a "name-worshipper" himself. But a closer examination of his views reveals that he never agreed with some of the cardinal positions of the leading name-worshipper, Fr. Anthony Bulatovich.

Thus Bulatovich considered that all thought about God is the uncreated action of God and God Himself, writing: "Human thought is not the product

of the human mind to the extent that that which the human eye sees is not a product of his vision... Forcing the mind to think about God is a human action, but any true thought about God is already a vision of God in some God-revealed property of His and is God Himself." Michael Alexandrovich, however, rejected this idea, writing: "*The thought and my object are not one and the same...* The thought of a man about God remains a human thought... The power of God, penetrating the mind, elicit in him a thought about God, which is nevertheless a human thought, a condition of my mind."

With the coming of the Bolsheviks, Michael Alexandrovich did not slacken his work for the Church. Thus from January 30, 1918 he was a member of the Temporary Council of the United Parishes of the city of Moscow, and in February, 1918 his name was on the appeal released by this Council which called on believers to defend the churches from the encroachments of the God-fighting power. Again, he offered his flat for the theological courses which began in the spring of 1918 with the blessing of Patriarch Tikhon, and himself taught patristics.

According to the oral tradition of the Catacomb Church (recently confirmed in a document), Michael Alexandrovich was tonsured as a monk in 1920, and in 1923 was made a secret bishop with the name of Mark and the title of Sergiev Posad, by Bishops Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) of Volokolamsk, Arsenius (Zhadanovsky) of Serphukov and Seraphim (Zvezdinsky) of Dmitrov. Although there are no documents proving the episcopate of Michael Alexandrovich, the following facts serve to confirm it: (1) on the protocol of his interrogation in connection with the case of the "All-Union Centre 'True Orthodoxy'", the words "Bishop Mark" are written in the hand of the interrogator; (2) in the interrogation of Natalya Andreyevna, the matushka of Hieromartyr Theodore Andreyev, mention is made of the episcopate of M.A. Novoselov.

When the schism of the "Living Church" broke out in 1922, Michael Alexandrovich was very probably a member of the "Brotherhood of Zealots of Orthodoxy" which published a "Brotherly Warning to the Children of the True Church of Christ" in which the following points were made: "...5. Therefore the 'guardian of piety' (speaking in the language of the Epistle of the Eastern Patriarchs), the Orthodox people, must decisively reject the usurpers of Church authority, not entering into communion with them and not allowing the prayerful commemoration of their names in the churches. 6. Those Orthodox priests and laymen who will continue to support ecclesiastical communion with the self-made schismatic hierarchy are thereby expelled with it from the body of the Church, that is, they have separated themselves from Christ."

This activity could not fail to attract the attention of the authorities, and on August 12, 1922, Heinrich Yagoda, the deputy president of the GPU, signed an order for the searching of Michael Alexandrovich's flat. He had gone to Optina at that time and so was not present at the search, which discovered

nothing significantly incriminating. But it meant that from this time - although the case against him was dropped on March 19, 1923 - he could not return to his flat and was forced to live in an illegal situation, hiding in the houses of his many friends, mainly in Moscow and Petersburg. Thus he sometimes lives in the flat of Claudia Vladimirovna Nazarova, and in that of Valeria Liorko Prishvina and her mother. He also lived in Vyshny Volochok.

Thus Constantine Sergeyevich Rodionov writes: "When the Bolshevik persecutions against the faith began, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov hid for a whole year. One night he would spend in my house, another - in the house of some woman whom I didn't ask about. I was unexpectedly sent on an expedition to the Caucasus as a bee-keeper. In my absence M.A. Novoselov and A.F. Losev walked down Nikitsky boulevard in the Arbat. Some people came up to them at the church of Saints Boris and Gleb and arrested them. Losev was soon released, but not Michael Alexandrovich. He was carrying my bread ration cards with my address on them. But my house was not searched. He was sent to Suzdal prison. From there Michael Alexandrovich let me know that we should be calm - he had not betrayed anyone. It seems that as a religious activist he was sentenced under article 58-10."

Once Bishop Mark said: "Now is a time when the righteousness of a person before God is defined not so much by his personal behaviour, his sins or virtue, as by his firmness in the faith, in his faithfulness to Church consciousness, his determination to stand in this faithfulness until death and martyrdom."

From 1922 until the end of 1927, Bishop Mark wrote a series of twenty "letters to friends" which constitute one of the most important contributions to ecclesiology in twentieth-century theology.

Thus in 1925 he wrote: "I shall say a few words to reveal the positive path of Christ, which was, undoubtedly, forgotten by the Church SRs [the predecessors of the renovationists] and has now been openly rejected by the Church Bolsheviks [the renovationists].

"First of all, both relate to the Church as to a human institution, which is why the term 'revival of the Church' occupies the first place in their vocabulary. They suppose - this is clear from their writings and actions - that only human energy is needed, on the one hand, and a series of external changes in Church organization, on the other, in order that the 'paralyzed' body of the Church should revive and begin to function correctly. The source of Church revival is in the church activists themselves. What is required is a skilful choice of energetic activists so as to revive, give wings to and set into motion the dead organization called 'the Church'. I repeat: this point of view is common both to the renovationists and to the majority of what we shall call the Old Churchmen. Neither group suspects what a jungle of religious errors they have wandered into, where they themselves are going, and where they

are leading other unreflective people away from the true, genuine preaching of Christ.

"So as to speak with sense about the revival of the parish or of Church society in general (but by no means of the Church, which is herself the source of ever-flowing life), it is necessary first to give oneself a clear answer to the question: 'What is life in the Christian meaning of the word?'

"Genuine life is eternal life, and it is in the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Lord Himself, the Son of God, Who is called Eternal Life in the holy Gospel. Hence Church revival is revival in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is a more or less deep immersion in eternal life - Christ the Son of God, or the reception of It inside oneself. In this acquisition of eternal life, or, speaking in the words of the holy Apostle Peter, in this 'partaking of the Divine nature', or in the deification of man, lies the main aim of the Christian life." (Letter 1)

One of Vladyka Mark's most important contributions to theological thought was the distinction he worked out between the Church as *organism* and the Church as *organization*: "It is necessary to distinguish between the Church-organism and the Church-organization. As the apostle taught: 'You are the Body of Christ and individually members of it' (I Corinthians 12.27). The Church-organism is a living person, and just as the cells of our body, besides having their own life, have the life that is common to our body and links between themselves, so a man in the Body of Christ begins to live in Church, while Christ begins to live in him. That is why the apostle said: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me' (Galatians 2.20).

"The basis for the affirmation of the Church-organism is love for Christ. The Lord Himself saw the basis of His Church precisely in love for Him. He asked Peter: did he love Him? And He added: 'Feed My sheep'. The Church of Christ is the union of mutual love of the believers ('United by the bond of love and offering themselves to Christ the Lord, the apostles were washed clean', Canon of Holy Thursday). Only in the Church organism can true democratism, equality and brotherhood come into being; we are equal and brothers only if we are parts of one and the same living body. In the organization there is not and cannot be '*organic*' equality and brotherhood" (Letter 5).

"Only to the Church-organism can we apply such titles as we meet in the Word of God, for example: 'glorious, holy, spotless' (Ephesians 1.4); 'the Bride of the Lamb' (Revelation 19.7; 21.9); 'the Body of Christ' (Ephesians 1.23; Colossians 1.24); 'the pillar and ground of the truth' (I Timothy 3.15). These concepts are inapplicable to the Church-organization (or applicable only with great qualifications); they lead people into perplexity and are rejected by them. The Church-organism is the pure 'Bride' of Christ (Revelation 21.2), but the Church-organization has all the faults of human society and always bears the marks of human infirmities... The Church-organization often persecutes the saints of God, but the Church-organism receives them into her bosom...

The Church-organization rejects them from its midst, deprives them of episcopal sees, while they remain the most glorious members of the Church-organism. It is possible to belong externally to the visible Church (organization), while one belongs only inwardly to the Body of Christ (organism), and the measure of one's belongingness is determined by the degree of one's sanctity." (Letter 18)

Vladyka Mark also made an important contribution to the concept of the conciliarity [sobornost'] of the Church: "It is not the Council that is important, but *conciliarity* (the infallible teaching magisterium), which reveals itself by all means, whether at a Council or not. From the fact that the Church in definite historical periods convenes Councils, or that she does not convene them, one must by no means conclude that the infallible magisterium existed in such-and-such a period, but not in such-and-such a period. This simply means that in such-and-such a period circumstances demanded that the magisterium reveal itself in such a form, whereas in the other period circumstances did not demand precisely this form of revelation. As a result of this neither conciliarity nor the magisterium is in any way affected in its grace-filled and uninterrupted existence... Conciliarity in the Church of Christ is revealed in the agreement of all her members amongst themselves. This agreement is not assigned to any particular local Church, to any particular geographical point, or to any particular hierarch or meeting of hierarchs, but binds together all those who belong to the Church. Neither does it need any juridical regulations since its self-existent power acts beyond rules that our attainable by our reason. It simply exists, and itself defines all the remaining manifestations of Church life instead of being defined by them. One of these manifestations is the Ecumenical Councils...

"The material element in the magisterium (of such Councils) consists in the people who take part in the Council, in the external conditions of their working together and in the quantity and character of the matters they resolve. But the spiritual element lies in the identity of the conciliar witnesses with the faith of the whole body of the Church. It is this very identity which is nothing other than conciliarity itself, as expressed in the Council. And it alone defines in itself the ecumenicity and conciliar magisterium which are wholly included in it (that is, in the above-mentioned identity). For conciliarity, ecumenicity, magisterium - all these are terms with different meanings that define in themselves only various forms of one and the same whole, whose name is the Holy Spirit Who rules the Church...

"The conciliarity of each Council is established only from the following material historical phenomenon: its de facto acceptance, and the acceptance of the witnesses it gives, by the whole body of the Church as being its own witnesses. Thus this question is resolved on the basis of fact, and not on the basis of right. And so: if the whole body of the Church de facto accepts the Council, that means that the Council was Ecumenical. But if the Church rejects it, that means that for the Church it was nothing.

"The Council in and of itself has no significance. The only thing that is important is conciliarity, which depends, not on any particular meeting of people, nor, a fortiori, on any particular person, but on the whole Church. All this is historically proven. The ecumenical significance of a particular Council was by no means recognized immediately, but only after a certain time had passed, time that was necessary for the elucidation of this question.

"Of course, the Church herself and all her living members, to the degree of their participation in her, have no need whatever of a rational criterion of the ecumenicity of her own Councils. But in addressing errors, and in the sense of a rational support for those who need that, the Church in Council rationally justifies her witnesses, holding to popular criteria. And for that reason she also refers to such facts as are understood by the reason of all, even outsiders.

"The conclusion is as follows: the faith of the Church opposes this or that heresy not because this or that heresy was condemned by this or that Ecumenical Council, but rather the reverse: such-and-such an Ecumenical Council condemned such-and-such a heresy because it opposed the faith of the Church. This position cuts off the way for all further polemics because all further polemics are rendered pointless.

"And so, as regards conciliar infallibility, this lies, as we have seen, in the identity of the witnesses given by the Council with the faith of the whole Church body. The character of this conciliar infallibility, that is, of this infallible conciliar agreement, is by no means affected by the variety of those material means by which it is certified. Of course, the most expedient means of certification for outsiders is a material congress of a known number of physical people, which is called a Council. But conciliar agreement can also inspire any other witness, which is therefore a conciliar witness because of this identity with the opinion of the whole Church body. For conciliarity is one, unchanging spirit, whereas witnesses are subject to the law of material variety of external forms. From this it follows that ecumenicity, infallibility and conciliarity are everywhere, in every true witness that is identical with the faith of the Church, being given according to the participation in the Holy Church of whoever it may be: a Council, great or small, or an individual person, be he a fool-for-Christ or a child.

"And from this there follows the church thesis of the complete, absolute estrangement of the conciliar principle from any formal-juridical rules of its government. The Spirit witnesses of Himself in the Church of Christ when He wants, where He wants and how He wants, because it is not we who are measured for the Spirit, but the Spirit is measured for us.

"This is the Orthodox answer to the question: who in each case is the infallible organ of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Spirit Himself chooses in each case. For it is not the organ which, by its own right, gives itself the Spirit, but the Spirit, by His mercy, gives Himself to the organ. This precludes, once

and for all, all juridical means of defining conciliarity, which is accessible only to faith and love, and not to the reason.

"This is the unshakeable Orthodox teaching of the Ecumenical Apostolic Church." (Letter 11)

Like his mentor, Vladyka Theodore, Bishop Mark criticized Patriarch Tikhon's compromises with the communists and renovationists, but did not break communion with him. When Metropolitan Sergius issued his notorious "declaration" in 1927, he took an ardent part in the protest against the metropolitan, giving advice to many bishops and priests who venerated him, and is considered by many to have been the leader of the Catacomb Church in Moscow. In his last letter to friends, written at the end of 1927, he said, obviously referring to the situation created by Sergius' declaration: "The whole ship of the Church has listed and is hanging over the edge of the abyss."

From November, 1927, Vladyka Mark was living in Leningrad and took part in the councils of the leading Josephite clergy. It was at this time that he wrote his "Apology for those who have departed from M. Sergius (Stragorodsky)", one of the longest and most comprehensive of all exposés of sergianism. At some point in 1927 Bishop Mark was arrested, but soon released.

At the beginning of 1928 he wrote "A Conversation of Two Friends" with the help of Hieromartyr Theodore Andreyev. Here he compared Sergianism to an illness as follows: "The microbe of the illness of the higher Church authorities in the person of Metropolitan Sergius is the compromising thought that was born in the mind of Metropolitan Sergius during his isolation, after which he was freed [in March, 1927].

"The treatment of this sign of illness was the friendly advice of the most authoritative people not to take a step that would be harmful for the Church, and as a consequence of the ineffectiveness of this treatment, that is, the non-acceptance of the good advice, a red spot appeared. The external redness on the body of the sick person was the Synod composed of hierarchs with tarnished reputations and with the rights of a consultative organ, according to the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius dated May 5/18, 1927.

"An increase in the redness was the assumption by the Synod of the rights and authority to rule together with Metropolitan Sergius and the Synod's transfer of bishops.

"A malignant growth was the appearance of the declaration of July 16/29, 1927. Various methods of treating the illness were employed: the condemnation of the declaration by the conscience of believers and the distribution of leaflets by the zealots of Orthodoxy reproaching the actions of

Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod and explaining the correct relationship of the Church to the state in contemporary conditions.

“The formation of an abscess was the order of October 8/21, 1927 concerning the commemoration of Metropolitan Sergius and the civil authorities.

“A surgical cutting of the abscess with the aim of warding off further infection was the partial separation from Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod of whole dioceses and individual parishes.

“If there is no healing after this operation, then it will be necessary, with pain of heart, to make an amputation of the sick member, that is, for all zealots of the purity of Orthodoxy to separate finally from Metropolitan Sergius. God grant that this may not happen!...”

But it did happen, and Bishop Mark was among those who separated finally from Metropolitan Sergius. In March, 1928 he wrote “Why we have Departed from Metropolitan Sergius”. And another of his brochures, which is mentioned in many trials of the True Orthodox Christians, was “What must a Orthodox Christian Know?” In this brochure he wrote: “Every Christian must look at the civil authority contemporary with us as allowed by God to punish us and bring us to our senses”; “Christianity and Communism mutually exclude each other, and the struggle between them is inevitable”; “there has been introduced civil marriage, which radically destroys the idea of the family that has been established by God Himself, and an animal life is the result”; “patriotism has been replaced by internationalism and class warfare”; “the civil authorities are demanding that the Orthodox Church justify their actions against Christianity, that is, recognize the revolution, which is violence and can never be justified by the Church”; “the reason for the persecutions against the Church on the part of the unbelieving authorities consists in the striving to submit the Church to their influence and through the Church prepare the people to accept the Antichrist as the political and spiritual head of fallen humanity”.

In “Sergianism is a heresy, not a parasynagogue”, Bishop Mark wrote: “You say in passing that M. Sergius is not a heretic, consequently one should not leave him on the basis of the 15th Canon of the First-and-Second Council. But we affirm, on the contrary, that his sin is worse than heresy.”

In regard to Soviet power, Bishop Mark expressed the following opinion: “I am an enemy of Soviet power - and what is more, by dint of my religious convictions, insofar as Soviet power is an atheist power and even anti-theist. I believe that as a true Christian I cannot strengthen this power by any means... [There is] a petition which the Church has commanded to be used everyday in certain well-known conditions... The purpose of this formula is to request the overthrow of the infidel power by God... But this formula does not

amount to a summons to believers to take active measures, but only calls them to pray for the overthrow of the power that has fallen away from God."

Once Bishop Mark visited Metropolitan Joseph, who said: "Novoselov spoke with me about the situation in the Church that has been created by Sergius' declaration. He said that the position of the declaration was unacceptable for the believing people and, in particular, for certain 'church zealots from the intelligentsia'. However, he did not name any representatives of this kind of intelligentsia..." According to Metropolitan Joseph, Bishop Mark had some influence on Metropolitan Agathangelus and Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich.

On May 17, 1929 he was arrested again by the OGPU in Moscow for "anti-Soviet agitation", and on May 23 was sentenced as an "especially dangerous element" to three years in political isolators according to article 58-10 of the criminal code. First he was sent to the Suzdal political isolator. Then, on October 27, 1930, he was transferred to the Butyrki prison in Moscow. On September 3, 1931, he was condemned in accordance with article 58-10 as "an active participant in the church-political centre of the All-Union counter-revolutionary organization, 'The True Orthodox Church'". He was sentenced to eight years in Yaroslavl political isolator. This was part of the group case, "The Case of the All-Union Centre of True Orthodoxy, 1931".

In the sentence of 1931 it was decreed that "in relation to M.A. Novoselov the resolution of the Special Conference of May 17, 1929 is to be considered replaced by the present resolution". The indictment read: "In the course of several years he has been a participant in 'The Church-Political Centre' of the All-Union counter-revolutionary organization, 'The True Orthodox Church', and was in an illegal position. On the instructions of this centre, he, together with reactionary churchmen in Leningrad, created the 'All-Union Church-Administrative Centre' of this organization, and ruled the latter on instructions from the centre in a counter-revolutionary direction, demanding active counter-revolutionary activity from the organization. Going round the periphery in a systematic manner, he created a series of branches of this organization - in Tver, in Serpukhov and in a series of other places, and directed their counter-revolutionary activity. He wrote counter-revolutionary documents and was in charge of their distribution."

On February 7, 1937 he was sentenced to another three years in Vologda prison for counter-revolutionary activity. He arrived there on June 26, 1937. On January 17, 1938 he was sentenced to death "for carrying out... anti-Soviet agitation in prison" and was shot on the same day.

V.D. Prishvina writes: "The old women who used to send M.A. Novoselov parcels in prison lost trace of him during the Fatherland war: parcels began to come back without explanation. Only once did they receive a living witness about him: an unknown Turk came to the old women on being released from prison and sent to his homeland. He carried out a promise he had given to

Novoselov - to give them his blessing and thanks. The Turk met Michael Alexandrovich in the prison hospital, where he converted him to Christianity. He spoke about Michael Alexandrovich as about a saint."

29. HOLY HIEROMARTYRS SERGIUS, NICHOLAS AND JOHN OF PETROGRAD

Protopriest Sergius Andreyevich Tikhomirov was born on May 30, 1872 in the village of Globitsy, Peterhof uyezd, in a priestly family. He went to the St. Petersburg theological seminary (1893) and from 1895 to 1897 worked as overseer in the Alexander Nevsky theological school. He was ordained to the priesthood at the beginning of 1896 and was sent to the distant Nikolsky church in the village of Kozlov Bereg (according to another source, Klopiny), Gdov uyezd, but a year later was transferred to the Trinity church in the village of Kropitsy, Peterhof uyezd, where he worked until 1905, when he was again transferred to Petersburg, being appointed to the orphans church of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk on Krestovsky island (according to another source, the church of the Alexandrovsky orphanage). In this church there prayed not only the orphans and the servants of the orphanage, but also local inhabitants, because there was no other church on the island. Here the young priest served for almost three years, until 25 (or 24) September, 1908, when the diocesan administration appointed him superior of another orphanage church - that of St. Alexander Nevsky of the Petrovsky society for aid to the poor. The society's church was the church of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple in Vvedenskaya street, Petrograd side. Fr. Sergius not only served here, but also taught the Law of God in the neighbouring schools. In 1915 he was raised to the rank of protopriest.

In September, 1916 the refuge with its church was temporarily closed, but batyushka continued to serve in other churches, also conducting talks in hospitals. During this period he began to acquire a reputation as a spiritual father. Among his spiritual children was the noted Russian philosopher and religious thinker, the professor of Petrograd University and polytechnic institute, S.A. Askoldov. Fr. Sergius was an ascetic, a remarkable preacher, and a great venerator of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky). He often visited Optina desert and was in spiritual communion with the Optina elders Joseph, Anatolius, Nectarius and Dositheus (Elder Nectarius' spiritual father). One of those who knew him said that he was "strict to his spiritual children when he noticed in them even faint signs of self-justification. He was exceptionally tender, sensitive, attentive and loving if he noticed even a hint of despondency or despair." He was called an "ascetic" and "elder", like Fr. Michael Prudnikov, with whom he was friendly. He was of medium height, very thin, with an iconographer's "Byzantine" face, with eyes that were at the same time strict and kind.

On July 19, 1919 Fr. Sergius began serving again in the church of the Entrance to the Mother of God on Vvedenskaya. From September, 1922 to January, 1924 Fr. Sergius lived on money given him by parishioners. Life was difficult - his wife, Matushka Eudocia Pavlovna did not work, while his son Ivan (born 1898), who had fought as a corporal in the White armies, went into hiding under a false name, working in a sugar factory. Only his daughter

Julia (born 1897) earned money, working as a typist in a Soviet institution. In 1923 the Bolsheviks gave him a conditional year's sentence "for distributing appeals" in defence of the Church and the Faith. At the end of the year he was made dean and confessor for repentant renovationists. In 1926 he became superior of the church of St. John the Almsgiver attached to a refuge for the blind on the corner of Bolshaya Zelenina street and Geslerovsky prospect, on the Petrograd side. After the seizure of this church by the renovationist Krasnitsky, he became second priest in the church of St. Alexis the Man of God on Geslerovsky prospect. The first priest of that church was Fr. Paul Vinogradov.

Fr. Sergius did not fear to participate in the illegal brotherhood of St. Seraphim of Sarov, which was led by his spiritual son, I.M. Andreyevsky, and which united the church-oriented intelligentsia and youth of Petrograd. On January 15, 1927 he served a moleben at the founding of the brotherhood, and attended its meetings; his daughter Julia delivered reports at them and paid for this with exile.

After Metropolitan Sergius' declaration in 1927, Fr. Sergius immediately united himself to the group of protestors who rebuked the treachery of Metropolitan Sergius and those with him. "Having received this declaration as a dean from Bishop Yarushevich," he wrote, "I read it through at home and found that through this declaration Metropolitan Sergius was merging in soul with the antichristian authorities. I, as a True Orthodox, cannot accept the joys of Soviet power as my joys and the successes of Soviet power as my successes... for the salvation of True Orthodoxy it is necessary to choose a path that counters the intentions of Metropolitan Sergius to submit the Church to the antichristian atheist authorities."

Right up to his arrest, Fr. Sergius served in the cathedral church of the "Josephites", the church of the Saviour on the blood. Here, said Hieromonk Gabriel, "were concentrated all the best forces of the clergy, who were ready to give all their strength and their life for the purity of Orthodoxy, which was being trampled upon... They were tried people, always able to take up the reins of administration and lead the oppressed Russian people to a peaceful life and prosperity..."

In the words of Protopriest B.M. Veryuzhsky, the superior of the cathedral, "Sergius played a prominent and central role..., using the great trust displayed in him by Archbishop Demetrius... He received for confession clergy coming from various places in the USSR,... so as to be assured of the genuineness of their desire to be in communion with us." Fr. Sergius took part in all the most important decisions and unwaveringly supported the actions of Metropolitan Joseph and Archbishop Demetrius. His spiritual father was Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin), who led the Petrograd Josephites after the arrest of Vladyka Demetrius. The latter said that Fr. Sergius and Fr. Nicholas Prozorov were among his "closest assistants".

Fr. Sergius was arrested for the first time in 1928, then after some months released for some reason, and then arrested again in November 23 (or 28), 1929 in connection with the Leningrad branch of the True Orthodox Church. In prison (which was located in the Petrograd House of Preliminary Imprisonment in Shpalernaya street), Fr. Sergius behaved with exemplary courage. He fearlessly denounced atheism in spite of threats and beatings.

In the course of a search of the flat of the cathedral warden, Fr. Sergius was found with the "Acts of the Council in Sremsky Karlovtsy", with which he fiercely confessed his full agreement in front of the chekists. "To every true believer," he said to the investigator, "I told my ideas and called on them to follow my example..., so that they might by all means multiply, copy and reprint the appeals that were appearing against the declaration and the orders of Metropolitan Sergius." Not only were these leaflets multiplied, but also materials of the Russian Church Abroad, to demonstrate that "the Josephites are not alone, that behind them stand such authoritative church figures as [Archbishop] Theophan [of Poltava], [Metropolitan] Anthony Khrapovitsky [of Kiev] and others."

On August 3, 1930 Fr. Sergius was convicted in accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11 and sentenced to be shot. Not long before his execution he asked his wife to bring him fresh underwear and a new ryasa, and at his last meeting with his wife he was so full of light and joy that he infected her, too, with his spiritual exaltation, calm and joy. For nine months he was in solitary confinement. He was shot together with Fr. Nicholas Prozorov on the night before the feast of the Transfiguration, August 6/19 - according to another source, on August 20, and according to yet a third, on August 8/21, 1930, at eleven o'clock in the evening - in the basement of the prison on Shpalernaya.

Protopriest Nicholas Fyodorovich Prozorov was born on May 6/19, 1897 in the village of Pokrovskoye-Borisenkovskoye, Nizhnelomsky uyezd, Penza province. He came from a clerical family and entered the Penza seminary, but left it in 1914 after four classes to become a cadet in the Alexandrovsky military school (according to another source, the Mikhailovsky artillery school) in Moscow and defend the fatherland. After passing a shortened course, within a year the seminarist was already at the front in the rank of second lieutenant, and was wounded four times.

The revolution found Prozorov as commander of a battalion in the rank of staff-captain. When the army collapsed, the young officer returned to his native Penza and married a local girl, Nadezhda Vladimirovna, thinking to lead a quiet family life. He was completely loyal to Soviet power, and was even appointed head of a unit of the city police and military instructor.

But then, in 1918, came the "Red Terror". In Prozorov's own words, "I was arrested as a former officer and imprisoned. There were 450 officers in the prison, of whom **150** were shot during the escape of the criminals. They were

led out 10 at a time and were shot there in the courtyard of the prison... I vowed that if I escaped shooting I would devote my life to God."

The vow of the future priest produced a miracle. Once he suggested to the prisoners that they read aloud the akathist to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. Those officers who read it were delivered from execution the next morning, while all those who refused were shot. Prozorov remained another six weeks in the Penza cheka, and was then released.

In 1919 Fr. Nicholas was ordained to the priesthood by the future hieromartyr, Archbishop John (Pommer) of Latvia, who was at that time Bishop of Penza, and served in the villages near Penza.

In 1924 he was again arrested and was in prison for three weeks.

In 1927 he went to Petrograd to complete his theological studies. Settling with his wife and three children on the edge of the city, on the right bank of the Neva, in the village of Klochki, he entered a school for pastors, and then undertook higher theological studies. He was appointed to serve in the church of the coenobium of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, which was not far from his place of residence. His spiritual father was Fr. Theodore Andreyev from the St. Sergius cathedral, a man of great mind and firmly Orthodox convictions. Very probably it was under the influence of Fr. Theodore that the young priest entered into opposition to Metropolitan Sergius.

Since the coenobium church remained in the possession of the Josephites, Vladyka Demetrius transferred Fr. Nicholas to the St. Panteleimon church of the Alexander Oshevsky monastery podvorye near the 'Piskarevka' platform of the Irinovskaya railway.

At this time, as Fr. Michael Polsky relates, "something remarkable happened to him. One of the most powerful communists in Leningrad came to him.

"Listen, pope, I've fallen in love with this beauty!"

"He pointed to the girl who had come with him and who did indeed deserve that title.

"She doesn't want to go with me unless a pope ties the knot. Your church is in the woods, no one will find out.' (Communists were excluded from the party if they had a church marriage.)

"Fr. Nicholas agreed and suggested that they first go to confession with him, if only on the day before the wedding.

"You must be joking, pope,' said the all-powerful communist, disturbed. 'I'll indulge the whim of the girl I love, but I don't recognize any confession.

Marry us immediately. I'll pay you as much as you want, more than you get in a whole year. After all, I've got my own wife and children (he had three children). As long as I live, no one will arrest you. If by chance they arrest you, let your wife run to my wife, and they'll release you in a moment. You know, I'm a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.'

"But Fr. Nicholas refused to marry them without confession, in spite of the pleas and threats of his terrible guest and the tears of his beautiful companion. And he and his family remained in poverty, deprived of the possibility of gaining an all-powerful intercessor with weight in the Kremlin. He did not reveal his name to me, but said that it was known throughout Russia."

Protopriest Basil Veryuzhsky praised Fr. Nicholas, calling him "a prominent activist in the organization..., a close advisor of Archbishop Demetrius..., an energetic worker." In the words of Hieromonk Gabriel (Vladimirov): "The right hand of our leader, Bishop Demetrius, was Nicholas Prozorov. He was not only his secretary..., but also his advisor. Without Prozorov and the nun Anastasia Kulikova nothing was undertaken." They ran Archbishop Demetrius' affairs and enjoyed his confidence. In the words of Fr. Nicholas himself, "on the instructions of Bishop Demetrius I wrote resolutions on uniting clergy of the USSR to our group, carrying out all kinds of commissions."

On November 28, 1929 Fr. Nicholas was arrested in connection with "the case of the Leningrad branch of the True Orthodox Church". During interrogations by the investigator A. Makarov, the chekists' "specialist on religious affairs", Fr. Nicholas behaved with dignity and honour, declaring that he did not commemorate the authorities because "the laws of the Church forbid this,... and this is not necessary to Soviet power - on the contrary, it discredits it in the eyes of the people". However, he would agree to commemorate it "if Vladyka really wishes this and gives a declaration to this effect by a special order." But he expressed the hope that nothing of the sort would happen.

The 33-year-old Fr. Nicholas Prozorov was of medium height, dark skinned, with rather crude features, dark eyes and hair, and a small beard. He was a simple man, not a learned intellectual, but with a deep faith and firm in his confession; and thus he believed that in joyfully accepting martyrdom he opened for himself entry into the Kingdom of heaven.

Professor S. Nesterov, who was arrested at the same time as Archbishop Demetrius and Fr. Sergius Tikhomirov, writes: "In February, 1930, in cell number 9 of the House of Preliminary Imprisonment on Voinova (formerly Shpalernaya) street No. 25, I met a ship-building engineer from the Baltic factory. Depressed because of my arrest, I received from him both spiritual support and prayer together during the first days of my imprisonment.

"At the end of February they brought a wanderer into our cell. This uneducated invalid, who had suffered wounds 25 years before as a private during the siege of Port Arthur, displayed a rare firmness and fiercely condemned Metropolitan Sergius' actions. Then they brought Fr. Peter B. to us from solitary confinement. Uniting myself with both of these with all my soul, I broke forever with the hierarchy of Metropolitan Sergius and joined the small church whose pastor was Fr. Peter.

"On April 10, 1930, our cell was handed over to the 'workers' (arrested men who worked on sawing wood in the prison courtyard), and all four of us were transferred into cell no. 21, where 80-100 people were lying on 20 cots (in the last cell there had been 35 people for 14 cots). There I met Fathers John and Nicholas, one other aged, 75-year-old protopriest, Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky, who had been brought from Kharkov in connection with the affair of Metropolitan Sergius, and the former Synodal functionary Shenets. With them I attended Paschal Mattins on April 4/17 and spent the summer.

"With us was Fr. Alexander Tikhomirov, the brother of Fr. Sergius, who was in cell no. 22 and was suffering terribly from heart attacks, and two commanders from the regular armed forces, who joined the same group.

"At that time Vicar-Bishop Demetrius of Gdov, who headed the faithful flock in Petrograd was suffering in solitary isolation. I met him once when I, together with other prisoners and accompanied by a guard, was carrying out a heavy bin with rubbish. Vladyka was returning from a 10-minute walk. Protopriests Beryuzhsky and Sergius Tikhomirov were in solitary confinement...

"The Fathers who grew old during their time in this cell occupied a little corner where they slept together and in the morning served *obylednitsa*, in the evening - Vespers, and on the eve of a feast - the all-night Vigil. They sat in a row on stools and were joined by two or three laymen. We listened to the whole service which was pronounced softly from memory. The other prisoners pretended not to notice this...

"Here I spent my first Pascha in prison. Although I was warned by a good friend of mine not to go to the 'holy corner', for which I could easily get some years added to my sentence, I still could not resist, and I went there when Fr. Nicholas began to sing the opening Paschal hymn: *Thy Resurrection, O Christ Saviour, angels hymn in heaven; vouchsafe to us on earth with pure heart to glorify Thee*. Other priests seconded him, and thus we had the whole joyous service. As I returned to my mattress I saw how many of the prisoners were still crossing themselves, tears streaming down their unshaven cheeks. Everyone in the cell had carefully followed our service in silence.

"In the morning of August 4/17 we were all, as always, summoned into the corridor, ... where we were told to sign that we had read our sentences: Fr. John Nikitin, the engineer K. and the wanderer of God - ten years in the

camps; Fr. Peter B. - 5 years; Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky - 3 years; the official Shenets - 3 years' exile in Kazakhstan.

"The next morning during our walk we learned by a complicated system of signalling that Bishop Demetrius at the age of 75 had received 10 years in isolation.; Fr. Basil Veryuzhsky and Mother Kira - 10 years in the camps; Fr. Alexander Tikhomirov - 5 years; the others I do not remember.

"I will note that an uneducated, 70-year-old metal worker... who had declared himself to be a monarchist received 10 years.

"Only Fr. Sergius Tikhomirov, who was in solitary isolation, and our fellow-prisoner Fr. Nicholas Prozorov, were not called out for the announcement of the sentence on the morning of August 4/17 [They had been condemned to be shot on August 3, but had to wait until August 21 for the carrying out of their sentences.]

"On the next day all those who had been sentenced were led out in convoy and said goodbye to us. Fr. Nicholas did not know whether to rejoice or be sad. If they had declared him innocent, then they would probably have released him. But everything became clearer - there was another reason why they had as it were forgotten about him before the departure of his comrades.

"The whole of August 5/18, the eve of the Transfiguration, I tried not to depart from Fr. Nicholas, who immediately felt lonely after the departure of all his comrades.

"Of the hundreds of prisoners, the majority did not understand what it was all about, while others thought that it was a sign of his release. Alone, he read the all-vigil service for the Transfiguration from memory, while I listened. The other laymen who usually listened had already been scattered to other camps (the composition of the cell was constantly changing). He took out of the pocket of his cassock a photo of his three daughters and, tenderly looking at them, said to me:

"I believe that the Lord will not abandon these orphans in the terrible world of the Bolsheviks.'

"At nine o'clock the usual preparations for the night began. Those who had been in the cell longest lay down on the cots, the others on the tables and benches formed from stools, while the newcomers lay under the tables and cots. My cot was by the window, Fr. Nicholas' - by the grating which separated us from the corridor. When everyone had lain down, the officer on duty appeared and stood in the corridor by the door of the grating:

"Is there a Prozorov here?'

"There is - I am he,' said Fr. Nicholas, bounding from his cot.

"Name and patronymic?" asked the officer, checking with his list.

"Nicholas Kiriakovich," replied batyushka, dressing.

"Get ready with your things."

Fr. Nicholas understood everything. We had often observed that the duty officer called people out for execution in this way.

Fr. Nicholas quickly dressed and packed a straw box with his prison 'property'. I lay at the other end of the cell and could not get to him across the cell, which was blocked with tables, benches, cots and bodies lying everywhere. But from the lighted corner where he was packing I could clearly see his courageous face surrounded by a black beard and lit up by some unearthly joy (he was 33 years old, like the Saviour when He ascended Golgotha). The whole cell became quiet and watched Fr. Nicholas. With a happy smile Fr. Nicholas looked at all of us and quickly went to the grating, which the officer opened for him. On the threshold he turned to us and said loudly:

"The Lord is calling me to Him, and now I will be with Him."

In silence, shaken by the greatness of soul of this modest pastor, we all saw how the grating closed after him and with a quick pace he went in front of the officer. In a whisper we all began to speak about Fr. Nicholas with deep feeling. Not only the believers, but also the atheists: the Trotskyites and Mensheviks and bandits and just plain Soviet rogues were inspired with reverence and deep feeling by his firm faith.

"On the next visiting day, the prisoners who returned from meeting their relatives told us that the priests' wives had been informed of the sentences against their husbands."

Fr. Nicholas was shot on August 21, 1930. Two letters from Metropolitan Joseph to Fr. Nicholas have been preserved.

Protopriest John Grigoryevich Nikitin was born in March, 1880 in the village of Luzhno, Demyansky uyezd, Novgorod province. He went to theological school in Staraya Russa. In 1901 he was ordained to the priesthood. He was married to Maria Petrovna, and had two daughters, Barbara and Helena. In 1907 he graduated from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy with the degree of candidate of theology, and on October 1, 1907 was ordained to the priesthood and served at the Resurrection church at the Warsaw station. On August 11, 1908 he was appointed rector of the SS. Constantine and Helen house church of the gymnasium of the Imperial Philanthropic society until its closure in August, 1918. In 1917 he was a member of the diocesan administration and diocesan missionary council. In

October, 1918 he was transferred to the Ascension church in Petrograd, and in 1926 - to the Trinity Izmailovsky cathedral, which he left in the second half of 1927 because of his disagreement with Metropolitan Sergius. Before 1928 he was twice arrested for anti-soviet agitation. He described the 1927 declaration as "of doubtful morality" and as having "a Jesuitical character". From January, 1928 he served in the cathedral of the Saviour on the Blood, at the invitation of the rector, Fr. Basil Veryuzhsky, and was a close assistant of Archbishop Demetrius. Fr. Basil said: "Nikitin was our tribune. He brought the people with him. His sermons often acquired an agitational character. He loved to speak about Metropolitan Joseph, crowning him and the whole of our organization with the aura of confession." He used to take the confessions of those who came from the Ukraine and other provinces before they were joined to the True Orthodox Church. Thanks to him, the small Kikerinsky skete joined the True Orthodox Church, and he probably influenced **Hieromonk Paphnutius** (Akinshin) and the **nuns** of the Dormition monastery in Vyritsa (where he lived in the summer in a dacha with his family) to break with Metropolitan Sergius, for which they were all arrested and sent to the camps at the beginning of the 1930s. On November 28 (or 29), 1929 he was arrested in his flat in connection with the affair of the Petrograd branch of the True Orthodox Church. During his interrogation he said that Metropolitan Sergius' declaration was "completely incompatible", in its falseness and flattery, "with the truth and holiness of the Holy Orthodox Church, as the Pillar and Ground of the Truth". On August 3 he was sentenced in accordance with articles 58-10 and 11 to ten years in the labour camps. In his last letters he gave his family to know that he was preparing for death. He was sent to Solovki, arriving on September 24, and then to the White Sea - Baltic Canal camp (Kem), where he died (shot?) on November 4, 1938. He was buried in a fraternal grave at Kuzemsa station in Karelia. According to another source, he was buried in Priozersk next to the podvorye of the Valaam monastery.

30. HOLY CONFESSOR ABBESS SOPHIA OF KIEV

And those with her

Abbess Sophia, in the world Sophia Yevgenievna Grineva, was born in Moscow in 1873 in a wealthy landowner's family. Her father, Eugene Ivanovich Grinev, married early, while still a first-year student in the juridical faculty of Moscow university, to Lydia Dmitrievna Glazunova, who was only sixteen. They married in Moscow, in Khamovniki, and their first child, the future abbess-confessor, was born while her father was still a third-year student. The couple had two more children, Maria and Boris. After graduating, Eugene Ivanovich became secretary to the Tula District Court, and served in Belev, Tula district. When Sophia was only seven years old, her father fell down with pneumonia while on a trip round the district, and died three days later, being buried in Belev. His widow was only twenty-six years old; she moved immediately with her three children to her native land of Tarussa district, Kaluga province. The children stayed in various families while their mother recovered from the shock of her husband's premature death.

For a while they stayed in a convent in Belev, which was under the spiritual direction of the Optina elders. The superior was their family's former governess, Abbess Eugenia. The nuns were very kind to the orphaned children, who often recalled what they had seen in the monastery in their childish games. Thus Sophia would put on a long cape, and, imitating the abbess, stood on an elevated spot. The younger sister and brother then "censed" her, while the "abbess" fervently "blessed" them...

At the age of nine, Sophia was sent to the Alexandro-Mariinsky institute in Moscow, but did not remain long there because of the penury of her mother. Eventually Boris received by inheritance from his uncle a small plot of land in Voronezh province. The family let this plot for 500-700 rubles a year, and lived on this income.

At the age of sixteen, Sonya was living with her aunt and maternal grandmother in Kaluga province, not far from Optina desert. Having known the monastery from her early years, Sonya fell in love with the monastic life and later became a spiritual daughter of the holy elders.

Once the Grinev family were praying in the church in Optina. After the liturgy, the celebrant - according to one source, it was Elder Anatolius (Zertsalov) - came out with the cross, and, turning towards the Grinevs, asked them to let the abbess come up. They looked around in confusion, and then understood that batyushka was calling Sonya. The twelve-year-old girl kissed the cross, while the clairvoyant elder stroked the "abbess", and stroked her head, saying:

"What an abbess she will be!"

And another elder who lived in silence in the woods on meeting her bowed at her feet.

Again, she once went with her mother to the barn for threshing. Suddenly an invalid peasant woman who had been paralyzed for many years, came up to the mother and said:

"Don't give your daughter in marriage. Today I had a dream: in the iconostasis instead of the Mother of God was your daughter."

It is well-known that abbesses are considered the deputies of the Mother of God.

Sophia went to study in the Moscow Alexander-Mariinsky institute, but finished her secondary education in the Kiev Fundukleyevsky gymnasium. When she became an abbess, Sophia did not forget the gymnasium, and helped its pupils. After leaving the institute she was sent to study singing in the Kiev conservatory. Her life in this period was very happy; pleasure followed after pleasure. She had a wonderful voice, and the professors promised her a glittering future as an opera singer. But Sophia became concentrated and thoughtful; she began to pray and to go to church and fast. God was evidently calling her...

Not far from the Grinev estate lived a wealthy landowner, Znamensky, whose daughter Anna Zakharyevna, having just completed her higher education, abandoned all thought of an upper-class career and, out of religious zeal, preferred to become a village school teacher. Being aflame with monastic striving, she would give spiritual lectures to peasant girls with the singing of akathists, ending late at night. These were attended by more than 400 people. Anna and Sophia became close friends. Late one winter evening, going through the deserted woods to Anna's lecture, Sophia encountered a wolf, and her death seemed certain, since these beasts, who plagued this territory, were not only cattle-killers, but had recently even killed an armed officer. Here she made a vow to become a nun if she remained alive. She made the sign of the Cross over the wolf, and at once he ran away into the woods.

Just before graduating from the conservatory, when she was twenty-two years old, Sophia incautiously went out in frosty weather, fell severely ill with anginal diphtheria and lost her voice. She was in despair. The doctors suggested that she had tuberculosis and advised her to go to Davos in Switzerland.

By that time Anna had asked for and received her share of land from her father's inheritance, and together with fifteen other young women she settled in a remote and deserted wooded area, founded a community dedicated to the Holy Trinity and began to lead a severe monastic life with the blessing of

several holy men: St. John of Kronstadt, Elder Ambrose of Optina, Elder Barnabas of Gethsemane skete and others. While waiting for a warm house to be built, the sisters lived in tents in huts made out of branches and boards, slept on the earthen floor with a rock for a pillow, ate dry bread, and only on feast days had some warm weak barley soup. They felled trees, chopped firewood, dug a well and built a beautiful church, where they conducted the whole daily cycle of Divine services.

Matushka Anna suggested to Sophia that she rest in her monastery before setting out for Davos. But Sophia's health deteriorated so sharply that they invited the spiritual father of the community to give her the last rites. She could no longer speak and in her dumb confession she wept on the breast of the kind elder, who comforted and encouraged her. After receiving Communion, she fell asleep. On awaking, to the astonishment of all, she began to speak. A service of thanksgiving was served, and she quickly began to recover. After this miracle there could be no question of her returning to the world. She was probably made a rasophor-nun in the community of the Holy Trinity. But she did not remain there long...

The community flourished, with over 600 sisters, an orphanage, an old-age home, a large vegetable garden and orchard, a brick factory and metochia in Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, Matushka Anna, overwhelmed by her success, suffered a grave spiritual catastrophe: she was lured into spiritism and left the convent. Dissension struck the convent, and some sisters left.

Sophia went to a holy elder, Gerasimus of Kaluga, who had just opened the St. Nicholas convent for his spiritual daughters. There, in 1897, she was joined by her friend, Catherine Metzendorff, who had also left the Holy Trinity community. However, Sophia incurred the dislike of the treasurer of the convent because she read spiritual literature to the sisters and they loved her. Soon she and Catherine left the St. Nicholas convent and went to found an independent community. On the bank of the beautiful Oka river there was an abandoned church of St. John the Almsgiver with an icon of the Mother of God called "Joy and Consolation". There, in a place called Dugny from the river which flowed into the Oka at that point, the young sisters settled in order to continue their narrow path of poverty, daily church services and labour.

But there was also a factory there, where former convicts worked. At first they did not like the nuns and caused them many vexations. But the community quickly grew to number 170 sisters, monastery buildings were constructed and the church was repaired. And a refuge for 30 children was built.

The superior was Mother Catherine, who was older than Mother Sophia by some years. However, the sisters loved Mother Sophia more than Mother Catherine because of her kindness and mercifulness and the inexpressible spiritual fragrance that surrounded her. This aroused the annoyance of

Mother Catherine, and for the sake of peace Sophia decided to go to the Belev monastery where her father was buried.

But the sisters were very upset. Among them was the fool-for-Christ Maryushka, who nicknamed Mother Sophia "Seraphima". She climbed into a tree and called to her:

"Seraphima, Seraphima!"

Finally, Mother Catherine wrote that life in the community was in disarray and that Mother Sophia should return, while she herself would go away. That is what they did. Mother Catherine founded a community near the town of Bologoye in Novgorod province, dying there at the age of 95. In December, 1905 Ryasophor novice Sophia was confirmed by the Kaluga spiritual consistory as superior of the new community "Joy and Consolation".

Life was difficult in the new community. Nuns often came to matushka to report that there was nothing with which to feed the sisters and children that day. But every time Mother Sophia convinced them that the Lord would not fail to come to their help, reminding them of previous examples of miraculous help from on high. Candles were lit at the foot of the Crucifixion in her cell, matushka and her nuns began to pray, and their faith was never put to shame.

The following great miracle took place. Mother Sophia constantly lobbied for the legal confirmation of her community. And then an order was received from the Holy Synod commanding the community to contribute 4000 rubles in a very short time for the 47 desyatins of land belonging to the church of St. John the Almsgiver. Without this the community could not be confirmed in law. Matushka gathered the sisters into the church, explained the situation to them and placed the order paper before the icon of St. Seraphim. A prayer service with an akathist to the saint was served. How many tears were shed then! Two days later, an unknown wanderer appeared and brought an envelope with 4000 rubles and a request that they pray for the virgins Elizabeth and Anastasia. It turned out that this wanderer had been present at the reading of the akathist and had turned to some benefactors whom he knew and who trusted him. In this way the community was saved.

The spiritual life of the community was centred on the church, which was poor, but always clean and decorated with great taste. The iconostasis was modest, but artistically worked. On the glass of the altar window was painted an icon of the Resurrection of Christ, which was illumined during the triumphant services. During the polyeleos candles were handed out to everyone in accordance with the custom of the Kaluga monasteries. Then matushka was given a dish of pieces of bread cut during the litiya, and she went round the parishioners with them. They loved her and went to her with all their troubles. When, at the end of the service, the children were led away to sleep, matushka blessed each of them, and in turn bowed to each of them to

be signed with the sign of the cross. Matushka also took loving care of the church cemetery, and on appointed days lampadas were lit on the graves. By her faith and love for God matushka strengthened the desire of the nuns to serve Him with all their heart and fulfil His holy commandments. The spirit of the community also had a powerful influence on the laypeople who visited it. Unbelievers often became believers, and there were cases when they entered the number of the monastics. Many of the simple people left a secure life in the world and entered the community as workers. All the traditions that matushka introduced into the community were kept sacred even when she had left it against her will.

The writer V.P. Bykov, who was converted from spiritism by matushka, wrote about the community: "Very often there were and are moments when the day comes and 170 nuns and 30 more from the children's home have to be given food, and the kind treasurer, Matushka Martha, burdened with constant cares for the present day, has only 25-30 rubles in all together with several letters demanding the payment of debts: sometimes for firewood - the monastery is in terrible need of heating, sometimes for various

Meanwhile, matushka had to suffer a severe trial. For a long time no priest was appointed for the community. Finally, he arrived. To the horror of all he turned out to be an alcoholic. Moreover, he had a terrible character. His own family had left him. He beat the old novice who had been attached to him, and during the services he loudly and indignantly swore at the sacristans and chanters. But matushka firmly told the sisters that since this had happened with the permission of God, and that this priest had been sent to them, their duty was to respect him for the sake of his rank and not be led astray by his weaknesses; she besought them to be patient. The sisters, as ever, received these words of hers with complete trust. Once she saw in a dream that she was rising higher and higher in the air and bringing this priest with her. From this she drew the conclusion that he had not been sent to her for nothing. Meanwhile, the situation became more and more difficult. The priest hated her, he searched out two or three dissatisfied sisters, set them as a faction against the superior and began to write complaints against her, which was unheard of in that peaceful community before then. Mother Sophia only prayed for him and demanded from the disturbed sisters that they endured everything. However she did not find it in herself to have confession with him. But this priest did have one great quality: he prayed sincerely and loved to serve the Liturgy.

Once Mother Sophia suddenly fell seriously ill, and in the night they had to call the community's priest to give her the last rites in case she died. Then something unexpected happened. While going to her, the priest stumbled and dropped the Holy Gifts. This accident elicited such sympathy and compassion from matushka that the priest's eyes were opened and he saw her in a true light. According to the rule he had to report the incident to the bishop. The bishop sent him to a spiritual father. He returned a completely changed man, and declared that he would go to Fr. Gerasimus for correction.

Fr. Gerasimus was an exceptionally spiritual man. In his youth, when he had been a novice of the clairvoyant fool-for-Christ, Elder Gerasimus, his elder used to say of him:

"My Misha will be higher than I."

He commanded him to found a community and refuse nobody entrance into it. In fulfilment of his elder's command, Fr. Gerasimus founded the St. Sergius skete. There he received both helpless sick people and cripples, and the spiritually sick, fallen people who required spiritual regeneration and correction. The healthy looked after the sick and crippled. The monastery was exemplary. The outpouring of Fr. Gerasimus' love had no bounds and was capable of regenerating the hearts of men. He was spiritually close to Mother Sophia, and they sent each other their spiritual children. In accordance with the grace given him, Fr. Gerasimus was a clairvoyant elder.

It was in this "hospital" that the priest wanted to go for repentance. There he became gentler, was completely cured of his alcoholism and asked to go back to matushka. But she was already in the Kiev Protection monastery. It happened like this.

The Kiev Protection monastery was founded at the end of the 19th century by Nun Anastasia, in the world the Great Princess Alexandra Petrovna. The monastery was very large and its administration very complicated. It contained cells for 1200 sisters, a large hospital in which female student medics practised, a refuge and a work-house. The abbess had to deal with various people: with the Great Princely family, who considered this monastery their heritage; with the builders of the huge, as yet unfinished cathedral (besides which there were several churches); with the doctors of the hospital; with the members of the city administration; and with many others. The book-keeping section was huge. Besides, the elderly inhabitants, who were used to the wise direction of the holy eldress Anastasia, did not get on with the superiors, and they often changed.

Metropolitan Flavian of Kiev was at that time in Petersburg, in the Synod, and Matushka Sophia visited him in connection with her own affairs. He was carefully looking for an abbess for the Protection monastery. Now there stood in front of him a young, sensible, clever superior of a community she herself had founded. His choice fell on her. They did not at that time suspect what a find they had made, what a pearl they had caught.

Mother Sophia wept the whole night. She had grown in soul with her community, with the monastic sisters, with the children whom they supported, with the laypeople who settled near it, with the simple people who entrusted her with their troubles. They were digging her out as one digs out a tree with its roots. She was then a rasophor-nun. She was tonsured into the mantia and raised to the rank of abbess in the Novodevichi monastery.

She kept the name of Sophia since that is what she was called on all business papers. This took place at the end of 1912 or the beginning of 1913.

The nuns of the Protection monastery were worried as they awaited the coming of the new abbess. And when she arrived a kind of omen took place: the door of her carriage for some reason would not open, and she had to come out on the other side. She crossed herself and said:

"This is a kind of foretelling of prison."

And so it turned out: when Bolshevik power was established in Kiev, they dragged her out of the monastery into prison.

By her exceptional kindness, humility and simplicity, Abbess Sophia won the hearts of the sisters of the Protection monastery, as she had those of the "Joy and Consolation" community. Everybody loved her. She was generous to the poor, none of the needy left her without help, she never refused to support anybody. It was a great consolation for her that she could now help her beloved "Joy and Consolation" community. Another consolation was that the sisters who were closest to her moved to Kiev with her. Closest of all to her was her faithful assistant in "Joy and Consolation", Mother Martha, who became her senior cell-attendant. She shared with matushka all her sorrows in the Bolshevik period, and died as **Schema-Nun Margaret**. Everybody in the Protection monastery loved her: both the capricious old women, and the children of the refuge, who met her with joyful cries.

This is where the revolution found her. And Mother Sophia was soon called to suffer for the faith. The Protection monastery was closed earlier than the others, and Mother Sophia was taken away to prison, being transferred from one to another.

Being a true offspring of the Optina elders, with whom she was in constant contact, she soberly discerned the true nature of the Soviet revolution and knew what to expect from it. Thus when the assault of the "Living Church" struck, her convent was one of the first to give a blow back, although she herself had already been arrested. A new calendarist bishop was forced into the convent by GPU agents to serve the Liturgy. When the women who attended it came up to kiss the Cross at the end, one after the other they spat on the bishop's hand that held the Cross, and thus put an end to "renovation" in the Protection convent. The bishop learned his lesson and repented.

Hearing about this, Bishop Damascene of Glukhov exclaimed: "If it were not for the women, who else would defend the Church? Let them at least defend it however they can!"

In 1926 Abbess Sophia was released and lived 25 versts beyond Kiev. Then she returned to Kiev and settled with a relative of hers near the Protection convent. In 1927 there was published Metropolitan Sergius' notorious

declaration, which betrayed the Church into the hands of the atheists. Mother Sophia and her clergy, led by the young protopriest, **Fr. Demetrius Ivanov**, were the first ones in Kiev who openly rejected it. Unfortunately, they were supported by few of the other clergy, while most of the local bishops were silent, in effect accepting the declaration. The convent was confused and divided because of this, and Abbess Sophia thought it wiser to leave the convent with Fr. Demetrius and twenty sisters of like mind. The other nuns did not divulge her whereabouts.

Protopriest Demetrius Nikolayevich Ivanov was born on February 20, 1883 in Tbilisi (according to another source, Yelisavetgrad). He finished his studies at Kiev theological seminary, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1905. From 1905 to 1910 he studied in the Kiev Theological Academy, and then became a priest in, successively, Baku, the church of St. George in Kiev and the Pokrov women's monastery in Kiev. An outstanding pastor, he was a spiritual son of **Elder Nectarius** of Optina. Between 1923 and 1930 he was arrested several times, but soon released.

In 1927, after the closure of the Pokrov monastery, Fr. Demetrius served in the Trinity church in the dacha in Irpen, near Kiev, settling there together with his family and Abbess Sophia, in a summer house donated by a wealthy lady, Mrs. Helen Alexandrovna Babenko. The other nuns lived in private houses nearby and at night gathered at her side for services. At this time a miraculous spring was discovered nearby. Living there, of course, was not easy, for an intensified persecution was being directed against all Josephites. In the house there was a hall adorned with paintings. At night they were taken down and replaced by icons, and all night long fervent prayer was offered in special vigils. In the morning the paintings were replaced, and no outsiders could know that this was a catacomb church, which served as a spiritual centre for the True Orthodox Christians of the whole Kiev area.

With the blessing of Elder Nectarius Fr. Demetrius broke communion with Metropolitan Sergius and began to serve in secret. He signed the antisergianist "Kievan Appeal" in the autumn of 1927. In July, 1928 he went to Petrograd and met **Bishop Demetrius** (Lyubimov) and **Fr. Theodore Andreyev**. As representative of the Irpen community and part of the clergy of the city of Gomel, Fr. Demetrius obtained their formal union with the Josephite True Orthodox Christians, and was himself appointed Archbishop Demetrius' proxy in Kiev in 1929. He brought with him into the Irpen community the priest of the local church, **Fr. Victor Davidovich**, **Abbess Rafaila** from Gomel, **Abbess Valeria** from Rzhishchev, **nuns** from Diveyevo, Shamordino and Orenburg, and inhabitants of the Kiev Pokrovsky and Mezhygorsky monasteries. In January, 1929 Fr. Demetrius drew to participation in his movement **Nun Anastasia** from Slavyansk, and then **Nun Irina** (Gladysheva) from Orenburg; they both settled in Irpen. In the summer of 1929 there came to him a large group of pilgrims led by **Archimandrite Hilarion and some nuns** from some closed Caucasian monasteries. Fr. Demetrius wrote several antisergianist leaflets. He made copies of them on a

typewriter in Irpen, as also of the works of **Fr. Anatolius Zhurakovsky** and **Fr. Andrew Bojchuk**, and recordings of a conversation between members of the Kievan Josephites and Metropolitan Michael. It is reported that he declared the sergianist church to be graceless, and her sacraments invalid, and even forbade people to pray when they pass by sergianist churches. This strict opinion of his he based on the opinions with regard to this question of Elder Nectarius of Optina. Fr. Demetrius was arrested on January (April) 15, 1931 for being "the leader of the Kiev branch and curator of the Gomel branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church", and on January 2, 1932 was sentenced to five years in the camps. He was sent to Vishlag, near Arkhangelsk, but on October (September) 23, 1932 was released and after being severely beaten and almost tortured to death was exiled to the north, to the city of Archangelsk. On arriving there with his wife, he was suffering so much that he could hardly walk. Nobody knew him in the city. He fell on the street and just lay there, unable to move. A Jewish doctor who was passing took him to his flat and looked after him. However, on March 17, 1933 Fr. Demetrius died in his arms.

There exists an anti-sergianist letter written by a person close to Abbess Sophia to a friend abroad in 1933. To get round the Soviet censor, the church situation is thinly disguised behind a discussion of "doctors". The person who received it immediately understood that "Dr. Sergiev" was Metropolitan Sergius, and "the old men Petrov and Kirillov" - Metropolitans Peter and Cyril, who refused to recognize Sergius' "Declaration". The "clinics and drugstores" were the churches, and "treatment" was Holy Communion and the other Holy Mysteries:

"None of our people have any contact with the doctors of Sergiev, and we do not go to his clinics for treatment. He has acted completely illegally, since the old man, Dr. Petrov, only assigned him as his replacement for current business when he had to go away, but Sergiev, without a consultation of all the doctors, took over the administration, which he directs in all matters. The old men Petrov and Kirillov do not recognize this administration, and both of them are in persecutions and sorrows. My husband was very upset with the activities of Dr. Sergiev, because all the zealots of homeopathy [True Orthodoxy] are deprived of the possibility of treatment, since all the drug stores are in the hands of those who have taken over everything. It is difficult to explain to you, but if you know everything, it is *unacceptable*. I will tell you one thing: I was in Chernigov the whole time without a doctor and travelled to Kiev [Mother Sophia] when necessary, that is, once or twice a year. The children have also not gone for treatment here."

The leading anti-sergianist in the Kiev area was **Bishop Damascene** (Tsedrik) of Glukhov, who was spiritually very close to Abbess Sophia. He wrote flaming appeals showing the ruinousness of Metropolitan Sergius' policy in every aspect. His stirring appeals were secretly copied and re-copied by Orthodox zealots, and some of them reached the free world, where they were distributed. His deep concern was for the future of true, unadulterated

Orthodoxy in Russia, a concern shared by his friend, Abbess Sophia. He was often arrested, released for a while, and then exiled again. Once, in 1934, he visited Abbess Sophia when she was also free from prison for a time, and tonsured her into the Great Schema.

In 1937 all the members of the Irpen community except Abbess Sophia, who had already been arrested, were arrested and exiled to an island in the Kamchatka area in the Far East, where they were placed in a collective farm that raised reindeer. Mrs. Barbenko, who became a nun, sent word from there, but when they sent a letter and money there, they did not receive a reply. In her telegram Helen Alexandrovna had said that they had been conveyed on a steamer for several days. Thus did the Irpen community of True Orthodoxy come to an end.

Abbess Sophia was arrested before the rest of the community, and so she was not sent with the other sisters to the Far East, but was thrown from one prison to another, mostly in European Russia. Her sisters here and there managed to keep watch over her, until finally, as a result of the inhuman prison conditions, she contracted bronchial asthma and other serious ailments, and was released to die. But while in prison she was not harmless for the God-hating Soviets. Judging from an earlier encounter she had with one convinced atheist, she must have challenged the beliefs and prejudices of materialists in the prisons, shattering to pieces their philosophical inconsistencies and thus bringing their souls to God. Once, before the revolution, a lady who knew Abbess Sophia's deeply-rooted understanding of the Orthodox world-view, implored her to influence her son, who was a convinced atheist. This man, exceedingly brilliant and talented, was making an enviable career for himself in engineering, and would not yield to anyone's persuasion. Mother Sophia talked to him about religion, but he resisted her words, although she did manage to talk him into going to Sarov monastery; she herself also went there at this time. The duel between the holy nun and the atheist was not an easy one, but by her holy prayers some miracle took place, which shook the engineer to the depths. He not only became a believer, but was truly reborn spiritually. His former life disgusted him completely, and he could not endure to continue it. He left his job, abandoned everything he had, put on simple peasants' clothing, and set out on foot for Solovki monastery. The former atheist became a pilgrim with the Prayer of Jesus on his lips.

On June 15, 1941, Abbess Sophia's sister, Maria Evgenievna Popova, who was living in Paris, received a letter from N.A. Grigorievna, one of matushka's spiritual daughters, informing her of her sister's death on March 22 / April 4 of that year. The last morning in the much-suffering life of Abbess Sophia arrived when she was amidst her spiritual daughters on a collective farm near Serphukhov which was a catacomb convent. She was in a state of absolute exhaustion, not having partaken of any food for several days. After morning prayers, when her room had been put in order, Mother Sophia asked to be left alone, and then began to read her favourite book, the Gospel. Then the sisters

heard her coughing and gasping for air. The agony lasted for three hours, but she was fully conscious and her eyes were clear. Then she turned her gaze to an icon, closed her eyes for the last time, and departed to the Lord.

31. HOLY HIEROMARTYR SERGIUS OF MOSCOW

Fr. Sergius Mechev was born on September 17, 1892 to the famous Moscow elder, Fr. Alexis Mechev, and his matushka, Anna Petrovna. He was the fourth child and arrived in a household that was already cramped for space and in trouble financially. The frequent shortage of food was the cause of the boy's weak constitution, but he had a strong-willed character inherited from his mother. Her death in 1902 was hard on him, but he had a close bond with his father. In 1902 he entered the third Moscow gymnasium, finishing his studies there in 1910 with a gold (according to another source, silver) medal. He used to serve in the altar, helping his father, and also sang on the kliros. His father greatly loved his son, and wanted him to take his place as the parish priest. However, he did not put pressure on him, and gave him the opportunity to receive a good education. In 1910 Sergius Alexeyevich entered the historico-philological faculty of Moscow University after a short period in the medical faculty. He was one of five pupils of Professor G.I. Chelpanov who later became priests. Among the subjects Sergius Alexeyevich studied at university, he was especially interested in ancient Russian literature. He also studied the history of the Russian Church and listened to the lectures of Professor S.I. Smirnov, for whom he had a great respect. In 1913, Sergius Alexeyevich visited the cities of Switzerland and Italy during his summer holidays. After studying the works of the famous painters of the Renaissance, he came to the conclusion that the ancient Russian icon greatly exceeded western art in its spirituality.

In 1914 he joined the army as a volunteer medical orderly, serving in a hospital at the Western front. In June, 1916 he returned from the front and resumed his studies at the university. In 1917, after graduation, he was recruited into the army and served in Moscow. At the same time he took part in the work of a student theological circle in the name of St. John Chrysostom, organized by Bishop Arsenius (Zhadanovsky), where the works of the Holy Fathers were studied and lectures on theological subjects were read and discussed. In 1918 he was demobilized because of his health. In a field hospital he got to know **Euphrosyne Nikolayevna Shiforostova** (born 1890), a student in the Higher Women's courses, who came from a pious merchant's family. Soon after the wedding, Fr. Alexis told the bride that he had very much wanted this marriage and hoped that Sergius would become a priest.

In 1917 the Local Council of the Russian Church meeting in Moscow formed a commission to negotiate relations with the new government. Sergius Alexeyevich became a member of this commission, as a result of which he came into frequent contact with Patriarch Tikhon, who became very fond of him and urged him to become a priest. This decision was finally taken in the autumn of 1918 in Optina Desert during a conversation with Elder Anatolius (Potapov). His father had been in close touch with these elders, who would send Muscovites who came to them to him. And now he received the blessing of Elders Anatolius and Nectarius to become a priest.

In 1918 he was serving in Moscow as the director of a kindergarten. Then he became a pedagogue-instructor for pre-school education. Besides this, until 1922 he was the secretary of a medical journal.

On April 12, 1919 Sergius Alexeyevich was ordained to the diaconate in Moscow, and on April 17, Holy Thursday - to the priesthood, by Bishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) in the Danilov monastery. Fr. Sergius began to serve with his father in the church of St. Nicholas on Maroseika street in Klenniki. In 1921 he became director of a district kindergarten and instructor in pre-school education. In 1922 he became the secretary of a medical journal.

Fr. Alexis died on June 9, 1923, and his funeral was celebrated by **Hieromartyr Theodore**, Archbishop of Volokolamsk, thirty priests and six deacons. The body was met at the graveside by Patriarch Tikhon, who had just been released from prison. And while he was blessing the people, which took several hours, Fr. Sergius served the first full pannikhida to his father.

Elder Nectarius once said: "You knew Fr. Alexis? The whole of Moscow knew him, while Fr. Sergius is known so far only by half of Moscow. But he will be greater than his father."

Shortly after the death of his father, Fr. Sergius was arrested for his opposition to the renovationists (together with Archbishop Theodore he was one of the few clergy who did not submit to them), and cast into Butyrki prison. This concentrated his mind on prayer and expectation of the manifestation of the will of God. On the night of the fortieth day after his father's death, Fr. Sergius distinctly felt his presence and was filled with a radiant joy the whole day. He was released on September 15, and immediately went to the Lazarevskoye cemetery where his father was buried. Fr. Sergius' soul was strengthened with the resolve to take on his father's heritage and devote the rest of his life to this.

And so he succeeded his father in the church on Maroseika street. And the parish began to grow, receiving people from all over Moscow. His parish loved him. He filled all with a special joy at his meetings. In hard times he would be able to gather food and provisions. In times of disharmony he would make the warring parties be reconciled and forgive one another. He would give everyone courage by his prayers. During the winter of 1924-25, Fr. Sergius gathered discussion groups before the morning Liturgy. He would lecture on Christian ethics: relations with one another and with the pastor, and the life of an Orthodox Christian in the world in general.

Fr. Sergius' family had two houses in the country: one in Vereya and one in Dubky. For the summer Fr. Sergius would send families with children there for spiritual retreats, which were very profitable.

When Patriarch Tikhon was deceived into accepting the new calendar, Fr. Sergius was upset and came to him:

"Your Holiness Vladyka!" he said. "Don't consider me a rebel, but my church conscience does not allow me to accept the new style!"

"What kind of a rebel are you, Seryozha," replied his Holiness in a fatherly way. "I know you. But they are demanding that I introduce the new style."

The people of the Church did not accept the new style and soon the Julian calendar was restored. Some, however, considered that if the new style was adopted, believers would have greater opportunities to go to festal services, since at that time the Nativity and Baptism of Christ according to the new style were still holidays.

"I assure you," said Fr. Sergius, "soon they will not keep the feast by any calendar."

And soon the five-day-week became the six-day-week, then the seven-day-week or six days with a variable day of rest.

After the death of Patriarch Tikhon in 1925, Fr. Sergius commemorated only Metropolitan Peter, the patriarchal locum tenens. When Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned, and his deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, demanded that his name be commemorated alongside Metropolitan Peter's, Fr. Sergius considered this demand uncanonical and broke communion with him. And he said that if he were banned from serving by Sergius' Synod, he would not accept it. Fr. Sergius also refused to pray for unbelievers, and especially militant atheists, at the Divine Liturgy. He said that the conversion of the soul to God is a free choice, and it is wrong to pray for those who do not want it, and especially at the Liturgy, which is a service for believers only.

Protopresbyter Michael Polsky wrote: "In essence, a huge majority of the Moscow churches belonged to the secret adherents of Fr. Sergius Mechiev. Among them,... the proclamations of the Soviet government were not followed."

In April, 1928 Fr. Sergius travelled to the village of Kholmischi to see Elder Nectarius of Optina, who expressed the desire that Fr. Sergius be next to him at the hour of his death and bury him. "I am not worried about you," he said to him. Many priests and laymen came to the burial, which was led by Fr. Sergius.

On October 29, 1929, Fr. Sergius was arrested and cast into the Butyrki prison. Together with him, two priests, **Fr. Constantine Rovinsky and Hieromonk Sabbas** (a monk of St. Sabbas' Storozhevsky monastery near Zvenigorod, who had been on the staff of the church on Maroseika while

Elder Alexis was still alive), and nine people from the Maroseika church were arrested.

On November 20 Fr. Sergius was sentenced to three years' exile in the north. On November 24 the train with the arrested people set off for Arkhangelsk. There Fr. Sergius managed to stay in the flat of his spiritual daughter, K.T.

After a time, in 1930, he was sent to the town of Kadnikov in Vologda province, where he obtained refuge in the flat of a church warden, A.K. Shomina. Every day, at the time when services were being celebrated in the church on Maroseika, Fr. Sergius would serve Vespers, and then in the morning Mattins and the Liturgy. When it was possible, his relatives would visit him: his elder children and someone with them. Matushka came only when she was not working. Sometimes his spiritual children would come (during the evening, so as not to attract attention).

Fr. Sergius would write letters to his spiritual children in which he poured out his love for them and his desire to strengthen and console them. "You are my way to Christ," he wrote to them in 1930. "How can I be without you?" And from his place of exile in Ust-Sisolsk in 1930, he wrote to Tatiana Kuprianov: "A hermit is first unto God, and then to the people; a pastor - first to the people and then to God. The eyes of the hermit behold God; the eyes of the pastor - the people. In them He reveals His beauty. To the pastor, the flock does not close off the Lord; on the contrary, it shows the way to Him. My dear Tanya, I am unworthy and more sinful than all, but I am a shepherd, not only a priest. My spirit yearns for every soul of my flock. If it were said, 'Choose between two possibilities - either serve the Divine services or feed the flock' - without hesitation I would feed and console the flock."

In another letter he wrote: "The judgement of God is being accomplished on the Church of Russia. It is not by chance that the visible side of Christianity is being taken away from us. The Lord is punishing us for our sins and in this way he is leading us to purification. Special sorrows and unprecedented attacks are the lot of our days. The purpose of our life is to overcome them through repentance."

On the eve of the Annunciation, 1932, Fr. Sergius' church on Maroseika street was closed and turned into a warehouse. The only priest of the church, **Hieromonk Alexander** (Ilyin) was arrested on his way to the church, was convicted and exiled to Narym. The church began to be broken down from within. However, the wonder-working icon of the Fyodorovskaya Mother of God was taken out and preserved by **Maria Nikolayevna Sokolova**.

Matushka Euphrosyne was accused of being "a member of the church-monarchicist counter-revolutionary organization, 'The True Orthodox Church', and convicted on May 16, 1932 in accordance with article 58-11 to three years' deprivation of the right to live in twelve place, and had to live in

the Urals province. Hers was part of the group case "The Case of Ananin and others, Moscow, 1932". She went to her husband in Kadnikov. Fr. Sergius' four children, who were aged from six-and-a-half to twelve, were sent for re-education to children's homes. However, Matushka Euphrosyne's unmarried younger brother **Gleb Nikolayevich** immediately went to the children at Fr. Alexis' flat, which had now become a crowded "kommunalka", and took their care upon himself.

On March 8, 1933, Fr. Sergius was arrested again in Kadnikov, cast into prison in Vologda, and then, on August 28, given five years in the camps for "anti-collective farm agitation" in "the Case of P.A. Cheltsov, S.A. Mechev and others, Kadnikov, 1933".

Priest Peter Cheltsov was born in 1888 in the village of Shekhmino, Rybnovsk uyezd, Ryazan province. In 1910 he finished his studies at a theological seminary, and in 1915 - at Kiev Theological Academy. He was ordained and appointed inspector of the women's theological school in Smolensk and teacher at the theological seminary. From 1918 he was rector of the church of St. Elijah in Smolensk. In 1922 he was under investigation in connection with "the requisitioning of church valuables". In 1924 he was arrested on suspicion of "counter-revolutionary activity". On June 19, 1927 he was arrested for "counter-revolutionary activity" and sentenced to three years in the camps and sent to Solovki. In September, 1929 he was released and exiled for three years to Kadnikov, Vologda province, where he worked as a cobbler in a house. In February, 1933, in "the Case of P.A. Cheltsov, S.A. Mechev and others, Kadnikov, 1933", he was again arrested and sentenced to three years in the camps and sent to a camp, from where he was released in April, 1936. At the end of 1936 he was rector of the church in the village of Narma, Kurlovsky region, Vladimir province. In May, 1941 he was arrested and condemned to one year's imprisonment for non-payment of taxes. On May, 15, 1942 he was released and returned to Narma. In April, 1943 he was appointed rector of the church in the village of Zakolpe, Gus-Khrystal region by Archbishop John Sokolov. On June 18, 1949 he was arrested in the group case of "the anti-Soviet underground of churchmen", and sent for further investigation to the inner prison. He was accused that: "being a convinced monarchist, and often condemned for anti-Soviet activity, he established links with Molostov, and joined the ranks of the most active participants of the anti-Soviet underground, taking an active part in anti-Soviet meetings of churchmen." On February 13, 1950 he was sentenced to ten years in the camps and sent to Osoblag no. 1 (Mineralny camp). Nothing more is known about him.

Many other exiled clergy in the town who refused to work for the Soviets were arrested at this time.

Soon, through the intercessions of his spiritual children and the help of the Red Cross Fr. Sergius was transferred as a medical orderly to Arkhangelsk, and then to the medical point in a state farm in Ust-Pinega, Arkhangelsk

province. However, he was then transferred to heavy, general work and became terribly tired and debilitated. In 1934 or 1935 he was transferred to the Svir camps, where there were many criminals. Fr. Sergius was working as a medical orderly, but conditions were still very difficult. The criminals stole everything he had, and so he went round in a light coat and barefoot. Matushka and the children came for a time, but Fr. Sergius became very fearful for them and soon sent them back.

From Ust-Pinega Fr. Sergius was sent to Perebory station, near Rybinsk, on dam-building work. Here conditions were better, and he was helped by the fact that only a few kilometres from him there lived a family of his spiritual children, who had been exiled from Moscow. In the summer of 1936 Matushka and the children settled nearby, and Fr. Sergius was able to visit them almost every day.

In 1937, his term came to an end, and he was released. Matushka and the children were already living in Moscow, but Fr. Sergius was not allowed to return home. Instead, he lived near Kalinin (Tver), serving as a medic in a polyclinic for ears, throats and eyes, and celebrating the Liturgy in secret. In 1938 Matushka took a dacha near Kalinin.

Once, being without a bishop, Fr. Sergius followed the advice of one of his spiritual sons and opened his heart to a certain hierarch, Bishop Manuel Lemeshevsky, and in confidence explained to him his church position, thinking that he shared his views. Bishop Manuel was soon arrested, renounced his confessing position and betrayed Fr. Sergius. During questioning at his trial, the arrested hierarch said that Fr. Sergius was the main instigator of the opposition to Metropolitan Sergius. He also said that he wished to be a loyal Soviet citizen and wanted no trouble. The prosecutor tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"Don't worry and be upset, Vladyka: you will be of some use to us later."

After this, he was released and was given the diocese of Orenburg by Metropolitan Sergius...

Fr. Sergius was advised to go into hiding in Central Asia, but he could not leave his spiritual children and lived secretly in various places, serving in secret. At the beginning of 1940 he moved to Rybinsk, and in the summer of 1941 - to the village of Kipyachevo in Rybinsk region. Then he got work as a medical orderly in Rybinsk, while he himself lived on the other side of the Volga.

Once he made contact with the sergianst bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky), who was a secret GPU agent. Manuel betrayed Fr. Sergius and his catacomb children to the authorities. Then Fr. Sergius made contact with the cell-attendant of the famous recluse, Blessed Xenia of Rybinsk, and asked her:

"What must a priest do who has been betrayed by a bishop?"

The woman was embarrassed and did not want to pass on the question to Matushka Xenia. But when she came to matushka, matushka met her with the words:

"Whom did you refuse?! He is a hieromartyr!"

And she added: "The schema and reclusion await him."

This was a prophecy of prison and death.

At first everything went well in Rybinsk, but then he received a rebuke at work, then broke a leg and became an invalid. When his leg began to heal, he left Rybinsk and found a suitable refuge in an abandoned village on the Volga near Tutayevo. This was a very difficult period for him. He felt himself condemned with no hope of redemption. He prayed inwardly and prepared for death. Even more than for himself, he suffered for his spiritual children. His whole prayer was concentrated on one thing: that he alone should suffer, and that nobody should suffer for his mistakes.

Fr. Sergius celebrated the Divine services whenever he could. He told the spiritual daughter who accompanied him that he would like to celebrate the Liturgy as much as possible. He wanted to serve forty Liturgies, as if to commemorate the forty-day period of his soul's journey through the aerial "toll houses" after his death. He knew that he would soon be caught and again sent to prison or killed. Visitors sometimes came to him. He talked with them, prayed and accompanied them to the quayside. But he no longer hoped to see his family or his spiritual children.

The war began, increasing the atmosphere of general suspiciousness. On July 7, 1941, Fr. Sergius and his spiritual daughter, **Elizabeth Alexandrovna Bulgakova**, were arrested for the last time as the result of a passport check (the locals suspected he was a German spy) and were cast into Yaroslavl NKVD prison. She was charged with being "an active member of the counter-revolutionary church organization led by S.A. Mechev, which had as its aim a struggle against Metropolitan Sergius and which sought to bring the Church into an illegal existence." A long prison term threatened, but on November 12 she was released - a miracle worked, she said, through the prayers and heroic actions of Fr. Sergius.

During interrogation, Fr. Sergius categorically refused to name those known to him. For his non-cooperation he was cast into a punishment cell for five days. On November 22, Fr. Sergius was convicted, in accordance with articles 58-2 and 58-11, of being "the leader of an anti-Soviet organization", and was sentenced to death. On January 5, 1942 (December 9/22, 1941 or November 6, 1941, according to other sources), he was shot in prison together with other prisoners with sentences longer than ten years.

32. HOLY HIEROCONFESSORS SERAPHIM AND SERAPHIM OF MOSCOW

And those with them

Protopriest Vladimir Anatolyevich Bogdanov (in secret monasticism, **Seraphim**) was born on April 19, 1865 in Moscow, the son of the famous Russian anthropologist and zoologist A. P. Bogdanov, the director of the Moscow zoological museum. In 1888 he graduated from the physical-mathematical faculty of Moscow Imperial University. From 1888 to 1900 he was a teacher in the first real school in Moscow. From 1902 he was in charge of the departments of readings in physics and natural science in the commission for the organization of general educational readings for the Moscow workers. He had the degree of candidate of mathematical sciences. From 1900 to 1917 he was a member of many scientific societies and institutions founded by his father.

He was a disciple of Elder Barsanuphius of Optina, and then spiritual son of Fr. Valentine Amphiteatrov. He also often went for spiritual advice to Elder Barnabas of Gethsemane skete. On May 17, 1914 he was ordained to the priesthood as a celibate in the Dormition cathedral. From 1915 to 1927 he served in the churches of the Saviour of the Transfiguration on the Sands, in the Jerusalem podvorye (the church of St. Philip), and was superior of the church of St. Seraphim of Sarov attached to the St. Seraphim committee for help to the wounded until its closure in 1921. In the 1920s he was secretly tonsured with the name Seraphim. Patriarch Tikhon often proposed to consecrate him to the episcopate, but he refused. He was the spiritual father of **Fathers Vladimir Krivolutsky, Demetrius Kryuchkov and Alexander Gomanovsky.**

In 1923 (1922) he was arrested and imprisoned in Butyrki prison after which he was exiled for three years to Ust-Sysolsk, Zyryansk region together with Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Archbishop Thaddeus (Uspensky) and Bishop Athanasius (Sakharov). He returned from exile in 1924 (1925), and lived in Moscow, serving every day in various churches. According to another source, he lived in Pushkino. He often lived for long periods in the Diveyevo monastery, in the Seraphimo-Ponetayevsky monastery, and in the Anosino desert. He witnessed that the relics of St. Seraphim had been preserved from the Bolsheviks by the Diveyevo nuns.

He served his last Liturgy in a Moscow church on April 13, 1927, after which he served at home and in village churches. He rejected sergianism, and said: "The head of renovationism, A. Vvedensky, did not do as much harm to the Orthodox Church as Metropolitan Sergius has done by his actions."

Schema-Monk Epiphanius writes: "Before the revolution, Father Vladimir (B.) graduated from the Physics and Mathematics faculty of the Moscow State University. Following this he was Professor of Physics in this same university

at the same time that his father was professor of another faculty. During the revolution he abandoned his teaching career and became an unassuming celibate priest.

"While a student, he had been called 'elder' by the Optina elder, Hieroschemamonk Ambrose. And that is what he became. Once Elder Ambrose had visitors, and the conversation turned to eldership. Hieroschemamonk Ambrose explained that eldership is a special gift of God that is bound neither to age nor to a hierarchical position in the Church. Looking through the window, he drew the attention of his interlocutors to a student who was passing in the yard.

"Look, you see, this is a student. But he is already an elder. He gives to others correct spiritual counsel on how to live, how to save oneself, how to struggle with the passions. And this is a rare gift of God..'

"Years passed. The student became a professor at the Moscow State University next to his father. Then the son became a priest. With the publication of Metropolitan Sergius' declaration recognizing Soviet power as God-given, Fr. Vladimir separated from Metropolitan Sergius. When all the Moscow churches, for fear of the Soviet authorities, became sergianist, as before they had become renovationist, Protopriest Fr. Vladimir was serving in the Serbian podvorye in obedience to the Serbian patriarch. The elder gave spiritual food to many educated people, mainly in secret.

"He had the habit of delivering very short, pithy sermon-appeals of two to three minutes' duration, in the spirit of short ascetic instructions from the holy Fathers. These sermons did not fatigue people, but, on the contrary, favoured a prayerful mood and concentration. In his actions he followed the rules of St. Hesychius of Jerusalem, who taught that 'the outer is the enemy of the inner', and for that reason the elder carefully avoided anything that could appear to be in the nature of self-advertisement. His whole spiritual activity was hidden from human eyes. But it seems that towards the end of his life he was a monk and bore the name of Seraphim. But this was not made public knowledge.

"He was, of course, persecuted by the Soviet authorities. They often arrested him and he was not only in prison but also in camps. On being freed he hid himself and directed secret Catacomb communities of believers. He taught everyone to have no communion with the sergianist church, because it was a political false-church united with the God-fighting authorities.

"One of those spiritually fed by the elder, a Moscow priest, said:

"It so happened that, together with Batyushka Vladimir, we also, priests who had enjoyed his spiritual direction, were arrested. They kept us in Butyrki prison in a room full of priests of every kind. Both the renovationists and the neo-renovationists [the sergianists] were there. We kept apart, our group being united by our elder. He remained all the time in prayer.

"The day of the Holy Trinity arrived. We got up early and prayed, standing by the big window, which was somewhat darkened by the prison "cap" or "muzzle". We even read through the Vespers kneeling prayers. The elder read them from memory almost perfectly. And after this, since the Lord had sent him in a parcel the reserved Gifts, we all, led by the elder, received communion... Only we did not know what to do with that thin piece of paper in which the Gifts had been wrapped. You see, there were some imperceptible small particles on it. The elder told us that this paper had to be burned on the window sill, covered with a sheet of zinc and tin. We did this. But some light ashes were still left, and again we did not know what to do.

"At that very moment, when the cigarette paper was burning quickly, with the same speed there appeared a white dove on the window-sill. It pecked up all the ashes and disappeared behind the edge of the sill. We were stunned by the sight. A holy miracle had been accomplished before our eyes. The symbol of the Holy Spirit, the white dove, had consumed the imperceptible burnt remains of the Holy Gifts. With tears of tender feeling, the elder said:

""Let us thank the Lord!""

In 1929 Fr. Vladimir moved to Bratovschina, and year later settled secretly in a house on the outskirts of Sergiev Posad (according to another source, in Pushkino). Here he served secretly with another catacomb elder, Archimandrite Seraphim (Bityukov). Fr. Vladimir died on November 10, 1931. He was considered to be an elder, and the Optina elders sent many people for spiritual advice to him.

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Fr. Vladimir was close to **Archimandrite Seraphim** (in the world Sergius Mikhailovich Bityukov), who took on several of his spiritual children after his death, and was perhaps the last Josephite priest to serve openly in Moscow. He was born in 1880 in Moscow, of a merchant's family. He received a higher technical education, and worked in one of the capital's companies. He visited Optina Desert. He attended lectures in the Moscow Theological Academy. In 1919 he was ordained to the priesthood, serving in the church of the Resurrection in Sokolniki in Moscow with Fr. John Kedrov, the brother of Hieromartyr Pachomius, Archbishop of Chernigov. In 1920 Fr. Sergius was summoned by Patriarch Tikhon to serve in the church of the Holy Martyrs and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John on Solyanka, where he remained until the end of 1927. In 1922 he was tonsured into the mantia with the name Seraphim. In 1926 he was raised to the rank of archimandrite. Then he served in churches in Moscow region. In 1926 he was arrested for a short time on a charge of hiding church valuables, but was soon released when it was realized that the valuables belonged to the Serbian Church, whose podvorye was situated in the church of SS. Cyrus and John. After Metropolitan Sergius issued his notorious declaration, in July, 1928, Fr. Seraphim joined the

Catacomb Church. For some time he lived in various places, but then settled in Sergiev Posad in the house of **Nun Xenia (Grishanova)** of Diveyevo. As was revealed in his interrogation, he was the spiritual father of other Diveyevo nuns who had been forced to leave the convent after its closure in 1927. Like Fathers Alexis and Sergius Mechev, Fr. Seraphim was guided by the counsels of Elder Nectarius of Optina. Another of his guides was Elder Zosima (in schema Zachariah), who had come to Moscow after the closure of the Holy Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra.

Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov) writes about him: "With his priestly rank he received something which is rare in our time - the gift of the exorcism of demons. The elder received this special gift for the healing of the possessed, the oppressed, 'those under the constraint of the devil'. Thus when he was serving, the church of the podvorye resembled a hospital for the mentally ill, in which there gathered every possible maimed, hunchbacked and epileptic person, as well as those clearly oppressed by evil spirits."

The following story is ascribed by Schema-Monk Epiphanius to Fr. Seraphim and by another to his spiritual father, **Elder Zachariah** of Sergiev Posad, who died in 1936.

"A special prayer service was being read over a possessed man. The man being healed was letting his eyes rove around in a terrified manner and muttering unclear words. It was as if something were boiling inside him...

"No, no, I will not go out!" 'he' cried in a strange, rough voice which was not his own.

"But the prayer commanded the spirit 'in the name of Jesus Christ', 'in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' to come out of him and never enter into him again...

"The priest repeated his call to set free God's creation... But that which was inside the man stubbornly remained within him:

"No, no! I will not come out. I do not want to!..."

"But suddenly the priest said:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I command you: tell me: was my father with you?"

"He was! But your prayers got him out!"

"And my mother: was she with you?"

"Again, in a disconcerted tone, suffering and despairing:

"We did not see her!... For she strewed her whole path with pieces of bread...'

"Here it is necessary to make a clarification.

"The demon was talking about something that the man being healed did not know... In the time of the terrible famine of 1921 and 1922 the mother of Father Seraphim took upon herself the task of feeding homeless children. She literally collected pieces of bread from among her acquaintances. She did this day and night and thereby fed unfortunate children who had been left to the mercy of God. The demon was recalling this exploit when he said that 'she strewed her whole path with pieces of bread', that is, through her unparalleled mercifulness towards the unfortunate children she obtained an unhindered ascent to Heaven...

"After the possessed man had obeyed the priest as he adjured the demon to reply in the name of the Lord, the priest again said:

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you, unclean spirit, come out! In the name of the Holy Trinity I command you...'

"And suddenly, instead of a reply, there was a soul-rending shriek. And the oppressed man fell down, trembling throughout his body. He became black like a corpse... But the priest read the appointed prayers from The Book of Needs by Metropolitan Peter Moghila...

"That is how the demon was driven out, leaving with a terrible scream. But the sufferer himself knew nothing of this, he absolutely did not remember what had happened to him... They brought him to the Holy Cross and the Holy Icons. He willingly and fervently kissed them. But if they succeeded in doing that before his exorcism, it was only with great difficulty, with a struggle..."

Archimandrite Seraphim died on February 19, 1942. In the course of an investigation into "the affair of the underground", on December 8, 1943, NKGB agents found his burial place under the floor of a house in Sergiev Posad. According to the official report, "some parts of the body (his hands and face) preserved the colour of flesh". Fr. Seraphim was buried in a ryasa and epitrachelion and with a wooden cross.

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Protopriest Alexander Ivanovich Gomanovsky was born on August 12, 1886 in Kimry, Tver province (or the Volga region). From his earliest childhood he dreamed of becoming a priest, but for a long time his mother did not agree. Alexander married, but not for long. At the marriage service his bride was supported on both sides – she was in the last stages of

tuberculosis. Alexander sent her to be treated, but she soon died. He was ordained, and in 1911 he began to serve in the church of St. Philip of Moscow on Povarskaya street in Moscow. In the same year he was transferred to Kazanka settlement, Astrakhan province. In 1915 he joined the army and became a regimental priest in Galicia. He was at the front, and was given awards.

When the revolution came, Fr. Alexander firmly rejected it, although he was meek and humble by nature.

At first he was the spiritual son of Archimandrite Philaret of the Chudov monastery. Another of Fr. Philaret's spiritual children, Nadezhda Fyodorovna Blagushina, recalls that Fr. Alexander would give all his money to the monastery without leaving anything for himself to buy food. But it always miraculously appeared. Once he blessed an empty table, and then one neighbour brought in some pies, and after her another – some fish.

In 1919 he became preacher and secretary of the Brotherhood of the Zealots and Preachers of Orthodoxy, and was rector of the church of St. Sabbas the Sanctified on Devichy polye. He also served in the house church on Vorovsky Street. He served as a groom in the Central Bacteriological Institute, and at the moment of his arrest was working in the Palace of Arts. He became the spiritual son of Fr. Vladimir Bogdanov, and on October 9, 1926 received the monastic tonsure secretly from him, taking the name Daniel.

Fr. Vladimir and Fr. Alexander would often go with a group of pilgrims to Diveyevo. N.F. Blagushina relates that from the station they would walk for a long time chanting the akathist to St. Seraphim. Then the akathist would be cut up and a phrase would be given to each to chant. It turned out that the phrase each one received suited him or her in a wonderful way.

Zoya Vasilyevna Kiseleva recounts the following conversation between Fr. Alexander and his spiritual father at table which demonstrates Fr. Alexander's obedience:

“Well, children, were you at liturgy today?” asked Fr. Vladimir. “You, for example, Sophia?”

“I was at St. Sabbas the Sanctified.”

“What was the epistle reading?”

“I don't remember, batyushka.”

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, Sophia? What distracted you?”

“I was looking at Fr. Alexander’s hair and thinking: ‘What wonderful hair he has!’”

“Do you hear, Fr. Alexander? Immediately get your hair cut, otherwise you will answer for her soul.

“Batyushka?!” we all cried.

“No, he must get his hair cut,” repeated Fr. Vladimir.

Fr. Alexander got up smilingly and immediately went and got his hair cut.

It was a difficult time, with inflation and hunger. Fr. Alexander was serving a pannikhida. When those who ordered it asked how much they should pay him, he said:

“Twenty kopeks. Clothing is dear, footwear is dear... Twenty kopeks. I won’t budge.”

At that time everyone was reckoning in the millions, but he insisted on his “Twenty kopecks. I won’t budge.” It turned out that these people were very poor.

“Your batyushka is blessed,” they said to Nadezhda Fyodorovna.

Fr. Alexander lived in a large room with many books. In the comparatively prosperous periods of his life Fr. Alexander would spend practically all his money on books, restricting himself in everything else.

Once, towards the end of the 1920s, Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus unexpectedly visited him. Fr. Alexander was very glad.

“How come?! You’re alive?! The whole world is looking for you to kill you!”

Sergius Alexandrovich replied that he had been in Optina and a schema-monk had advised him to read the 26th, 50th and 90th psalms everyday – “and

nothing will happen to you," he said. "They'll shoot you out of a cannon, but it won't kill you."

Sergius Alexandrovich died in 1929. That autumn Fr. Alexander visited his wife in Krutets, where she gave him her husband's coat.

In 1929 Fr. Alexander came home from some trip and found a message from the authorities at home. He could have decided not to go because the message was given when he was away and handed to the cleaner, Catherine Stepanovna. But he went in any case. He decided to suffer as the others had suffered. On October 29 he went with Nadezhda Fyodorovna to the authorities, who arrested him and on November 20 condemned him for "organizing a sisterhood at the church of St. Sabbas the Sanctified and commemorating prisoners and those killed from the ambon". In accordance with article 58-10 he was sentenced to three years in the camps and sent to Uralsk in Western Kazakhstan. On July 3 he was sentenced to three years' exile in Kazakhstan. On May 28, 1933 his mother petitioned for a lightening of his lot because of his various illnesses, but her petition was refused. On July 3, 1935 he was released and, not being allowed to live in Moscow, went to live in Kalyazin, Tver province.

According to another source, however, Fr. Alexander was sent to Solovki. Claudia Ivanovna (Jikoyevich) recalls: "He wrote to us from there. And it was possible to write to him, but he warned: "When you write don't put all the letters, don't forget the big animal" (the first letters of Solovki's full name spelt SLON, meaning "elephant"). According to this source, after his release in about 1932 he was not allowed to live in Moscow, and so lived in the city of Kalyazin, near Moscow, and in other places. According to one source, he was transferred from Solovki to a settlement in Kem. His spiritual children did not forget him there, either, and went to see him, bringing him what they could, although the trip itself could earn them a prison sentence - the NKVD did not welcome such links. They would come, and he would go to the next village to see them, and would not appear again for two days. Strange as it may seem, the bosses overlooked these absences of his, although it was a gross violation of the rules. Moreover, they even entrusted him with some responsible tasks. Once they sent him off as a guard. He went up into the tower and looked at the passing trains, which were taking exiles. Once he looked into the window of a carriage and some Tatyana Katuar, whom he knew well. He rushed onto the platform and for a long time waved at the disappearing train...

"In August, 1933," recalls Claudia Ivanovna, "I, Macarius Mikhailovich Suvorov and Natasha Polyanskaya went to see Fr. Alexander. Natasha walked on crutches and was not able to carry anything, Macarius and I had to carry everything. We arrived at the place and for some time waited for permission [to see him]. We received it, and began to cross [the river] on a

boat. When we had crossed, Fr. Alexander hurriedly came up to us. We gave him a prayer-book, medicines and money. But when he went back they picked on him: 'Why did you leave the zone?' He could find nothing better to say than: 'Today was Natasha's namesday.' And again, strange as it may seem, they let him go, and then gave him a short vacation so that he could spend some days with us. One of his guards said: 'He is a batyushka for all batyushkas.'

"We paid the railwayman and hired a little carriage. It was on the rails in a siding. There were many such houses on wheels. Fr. Alexander served a moleben. Since the World War he had a small suitcase with a double bottom, with an antimins. We lived for several days in the little carriage. It was the beginning of autumn, quiet and peaceful. It rained gently for a long time, but it was not cold. Officially, Fr. Alexander had been given a week's vacation, but it was possible to live longer there. Fr. Alexander was neither joyful nor sad. He accepted everything as inevitable, as a trial sent from above. And in essence he did not hope for any change. He accurately assessed the time in which he lived."

In 1935 they received the news that Fr. Alexander was in Saratov. Claudia Ivanovna went to see visit him, but at some station she was given a telegram from Macarius Mikhailovich: 'Dyedushka (that is, Fr. Alexander) has moved to Uralsk. Return.'" She got out at that station. But unexpectedly the thought came to her to go to Uralsk. She sold her already-bought return ticket and went first to Saratov, and then by boat to Astrakhan. From Astrakhan she got to Uralsk, but had no idea where to look for Fr. Alexander. And then, quite unexpectedly, she met Vladyka Seraphim (Zvezdinsky). They went to his house. And again a miracle: she saw at his house an address written in Fr. Alexander's handwriting.

"Where did this come from?!"

"But this is my favourite batyushka," replied Vladyka Seraphim.

The next day she ran to meeting, but then, to make things worse, a convoy came from Tashkent. There was a pile of passports on the boss's table. He called out the prisoners in turn and sent them to "voluntary" settlement. She waited for a long time until they had all passed on, and finally made up her mind. She gave her passport and said:

"I have to meet Gomanovsky."

The boss, whose name, as she later learned, was Popov, said spitefully:

“How do you think you’re behaving yourself?! I could right now take your passport and send you where I’ve sent them...”

But then he relented and allowed her to meet Fr. Alexander. He was in the local prison, and had arrived with the preceding convoy from Central Asia. There the People’s Commissar for Education Mantashev had helped him – he knew Fr. Alexander and was very well disposed towards him. Claudia Ivanovna’s arrival gladdened Fr. Alexander, but he hurried her up. Her vacation was drawing to an end, and he was afraid that she would be late. In those times that was fraught with consequences...

When Fr. Alexander was sent to the settlement, Claudia Ivanovna tried to help him to prepare for the severe local winter. But it didn’t turn out well. There were many exiles, and there wasn’t enough for everybody. She wrote: “I didn’t manage to get wooden logs...”

From December, 1940, as all sources agree, Fr. Alexander was living illegally in Moscow with his spiritual children, secretly serving in flats and giving communion to the sick in hospital. He was known for his humility, self-sacrifice and joyful disposition.

According to one version, he was arrested in 1941, and died in camp in Karaganda in 1943. Claudia Ivanovna said that there was very little food there, so Fr. Alexander got weaker, fell ill and soon died. According to another version, however, he died in Moscow. Someone even remembered that in this last, Muscovite period of Fr. Alexander’s life he had such bad rheumatism that when he walked the creaking of his legs could be heard through the room. They say that Claudia Ivanovna knew much about this period of his life. She also knew where he was buried, but carefully concealed this from everyone. It seems that **Macarius Mikhailovich** also knew about this. He was not only Fr. Alexander’s cousin, but also his spiritual son. But he also was silent about this. He was a deeply believing person, who, though not tonsured into monasticism, led a truly monastic life, for which the Lord granted him the gift of clairvoyance. Claudia Ivanovna was buried next to Macarius Mikhailovich in Khovansky cemetery. A lit candle would not go out on his grave even in a strong wind...

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Priest Vladimir Vladimirovich Krivolutsky was born on November 25, 1888 in the city of Orel. In 1910 he graduated from the Law Faculty of Moscow Imperial University and served as a lawyer. From 1915 to 1918, after finishing artillery courses, he served at the front as a volunteer. In 1918 he was demobilized and moved to Moscow. From 1918 he returned to military service, and was in the 33rd artillery brigade in the rank of brigade adjutant. After demobilization in 1921 he studied at the National Orthodox Academy, and attended theological courses and lectures read by Fr. Paul Florensky, S.N.

Durylin and others. His spiritual father was Fr. Vladimir Bogdanov. On February 21 / March 6, 1922 he was ordained to the diaconate and served both in the church of SS. Cyrus and John and in the church of the Saviour of the Transfiguration on Pesky. According to one source, he was arrested for opposition to the renovationist heretics. On August 27 / September 9, 1923 he was ordained to the priesthood by Patriarch Tikhon. From October, 1924 to 1930 he served in Moscow, in the church of the Mother of God of the Sign in Sheremetyevsky pereulok, where the honorary president of the church council was Archbishop Tryphon (Turkestanov). He was arrested in 1927, and released a few months later.

He did not recognize the "declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius, and wrote a denunciation of it from an eschatological point of view. He wrote: "Although the path chosen by the former Metropolitan Sergius and Sergianism has done no formal damage to the teaching of the Orthodox Church through heresy with regard to the dogmas, it is something more terrible than heresy. It is exactly what the holy Apostle Paul warned about: 'This know also, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be (here the Apostle describes the future state of these men, and he concludes): 'having a form of godliness, but denying the form thereof' (II Timothy 3.1-5). Alas, only the appearance has been preserved, while the inner content, the power of confession of the Christian faith has turned out to be trampled upon, substituted, destroyed!...

"Until now mankind has known the first three forms of political power: but mankind has so far had no experience of the fourth kind, that is, the *consciously God-fighting* kind. This power was destined to appear when people matured in the sin of apostasy from God, of the struggle against God.

"And lo! The appearance of 'the horseman on the pale horse', to whom was given 'power over one quarter of the earth', signifies *the appearance for the first time on earth of a consciously and deliberately God-fighting power.*" This power is only allowed by God, although the will of this power is directed to the annihilation in people of all that is from God, and even His very name. The Almighty Lord allowed this power to rule over men, for the will of the great majority of people, in passing through most serious sins, has matured in evil and resistance to God to the point of fighting against God (that is, Satanism)."

From January 22, 1930, after the closure of the church of the Sign, he served in the St. Nicholas church in Kotelniki. On December 28, 1930 he was arrested for belonging "to the Moscow branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church" and exiled to Pinega, Archangelsk province, for three years, sharing this exile with St. Nikon of Optina. Towards the end of 1932 he was transferred to the devastated Krasnogorsk monastery on the banks of the river Pinega. Released in December, 1933, he lived in Mozhaisk and Yegoryevsk, serving secretly in the homes of the faithful as a priest of the True Orthodox Church.

He was arrested for the third time on April 21, 1946 during a secret Paschal Mattins, and on November 30 was sentenced by the MGB to ten years in a forced labour camp for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda and the creation of a group" (article 58-10). Fr. Vladimir served his term first for three years in Krasnoyarsk, then in a prison in Moscow, and then in the so-called "death camp" located in the village of Spas, in the district of Karaganda (according to another source, the village of Dolinskoye, in the Karlag camp), where there were 25,000 prisoners. According to one source, he died on September 9, 1952 and was buried in a now unmarked grave on the outskirts of the city of Abakan. According to another source, however, he was released from the camps in 1955 because of illness. Or more exactly, he was let out "to die". In 1956 Fr. Vladimir wanted to go to the northern Caucasus; but then his close relatives reported that he had died, in Moscow on March 29, 1956 from tuberculosis of the lungs. According to one source, he confessed and received the Holy Mysteries from Igumen Ioann (Seletsky) before he died. He was buried in the Vvedensky cemetery in Moscow.

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Priest Alexis Ivanovich Gabriyanik was born in 1895 in the village of Manchitsy, Volkovysskiy uyezd, Grodno province. He graduated from a pedagogical institute in Moscow. From 1915 to 1917 he served as a private in the army, first in the 166th regiment and then in the 12th reserve regiment. In 1917 he entered the Third Medical Institute in Moscow and also went to lectures at the Moscow Theological Academy. At the same time, from 1917 to 1920, he was a teacher in one of the villages of Irbit uyezd, Perm province. In 1920 he took social-historical courses at the Academy of Popular Education, and entered the medical faculty of Moscow State University. From 1921 to 1922 he worked as a teacher. From 1922 to 1924 he worked as a cashier in Sergievo, Moscow province. In 1924, while studying at Moscow Theological Academy, he married Anna Alexandrovna, the daughter of the Academy Professor A.P. Golubtsov. He was a spiritual son of Elder Alexis (Sobolev) of Zosima desert. From 1924 to 1925 he was unemployed. In 1925 (according to another source, 1924) he was ordained to the priesthood by Patriarch Tikhon (according to another source, Bishop Bartholomew (Remov) of Sergievo in the Vysokopetrovsky monastery in Moscow). He served in the church of the village of Mikhailovskoye, 40 kilometres from Sergievo, and then, until 1928, in the church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Sergiev Posad. In April, 1928 he was banned for refusing to commemorate Metropolitan Sergius. Within a week the ban was removed; he was transferred to Moscow and for a short time served in the church of SS. Cyrus and John, becoming a spiritual son of the rector, Fr. Seraphim (Bityukov). In May, 1928 he was arrested in Sergievo together with more than one hundred other people in connection with the affair of the "attempt on the life of agitprop deputy Kostomarov" and was exiled for three years to Central Asia. First he was cast into Butyrki prison, then into Vladimir city prison. On his return he lived in Voronezh, but in 1933 he was sentenced to two years in the camps according to article 58-10 and was

sent to kishlak Guzar, Karshkadarinskaya province, Uzbekistan. On October 12, 1931, after completing his term, he was deprived of the right to live in twelve places in the country, Urals province and some border areas. He settled in Pavlovsk, Voronezh province, where his family followed him. However, they were so poor that Fr. Alexis had to beg for alms. In 1933 he was condemned in Voronezh for "belonging to a monarchist organization", and was sentenced in accordance with article 58-10 to the Temkinskye camps in Mordovia for three years. In 1935 he was released, but was not allowed to live in Moscow, so he lived in Strunino on the Yaroslavl railway and worked in a warehouse. From 1936 to 1937 he worked as a laboratory technician; from 1937 to 1940 - as a medical orderly in a clinic of infectious diseases in the village of Arsaki, Moscow province; and from 1940 to 1941 - as a sanitary doctor in a factory in Sergiev Posad. In September, 1941, in connection with the beginning of the war and the evacuation of the factory, he was deprived of his registration. With the blessing of Fr. Seraphim, he went around the villages of Vladimir province, serving in the houses of believers and working in various institutions. He belonged to the "non-commemorators", and was in communion with **Hieromonk Andrew** (Elbson) and **Fr. Alexander (Ilyin)**.

On March 10, 1946 he was arrested on the street as he was going to a meeting of his catacomb community. He had been denounced by one of his spiritual daughters. He was cast into the Lubyanka prison, and was sentenced to four years in prison in accordance with articles 58-10 part 2 and 58-11 for "participation in an anti-Soviet church organization" and "anti-Soviet agitation". The investigation established that Fr. Alexis had had meetings with Fr. Seraphim in Sergiev Posad, and also with Fr. Vladimir Krivolutsky. He had also hidden Christians in his flats in Moscow and Sergievo. In October, 1946 he was moved to Vladimir strict regime prison. In March, 1950 he was sent from Vladimir prison into exile in Krasnoyarsk region. On the way, in the transit prison in Kirov, he fell ill with tuberculosis and died on May 17, 1950.

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Priest Demetrius Kryuchkov was born on September 10, 1874 in the village of Lyakovka, Glukhov uyezd, Chernigov province, in the family of the peasants Ivan and Eudocia Kryuchkov. He had the title of people's teacher. In 1882 the Kryuchkov family together with other poor peasants left for Omsk province and settled in the village of Rozhdestvenka not far from the city of Tatarsk. But the eight-year-old Demetrius did not go with his parents: on the day of their departure he ran away and hid himself. In order to survive, he got a job with the landowner Ratchenko in the village of Zarudskoye looking after bees. He worked there for about five years. At the age of thirteen Demetrius went to work for the landowner Trophimenko in the city of Glukhov, Chernigov province, where he learned gardening. He was about six years with this landowner, and in 1893, at the age of nineteen, he left Glukhov for Moscow, where he was hoping to study. Since he had no money, he was forced to earn his living, and with this in mind he enrolled in a church choir.

By 1908 he had become the reader in the church of the village of Kraskovo, near Moscow. In the same year he married Anastasia Semyonovna, a native of Smolensk province. The marriage turned out to be childless. Demetrius Ivanovich served for seven years as a reader. In 1916 he was ordained to the diaconate in the same church.

In 1917 Fr. Demetrius was transferred to Moscow to the church of the Exaltation on Brazhka (in Plyuschikha). Once, during the summer of 1918, **Fr. Vladimir Bogdanov** came to the church of the Exaltation to serve the funeral for his niece. Fr. Demetrius was concelebrating with him as deacon. During the service Fr. Vladimir pointed out certain things to him. This first short communion in prayer with Fr. Vladimir made a very deep impression on Fr. Demetrius. At the end of the funeral Fr. Demetrius asked permission from Fr. Vladimir to stay in his flat in order to learn how to serve and not make any more mistakes in future. Fr. Vladimir agreed, and very soon Fr. Demetrius became his regular visitor, and later his spiritual son.

In 1919 Fr. Demetrius was ordained to the priesthood for the same church in which he had served as deacon. In 1922, at the request of the clergy of the church of St. Sabbas the Sanctified (in Savvinsky pereulok), Fr. Demetrius was transferred there. This was the year in which the requisitioning of church valuables by the Bolsheviks took place. The mass arrests also affected the clergy of the church of St. Sabbas: all its clergy were arrested, including Fr. Demetrius. On May 8 he was condemned by a military tribunal for "reading the appeals of Patriarch Tikhon against the requisitioning of church valuables", and was sentenced to five (according to another source, three) years imprisonment (according to another source, in a corrective labour camp). Since he had been in the habit of working since the age of eight, he occupied himself with beekeeping and shoemaking in prison. He was freed from prison on amnesty before the end of his term, in 1924. In 1925, while serving a pannikhida for Protopriest Alexis Mechev, he got to know his son, the future hieromartyr **Fr. Sergius Mechev**.

In 1927 Fr. Demetrius rejected the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and attached himself to the True Orthodox Church, to which other pastor-confessors in Moscow also belonged: Fr. Sergius Mechiev, Fr. Vladimir Bogdanov, Fr. Seraphim (Batyukov), Fr. Vladimir Krivolutsky, Fr. Alexis Kozyaev, and others. At about this time he retired because of illness.

In 1928-1929 Fr. Demetrius was invited unofficially to serve in the church of Saints Cyrus and John on Solyanka (the Serbian podvorye), which was one of the centres of the True Orthodox Church in Moscow, while living in the village of Tomilino, Moscow province. In November, 1931 Protopriest Vladimir Bogdanov reposed. Fr. Demetrius served his funeral service.

On April 5, 1932 Fr. Demetrius was arrested for being "a participant in the Moscow branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church", and together with other Catacomb priests was

detained in Butyrki prison. He was involved in the investigation of the case of Bishop Seraphim (Zvezdinsky) of Dmitrov. He refused to plead guilty. "I have no political views," he said to the investigator. "I hardly know anyone, and am interested only in the inner life." During the interrogations he prayed continuously, sometimes aloud, and did not name a single name.

According to the sentence of the Special Convention attached to the Collegium of the OGPU of the USSR, on July 7, 1932 Fr. Demetrius was exiled according to articles 58-10 and 11 to three years' exile in Western Siberia, to the village of Timsk in Narymsk region. After serving his term of exile, in 1935, he settled in the city of Gzhatsk and got work as a wood-cutter.

In 1937 Fr. Demetrius, now aged sixty-three, moved closer to Moscow, to the village of Tomilino, Moscow province. Here with the money he had earned he built himself a little house of seven square metres, which those who knew him called a shed, and obtained work as a gardener in a kindergarten. His spiritual children and friends lived in Moscow; at great risk Fr. Demetrius now took upon himself the burden of their spiritual welfare. He regularly visited them in Moscow and in the villages near Moscow, serving the liturgy secretly in flats and dachas, confessing and communing, baptising and burying. Through a miracle the Lord preserved him from arrest.

In 1941, as the Germans approached Moscow, the kindergarten in which Fr. Demetrius worked was evacuated from Tomilino, but the director of the school did not offer that Fr. Demetrius go with them, although he wanted that. He remained as gardener for the military hospitals that took the place of the school. He grew seedlings of cabbage, tomato, beetroot, carrot and flowers. When the hospital left Tomilino, he remained as gardener for the day nursery of the Semashko factory.

On May 17, 1946 Fr. Demetrius was arrested by the MGB for the third time and accused of being "one of the leaders of the anti-Soviet church-monarchical underground". To all accusations he replied: "I deny all this." To questions on the purpose of people's visits to him he replied: "On business... in connection with the need to repair my primus, there were no other conversations... I went to the flat so that she might help me to get a currant bush from her acquaintance..." During the investigation Fr. Demetrius had to endure twenty interrogations which lasted from two to eight hours. "I will never admit to any political crimes," he said at one of the last interrogations. He was transferred to the Lefortovo prison.

On September 30, 1946 Fr. Demetrius was sentenced to five years in exile. After completing his term of exile he went to live near the city of Abakan in Krasnoyarsk region. He died on September 9, 1952 and was buried in a now unmarked grave on the outskirts of Abakan.

33. HOLY HIEROCONFESSOR BASIL, BISHOP OF KINESHMA and those with him

Bishop Basil, in the world Benjamin Sergeyevich Preobrazhensky, was born in 1876 in Kineshma, Kostroma province into the family of Protopriest Sergius and Matushka Paula.

In those years many of the clergy did not distance themselves from the worldly environment, and borrowed worldly tendencies and a worldly cast of mind from it. But Fr. Sergius Preobrazhensky and his wife Paula were not like those. There was nothing worldly in their home, and no objects of secular culture. After all, how could anything secular compare with the Sacred Scriptures!

Fr. Sergius did not accept in his home guests whose aim was vain talk. The whole sense and aim of earthly life for the couple was the cleansing of the mind and heart by prayer and the sacraments. And a purified heart was better able to detect the insidious traps of this world and the craftiness and evil thoughts coming from the devil. And for that reason the parents tried in every way possible to protect their children from the influence of the world, knowing how difficult it is to uproot the thorns of sin and passion once they have already grown.

Benjamin Sergeyevich was brought up from infancy in an atmosphere of prayer and spiritual exploits. Only prayer, only church services, only spiritual exploits, only true joy filled his life from early childhood. The whole structure of the life that surrounded him was similar to the monastic. Neither news, nor gossip, nor vain conversations - nothing of all this penetrated the high fence of their house, which the children were forbidden to leave. And it was a joy for the child when their house was visited by poor brothers and wanderers. On the very day of his baptism, when Benjamin was brought home from the church, an old wanderer woman arrived in their house, looked at the boy and said:

"He will be a great man."

And there were other prefigurings of his exceptional future.

His parents did not even consider the study of letters to be important, and did not make haste about it. And this absence of worldly vanity taught the boy mental concentration, so that when the time came to study, he finished Kostroma theological seminary with distinction. (One of his fellow-pupils was the future hieromartyr, **Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky)**.)

Then he entered the Kiev Theological Academy. When he was studying in the academy, Benjamin Sergeyevich began to preach in the town churches. His sermons soon became so well-known and popular that he was also

invited to the villages on the patronal feasts of the village churches. In 1901 he graduated with the degree of candidate of theology.

On June 28, 1901 he was appointed a teacher of polemical theology, history and polemics against the Old Ritualist schism and local sects in the Voronezh theological seminary. Having been interested since youth in the ascetic side of the Christian struggle, he wrote a dissertation "On the Skete Paterikon", for which he was awarded the degree of master of theology.

In 1910, having acquired a good knowledge of both the ancient and the modern European languages, he went to London in order to continue his education and become more closely acquainted with European culture. He got to know the English scout movement, and listened to lectures by Baden-Powell, the founder of the scout movement.

In 1911 he was appointed teacher of foreign languages and general history in the Mirgorod men's gymnasium in Poltava province, and in 1914 – teacher of Latin language in the Petrovskaya gymnasium in Moscow.

In the same year he went on a special trip to England and spent some time at a summer scout camp. On his return, he published a book on the boy scouts, and in 1917 – a second book on the subject together with V.A. Popov. In his book, "The Russian Scout Movement", Yu.V. Kudryshov considers these two books the best of their kind. Benjamin took part in the Second All-Russian Congress of Instructors and those interested in Scouting from December 28, 1916 to 1 January, 1917.

In 1917 he graduated from a pedagogical institute.

At that point Benjamin Sergeyevich had decided to devote himself to pedagogy. However, a critical incident made him change his mind. On returning home in the summer he arranged with some friends to go on a restful trip in a boat. But for some unknown reason the boat capsized, and all those who had been sitting in it began to drown. And then Benjamin turned in prayer to the Lord, beseeching him to preserve his life and vowing to abandon secular education and devote himself to the service of the Church. He had hardly had time to utter this prayer in his mind when he saw a long, thick plank. Taking hold of it, he swam to safety. All the others who had been sailing with him drowned.

Also, towards the end of October, 1917, Benjamin was a witness of the battle for the Moscow Kremlin between the junkers and the Bolsheviki.

Shaken by these events, Benjamin Sergeyevich decided to leave Moscow and devote his life to God. He became a reader in the Ascension church in Kineshma, helping his elderly father. He founded Orthodox circles for the study of the Holy Scriptures attached to the churches of the Kineshma diocese. In 1918, the authorities issued a decree forbidding the preaching of

the Law of God in schools; so the light of Christ was forcibly removed from the hearts of the children. However, Benjamin Sergeyeovich began to gather the children in the Ascension church and preach the Law of God to them there. And then he became a missionary-preacher in his native land of Kineshma, going round the parishes on foot and founding circles of zealots of piety wherever he could, drawing them in by the reading and interpretation of the Word of God.

He carefully examined the parishioners of the churches in which he had to preach during church services, and chose from amongst them a strongly believing woman who had a good knowledge of the Word of God, round whom he began to collect a church circle. In this circle the Gospel was read and then interpreted. Benjamin Sergeyeovich himself did some of the interpreting. Besides this, the appointed church services were read, and church chants and spiritual verses beloved by the people were sung.

It was difficult to organize these circles, but once created they gave fruit a hundredfold, educating many souls in such faithfulness and love for Christ that none of the misfortunes that came after could shake them. During the renovationist heresy these circles became unshakeable fortresses of Orthodoxy.

From September 30 to October 1, 1919, Benjamin Sergeyeovich took part in the Congress of Scoutmasters of the South of Russia in Novorossiysk.

Being strict with himself and a strict fulfiller of the canons and regulations of the Church, Benjamin's father did not consider him ready for ordination to the priesthood and monasticism before he was forty. So only on July 16, 1920 was Benjamin ordained to the priesthood as a celibate; he was then 45. The ordination took place in the town of Kostroma and was performed by Archbishop Seraphim (Mescheryakov) of Kostroma. Soon after this, his father died, and Benjamin received the tonsure with the name of Basil, in honour of St. Basil the Great.

In 1921 he was arrested by the Ivanovo Cheka as having been "politically unreliable as a hostage in the days of the Kronstadt uprising".

On September 19, 1921 Fr. Basil was consecrated as Bishop of Kineshma, a vicariate of the diocese of Kostroma. Archbishop Seraphim of Kostroma and Bishops Hierotheus (Pomerantsev) and Sebastian (Vesti) carried out the consecration. After his consecration, he redoubled his ascetic efforts. Having renounced all personal property, he settled on the edge of the town in a small bath-house which was in the kitchen-garden of a soldier's widow, Anna Alexandrovna Rodina. The hierarch had no possessions or furniture, and he slept on the bare floor, putting a log under his head and covering himself up with some clothes. He hid his exploit from outsiders, receiving no-one in this place. Those who came met him in the chancellery, which was attached to the Ascension church.

The bath-house was a long way from the church, one had to go through the whole town, but the hierarch did not want to find a nearer place for himself, although at that time he served daily. Every morning while it was not yet light he would walk across the whole town to the church, returning home late at night. Not once was he apprehended by robbers on the street, but he meekly and lovingly gave them everything he had, and soon they began to recognize him from a distance and did not come up to him anymore.

Besides the daily church services, in which he always preached without fail, the hierarch confessed his numerous spiritual children, going round the homes of all who needed his help and word of consolation, visiting monasteries and the circles he had founded scattered throughout the uyezd.

On major feast-days the hierarch served in the cathedral, and from Thursday to Friday there were all-night vigils in the church of the Ascension. The people loved these all-night vigils which were dedicated to the memorial of the Lord's Passion, and were present at them in great numbers. They were especially beloved of the workers, many of whom lived not in the very centre of the town, but in the environs, two hours' walk from the church. They stood through the all-night vigil and it was only late at night that they got home - in the morning they were again at work. But such was the grace of these services that people did not feel tired. During the Divine service the hierarch himself read the akathist to the Passion and there was such quietness in the church at that time, as if there were not a single person there, and every word was heard in the furthest corner.

The grace-filled words of Bishop Basil's sermon pierced the hearts and drew more and more people into the churches. After his sermons many completely changed their lives. Some, following the example of the hierarch, gave their property to the poor, dedicating their lives to the service of the Lord and their neighbours.

The light of faith and grace began to reach even the unbelievers, and Jews began to come to the church so as to hear the hierarch's words about Christ the Saviour.

Whatever people might think of the Christian faith and the Orthodox Church, almost everyone felt that the hierarch's words responded to the inner demands of the soul, clearly returning life to the soul and a feeling of meaning to life. And the authorities began to be more and more disturbed. But they found no excuse for arresting the hierarch, while his popularity amidst the people was so great that the authorities could not bring themselves to arrest him. And then they began to infiltrate people into the church whose task was to tempt the hierarch with questions during the sermon so as to confuse him.

Vladyka Basil knew that there were such people in the church, and he replied to many of their questions beforehand. Convicted in their conscience, and understanding the pointlessness of their situation, the atheists left the church without asking any questions.

Soon after his consecration Basil of Kineshma got to know his future cell-attendant, who would share with him the difficulties of exile and imprisonment. Later, in exile, Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov) of Kazan used to say of him:

"I have seen many cell-attendants, but not one like Alexander Pavlovich. Vladyka Basil has been lucky."

Alexander Pavlovich Chumakov was born at the end of the 19th century in the village of Polka in Kostroma province in a peasant family. He had a deeply religious mother who from childhood tried to instil a love for God and the Church into the boy. When Alexander came of age, she insisted that he went to the elders in Optina desert and received their blessing for his future life. And while he was going to Optina, past the villages he knew, all the girls poured out onto the road so as to laugh at him - look at the monk, they said. And he himself went with a heavy heart and was embarrassed by these gibes.

But when Alexander came to Optina and was present at the services and heard the Optina chanting, then his heaviness disappeared in a flash. And he felt as if he were standing in the heavens.

Alexander was for two years in Optina; when the Russo-German war began he was drafted to the front.

Soon he found himself in captivity, twice he ran away and twice they caught him and imprisoned him, cruelly beating and mocking him.

In captivity, while he was carrying out forced labour, he was seen by a rich German woman who was enflamed with such a passion for him that she immediately proposed marriage to him. Alexander refused, she tried to persuade him, but her persuasion had no effect, and she began to compel him to live with her by force and threats. But the courageous warrior of Christ withstood this pressure, too. However, seeing that his life was in danger, he again fled, and this time succeeded in reaching his homeland. By this time the war had begun to change to civil conflicts, and Alexander Pavlovich became a psalm-reader in the church of the village of Polka.

Alexander Pavlovich went to a hierarchical service in Reshensky monastery specially in order to look at an unusual hierarch. He walked beside Vladyka Basil, chanted together with him and Vladyka liked him.

"Alexander Pavlovich," he said, "come and serve as psalm-reader in the church of the Ascension."

"Alright, holy Vladyka, but first I must go to **Elder Anatolius of Optina** and receive his blessing."

"I myself used to go to Elder Anatolius," replied the hierarch, "but he's dead now."

"Then bless me, Vladyka, to be your psalm-reader," replied Alexander Pavlovich, bowing to the hierarch.

In 1922 famine broke out in the Lower Volga. Thousands died every day. In some cases the authorities took orphaned children and sent them to children's homes in other towns. Not long before Pascha they brought some of these children to Kineshma.

After the service Vladyka gave a sermon to the people, calling on them to help the starving children.

"Soon the festive days of Pascha will be with us. When you come from the feast and sit at table, remember the starving children..." said the hierarch.

After this sermon many took children into their homes. The bishop himself rented a home for the children and put five girls in it together with a nurse, a pious believer by the name of Olga Vasilyevna. He often visited them, and sometimes had to stay the night there. But on those occasions he did not change his rule, but lay on the floor in the kitchen with a log under his head.

In the summer of 1922 the heretical church movement of renovationism arose. Throughout the country the renovationists captured churches and drove out Orthodox priests and bishops whom the authorities gave over to imprisonment and death. In those parishes whose church had been seized by the renovationists Vladyka blessed the priests not to leave their flocks, but to celebrate the Liturgy in the squares of the villages. He himself gave an example of this, and after every service he delivered a sermon which hundreds and thousands of people came to listen to.

The hierarch Basil served the Liturgy with the greatest reverence; often during the proskomedia his fellow-servers saw tears flowing abundantly down his cheeks. He told one of those close to him that during the Liturgy of the Presanctified, when the choir sings: "Now the heavenly powers are with us...", he had seen with his own eyes the heavenly powers standing in front of the altar in the form of white doves.

The hierarch was both a refined ascetic and overflowing with simplicity and love in his relations with people. When he visited, the news of his arrival spread quickly, and people hurried to come and meet him, fitting themselves in where they could. Vladyka often sat on the floor, singing spiritual songs and accompanying himself on the cithara. And his sermons, discussions of

the Gospel and singing were so full of simplicity and love that it seemed as if he were a spiritual pipe in the hands of God. He wished for and sought no other lot. Neither gold, nor silver, nor a place in the world - none of this did he wish for; nothing except to be a true servant of God.

None of those present wanted these discussions to end. For many their meeting with him became the guiding star leading them for the rest of their life.

Soon the Lord began to reveal to those around that He not only gave His servant grace in his sermons, but also heard and carried out his prayers and petitions.

Thus there was a girl who fell into difficult circumstances and under the instigation of the devil became more and more despondent; and things came to such a pass that she finally decided to commit suicide. Kind people brought her to the hierarch, in whom she confided her whole story. He heard her confession in silence, and in parting blessed her and kissed her on the head. At that moment her heaviness and the tormenting thoughts that had oppressed her for so long fell away.

Once a couple came to the bishop and began to complain that they had no children. They asked him to pray for them. He prayed. Soon after that a daughter was born to them.

A widow with four small children fell seriously ill with dysentery. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and finally became critical. Realizing that she was dying, the widow called the hierarch to give her the last rites. Vladyka Basil came to the house of the sick woman. The four little defenceless children surrounded their mother's deathbed. The hierarch's heart was seized with profound compassion and pity, and he began to pray fervently to the God of widows and orphans to give the woman life. After praying, he confessed her and gave her communion. And from that moment she began to get rapidly better and soon recovered completely, and she died only in deep old age.

Sometimes children came to petition for their hopelessly ill parents. Once a girl knocked at the hierarch's cell. He opened the door and recognized her. She was one of those who came to the church to learn the Law of God from him.

The whole way there she had been weeping bitterly, and when she saw him - he was her last hope - she began to weep still more. And no wonder, when her deeply beloved father was dying.

The hierarch immediately got ready and set off with her for the dying man, whom he found already in his death throes.

And the hierarch began to pray. He prayed long and fervently. Then he gave the dying man the Holy Mysteries and, leaving the rest to the will of God, departed. Immediately the illness reached crisis-point, the sick man began to improve quite rapidly and soon recovered.

In the village of Belizanets, the whole family of the churchwarden Basil P., a spiritual son of the hierarch, fell ill with typhus.

The illness dragged on, sometimes there was an improvement, sometimes a deterioration, but no final recovery. The hierarch, who was at that time in Vichuga, was informed of this.

It was a nasty autumn day, rain was falling, and night was approaching when the hierarch left the town. His journey through the rain, in the dark, along the muddy road was long and difficult. Only late at night did the bishop reach the house of the warden. He confessed the adults, gave Communion to everyone, and went on. A few days after his departure the family had recovered.

Like many true God-pleasers, the hierarch had the gift of clairvoyance.

Once he was asked to ordain a man to the priesthood.

"Let's wait a little," replied Vladyka.

The man turned out to be ill and soon went mad.

Another time a woman came to him and asked him to bless her to go on a journey.

"No," replied the hierarch, "you must now receive Holy Unction and receive Communion."

During Holy Unction she began to lose the use of her tongue, and soon died.

One woman asked Vladyka to bless her to eat once a day during Great Lent.

"No, I don't bless you to do this, eat twice a day, otherwise you won't make it to Pascha."

It turned out that at the beginning of Great Lent both her daughters-in-law fell ill. Their recoveries were short-lived - and she had to look after not only the sick women, but also their children and their livestock. She hardly had the strength to manage.

The hierarch did not serve long in his see, one year and eight months in all, and on May 10, 1923 he was arrested in Kineshma and exiled for two years to Ust-Kol in Zyryansk region, Komi SSR, where there were four bishops and two metropolitans at that time. One of them, **Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan**, gave Bishop Basil his hierarchical vestments. He carefully looked after them, and before his death gave the blessing for them to be cut up and distributed to his spiritual children as sacred objects.

Six hierarchs assembled with some exiled priests who had come for the service in a small hut in the taiga. After the service a hierarch gave a sermon. By common consent, the hierarch Basil of Kineshma was inferior only to Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan in the grace-filled strength and depth of his sermons.

Soon Vladyka Basil's cell-attendant came voluntarily to share with him the bitterness of exile.

On May 19, 1925, his term of exile came to end and he returned to Kineshma. His spiritual children began to come to him, gathering together in small groups in the Ascension church. Here he confessed them after the evening service. The confessions lasted well into the night - many unresolved questions had accumulated, and everyone wanted to confess all his sins, down to the smallest. The hierarch did not want to hurry them, wishing to give place to the action of God and His grace.

The hierarch did not change his routines, whether in regard to services, or to preaching, or to anything else. And the Church began to grow stronger.

Like a true pastor, Bishop Basil protected his flock from every kind of evil and error. If he learned that one of his spiritual children was thinking incorrectly, then without wasting any time he hastened to visit this person.

Not far from the town of Vichuga there lived a sick eldress by the name of Martha Lavrentyevna Smirnova. She was a great ascetic. From childhood she had led a God-pleasing life, and the last 22 years she had passed in immobility, ceaselessly giving thanks to God. For this the Lord gave her the gift of discernment, which many of those who came to her for advice profited from.

In exile Bishop Basil learned that the eldress had begun to receive people who were in heresy and were going round everywhere glorifying her as a saint.

On returning from exile, Vladyka did not change his rule and set off on foot for Vichuga, visiting the homes of his spiritual children on the way.

He arrived at the cell of the eldress in the evening. It was full of people and the hierarch asked everyone to leave so that he could remain alone with Martha Lavrentyevna and her cell-attendant.

"I want to test you," said the hierarch, "to see whether you are in spiritual deception or not. I have learned that you are visited by some people from Ivanovo who have even given you their photographs and glorify you throughout the town as a saint. And yet they are not Orthodox. If you continue to mix with them, I will exclude you from my circle."

Without hesitation the eldress agreed to stop seeing the heretics.

In the home of one of the hierarch's spiritual children, Eudocia, the oil-lamp in front of the icon began to light of itself at midnight.

"It seems that the Lord is calling me to get up and pray," she thought, not sure whether to accept this phenomenon as from God or a deception. But she had already felt the spirit of deception in her heart - you pray so much, she said to herself, that the Lord Himself lights the oil-lamp.

In order to test this phenomenon, she invited an acquaintance of hers to stay the following night. But the oil-lamp lit up in her presence, too. Then she invited another witness to stay the night with her. The same thing happened with her. At midnight the oil-lamp lit up of itself.

This finally persuaded Eudocia to accept this phenomenon as from God.

When he had heard her out, the hierarch said to her severely:

"No, this phenomenon is not from God, but from the enemy, and because you have accepted it as coming from God I am laying a penance on you - you are not to have Communion for a year. And the oil-lamp will not light up again."

And truly, from that day the oil-lamp did not light up.

On Christmas Day, January 7, 1926, the authorities, worried by the revival of Church life under Bishop Basil, demanded that he leave the town. Alexander Pavlovich suggested that they go to his homeland, the village of Anapol, Kostroma province, and there wait till the difficult times were over. Vladyka agreed. Before leaving for the village he went to Vetluga and visited his sister there.

During the two weeks of the hierarch's stay with his sister, Alexander Pavlovich built a small house like the one he had lived in Kineshma. When the bishop arrived, an altar was constructed and daily services were then celebrated in it according to the typicon. He lived there as an exile, devoting

the whole of his time to prayer. He served together with Alexander Pavlovich, no outsider being present since there was no Orthodox church in the vicinity.

Here Vladyka Basil lived in almost complete isolation for about half a year. Then he went to Sarov - to pray for the last time at the relics of St. Seraphim. From Sarov he returned by the beginning of the Apostles' Fast to Kineshma and immediately began to serve in the Ascension church.

He had served several months in all in his see when, in 1926, he was transferred to the see of Vyazniki, a vicariate of the Vladimir diocese, as temporary administrator. He served for half a year in Vyazniki, until June, 1927, when he was expelled to Kostroma.

According to one (dubious) source it was in this period that he signed the decisions of the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church, which took place between March and August, 1928.

After staying in Kostroma for some months, he returned to Kineshma in August, 1928. However, after only a month, in September, 1928, he was arrested in connection with the Kineshma branch of the True Orthodox Church. If until that time it had been difficult to find a "lawful" way of sentencing the hierarch to prison, now the publication of the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) gave the authorities ample excuse for persecuting the Orthodox. Bishops, priests and laymen were now arrested in their thousands and sent to prison, where hunger, cold, forced labour and death awaited them. Bishop Basil rejected the declaration, and on November 19, 1928 (or February or March, 1929) was sentenced to three years in exile. Together with him they arrested the priest of the Ascension church, **Fr. Nicholas Panov**, and **Catherine Alexandrovna Knishek**.

The bishop was sent to prison in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and in February or March, 1929 was taken under convoy to the small taiga hamlet of Malorechka, twenty-five kilometres from the district town of Taborovo, Sverdlovsk province.

Here, too, Alexander Pavlovich shared all the difficulties of exile with the hierarch. The two of them set up an altar in the little house, the hierarch consecrated it, and they celebrated Divine services there every day.

Prayer, Divine services and heavy work in the woods - all this was like the strictest form of skete life. Life was poor, and Alexander Pavlovich earned some extra by making wooden wash-tubs and catching fish.

They conversed little with each other. Sometimes they had a kind of break for an hour, and they sat amidst the woods in the fading twilight. Fish splashed in the dark waters of a little river. A bonfire burned, lighting up the concentrated face of the hierarch, whose soul was totally immersed in prayer. The gloom of the woods wrapped them round every more closely, and it was

then that Alexander Pavlovich wanted to strike up a conversation with the hierarch, to ask him something, but on looking at Vladyka, he decided not to trouble him.

According to Nicholas Balashov, in 1931 Bishop Basil was again given the choice: accept the declaration or go to prison. He refused, and was subjected to tortures.

In 1931, in a brochure called Ryasniki and published by the local section of the militant atheists in Ivanovo, the following was written about Bishop Basil's followers: "Among the Old Tikhonites of our region there is a branch of the so-called Basilites. They received this name after the name of the founder of this group, Bishop Basil (Preobrazhensky). We already know that this ryasnik was in the group of Ryashentsev. The Basilite programme differs in no way from the programme of the Old Tikhonites, but this group is distinguished by its activism. In those places where the priests belong to the sergianists, the Basilites leave the membership of the religious communities, cease to go to the church and organize house prayer-centres, giving as the reason for their departure the fact that the priests have changed their stripes and forgotten the true God. 'Once I went into the church,' says the profiteer Mazina, leader of the group, 'and I felt a pang in my heart, my head went dim and a voice told me to leave and pray at home' (village of Semenovskoye, Kineshma district)."

Three years passed in isolation, prayer and work, and the fourth was already coming to an end. The hierarch's thoughts began to incline towards the idea of staying forever there, where they had acquired a desert.

But it turned out that it was impossible to choose exile voluntarily. He only decided to ask the local authorities for permission to stay when they themselves had begun to demand his departure.

"Give us permission to stay," he asked.

"No, you can't stay here. Leave. You can go to any town except the forbidden ones."

"I must think about it," said the hierarch and went out into the street where his cell-attendant was waiting for him:

"Well, Alexander Pavlovich, where shall we go?"

"I'm not the one who gives the orders, holy Vladyka, you choose."

The hierarch pondered. But where, where were they to go? What place of exile should he choose? Desolate Sarov... Diveyevo... Optina desert. Alexander Pavlovich often used to tell the hierarch about his stay in Optina, and he loved listening to stories about the monastery so beloved by the

Russian people. He loved to hear about the obediences Alexander Pavlovich had to labour in.

"Tell me, where was the baker Photius from - the one you helped in Optina?"

"From Orel."

"Well that's fine then - let's go to Photius' homeland."

They lived for in Orel from September, 1932 to March 31, 1933, when they were summoned by the NKVD. During interrogation, Vladyka said that Soviet power was a temporary power, while he did not believe in the idea of the construction of socialism-communism. The struggle against religion was allowed by God in order to test the moral-religious life of the people. In this period of trial there would undoubtedly be a schism between the believers and the unbelievers. Moreover, the believers might turn out to be in the minority. However, in spite of everything the Church would conquer and the gates of hell would not prevail against her.

The Bolsheviki demanded that they leave the town.

"Where shall we go?" asked the hierarch.

"Go to Kineshma."

For the last time the hierarch entered his native diocese, where he had sown so many good seeds. Although physically separated from his flock, he had never been separated from it spiritually, and by prior agreement they even prayed at the same time.

It was the last time that Vladyka Basil beheld his native town, because immediately after his arrival he and his cell-attendant were thrown into prison and brought to trial in connection with the Kineshma branch of the True Orthodox Church.

This time it was the atheists' intention to kill them. But the Lord judged otherwise. The schoolchildren who had been called to the trial to witness against Vladyka Basil and his cell-mate refused to give evidence, saying that they did not know the men in the dock and were seeing them for the first time. After the failure of the prosecution, the judge sentenced Bishop Basil and his cell-attendant to five years in a hard labour camp for "creating a net of counter-revolutionary circles whose aim was the anti-Soviet education of the religious masses and the overthrow of the existing order".

This was in July, 1933. He served his term not far from the town of Rybinsk, in a camp whose inmates worked on the construction of a canal. Alexander Pavlovich was exiled to the vicinity of Murmansk.

Some priests who were summoned for interrogation after him were told by the torturers: "That Preobrazhensky is not like you, he's straight, he's not for turning, while you are for us to our face and against us behind our backs."

In January, 1938, Vladyka Basil settled in Rybinsk, and then, after a short period, he moved to the village of Kotovo, near Uglich, where he had the intention of ending his days. At the invitation of the choir director of the church in Kotovo, he went to live with her, serving in a church secretly constructed in a bath-house in a kitchen-garden. Soon a circle was formed in the village.

In 1943 the metropolitan of Yaroslavl offered him a see.

"I don't recognize Sergius as Orthodox," wrote Basil to him in reply. "And I ask you not to offer me any other sees, because I am old and too worn out by exiles."

The metropolitan promised.

But the very thought that a hierarch who was faithful to God and His Holy Church was still at liberty terrified the torturers, and on November 5, 1943, three months after this correspondence, Vladyka Basil was again arrested, in Kotovo.

From November 7, 1943 to January, 1944 Bishop Basil was in the inner prison of the NKVD in Yaroslavl. Although he had heart problems and the doctor said he should go to hospital, he was subjected to constant interrogations and tortures. On January 26 he was taken, scarcely alive, to the inner prison of the NKVD in Moscow. On July 13, 1944 he was transferred to the Butyrki prison.

In the same month he was sentenced to five years' exile in Krasnoyarsk district, and was sent under convoy, first to prison in Krasnoyarsk, and from there to the remote village of Birilyussi. The little Siberian village was in a remote area surrounded by boundless woods and a network of rivers. The young people had already been deeply corrupted by atheism and made cruel by the war. Even young children became savage in the surrounding cruelty. For a long time the bishop was not able to find a suitable flat for himself, and finally he settled in the house of a widow who had three young children. When he was praying, they used to gather little balls of horse manure and throw them at him, saying:

"There you are, granddad, eat."

Soon the Lord gave him some alleviation from his sufferings: some believing women found another flat for him. The landlady was single, and an exiled nun was living with her at the time.

In Birilyussi Vladyka suffered a partial paralysis, and it was now difficult for him to walk and he needed nursing.

The war was coming to an end, and the authorities were establishing a concordat with the Church whereby from the Church was demanded everything while the authorities promised in exchange not to kill bishops and priests or subject them to imprisonment, and to open a certain number of churches and seminaries. Once again the authorities tried to compel Vladyka Basil to recognize Sergius' Synod.

"You know why you're in exile. Recognize the Synod and we will immediately free you and take you by air to Moscow, where you will be treated and will be able to live."

The hierarch refused.

"Then stay where you are, we have no right to let you go."

Seeing that the bishop was seriously ill, the believing women asked the local bishop to send a priest with the Holy Gifts. This was done. But Vladyka refused to receive communion from the sergianist priest.

At Pascha, 1945, he wrote to one of his spiritual daughters, congratulating her on the feast and saying: "My child! Once more I congratulate you on the feast. Christ is risen indeed!... I met Pascha very well. The Lord has blessed me with all good things - all your wishes were fulfilled. Glory to the Creator for His mercies and kindnesses.

"... My child! Do not be upset, everything is in the will of God, I have already reached the term of human life, 70 years, and from now on life has little of interest to offer me. Of one thing I am certain, that I will not last five years in Birilyussi. I am not frightened of death. I would like to die surrounded by children and relatives, so that I can talk with and bless them all. Or at least have one person who is close to me by my side, someone to whom I can entrust my will and instructions with regard to my burial.

"Alas! There is not one such person. Complete isolation is a heavy burden. I am being treated, I am taking iodine, but I received the most precious medicine on Great Thursday. I thank the Maker for all these joys and consolation. I am choking with a cough, it's difficult to breathe, I lie down most of the time. But I shouldn't lie down too much. Still, complete immobility helps my breathing, I can inhale with my whole chest.

"... Farewell, my child! Don't be downcast that I'm too tired to go on writing. Be healthy. Entrust yourself entirely to the will of God. Bow your head and say: Thy will be done. Pray. I believe in the prayers of children, they

often help me. You will find consolation in prayer. I wish you good health and a long and happy life.

"Bishop Basil of Kineshma, who sincerely loves you.

"Send my greetings and best wishes to the children. I ask forgiveness of all and bow to the earth."

At the same time, in spring, 1945, he wrote to Alexander Pavlovich, inviting him to come. Alexander Pavlovich replied that he would come when the haymaking was over.

But the hierarch knew that he would not live to the autumn.

However, Alexander Pavlovich did not hasten to come, and when he did arrive the hierarch was already dead.

Shortly before his death, Bishop Basil asked the nun who was living with his landlady to read the canon for the departing of the soul. Having read the canon, she began to read the final prayer. The hierarch listened attentively, and when the prayer was over said "Amen" in a firm voice and quietly passed away. He died on July 31 / August 13, 1945 (according to another source, August 18, 1947).

When the news of his death came to his spiritual children, by common agreement of those close to him the funeral service was performed in another place by the hierarch's spiritual son, **Hieromonk Benedict** of Lukhsky monastery, who was living in hiding at that time near Kineshma.

Some sermons have been preserved from Basil of Kineshma's writings, as well as most of his "Conversations on the Gospel according to Mark", in which one can clearly hear the voice of the great preacher converting the hearts of thousands of people to Christ.

In July, 1993 the holy relics of St. Basil of Kineshma were translated to the women's monastery of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple in Ivanovo. In August the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate glorified the bishop who had rejected them all his life. A part of his relics are now to be found in the cathedral in Kineshma.

A close disciple of Bishop Basil was **Victor Alexandrovich Rayevsky**. He was born on February 20, 1902. In 1905 his parents moved to St. Petersburg; Victor's father, Alexander Dmitrievich, was a painter and earned his living giving lessons in painting. Between the father and the mother, Xenia Andreyevna, a quarrel took place, and she went to Kineshma taking her daughter with her, while the son remained with his father. The father was a deeply religious man, and the son was brought up in a religious spirit.

The First World War began, and Alexander Rayevsky was called up into the army. At that time Victor was studying in a modern school in Gatchina. In 1918 news from his father stopped coming. Victor moved to his mother in Kineshma and continued his education in the sixth class of the modern school. In 1918 the authorities everywhere removed the study of the Law of God in educational institutions, and as a sign of protest the youth left school and went to work in a mill. When there arose disturbances among the workers he made a speech in front of them. For this he was arrested and sentenced to three months in prison.

At this time the future hieroconfessor, Bishop Basil of Kineshma, was shining like a star from the heights of his cathedra. Victor listened to him with trembling, feeling the fire of the love of Christ burning ever more brightly in his heart. And it became ever more clear to the youth that the career that his relatives proposed to him - that of a secular painter - would be chains and captivity for his soul.

Victor went to Bishop Basil and asked his blessing to become a fool for Christ. Vladyka blessed him to begin with the feat of silence. And so, abandoning all, Victor settled in the St. Macarius women's monastery in the village of Reshma, which was on the banks of the Volga about thirty kilometres from Kineshma. Here, muzzling his feelings and his rebellious tongue, he silently worked as a groom for two years.

But no ascetic feat undertaken for Christ's sake is left without attacks from the enemy of mankind. And the devil chose to attack him through the person closest to him, his mother. On learning that her son had gone to a monastery and had taken upon himself the feat of silence and foolishness for Christ, she was very angry. She accused Bishop Basil, and demanded that he force Victor to return home. Bishop Basil tried for a long time to dissuade her, but when she wouldn't listen he finally said to her firmly:

“He himself has chosen this path, and this is the will of God for him.”

Furious, the mother went to the St. Macarius monastery. On getting out of her carriage, she did not want to enter - the very sight of the monastery and monastic clothing disturbed her so much. And when Blessed Victor came out to see her she was still more angry. She tried to persuade him to stop playing the fool, return home and take up the career of a painter. Victor loved his mother, but he loved God more, so he said: “If I follow this path to the end, then not only you, but the whole of our family will be in paradise. There things are eternal, here - fleeting.”

Xenia Andreyevna again tried to persuade her son to return home, but he was silent. Angrily she parted from him and left. Victor remained to finish his course. He lived in a tiny room that he shared with the sheep, sleeping on the floor. There was no door onto the street, and to prevent the sheep from

wandering he blocked the passage in with logs. The entrance was so low that the priests who came to see Victor would say:

“The way to you is cramped.”

“To the Kingdom of the Heavens the entrance is still more cramped,” the blessed one would reply.

If people came to him trying to look attractive and well dressed out of vainglory, he would go round thickly covering his face and hands with soot. And in both summer and winter he went barefoot. Once during the all-night vigil on Saturday night one of the monastery novices summoned her village friends to come and have a look at the blessed one. They came, and saw Victor cutting wood. They stopped not far away and looked, instead of going to the church to pray. The blessed one did not like this. He picked up a hatchet and rushed at the girls. They rushed away from him into the church...

Soon the gift of clairvoyance began to manifest itself in the blessed one. Once Alexandra Karacheva brought him some milk and eggs, without saying from whom she had received them - she said she had been told to give them to him. The blessed one gave the name of the man who had given them to her, adding that he was a great blasphemer.

On great feasts, when the clergy went round the blessed one's cell in a cross procession, the blessed one would walk with them and publicly denounced the impure life of several inattentive nuns. And sometimes, without saying anything, he would take some soot and smear the bed of some nun and cover her cell with it. It was as if to say: there is dirt in your cell or your conscience is impure.

Sometimes when the nuns were in church he would go round their cells and if he found a feather pillow or a feather-bed, he would immediately tear it up and plunge the feathers in a barrel of water that stood next to every cell. Sometimes he would leave a note: be like me.

If he noticed that one of the nuns had put on a ring or ear-rings, he would take them away and given them to the poor. Thus once a poor peasant came to the monastery. He was intending to give his daughter away in marriage, but he had no rings or anything else to give her as a dowry. Someone advised him to go to Blessed Victor.

“Well, which ones do you like?” asked the blessed one, laying out various adornments in front of him.

The peasant chose what he needed, and Blessed Victor began to wrap it up. Then the peasant asked:

“How much will that cost?”

“Five ‘Save, O Lord’s’, three big ones and two small ones,” replied the blessed one.

Not long before the closure of the monastery he began swearing, using the most vulgar words. He went around the monastery swearing. Or one of the nuns would ask him about something, and he would swear instead of replying. They began to be upset by this, and complained to Bishop Basil. He arrived at the monastery to investigate the matter. For a long time he talked alone with the blessed one, who told him in detail about the future fate of the monastery. But he asked him not to reveal this to the nuns. The hierarch could only marvel at the blessed one’s purity of heart and the lack of understanding of some of the nuns.

The nuns’ request to bring the blessed one to reason brought its own reply - the monastery was soon closed. That happened in 1927. Now people embittered by atheism wandered round the monastery and its lands with curses and swear-words on their lips.

In October, 1928 Blessed Victor was arrested. Bishop Basil was arrested at the same time. And the Lord gave the blessed one the spiritual joy of being in the same cell with his spiritual father and hierarch. The bishop fell seriously ill in prison, and the blessed one looked after him, trying to relieve his pain. During interrogations the blessed one behaved courageously, and often rebuked the persecutors. When they asked him where he lived he replied:

“In Yurevtsa, in Kineshma, in Reshma. I don’t want to say where else I was or whom I knew because if I said it I would be betraying my near ones.”

When they asked him about Bishop Basil, Blessed Victor replied:

“Since I got to know Bishop Basil I have become deeper and stronger in faith. As regards my being called to account, I will say only one thing - Soviet power persecutes religion, and you have seized me because of this, just as you seized, for example, Bishop Basil. Your only work is to choose spies and follow after me. You have become very clever. What have you turned Holy Russia into? Into a kind of mob. Everything is coming to an end. Here your authority rules, but at the Terrible Judgement you will answer for everything before God. With you only a small group ruling the people lives well, while all the people starve. Everything that Soviet power preaches is absurd. Lenin was half-mad. That’s how I look at Soviet power, but although that’s how I look at it, I have not and do not conduct any activity aimed at the overthrow of the authorities...”

The blessed one refused to sign the protocols, saying that he was not a co-worker of Soviet power, and all its activity was aimed against religion.

He was sentenced to three years exile in Siberia. After his return from exile, he settled in Kineshma, whence he often went to Reshma. The monastery had been destroyed, the nuns ejected, Abbess Dosithea and several nuns had settled in a village not far from Kineshma, where they lived a life of quiet prayer, doing work with their hands. There the abbess died and was buried in the cemetery of the village of Mavrino.

In Reshma the blessed one stayed in the house of the pious widow, **Maria Vasilyevna Kruglovaya** (born April 7, 1877 in Reshma). At the same time and in the same village there lived the girl **Anna Konstantinovna Korygina** (born 9 December, 1905 in Reshma). Since childhood she had wanted to go to a monastery, but the monasteries began to close in the 1920s, and so she, having given away her property, settled on the edge of a ravine in a tiny hut. Maria quarrelled with Anna, but the blessed one persuaded her to be reconciled, saying:

“You bake some biscuits, go to Anna and be reconciled. Don’t rise up against her. You will soon have to walk along the same road with her, sharing the same bread.”

On October 2, 1927 Anna and Maria were arrested for preaching Christianity. They were imprisoned in one room in Ivanovo, and on October 8 were sentenced and shot.

In 1937 Blessed Victor was arrested and died in prison.

**34. HOLY HIEROCONFESSOR PETER, SCHEMA-BISHOP OF
NIZHEGOROD**
and those with him

Early Years

Schema-Bishop Peter, in the world Patapius Trofimovich Ladygin, was born on December 1, 1866 (according to other sources, 1860 or 1861) in the village of Seleg, Krasnogorsk region, not far from the city of Glazov in Udmurtia. His parents Trophimus and Theodora were poor, pious peasants from the village of Selega. They had six sons and one daughter. Patapius was the fifth child.

In his autobiography Schema-Bishop Peter writes: "I lived an ordinary life in my youth. At the age of eight I began to study from an old priest, Fr. Paul. We didn't have a school. I went to him for two winters. That was the sum total of my education in my youth.

"In 1875, when I was ten, they brought us the icon of the Mother of God 'the Consolation of the Sorrowing', which came from Mount Athos. The first miracle [from this icon] was worked on Vladimir Nevolen. He was deaf and dumb. Immediately he kissed the icon of the Mother of God he began to speak and hear. The miracle took place on November 19, 1866, and after this all kinds of miracles came from this icon of the Mother of God, and everyone was healed. During prayer services [in front of this icon] I would always weep. I couldn't help myself, something unusual worked on me.

"During my youth I never went for walks or played games, but in my free time I went fishing. I caught a lot of fish, everyone was amazed.

"My mama died when I was 18. Papa and my younger brothers John and Simeon remained. And at that point they took it into their heads to marry me. My father had never put a finger on me, but when I didn't want to marry, he twice beat me on the back with a belt and took me weeping to my bride. There I said to my bride Catherine:

"Don't marry me, I don't want to. We have a very bad older sister-in-law, it'll be bad for you. Don't marry me.'

"But she didn't believe me. Our matchmaker was my aunt, my mama's sister. They married me, but while I was being crowned I couldn't believe it. But then I was reconciled with life and a year passed.

"I became seriously ill. I had pneumonia during Great Lent. They lost all hope that I would live. In May I went fishing and I got a cold in my legs, completely losing the use of them. In June and July I lay in hospital. The doctors said that my legs would not work - I had severe rheumatism. I was in

terrible pain. My wife Catherine looked after me. Every night she would put nettles on my legs. Katya was always crying, and I always reminded her:

"I told you not to marry me.'

"After the Dormition of the Mother of God an old wanderer came to us. In the evening they began to bind my legs with nettles.

"What,' said the man, 'have you been ill like this for a long time?'

"We told him. He said:

"If you pray to God and beseech the Mother of God, I will heal you.'

"I gave him my promise, and while I was still ill I promised that I would join the army. We got up in the morning. The old man asked:

"Are they going to bake bread here?'

"They are.'

"He asked for a tub, and put a prop for my legs against the tub. And when the bread was baked, he took one loaf, broke it and put it on the bottom of the tub, and my legs on the bread... And the pain in my legs became less sharp. He left asking me not to forget the Mother of God or to pray. And he also ordered that this should be done two more times. And when it had been done three times I recovered completely and began to walk.

"Two weeks passed. On September 9, 1888, my wife Katya gave birth to a daughter, who was called Euphemia in baptism. On the fifth day after giving birth Katya went and did some washing. Aunt Domna came in and said:

"Katya, are you working after giving birth?'

"She went away and Katya fell ill. She contracted a high fever, and on September 19 she died. My daughter remained alive for nine more days. She was looked after by my in-laws. On November 19, the day of the feast of the Mother of God "the Consolation of the Sorrowing", she died without pain. The Mother of God took her to herself.

"And on the evening of the same day I went to enrol in the army. I was accepted into service on November 22. The doctors who had treated me did not want to accept me because I was ill - my legs were no good. But I had given a promise when I was ill that when I recovered, even if I would have to go far away, I would still join the army. The doctors still did not want to accept me. I demanded that they accept me. But I was left on one side. They accepted three people. I began to ask insistently for the commanding officer, and he ordered me to be accepted, saying:

"If he falls ill there, send him back.'

"And they accepted me. I made the sign of the cross and left. But my papa began to cry and said:

"You've destroyed yourself. You'll die, and we'll never see you again.'

"I said: 'I won't die. The Mother of God will preserve me...'"

Mount Athos

The young Patapius fulfilled his military service in Kiev, serving as a non-commissioned officer. He learned engineering with the sappers. In his free time he would go to the Kiev Caves Lavra, where he venerated the relics of the saints and read the Kiev Caves Patericon. He became a spiritual son of Elder Jonah (in schema Peter), who was himself a spiritual son and novice of St. Seraphim of Sarov. Patapius asked Elder Jonah to bless him to enter the Kiev Caves Lavra after his military service, but instead the elder directed him to go to Jerusalem and Mount Athos:

"When you've gone there and seen everything, and visited the holy places, then you'll be able to come here and join. Monasticism will not run away from you. Look, I've been a monk for more than 40 years and the enemy continually disturbs me with the thought that I haven't been to Jerusalem or Athos. But it's difficult to leave here, they don't let you out of the monastery."

Patapius followed the elder's advice, and in September, 1892, at the end of his military service, he went home to receive his father's blessing and earn some money for the fare to Jerusalem. Then, on June 12, 1893, the feast of Saints Peter and Onuphrius of Mount Athos, he set off. The steamer from Constantinople stopped at Mount Athos, where the monks of St. Andrew's skete invited Patapius to stay until Christmas. But Patapius said:

"What are you saying?! You don't let people sleep! During the day you sleep it off, while the pilgrims go round the monasteries. But at night you don't let us sleep!"

The monks laughed and said:

"Did you really come here to sleep?!"

Two weeks later, in October, Patapius boarded a steamer going from Odessa to Jerusalem, where he arrived at the end of the month. On the second day of Christmas he met the abbess of a monastery in Samara who suggested that he go to Mount Athos. But Patapius told her:

"I can't live on Mount Athos. The monks there don't let one sleep. I quarrelled with them and only just made it to the steamer two weeks later."

But the abbess said:

"Child, these thoughts are from the enemy. Think how many ascetics are there and what a holy mountain it is. The Mother of God feeds and consoles and saves all those who live there."

And she continued, weeping:

"How fortunate are those who live on Athos, in the lot of the Mother of God."

But Patapius still did not agree to go.

Then the abbess suggested that they cast lots in the name of the Trinity: the first for going to Athos and staying there, the second for staying there, in Jerusalem, and the third for going to Russia. They went to the Holy Sepulchre, laid the lots on the Tomb of the Lord and prayed for a long time. The lot which they chose was for Athos. Patapius was terrified. But the abbess calmed him:

"Don't worry, let's cast lots three times."

And on the third day of Christmas, after again praying all night at the Holy Sepulchre, the lot fell on Athos. Then Patapius felt calmer and said:

"How many people live there!"

But the abbess said that they should cast lots a third time. So on the fourth day of Christmas, after again praying at the Holy Sepulchre, they cast lots. The lot fell on Russia. The abbess said:

"This is your destiny with the Lord and the Mother of God. Go to Athos, the lot of the Mother of God. She has blessed this path for you with two lots. But with the third lot the Lord has shown you that you will be sent from Athos on obedience to Russia, and there you may end your life."

And this is what happened in fact...

And so, after visiting the holy places again, Patapius went to Jaffa and on January 16, 1894 set sail for Athos. That night there was an all-night vigil in honour of St. Anthony. Patapius prayed to him, as the leader of all monks, to indicate which community on Athos he should go to. After casting lots, the lot fell on the St. Andrew skete.

Patapius arrived at St. Andrew's skete on January 20. Igumen Joseph gave him obediences in the chancellery and the candle-shop, gave him a cassock, a jacket and a prayer-robe, and blessed him to pray three prayer-ropes: two to the Saviour and one to the Mother of God. And he warned him:

"When you pray, take care not to be frightened - the enemy will try to frighten you. Don't move from your place, stand and pray. He won't do anything to you."

Patapius was living in the guest-house with six pilgrims. When they had gone to sleep, he began to pray his three prayer-ropes.

"Suddenly," he writes in his biography, "there was a terrible blow at the door. I thought that the door was going to fly away. But I stood and prayed. Then there was a second blow, in the corner. You would think the whole building was going to collapse. But I stood and prayed with fear. Although it was frightening, I stood and prayed in accordance with the blessing of the igumen. Then from under the bunks where the pilgrims were sleeping a trunk of one of the pilgrims was thrown out against my legs. All the pilgrims jumped up and were terrified. But I stood in my place and prayed. The pilgrims took the trunk and put it back under the bunks, and themselves went to sleep while I finished these three prayer-ropes. When I had finished, I lay down to sleep and didn't wake up until Mattins. At the signal for church everyone went to church. When the monks and novices go to church they all kiss the icon and receive the igumen's blessing. I also kissed the icon and went up to receive the igumen's blessing. The igumen asked me:

"Brother Patapius, how did it go? Did you pray the prayer-ropes?"

"I did."

"Well, did they try to frighten you?"

"They did."

"You come to me in the daytime, after the service."

Patapius was then given a cell with Novice Matthew. They prayed together, and the devil did not trouble them. Later the igumen said to Patapius:

"So, Brother Patapius, the Mother of God, the Apostle Andrew and St. Anthony the Great have sent you here to us. Remember that you will answer in fear before the Lord for every word or deed that you have done out of laziness or not in accordance with righteousness. Know that it is not I that have given you such a great obedience, but the Mother of God, the Apostle Andrew and Anthony the Great. They will help you in everything if you carry out your holy obedience with humility and a pure heart."

And then the igumen gave him the very responsible obedience of calculating the money to be given to all the workers and the desert-dwellers. All the monks were amazed that a newly arrived novice should be given such a difficult and responsible obedience. Besides this, he was given the obediences of waking up the brethren for services and serving in the altar as an ecclesiarch.

"On March 25, 1895," continues Bishop Peter in his biography, "on the feast of the Annunciation, I the sinful and unworthy one was found worthy to hear the chanting of angels. There was a vigil in the church of the Mother of God 'The Consolation of the Sorrowing'. The vigil began at 7 o'clock and finished at 6 in the morning. During the vigil they read the akathist to the Annunciation of the Mother of God. The vigil came to an end, and the young monastic clergy were going to serve the late Liturgy. I had to come early into the church in order to prepare the censer, the warm water and do various chores. After the vigil I went to my cell to rest for one-and-a-half to two hours. My cell was under the altar of this church. My window was open. At seven o'clock in the morning I heard chanting in the church. They were chanting and reading the akathist to the Mother of God and chanting: 'Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded'. When I heard it I jumped up and thought that I had overslept. I was frightened and ran to the church. I ran up, but the doors of the church were locked, and in the church everyone was continuing to chant. I ran back down the corridor to the altar. I ran up to the altar door and again the chanting was continuing. I was filled with fear - I had never heard such chanting before. I went back to my cell and fell on my knees. I wept and listened to the chanting. And suddenly they began to chant the verse "The Pre-Eternal Counsel" in my cell. They chanted the whole verse. I don't remember whether I was in heaven or on earth.

"At 7.45 I gave the signal for the beginning of the church service. Everybody came and I went into the church. I told my spiritual father and the igumen about it. They said:

"Thank God and don't forget it. Always chant this verse..."

"At Pascha my father came to see me at the feast. He stayed for three weeks and wept a great deal, calling me to return home.

"You know, it's difficult for you here."

"I said to him:

"You stay here if you want to see me."

"No," he said, "I can't stand it. One has to pray for a long time."

"I accompanied him and he wept a great deal. When he returned home, a year later, on the second day of Pascha, he died."

In Great Lent, 1896, Patapius was tonsured as a rya-sofor-monk and given the name Pigasius. A week later he had the following vision: "The igumen sent me off with a package:

"You must take this package to this address."

"I left the monastery and went towards Athos, to the Kalyagrou jetty. A desert-dweller by the name of Macarius was with me.

"We had not gone very far when suddenly we saw a huge snake lying across the path. Macarius saw it and said:

"I won't go, I'm frightened."

"But I decided to carry out my obedience, crossed myself and jumped over it. I went on alone.

"After a while I came across another huge snake which was lying in the form of a ring across the path. It was impossible to pass it by. On the left was a cliff and the sea, and on the right - a huge rock. I stood by the snake for a long time, praying to the Mother of God and the Apostle Andrew. I did not want to return home, but I feared to go on because of this snake. I crossed myself and jumped into the ring and then out of the ring and further.

"I went on for a while and came to the Kolyagrou jetty. There was a big level area by the sea. The whole of the area was filled with various snakes. Some had died, others were still alive after a fashion. I passed through there without fear. It began to get dark. It was night, I couldn't see the path.

"I saw a small light and a little hut. I prayed and the answer came: 'Amen.' I showed the man the address on the package and asked him how to get there. He said:

"Okay, I'll show you now, and you'll get there."

"I saw that there was a great number of snakes in his cell, and I thought that he had collected them... But he said:

"I didn't take them or bring them here. They come here of themselves in order to tempt me during prayer, and I don't believe them. I pray, and they immediately die."

"We left his hut and he said:

"Go straight ahead, don't turn to the left and also not to the right. Go straight on.'

"After a time I suddenly saw some houses. A man came out and I asked him where the house on the address was. He showed me the house and I went in.

"There were many cobblers there sewing boots. I gave them my package. They tore it up and immediately all stood up. And from men they turned into demons.

"So you've been tonsured!' they said and began to tear my cassock into shreds.

"We'll give you a tonsure!' they shouted.

"I ran away from them, but they got hold of my cassock and tore it to pieces. I got hold of one piece, stuck it on, and it became one whole cassock. I kept running and suddenly I saw a church. The doors were shut, and there was an open space under the church. I ran into it. It was dark, and the demons were still tearing at me. I fell on my knees and shouted:

"Mother of God, save me!"

"And suddenly a light appeared in the corner and all the demons disappeared, and it turned out that there was an icon in the corner, the Kazan Mother of God. It was all shining, and diamonds were glittering on it. And above the icon of the Mother of God was an icon of the Saviour wearing a crown of thorns. And above the Saviour - the Crucifixion. And from the icon of the Mother of God a voice spoke to me:

"Fear nothing, I will always help you in everything.'

"At that point I woke up.

"The bell was ringing, and I went into the church. When I went up to ask the igumen's blessing, he said to me:

"Father Pigasius, how you've changed!"

"And I told him the terrible dream. And he said to me:

"After the service come and tell me about it.'

"I went and told him everything in detail, and he blessed me to go immediately to Macarius the icon-painter.

"And tell him what size the Saviour and Mother of God and Crucifixion were, and let him paint them. And you always keep them in your cell. And pray to them, and the demons will do nothing to you. And carry out the holy obedience which the Lord has blessed you to carry out with fear and trembling.'

"The icons were painted, and the igumen himself blessed them and said:

"You will have many sorrows, but don't be depressed. The Mother of God has told you that she will not leave you, and has shown you how the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was crucified for us sinners.'

"I always took these icons with me and kept them, but in 1930, when I was arrested for the third time, they took them away from me. Maria, Olga and Cleopatra saw these icons and prayed to them. I prayed to them for 34 years."

In 1897 Fr. Pigasius went to Constantinople, where he was operated in the stomach for haemorrhoids.

In 1898 he was tonsured into the mantia with the name Pitirim.

On May 14, 1900 he was ordained to the diaconate, and in 1901 he was sent on obedience to Constantinople to serve as a hierodeacon in the metochion (podvorye) and to do the accounts of the income and expenditure of the community. In May while he was in the podvorye, he had the following vision:

"Two people of unusual beauty came to the podvorye and said:

"Get ready to come with us!"

"Where?" I asked.

"The Heavenly Queen has appointed you to command a ship, you have to go to sea.'

"I've never been a sailor,' I said, 'and I don't know how to command. I'll sink the ship and drown myself.'

"They said: 'We can't leave you, for the Queen has sent you, you must go.'

"I went. We came to the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg. At the quayside of the river Neva there stood a beautiful sailing ship. We went onto it, and suddenly the Queen, the Mother of God, came out and said:

"So you must take this ship to the other side of the ocean, together with all these people whom I'm entrusting to you.'

"I wept, and fell at the feet of the Mother of God and said:

"I can't."

"Have no fear,' she said, 'I myself will be with you. Command the ship to go out to sea.'

"We went out to sea, and a terrible storm rose up. Our ship was going fast and the storm had no influence on it. On the sea we met two huge ships full of people. The waves were hurling them off the ships from all sides, and you think they're going to send them to the bottom of the sea now. We quickly passed by them. They remained in the midst of the sea, but we quickly arrived at the shore. It is impossible to describe how beautiful it was on the shore; there were various trees and fruits. We all got out onto the shore and the Mother of God said to me:

"So we have passed over the terrible deep."

"At that point I woke up.

"I told Hieromonk Fr. Ambrose about this. He said to me:

"Write all this down, and for the time being tell nobody anything. The Mother of God will entrust you to rule a flock."

"And then we went into the church of the wonderworking icon 'The Consolation of the Sorrowing' and served a prayer service to her and thanked her for caring for us."

In 1902 Fr. Pitirim returned to Athos, and on September 25, 1904 he was ordained to the priesthood. He continued to serve his obedience as a steward, which involved feeding the vast numbers of pilgrims who came to the skete for feasts. And with his engineering skills he was much in demand for building projects both in the St. Andrew skete and the Thebaida skete.

The Heresy of the Name-Worshippers

Once, in the second week of the Great Fast, 1907, he went to his cell after the all-night vigil to rest for an hour or so before celebrating the late Liturgy at 8 o'clock. He read his rule, and there were still 20 minutes remaining before he had to go to the church at 7.15. He was sitting beside a lamp reading a book, and began to nod off.

"While I was dozing I saw that our brothers had condemned myself and two youths to death by crucifixion. I asked the brothers, not for myself, but for the youths, saying that they were guilty of nothing. But the brothers said:

"This is not your business!"

"They brought a cross made out of bits of rails and began to crucify me. They pierced my hands with clamps and bolted them down. What a terrible pain I suffered! They dug a hole and put the cross in it. I was hanging with a terrible pain in my hands. They said:

"He'll be hanging there for a long time, we'll have to break his shins.'

"And they began to beat my shins, and it was terribly painful, unbearable. When they had broken my shins, I immediately died and remained the same, only in the air. I saw my body hanging and heard everything they were saying:

"Now he's dead, let's take him away and unscrew the bolts.'

"They took me down and laid me on a stretcher, the kind on which they put dead people, and placed my body in the church. My friend Florentius the sacristan said:

"We have to read the Gospel.'

"He brought out the Gospel, laid it on the anoly and began to read. They came into the church to celebrate the Liturgy and saw me lying there, so they did not begin the Liturgy but began to chant the funeral service. I heard and saw everything, but couldn't speak. When they had buried me and begun to chant: 'Come, brethren, let us give the last kiss', the brothers all began to say farewell to my body, but so joyfully, while five of the monks who had crucified me did not want to say farewell. They stood by the left kliros, and the others began to force them, but they didn't want to. Then the brothers dragged them up and forced to say farewell. When they had come up to my body and kissed it, two angels immediately appeared and said to me:

"Now we'll show you everything!"

"And then everything was immediately revealed to me, everything that I had done since my youth, good and bad. I saw everyone with whom I had had any dealings. I even saw myself on military service with my comrades-in-arms fitting a silver lampada to the icon of St. Nicholas in the barracks where I prayed. I hung it and it burned and I felt so happy. I saw all my relatives. When the vision was over, the angels said to me:

"Well, we've shown you earthly things, now we'll show you heavenly things.'

"And immediately we began to go rapidly upwards. We stopped in the air and the angel on the right side went off somewhere. The angel on the left side stayed with me. During this period I felt such fear and terror that I fell down. I knelt and shouted:

"O Mother of God, Apostle Andrew and Anthony the Great, save me from falling!"

"At this point the second angel appeared before me, and I was joyful and we continued to go upwards, stopping five times. When we stopped the sixth time, the ecclesiarch came out of the church and knocked on the door so as to call me in the church. I then absentmindedly put on my ryasa and went into the church without locking my cell.

"I went into the church but was unable to do the proskomedia. Archimandrite Joseph and others had already arrived in order to celebrate the late Liturgy. They went into the altar and saw that my face had completely changed and I was all trembling.

"What's the matter?' asked the igumen.

"I told him everything. They made another monk continue the Liturgy and sent me away to calm down and rest. When the late Liturgy was over, the igumen invited all the clergy and told me to tell the whole vision.

"I was given two days to calm down and rest. Another hieromonk served me. And the igumen told me:

"You will have to suffer much, but believe that the Mother of God and the Lord will not leave you. The angels which you saw will always help you in your sorrows..."

In November, 1911 (according to another source, 1910), Fr. Pitirim was appointed superior of the skete's metochion (podvorye) in Odessa, and on December 1, 1911, he arrived in Odessa.

The year 1912 passed successfully; "but in 1913 my cross began, which I had seen on Athos, when they crucified me. In January, 1913, a division took place among the brothers on Athos, and the worship of the name of God began. In the Caucasus a certain schema-monk Hilarion had published a book in which he wrote that God Himself is included in the name 'Jesus'. But this was an incorrect opinion. The monks on Athos began to divide over this book, some being for it and some against.

"The book was given to the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch studied it and condemned it as heresy. Whoever was in favour of it was expelled from the Church.

"The book was also given to the Russian Synod, which condemned it. In our skete of St. Andrew on Athos, Hieromonk Anthony Bulatovich was a partisan of the book, and gathered other partisan monks, especially the young ones, and beat up the igumen and elders, and threw them out of the

monastery and took over the monastery. They sent me a telegram telling me that Igumen Jerome and all our elders had been removed from the monastery and telling me to submit to them.

"They threw out Igumen Jerome and elected a new archimandrite, David. Igumen Jerome also sent me a telegram in Odessa. He wrote what had happened and asked me not to carry out the commands of David and his supporters. I took these telegrams and went to Archbishop Demetrius of Odessa and the Chersonese. I asked him what to do. And he blessed me not to carry out the commands for the time being, but to wait for a resolution of the matter.

"I did that, but within two weeks Archbishop Demetrius had died. In his place they appointed Archbishop Sergius, who told me that he would not interfere in the matter. And I had to take everything on myself. When I did not carry out the orders of either side, the Athonites sent a declaration to the bank and post office in Odessa, saying that I was not their attorney. Then they sent two monks to remove me from the podvorye and take it over themselves. They took 2000 roubles from there, but the customs removed this money, put it into the treasury and asked me:

"Can we give it to them or not?"

"I told them: 'Until the clarification of the matter, you mustn't.'

"And with regard to the monks I sent a telegram to the Most Holy Synod, since Bishop Sergius refused to interfere. The Synod replied:

"Return the monks to Athos and give them the 2000 roubles.'

"I sent them back to Athos, but kept the money in Odessa since they could go by rail from Constantinople to Russia.

"On their return to Athos, they began to say that it was necessary to calm down and return the former igumen. Then Anthony Bulatovich himself decided to go to Russia, and in 1913, on the day of the 300th anniversary of the House of the Romanovs, he forcibly obtained the signatures of 330 monks to his election. He wanted to be presented to his Majesty, so that his Majesty could confirm the monastery's rule by Archimandrite David and his supporters.

"He travelled on the same steamship as Patriarch Gregory of Antioch, who was also going to the 300th anniversary of the House of the Romanovs. When the steamship arrived in Odessa, everyone was there to meet the patriarch. A train was prepared for him at the station. Anthony Bulatovich arrived at the podvorye in a carriage. I searched Bulatovich, inviting Okolodchy from the police. They began the search, and found all the signatures in a portfolio. He struck the table and said:

"Pitirim, I'll see that you rot in prison!"

"They searched him, and set off to search his monk, while Monk Michael was placed outside his room so as not to let him out. He asked to go to the lavatory, and Anthony Bulatovich was let out without his hat. He went straight to the station just as the train with Patriarch Gregory was moving out.

"They told me that Bulatovich had escaped and had got on the train. So in the evening I sent a telegram to the Procurator of the Most Holy Synod in Petersburg, Sabler, and a second to Archbishop Anthony [Khrapovitsky] of Volhynia, who was a member of the Holy Synod. They immediately gave orders that he should be arrested as they were leaving the train. But in Zlobin he got off the train, got on a train for Moscow and in Moscow went to Grand-Princess Elizabeth Feodorovna. From her he obtained a letter allowing him free access to his Majesty Tsar Nicholas.

"The train with Patriarch Gregory arrived in Petersburg, and he was not on it. Then the Procurator Sabler told the superior of our podvorye in Petersburg, Hieromonk Antonin, that immediately he appeared at the podvorye he should inform the Procurator. He appeared two days later, and the superior Antonin told him that they were looking for him to arrest him. He immediately went into hiding and hid in Petersburg for six months.

"In May at the request of Bulatovich and Great-Princess Olga Alexandrovna, his Majesty Tsar Nicholas Alexandrovich directed the Synod to cease the persecution of Anthony Bulatovich, to give the monastery to the name-worshippers and to expel the monks from the Russian St. Andrew skete and put them in the St. Elijah skete and the St. Panteleimon monastery. But the Greeks on Athos and the Patriarch of Constantinople had ordered all the name-worshippers to be exiled to Russia.

"Then I decided to go personally to Petersburg and intercede on behalf of the St. Andrew skete. On May 14, 1913 I arrived in Petersburg and went to the Synod. May 20 was already the Synod's last session. The members of the Synod were Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg [the future hieromartyr], Archbishop Nikon of Vologda, Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, Archbishop Anthony of Volhynia and others.

"I explained everything to them in detail and said that it was essential for them to send a commission to Athos. I had to find and explain it to all the members of the Synod individually, and I went to the flat of each of them. On May 20 the Synod decided to send a commission to Athos. They appointed Archbishop Nikon of Vologda and Professor Sergius Victorovich Troitsky as members of the commission. They said that they would set off in four days' time. And they said to me:

"You must obtain permission for the commission to go abroad, and see that the Greek authorities cooperate."

"I had to obtain this from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. At that time he was Sazonov. He was in Moscow for the coronation of his Majesty Tsar Nicholas II. His first deputy was Neratov, and second deputy - the landowner Prince Trubetskoy. I couldn't see Neratov, and all the foreign ambassadors directed me to Trubetskoy. But I did not agree because he was friendly with Bulatovich.

"Then I decided to go to Princess Cleopatra Petrovna Cherkasskaya, whom I had once met. The niece of the princess was married to Sazonov. She immediately gave me her visiting card, so that I could go to the priest Petrovsky, who was the spiritual father both of the princess and Sazonov, in order that I could ask to see the first deputy Neratov. Protopriest Petrovsky gave me his visiting card and wrote asking that I be received immediately.

"I went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with this visiting card and handed it over. I was given an appointment for 8 o'clock in the evening... Neratov received me very kindly and in response to my petition ordered that the Constantinople embassy take the most energetic measures on behalf of the commission so that everything necessary should be given it.

"I thanked Neratov. I had still had business with Sevastianov, the director of posts and communications for the whole of Russia. I went to him and presented my petition asking that I be allowed to receive the post, the money, the parcels and the transfers. He shouted at me:

"That's just like you monks, creating a rebellion on Mount Athos!"

"He shouted and shouted at me. I simply stood and waited until he had finished. Then I began to say:

"You are the Minister and Director of the post of the whole of Russia, and you occupy this post in a lawful manner. If your junior officials came to you, beat you up and expelled you from this building, would you begin to make a fuss or not?"

"Of course I would."

"And that's just what I'm doing. Although I was not there, and they didn't beat me up, but have been in Odessa now since 1911 and entrusted with the capital and property. In Odessa I publish a journal entitled The Confirmation of the Faith.

"I gave him the journal.

"I print this journal, but I need money for paper and materials, and for printing. They send money for me to the post office, and besides, correspondence comes for the brothers and the pilgrims, and all that is lying in the post-office in Odessa, and by law in three months' time it all has to be sent back. For that reason I beseech you to allow me to be given all the correspondence which has been held up. You can decide not to give me the correspondence which is addressed to Igumen Jerome and David... until the affair is resolved.'

In the end the Minister gave in, and Fr. Pitirim returned to Odessa, received his mail, and began to prepare for the arrival of the commission. Two days later the commission arrived. On May 28, 1913, the commission departed for Constantinople together with Fr. Pitirim's monk Bessarion. Having arrived in Constantinople and received the blessing of the Patriarch to go ahead, the commission together with the Russian ambassador and 200 soldiers set off for Athos.

On June 3, the commission arrived at St. Panteleimon's monastery and went straight to the church, where the usual litiya was served. After this Archbishop Nikon began to give a sermon. The monks began to whistle and shout. Then the archbishop stopped his sermon, left the church and went to the refectory. There he was surrounded by groups of ten to fifteen monks who shouted at him and did not allow him to speak a word. Finally, the embassy official Shcherbin took the archbishop and Troitsky back to the ship. As they were leaving the shore, the name-worshipping monks began to hurl stones at the ship.

The next day the commission appealed to the Greek authorities. The local Athonite authorities then took it upon themselves to write to each monk individually and ask whether he recognized the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Russian Synod or whether he recognized the heretical brochure. The census lasted two weeks, after which it was revealed that 487 monks were on the side of the name-worshippers.

Then the Greeks decreed that they should be removed from Athos and demanded that the Russians send a steamer. The Russians sent the steamer "Kherson", which docked at the St. Panteleimon monastery on June 17. The heretical monks locked themselves into one block and refused to go out to the steamer. Then Russian soldiers and sailors decided to open the roof of the block and pour cold water through a hose onto the monks. They couldn't stand this, so they opened the door and were led out under convoy.

This left the monks of the St. Andrew skete, who had locked themselves up for six months. Bulatovich's assistant, Protodeacon Thaddeus, was caught by the Greeks and Shcherbin, and he agreed to persuade the monks of the St. Andrew skete to open their doors on condition that he himself would not be taken. Then Thaddeus went to the skete and told the monks that the Tsar had sent the steamer, that at the intercession of Bulatovich and the Tsar they

would be given either the Kiev-Caves Lavra or New Athos, whichever they wanted, and that each monk would be given 100 roubles per year. And he showed them a supposed gramota which confirmed this.

This delighted the monks, and they agreed to meet the commission at 10 o'clock the next day. So when the commission arrived, they were met triumphantly with the ringing of bells. But then, while a "Many Years" to the Tsar and Bulatovich was being chanted in the church, 100 sailors were let into the skete. They took up positions preventing any escape and promptly began to ask each monk whether he recognized the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Russian Synod, or the heretical brochure. It turned out that 183 were name-worshippers, while 345 recognized the authority of the Patriarch and Synod. They were then led quietly out to the steamer.

When they had been put onto the steamer, the commission introduced the exiled Igumen Jerome and the elders into the skete.

The steamer with the 736 name-worshipping monks arrived in Odessa, and each monk was then given money for his ticket back to his homeland and the opportunity to be registered in a Russian monastery if he recognized the authority of the Synod. But 26 people were detained in the St. Andrew podvorye until they were taken for trial in Moscow, where Fr. Pitirim was called to give evidence.

Bulatovich was not condemned at this trial because his godfather was close to the Tsar. And the Tsar and Tsaritsa were inclined to take pity on the exiled monks. So an appointment was made for Fr. Pitirim to see the Tsar and explain the matter to him. He explained the matter so well to the Tsar and Tsaritsa that the Tsar was persuaded of the rightness of the decision.

But Bulatovich then petitioned that his case be brought up in the State Duma. Since he was himself a left socialist revolutionary, the revolutionaries took his side. So Fr. Pitirim was again summoned to Petersburg to explain the matter before the Duma. Finally, the revolutionaries were persuaded to drop the matter. That was the end of the Bulatovich affair.

War and Revolution

In 1914 the war with Germany began, and all communications between Russia and Athos were cut off.

In Odessa Fr. Pitirim was the first to open a hospital for the war wounded, and was given awards for his work by the Red Cross, the Holy Synod and the War Ministry.

In February, 1917 he was summoned to Petersburg and asked to take over the administration of two monasteries in Bessarabia which belonged to the Athonite Bulgarian monastery of Zographou. The Bulgarian monks who

administered these monasteries had been forced to move to Ryazan province because of the war. So Fr. Pitirim was asked to take responsibility for the Moldavian monks who remained - which he did until the occupation of Bessarabia by the Romanians.

While in Petersburg, Fr. Pitirim was invited to attend the critical session of the Duma on February 23, at which Kerensky said: "Down with the Tsar and the ministers, they've been tormenting the people enough. The workers are starving and they cannot give them bread. We, the workers, shall do everything, we'll take the bread from the peasants who produce corn, give them a firm price of one rouble per pound and force them to take the corn to the railway stations. And if they don't bring it, then we'll go with arms. The workers will do everything."

On February 27, the first full day of the revolution, Fr. Pitirim left Petersburg for Odessa. In November, he was again in Petersburg and on 30 November he went to congratulate the newly-enthroned Patriarch Tikhon on the great and heavy obedience he had undertaken. The Patriarch received him kindly, and while they were talking the newly-appointed Metropolitans Agathangelus and Cyril arrived. From that time Fr. Pitirim always continued to correspond with these great leaders and future hieromartyrs of the Russian Church.

At the end of December, 1917, Fr. Pitirim was summoned by the Holy Synod to Petersburg in connection with the Bessarabian monasteries, and in June, 1918 the Patriarch summoned him to Moscow and entrusted him with a gramota to the Patriarch in Constantinople, from whom he had received no communications since November of the previous year.

Fr. Pitirim had to go to Lenin himself in order to obtain permission for himself and several wounded people to leave Moscow. With great difficulty he reached Kiev in August, where he visited the grave of the New Hieromartyr Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev before celebrating the feast of the Dormition with the new metropolitan, Anthony (Khrapovitsky). It was not until October, as the war was ending, that he reached Constantinople on a steamboat together with a large embassy from the Hetman of the Ukraine.

Having arrived at the residence of the Patriarch, Fr. Pitirim was told that the Ecumenical Patriarch had received Patriarch Tikhon's gramota already in November, 1917, and welcomed the restoration of the patriarchate in Russia.

He then petitioned for, and obtained, the transfer to himself of the seven Russian metochia (podvorya) in Constantinople, and proceeded to transfer 3700 Russian prisoners of war into them in preparation for their repatriation to Russia.

He continues the story in his biography: "On November 1st, 1918, the English, French, Italian and Greek fleets arrived in Constantinople and

occupied it, making it neutral from that day on. It was ruled by four powers: England, France, Italy and Turkey. On November 3rd, our prisoners were clothed by the English, who gave each man three pairs of underwear, shoes, soldiers' blouses, greatcoats, service caps, waterproof raincoats and provisions in the form of tinned food. The prisoners began to sell everything in the market and get drunk. Then the command went out from all the powers that no one was to buy English military clothes from prisoners of war. Typhus appeared among the prisoners and they began to die. I myself had to clothe the dead and go to the cemetery to sing the burial service. The whole of November passed in this way. I was tormented together with them. They began to pull up the floors, cut them up and burn them, and then boil themselves tea. There was any amount [of wood] in the courtyard, but they didn't take that, but burned the floors in the house. Then I began to ask the powers to allow me to bring twenty-four people from Athos, three for each podvorye. They gave me leave to go to Athos.

"Of the 700 prisoners who had arrived in Odessa, the majority turned out to be Russians, not Ukrainians. The Hetman's authority refused to receive them and began to return them to Constantinople.

"When I received the document enabling me to go to Athos, only military vessels went there. It was impossible for me to leave unless I could bring two monks from Odessa to go with me. When the monks arrived, I left them to look after the podvoryes instead of me while I myself left on December 12th on a military vessel to Thessalonica, and from there to Athos by mule. I had to go for four days over hills and through forests. I found a driver and agreed with him, but since it rained heavily during the night he refused. Then I decided to go on a French steamboat which went to Kovana for wood for the armies. This steamboat passed by Athos. I got on the steamboat with a Greek, a monk from the Panteleimon monastery. The captain of the steamboat, a Frenchman, took an interest in me and called me into his cabin and began to ask me about what was happening in Russia. I couldn't speak French, so the Greek translated. We sat there the whole night. I didn't ask the captain to drop me off at Athos. At ten in the morning the mountain of Athos appeared. The captain suddenly turned the steamboat towards Athos. I don't remember what happened to me: such tearful joy, I hadn't been on Athos for eight years, I had experienced such sorrow; I had been separated from Athos since 1914.

"At three in the afternoon the ship came up to the quay of Daphni. The captain asked me about my return journey. I said that I would return in two weeks. He said that on January 7/20 he would drop by for me on his return journey. After this they let down the small boats and let us out on the quayside. Then I sent the Panteleimon monk to the Panteleimon monastery to tell them about my arrival, and after two hours they came for me on horses and at six o'clock in the evening, on the eve of the Nativity of Christ, I arrived at the Panteleimon monastery. They met me so triumphantly and with such joy: none of them knew whether I was alive or dead. They took me straight to the abbot of the monastery. He, like all the monastics, was amazed. I told

them how I had arrived there, and they all listened with amazement. They gave me something to eat, but there was no time to eat - I was talking to them the whole time. After one-and-a-half hours I said:

"Take me to my community, the St. Andrew skete."

"But under no circumstances would they let anyone out at night. They said they would take me the next day. I promised that afterwards I would come and tell them everything, but they said:

"No one will go with you on the eve of the feast."

"I said that I would go alone, only would they give me a mule or a horse. They gave me a mule which went each day to Karyes to bring provisions for the members of the Athonite Synod. So the mule knew the road. It was dark and foggy. I left the Panteleimon monastery. Along the whole route I met only three desert-dwellers in various places. The mule brought me to Karyes, where it used to bring provisions, but wouldn't go a step further. Then I got off the mule and went in front of it, leading it. We arrived at our community, I tied the mule to the pavilion, went up to the gates and knocked. A monk opened the gate. He didn't know me. He asked who was there. I replied: 'One of ours.' He opened up and I went in. But since he didn't know me, he said:

"Who are you? You're not one of ours."

"But I said: 'No, I am one of yours.'"

"He got frightened and said:

"Go away, otherwise they'll rebuke me for letting in a stranger."

"I asked: 'Who is now the oldest gate-keeper in the community?'"

"Fr. Archippus," he replied.

Fr. Archippus was not to be found, he had left on some business. I asked the monk at the gate to tell him that such-and-such a monk had arrived, and then myself went out of the gates and began to untie the mule and my baggage. When Fr. Archippus arrived, his assistant told him that some stranger had arrived. Fr. Archippus came out and began to ask me:

"Who are you?"

"I replied: 'It's me.'"

"He again asked: 'But who *are* you?'"

"Well, I'm me," I replied.

"When I said: 'Well, I'm me,' he recognized my voice, fell at my feet and said:

"'Give the blessing.'

"Then we greeted each other and kissed each other.

"'Is the abbot well?' I asked.

"He replied that he was sick.

"'Look, don't tell anyone that I've arrived,' I said.

"Then we went to the guest-house. We went to the buffet, where the guest-master Protodeacon Stratonicus was reading his rule. When I opened the door and went in, his book fell out of his hands. He only stood there and looked at me.

"'What are you looking at me like that for?' I said. 'It's Fr. Pitirim.'

"'Is it you, or a vision?'

"I assured him that it was me and we greeted each other. Then I said:

"'Give me a room with a window onto the courtyard so that I can see how the monks go to church.'

"He gave me a room and offered some tea.

"But I said: 'First you go to Vladimir and Joasaphat, and quietly tell them that I have arrived, but tell noone else that I'm here.'

"First he went to Vladimir. He asked in what room I was and himself ran up to me. The guest-master then went to Joasaphat. Vladimir ran with such joy that he dropped a shoe off his foot, hurled himself at me, and we kissed each other and wept copiously. Meanwhile, Joasaphat arrived. We greeted each other and began to talk. I began to tell them my story in short. Meanwhile they gave me tea. While we were talking and drinking tea, the bell began to ring for the all-night vigil. Vladimir had to go and serve the sick abbot. They agreed not to tell anyone anything, but when the service began I would go into the church. Already the younger desert-dwellers were kissing the icons. I went up to kiss the icon of the feast of the Nativity, and one of the monks said to me:

"'Where are you going? Our own monks have not arrived yet, and you're going to kiss the icons?'

"I kissed the icon of the Mother of God and in accordance with Athosite custom in the middle of the church opposite the royal doors I made three bows, and then bowed first to the right kliros and then to the left and then to the brothers behind. When I was bowing to the right kliros, the chanter on the right kliros Maurice recognized me and said to the others:

"It's Pitirim."

"They replied that he had gone out of his mind: from where would Pitirim turn up there? I went straight into the sanctuary. Everyone was already reading the rule. I went up to the altar-table and bowed. All the clerics were standing and looking, none of them said a word. The sacrist, Hieromonk Florentius, decided to go up to me and asked:

"Fr. Pitirim, is it you or a vision?"

"I said that it was me, and then everyone began to greet me and we kissed each other. Then we began to pray. At the magnification I went out, and all the monks saw me. After the magnification I began to anoint all the monks. Then they were all convinced that it was me. After the all-night vigil had finished, I wanted to serve the early Liturgy, and six hieromonks and three hierodeacons served with me. Almost all the monks came for the early Liturgy. After the service they all invited me to have tea. I didn't go, but went into the guest-house together with all the clergy, chanters and all the other monks. There they poured out tea and while we were drinking I spoke. They all wanted to know what we had gone through during this period and how I had come to Athos.

"On the second day of the Nativity I went to the St. Elijah skete and stayed there for a day. I told them about their podvorye in Odessa and how the monks were living there. Then I returned to my community. The heads of the monasteries began to come to me and agreed that when we went they would each give me three people. I needed twenty-four people. I told them that a steamboat was coming for me, and we would go on January 7/20, 1919. Around the New Year people were sent to me from the Panteleimon monastery, and I went there and stayed there for two days. They took me on the cutter to the skete at Thebadia, where there was a church, so that I could see how they had finished the church, which my workmen had finished without me. On January 3rd I returned to my community again and remained there until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. On the feast I celebrated the Liturgy and began to get ready to go to the Pantaleimon monastery, where the steamboat would arrive. It was very hard for me to leave my community. I didn't want to go, but I was compelled by the fact that in Constantinople I had accepted the responsibility for some communities and I had to hand them over to those to whom they belonged. From Constantinople I would be able to return again to Athos, but the main thing was to fulfil the charge given me by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and bring the gramota from the Ecumenical

Patriarch to our Patriarch. And so I, for the sake of holy obedience, had to return to Russia and give this gramota to his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon.

"On January 7th the French steamboat put in at Athos. I boarded it with tears. While it was passing for two hours by Athos, I could not restrain myself and wept all the time. On January 8th I returned to Thessalonica, and on the 9th - to Constantinople. On January 16th there arrived the monks who had been appointed for the podvoryes. I handed over to them the acts whereby the podvoryes were received from the Turkish government, after which I could go to Russia.

"While I had been on Athos, the Bolsheviks had taken Odessa. There was no longer any Hetman. They began to send all the Russian and Ukrainian prisoners to Odessa. I left on the next steamboat. On January 29th I arrived in Odessa. There Soviet power was in control.

"In 1919 a certain Petlyura appeared and drove the Bolsheviks out of Odessa. They fought for more than a year. In 1920 armies began to come to Odessa from Crimea under the command of a certain General Imeling, and in February the Bolsheviks again took Odessa. This was already the last battle, and all the armies, and the intelligentsia, too, left Russia for Constantinople. In 1920 the war came to an end, only in Siberia there was Kolchak, who was also gradually retreating towards Manchuria and Vladivostok.

"We had nothing to live on in Odessa. I began to ask for some land to be given to us. We were sixty people at the podvorye. They gave us some land near the Yermievka station, fifty versts from Odessa, in the village of Kuzmenko. We had nothing: neither horses, nor ploughs, nor harrows. We began as follows. First six monks would go there. Tailors and cobblers in the villages began privately to sew boots, jackets and coats, and in exchange for this work each would plough as much land as he could, so that we could sow something. I also arrived on a pair of horses, as did the president of the village. They stopped near me. The president, Manuel Sidorenko, came up to me and said:

"Drop it and leave, so that nobody's here tomorrow.'

"I said: 'We won't go - the government has given us this land.'

"He struck me twice. A boy from Kotalovka was with me. I said to him:

"You see how Sidorenko beats me.'

"I see,' he replied.

"Go,' said Sidorenko for the second time.

"I will not leave the plough,' I replied.

"He hit me again, pushed me away with his feet and left. I finished ploughing as much as was necessary, sowed some oats and barley, and then started harrowing. The boy had gone home with the horses, so I got on a train and went to Odessa. I described everything in detail and went to the court. A week later, Sidorenko was arrested and driven on foot to Odessa. A trial was arranged, the boy and I were summoned to appear before it. When they interrogated the boy, he described everything that had happened in great detail. The judge said:

"If Archimandrite Pitirim forgives you, then fine. Otherwise you will be sentenced to three years, one year for every blow."

"He began to weep and begged me for forgiveness:

"I have children, I was drunk and don't remember anything."

"I forgave him, but the judge still gave him one year's forced labour. After this no one touched us. We began to work the land and live on it."

The Renovatist Heresy

"In 1921-22 they began to remove the silver and golden things from the churches. Patriarch Tikhon wrote that church vessels in which the services were carried out should not be given up, in accordance with the church typicon established by Anastasius and the Ecumenical Councils. When the Patriarch did not allow this, three bishops, Eudocimus, Antonin and Leonid, were found, together with the Protopriests Vvedensky, Krasnitsky, Boyarsky, Stadnik and others. They declared that they did not agree with the Patriarch, that his ban was unlawful, and that they allowed it. Then, on May 2nd, 1922, the Patriarch was arrested. He handed over his administration to Metropolitan Agathangelus, the first candidate [for the post of patriarchal locum tenens] who had been appointed by the Council [of 1917-18]. Agathangelus issued an epistle stating that he was accepting the patriarchal locum tenancy. 'Every ruling bishop must lead his flock in accordance with his hierarchical conscience, with which he gave his oath on being established as a bishop. But if he is in perplexity about anything, let him address my humility.'

"When the metropolitan issued this epistle, he was immediately arrested and exiled to Siberia. But Eudocimus, Antonin and Leonid then consecrated the protopriests Vvedensky, Krasnitsky, Stadnik and others to the episcopate, while they made themselves metropolitans. They created a Higher Church Administration which was confirmed by Soviet power. Then they became the ecclesiastical rulers throughout Russia. They created a programme [of twenty-eight points], in which it was said that 'our Lord Jesus Christ is not God, and the Mother of God is not a Virgin' and other points which go against our Church and the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and Apostles. That had

been [decided upon] earlier, when Arius did not recognize the Saviour and the Virgin Mother of God. Both he and all those who followed his teaching were condemned by the Ecumenical Councils and anathematized.

"Then in Moscow this Higher Church Administration began to demand that all the bishops and priests should recognize them, while all those who did not recognize them were thrown into prison. The three metropolitans: Vvedensky, Krasnitsky and Boyarksy went one evening to Metropolitan Benjamin [of Petrograd] and suggested that he also unite with them. He said:

"I was elected to this see by the people. Without the people I cannot decide. Tomorrow is Sunday, the people will be free. We shall ask the people to assemble at the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. Then you explain to them what renovationism and the Living Church is.'

"They all agreed to this. That same evening Metropolitan Benjamin phoned the deans of Leningrad that they should immediately announce in all the churches that some metropolitans had arrived from Moscow who had suggested that he accept renovationism

"Tomorrow, May 28th, I shall serve in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. At the end of the Liturgy the representatives of the Living Church will explain what renovationism and the Living Church is. And I shall ask the whole people and all the believers who are interested in Church matters to come at ten o'clock to the Lavra.'

"On May 28th, 1922, the people began to come together from the whole of Leningrad, and in front of the entrance they placed notebooks in which everyone's name could be recorded. From these notebooks it is calculated that 12,000 people gathered, as well as the clergy from every church. Three people: Archimandrite Macarius [the future bishop-confessor of the Catacomb Church], Hieromonk Seraphim and Hierodeacon German wrote down everything that happened and sent it to me in Odessa.

"At the end of the Liturgy Metropolitan Benjamin addressed the people, saying:

"There have arrived from Moscow representatives of the Living Church. They propose that we accept their teaching. I cannot do this without you, who elected me. So I have invited all of you who are interested in Church affairs. Listen carefully. They will explain their programme to you, and then I will express my own opinion!'

"Then, on the ambon, Metropolitan Benjamin appointed eight members of the presidium; the metropolitan himself, four clergy and three laymen. Then he declared the session open.

"Vvedensky came out onto the ambon. He began to explain his programme as follows:

"'Brothers and sister, up to now,' he said, 'we have been subject to the Tsar and the metropolitans. But now we are free, and we ourselves must rule the people and the Church. More than 1900 years have already passed since it was written for us that the Lord Jesus Christ was born from the Virgin Mary and is the Son of God. But that is not true We recognize the existence of the God of Sabaoth, about whom our whole Bible and all the prophets have written. And we recognize them. But Jesus Christ is not God. He was simply a very clever man. And it is impossible to call Mary, who was born of a Jewish tribe and herself gave birth to Jesus - the Mother of God and Virgin. And so now we have all recognized the existence of God, that is, the God of Sabaoth, and we must all be united: both Jews and Catholics must be a living people's church.'

"When he had said this, the whole people cried out:

"'We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and God, and we recognize the Mother of God to be a Virgin!'

"Then Krasnitsky came out and said:

"'Brothers and sisters, the baptism of small children has been accepted by us. But when the child is just born he does not know or understand anything. They baptize him, put a little cross on him, and he grows up with the obligation of wearing this cross and not taking it off. But when he has grown up, he will learn and know everything - the cross will be quite unnecessary for him. So we do not recognize the baptism of young children, and when he comes of age let him be baptized and wear a cross. In the same way we do not recognize marriage: it is unnecessary and wrong. Why bind people? It should be like this: they should get together, register a civil marriage, and if one doesn't like the other, then let them go off in search of another and let him take another woman. We have freedom now. So we do not recognize any saints or relics. Nor do we recognize monasticism. We don't need any monasticism. Before, bishops had to come from the monks. This is wrong, because a man cannot live without a woman, nor the woman without a man. Bishops must be married, and priests also. It used to be that if a priest's wife died he had to remain a widower until his death. That is wrong. Now there is freedom. We can take a second and a third wife.'

" Then Boyarsky came out. He said:

"'Although Vvedensky said that Jesus Christ is not God but a clever man, and the Mother of God is not a Virgin, I do not agree with this. I recognize that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Mother of God a Virgin... But baptism, marriage, holy relics, monasticism - I do not recognize!'

"When he had said this, the people cried out:

"'We do not need your explanations. We do not want your new Living Church'

"There was a disturbance and shouting among the people. Metropolitan Benjamin began to calm them down. When the people were settled, Metropolitan Benjamin said to them:

"'You have all heard all the explanations of the representatives of the Living Church. Perhaps there is someone who will agree to join them. But I cannot, because this is the same blasphemy which was previously preached by Arius and his followers. And so I, in accordance with the rules of the Apostles and the Ecumenical Councils am obliged to anathematize all the leaders of this living and new church and their followers.'

"Then he immediately turned towards the Royal Doors and said:

"'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and of the All-pure, immaculate and Ever-Virgin His Mother, the Birth-giver of God, I anathematize...'

"And there and then the protodeacon pronounced anathema on all the teachers and followers of the 'Living Church'. But while they were chanting anathema, Vvedensky, fled out of the sanctuary through a side-door into the courtyard of the Alexander-Nevisky Lavra, and informed the GPU by telephone of what had happened. But Metropolitan Benjamin began to preach and give further explanations to the people. While he was speaking, there appeared representatives of the Soviet authorities and arrested Metropolitan Benjamin and the four bishops and three laymen who had been appointed members of the presidium.

"Immediately, they took them out into Gorochovaya street, where the GPU was situated. All the people who had been in the Lavra went there and demanded that the authorities release the metropolitan and those who had been taken with him. The whole people gathered and towards the evening of May 28th about 30,000 people had gathered on the square of the GPU. No one left, they continued demanding their release, but the authorities did not release them. It was already late in the evening when the people were dispersed by a cavalry army.

"The Living Church was proclaimed in Leningrad on May 29th. If a bishop or priest wanted to join it he stayed where he was, while all those who did not join them were arrested and exiled. From this time it was announced to all the churches in Russia that now there was no longer any patriarchal rule in Russia, but only the Higher Church Administration - the HCA. This HCA's rule began to be accepted throughout Russia and they began to commemorate in the litanies, not the Patriarch, but the HCA. All the priests and several of

the bishops freely accepted this rule, but some of them were taking stock and waiting for a detailed explanation, and for that reason they commemorated neither the Patriarch nor the HCA. Some people knew who Metropolitan Eudocimus, Anthony and Leonid were and did not accept them, and the priest and bishops refrained for the time being. But Metropolitan Sergius, formerly of Finland, who was known to everyone since he had been a member of the former Synod under the Tsar, joined the HCA in June, 1922, and began to write to church journals that this was the only correct administration, the only canonical administration. In July these journals were distributed throughout the churches of Russia. Then all the priests and bishops began to accept the HCA and almost everyone accepted this administration and submitted to it, referring to the authority of Metropolitan Sergius. They all went over freely: only some believers from the monastics and a few priests refrained. But there were not many of them.

"I in Odessa was very upset and unhappy, but I did not commemorate the HCA for one day, although I did not know in detail what was happening in Moscow and Leningrad. On the same day, August 17th, I received letters from my brothers Archimandrite Macarius and Metropolitan Agathangelus. In Metropolitan Agathangelus' letter was an epistle in which it was said that he had taken [the administration of the Church] upon himself in accordance with the will and blessing of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, who had been arrested, and that 'I, as the first candidate chosen by the Council in accordance with the will of God, take upon myself this great work of the administration of the Church of the whole of Russia, and I give my full blessing to every bishop, archimandrite and priest to lead his flock along the true path which has been given to us by the Holy Apostles and the Ecumenical Councils. Everybody must firmly take stock of the church situation. Now the so-called Living Church, in which the HCA [is involved?], has been founded and confirmed by the authorities in our land. But I remain by the apostolic conciliar decrees, and if you are perplexed about anything, address my humility.' There was nothing more from Metropolitan Agathangelus. But Archimandrite Macarius wrote from Leningrad everything that I have indicated above, about how Metropolitan Benjamin anathematized the HCA. Immediately I received the epistle from Metropolitan Agathangelus and Macarius, I went to the ruling bishop of Odessa and Kherson, Alexis. I gave him to read the epistle I had received, and the detailed explanation from Leningrad of what had been happening there in the month of May. When he had read it all, Vladyka ordered the secretary of the Odessa-Kherson diocese, Nicholas Vladimirovich Chishchakov, to be invited there, and gave him, too, to read it. Then immediately, on August 19th (it was a Friday, at two o'clock in the afternoon), they decided to instruct all the Odessa clerics and the spiritual presidents, i.e. of the church councils, to come to the Dormition church. They all assembled and the epistle from Leningrad was read out to all. It was decreed that the epistle of Metropolitan Agathangelus should be reprinted on typewriters. On Saturday the 20th it was announced throughout the city of Odessa that [the epistle] would be read out on the Sunday, so that all the people should know what was being done in the Church and in the

diocese. On the evening of the Saturday Bishop Alexis telephoned all the deans, telling them to come to him on the Sunday, but that they should not read the epistle for the time being. And I was told by phone that I should not explain anything to the people for the time being. But I did not obey the bishop - I proclaimed it at the early and later Liturgies. The people dispersed, and the news spread throughout the city about what Metropolitan Agathangelus had written and the fact that in Leningrad the HCA had been excommunicated from the Church and anathematized by Metropolitan Benjamin.

"On August 23rd, Vladyka Alexis (Bazhanov) summoned me to his quarters. Angrily he said:

"You were told on the telephone that you should not for the time being proclaim it to the people, but you did proclaim it. Does that mean that you do not submit to your diocesan bishop?"

"I replied that in the Dormition church it had been decreed that the news should be proclaimed to the people on Sunday, and should be sent separately to each church in the diocese, so that the people should know what was being done in our Church.

"I find it unnecessary to proclaim it for the time being," replied Vladyka.

"That means that you agree to join the HCA and commemorate them," I said, "but I have not commemorated them and will not commemorate them in the future."

"I ban you from serving," said the bishop.

"I replied: 'I do not recognize your ban - it means that you, too, are a renovationist.'"

"He said that he was not a renovationist.

"I objected: 'If you were not a renovationist, you would not have rescinded the decree of Metropolitan Agathangelus. And from today I do not recognize you and will not commemorate you at the litanies'... And I left Alexis.

"I went home to the podvorye, gathered together the five monks and three hierodeacons, and declared to them that from that day I would not be commemorating the bishop of Odessa and Kherson. I told them everything in detail, that he had forbidden me to serve and that I did not recognize him and that he was a renovationist. Out of all the eight people present, only one hierodeacon did not agree with me.

"I will commemorate Bishop Alexis," he said.

"If you want to commemorate Alexis,' I replied, 'go to him and serve there, but I will not allow you to serve with me in the podvorye.'

"I did not allow him to serve, and he went to the bishop's house, where he served. From August 23rd Alexis was not commemorated with us in the podvorye. Nor was the HCA. The whole city knew about that in the St. Andrew podvorye Archimandrite Pitirim had forbidden his monks from commemorating Alexis of Odessa and Kherson.

"On October 25th, I was arrested and taken to the GPU. I went with joy for the purity of the faith. They kept me there for seventeen days for interrogations: why did I not recognize or commemorate Alexis? I explained that I was from old Athos, there I was tonsured into monasticism and ordained as a church-server by a Greek bishop and I was in obedience to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. According to our Church law, one must commemorate the person one is in obedience to. After interrogation I was freed.

"Vladyka Alexis was unhappy. He summoned a Diocesan Congress for November 7, 1923 [1922?], at which it was decreed that the Athonite podvorye should be closed and handed over to the Administration of the Odessa-Kherson Diocese, since it was a menace for the world.

"During this period, on January 2nd, 1923, I saw a vision: it was as if I was in my community on Athos and the reposed Archimandrite Joseph was blessing me for a new obedience. He was making me a bishop, vesting me in a hierarchical mantia and omophorion, and putting a staff in my hand, while by the other column on the left stood the Apostle Andrew, who was also blessing me. And they put me on the left kliros of the church. I looked at them with such joy - at my elder Joseph and the Apostle Andrew. The service continued for some time until suddenly two people came up to me and said:

"Let's go. You have been appointed our bishop. Everybody's waiting for you there!"

"They took me by the hands and led me out of the church, and suddenly a simple peasant cart drawn by a pair of horses appeared. I kept on thinking how I was going to sit in this carriage in my mantia and omophorion and staff. Then suddenly I was in the carriage, while behind me there was a carpet and railings. The driver set off, and we left my community and Athos. We went over the sea on the horses. It was as if we were crossing dry land. Suddenly the inhabitants brought me up to a large church. They were ringing the bells as one does when meeting a bishop. We went up to the church and again the same two people who had taken me out on Athos appeared. They took me and led me into the church. When we entered, there was a lot of dirt and dust in the vestibule. I said to them:

"Where have you brought me?"

"They replied that there was a clean, good place with them. We went up the left-hand side-chapel and came to the iconostasis. There were no icons - they had been broken up. And suddenly a priest came out from the central altar with a cross, in the way priests always meet bishops. I took the cross and kissed it. Suddenly there appeared in front of me a boy of extraordinary beauty, who said to me:

"So you've come to us - good. We are all alive and we shall live, and you will be with us.'

"I said: 'Is that all?'

"He said: 'That's all.'

"He was not tall. I said to those who had brought me:

"'Raise me up, I shall kiss him.'

"They raised me up. I asked:

"'What is your name?'

"'I am called Malachi,' he replied with a smile, and immediately disappeared.

"The third of January was indeed the commemoration of the holy Prophet Malachi. Then they led me into the central chapel, where on the left side the steps of the ambon were broken. They lifted me up and I found myself on the ambon of the central chapel. The priest went into the altar, and I turned to the people. I wanted to pronounce some words of welcome, and I saw that the middle of this church was covered with Persian carpets, and there were no people. But the right-hand side-chapel was full of people, and they all wanted to hear what I would say. I began to speak as follows:

"'Dear brothers and sisters, I have been appointed as your pastor here. I don't know any of you, and you don't know me. I have to say to you that our Church administration here in Russia is not canonical and they do not want to stand for the purity of the Apostolic Church.'

"And I began to weep and sob, and immediately woke up.

"Two weeks later, on January 17th, 1923, on the feast of St. Anthony the Great, I had served the all-night vigil, gone into my cell and had only lain down to sleep a little when I had the following vision: I was going into the cathedral church of Odessa to the right-hand doors of the right-hand chapel. I went - and saw no one. On the right-hand iconostasis there were no icons - they had all been broken. I went into the sanctuary and kissed the altar-table.

The altar-table was in its usual place. I made three prostrations and began to kiss the altar-table. At that moment the Prophet Malachi appeared between the altar and the high place and said to me:

"Look what's happening in the Church now.'

"I went into the central chapel to kiss the altar-table, went up to the altar and saw that the whole sanctuary was full of men and women crowding round the altar-table. When I was moving across to the central chapel where the people were, a Jew was reading on the altar - I don't know what he was reading. I asked him:

"What have you done with the church?'

"It's according to the new style,' he said.

"At that moment I saw a vested protodeacon standing on the ambon, while in the middle of the church on the cathedra stood a bishop and many people. At that moment the protodeacon intoned: "Blessed be the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The chanters chanted: "Amen." All those who were in the sanctuary, men and women, were praying. Then they lay down and in the lying position sang with a laugh: "Lord, have mercy." Then I woke up, shaking all over.

"In March, 1923, Metropolitan Eudocimus, the head of the renovationist church, himself came to Odessa to convince me to accept renovationism. I remained alone. In Odessa the people had stopped going to church, they went instead to our podvorye. During the Great Fast up to 3000 people came to us every day to receive communion. Then Bishop Alexis wrote to Eudocimus in Moscow that in Odessa Archimandrite Pitirim had not accepted renovationism and did not commemorate the HCA, and that all the people were going to him. Then Eudocimus himself came to me. He invited me to come to him without fail. I came, but did not take his blessing. He invited me to sit down. They, Eudocimus and Alexis, were sitting on the sofa. In the bishop's residence Eudocimus addressed me as follows:

"Father Archimandrite! Why do you not commemorate the HCA of your bishop?'

"I replied: 'Your Eminence, I cannot commemorate the HCA because all of them have been excommunicated from the Church and anathematized by Metropolitan Benjamin, who also excommunicated and anathematized all those who confess the new Living Church, in whose programme it is said that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, and the Mother of God is not a Virgin. This confession has been condemned by the Ecumenical Councils and anathematized. Moreover, on May 28th in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Leningrad your brothers Vvedensky, Krasnitsky and Boyarsky, in the presence of 12,000 people, confessed and explained what the Living Church

was. And you are subject to expulsion. Benjamin excommunicated you lawfully. You shot Benjamin, four bishops and three laymen!

"And I began to tell them that I knew everything and had read everything. And since Vladyka Alexis had forbidden the epistle of Metropolitan Agathangelus to be proclaimed to the people, I had stopped commemorating him.

"Eudocimus said to me: 'Since you cannot commemorate the HCA and Alexis, remain with your convictions, but tell your hieromonks that they should commemorate the HCA and Bishop Alexis in the litanies, so as not to disturb the people.'

"I categorically refused.

"'For this they will put you in prison,' he said, 'close your podvorye and expel all your monks from Odessa. How will you answer before your Athonites, who have entrusted you with both the podvorye and the monks?'

"'You understand that you are already excommunicated. If I did not know that, I could still do as you wish,' I replied.

"Eudocimus said: 'You make a compromise. With us in Moscow the monks of the Panteleimon monastery and their abbot have agreed, while they themselves remain with their convictions. The people did not know this and does not know it now, and they are not disturbed.'

"I replied: 'The fact that the Panteleimon monks have made a compromise with you is their business, but I will not do and cannot do it. In our Church there can be no compromises.' And then I left them.

"Three days later they sent Bishop Gerasimus of Boltovsk to me. He was with me for more than an hour, constantly trying to persuade me. I did not agree and he left.

"Two days later they sent Archbishop Pimen of Podolsk to me. He came and tried to persuade me. He said:

"'Because of your stubbornness they'll take the whole of this podvorye. They won't even give you a bed!'

"When he said this I began to laugh. I said to him:

"'Vladyko! Shall we really take beds with us into the Kingdom of Heaven?'

"Then he got up and said: 'Forgive me, I shall not speak with you any longer,' and left.

"After this Eudocimus appointed another bishop for Odessa and took Alexis Bazhanov away with him to Moscow, where he made him Metropolitan of Kazan.

"A week after their departure, on Palm Sunday, we were serving the all-night vigil. At three o'clock the GPU arrived and sealed our churches. In the morning the people arrived, but the churches were closed, so the people stood in the street until 12 o'clock. All the streets were full of people. The police asked them:

"Disperse - all the churches are open, go and pray there.'

"But the people did not move. At 12 o'clock the cavalry were summoned. They dispersed the people and emptied the streets. Up to Holy Thursday we were still in the podvorye, but on Holy Thursday they moved all of us out of the St. Andrew podvorye to Ilinskoye, where they had appointed their own priests in the church. Since none of the monks would go into the church, the order was given to all the monks to leave Odessa and go wherever they wanted. All the monks chose me to go to Moscow and intercede for all the Athonite monks to be allowed to go to Old Athos, and if permission was not given, to be given a monastery somewhere in Russia. I wrote down the names of all of them - there were 180 people. I wrote down the Christian names and surnames of each of them, how long they had lived on Athos and in which community. I arrived in Moscow and went to Kalinin. Kalinin said that he could not do this, but that everything depended on his colleagues' opinions of the matter. And he sent me to Sakhorov, who, having looked into the matter, sent me to Krasin. Krasin did not receive me for two weeks. Every day I went to him. His secretary proposed that I go to Chicherin and get a note from him to Krasin. And he told me that I should come to him at eight o'clock in the evening. Krasin was due to arrive a nine o'clock. I arrived and sat in the reception room. At 9 Krasin came in with a comrade, with whom he talked until 10.30. After that they told him about me and Krasin received me. Having read my petition and the list [of names], he said:

"I cannot decide this myself. It has to be passed to a session of my colleagues.'

"And he told his secretary to make a note and give me the number of my case. Krasin told me to go to Odessa, and after the session the decision would be sent to me there. They could cope with things only one at a time. I left Moscow with nothing. On arriving in Odessa in May, I told everything to the monks. They began to disperse - some to their homeland, wherever they wanted. In June, papers came from Moscow allowing the monks to go to Athos and dividing them into three groups of sixty monks each. All those sent away were specified by name exactly as on the list of Archimandrite Pitirim. He himself was allowed to leave with the last group. When the papers arrived in Odessa, there were thirty monks there. The Odessa GPU said that in view of the fact that we were so few they could not allow us to leave. So we stayed.

"In 1923 the renovationists convened their council in Moscow, at which they decreed that Patriarch Tikhon should be deprived of his patriarchal rank and even his monasticism and turned into the layman Basil Bellavin. They sent their decree to the Patriarch, so that he should know that he was a layman and should sign the papers and submit to them. Patriarch Tikhon wrote on the declaration: 'Patriarch Tikhon has read this'. When Metropolitan Sergius [Stragorodsky] saw that nothing was gained from the council, and that Patriarch Tikhon remained the lawful patriarch, he left the administration and the Living Church and HCA. He came to Patriarch Tikhon asking to be forgiven and received as penitent novice. The Patriarch said to him:

"I forgive you since you repent, but you will have to be judged by a Council of the Orthodox Church.'

"And he sent him to Nizhni-Novgorod to turn over a new leaf there.

"In 1923 I [together with all the brothers] was exiled from Odessa to a farm fifty versts from the city [in the village of Yeremevka], where we had previously worked the land. In 1924, thirty-seven protopriests recognized their mistake. The people were not going to church. They then began to write that they were again returning to Patriarch Tikhon. But in Odessa there was no Orthodox bishop. [The nearest] was in Kharkov, by the name of Onuphrius, but in Odessa itself there was only a renovationist bishop. Patriarch Tikhon blessed Archimandrite Pitirim, who was living near Odessa, to go to Odessa and receive these thirty-seven protopriests. He said that they should give an oath and ask forgiveness of the whole people in the church. I went to Odessa with the blessing of Patriarch Tikhon with the letter he had sent me... I united them [to the Church] on four Sundays, dividing them into groups of nine. They repented. I read the prayer of absolution over them and united them again to our Church. I asked the people to accept them and go with them to church without doubting. A month after this, the Soviet authorities ordered me to leave even the farm and told me that I should not dare to live anywhere in Ukraine. And they took from me a written undertaking concerning my future place of residence. I indicated the town of Glazov, in Vyatka province. I went to Patriarch Tikhon in Moscow to tell him of my position. The Patriarch only smiled and said:

"It's good that you have come. I am now going to make you a bishop [of Yaransk]. We need many people here, but I don't have anyone.'

"But I refused, I did not agree and said that I couldn't.

"He said: 'You can't refuse - this is holy obedience. We need bishops, and we can't get them anywhere.'

"I began to ask him to let me go home and rest in my homeland.

"After that, let the will of God be done, I shall carry out the obedience. In 1917 I came to bring you a gramota from the Ecumenical Patriarch, which was considered impossible. But by your holy prayers and blessing I succeeded in everything and now I ask you only to let me go to my homeland and see my relatives."

The Sergianist Heresy

"I was two nights in the Donskoy monastery, where he [Patriarch Tikhon] was accommodated in the small church. There were three rooms attached to it. He served his confinement in this church with the double eastern doors, and when he was released he did not want to live in the patriarchal apartment. So he stayed in the place where he had been confined. On two evenings he invited me to his room, and there we discussed everything. It was then that I asked him:

"Your Holiness, how did you receive Metropolitan Sergius? On what conditions?"

"He said to me: 'I received him as a penitent novice, he cannot rule the Church until a Council. And he must bear whatever punishment the Council gives him. Sergius agreed to this.'

"As for me, [the Patriarch] blessed me to go and rest in my homeland, after which I was to return to him in Moscow. I was with his Holiness the Patriarch in October, 1924, and on December 7, the Patriarch wrote an epistle to all the clergy of the Church. There it was written:

"Whoever was in the administration of the Living Church in the HCA cannot take up any further administrative position in our Church. And not only can he not be an administrator: he cannot have a vote during a Council.'

"After the publication of this epistle, the living-churchmen took other measures. In January, 1925, they decided to kill him [the Patriarch]. A criminal forced his way into the bedroom in his residence. At two o'clock in the morning the Patriarch went out of the bedroom into another room to pray, while his cell-attendant James went into the bedroom and began to lay the bed. The criminal thought that this was the Patriarch and killed James on the spot, but was himself arrested. After the murder of James, the layman Straton and the protodeacon Mark were appointed to be with the Patriarch.

"The Patriarch continued his work. On the Annunciation, having celebrated the Liturgy, he was completely healthy. At four o'clock Metropolitan Seraphim of Tver came to him. The Patriarch told him that he would serve the next day, but Seraphim said:

"Do not serve, your Holiness, have a rest. You are very tired and weak."

"Seraphim left at eight o'clock in the evening.

"The Patriarch felt well and was getting ready to serve the next day. But suddenly there was a ring at the door. When they opened the door, a doctor entered. The doctor said:

"Your Holiness! You rang us and asked us to come since you were weak. Here I am to examine you and prescribe you some medicines."

"The Patriarch said: 'But no. I feel fine.'

"Okay," said the doctor, 'but just allow me to examine you. Your pulse is weak. You must drink some medicine.'

"The Patriarch asked: 'Why have you come and not my doctor, who always looks after me?'

"He's not at home now, he's on call, but I was at home - so here I am," replied the doctor. 'In an hour's time I shall send you a mixture.'

"An hour after the doctor had left, at ten o'clock in the evening, Mark brought the Patriarch a mixture and said that the doctor had ordered him to drink a spoonful.

"Give it to me," said the Patriarch.

"Mark poured out a spoonful of the mixture and the Patriarch drank it. Immediately he began to vomit (be sick). The cell-attendants Straton and Mark rang the doctor. After a few minutes the doctor appeared. The Patriarch was lying down.

"What's the matter with him?" asked the doctor.

"The doctor prescribed a mixture and ordered us to give him one spoonful," replied Mark.

"The doctor demanded to see the mixture immediately. They gave it him. On seeing it, the doctor threw up his hands and immediately sent the Patriarch to hospital. Mark and Stratonicus took him out and put him in the carriage. They got in themselves and accompanied him to the hospital. There they gave him some milk, and prepared some baths, but nothing helped. Within an hour and a half Patriarch Tikhon had died. The cell-attendants took him back. At three o'clock the Patriarch was laid out as a corpse at home. I write this from the words of the cell-attendants Mark and Stratonicus, who were with the Patriarch in the place of the murdered Yakov.

[This version of events by Schema-Bishop Peter does not agree with the usually accepted account of the death of the Patriarch and for that reason it may give rise to doubts, first of all because it is well-known that before his death the Patriarch lived in a clinic and died in a room he had taken. - Comment of the editors of Tserkovnaya Zhizn'.]

"In 1925 I was again in Moscow, where I met the cell-attendants [of the Patriarch] and asked how the Patriarch had died. In 1924, when I had been with the Patriarch, he had commanded me to leave my address for Metropolitan Peter. I arrived in my homeland of Glazov, where all my relatives were very glad to see me. I remained there for four months. On learning in Ufa province that I was in Glazov, my cousins and nephews came to visit me. Nun Eustalia came to Glazov and asked me to go and see them. That was in 1925. I arrived in Ufa, went to the church and asked:

"Are your people old-churchmen or renovationists?"

"They replied that they were old-churchmen. [But] in the church they did not commemorate Patriarch Tikhon. I asked the priest:

"Why are you old-churchmen, but do not commemorate Patriarch Tikhon?"

"He replied: 'We are doing what Vladyka John of Ufa ordered us to do.'

"My relatives invited me to serve. The church was in the house of my nephew, while the priest was staying in the flat of my other nephew. I refused to serve with them since they were new-churchmen and did not commemorate Patriarch Tikhon. My nephew Demetrius took me to Ufa so that I could ask John why he was not commemorating Patriarch Tikhon. I went to the Nikolayevsky church, where John was serving. When vespers had finished, they told him that some archimandrite had arrived from Odessa. John immediately invited me to his flat to drink some tea and eat something. During tea we talked. He asked why I had come here. I said that I had relatives here. Then I asked:

"What, are you new-churchmen? Why do you not commemorate Patriarch Tikhon?"

"No, no, we are old-churchmen, but we do not commemorate him because we wrote to the Patriarch and he did not bless us - we do not have to commemorate him,' he said.

"That cannot be,' I said. 'It is never permissible not to commemorate the Patriarch. Now we can find out: where they commemorate Patriarch Tikhon they are old-churchmen, and where they do not they are renovationist.'

"But he continued to assure me that he was an old-churchman and I did not talk to him anymore about this. I asked his permission to serve at my relatives' in Sophronovka village. He kindly gave permission. We ate and said goodbye. I left for Sophronovka. I began to serve on the first Sunday. After the Liturgy I gave the people a sermon on renovationism, how the icons had been thrown out and returned again. The people learned that I had come from Athos and that I was an archimandrite. When they heard that I was commemorating Patriarch Tikhon, which was done nowhere at that time, they began to come to me from all the villages. I served throughout the fast and at Pascha. The wife of the priest of this church then objected to her husband:

"Why do you allow the archimandrite to serve? Now he will take your place and we will be left without a crust of bread.'

"She wrote a letter to Bishop John, and sent it with her mother-in-law to Ufa. In it she pointed out that the archimandrite was commemorating Patriarch Tikhon and that the people were coming to him from all the villages. The bishop forbade me to serve, saying:

"Why are you taking the last crust of bread from a poor priest? Come to me and I will give you a place. John's card was given to me at Mid-Pentecost and after this I stopped serving. I decided to go to Vyatka and stay there for a while.

"At that time some people came to me from Kuznetsk, asking me to tonsure the sister of Michael Panchenko into the mantia. He had two sisters: one had tuberculosis and it was impossible to take her to Ufa. Bishop John blessed her to receive the tonsure from Archimandrite Pitirim. I went to Kuznetsk and tonsured Helen before Pentecost. The priest John Lysenko was there. He was very ill and was unable to serve. I served the feast of the Trinity with them. I was accompanied by my niece, Nun Eustalia, who had come to see me in my homeland in Glazov. In Priest Lysenko's house I served Small Vespers. Five people came during the evening: Nun Maria, Michael Panchenko, Cosmas Panchenko, the church warden and the missionary Athanasius Chemenev. They handed me a letter from Archbishop Andrew which read:

"Bring me one of the monks and I will make him a bishop. Bishop John is a real renovationist. You are doing well in not recognizing him.'

"They said that about 3000 people were not going to the church where the priests of Bishop John who did not commemorate Patriarch Tikhon were serving.

"Bishop John wrote a declaration for distribution throughout the diocese, in which he said:

"Up to this time we have been in darkness, but now Soviet power has given us light. In the past we bowed down to the golden calf, but now we have complete freedom. Priests do not have to give sermons in the churches, they can speak openly on the squares.'

"This was signed by Bishop John. When I read this declaration, then it really dawned on me that the poor people knew nothing about what was happening in our church and what kind of church-servers we had. I said that I could not agree to this exploit without the lot and the will of God. They said to me:

"If you do not agree, then you will answer for all of us before the Lord. We shall not go to these churches.'

"I said: 'Then choose three candidates. Tomorrow is Trinity Sunday, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Whoever the Lord indicates to you will be your bishop.'

"They were very glad and agreed. Then they appointed me as the first candidate, Theophanes, who served in the French factory, as the second, and since no third monastic could be found they also appointed Michael Panchenko, who was married. They said: if the lot falls to him, they will both be tonsured, and have already agreed about this. I also agreed and wrote down the three lots. On the day of the feast of the Holy Trinity we asked the Lord to indicate a Bishop for us. At the end of the service, the Liturgy and the Vespers, I took the three lots from the altar, put them in the tabernacle, and then shook them. They decided that the lot should be drawn by the leader of the group of missionaries Chemetov. The lot fell on me. Everybody was joyful, but I wept bitterly, knowing that I was going to sufferings. But I submitted to the will of God. On the second day of Trinity I again celebrated the Liturgy, and immediately after they accompanied me with the missionary Chemetov to Archbishop Andrew, who was in Ten-Zhen in Asia [Tadzhikistan]. On the train travelling with us were Archimandrite Anthony Milovidov and Hieromonk Rufinus Brekhov, who were also due to be consecrated to the episcopate.

"We were consecrated by Archbishop Andrew of Ufa and Bishop Lev [Cherepanov] of Nizhne-Tagilsk. [According to one source, Patriarch Tikhon had sent a letter to Archbishop Andrew telling him to consecrate Fr. Pitirim.] On June 6th Anthony was consecrated Bishop of Ustkovsk [Ust-Katavsk, in other sources]. On June 7 Rufinus was consecrated Bishop of Ustkovsk [this is probably an error in the title of Bishop Rufinus, who is in other places called Bishop of Satkinsk]. And on June 8 [1925] I, Pitirim, was consecrated Bishop of Nizhegorod [and Urzhuma].

"From Ten-Zhen I went straight to Odessa to pick up the things I had left there. From Odessa I went to Sophinevskoye, where I stayed with relatives. I arrived at Uteryak station, and from Sophronov I had to go four kilometres

out of my way on horseback. They found for me a Bashkiri driver and he arrived at the station on exactly the same carriage which I had seen in a dream in 1923 on the 2nd of January, in which I had been consecrated to the episcopate. I had been consecrated to the episcopate and a Bashkir drove me to the village of Sophronovka.

"While I was on my way to Ten-Zhen, I received a registered parcel from Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, in which he described in detail how before the death of Patriarch Tikhon he had been confirmed [as patriarchal locum tenens] by the Patriarch until the return from exile of Metropolitan Agathangelus or Metropolitan Cyril, whichever of them should be released first. In Moscow 67 bishops had confirmed him at an assembly. The bishops were all mentioned by name, while the third candidate, Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky] had by this time already gone abroad.

"In 1925 Metropolitan Peter took upon himself the administration of the Church. Then, in September, Metropolitan Sergius convened a Council, at which they decreed that all should unite into one: the renovationists, the [Ukrainian] self-consecrators and the Church of Metropolitan Peter. Metropolitan Peter did not agree to this, nor could he according to the apostolic and conciliar decrees. The renovationists had already been excommunicated and anathematized, while the self-consecrators had also uncanonically consecrated themselves, which has never been known in our Orthodox Church. But Metropolitan Peter was immediately arrested for his disagreement with the impious council. He spent two days in prison and handed over the administration of the Church to some unknown person. A group of eight bishops was with Metropolitan Peter, forming a Synod. The head of this group, and the oldest, was Archbishop Gregory of Sverdlovsk. They were waiting for Metropolitan Peter to announce to whom he was handing over the administration. But at this point Metropolitan Peter was visited by Tuchkov, who been put in charge of Church affairs by the authorities. Tuchkov was with some bishop or other, I don't know who. Tuchkov ordered Metropolitan Peter to hand over the administration to Metropolitan Sergius. Peter said that he could not do that since Metropolitan Sergius had been in a member of the [renovationist] Higher Church Administration, and because in December, 1924 there had been published an epistle of Patriarch Tikhon to the whole Russian flock in which it was said that whoever had been in the HCA could not be part of the administration of the Orthodox Church. Then Tuchkov said that Metropolitan Peter should hand over the administration to this group of eight bishops. Sergius would join this group, but would not do any administration. Metropolitan Peter agreed to Tuchkov's demand to write this and hand over the administration to the group of bishops. But it was not handed over to the bishops, but to Sergius. Sergius was at that time in Gorky [Nizhni-Novgorod], and he did not join this group of hierarchs, but collected several bishops of his own there. Two weeks passed. Gregory in Moscow knew nothing, and he sent a second time to Metropolitan Peter. The latter replied that already two weeks before

he handed the administration over to them, and that 'the group must rule, and Metropolitan Sergius must join this group'.

"When Archbishop Gregory received this information from Metropolitan Peter, he sent two bishops of his group from Moscow to Metropolitan Sergius in Gorky. They had a letter in which he wrote:

"Why do you not come to us in Moscow and give us no information?"

"Sergius replied: 'I don't recognize any of you and will not come to Moscow.'

"The two bishops returned from Sergius and explained to Sergius' reply to Gregory and his group. Then Gregory and his group informed Metropolitan Peter that Sergius would not come to Moscow and declared that he recognized none of them and had already registered his council [with the authorities]. Then Metropolitan Peter handed over the whole administration to Archbishop Gregory of Sverdlovsk and his group. When Archbishop Gregory received this communication from Metropolitan Peter, he registered his group. That was how three Synods came to be formed with us in Russia: the Renovationist, the Sergianist and the Gregorian. But no one in the whole of Russia knows this. Then they began to divide the Church into Gregorians, Sergianists, Renovationist and self-consecrators... When Metropolitan Sergius heard that Gregory and his group had been registered, he excommunicated his Synod and forbade them all to serve. Gregory, of course, did not recognize these bans. I learned these details and was terrified by all that had happened. I decided to go into retirement, take the schema and not be responsible for my flock before the Lord."

On April 21, 1927, Bishop Pitirim took the schema with the name of Peter. According to another source, he was tonsured on January 20, 1928 in the village of Chetverto-Petrovskoye by Bishop Job (Afanasyev), who took over his Nizhegorod diocese with the blessing of Archbishop Andrew of Ufa. "After my tonsure," he writes, "I resigned from the administration of the Church and in Voznesensk, near Chetveropetrovsk, they made me a cell in which I prayed, without leaving or going anywhere. On feasts and Sundays I would go to Chetveropetrovsk and sometimes I served. Many people came, and they also brought the sick. Bishop John, seeing this, began to complain and petition that I be arrested or removed.

"In 1926 Metropolitan Agathangelus finished his term of exile and returned to Yaroslavl since he was considered the metropolitan of Yaroslavl. Everyone began to come to him. Then Tuchkov with some archimandrite came to Agathangelus and began to demand from him that he hand over his administration to [Metropolitan] Sergius. Metropolitan Agathangelus did not agree to this. Then Tuchkov told him that he would now go back into exile. Then Agathangelus, because of his health and since he had already been three years in exile, resigned from the administration [the post of patriarchal locum

tenens] and left it to Peter of Krutitsa as the lawful [locum tenens] until the second candidate, Metropolitan Cyril, should return from exile. I heard about this when I personally went to him in Yaroslavl and he himself explained his situation to me. And he said that the canonical administration was now really in the hands of Cyril, and temporarily, until the return of Cyril, with Metropolitan Peter. He did not recognize Sergius or Gregory.

"How should we act in the future,' I asked him, 'if neither Cyril nor Peter are around? Who must we commemorate?'

"He said: 'There is still the canonical Metropolitan Joseph, formerly of Uglich, who at the moment is in Leningrad. He was appointed by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon as a candidate in the event of the death of the Patriarch, myself, Cyril and Anthony [Khrapovitsky, metropolitan of Kiev and first President of the Russian Church Abroad?].'

"Joseph was sent by the Patriarch to Leningrad, but when Sergius took over the administration, he sent Alexis there, the one who is now metropolitan in Leningrad. But Joseph was imprisoned and sent into exile, while Alexis ruled in Leningrad until he was appointed Patriarch. A year after Agathangel, Cyril also completed his term in exile and arrived in Kazan. Then Tuchkov arrived in Kazan from Metropolitan Sergius and asked Cyril to withdraw his candidature. He did not agree and was immediately sent for another ten years in exile."

According to one (dubious) source, Vladyka Peter took part in the so-called "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church, which took place in various places between March and August, 1928. He signed the decisions of the Council through the priest John (Lysenko?). However, he did not accept its eleventh canon, which decreed that the "worshippers of the Name of God" had been unjustly excluded from the Church and should be received "with honour, as confessors of the Faith".

In December, 1928, Bishop Peter fell ill with an unknown disease, and in the same month, as he writes, "I was arrested [in connection with the Ufa branch of the True Orthodox Church] and taken to the GPU in Ufa." According to Nina Ivanovna Pashko, he was accused of reading prayers over sick people in church, and they demanded money from him. "I could not go up the stairs, and the GPU carried me on their arms. 7 people were arrested with me: **Priest John Lysenko**, who served in Chetveropetrovsk, **Cosmas Panchenko**, who served in Kuznetsovskaya, **Michael Panchenko**, who served in Ryazanovskaya; four nuns: **Maria Smolnikova**, **Aleutina Mikhailovna**, **Vera Salnikova** and **Christine Pashko**. We were in prison from December, 1928. In April, 1929, a show trial was carried out on us; it began on the Monday of Holy Week and continued every day for the whole week. On Holy Saturday at 6 p.m. they read out the sentence: for Maria Smolnikova and myself - two [three] years imprisonment followed by five years free exile outside Bashkiria; for John Lysenko - one year; for Cosmas and Michael

Panchenko - one year and five months; for Aleutina Mikhailovna and Christine Panko - six months. The priest John Lysenko and the Panchenkos completed their terms and were freed, while Maria and I were freed after one year and nine months in prison.

"270 of us were put into one barracks. They read out a list of the sentences and declared:

"Go to whatever town you want and feed yourselves at your own expense. And look for flats yourselves.'

"We left the barracks in June, 1930.

"The village soviet had five bishops and 450 priests and deacons living in exile in flats. We all came together to pray in one church. At this time they published in a Russian newspaper Metropolitan Sergius' declaration to the effect that Orthodoxy was triumphing in our country, that no one was exiled or arrested for church activity, and that those who had been exiled were enemies of Soviet power. When we read this newspaper, there was great weeping in the church. Everyone wept, and when we began to sing "O fervent protectress", the whole church was sobbing.

"On July 10, 1930, I was released from exile because we had made a petition to Moscow to the chief administration of the GPU that we had been wrongly sent to exile in Archangelsk. I wrote that the court had condemned me to two years in prison and five years of free exile, but they had sent us into exile. A paper arrived from Moscow saying that we should be freed, and on July 11 they let us out. We were allowed to go anywhere except to five cities. We chose the city of Asha, and moved there on July 20. Since we had no flat, we settled in citizen Kholodilina's apiary in the wood. There we lived for five months. When they arrested us, they took us to Chelyabinsk. There they interrogated me several times:

"Why do you not recognize Metropolitan Sergius and open a church illegally?'

"I replied: 'I cannot recognize Metropolitan Sergius because he was a renovationist and according to our holy canons he has illegally taken the place of the locum tenens of the patriarch.'

"Then I was sent from Chelyabinsk to Sverdlovsk. After my departure Alexandra Kryshkova arrived in Chelyabinsk and asked about me:

"Where have you taken Vladyka Ladygin?'

"They replied: 'Do you want to see him?'

"She said: 'Yes.'

"They gave her a paper and pencil and told her to sign. She signed, and they immediately arrested her and took her to Chelyabinsk prison, where Olga Kryshkova, Maria Smolnikov and Christine Pashkova already were. They were all amazed and both rejoiced and wept. They were all in Chelyabinsk prison about a year and then were all given three years in the camps, while I was kept in a cellar in Sverdlovsk for six months before being transferred to a general block. At the end of 1931 I was taken to Moscow, where I was kept in Butyrki prison for one and a half months. From Moscow I was sent to Yaroslavl, where I remained for two years. When I had completed my term, I was freed."

Priest John Proklovich Lisenko was born in 1880. On July 20, 1931 he was arrested in a group case with Bishop Peter. He was sentenced to three years in the camps. On November 28, 1937 he was arrested and sentenced to death. On December 17 he was shot.

Last Years

In 1933 Bishop Peter was given a passport in Ufa, and went to his homeland of Glazov, where he remained in hiding for two and a half years. According to one source, Bishop Peter recovered from his illness in January, 1934, and lived in retirement in his see, serving the early Liturgy on feastdays. Neither the ruling bishop, Rufinus, nor the people recognized Metropolitan Sergius; they formed an autocephalous church. We have a letter from Bishop Peter and Bishop Rufinus to Bishop Gabriel [Chepura?] of Akkerman asking for a litre or half a litre of holy chrism because they had neither pure oil nor anything to boil the chrism in.

After two-and-a-half years, writes Bishop Peter, "I was again summoned to Ufa, where Bishop Rufinus wanted to arrest me. In May, 1936 I left Ufa for my homeland, while all the above-mentioned citizens carried out their sentences in the camps. While they were in the camps they were forbidden to wear crosses. **Maria Smolnikova** and **Olga and Alexandra Kryshkova** did not agree, and were given three more years' free exile and were sent to Vologda. My relatives and I went to visit them twice. I remained in my homeland until 1937, in which year I went to Kaluga and remained there until 1940. In July we were moved to Beloretsk [in Bashkiria], where we lived until 1945. We lived quietly, cultivating the soil and praying in the house. This was displeasing to the enemy, and he found some people who betrayed us to new sufferings. So let the believers know how the pastors suffer for the purity of the Church..."

Nun Eudocia, in the world Olga Vasilyevna Kryshkova, was born in 1903 in Ufa province. She was a nanny in a kindergarten. She was a reader for Bishop Peter. On December 5, 1945 she was arrested and sentenced to ten years in the camps, and sent to Dubravlag. After being released she returned to her homeland. Nothing more is known about her.

Alexandra Vasilyevna Kryshkova was born in 1890 in Ufa province. On December 5, 1945 she was arrested and sentenced to ten years in the camps, and sent to Dubravlag. After being released she returned to her homeland. Nothing more is known about her.

During the war, according to Nina Ivanovna Pashko, Vladyka Peter lived with an agronomist and was their cook during the Fast.

In 1945 Bishop Peter was arrested in Ufa and sentenced to five years' exile in Central Asia for belonging to the True Orthodox Church. At the time of his arrest, he appears to have been serving in Saratov (his predecessors Bishop Job and Bishop Dositheus had already been sent to the camps). At the railway station a large number of people appeared and tried to abduct him, and the soldier who was accompanying him and the station guard had to shoot. The local newspaper reported: "Wretched and hysterical women tried to free their 'idol' and shamefully disturbed public order..."

When in exile, Bishop Peter hid there in the mountains. In 1948, according to one source, he took part in the Catacomb Council of Chirchuk, near Tashkent. From 1949 to 1951 he went into hiding in Belorussia and the Kuban.

According to another source, however, in 1944 Vladyka Peter and twenty-five of his spiritual children decided to move to Central Asia. Having been refused permission to live in any of the cities of Uzbekistan, they decided to set off for the Tyan-Shan mountains of Kirgizia. There, in a very remote area near the Chinese border, they built a skete with twelve cells and a church. However, on November 22, 1951 they were spotted from the air, and all the monks were arrested.

In 1951, according to Nina Ivanovna Pashko, Vladyka Peter was living with her parents in Chelyabinsk, where she obtained for him an operation on the eyes in the local hospital. After the hospital he went to the city of Glazov.

He was a tall man with an erect stance and long, white hair.

Bishop Peter united various groups of Catacomb Christians on the territory of Soviet Russia. In his time he ordained many secret priests.

Vladyka Peter was blind for five years before his death. He reposed in complete isolation on February 6/19 (or June 2), 1957, at 3 o'clock in the morning, in the town of Glazov. He died sitting in a chair with his arms raised and his fingers in a blessing position. He decreed in his will that he should be buried without a coffin, according to Athonite custom. He was buried in the city cemetery. On the grave is a short inscription: "Here lies the servant of God Peter". Catacomb believers who look after his grave witness that there have been cases of healing from illness after prayers at his grave.

One of Bishop Peter's disciples was **Schema-Archimandrite Seraphim**, in the world Michael Konstantinovich Tomin, was born on November 16, 1923 in the village of Barakovo, Orenburg province into a poor peasant family. He was baptised and communed on the morning of his birth because they feared that he would not survive. When he was three years old, it turned out that his legs were severely crippled and he could not walk. His parents took him from the village to an exiled professor, Alexander Afanasyevich Barabin. Barabin, a deeply believing person, examined him and said: "This child does not have a physical illness. Go to Schema-Monk Zosimia." This great clairvoyant eldress healed the child and foretold that he would be a monk. Immediately Misha began to walk and read, he began to pray a great deal, and he did this with love.

At the age of five, Misha began to read in church. They made a little sticharion for him. Once, at the Small Entrance, he went through the Royal Doors ahead of the priest. "Minushnya will be a priest," said Fr. Gregory. From the age of six the child was chanting in the choir. And standing on a little stool, he would read the Apostle and the Hours. Fr. John loved him very much, and often, on a cold and snowy winter's day, he would wrap him in a sheepskin coat and carry him into the church. His father did not allow him to pray at home, and so he prayed at nights until the morning in front of a cross on the common grave of those who had died during the famine of 1921. And there he went to sleep. During the winter he would pray in the basement on the potatoes until he fell asleep. He was at school for only one complete year. Then they began to exclude him because of his faith. But the Lord preserved the youth. When the regional inspector tore the crosses off all the pupils, they did not touch Misha's cross, but only threw him out of the class.

On the feast of the Annunciation, 1934, since almost all the churches in the district were closed, the believers from twenty villages came together in the church in Barakovo. The church could not accommodate all the people. They began to ring the bells at four in the morning, and the service continued until one in the afternoon. As Misha was entering the church in his sticharion, he saw two NKVD officers dragging Fr. John out of the altar. They also arrested the warden, two nuns and the ten-year-old Misha. All the arrestees were locked into a hut for three days. Misha's hat was in the altar, but he had put on a little fur coat under his sticharion. Fr. John put his own skufya on Misha, while he himself froze without anything on his head. Three days later **Fr. John** was shot, while the others were sentenced to three years in prison. Misha was released because of his youth. That night, he walked home for seven kilometres through the frost. Then his father took a whip and thrashed him so hard that his sticharion was cut to pieces. For three months Misha lay without moving on the stove...

In 1937 all the churches began to be closed, and the priests arrested. Michael's father expelled him from his house. The youth built a cell for

himself in the courtyard, earning his living by repairing pails and tables, building stoves and working as a smith. Then he decided secretly to dig out a cave for himself. At night he would carry the earth in a sack to the river. Finally, the cave was ready. Only his father's mother knew about it. She came there to pray with her grandson. More than once she said to Michael: "Dear one, he [your father] is going to kill you!..." "Let him kill me. I will be a martyr," Michael replied. In the cave Michael put a cross, made a coffin and began to sleep in it after the manner of Eldress Zosimia. The cave was in a kitchen-garden, and potatoes grew on top of it. More than once the Chekists came from Sharlyk, broke the windows in the cell and took Michael to the regional centre. But they had to release him because he was still so young. However, when he was fourteen, they imposed income tax on him as though he were an adult.

Michael's father was not accepted into the communist party because of the faith of his son. Once, on May 1, which coincided that year with the second day of Holy Pascha, his father came home late at night and heard Michael and his grandmother chanting: "Christ is risen!" The father said: "Are you going to live the monastic life for long?" Unable to restrain himself, Michael replied: "Forever, dad!" His father kicked him as hard as he could in the pit of the stomach. Michael fell, and turned black. Then his father rushed out of the house to drown himself in the river, but at the bank he saw a beautiful old man in white garments walking towards him in the air and saying: "Constantine, go back. Pull yourself together!" He turned back, and never again beat Michael. Michael's father told about this vision much later, when he went to the front and thought he was not going to come back alive.

At the beginning of the war, in 1941, Michael was called up to the military commissariat in Sharlyk. Michael, being a ryasophor monk, came in his ryasa, skufya and bast shoes. In his satchel were some service books. The commissar cursed and said: "Where did you come from looking like that?" Immediately he was sent to a prison cell. The next day they tried to take from him his ryasa and skufya, but he said that he would go to the front in his ryasa. At that time Michael's hair grew below his waist, but his beard had not yet grown. He was sent on foot to Orenburg with a letter sealed with sealing-wax. For three days Michael walked across the steppe chanting psalms, weeping and praying. The regional authorities were also amazed seeing him in a ryasa. Michael handed over the packet from Commissar Zaitsev to the Military Commissar. On reading it, he said: "What, is he mad? He's written about you: 'Line him up against the wall and shoot him!' For what? We have a military code: if a priest or monk does not wear his uniform, but remains in his ryasa, and with a beard, then we have the right to send him to the front as a sapper, a medical orderly, a cook or a carpenter. After all, you're a carpenter and stove-mender, aren't you?" "Yes." "We shall send you to Buzuluk, to the building section."

And so Michael spent the first year of the war in the building battalion. The frosts reached 40 degrees, and he walked around in his summer skufya. From the wind and the frost his right eye went red. He was sent to the

military hospital in Orenburg, but the doctors there decided that they could not save his eye. After an operation he remained with one eye. He was classified as an invalid, second class, and decommissioned.

In 1942 Michael became the spiritual son of Bishop Peter (Ladygin), who was in hiding. The spiritual children of Vladyka Peter, about twenty-five people in all, decided to set off with him to Central Asia. They dressed Vladyka as an "Uzbek" and put him on a train to Tashkent. However, they were not able to obtain permission to live in any of the cities of Central Asia. And so they decided to go into the mountains of Tyan-Shan. They stayed in Zhelal-Abad with a spiritual son of Matushka Zosimia, **Ivan Elyanovich Yeremenko** from Orenburg, a participant in the Local Council of Moscow in 1917-18, who had miraculously escaped from the Bolsheviks. Here they prepared themselves to flee into the mountains: they bought seeds, and collected icons and service books. At night they set out for the Chinese border, and for eight days travelled through deserted places. They struck camp on a high plateau in the Tyan-Shan mountains of Kirgizia and built a skete with twelve cells and a church. They lived according to the strictest rule of the skete of St. Andrew on Mount Athos (Vladyka was an Athonite monk), and slept only three hours in the twenty-four, praying without ceasing. There, in 1944, Schema-Bishop Peter tonsured Michael into monasticism and then ordained him to the diaconate and priesthood with the name Misael. Fr. Misael was responsible for the economy of the skete.

Seven years passed, during which nobody disturbed their isolation. But then Fr. Misael suggested to Vladyka that they should go further into the mountains. Vladyka replied: "No, I have to finish my life, but you must pass through the school of suffering." The monks were expecting arrest every day.

On November 22, 1951, the feast of the Mother of God "The Quick-Hearer", the liturgy was served and all the monks received Holy Communion. Then they all saw an airplane in the sky. It spotted them. Vladyka Peter was the first to be taken away. He was sent under house arrest to Vyatka province, where he died in 1957. The rest, including Fr. Misael, were arrested. Soon the brothers were given an amnesty and passports. However, Fr. Misael was given a "wolf's ticket" - he was allowed to live in any populated place for no more than three weeks in a row. He wandered throughout Central Asia. Then, exhausted from his endless moves, he decided to run away. An All-Union search warrant was issued.

Secretly he went to Orenburg, to the flat of his sister. His appearance in the church caused much joy. The next day, half the city knew of his arrival. A search was begun. Sitting in the flat of his sister, he saw that police had surrounded the whole block. He left his sister's flat, having put a woman's coat and fluffy dress over his ryasa, and went into hiding with his uncle. Then, in spite of a snow-storm, he left the city. Getting lost on the way, he came to a village and knocked on the door of the last house. Under an icon of St. Nicholas, an old man, the father of the mistress of the house was lying on

the point of death. He turned to Fr. Misael and implored him: "Give me Communion!" Fr. Misael had nothing with him. The old man made his confession to Fr. Misael and then died. It turned out that these people had lived a strict Orthodox life at home, and had not entered the collective farm.

Fr. Michael set off for Nemetskaya Sloboda, where he lived with German sectarians. They knew that he was an Orthodox priest. Once Fr. Michael blessed some water and began to drink it. They also wanted to drink it, but he did not allow them, saying: "You mustn't, you are of a different faith." Soon the masters of the house were baptized by Fr. Michael. Then he hid for nine months in the only house in the sloboda where Russians were living. More than once NKVD officers came out to interrogate the owners. When an officer came in, he would usually sit on a cot while Fr. Michael was under the cot. "That accursed one-eyed priest!" complained the NKVD officer. "An All-Union search warrant has been issued for him, but we can't catch him!" Once he had to sit in a well, and another time - in a ravine.

In 1955 Fr. Michael returned to Central Asia. There he was arrested and sent into exile in Przhivalsk, Kirgizia. Nothing more is known about him except that he became a schema-archimandrite in Orenburg.

*

Another disciple of Bishop Peter was **Hieromonk Timothy** (Nesgovorov). He was born in 1894 in the city of Asha, Chelyabinsk province. In 1922-23 he fell into renovationism, and was received back into the True Church through repentance by Vladyka Peter, who in 1925 ordained him as a "reserve priest" (that is, a priest ordained because of the extreme necessity in times of persecution, whose ordination remained a secret until it became necessary to reveal it) on the instructions of Archbishop Andrew of Ufa. In 1926 Archbishop Andrew blessed the "reserve priests" to go to the parishes. He served in a prayer house. But thanks to his fine sermons and close links with the people, Fr. Timothy acquired great authority, to the extent that a renovationist priest was forced to leave his parish while Fr. Timothy was invited to take his place in the church. Bishop Benjamin (Troitsky) awarded him with a nabadrennik. In 1930 Fr. Timothy was arrested, but ran away from prison four times. He was 19 years in prison. His family became very poor, his matushka was not given work anywhere, but she had five children, so she had to live by begging. Fr. Timothy was released in 1948, and received monasticism together with his matushka. Vladyka Peter blessed him to serve the large Tashkent community of the Catacomb Church. In 1951 all the members of the community were arrested. He was sentenced to 25 years, but was released after six years, in 1956... He went to Asha, and with the blessing of Vladyka Peter went round the villages and towns of Russia, serving the Catacomb Church. After the death of Vladyka Peter, his flock was served by Fr. Timothy. He lived in the Caucasus for six years. He was in communion with the catacomb **Hieromonk Gerasimus** (Zamesin) in Abkhazia (end of 1950s, beginning of 1960s). Through the future Archbishop Lazarus

(Zhurbenko) he petitioned Archbishop Leontius of Chile to be received under his omophorion. He tonsured two of his sisters into the mantia, and soon after this, in 1975, died of asthma. He was 82 years old.

35. HOLY HIEROCONFESSOR BARNABAS, BISHOP OF PECHERSK

And those with him

Bishop Barnabas, in the world Nicholas Nicanorovich Belyaev, was born on May 12, 1887 old style (according to another source, May 5, 1881) in the parish of the Holy Protection in the village of Ramenskoye, Bronnitsky uyezd, Moscow region, from simple and pious parents - the factory worker Nicanor Belyaev and Claudia Smirnova, the daughter of the deacon of the country church of Dorka. In spite of the ardent desire of both parents, they had no children. For 18 years they prayed to God and St. Nicholas to give them a child - a boy. The mother went frequently to a chapel near Sukharevaya tower in Moscow and prayed with tears in front of the icon of St. Nicholas. She vowed that if the Lord heard her she would lead him to be spiritual person, devoted to the Church and not to the world, and that she would name him after St. Nicholas. During one of the mother's serious illnesses, a council of doctors declared that she would never have children. A little more than a year later, in the week after the spring feast of St. Nicholas, and after 17 years of barrenness, a boy was born and called Nicholas. Only the priest proposed that he be named, not after the hierarch Nicholas, but after Blessed Nicholas, the fool-for-Christ and wonderworker.

Nicholas was the only child of his parents, and they reared him in faith and piety. As he wrote in his biography: "The atmosphere created by the prayerful disposition of my mother had a good, sweet, grace-filled influence on my soul." She died on the feast of the Annunciation, 1903 or 1904. The young Nicholas acquired strong religious feelings from his mother. Once he went to venerate an icon of the Mother of God which was 12 versts away. After the all-night vigil, he decided not to stay the night, although it was about to rain, but to go home, thinking: "I must suffer something for the sake of my love for the Mother of God. Knights freeze in front of the windows of their beauties in spite of the bad weather. All the more should I do this for the 'Bride Unwedded!'" On the way back it poured, and he was soaked to the skin. In the morning he went to the Liturgy. But suddenly an inner voice said to him:

"Go home now, otherwise it will be bad for you."

After some hesitation he went home. Hardly had he arrived when he felt so weak that he could move neither hands nor legs. He had a terrible rheumatism of the joints. But although he was suffering greatly, he did not allow the doctor to be called, but relied rather on prayer to the Mother of God. His prayer was immediately answered. His pain went, he got up and went down to his relatives, completely healthy.

Once when he was between ten and twelve years old, his mother and his aunt went in fulfilment of a promise to the relics of St. Sergius in Sergiev Posad, taking Nicholas and his cousin with them. When they came up to the

shrine, a monk standing at the feet of the saint turned to Nicholas. Taking some coins that were lying on the broad shelf of the coffin as if from the hand of the saint himself, he gave them to Nicholas and told him to buy two books with them - one for himself, and the other for his cousin; for himself - the famous Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven by St. Innocent, metropolitan of Moscow, and for his cousin - the well-known speech of Professor Klyuchevsky on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the day of the repose of St. Sergius.

The monk's action seemed strange and significant. The way in which he specially turned to him and insisted on his buying the book, his mother's acquiescence and the blessing as if from the saint itself - all this struck Nicholas. He bought the book and forgot about it.

"Not because I was disobedient," he recalled later, "but simply because the time had not yet come for God's will to be fulfilled and for my soul to respond to the voice of God Who was calling me. Later the monk's action seemed to me to be prophetic."

While he was preparing for a competitive examination, he was rummaging among his books and came upon the above-mentioned brochure by Metropolitan Innocent, which had lain there for almost 10 years. He began to read it, and everything he read there was completely contrary to the path in life he was intending to take. He was intending to build material houses, but there it was written that "people were not created to live only here, on the earth, like animals which disappear after their death, but exclusively in order to live with God and in God, and to live not 100 or 1000 years, but eternally." The words of the ascetic hierarch promised that "if a person who seeks with all his heart to go along the path to the Kingdom of Heaven, for every piece of work, and every sorrow, and every victory over himself and every restraint of himself, for every deed and even every good intention and desire, he will be rewarded seventy times seven in this life; while it is impossible to speak about or imagine what awaits him there. And so, brethren, follow Him, hurry and do not delay; go while the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven are not yet closed for you."

The grace of God did its work, and immediately after the examination, in the summer of 1909, he made his way first to Sarov and then to Optina desert. In Optina he met the great elder Barsanuphius. Two Nicholas Belyaevs came to the elder at about this time. The one, the future elder and hieromartyr Nikon had already been taken on as the elder's secretary. To the other's request the elder thought a little and then said:

"Well, where shall we take you? You can't do the general obediences, your health is too weak, while the post of secretary is already taken."

And he blessed him to study.

On parting Elder Barsanuphius blessed Nicholas with an icon of the Nativity of Christ, on the back of which he wrote: "A blessing for a new spiritual life. The commemoration of St. Abraham of Smolensk. Read his life. August 21st, 1909." St. Abraham was born in response to the prayer of pious parents, upon whose death he received the tonsure and assumed the exploit of foolishness for Christ. On becoming a priest and an experienced spiritual father, St. Abraham acquired many spiritual children in the city. Two main thoughts were imprinted in his heart: the memory of the Terrible Judgement and of the toll-houses. Many came to him from the city, repented and changed their lives. Then the devil raised a persecution against Abraham. They accused him of being a heretic and a fornicator. A council was convened, and the saint was condemned. Abraham had two devoted disciples. All these events were later repeated in the life of Bishop Barnabas.

In 1910, Nicholas left high school with a gold medal. That summer he met **Elder Alexis (Sobolev)** of the Zosima Hermitage and became his spiritual son and novice in the hermitage. Having already some idea of eldership, he began immediately to write down the elder's replies, knowing that they were to be carried out.

"All the replies that I have given you so far," said the elder to him later, "are in force and true, and if you do not carry them out, then you are guilty and not I. You must ask forgiveness and repent... As regards your soul - I take everything onto myself..."

The young novice was interested in everything. What prostrations should he do on entering the church? Should he clean his teeth or eat sweet things? What language was he to study - French or German? Should he reply to the blasphemous works of the atheists which he had to read in the Academy, or not? Should he read foreign authors? Should he ask his friends for books? Could he add some prostrations to the number Fr. Barsanuphius had prescribed? Should he look in the eyes of the person he was talking with, or not? How was he to struggle with his flesh? What should he do if someone comes into the church and greets him? Could he go for walks? Could he read secular literature? Was he allowed to abuse heretics? How was he to read the Holy Scriptures? etc. The elder replied to all these questions.

In April, 1911 Nicholas petitioned the rector of the Moscow Academy, Bishop Theodore (Pozeyevsky), the future hieromartyr, that he ask Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky) for permission to receive the monastic tonsure. Permission was granted, and on November 7 (according to another source, June 11), in Zosima Hermitage, Nicholas was tonsured by Bishop Theodore with the name Barnabas in honour of the Apostle Barnabas and Elder Barnabas (+1905) of Gethsemane skete.

Before his tonsure Elder Alexis gave him the following advice: "Let your motto and prayer for the whole of your life be these words: Receive me, O

Lord, into Thy paternal embrace and do not release me whatever happens to me throughout my life. May I always be Thine."

Two or three years after this tonsure, Bishop Theodore was visited by the famous Elder Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel. Vladyka called all those whom he had tonsured, about 15 to 20 people, into his room. When they were all sitting at the table and Vladyka began to recommend several of those who were newly tonsured, the elder at the name of Barnabas said, without talking to anyone in particular:

"When they tonsured him and I heard about it, I thought: a new Fr. Barnabas has been born."

And his eyes became bright and smiling.

This was the beginning of Fr. Barnabas' acquaintance with the great elder Fr. Gabriel (Zyryanov). "Batyushka would talk," Vladyka Barnabas remembered later, "and I listened attentively, not lowering my eyes from him. It's hard to believe that it really was all like that. Batyushka was sitting all white, like the moon, peaceful, joyful, while through the window it was a quiet evening and a strong, sickly sweet smell of jasmine came up from the garden..."

"It was good to sit with the elder Fr. Gabriel those quiet warm summer evenings... I was going through a particularly difficult period in my life: the transition from the noetic Egypt through "the Red Sea deep"... And to meet such a Moses on the way was exceptionally sweet and, as I see now, absolutely necessary."

In 1911 Fr. Barnabas entered the Moscow Theological Academy, and in the summer he was ordained to the diaconate, and in 1913 - to the priesthood. While he was studying in the Academy, Fr. Barnabas got to know the very strict life of the monasteries and sketes which were around the Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra, which made a great impression on him.

In 1913 Fr. Barnabas was ordained to the priesthood, and during the last year of his course, he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and returned in the summer of 1914 because of the beginning of the world war. In 1915 he graduated from the Moscow Theological Academy and on September 11 was sent as a teacher to the Nizhegorod theological seminary, where he taught homiletics until the summer of 1918. At one point he was the abbot of the Staro-Golutvinsky monastery in the Moscow diocese. In 1919 he became the secretary of Archbishop Eudocimus (Meshchersky) of Nizhni-Novgorod.

On February 29, 1920, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, he was consecrated bishop of Vasilsursk, a vicariate of the diocese of Nizhni-Novgorod, by Archbishop Eudocimus and Bishop Michael of Arzamas in the church of the Ascension, Nizhni-Novgorod. He had been blessed to accept this consecration

by three holy elders: Schema-Archimandrite Barsanuphius of Optina, Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel of Spaso-Eleazar Monastery and Elder Alexis of the Zosima hermitage.

At the beginning of August, 1920, Bishop Barnabas was transferred to the Pechersk monastery, becoming Bishop of Pechersk, the senior vicariate of the diocese of Nizhni-Novgorod. From October 20 to March, 1921 he was in retreat in the Zosima hermitage. In March he returned to Nizhni-Novgorod. He often served and took confessions. When he confessed people, he asked the penitent in detail about all the details and circumstances of his sins, even the most secret. And he did this until he was convinced that everything had been said and that no hidden, dark corners remained where the devil could weave his nest and again start to lay his snares, drawing the soul down towards destruction. Vladyka would give a sermon at almost every one of his services, calling on the people to repent and make a correct, sincere confession:

"This is the second day on which you have heard the canon of St. Andrew of Crete, in which sins are called by their own names, as they are in life, without any kind of concealment. You know from yourselves that it is hardest of all to repent of sexual sins, saying everything in detail, as it was in reality. The whole difficulty lies in the fact that few people call things by their names in confession. It is necessary to say everything to the smallest details, describing its whole essence. There are plenty of good examples for us in the Bible, where sins are named directly by their own names, where the falls into sin are described in every detail..."

For this he was besieged by demons. Sometimes they would take him by the throat, physically preventing him from serving. Sometimes he came from the church to his cell exhausted and tormented. They visited him also at home, sometimes even in broad daylight in their own form. Once they took hold of his right hand so that he could not cross himself or move his hand, and felt a very strong pain. He called on the name of God: at first it did not help, and the bishop was puzzled. Perhaps he had sinned in some way that he could not remember and so had angered God. Then he turned for help to the Mother of God and immediately received it.

After his return from Zosima Hermitage, Bishop Barnabas was appointed to the consistory to deal with divorce matters.

At this time he was close to the blessed Eldress Maria Ivanovna of Diveyevo, who, already in 1919, some three years before the event, had prophesied that he would take upon himself the feat of foolishness for Christ's sake and be put in a psychiatric hospital for three days and then live with private citizens.

Once Vladyka sent a message to Maria Ivanovna asking her whether he could write books.

"Let him write," she replied.

It was the baking summer of 1922, when the renovationist schism, supported by the Bolsheviks, threatened to destroy the ship of the Russian Church. On June 20, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), Archbishop Seraphim (Alexandrov) and Archbishop Eudocimus (Meshcheryakov) signed a declaration uniting themselves to the renovationists.

On July 19, 1922 there was a meeting of the clergy of Nizhni-Novgorod in the Diveyevo podvorye, at which it was resolved to recognize the renovationist church administration. The resolution was signed by Archbishop Eudocimus and Seraphim, and by Bishops Michael, Barnabas and Macarius. Or rather, that was what they said in the newspapers, but in reality it was not quite like that - Bishop Barnabas did not sign all the points of the declaration. That is why the patriarch did not demand his repentance or a petition that his episcopate be returned to him, as he demanded of Metropolitan Sergius and several others.

"Now he must be patient," said Blessed Maria Ivanovna. "He must hold onto the old, nothing new, everything in the old style. He must spit on the ukazes, let him not go anywhere, there is nowhere for him to go. He mustn't listen, they won't drive him anywhere. That would be the same as taking off one's cross and becoming a Jew, wouldn't it?... He must be a bishop and reject sin. The people need him, he cannot be an ordinary person."

It became impossible for Bishop Barnabas to rule his diocese while the ruling hierarch, Eudocimus, was a renovationist. (Already for a long time Maria Ivanovna had called him a red candle, a red hierarch.) So he left Nizhni-Novgorod in order to offer his repentance to Archbishop Theodore at the Danilov monastery. But Archbishop Theodore refused to accept him. So he went to Zosima Hermitage, where Elder Alexis laid his epitrachelion on him and gave him a penance.

On the evening of September 29, 1922 all his problems received a fitting resolution. "The elders," wrote Vladyka, "easily and freely blessed me to take on the feat of foolishness for Christ's sake as the only way out of my present situation, which threatened grave dangers for the whole of my spiritual life."

Fr. Alexis said: "Well, we [that is, he and Fr. Metrophanes] are locking you up [that is, away from people, although not completely, not as a recluse]."

When Vladyka asked whether he could serve at home, Fr. Alexis said:

"God gives His blessing, that is a good work."

At the clinic he obtained a certificate that on October 16 he had been seen by Doctor Lebedev because of "hysterical neurasthenia". This was in order

that it should not seem as if he had suddenly gone out of his mind, but that his illness had been developing gradually, in accordance with the psychiatric textbooks.

And so, on October 19, 1922, he was admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

Later, on October 22, the feast of the Kazan icon, he was released at the petition of believers and settled in the private house of his spiritual children Raphael Andreyevich Karelin and Elizabeth Germanovna Karelina. Raphael Alexandrovich was a former satanist with great power in the demonic world, who had been saved from destruction by Vladyka Barnabas, for which Vladyka had to pay by suffering many attacks from the dark powers. After Karelin's conversion, the demons appeared to the bishop and personally confirmed the great authority he had had among them.

It was in this house that, with the blessing of Elder Alexis, he began writing "The Foundations of the Art of Holiness". He wrote it in such a way that anyone, and especially young people, could understand and profit from it. During this period of his life he had no communications with anyone. Here he was visited by Fr. Metrophanes, who had been sent by Elder Alexis; and after a long conversation Fr. Metrophanes emerged to say that by the command of Vladyka his spiritual children were to refer for the time being for spiritual nourishment to Fr. Peter Topolev.

Vladyka Barnabas was several times arrested by the authorities and put in prison. But he was soon freed because they could not prove that he was healthy. They told his novice Valentina to take him away.

Once Vladyka was sitting and writing. There was a knock on the front door. Realizing that this was the GPU, he got up, put the pages he had written into a book and placed it on the shelf. The chekist came in and, without a moment's hesitation, as if he were a real magician, stretched out his hand and took precisely that book from the shelf.

At the beginning of 1928 he went with his spiritual son Hieromonk Cyprian and some other spiritual children of his to Kzyl-Ordu, where he tried to found a secret monastery. There, according to one source, he met Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, who persuaded him to reject the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius and stop commemorating him.

According to one (dubious) source, he participated in the "Nomadic Council" of the Catacomb Church through Monk Cornelius. He agreed with the Canons but refused to sign them. Later, however, according to this source, he affixed his signature.

Circumstances forced Bishop Barnabas to leave Kzyl-Ordu. Before leaving, he fell ill with typhoid, but refused all medical help and recovered with the

help of God. It was in Kzyl-Ordu that Vladyka had a vision of the sign of the Cross in the heavens.

They left Kzyl-Ordu on the feast of the Vladimir icon, August 26 / September 8, 1931. On arriving in Moscow Vladyka settled secretly in Ostankino, in the house of the brother of Valentina Dolganova, Vitaly, who was the chief architect of Moscow in charge of the planting of trees and shrubs. However, in March, 1933, Fr. Cyprian was arrested, and then they came to arrest Vladyka Barnabas and his women novices **Valentina and Faina** (Ivanovna Dolganova). Vladyka was at that time lying ill, so they left him. When he had recovered a little, he himself went to the Lubyanka prison. He said that his novices had been arrested and he had remained, so he had come to find out what it was all about. The authorities told him to sit down and wait. Then they arrested him.

The authorities tried to elicit a confession from his novices that he was healthy, offering them freedom in exchange. But they stood firm and refused to sign any testimonies. They were convicted of "creating a secret monastery", and were sentenced to three years' exile in the north in accordance with article 58-11. Faina was killed in exile in 1936, while Valentina died at some time after 1985.

Bishop Barnabas and Fr. Cyprian were sentenced to three years in the camps. Vladyka was convicted of "creating a secret monastery" and sentenced in accordance with article 58-10. He served the beginning of his imprisonment in the Biisk camps in the Altai. On the road to the camp, the Lord revealed to him everything that was to happen to him in the first year and even the detailed structure of the camp. And on the eve of every transfer the Lord would reveal to him what was in store for him.

Once he prophesied to Tatyana Shurakova, later the nun Magdalene, that she would be freed on St. Elijah's day, after completing only two-and-a-half years of her ten-year sentence. To the astonishment of all, she was freed on that day. On another occasion, he called the camp hospital's doctor, Maria Kuzminichna, by her secret monastic name of Michaela, although this was known to nobody. And when she was freed, he prophesied to her that they would meet again in Kiev, which came to pass.

The camp was occupied with the building of the Chuisk highway, which stretched 626 kilometres from the city of Biisk to the border with Manchuria. The bishop refused to work and received punishment rations. He was put in the worst barracks, amidst the most inveterate villains. So as not to hear their foul language, the bishop left the barracks and walked the whole day in his long, yellow satin shirt along the outer wall. He spoke with nobody, and if he said anything it was incomprehensible.

So the camp doctors certified him insane and he was sent to the prison psychiatric hospital in the town of Tomsk, where he was visited by his cell-

attendant Vera Vasilyevna Lobzanskaya. Two months later, in the savage winter of 1936, he was transferred to the Mariinsk camps. In March the "mad" bishop was freed. On leaving the camp he changed his patronymic from Nikanorovich to Nikolayevich, and his date of birth to 1883, and lived secretly in a tiny room in Tomsk with Vera Vasilyevna. There they stayed in hunger and cold, supporting themselves mainly from a kitchen garden, until the beginning of the war in 1941. He was known as "Uncle Kolya".

In the Biisk camps Vladyka got to know **Zinaida**, the daughter of **Protopriest Sabbas Mikhailovich Petrunevich**. Fr. Sabbas had been a teacher of the Law of God until the revolution of 1917. He maintained friendly relations with Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), and accompanied him on his way into emigration. However, when Vladyka invited him to come with him, he refused. At the beginning of the 1920s he became the rector of the church of St. Olga in Kiev and the centre around which all the faithful Orthodox Christians of the city gathered, becoming for them what Bishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) was for the Christians of Moscow. When the Kiev Caves Lavra was occupied by the renovationists, he invited the brotherhood to go to his church. For this he was arrested and spent ten years in the Aleysky camps in the Altai. Before the end of his sentence he was given another ten years, and then another ten years. He died in camp.

Zinaida was a doctor who had been imprisoned for helping a bishop who later betrayed her. She became Vladyka's spiritual daughter, and after leaving prison he kept up correspondence with the people close to him through her.

Vladyka's major works were completed by the time of his arrest in 1933 and were kept in the earth until 1948, when it was revealed to him that there would be an emigration out of Russia and it would be possible to fulfil the blessing of the elders and publish his works. For this reason in the autumn of 1948 he moved to Kiev and his works were transferred there from Nizhni-Novgorod. Some of them had become corrupted through their long stay in the earth, and he had to put in a great deal more work to restore his works to something like their former state. During the last years of his life in Kiev Vladyka worked on his earlier work "The Foundations of the Art of Holiness" and on other works. These included lives of Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel of Seven Lakes monastery, St. Seraphim of Sarov, several ascetics of the nineteenth century, St. Synklitiki and St. Gregory of Agrigentum, a book on Orthodox asceticism entitled "The Blue Ship", 16 notebooks and other books.

Vladyka was intolerant towards every kind of spiritual deception. Once a nun brought him a book on Catholic spirituality and the stigmata, which she greatly admired. Vladyka said:

"I will not touch this book, and you must not only not read it, but if you give it to others, you will answer for it at the Terrible Judgement."

Once a secret nun whom he had known in the Altai came to him. She exhibited certain signs of spiritual deception - feelings of great exaltation during services, seeing the faces of some people for whom she was praying as brighter than others, hearing sweet music, etc. She told the bishop that at the command of an elder she prayed one thousand Jesus prayers at a time, and asked whether she should add some more. But he told her to pray only ten - but in such a way that her concentration was not interrupted while she prayed. She thought this was trivial, but soon came back confessing with contrition that she had been quite unable to pray ten Jesus prayers without distraction. Then the bishop explained that God gives spiritual gifts not for mechanical effort as such, but for humility - and humility comes only as a result of pure prayer, while pure prayer is received only through humility.

While he was living in Kiev, he was offered the possibility of becoming a bishop in the Moscow Patriarchate. But he refused, preferring to continue his struggles, remaining in reclusion and obscurity, known to the world as "Uncle Kolya" and to his spiritual children as their spiritual instructor and educator. Contrary to the assertions of some writers, he did not bless his children to take communion in the official church, which he called an "office".

Thus his cell-attendant, **Nun Seraphima** (Vera Vasilyevna Lobzanskaya) writes: "Vladyka constantly, all the time sorrowed over the state of the [official] Church and the loss by its hierarchy and clergy of the spirit of repentance. He did not serve in contemporary churches, and recognized neither Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) nor Patriarch Alexis (Simansky), considering that the contemporary hierarchy substituted its own ideas in the place of the teaching of Christ. He considered that 'now is a time of great sorrow for the Church', and did not even allow a lampada to be lit in front of an icon, considered it to be a spiritual consolation which should not exist at times of great sorrow."

Vladyka commemorated "every persecuted Orthodox episcopate" at the Liturgy.

Among the sayings of Vladyka are the following: "The communists fight against religion. Stalin himself has declared this for all to hear. For decades they have preached this by pen and sword, and the fact that several churches have now been repaired for the carrying out of Divine services by hirelings who have broken their vows is simply a political trick and a temporary 'campaign'."

"One must force and constrict oneself at all times. One must not love the conditions of salvation, even if they are paradise for prayer and piety."

"One must always consider oneself guilty, even if a clear lie has been made against you. One must know that this has happened because of some sin which was perhaps committed several years ago. Always reproach yourself, humble yourself in such a way as to say to all that they say against you:

'Forgive me.' This is the quickest path to receiving grace, while others are very long. On this path one does not need direction, while direction is necessary on other paths."

"It is impossible to live on earth without a cross. God sends sufferings for some sin you have committed."

"I demand nothing from you," Vladyka said to his spiritual children, "neither non-eating, nor sleeping on bare boards, nor long prayers. Only reproach yourselves for everything, at all times, in every place. This is my advice to you and my most sincere desire."

For the sake of the publication of his works in the West, he got to know a series of people who were far from the Church and Orthodoxy, about whom it was revealed to him that they would in time leave for the West. Afterwards, in 1972, this happened, but already after the death of Vladyka. He said: "I must live by faith, write by faith, hide by faith, and preserve what is written by faith, preparing for the publication of my works by faith..."

According to one source, he corresponded with Bishop John of Zaraisk, and in about 1960 Bishop Vladimir (Stromberg) send him a letter through intermediaries. According to the same source, F.I. Zhurbenko, the future Archbishop Lazarus, tried to contact him, but Bishop Barnabas refused.

Towards the end of 1961 he began to feel weaker. Forty days before his repose, on March 25, 1963, he blessed the sewing for him of some hierarchical vestments. Then, on April 17, he summoned his spiritual daughters and said:

"It's time to go home, home, I hear a voice... I don't want to. I'm held back by my affairs. There is much I have to complete... There will be no better time to do it... It is terrible to die, one must prepare oneself for it..."

In the forty days before his death he often repeated to his cell-attendant:

"I ask you only one thing: do not place your hope on men, hope only in God."

On April 17 he summoned his spiritual children for a parting discourse. From April 28, Vladyka could no longer lie down, but only sat in a chair. A doctor examined him and said that he had an infarction or sclerosis. On April 30, he stopped eating and drinking. On May 3, Vladyka continued sitting in his chair with closed eyes. From May 4, he no longer spoke. Vladyka continued sitting in this chair with his head bent until his death.

Just before his death, on April 23 / May 6, the feast of St. George, two tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he quietly reposed. After his repose, his face lost its shadow of sadness and looked younger and lighter.

At the request of Zina Petrunovich, Fr. Alexis Glagolev vested him in his hierarchical vestments and celebrated his funeral service. He was buried in the Baykov cemetery by the western wall of the church of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God.

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A close disciple of Bishop Barnabas was **Hieromonk Cyprian**, in the world Constantine Alexeyevich Nyelidov, was born on January 14, 1902 in Kazan (or Nizhni-Novgorod) in the family of an oculist. His mother was from a family of Georgian princes; she left her husband, and his father married again and moved to Nizhni-Novgorod. Constantine was brought up by his grandfather and grandmother on his stepmother's side, and studied at the Nizhegorod nobleman's institute. He was a subdeacon, first with Bishop Barnabas, and then with Metropolitan Sergius. In 1925 he was tonsured into the mantia and ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan Sergius. In 1928 Metropolitan Sergius sent him from Nizhni to be with Bishop Barnabas in Kzyl-Orde. After a time Fr. Cyprian was transferred to the little town of Aralskoye More. From there, in 1931, Metropolitan Sergius invited him back to Moscow. Arriving in August, 1932, he moved in with the brother of Valentina Dolganova, Vitaly Ivanovich in Ostankino. After a time the retired Bishop Barnabas and his spiritual children arrived there. Fr. Cyprian spent most of his time in the chancellery of the Synod and in the church of St. John the Apostle on Tver boulevard, of which he was the rector. In 1933 he moved to Pushkino. On March 15, 1933 he was arrested in Moscow and cast into Butyrki isolator. On May 5, in "The Case of Bishop Barnabas, 1933", he was indicted of "creating a secret monastery" and of "conducting anti-Soviet agitation and counter-revolutionary activity", and was sentenced in accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11 to three years in the Siblag camps in the Altai, where he joined Bishop Barnabas. In the camps he was given work on the soil, but was then made a storeman. For his honesty he was slandered and sent on a punishment battalion to inveterate criminals, who constantly abused him. But he was always patient, calm and radiant. Fr. Cyprian died of tuberculosis in the camp hospital on June 16, 1934, "in the flower of his strength", as Bishop Barnabas had prophesied. He was buried in Korkuchi cleft, where Nun Catherine later laid a cross made out of stones.

**36. HIEROMARTYR MICHAEL, SCHEMA-BISHOP OF
CHISTOPOL**

and those with him

Schema-Bishop Michael (Yershov) was born on September 17 (or October 12), 1911, in the village of Mamykovo in Kazan province, in a peasant family. According to another source, he was born in the village of Barskoye, Yenaruskino, Aksubayevovo volost, Chistopol canon, Tataria. His father, whose name was Basil, had taken part in the Russo-Japanese War, the First World War and the Civil War. From 1920 he had become a cobbler and president of the committee of poverty in the village. There were five children in the family, four daughters and a son. Michael's mother was called Daria.

Michael finished two classes at elementary school, and at the age of ten began to help his father, working as a cobbler. He went to church services and sang in the choir. When he was twelve years old, as he was receiving communion a church in Chistopol, an elder saw him and said: "This lad will take upon himself the sins of the whole people." According to one source, he was tonsured into the mantia in 1927, and in 1928 was ordained to the diaconate. However, from 1929 the church was closed and his father became president of the village soviet and began to persecute his son for reading service books and constantly praying at home. As a result of this he went blind. Afterwards, when he repented, he recovered his sight.

In November, 1930 Fr. Michael left his father's home because he did not agree with the family's joining the collective farm. At some time during that year. He arrived in Chistopol, where he fell seriously ill. On recovering, he got to know Elder Plato, who told him: "You will suffer very much for the name of God and for the people. Only don't seek anything from anyone, rely only on Almighty God. By the mercy of God I knew about you before." Together they went round the villages taking part in joint prayer-services.

According to one source, Fr. Michael was ordained to the priesthood in 1930 by the Catacomb Archbishop and future Hieromartyr Nectarius (Trezvinsky) in Kazan. According to another source, however, his ordination took place in September, 1933 at the hands of Hieromonk Peter (?). He was a fervent opponent of the Moscow Patriarchate, and believed that it was wrong to have any contact with it.

Fr. Michael and Elder Plato were arrested on March 3, 1931 in Chistopol, but he was released on May 1. A few days later, he was arrested again in Kazan, but was released after twelve days. He then went underground, wandering round the villages and earning his bread as a cobbler. He walked in chains, carried out joint prayer services and healed the sick and the demon-possessed.

In April, 1933 he was arrested in the village of Aksubayevo, but was released in July. On June 7, 1934 he was arrested in Bilyarsk, taken by convoy to Chistopol, then to Kazan and on July 10 condemned to eight years in the camps for anti-Soviet agitation. He served his term in the Mariinsk and Baikal-Amur camps, and then in Ulan-Ude and near Murmansk, doing general work. In 1940 he was transferred to Kandalaksha, where they were building a railway. He worked in the refectory. In May, 1942 he was sent to Tataria to work on the Ulyanovsk-Sviyazhsk railway. There he worked in the field hospital. On September 25 he was sent for defensive works in the village of Stepanovka, Buinsk region, from where he escaped to Chistopol, then to Aksubayevo region. On October 16 (17), 1942 he was arrested and cast into Chistopol prison. On January 23, 1943 he was sentenced "for desertion from defensive works" to seven (eight) years in prison. On February 16, 1943, according to one source, he was released, but according to another he was sent to call-up, but, not wishing to serve in the army, escaped. After this he served secretly in the village of Yelantovo, Sheremetyevo region. He celebrated Pascha on April 12, 1943 in a tent on a hill not far from Yelantovo with a group of twelve women. Later those attending the services in the tent rose to sixty. In September, during a service on the hill, the police arrived and drove away the believers; some were arrested and sent to the camps. On December 12 (or 15 or 26), 1943 he was arrested again for church preaching and cast into Chistopol prison. He was accused of being "a leader of the anti-Soviet activity of the underground of the True Orthodox Church of Tikhonite tendency in Tataria", and on August 18, 1944 was sentenced to death by shooting. He spent 81 days in the death cell; they starved him the whole time. On October 25, 1944, they commuted the death sentence to fifteen years' hard labour, of which he was informed on November 9. He was sent to Vorkutlag, where he worked in the mines, and later - in the cobblers' workshop. In 1945 he appealed for clemency to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, but his request was declined.

In October, 1946 he got to know Basil Kalinin, healing him from an illness of the spine which had paralyzed him completely for three years. He came up to him, took him by the hand and said:

"Get up and walk."

He also healed the withered hand of John Kokarev and the leprous face of Gregory Rusakov (the future Hieromonk Philaret), which was already stinking. He took the whole crust from his face.

Fr. Michael passed through almost all the prisons of the Soviet Gulag: Kazan, Arzamas, Vorkuta, Olga, Bannino, Sakhalin, Nagayeva, Magadan, Suman, Kolyma, Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk, Bratsk, Taipet...

On August 3, 1950 he was transferred to Sevvostoklag (Kolyma, North-East Siberia), where he worked in the gold-fields. On November 15, 1954 he was recorded in his personal file as having worked only 54 days, while there

was a series of decrees casting him into the isolator for between three and ten days for refusing to work. On July 14, 1954 his sentenced was reduced by one-third. In December, 1954 he was transferred from Kolyma to the camp section Sovietskaya Gavan, Khabarovsk district. On May 29, 1956 he was transferred to a prison regime for one year, and was sent to prison in Blagoveschensk. On July 4, 1958 the follow report was written about him: "During his stay in prison he behaved satisfactorily, and did not violate the prison regime, was a cleaner in the corridors of the prison, and carried out his work. A religious fanatic, he did not work on days that were, in his opinion, festal."

It is said that in the 1950s Fr. Michael was secretly consecrated Bishop of Chistopol in the camps, and in this capacity took part, according to one source, in the Nikolsky Council of the Catacomb Church in 1961 through Monk John. However, the real existence of this Council is doubted by many.

On April 11, he was transferred to the inner prison of the KGB in Kazan for investigation in connection with a church case. On July 18 he was indicted for being "the leader of the anti-Soviet underground of the True Orthodox Church in Tataria. By means of written and personal links with those who think like him, he gave instructions on preaching the ideas of the True Orthodox Church, called on people to refuse to participate in political enterprises and decline from service in the Soviet Army, in collective farms, in state institutions and undertakings. He gave instructions on preparing new secret priests, and on acquiring houses and equipment for an illegal church." On August 11-14, 1958 he was sentenced to twenty-five years in the camps with five years disenfranchisement, and was sent to Dubravlag, Potma, Mordovia. "At eight in the morning they brought Vladyka Michael (Yershov) in a 'black raven' ... He raised his hand like this, crossed himself and bowed to the earth. 'Pray and fear not. The victory will be with the True Orthodox Christians!' Then they took him away. After him they brought in Basil Vladimirovich, and he also said: 'All of you pray for us, pray. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Then they brought in Fr. Philaret, and after him Ivan, and the last was Nadezhda Vasilyevna. They brought them through, and they all shouted: 'Pray! The victory will be with the True Orthodox Christians!' ... They gave them twenty-five years' strict regime."

Fr. Michael spent fifteen years in irons. According to the accounts of prisoners, he spent whole nights standing in prayer. He healed many criminals, possessed, lame, blind and sick people, and gave them instructions on how to live well. He also had the gift of prophecy.

On August 13, 1973 he declared a hunger strike in the camp. In October he was transferred to the seventeenth section of the Temnikov camp (Potma). In the spring of 1974 they pulled out all his hair and all the hairs of his beard one by one with manacles, after which he was paralyzed. A.S. Dubina reported that he died in camp on June 4, 1977. According to another report, however, he died in a special prison hospital in Kazan on June 4, 1974.

Bishop Michael's close collaborator, Bishop Vasily, was born **Basil Vladimirovich Kalinin** in 1917 at Kubansky khutor, Belorechensky uyezd, Krasnodar region into a peasant family. He finished one class of elementary school. In 1929 his family was dekulakized and he was exiled to Stavropol, later to Sverdlovsk. In 1932 his family fled from exile, and his father began preaching in the villages of the Kuban about the coming of the last time and of the Antichrist. In 1933, together with his father, **Vladimir Markovich**, he was arrested, but soon released, while his father was sent to a camp. He married, and in 1938 a daughter Tatyana was born to him, and in 1940 – a son Michael. In 1940 he was called up into the army and was sent to the northern fleet. At the beginning of the war he operated a machine-gun. In 1943 he was preparing to go over to the Germans, but then he received a letter from his brother and understood that “I’m doing something very stupid. If I betray the Homeland, then because of me my whole family will perish, and I am particularly sorry for my children.” In 1943 he was arrested in Polyarny and was accused that, “while on military service in the period 1942-43, he systematically made anti-Soviet statements and, besides, recruited like-minded people from the other soldiers with the aim of going over to the Germans and organizing on their side an armed struggle against Soviet power. At the same time he aimed to hand over spy material to the Germans and carry out diversionary and terrorist acts at the moment of passing over to the enemy.” On January 5, 1944 he was sentenced to death, but in March his sentence was commuted to twenty years’ hard labour. He was sent to a camp, where he got to know Fr. Michael Yershov. On October 6, 1956 he was pardoned and released from camp, and on the instructions of Fr. Michael went to Yelantovo in Tataria, where he established links with the underground True Orthodox Church. In March, 1957 he went, on the instructions of Fr. Michael, to Krasnodar district, where, on March 25, 1958 he was arrested. He was accused of “joining the anti-Soviet underground of the True Orthodox Church of Tikhonite orientation and taking an active part in carrying out counter-revolutionary agitation among the population, calling people to boycott political state enterprises and decline from socially useful work. Also he drew new people into the underground.” On August 11-14 he was sentenced to twenty-five years in the camps with disenfranchisement for five years with confiscation of property. On October 5 he arrived in Dubravlag, and on October 20, 1960 he was transferred to Temnikov camp. On March 30, 1961 he was recognized to be “an especially dangerous recidivist”, and in February, 1974 he was sent for twelve days to a penal isolator “for absence from physical exercise” (at that time he was praying in the barracks). On August 30, 1974 the head of the camp gave him a negative report and said that he had not started on the path of correction. On March 25, 1983 he was released and returned to Yelantovo, where, on February 18, 1995, he died.

37. HOLY HIEROCONFESSOR ALEXANDER OF OMSK

Hieromonk Alexander, in the world Athanasius Vasilyevich Turuntayevskikh (he later changed his surname to Orlov), was born in 1878 in Vologda province in the family of Protopriest Basil, who served in one parish for 50 years. His mother, who was called Olga, was a deeply believing Christian. There were six brothers and one sister in the family. All the brothers and the brother-in-law became priests. The Lord placed the mark of His grace on the youngest son of this noble spiritual family from his youngest years – Athanasius refused to eat meat from the age of five.

He went to study in a theological seminary. Now atheism was widespread among schoolchildren in those years, and Athanasius fell into its nets. And so on leaving the seminary he abandoned the spiritual path and entered medical school.

Athanasius's fall was not hidden from his mother. On her deathbed – she died at the age of 56 – she told him: “Leave your atheist comrades, change your character and God will not abandon you.” The death of Athanasius' mother had been exactly prophesied by a fool-for-Christ, which made a strong impression on him, the more so in that a good provincial doctor had said that she would recover.

After the death of his mother Athanasius began to become interested in theology, the philosophical approach to religion, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and life after death. But he was burdened by the fact that he had been so attracted to atheist ideas, and he was constantly pursued by the thought: “you will not be forgiven”. The thought gnawed at his brain: “If you wish to receive forgiveness, offer yourself as a sacrifice to God”.

In despair he decided to commit suicide. His nearest relatives did not let him out of their sight, but followed him day and night. Many priests tried to convince Athanasius to abandon his plan, but without success. He took a raw thong from a harness, put his head into a noose and stepped off the stool... But just at that moment a fiery streak of lightning flashed before his eyes, and for the rest of his life he remembered the voice which he heard: “Now you are mine. There is no repentance in the grave.” And then he heard the powerful laugh of the devil.

At that moment he repented and came to on the floor – the end of the raw thong was swaying on the ceiling, and a noose hung round his neck. On hearing the noise his relatives ran up. His godfather, who was a priest, confessed him and gave him communion. He sincerely repented and the thought of suicide never entered his mind again. Another priest, a friend of his father's, said to him: “Athanasius, Satan told you the truth – there is no repentance in the grave. But you are not yet in the grave, and you can still repent.”

Athanasius imposed a strict fast upon himself and intensified his prayer. He took up a three-year practical as a psalm-reader in a small parish where there were few services – only every Sunday. Since he was knowledgeable in medicine (according to one source, he had both a medical and a university training), he worked to counter epidemics of typhus and dysentery.

In 1915, during the First World War, he went to the front as a volunteer, serving as a regimental priest. With a cross in his hand, he would go in front of the soldiers into battle for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland. His fearlessness, untiring service and flaming faith attracted the soldiers.

At the defence of Yakibstadt bridgehead, Priest Alexander did not allow the sappers to blow up the bridge until all the soldiers and the numerous wounded had been transported across from the German side of the river, for the water was cold and swift-flowing. The soldiers then met and decreed that Priest Alexander should be given the cross of St. George.

He was three years at the front, and fell into captivity for seven months, but managed to escape. He did not go home, but returned to the front. He went into the trenches with his cross and words of encouragement. He also gave sermons. For his faithful service he was awarded with a *gramota* and golden cross by his Majesty Tsar Nicholas II. He was to receive this award personally from the Tsar, but the arrest of the Tsar in 1917 prevented this.

After the revolution Priest Alexander received no salary. However, the older soldiers tried to persuade him not to leave. And he remained until the front was liquidated, saying: “Dear ones, it’s a shame to break one’s oath”.

In 1918 he returned from the front and took up a position in the village of Gribtsevo, Vologda province. His parish consisted of widely scattered villages and a church near a river. There was a bell-tower with one bell weighing 450 pounds, a second – 150, and a third – 80. There were always many parishioners in church. On the eve of Sundays and feasts, Priest Alexander introduced all-night vigils, which were followed by choir rehearsals with everyone chanting. He also introduced discussions outside the services: explanations of the Creed, the commandments and the Law of God, Church history, explanations of prayers and answers to parishioners’ questions.

Priest Alexander used to reminisce about this period: “I felt myself to be an irredeemable debtor before the Lord for my previous sins, lack of faith and the sins of my youth, and full of gratitude to the Lord for His mercy towards me in the war and in captivity. I was young, my voice was strong, I did not tire easily. I often had to speak on the subject of atheism, and to discuss the reality of the personality of Jesus Christ. I considered it my duty to acquaint my parishioners with the great scientists who had believed in God.”

At this time the Law of God was forbidden in schools, so Priest Alexander tried to speak more about God. This did not please the atheists. In the provincial newspaper they began to slander him. It became still more difficult for Priest Alexander to serve in his parish. The authorities sought the slightest excuse to arrest him, they imposed insupportable taxes on him and forbade him to preach.

Once a group of agitators came to the village soviet and posted a notice ordering the villagers to appear at a debate. The old rector refused to speak at the debate, but Priest Alexander decided to speak. He used what he himself had read and what he had heard in a debate in 1921 between Vvedensky and Lunacharsky against the atheists. The agitators could produce nothing in reply, and the senior member of the collective began to shout: "Arrest him...!"

"Everything you have is based on might, not on right," said Priest Alexander fervently, "and not on facts or logic. A bear has got still greater might - he can beat up whomever he wants."

Priest Alexander went home and the peasants dispersed. Two weeks later, they arrested him while he was paying a visit with his wife. He was brought to the village soviet under the guard of a policeman. This was on Cheesefare Saturday, and there were many people in the street. The people gathered at the village soviet and began to demand the release of the priest. The president of the soviet summoned a detachment of red-army soldiers.

"The priest has stirred up the whole district in rebellion," he said.

The bell for the all-night vigil was sounding, and some of the people went into the church. It became quieter on the street. The Bolsheviks said that Priest Alexander would be taken out the next day. However, during the service they took him out of the village, and then forced him to go the whole way by foot. Snow was falling heavily, the convoy were traveling on wooden sledges while he walked behind them for 50 kilometres along the snowy road. The soldiers whipped the horse, and forced him to run. Later it turned out that they had been given the order to shoot him while he was supposedly trying to run away.

First he was put into a common cell in Kandakovsk prison. The investigators interrogated him, often using the butts of their rifles and constantly coming back to the same accusation: "He went round the parishes and villages conducting discussions". But this was not true - he gave sermons only in the church. The investigator demanded that he confess, and that would be the end of the matter. But this would have meant that they could drag off any villager who let him conduct a discussion in his house.

Priest Alexander exposed their coarseness and refused to give any evidence before the drunken investigator. They sent him to the GPU in the provincial capital of Vologda, and then to a revolutionary tribunal. The

interrogators began again, with yet more accusations – there were now 18 points in all. The president of the revolutionary tribunal accused him of mocking the soldiers in the war. In rebuttal of this accusation, Priest Alexander produced his cross of St. George. Then they accused him of conducting anti-semitic propaganda against the Jews. But Priest Alexander did not have a single Jew in his parish. And at the front he had even defended the Jews, for which they had given him a present, a sacred book in Russian and Hebrew with a silver plaque and the inscription: “To the highly respected priest of the 237th Graiboronsky regiment, from the Jews of this regiment”. They asked to see the book, and it served as a proof of the truthfulness of Priest Alexander’s evidence.

Throughout the Great Fast until Palm Sunday Priest Alexander was constantly being brought under armed guard from his solitary cell for interrogations in various parts of the city. He was not allowed parcels from home. However, the day after seeing the procurator he was given back his clothes and documents and allowed to return to his parish. He served the services of Holy Week and met the Day of Resurrection with joy.

“That Pascha was especially joyful,” he said, “for my family, for me and for the parishioners. Their petitions, even as far as the centre, had been crowned with success. By the mercy of God, I, too, was resurrected!”

Priest Alexander rejected the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. He was a mitred protopriest with the right to wear two crosses, and the people stood up for him through thick and thin in his conflicts with the authorities, who watched his every step. The MVD boss declared openly that he wanted to get him. And they began to threaten him with prison and execution for his fierce sermons against atheism.

In 1930 he was arrested and spent three years in a camp on the Pinyuga road. Since he refused to be an informer, he was constantly receiving new arrests and imprisonments. He ran away, but had to hide continually from the authorities.

Priest Alexander sought an answer to his dilemma in the Gospel. He found it in Luke 14.26-27: “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple”. These few words made his decision clear and firm – to leave his family, because he was not allowed to serve honourably as a priest under Soviet power and his conscience did not allow him to become a traitor.

In 1935 he left his family, his wife and four children – his youngest son Nicholas was only six years old. He went to the river, and left a note on the bank which said: “It is impossible to live like this”. Then he left his clothes there (so that they should not look for him in the surrounding villages),

signed himself with the sign of the cross and left his native land. He took up employment as a shepherd, and in the winter was a sexton in the church of the Holy Spirit. He changed his surname to Orlov.

As a shepherd he wore old peasant clothes and was distinguished from the others by his meekness, humility, eagerness to please and kindness. It was clear from his face that he was not who he said he was. The villagers noticed this, and to test him gave him sour food to eat – but he was satisfied with everything.

In the church he did not go up close to the kliros in case he forgot himself and began to chant. Once, however, in Staraya Russa, he couldn't help it – he began to chant. This gave him away completely. Once he was asked to baptize a child, he couldn't refuse. There were rumours that this was not a simple peasant but someone who was hiding from Soviet power.

The time had come to leave the area. And so, thanking God, Who had enlightened him through the Holy Gospel and Who had made it easier for him to bear the burden of leaving his family, he went to the railway station and got on a train taking him eastwards. This was in 1941.

He came out in Omsk in Siberia. Having neither money nor even a crust of bread, and not knowing anybody, he began to beg for alms, first by the viaduct, and then in the Nikolskaya church. But nobody gave him anything. Fr. Alexander prayed to God and thanked Him for sending him this trial for the purification of his former sins.

He came out of the church and saw an elderly woman with a heavy suitcase. He offered to help her. This woman turned out to be a believer, and she gave him something to eat. He told her that he was a priest, but did not recognize the sergianist church. Gradually a parish was formed around him.

At first only a few individuals came, then it was tens of people. Finally, such a large catacomb community was formed that it was difficult to find a place where they could all fit in for the festal services, and admission had to be limited. The community included nuns who had been driven out of their destroyed monasteries. The nuns and believing old women collected books and vestments and church utensils. Then people were found who sewed gonfalons, and former monastery artists who painted icons. Then there appeared readers and chanters. People learned how to make candles, to bake prosphoras and boil incense.

Fr. Alexander commemorated Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin) of Nizhegorod, and later the First Hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad. At some time during his wanderings he had accepted the monastic tonsure with the name Alexander. According to one source, he became a monk at the end of the 1940s in the city of Ufa. He also adopted a new surname, Orlov, after a nun whom he had tonsured in Omsk.

People invited Fr. Alexander to their homes, and he went from house to house. Children were baptized, people repented of their sins and received the Holy Mysteries, burials and pannikhidas for the reposed were carried out. All this was done at great risk both for Fr. Alexander and for the parishioners, but God preserved and strengthened them.

On great feasts as many as 100 people gathered. The service was long. It began with an all-night vigil in the evening and finished at 4 in the morning, lasting twelve hours. The daily services began at about 3 or 4 o'clock and continued until late in the evening. During the proskomedia Fr. Alexander took out a particle for each believer. He spent a long time on confessions and sermons, which caused some of the old women to complain, but he was adamant. In his sermons, which made a great impression on many, batyushka especially concentrated on the refutation of atheist propaganda about the existence of God, and pointed out how many of the great scientists believed in God.

Fr. Alexander had a special veneration for the Mother of God. With what emotion and love he read akathists and molebens to her, and recounted the miraculous healings wrought through her icons in Holy Russia! He also knew the lives of the saints very well, and would often bring up examples from their lives to illustrate a point.

During the 1950s, when atheists were being introduced into the seminaries, Fr. Alexander would warn about these "wolves in sheep's clothing".

Twice batyushka was picked up off the streets of Omsk because of the unusual nobility of his bearing and brought to the police station. But with the help of God he was released. Once, while he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, at the moment of consecration of the Holy Gifts the police came in. Fr. Alexander took the chalice with the Holy Gifts and stood up against the wall, covering himself with a tablecloth. The police did not notice him. By the Providence of God and the prayers of the Most Holy Mother of God, Fr. Alexander and his flock were often saved from the torture-chambers of the KGB.

Fr. Alexander carried out miracles of healing. The servant of God Anna went to Fr. Alexander on Sundays and feastsdays seeking healing from her illness. Most of the time she seemed a normal person, but when they began to chant the Cherubic hymn she suddenly became anxious and began to shout in an inhuman voice. They had to drag her up to receive communion. In 1952, at the request of her relatives, Fr. Alexander read prayers over the sick woman, and the demon was driven out of her. Then Anna became a normal Christian who regularly, in peace and with the fear of God, received the Holy Mysteries and lived a Christian life.

Once, during a service, Fr. Alexander was seen accompanied by two angels in the altar.

In the middle of the 1960s a chance arrival at one of the services turned out to be a former parishioner of Fr. Alexander's in the church where he served before he left his family. She recognized him, as he did her. After she had told him about his family he decided to visit them.

They were convinced that he had drowned in the river. After he had told them what happened, they told him that his daughter Olga was working for the KGB. His wife just wept. But his daughter said to him: "Father! I give you my room. I will hang it with icons. You pray in it as much as you want, but stay with the family!"

Fr. Alexander replied: "My daughter, I'll do everything you suggest, but only on condition that you leave your work for the KGB".

His daughter replied that she could not do that. Then Fr. Alexander said: "Well then, my daughter, you cannot leave your work at the KGB, and I cannot leave my service to God and the people who have been entrusted to me. My life belongs to the Church of Christ."

At this they parted. Fr. Alexander and his novice Maria left for Omsk, not suspecting that at the order of his daughter he had been placed under constant surveillance.

By the will of God, however, Fr. Alexander did not fall into the hands of the KGB. His novice went through all the interrogations without giving away anything about batyushka or his address. However, this information was supplied by Maria's landlady.

Once on arriving in Omsk Fr. Alexander said: "My daughter has betrayed me." So church services stopped, and people came to visit him more rarely because many, and especially young people, were being summoned to interrogations. There they always demanded answers to the same questions – about Fr. Alexander. And they were asked to work as stooges for the KGB. Maria was forced to go to her parents in Semipalatinsk while for Fr. Alexander there began a life full of alarms and persecutions. In order not to expose his Omsk parishioners to danger, he went only where he was invited. By the Providence of God, faithful Christians offered him refuge in many towns, especially Tavda, Vyatka, Ufa, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Semipalatinsk and Novy Afon.

Fr. Alexander was a man of extraordinary courage. Thus on feasts of the Lord he would travel on the train holding placards with glorifications of the Lord. Thus at Pascha travelers would look with astonishment at the old man with a beard holding in his hand a placard with the words: "Christ is risen!"

Once, when he was traveling by boat to Semipalatinsk, he sat down at the piano and began to play: "God, save the Tsar". A detective who was travelling on the boat then told him that he would be arrested on disembarking. But it turned out that the detective got drunk, fell asleep and set fire to his mattress in the cabin. Meanwhile, Fr. Alexander had disembarked and escaped.

Once Fr. Alexander went with Nun Elizabeth (Orlova) to Novy Afon, and there stayed in the house of a believer. Unexpectedly the KGB came to arrest him. He and Mother Elizabeth hid in the loft. In the morning the KGB left without having found them. However, there had been a strong frost during the night, and they were both very ill. Somehow they made it back to Omsk, but they did not go outside again and never completely recovered. Fr. Alexander walked with difficulty, and Nun Elizabeth lost all her teeth.

In 1969, eight years before his death, his sight began to fail. Then he became completely blind and fell ill. But his hearing was good to the end. He knew the simple services by heart, but he needed to be prompted when it came to the festal exclamations. He celebrated the Liturgy only in the presence of his spiritual father, **Hieromonk Anthony**, who had been a cleric of **Schema-Bishop Peter** (Ladygin) and had spent many years in prison. Fr. Anthony would often go to Omsk to fulfil the needs of the Christians of that city. Fr. Alexander spent most of his time with Fr. Anthony in Tavda until his death there in 1973. Then he returned to Omsk.

In one of his last letters which have not been destroyed, Priest Alexander wrote:

"Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

"I appeal to you with a last humble request before my death: receive as a prayerful memento of the sinful hieromonk Alexander a humble gift which will nevertheless be very useful for all believers: the five prayers of the hierarch Demetrius of Rostov.

"I ask forgiveness of all if I have offended anyone in anything because of my feeble mind, lack of foresight, pettiness, insufficient self-control or, most important, lack of the fear of God - the beginning of spiritual wisdom.

"I beseech you all who believe in the Lord God to raise your fraternal Christian prayer that the Lord send me a Christian end and count me worthy of a good answer before the Terrible Judgement Seat of Christ. May the Lord reward you with temporary and eternal blessings.

"My path is life is ending with the words of St. John Chrysostom and the hierarch Nicholas, my favourite hierarchs - Glory to God for all things!..."

Before his death he said: "I have much to say, but I can't".

And before his death he forbade anyone to make any inscription over his grave, saying: "I lived in secret and must lie in secret".

Twenty-four hours before his death, he began to breathe with difficulty. In the neighbouring room they read the prayers for the departure of the soul from the body. On the morning of his death they had already read the prayers for him although he had not heard them. As he was dying they were reading the akathist to the holy great-martyr Barbara.

He died at the age of 99 in the city of Omsk (according to another source, Tomsk) in the family of a pious widow on August 29, 1977 at six o'clock in the evening. He had been a priest for more than seventy years, forty of them in the catacombs.

He was buried in Omsk in the north-eastern cemetery. In accordance with his wish there was no beautiful memorial on his grave. "I live secretly," he said, "I must die in secret."

The radiant memory of this wonderful pastor and fierce denouncer of the atheist Bolshevik power lives on in the hearts of his parishioners who are still alive. The path to his grave is not overgrown. When the parishioners meet, the conversation always turns to Fr. Alexander, and the prayers of those who pray to him at his grave are always answered.

38. HOLY HIEROCONFESSORS SERAPHIM, SERAPHIM AND NAZARIUS OF KHARKOV

And those with them

Schema-Archimandrite Seraphim, in the world Nicholas Mikhailovich Sangushko-Zagorovsky, was born on July 27, 1872 in Akhtyrka, Kharkov province into an ancient princely family which had moved into the priestly caste. His father, Deacon Michael Feoktistovich, died young, leaving his three children to be brought up by their mother, Paraskeva Andreyevna, a clever and energetic woman. His brother Michael became a priest, but died young. Kolya Zagorovsky was a happy, boisterous, talented boy. From childhood he loved his native Ukrainian language and popular songs. He demonstrated an exceptional talent as a comedian; every appearance of his on the stage elicited a storm of laughter. Nicholas' fame as a comic actor spread far beyond the bounds of the Kharkov theological seminary, where he completed his studies in 1894. He was invited to join a celebrated Ukrainian troupe, but Paraskeva Andreyevna wouldn't hear of it.

"I want to see you in golden rizas, otherwise I'll curse you," she declared to her son.

He had to submit. Nicholas married Catherine Ivanovna, an educated woman who had graduated from the diocesan school for daughters of the clergy. The couple had two children. Then, in 1894 he was ordained to the priesthood. The village where Fr. Nicholas was sent as pastor was called Malyzhino, in Bogodukhovsky uyezd, Kharkov province. It was in the back of beyond. This was difficult for Fr. Nicholas, because he had nowhere to demonstrate his richly endowed nature. The icon of the Mother of God which he had in his cell was the witness of his bitter tears. He called on the Mother of God to help him in his spiritual struggle. And then a miracle took place: his brilliant natural talents were transformed into spiritual ones: the artist-comedian became the famous preacher and people's pastor. Although the icon before which he prayed was painted in the Italian style and was not a copy of the ancient icon "Search of the Lost", Fr. Nicholas called it "The Malyzhino Search of the Lost". He adorned it with precious stones and venerated it as wonder-working. How many times thereafter did he sing the akathist in front of it: "Rejoice, grace-filled Virgin Birth-giver of God, the saviour of all the lost"! And the Mother of God came to help, healing and driving out demons.

The people loved Fr. Nicholas and surrounded him tightly, not leaving him even when he moved to Kharkov to give his children education. In 1908 Fr. Nicholas became the rector of the city's hospital church of St. Seraphim. In 1909 he was transferred to the church of St. Theodore the Studite attached to the Alexandrovskaya hospital. Here he continued to serve akathists in front of the icon and give sermons. Soon his reputation as a new Chrysostom spread

throughout Kharkov, and the people began to come to him from all directions.

A women's monastery began to form around him. With the sisters he would make pilgrimages to Belgorod and other holy places. In the 1910s Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov gave his blessing to the opening of a women's monastery in the name of the Mother of God "The Search of the Lost", and blessed Fr. Nicholas to be the nuns' spiritual leader. A three-storeyed building was set aside for it, and all the necessary preparations had already been made when the revolution broke out. But the monastery continued to exist in secret.

One of the novices was Ulyasha Nozdrina, later Mother Magdalina of Lesna monastery. When Fr. Nicholas was forced to leave Kharkov, he chose her as one of those who were to accompany him. She remembers: "Vladyka John Maximovich was a student then, and he used to visit Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky, at that time archbishop of Kharkov]. The relics of St. Meletius were there, and Metropolitan Anthony blessed our batyushka to look after them. Batyushka would come there every day, as would Vladyka John, who was then known as Misha and who would always ask batyushka's blessing to go to his studies. Once Fr. Nicholas said to him laughingly:

"Misha, you never miss the batyushka. You will probably become a bishop or a saint.'

"It's you, Fr. Nicholas, who will become a saint,' replied Misha.

"And look, you see, Vladyka John became both a bishop and a saint, he is soon going to be glorified [he was glorified by the Russian Church Abroad in 1994]. And my batyushka is also a saint..

"Batyushka was a holy man. He did so many miracles! I remember once there was a terrible drought, and batyushka organized a pilgrimage to go to Svyatogorsk monastery to pray for rain. So many people gathered, several thousands. They walked in groups with icons and gonfalons. Everyone was singing. When they arrived, they began to serve an all-night vigil in a wood near the monastery, for none of the churches could accommodate everyone. And the vigil went on all night, and the hieromonks were confessing the people all night. And in the morning practically everyone received Communion. And when Communion was finished, batyushka said:

"And now we are going to pray God for rain. Everyone fall face down and pray God until heavenly tears begin to drop on the earth.'

"Everyone fell on their knees. But the sky was completely clear. And suddenly clouds began to gather, and drops of rain began to fall like tears. Of course, everyone jumped up ran for cover - it was a real downpour. After the meal, they asked batyushka:

"Are you going to ring for the people to gather?"

"But it was pouring cats and dogs at the time. Batyushka thought for a little, dropped his head, and then said:

"Ring!"

"And suddenly the rain stopped. So we returned home so joyful, so happy. Everybody looked at us out of the windows, they didn't understand what had happened. But we waved at them with branches and sang:

"Christ is risen!"

"And how many people he healed! They often used to call him to the village of Pokrovskoye, he often went there to visit the sick - there were many demon-possessed people there. Batyushka had only to come within a few versts of the village, and all the demon-possessed people were shouting:

"He's coming, he's coming to torment us, the whining bald-head is coming to torment us!"

"And several people were already holding these possessed people down - they were so strong and furious. Batyushka came with the icon, served a moleben, then everyone came up to kiss the icon. And then, my God, what shouting, what a noise! And then they gradually quieted down, batyushka read a prayer over them, and while he was there the demon-possessed came peacefully up to receive Communion, and while this was taking place there was no shouting or cries. And how they loved batyushka! When there was a famine, this village of Pokrovskoye brought food in on carts. Batyushka took nothing for himself, but handed it out. My sister and brother were in a home - we were orphans, you know - and he sent provisions to the orphanages: one cart to one home, another to another, a third to the prison. It was all distributed. And when they arrested him, they brought so much food that the whole prison was fed.

"They later sent batyushka to Petrograd [in 1923]. And there, too, he healed very many people. In Petersburg there was a widow who was dying. She had two small children and a sister, and someone told them that there was this batyushka, call him if she's dying, and he'll help you. Batyushka and I went there. She was lying in bed, almost dead. She couldn't open her eyes any longer. Batyushka began to serve a moleben in front of this icon, then an akathist, while the children said:

"Batyushka, mamochka is almost dead, you have to serve the service for the dying."

"Don't worry, leave her, let her lie peacefully. The Mother of God will grant it - she'll get better."

"And then, on the second day, she suddenly came to. It turned out that she had felt that someone was praying for her. Of course, they immediately called batyushka, and he came with the Holy Gifts to communicate her. We arrived there, and she opened her eyes and said:

"Who's come to us? Call him, quickly!"

"He confessed her, gave her Communion, and the next day the children came and said:

"Batyushka, mama is feeling better!"

"And then she recovered. So the children sewed a Russian belt with flowers which priests used to wear and brought it to batyushka. They were so grateful! And she recovered and became his faithful spiritual daughter."

Another spiritual daughter of batyushka's, Mother Ierusalima, recounts:

"Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky served in the hospital church. What joy he gave to the sick people at Pascha! He would exchange kisses with all of them, and would go round giving them all pascha and eggs. He was so welcoming and tender, his only words were: "my joy", "my little one", "my sister" - that was how he addressed his flock. And every Sunday with him was like Pascha. The services were long, until three in the afternoon, and the Liturgy always ended with an akathist to the Mother of God "Search of the lost". During the akathist the whole church was on their knees, everyone was weeping, and he was weeping. His sermons were also very long, two hours long, and during the sermon he was weeping all the time, and everyone was weeping, so that even the walls were weeping, because so many people were packed in that they became wet from the people's breath. And after the service everyone would be invited to a meal, to drink tea and sing psalms and spiritual songs. Batyushka himself set many psalms to music."

In June, 1918 Fr. Nicholas was arrested in Kharkov, but was soon released. In July, 1922 he was transferred to the Nativity church in Kharkov. On March 17, 1923 he was arrested for resisting the renovationists.

Mother Ierusalima continues: "I remember him declaring to the people that today would be his last Liturgy, he had to prepare for his arrest because they had said to him:

"Don't commemorate Patriarch Tikhon."

"I couldn't reconcile myself with this. And when he said this, there was such an outburst of weeping that it could be heard a kilometre away on the

street. He wept and sobbed, and everyone accompanied him, and in the evening they came to his house and arrested him. They put him in [the Kholodnogorskaya] prison. Now he had a very large flock around Kharkov, and when they learned that he had been arrested, in the morning the head of the prison got a fright: the whole of the square round the prison was covered with peasant carts which were full of food with which they fed all the prisoners. And when the head of the prison saw that neither that day, nor the next, nor the day after did the carts leave, and so much food that they didn't know what to do with it, he decided to send him to Petrograd. And he took with him one nun, the most energetic one, Ulyasha..."

On May 15, 1923 Fr. Nicholas was convicted of "preaching of a counter-revolutionary content" and sentenced to three years' exile beyond the bounds of Kharkov. This was part of "The Case of Bishop Paul (Kratirov) and others, Kharkov, 1923".

They went to Petrograd, and Fr. Nicholas constructed a house church for himself, continuing to direct his nuns in Kharkov. In the middle of 1926, after his release from exile, he returned to Kharkov. However, in 1928 he went to Petrograd, joined the Catacomb Church and commemorated only Metropolitan Peter in services. His health worsened...

He wrote to his "children-orphans": "I don't serve anywhere... Such is the will of God! I have been alone in my little cell. I'm getting used to reclusion and silence and quiet, private prayer. Here is my service, and prayer, and the Mysteries of Holy Communion... Here I experience both all my joys and my sorrow... Ulyasha bows down to you all in heart and soul... How often she remembers you all and asks for your holy prayers..." "With you and amongst you my heart has taught me and has learned to experience the fullness of that grace-filled heavenly spiritual mystical union with Christ and in Christ, about which one can only judge from the words of the holy Apostle Paul: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him'... Remain patient, my little ones, and pray to God! And live in God like the wise Virgins of the Gospel. Do not weaken in your exploits of piety and purity of life, do not become cold towards prayer, but the more apply yourselves to the Jesus prayer and the '500s' [Optina prayer rule]. Commune of the Holy Mysteries of Christ more often. Be vigilant! Stand on guard, for the world is trying to catch you from all sides... It remains for us only to follow Him obediently. In this is the whole meaning of the blessed condition of man when he has given himself to Christ: not looking worriedly ahead, nor being frightened over the next step, not choosing his path himself, not laying upon himself in advance the burdens of coming woes, without fear, with firm faith, peacefully to follow after the Shepherd, step by step, rejoicing and always remembering that 'He goes before you...' Go then, my children, after Christ!... It is for this reason that I joyfully suffer and bear the cross of exile... Alone I go to pray at the Athonite podvorye. Alone I weep there, tucking myself into a corner. Alone I return again to my little cell. And my only joy is that every day I have the happiness

of communing of the Holy Mysteries of Christ in my cell!... So, my children, I live in hope of the coming Pascha that has no leave-taking..."

On January 7 (17), 1930 Fr. Nicholas was arrested in connection with the Petrograd branch of the True Orthodox Church and cast into prison. On August 3 he was sentenced by the OGPU to five years in the camps, and on August 18 he was sent under convoy to Solovki. Matushka Ekaterina Ivanovna and Ulyasha Nozdrina undertook the distant journey to visit batyushka.

During his time in Solovki (1930-35) Fr. Nicholas was widowed, and he was secretly tonsured into monasticism with the name Seraphim.

In 1935 Fr. Nicholas and some other prisoners were sent to a settlement in the far north. Exhausted and tormented, they walked across the tundra. Once they stopped for the night in a deserted chapel. Fr. Nicholas woke up and saw that he was sleeping under an icon of the Mother of God "Search of the lost". This encouraged him enormously, and he felt that he was under the protection of the Mother of God. He was the only one to reach the destination: the others all died en route.

Ulyasha, self-sacrificing as ever, did not abandon batyushka. She came to him on a cart, bringing a basket full of provisions. She had to go across thousands of versts of taiga, but the Lord preserved her, and she arrived safely. Batyushka was being guarded by sentries, but Ulyasha did not lose her presence of mind. She called the soldiers Petka or Vanka.

"This is my uncle," she told them. "He took me in when I was orphaned and brought me up. You also have a mother - remember her! Let my uncle eat with me!"

Permission was given, and batyushka went to eat with Ulyasha.

When Fr. Nicholas had served his term of punishment, in January, 1935, he was released to live wherever he liked except Kharkov province. He chose the town of Oboyan in Kursk province, which was the nearest to Kharkov. As they were travelling towards Oboyan by train, Fr. Nicholas and Ulyasha were talking about the fact that they knew no-one there and there was nowhere for them to go. By chance the wife of an exiled priest heard their conversation. She informed them that there was a secret women's monastery in Oboyan, and gave them its address. They set off there, but the mother-doorkeeper categorically refused to let them in since she feared that the authorities' attention would be drawn to the monastery.

"Still, please tell the abbess about us," asked Fr. Nicholas. Mother abbess soon came out and welcomed them in. It turned out that during the night St. Seraphim had appeared to her in her sleep and said:

"Seraphim from Kharkov is coming to you. Receive him."

Batyushka Nicholas, in monasticism Seraphim, began to weep...

In Oboyan they lived very quietly. Fr. Nicholas never came out onto the street by day. Sometimes his Kharkov nuns came to him by night, and in this way he directed their secret monastery. Ulyasha lived in complete obedience to batyushka; she was tonsured by him with the name Seraphima.

Mother Magdalina liked to tell the story of how she became a nurse in Oboyan with Fr. Nicholas' help. The story was as follows. When they went to live in exile in Oboyan, Ulyasha worked in the hospital as a junior nurse. However, an unexpected order arrived: all those with little education had to take an exam in accordance with the ten-year plan. Ulyasha was not very good at studying. So Fr. Nicholas began to give her lessons. Before the exam batyushka wrote a composition entitled: 'Morning in the settlement', and ordered Ulyasha to take it with her and write it out when they declared the subject of the essay. And in fact they gave the subject: 'Morning in the settlement'. For the oral exam Fr. Nicholas told Ulyasha to learn a poem. When they asked in class who knew this poem, it turned out that Ulyasha was the only one who knew it. So she passed her exam and became a nurse.

During the war Oboyan was occupied by the Germans. However, they were very respectful to Fr. Nicholas. He was soon driven home to Kharkov by ambulance, where celebrated services in his house in the presence of a large congregation.

Mother Ierusalima: "When batyushka returned to Kharkov, he did not serve in a church, but in his own home, in the semi-basement. What Liturgies they were, such a triumph! My mother, sister and I always went. The whole room was full of people, it was a big room, it was always full of people. The chanting was beautiful, the nuns always did the singing, everyone received Communion, everyone was so joyful, as if the old times had returned. But then the reds began to attack. They would have arrested him, of course. His daughter, Lydochka, had already left with her husband. And he said to matushka:

"I can't wait for the reds here, I even get frightened when I think they're approaching."

However, Mother Magdalina said: "Batyushka did not want to leave, but his family wanted him to leave. Now batyushka's son-in-law, Lydochka's husband, worked in the theatre as an opera director. And when the opera left, he and Lydia with their little son Seryozha also left. They wanted to take batyushka with them, but he wouldn't in any circumstances. At this point the people came, they all came.

"Batyushka, if you stay, they'll take you, you'll be exiled, or rather they'll kill you, and we don't know where your grave is.'

"No,' he said, 'I'm not going anywhere, I'm staying come what may.'

"But his daughter and son-in-law arranged it so that the Germans sent a car for batyushka. They simply arrived and said without any discussion:

"Batyushka, you must go!"

"But his matushka could not leave the house, because her daughter had gone, everyone had gone, and she needed to look after the house. So she, Mother Meletia and Dunya remained at home and told me:

"Ulyasha, you have to go with batyushka.'

"Batyushka was already old and ill. Of course, I was a little frightened of going, and I asked one other sister, Xenia, about it. But at this point the wanderer, Petro, also decided to go with us. And I felt a little better, because I was at any rate not alone, there were the three of us. They immediately took us to the train. I left in the clothes I was standing in, but then the sisters ran up to the train and brought some things for batyushka, a coat for me and something else. But batyushka was ill, he often had heart-attacks. We arrived at Peremyśl in Poland, and there batyushka became really ill, so we had to stop in Peremyśl. Batyushka was put in hospital, he was feeling very ill. I didn't leave him, but nursed him and did everything. Then they called his daughter and son-in-law, they all arrived. He was lying quietly in bed. Tears were flowing out of his eyes. He opened his eyes, looked at everyone and said:

"I don't see Ulyasha.'

"Then he stretched out his hand and I held him, and he took my hand and kissed it, and I felt that he was thanking me for not leaving him. And his tears again began to flow. His daughter took a clean handkerchief and began to wipe his face, and in this way he quietly, peacefully died. Almost the whole hospital came to look - he was lying so radiant and smiling! There was a church there, and on Orthodox feasts a Russian priest would serve. Batyushka died on the eve of the Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God [September 30 / October 13, 1943], and on the feast there was a Liturgy. We read the Psalter for batyushka, and there were pannikhidas, and he was buried in Peremyśl. And it turns out that in the place in Peremyśl where he died, his grandparents and great-grandparents had all died. You know, batyushka was from an ancient family. And there was even a monastery of the Zagorovskys somewhere there."

Hieromonk Seraphim, in the world Daniel Ivanovich Shevtsov, was born in 1875 in one of the villages of Voronezh province (according to another version – in Kharkov). In his youth he entered the Sviatogorsk Dormition desert in Kharkov province, one of the oldest monasteries in the south of Russia, which had 600 brothers by 1917. Daniel Shevtsov was tonsured with the name Seraphim in honour of St. Seraphim of Sarov. Later he was transferred, for his good moral life, to the Pokrov men’s monastery in Kharkov, where the diocesan administration was. He was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov.

In 1922, in view of the closure of the monastery by the Bolsheviks, Fr. Seraphim went to live with a poor widow. He was very ill at that time, and the widow looked after him until he recovered. From this time he lived in flats in Kharkov and the surrounding district. In 1937 he was sentenced to three years in prison for “unlawful activity”. After his release he continued to live illegally in Kharkov. From 1941, after the Germans occupied Kharkov, Fr. Seraphim came out to serve openly and began to look after people over a wide territory. Other catacomb priests serving in the area at this time were **Fr. Anthony Kranokutsy and Prot priest Nicholas Butkevich**, who were serving in the city of Bogodukhov in 1944. During the war **Matushka Pelagia** came to Voronezh province and founded a community of True Orthodox Christians. After her departure to Kharkov district, the leader of the group became **Matushka Thecla** (Trofimovna Nesterenko), who was sent by Fr. Seraphim from Kharkov to Voronezh region in autumn, 1944. Contributions, or tithes, were sent from the members of the community to Kharkov.

In 1946 batyushka was condemned for a second time, to seven years’ imprisonment. At the trial in Kiev, in the presence of more than ten clergy, Fr. Seraphim was offered a parish on condition that he was registered and conducted services together with the other priests, who had signed the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. He refused, and was sent to prison.

On his release in 1953, he continued to lead a catacomb community. “When it became extremely dangerous to pray in private homes because of the persecutions by the authorities, batyushka decided to dig out a cave. Not far from Kharkov there was the village of Tishki. In this village there was a street going up a tall hill. In the courtyard of the house where Fr. Seraphim was living temporarily, almost halfway up the hill, thick bushes were growing. And in was in this unnoticed place that they decided to dig a hole underground. They dug carefully, for a long time, under the direction of batyushka. When they had dug it out, there was a big basement the size of a spacious room, Air had to be pumped into the room artificially... [because] there was no normal ventilation. But there were icons in the catacomb, lampadas and candles were burning, and the Liturgy was celebrated. This continued for a certain time. Then once a new woman came with a group of Christians. When batyushka saw her, he said to his children: “Whom have you brought? Quickly get ready, let us leave this place.” Early in the morning, before dawn, all the believers who were there, with icons in their hands, left

the cave with Fr. Seraphim leading them. They went through the kitchen gardens (at that time the sunflowers were flowering, and the maize was as tall as a man) and through the woods to escape the organs of the KGB, who at that time had surrounded the house. Fortunately, they did not find any of those escaping. The woman who had brought them to batyushka was the wife of a priest who served the sergianists. She shared information with him, and he informed the organs.

“Eyewitnesses who knew Fr. Seraphim affirm that he had the gift of clairvoyance. Once while batyushka was sitting and chatting with his spiritual children, he said: ‘You, Nazarius, will be imprisoned for the faith. You, Maria, will also be taken. But you, Melania, will remain in freedom, they will not take you.’ He who writes these lines is a witness of the truth of these words of Fr. Seraphim, although the people have already departed into Eternity. Batyushka did not reply to difficult questions immediately. He would go into reclusion, pray to God, and only on the second day would he give a precise reply. Before his death he gave instructions to his spiritual children on how to live after him. And he said: ‘If in future you meet a true priest, I bless you all to go under his spiritual direction.’”

He died in 1955, and was buried secretly. Not knowing that he had died, the “organs of internal affairs” searched for him. When his grave was finally discovered, an army detachment was summoned to lift his coffin. When they had dug down to the coffin, its corner had rotted away, and through the opening there wafted a wonderful aroma. The bosses who were standing by said: “The believers poured so much perfume into the coffin that the aroma is spreading to this day.” When they opened the coffin, the body lay in the same condition as if it had been buried the day before. When they told the boss that the body had been lying in the grave for a year and a half, he was disturbed and said: “It’s impossible.” But when he was finally convinced of the truth of what was said, he was very perplexed. Soon the coffin with the body was taken away. Many citizens of the city of Chugev, which is 45 kilometres from Kharkov, watched as it passed by. Nobody knows where the grave of Fr. Seraphim is now. The boss only said: “We shall arrange it so that crowds of people do not go to his grave.” While he was still alive, batyushka used to say to his spiritual children: “When I die, they will not give my body peace in the grave...”

Before his death batyushka said: “I cannot appoint you a priest, but I give you instructions on how to live in order to be saved. I entrust you to the Mother of God, and if you follow my instructions, you will be saved.” After the death of Fr. Seraphim, some of the believers went to another Kharkov catacomb priest, **Fr. Nicetas Lekhan**, but most continued to live without a priest. And today in Kharkov and Kharkov district his faithful children still live and pray. They are called “Seraphimovites”, and they hope only on God, pray to God and commune of the crumbs of the prosphoras remaining from Batyushka Seraphim... Save them, O Lord, through the intercession of the Mother of God!

*

Hieromonk Nazarius, in the world Nestor Stefanovich Konyukhov, was born in 1890 (or 1888) in the village of Lugovka, Bogodukhovsky uyezd, Kharkov province (now Sumy province) into a peasant family. His father was called Stefan, and his mother – Melania. His grandfather was called Efim.

Once Efim went to Pisarevka to have a case made for an icon of the Saviour. Having received the icon and its case from the craftsman, he went with some friends into the local bar. There they drank vodka, and it turned out that they did not have enough money to pay for the drinks. Without thinking, Efim gave the icon in lieu of his debt. Immediately a demon entered into him; he lost consciousness and foamed at the mouth. His terrified friends carried him to a cart and took him to the village. His son Stefan immediately went to Pisarevka, paid the debt and took the icon back. Efim immediately came to himself, fell down before a large icon of the Holy Trinity and began to beg forgiveness for his great sin before the Lord. He wept so much that a pool of his tears was formed around him. And he wept for three days without getting up. Later he used to say: “I would get up, turn round and want to leave, but then the demons would shout: ‘You’re ours, you’re ours!’” So for three days they did not let him leave the icon. Without sleeping or eating, he stood and wept. Finally he thought of leaving the world and going to Kiev to worship at the holy places and enter a monastery. For a whole year he could not make up his mind whether to go to Kiev.

At that time there was a clairvoyant elder in Kiev, Fr. Jonah of the Holy Trinity monastery in Zverinitsa (later Schema-Archimandrite Peter, who died on January 9, 1909 at the age of 107). When Efim finally came round to going to Kiev he was shown the way to the hermit Fr. Jonah. He went up to the door and said: “Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us!” “Amen, child Efim,” replied the hermit, “come in! I’ve been waiting for you for a whole year. Come in and tell me what happened to you.” Efim told him everything, and when he had finished, he asked: “Batyushka, bless me to go into a monastery, so as to save my soul.” But Fr. Jonah did not agree: “You have no blessing to go into a monastery. Go home, and put your whole family on the path of salvation. And see that there are no spirits in your family!”

Efim returned, began to lead a pious life and set his children and grandchildren on the right path. When he would go through the village, people would whisper after him: “A saint, a saint is passing by!”

There were many icons and holy things in the house. Once, before the revolution, the house burned down and they did not succeed in getting the holy things out. Everybody saw a many-coloured, rainbow-like pillar ascending from the burning house. The whole village burned down, but

nothing similar had ever taken place before, so everyone decided that this was grace from the holy things ascending to heaven in the fiery pillar.

This was the kind of house in which Nestor was born...

Batyushka used to tell how he was born dead, but his mother tearfully prayed that he come to life, promising to give the child to the service of God. In his early childhood he had a vision or dream: he saw people of the earlier ages of Christianity who were grave and pious. Then he saw people from the Middle Ages, who were more lively. And then people of recent times – they shouted in a dreadful way and rushed around like madmen. Batyushka said that these scenes appeared before him as in a cinema. He was frightened and began to call Mama. She ran up and calmed him.

Another incident took place when batyushka was between ten and twelve years old. There was little river behind their kitchen garden, and he went there to catch fish. "I was sitting there," he said, "with my rod, and suddenly a dragon came up out of the water. Water simply poured off him! I was frightened, cast away my rod and ran home shouting: 'Oy, Mama, Mama! A terrible beast has appeared to me!' Mama calmed me down: 'It's nothing, child, nothing. It was a terrible demon. How could a beast get into the small river?' Then some adults went to the river to have a look. The rod was lying on the earth, and there was nothing around."

When Nestor began to grow up, he began to be drawn to street dancing. At first he felt out of place there, he didn't dance or sing, but then, the third time, it began to interest him. Someone was playing the harmonica, and girls and boys were dancing and singing. It happened to be the eve of the Dormition, the patronal feast of the village church, and he was going with his brother to fish in the lake. They cast their net and were delayed at the lake. So when they came back Nestor noticed with disappointment that the young dancers had already dispersed to their homes. His brother was driving the horse while Nestor was sitting with his back to the horse, sorrowing that the street was already empty. Suddenly he heard a voice from above: 'Why, lawless one, are you directing your steps on the path of lawlessness? Remember that today the Heavenly Queen is rising from earth to heaven! Remember Whom you promised to serve from your childhood!' And then in front of his very eyes on the dark sky his sins began to be written in fiery letters: 'Street pleasures, laughing, singing...'

"I was so frightened," he recounted, "that my hair stood on end and my hat rose up. And then I felt something sweet on my lips, as if something sweet had been put in my mouth. I immediately began to ask my brother: 'Faster! Drive faster!' We came to the village as midnight was sounding. I ran up to my father and began to pester him: 'Papa, papasha, let's go quickly to the church!' My father said: 'It's still early!' But I persuaded him and we went. But the nightwatchman didn't want to open up... From that time I stopped

going to the street parties and began to pray more to God. My only desire was to enter a monastery as quickly as possible."

At this time Elder Stefan was living in the Spaso-Yefimovsky monastery in Suzdal. He had been exiled there from Kharkov province because of a slanderous accusation. Archbishop Arseny of Kharkov had not thoroughly investigated the case. The matter was as follows. Elder Stefan was struggling on Mount Athos, but then was sent to the city of Bogodukhov in Kharkov province to build a women's monastery. The superior of the monastery was a baptized German. A prostitute was bribed to bring a child into the monastery and declared that the father was Elder Stefan. He did not justify himself, but said: "I have sinned, forgive me!" There was a trial, and Fr. Stefan was exiled to Suzdal, to the Spaso-Yefimovsky monastery. They took him there in an open wagon, and one pious woman saw a radiance over his head and said: "Whom have you condemned?" In the monastery he lived in a single cell with a condemned priest, and, as was reported to the Synod, there they did nothing but pray. At this time (in 1913) Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II visited the monastery, but was not admitted to the cell of the elder – they said that he was some kind of heretic. The elder later said: "It's a pity that the Sovereign did not come to me." For his great patience the Lord had granted the elder the gift of clairvoyance – he could have told the Tsar something important.

Many people came to visit Elder Stefan. Batyushka's father, Stefan Yefimovich, also came to him for advice. The elder asked him three times: "Who is your middle son?" (Batyushka had two brothers, one older than him and the other younger.) His father was silent, not knowing what to reply. And then the elder said: "That's Monk Nestor! But first he must serve the earthly King, and then the Heavenly."

By this time Nestor was already eighteen, and he began to ask his father and mother to bless him to go into a monastery. But the Lord decreed that first he had to go to Suzdal. He was walking along a path to the Spaso-Yefimovsky monastery and was dreaming about asking the elder for his blessing to enter a monastery. At that moment the elder was coming towards him along another path. "On coming up to me," recounted batyushka, "he said three times: 'God blesses! God blesses! God blesses!' Later, on entering the ante-chamber to the elder's cell, he saw the man who had met him on the path and asked those who were with him: "Who is this?" They said to him: "Elder Stefan." "Now I no longer need to ask, he has already blessed me," thought batyushka. He went up to the elder and put various questions to him on other matters, spiritual and material. He didn't ask him about monasticism – he had already received a blessing...

He could no longer wait, and finally, after praying at night, his parents gave their blessing. Immediately, at three in the morning he left his parents' house. He left the village as the sun was rising...

He met three old people who were going to Kiev and decided to accompany them. They walked for twelve days. Once they came to a chapel. There two monks were inscribing the names of living and reposed for those who wanted their relatives commemorated. The three old people and Nestor went up and gave a list of names. Then the monks said: "Give three roubles!" "I was frightened and said: 'Forgive me, brothers, but I have no money!' They got angry with me, began to shout at me and took away my bag. My fellow-travellers were frightened and ran out of the chapel. I began to cry. Well, I was a village lad and was frightened by monks attacking me! I told them: 'Well, write fewer names!' Then I understood that this was a temptation of the enemy, who wanted to turn me against monasticism, so that my striving for the monastery would subside. One shouted at the other: 'Hit him, the barefooted one!' They threw away my bag. I took up my bag, left the chapel and caught up with my fellow-travellers...

"We came to the Kiev Caves Lavra, and now I began to approach everyone with caution. There were many people around. I went up to one of them and asked: 'Batyushka, how do you put down people's names for commemoration? How much money do you need?' The monk replied: 'Child, we have thousands of people here, and some don't even have a kopeck. Let people give what they can. A general prayer for everybody is being read. Let him who wants, put his name down.' I was straightaway encouraged."

Nestor didn't like the crowds and the noise in the Lavra. The fuss wasn't to his taste, he wanted to go to some desert community. He found a friend in the Lavra, and together they went to the guest-house and got a place to sleep. There were two- and three-layered bunks in the dormitory. They lay down opposite each other and began to talk. Then batyushka saw that there was some woman in black walking between the bunks. When she came up to them, batyushka for some reason immediately sat on the edge of his bed: he noticed that she wanted to say something to him. She turned to him and said: 'Child! You want to enter a desert monastery. Tomorrow attend the Divine service, I will come to you and direct you where to go.' He listened to this and looked at his friend. It was as if he hadn't noticed - he paid no attention and continued their interrupted conversation.

In the morning they attended the service, and after the liturgy went out of the church into the courtyard of the Lavra. This woman - in monastic attire and with a noble appearance - again came up to batyushka and said: 'Let's go, I will show you where you have to go'. She led them beyond the city, told them which villages they had to pass through and said: 'In twelve versts you will see monastery gates. Go through them and into the community. You will be met by an elder with a staff in his hand - that is the igumen. Go up to him, make a prostration and say: "Father, bless and receive me into your community!" You are needed there, they will take you.'

"After these words batyushka asked the woman who she was and where she was from. 'My name is Pelagia, I'm from a community in the East.'

Batyushka thanked her and wanted to ask her something else, but she disappeared, and he didn't see where she had gone. It seemed strange to him that his companion again seemed to notice nothing, as if he had not seen or heard anything.

"Nestor and his friend walked for about twelve versts and came to the community, which was called "Tserkovschina skete". They had recently built a church in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God, and internal works were continuing – they had to build an iconostasis. Batyushka was a carpenter. When they came to the gates, his friend, Ivan, immediately went off to the builders while batyushka continued down the path. There he saw an elder with a staff, went up to him, bowed to his feet as St. Pelagia had told him, and said: 'Batyushka, bless me and receive me into your community!' 'And what is your occupation?' 'I'm a carpenter'. 'We need people like you,' replied the igumen. 'Have a rest from your journey, and tomorrow start on your obedience.'

"Batyushka went to the guest-house, where they gave him food and a cell for rest. The next day he began work on the iconostasis.

"Batyushka bore this obedience until he was called into the army at the age of twenty. He served in Moscow, in the Grenadiers regiment. He served two years there, and then the First World War began. He had to fight at the front. When the Manifesto on the Abdication of Tsar Nicholas was read to the soldiers, batyushka saw that the sun was eclipsed, and he thought: 'That's it, Russia has fallen!'"

The soldiers were soon disbanded. Nestor went for a short time to his homeland, but then returned to his community, "Tserkovschina". There he received the ryasophor, and then monasticism with the name Nestor. According to another account, however, he received the mantia with the name Nazarius from Elder Alexis (Goloseyevsky) of Kiev (+1916), his spiritual father, and with his blessing struggled in the Goloseyevskaya desert of the Kiev Caves Lavra.

In his community there were two hundred brothers. Once many people came to the community's patronal feast. There was not enough porridge, and the cook was worried. But as he gave out the porridge, he noticed that the porridge in the pot was increasing: "I gather it, and it grows like dough!" So he was able to feed all the worshippers.

The monastery used to send vegetables from its gardens to Moscow. Once before the Dormition they got ready an empty railway truck for tomatoes at the railway station. The superior did not want to pay for an empty railway truck and sent brothers to the station with carts full of tomatoes. The vigil service was going on while some of the brothers loaded the cart with tomatoes. When the cart arrived in Moscow and they opened it, the whole load was found to have rotted. Besides the loss in produce, they had to pay

to clean up the cart. The monastery suffered other losses: horses died, and then oxen. Then the superior came to himself and ordered a thanksgiving service to the Mother of God – he thanked her that she had punished them only with the deaths of their animals, while the brothers themselves had not suffered.

When the Bolsheviks began to destroy the churches and monasteries, the brothers thought of constructing an agricultural artel in the monastery in the hope of preserving it from destruction. The superior gathered everyone to a meeting to decide whether to make this concession to the authorities, which would involve registration of the artel. However, Fr. Nazarius protested. He got up and said: “We cannot allow this!” The superior went up to him, took him by the shoulders, let him to the door and said: “Go and do not disturb the brothers.” Fr. Nazarius was offended. He turned and said to the superior: “You are now driving me out, but there will come a time when they will drive you out!”

According to another source, Fr. Nazarius left the monastery and returned to his homeland in 1926, after the closure of the community by the Bolsheviks. He did not recognize the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, which came out in 1927. But someone in the village spread the rumour that he was a “signer”. People then began to look at him with suspicion, believing the accusation.

At the end of the 1920s Fr. Nazarius was living in his native village. On June 23 / July 6, 1930, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Sergius of Narva in the cathedral of the Saviour on the Blood in Petrograd. After his ordination he looked after catacomb communities in Sumy, Kharkov and other regions of the Ukraine.

Once the believers gathered in a certain house to celebrate a feast. Among them were Fr. Nazarius and Blessed Basil Krasnokutsky, from the city of Krasny Kut. When Fr. Nazarius came in, Blessed Basil began to go round the rooms looking in all the corners and saying: “Where has he gone? Look for him! Look for him! Go there! Come here!” Fr. Nazarius thought: “That’s me, probably, they’re looking for me in the monastery.” During lunch Blessed Basil smashed an onion into the salt and gave it to Fr. Nazarius: “Go on, eat it!” Fr. Nazarius obeyed, although it was bitter and salty. Then, when they were drinking tea, the blessed one took his cup of tea, hurled pieces of sugar into it – so many that the cup overflowed, – and gave it to Fr. Nazarius: “Drink!” Fr. Nazarius drank it. He saw this as a prophecy that his earthly life would be very bitter, and that sweetness awaited him in the life to come...

Those in the house who had entertained doubts about Fr. Nazarius did not want to go up to him for a blessing. But Blessed Basil pointed at him and said: “First go to the priest for a blessing, then to me.”

After living for a while with his relatives, Fr. Nazarius went to the monastery for his books and other things that he had left in the community.

The brothers told him that they had been looking for him in all the monasteries. Batyushka took his things and went to his relatives in Vinnitsa province.

There, during the celebration of Pascha, the chekists came and arrested Fr. Nazarius. The investigation lasted for a long time, and usually took place at night. When it was over, the investigator asked him:

“What do you think of Soviet power?”

“I’ll tell you what it is – violent, atheist and traitorous.”

“I’ll pack you off to the taiga, and you’ll rot there!”

Batyushka crossed himself and replied:

“I am with the Lord and will not rot in the taiga. But without God you will rot even in the towns.”

According to one source, on January 17, 1931 Fr. Nazarius was arrested in the village of Lugovka for being “a participant in the Kharkov branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church”, and on December 14 was sentenced in accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11 to three years in the camps and sent to a camp.

According to another source, however, he was sentenced to six years logging in the Kola peninsula of Murmansk province, beyond the Arctic circle. They took groups of prisoners into the taiga, threw them out of the railway trucks and ordered them: “Build yourselves barracks and work!” The prisoners were from many walks of life, and many were clergy and monastics. But everybody had their hair and beards forcibly shaved.

Some immediately refused to work for Soviet power. They stopped giving them rations, as a result of which they began to die from hunger. Batyushka went to work, and kept up the spirits of the others.

The logs cut by the prisoners were sent abroad via Murmansk. One of them wrote on a log: “These building materials have been obtained by blood.” The signature was written in blood. Some time later, a commission came from the West to check the condition of prisoners in Soviet labour camps. After this, conditions improved somewhat.

Many prisoners became weak and could not fulfil their labour norm, for which they were deprived of their rations. Fr. Nazarius, on becoming brigade leader, ascribed fulfilment of the norms to all the “weaklings” in his brigade. Inspectors came to see whether the norms had really been fulfilled as Fr. Nazarius indicated. He prayed that the Lord would cover his “guilt”. And He

did: the inspectors found that the quantity of wood logged was well over the norm...

Fr. Nazarius did not have a calendar in the camp, and so did not always know when it was a feastday. Once the brigade went out to work, but no progress at all was made. They began to count the days, and it turned out that it was the feast of the Annunciation...

Batyushka's sentence was six years, but thanks to his good work he was released after only three years. This was in 1936. He returned to his homeland, where his brother Gregory was living. There were six people in the family, and Gregory himself worked as an accountant in a collective farm.

A widow from a nearby village also lived in the house, helping with the housework. When Fr. Nazarius settled in with his brother, there were rumours about his relationship with this woman. Because of these rumours, Gregory wanted to have a separate household in another place while leaving his brother his father's property. But Fr. Nazarius decided otherwise – he settled in the western part of the village, taking with him the widow, Christina Mironova, and his blind virgin sister, Marina. Soon they were joined by Maria Fyodorovna, who came from the same village as Christina and was a former church chanter.

Fr. Nazarius could not serve in church because he continued to reject Metropolitan Sergius. So in order to earn his living he organized a brigade of carpenters who went around working on hire.

When the Second World War began, and the territory where Fr. Nazarius lived was occupied by the Germans, he built a church in the village of V-Pisarevka, in a building that had formerly been a pharmacy, and there he began to serve. But the Germans retreated, and Fr. Nazarius decided to go with them, fearing the Soviets would again cast him into prison. Together with him went some of his spiritual children, including Maria Fyodorovna. The end of the war found them in East Germany, whence they were forcibly repatriated and thrown into the camps. Fr. Nazarius was accused of "betraying the Fatherland" and carrying out services during the German occupation. Striving to escape arrest, he began to hide with relatives, and this underground existence continued until 1967, when the police finally caught him.

At the beginning of his wanderings, from 1945 to 1950, he could not serve because he was constantly forced to move from place to place. But in 1953 he formed a little community, a "skitok", as he liked to call it, in his native village. He used to serve at nights in the little house on the eves of Sundays and great feasts.

At the beginning of the 1950s **Archimandrite Anthony**, the last True Orthodox superior of the Kiev Caves Lavra, died and many of his spiritual

children began to come to Fr. Nazarius in accordance with Fr. Anthony's blessing before he died. Then many other Catacomb Christians began to visit him at night. Denunciations were made against him, but when the police came to look for the "pope" they could not find him.

Once he was linked with **Archbishop Anthony (Galynsky-Mikhailovksy)**, who tonsured him into the schema with the name Nicodemus. However, he later came to doubt in him and left him, commemorating instead the First Hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad. He was in communion with **Fr. Nicetas Lekhan**.

However, at the beginning of 1967 the police found him in the house, sick with flu. Fr. Nazarius was so shocked by their unexpected arrival that he went completely blind. But good people looked after him, and he lived for another eight years at home, dying on night of February 4-5 (according to another source, February 13), 1975 (ns). His sister Marina (in monasticism **Martha**) had died shortly after the arrival of the police, Maria Fyodorovna (in monasticism **Melania**) died on January 4, 1975 (ns), and a year later, on January 22, 1976 there died Christina Mironova (in monasticism **Chionia**).

One of Fr. Nazarius' disciples was **Hieromonk Pachomius**, in the world Peter Konstantinovich Petin. He was born in 1898 in the village of Pavlovka, Lebedin uyezd, Kharkov province into the family of a priest. He went to a theological seminary, and was a student on the second course of Kharkov University. In 1920 he was arrested, sentenced to three years in the camps and sent to a camp. In 1923 he was released, returned to Kharkov and served as an illegal priest, conducting secret services in the village of Bogodukhovo near Kharkov. After the death of his wife, Matushka Apollinaria, he was tonsured by Fr. Nazarius and went to Volgograd. On April 8, 1931 he was arrested for being "a participant in the Kharkov branch of the counter-revolutionary monarchist church organization, the True Orthodox Church", and on December 14 was sentenced to three years in the camps and sent to a camp. He met **Metropolitan Joseph** of Petrograd in Kazakhstan in the 1930s, and was awarded a mitre by him. On his release, Fr. Pachomius served the True Orthodox Church in Poltava. He spent the last years of his life on the outskirts of Tsaritsyn in the village of Sarepta. He died on January 10, 1985 (or 1989), and was buried in Kharkov.

39. HOLY HIEROCONFESSOR THEODORE OF BELARUS'

Archimandrite Theodore, in the world Theodore Andreyevich Rafanovich, was born in Belorussia in the village of Khanichi in Mogilev region.

Once as a child he wandered into the rye and came across a wolf. Thinking that it was a dog, he began to beat and shoo it away. Then some adults came up, and recognizing the "dog" to be a wolf, drove it away.

His father used to sing on the cliros in the local church. And the boy was sent to study in Mogilev seminary, where he was the only non-smoker among the students. But Theodore was orphaned when quite young, and it was left to his sister, Anna Andreyevna, to care for his education. Since he was not a quick learner, she wrote to Fr. John of Kronstadt asking him to pray for him. Soon she received a reply from Fr. John:

"I have prayed for your brother".

Immediately Theodore showed a dramatic improvement in his performance.

On leaving the seminary, Fr. Theodore married, was ordained to the priesthood and was sent to a parish 30 miles from Gomel in the village of Sherstin. His wife was called Sophia, and they had five children - George, Nicholas, Andrew, Natalia and Zinaida. Nicholas and George perished during the war.

Fr. Theodore was a very zealous priest, and many people came to his services and to seek his advice from the surrounding districts. In 1922, when renovationism began, he and his friend Fr. Paul (Levashov) were among the few priests who stood firmly for Orthodoxy, for which he was awarded a pectoral cross by Patriarch Tikhon on April 1/14, 1924. People came to him from many regions, abandoning their renovationist pastors, as a result of which he acquired a large parish.

Patriarch Tikhon sent a bishop to the Gomel region in order to receive penitent renovationist clergy back into the Church. At that time many repented and returned to the Orthodox Faith. But on his return journey this bishop was arrested by the authorities and sent to a camp. Fr. Theodore was under constant observation by the authorities during this period.

Once in their ignorance the servant of God Anna and her brother put their signatures to a document "on behalf of the Living Church". When they told Fr. Theodore about this, he clutched his head and said:

"What have you done! Have you got any golden coins? Take them to those who collected your signatures and ask them to blot out your signatures."

Anna and her brother did as they were told. Their signatures were blotted out.

Later, Fr. Theodore was forced to leave his Sherstin parish and serve in the Chernigov district. There he was arrested and sent to the Kotlas camp. According to some sources, he was for a time in Gomel prison.

When Fr. Theodore was in prison he was sentenced to be shot. The sentence was appointed for the following day. That evening Fr. Theodore was praying in his solitary underground cell. Suddenly he heard chanting beside him:

"Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy..."

He turned round and saw a vision - a multitude of reposed souls were standing behind him with burning candles in their hands. They were chanting these words of prayer and beseeching God to deliver Fr. Theodore from death. The next morning the decree concerning Fr. Theodore's execution was repealed.

While he was in prison, Fr. Theodore refused to take some milk because it was a fasting period. The Mother of God appeared to him and said:

"Servant of God, drink the milk."

After this he accepted it with gratitude and drank it.

He once had another vision of the Mother of God. She was walking over the earth so weightlessly that the grass and flowers did not even sway under her feet.

Once during winter in the camp he was carrying water, and the water splashed over him. His hands began to freeze, and he called on the Mother of God:

"Queen of heaven, warm me!"

Immediately his hands became hot, and even the water became hot.

"But the people around me were freezing," recalled Fr. Theodore.

When Fr. Theodore returned from prison his wife had died. He remained alone in the rank of a protopriest. And since he had no flock, he used to wander round the marshes praying:

"Mother of God, gather together my children for me."

And she brought them to him from all over Belorussia.

"I gathered you all through the Mother of God," he later said, "and I entrust you all to her."

Therefore he would grieve deeply and weep when one of them left him.

In 1927 Fr. Theodore refused to recognize the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, which placed the Church in submission to the atheists, and had to serve in house churches. The authorities searched for him, but Fr. Theodore constantly changed his domicile and escaped from his persecutors. Knowing of his loyalty to the true faith, many people came to him for spiritual support from the renovationists and sergianists.

Fr. Theodore was well hidden by reliable people. New people who wanted to come to him would have to spend a great deal of time and effort to persuade those close to him to let them meet batyushka.

In about 1939, Fr. Theodore was again arrested. It was winter. In the village of Strelki some people were waiting to receive communion from him. Batyushka was brought to them in a cart covered with straw. But then he was arrested and taken by train under convoy from Rogachev to Gomel. All his things were taken, and he was left only with his passport and his comb. As the train came into Saltanovka station, his guards fell asleep, and Fr. Theodore, remembering that he knew a Xenia there, quickly jumped off the train. It was snowing. Fr. Theodore lost his way, and sat down to die. Suddenly he heard some voices urging on a horse. They came up to him:

"Where are you going?" they asked.

"I'm going to Claudia Alexeyevna in Selevanikha - she's my daughter-in-law," he replied.

Claudia Alexeyevna was a teacher and lived with Xenia in the house of Matushka Matveyevna. Having reached Matushka's house, Fr. Theodore knocked on the window. The mistress of the house was aghast. He was frozen, wet and exhausted. They warmed him and gave him some fresh clothes.

In the morning Stepanida ran into the hut, and, learning that Fr. Theodore was there, called Tatiana. Since a stranger, a teacher, was living in the house, Fr. Theodore had to move immediately to another place. He went with Tatiana to the village of Ugly. On their way they saw a man in a black overcoat running towards them.

"That's it! A policemen's after us!" went through their heads.

But it was a false alarm: the man, who worked on the railways, passed by them without touching them.

That day was the feast of the Forty Martyrs (March 9 according to the Church calendar), and Fr. Theodore served a service to them with the master of the house John, his wife and daughter and Tatiana helping him. After this rumours circulated to the effect that Fr. Theodore had been arrested, but that he had managed to run away and was again at liberty. Those to whom he had been going for a service just before his arrest were delighted at the news.

During the war, when Belorussia was occupied by the Germans, Fr. Theodore came out of the catacombs and began to serve openly. He served in the church in the village of Obidovichi in Rogachev district, and also in a church in Gorodtsy. In his sermons he angrily denounced Soviet power.

"He gives such sermons about the communists," said some Sovietized people, "that if the Russians were here they would tear him to pieces."

He would angrily denounce Soviet power, the communists and their Moscow Patriarchate. For this he was persecuted by the authorities not only as a secret priest, but also as a zealous opponent of the whole Soviet regime.

When the Germans retreated, the church in Obidovichi burned to the ground. The Soviet armies arrived. By this time Fr. Theodore was no longer serving openly, but at home. He was summoned to the village soviet and warned:

"If you want to serve, go to a parish, old man!"

The clairvoyant Matushka Paulina from Gomel told him to hide, and he, following her advice, began to live secretly with his spiritual children in Belorussia.

"At night people would come to him, but during the day - never," remembers the servant of God T.

70 people would gather round batyushka by night. When there was a danger, noone would come. Sometimes his spiritual children would crawl up to the house on hands and knees. Some parishioners who are still alive remember the unexpected joy they had:

"What joy it was going to him. It was wonderful - through the rye and the oats!" remembers Abbess M.

Once Fr. Theodore was recognized by the GPU at a station. He was arrested. Then they took him through the villages under arrest, until some believers in Osipovichi ransomed him for 500 rubles.

Once, when Fr. Theodore was being hunted by the GPU, the president of the local soviet, who was a Jew, came to the hut where he was living. At that moment Fr. Theodore was praying with his prayer-rope. The man asked him who he was. Fr. Theodore said that he was a wanderer - they did not touch him.

In 1946 some people from the KGB went to the elder Peter Razumovsky (who by many accounts was a secret bishop) and began to demand that he reveal to them where Fr. Theodor was living. The elder only replied:

"I don't know where he is, but I will tell you one thing: the Holy Spirit is upon him! Fear him - he will strike you!"

Fr. Theodore was clairvoyant. If a person came to him with an offering but was secretly begrudging it, Fr. Theodore would be able to read his thoughts and would meet him with the words:

"To give or not to give?"

From others, however, he would accept offerings with gratitude.

Once Fr. Theodore was serving the Liturgy in an wooden cabin. After the service, he refused the food that was offered him, sat down and began to weep like a child.

"Take me away from here - out of this farmstead," he repeated insistently.

Now there was some rye growing on this farmstead. They took him there, and immediately after the police descended upon the house. They were looking for Fr. Theodore and turned the whole house upside down, sticking their rifle butts into everything possible. By that time Fr. Theodore had managed to go from the farmstead rye into the collective farm rye, which began just at that point, and to hide there.

It was in about 1956-57, at the feast of the Protecting Veil in October. A KGB agent came to the house of Fr. Theodore's reader at just the time that Fr. Theodore was in the house. The reader did not let the KGB agent beyond the door of her house, and he, after looking round on both sides, went away. In this village there worked another KGB agent, and the first agent, going to him, said that in the house of the reader there was a priest whom they were just about to arrest. This second agent had a believing mother who also went to Fr. Theodore. Her son warned her that she should not go to the house where the secret priest was serving - otherwise they would arrest her, too. She passed what she had heard on to her daughter-in-law, who ran and told everything to another woman from Fr. Theodore's flock.

"Don't worry - there's noone there", said this woman soothingly.

But immediately the first woman had gone she ran to Fr. Theodore and warned him. At that moment Fr. Theodore was doing the proskomedia, and the house was full of people who had assembled for the feast of the Protecting Veil. On hearing about the coming raid, the people became very anxious. Fr. Theodore turned to them and said:

"Don't go anywhere! Everyone make 36 signs of the cross on the doors and all round."

All the adults and children carried out this obedience fervently with their prayer-ropes.

"Let noone leave the Liturgy!" warned Fr. Theodore again.

And the master of the house added: "May the power and will of God be done!"

Everyone stood up to pray and the service began. They prayed very fervently, expecting that they would be arrested the next day. Everyone wept as they read the akathist to the Mother of God. Fr. Theodore calmed them all and said in his sermon:

"If God does not wish it, they can do nothing to us. Then even if hell were let loose, the Lord would not allow it!"

That is what happened this time - the service ended and everyone dispersed without trouble to their homes.

One of the places where Fr. Theodore lived was the village of Khymy. People would come to him there from distant places, passing points in which there were the houses of his parishioners. A kind of "post office" operated in these houses, and in them people could learn about any danger that was threatening.

The village of Khymy consisted of three parallel streets, on the last of which lived Fr. Theodore. The neighbours knew that in this house there lived a priest. 60-70 used to come to Fr. Theodore at this time. So as to be next to their batyushka, the members of his flock would sometimes organize their work on the spot. So the future Metropolitan E. pastured cows there for three years, while Abbess M. lived in Khymy for three months, having got work there preparing peat. She had to go to work in the morning, and for her sake Fr. Theodore began the service at 4 in the morning. Usually he began the service at 5 or 6 o'clock and served until 5 or 6 in the evening. Confessions would take a long time with him. He usually served alone, in a white podryasnik.

A woman who belonged to Fr. Theodore's flock worked in the nearby Beletsky peat factory. She learned in the factory that a raid on Fr. Theodore

was being planned, and soon a message went out through the "post office" that people should not go to Fr. Theodore any more. They say that at this time some people were returning from Fr. Theodore carrying holy water and prosphoras. On the road they noticed a parked "Kozlik" car. It was dark, and the car followed them keeping them always in its headlights. Realizing that they were being followed, the Christians waited until they came to some thickets. Then they turned sharply off the road and managed to hide.

Another woman in Fr. Theodore's flock got to know a secret detective who was pretending to be a believer. In her ignorance she gave him all the addresses where Fr. Theodore usually served. Soon the KGB summoned her and gave her an exact account of her conversation with the detective "Christian". The police went to all the addresses on the list. They did not find Fr. Theodore because the woman had not told the detective about the house in Khymy, where Fr. Theodore happened to be at that moment.

The police would take three houses of Fr. Theodore's parishioners and search them from top to bottom. But he was not there - he had managed to hide. Once the police came to a house where he was staying, and he again managed to hide. However, the mistress of the house, Pimenikha, was so frightened that she died from fear. It was particularly difficult for people to gather at Fr. Theodore's houses when Khrushchev came to power.

In the course of 20 years Fr. Theodore managed to gather a flock of about 1000 people. People would come to him from Mogilev, Minsk and Bryansk districts.

In the course of 20 years Fr. Theodore managed to gather a flock of about 1000 people. People would come to him from Mogilev, Minsk and Bryansk districts.

Fr. Theodore was a strict priest, but at the same time he was very attentive and loving. For example, there is the following incident from the childhood of Metropolitan E. He was tending the cows, and fell ill. It was a fasting period. Fr. Theodore came to him and said:

"Eat fish."

E. began to refuse: "How can I eat fish during a fast? I won't!"

"You're ill, eat fish," insisted batyushka.

The sick boy stubbornly refused. But Fr. Theodore did not go away until he had fed him.

One woman told him that she had such-and-such a job and lived in such-and-such conditions, which made it impossible for her to eat only fasting food during the fast, however much she wanted to.

"Well, what can you do, eat what you're eating, that's the kind of work you have," replied Fr. Theodore.

Fr. Theodore was against his spiritual children going to the collective farms, which he could not stand.

His parishioners asked him how they were to behave when they found themselves beside ruined churches or churches in which the Moscow Patriarchate served. He said that in such cases the church buildings had once served Orthodoxy, and should be treated with respect. On going up to one such church, they should stop, look up to heaven and say:

"O Lord, Thy grace has departed to the heavens."

After this they should cross themselves and stand for a little.

Fr. Theodore strictly forbade his spiritual children to go the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate, and that it was not right even to socialize with those who went to those churches. He would be particularly strict about this with those who were somewhat negligent in this respect. He said that one could go into the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate only for one reason - to venerate the holy things - the wonderworking icons, the holy relics and the cross. Relics and the cross, he said, retain their grace-filled power until the end of the world.

"In the Soviet churches they won't baptize your children, they'll 'red-star-ize' them," he said. (This is a play on words in Russian: "Nye okrestyat, a ozvyezdyat".)

He strictly forbade people to baptize or be married in the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate, and gave a penance to anybody who ignored this command.

This is what he told his spiritual children:

"If you go into a church of the Moscow Patriarchate and you decide to stand a little and see how their service goes, remember that you are not allowed to pray even one prayer with them. So don't get carried away by their chanting in case you begin to pray with them. Let's say they are singing 'Holy God', and then they cross themselves. Don't cross yourselves at the same time, but wait until they've done it, then you can cross yourselves."

As a rule, the "Theodorites" went into the churches of the patriarchate only in order to venerate the holy things before or after the service.

Fr. Theodore used to tell his spiritual children the following:

"The communists have been hurled at the Church like a crazy dog. Their Soviet emblem - the hammer and sickle - corresponds to their mission. With the hammer they beat people over the head, and with the sickle they mow down the churches. But then the Masons will remove the communists and take control of Russia. Priests will come from the West who will both go to hell themselves and will drag you down with them."

Fr. Theodore would carry with him everything he needed for serving. He had only one great need - a bishop. Fr. Theodore was very sad because he could not find a true bishop of the Catacomb Church. However, some of his spiritual children who lived in the south of Russia informed him that in their region there lived a Catacomb bishop, Anthony (Galynsky-Mikhailovsky), who had just been freed from prison. In 1956 or a little later, Archbishop Anthony was planning to visit Kiev, and he invited Fr. Theodore to visit him. It was a touching meeting, and Fr. Theodore, recognizing a true hierarchy, placed himself under his omophorion.

"He is not an earthly man," he said. "Although I am sick and weak I stood through the whole service"

When Fr. Theodore was living in Khymy, someone betrayed his whereabouts and the authorities burst in looking for him. However, the local president helped him - although he knew that Fr. Theodore was there, he told the searchers:

"He hasn't lived with us for a long time."

This averted the danger for a certain time, but the person who really saved Fr. Theodore then was a certain Alexander who put Fr. Theodore onto his motorcycle and drove him to his home in Gomel. So Fr. Theodore settled secretly in Gomel with Alexander and his wife Anfisa. Their home was just opposite the police-station!

Some time later, however, Alexander died through electrocution and Fr. Theodore left his flat and returned to Khymy. Fr. Theodore performed Alexander's funeral service in the following fashion. The coffin with the body lay on the first floor of the house, while he read the service standing on the second floor.. On the ninth day after Alexander's repose a fiery pillar was seen over his grave. As a result Fr. Theodore asked to be buried in the cemetery next to him.

In the town of Svetlogorsk there lives Fr. Theodore's daughter, Natalya. During his life the police often visited her, looking for him. They tried to force her by threats and violence to reveal the whereabouts of her father. When she refused they beat her and even threatened to rape her. Her husband ran away since they threatened him with shooting for hiding Fr. Theodore.

Once when two policemen were searching the house, a miracle took place. Before they arrived Natalya succeeded in lying down stock-still on a trunk. But the Lord turned away their eyes so that they did not see her. One of them even began to lift the lid of the trunk, but, without noticing her, said:

"How heavy this is!"

The other policeman told him to leave the trunk in peace. So they left without seeing or touching her.

Abdess M. says that in the last four years of his life Fr. Theodore was very poorly. He could hardly move and his mind became somewhat clouded and a childlike quality began to appear in him. All the same he continued to serve and feed the people, helped by a novice nun.

Fr. Theodore died in the village of Khymy on Palm Sunday, the feast of the Vilnius martyrs - April 14/27, 1975. This coincided with Radonitsa that year. When he died his daughter and her husband came to Hieromonk E. at three o'clock in the morning and handed him a letter from Archbishop Anthony with the command to perform the funeral service for Fr. Theodore. E. sat in the car with them and on arriving carried out the funeral service. (Archbishop Anthony had been informed that Fr. Theodore was dying by a nun who came to tell him.)

Metropolitan E. says that Archbishop Anthony had ordered that Fr. Theodore be buried in the cemetery. But when he died, the lady of the house in which he was living secretly was frightened to bury him in a cemetery, fearing that through this the authorities would find out that a catacomb priest had been hiding with her. She insisted that Fr. Theodore be buried next to her house. Fr. Theodore's daughter agreed with this.

And so he was buried at night under the wall of her house, wearing the golden cross which his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon had given him during the years of struggle with renovationism. The owners of this house were also frightened about the sacred vessels in which Fr. Theodore had served, as well as his other things. So some time later Nun A. came and handed them over to Hieromonk E.

Perhaps because of this disobedience with regard to Archbishop Anthony's command, this house burned down at the beginning of the 1980s, and Fr. Theodore's coffin was covered with logs.

In the second week of Pascha, 1992, members of Fr. Theodore's flock who had recently left the Catacomb Church and joined the Russian Church Abroad prepared a place in a cemetery for his burial, together with everything that was necessary, and with the participation of his daughter, grandsons and spiritual children, Fr. Theodore's remains were transferred there.

After Fr. Theodore's death several members of his flock went to no other person for spiritual sustenance. They had the impression that Fr. Theodore was the only true pastor.

40. HOLY NUN-CONFESSOR HELENA OF SUKHUMI

and those with her

Nun Helena was born in Minsk, Belorussia of noble parents who were related to both the Russian and the Greek ruling families (through Queen Olga of the Hellenes, Abbess Tamara Romanov of the Convent of the Ascension, Eleon, Jerusalem was her cousin). According to Olga Abramides, who had been healed by the saint and lived with her for some months in her hermitage, the family of the blessed one had nine children (six daughters and three sons), all of whom embraced the monastic life at an early age.

Helena and her sister Nina struggled under the direction of a certain virtuous abbess in a coenobitic monastery near Batumi, in Georgia, in order to learn the monastic life. The only photograph of Mother Helena shows her wearing the great schema.

At this time there died a virtuous bishop in the Batumi area. During his burial the face of the virtuous bishop sweated, and came down in streams which the faithful standing by gathered up with reverence. Mother Helena took some of this "holy water" and kept it for the next 75 years. Through her faith, and the faith of those sufferers who came to her, this "holy water" became wonder-working.

After the revolution, the monastery in which the sisters were struggling was destroyed by the Bolsheviks, and they sought refuge in the Caucasus mountains, in an impassable ravine one hour's walk from the village of Chin, in a thick forest of evergreen trees. For the first two years of their struggle here, the sisters lived in complete isolation. Their only food was a little warm water and a prosphora once a day, which appeared in a miraculous way. Later, when the villagers learned about them and began to help them, and they began to cultivate a garden, the fresh prosphora ceased to come...

During the winter they lived in an underground passage. Then the villagers helped them to build a typical Russian cell made out of trunks of trees with a stove. They ate only once a day - boiled potatoes. They never had oil. For Pascha, "to honour the day", they ate one egg.

The nuns had no communion with the official Churches of Russia or Georgia, and when clergy from these Churches would come up to meet them, Mother Helena would not let them into her cell, nor allow them to celebrate Divine services. For confession and communion they themselves went down to Sukhumi to an exiled priest of Bulgarian origin.

Once some secret policemen tried to catch them. However, Mother Helena was hidden in a miraculous manner, so they found only Mother Nina.

"Are you praying?" one of them asked.

“Yes,” she replied, “for all the Christians. And also for you, since you were baptized in the Name of Christ but have denied Him.”

In 1957 the hermitage was struck by fire. Flames were destroying everything. Then Mother Helena knelt down, raised her hands to heaven and fervently prayed to the Mother of God to help her servants. The Mother of God appeared and put out the fire! And as a sign of her appearance she left the mark of her immaculate foot there. From that time many people came to the hermitage to venerate the foot-print of the Mother of God.

To repair the damage caused by the fire, Mother Helena accepted help from the villagers and pilgrims. A twenty-year-old young man called Christopher Damianides and 42 other Christians worked for three months there to erect new buildings. (Christopher had come a long way from Kazakhstan on hearing of the fame of the saint, although he was very ill. And Mother Helena had healed him after putting him on a strict fast.)

The hermitage was built from wood. So to reconstruct it they had to use huge trees up to 50 metres high. After the completion of the works, Mother Helena called the Christians together, thanked them and said that the next day “Christopher will be able to leave”. The following day, however, she asked him to stay, because “they would have a great temptation”. And indeed, they had many problems from the local Forestry department, because the trees had been cut down without its permission.

After the work was done, some of the faithful offered to Matushka that they use a tree in order to construct a fence around the hermitage.

“No,” she said, “we shall not cut down another tree. But if God wills this work, He Himself will send it us.”

That night there was a terrible storm, and the next morning everyone saw to their amazement that a fir-tree of enormous proportions had been uprooted and stretched from the water right to the boundary of the hermitage. So, in accordance with the saint’s prophecy, the Lord Himself had sent wood to fence it round, in a manner that exceeded human and natural strength.

They had also build a little chapel inside the hermitage. When it was completed, Matushka called the young Christopher, together with Theodore Boukharides, and sent them to the village, saying: “There where the Georgians have built a school, there is a buried church dedicated to Saints Constantine and Helena. You excavate it and you will find a hidden icon.” The two young men obediently dug for the church, but could not find anything, and so set off back to the hermitage. Matushka Helena sent them there again, this time with clear and accurate instructions (how many steps to the right and to the left). The young man dug, and this time they found a big icon of the All-Holy Mother of God. While they were bringing it to the hermitage, Matushka,

informed "from above" about the discovery, went to meet them holding the honourable Cross and wonderworking holy water. She took the icon, kissed it and put it in the chapel. Then, in the presence of about 50 faithful, the church was filled with a wonderful fragrance. "Come, my children," she said, "come and see the grace of the Holy Spirit."

Through the grace of God, Mother Helena knew who were coming to visit her; she called them by their Christian names and said who would be received and who not. She did not receive those with little faith or those burdened by mortal sins.

Once (according to the witness of the monk Fr. Luke Panides) she was visited by a mother with a sick child, who was carrying some food. Matushka did not receive her. Later, when asked she explained that "all of them in the family are unbelievers". Another time, she told her visitors to sit in a room containing the icon of the Lord not-made-with-hands. While they all saw that the eyes in the Lord's face were open, one woman saw that they were closed.

"Why is that, Gerontissa?" asked one man.

"John," she replied, "I am not hindering her, but the Lord Himself, because she practices magic."

Mrs. Despoina Kalaitzides got to know Mother Helena in 1965 together with a relative of hers. Matushka - who had not seen them before - said to her:

"You are the daughter of Alexandra and you are very like her. I see your father Panagiotes dressed in green."

Before Despoina and her relative, the hermitage had been visited by two Russian women, bringing some food. However, Blessed Helena had again not received them. Later Matushka Nina told Despoina and her relative that the Russian women had a sick child and on an earlier visit Matushka Helena had advised them to keep the fasts of the Church in order that the child should be healed. And indeed, the child was healed. However, "the Russians easily forget", and since they were careless, in the end the child fell ill again. And she did not receive the food because it had been stolen from a state institution where they worked.

One evening a bear started groaning mournfully outside the hermitage of the saint. Matushka was frightened at the beginning. However, the cries of the animal forced her to interrupt her prayer. Then she saw that the bear's paw was wounded. The blessed one plucked up courage, came closer to the bear and bound up the wound.

A few days later the bear returned peacefully, holding in its paws some maize. Matushka received the animal's gift gratefully, but when she

understood that it had taken it from some farm, doing injustice in this way to some unsuspecting farmer, she “scolded” the bear and showed him a piece of wood, indicating in this way that in the future it should bring her firewood. From then on the animal brought firewood, demonstrating in this way his gratitude to the saint.

When sick people came to Matushka, she would counsel them to fast and pray, “for this kind cometh not out except by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17.21). And since there were no priests to read the Gospel, she would read the Gospel, sprinkling the sick with “holy water” and anointing them with oil from the lampada of the Mother of God. And in accordance with the faith of the sick people, the Lord performed miracles. From the sick she demanded only faith in the power of God and a Christian life thenceforth. At that time there were many “healers” in the Soviet Union. When the sick could not go to the hermitage themselves, their relatives sent their clothes there so that Matushka should bless them.

Like a true nun, Mother Helena had prepared her own grave while she was still alive, outside the hermitage. The simple people, during her lifetime, would take earth from the grave and it would work miracles.

One of the first to be healed through the prayers of Mother Helena was “Katya from Krasnodar”, who suffered from epilepsy. After her healing Katya stayed at the hermitage and became a nun with the name Catherine.

Olga Simeonides witnesses that when she was newly married and her son George was one year old, She fell mentally ill. She was oppressed, didn’t want to be in the house, feared lights and people, etc. With her mother and husband she went to many psychiatrists, with no result. Then a lecturer in psychiatry who was probably a believer discreetly recommended that the prayers of the Church for driving out demons be read. These prayers also did not work, but they did make the condition evident: Olga produced symptoms of demon-possession, and attacked the priests (of the official Georgian Church). Finally her mother in despair began to visit “magicians” and “healers”. At one such visit to a well-known medium, God had mercy on her: the medium, compelled by the grace of God, told her:

“Sit down and listen. You have to find a woman; only she will be able to heal your daughter. She was seven Gospels. At the third your daughter’s illness will be loosed.”

“Since the wretched husband and parents of Olga did not know where to go, they brought the sick woman to her house. For the next month Olga remained lying in a dark room, wrapped in a bed sheet, with absolutely no food or water. There was an icon of the Deisis in the room. One day she heard a sound. Starting up, the sick woman saw a nun standing in front of the icon.

"I am sorry for you," she said. "Give me your hand, so that I can lift you up. You have twelve days left to live."

Olga found the courage to stretch out her hand, and hardly had the unknown nun touched her than she felt a supernatural power go through her. Her strength returned and she was completely healed!

When this miracle became known, the thoughts of all turned to "Matushka Helena of Chin". Olga visited the hermitage to thank her, and recognized in the face of the blessed one the unknown nun who had healed her. Then the saint told her about the satanic bonds of magic, with which, with the permission of God, she had been bound.

"Don't seek to find out who was responsible," she said, "because then you will die from sorrow."

The wife of a very high-ranking Soviet general fell mentally ill. No psychiatrists could help her, so her husband took her - at great risk to himself, since people of his rank were supposed to be atheists - to the hermitage of Chin. Matushka Helena healed the woman. Then the general offered to bring electricity to the hermitage. Matushka refused"

"We are nuns," she said. "Wax and oil are sufficient for us."

The general then offered to bring water from the sides of the hill into the depths of the ravine by aqueduct. She accepted this gift.

Matushka Helena was also a prophetess. In 1955 Christopher Damianides, aged 18, was told by his parents to go to Matushka to ask her whether there would be a war.

"No," she replied. "There will be no war."

"And how will the situation develop?" asked Christopher.

"The eighth leader [of the Soviet Union] is called Michael [i.e. Michael Gorbachev, the eighth Soviet leader since Lenin]. He will be young and good-looking. He will change the situation. However, there will come great poverty. But finally good times will come..."

Many Pontiac Greeks living in the region wanted to return to Greece. She warned them that they must go only to the Old Calendar Church:

"In Greece there is the new calendar. Don't go to the churches where it is followed... If Greece returns to the Old Calendar, it will triumph. Otherwise it will perish."

Matushka Helena died in 1977 (her sister Nina died between the years 1957 and 1959). A Russian-style "open" wooden church has been erected over her grave, and a monk called Boris lives at the hermitage. Her relics have not been uncovered yet. But the earth from her grave is refreshed by a fragrant myrrh which, especially at night, makes the whole area fragrant. And the saint once appeared in a dream to the person who buried her and said:

"Don't move me, for the oil has reached my eyes..."

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In the early 1980s, in the same mountainous region about 60 kilometres from Sukhumi, a small secret community of monastics was discovered by the KGB. 18 managed to take shelter in a cave. The pursuers in a helicopter threw a cask full of burning liquid into the entrance and set it on fire. All those hiding in the cave perished. Their names were: **Irina, Maria, Eudocia, Ulyana, John, Gregory, Basil, Andrew, Stephen, and others.**

41. HOLY CONFESSOR VARENKA OF SERGACH

And those with her

Blessed Varenka, or Barbara Pavlovna Shulayeva, was born in 1914 in the village of Maidany, Pilninsky uyezd, Nizhni-Novgorod province, into a peasant family. The family worked on weekdays and went to church on Sundays. Varenka, who was no different from other peasant children, also went to church with her parents. Her spiritual father was **Fr. Vyacheslav Leontiev**.

Once, when she was thirteen years old, she saw in her sleep a church and a Woman in monastic vesture, and many people around her. The eyes of all were directed upon her; they went up to her reverently and received her blessing. And Varenka very much wanted to receive her blessing. She got up after the others - there were nuns there, as well as priests - and went closer and closer to her. Finally she came up to her and asked:

"Give the blessing."

"No, I only bless the weekdaysers, who go to church on weekdays."

And such sorrow gripped the heart of the girl, she so wanted to receive her blessing, that from that day she began to go to church every day. And so that people should not laugh at her for going to church every day like a nun, Varenka wrapped her face in a scarf and went to the church through the kitchen gardens.

Some time later, she for the first time fell asleep in a special way and slept for several days. In her sleep she saw the habitations of Paradise and hell and what awaits a man after his death.

"Do you remember," she said to her mother on awakening, "when I threw up my hands? That was when I saw a woman who was being flayed with iron combs. Then she was thrown into a boiling cauldron, and I was frightened."

Sometimes she told people what the Lord had been pleased to show her. Thus Matthew Leontiev died in Maidany, and since it was a time of famine his relatives did not want to have a funeral repast on the fortieth day. When Varenka fell asleep she saw him standing up to the knees in a fiery river.

"Tell our people to help me," he said.

Varenka told this to his relatives, and they had a funeral repast. After this she saw him again in her sleep, but he was now standing on the bank.

The news of her unusual gift spread among the Orthodox, and they began to come to her so as to learn the lot of their dead relatives. An old woman

called Olga lived in the village. She was extremely poor and weak. She had a wattle fence which was rickety; she cut wood with a mattock, and her courtyard was always covered with snow - she didn't have the strength or time to clear it because she still had a horse and cow, without which not one peasant household could survive. She had worked all her life and her life had been hard. And when she died Varenka saw her soul in Paradise.

Sometimes when they asked her about something, she did not reply immediately, but only the next time she woke up.

A few days before she would go to sleep, an Angel would appear to her and warn her not to leave the house in case she fell down somewhere with nobody to look after her.

When she fell asleep she became as if dead, so that the limbs of her body grew numb and became immobile.

Once in the church after the end of the Liturgy, Varenka said to Anastasia Astafyeva, with whom she was friendly:

"Let's go home, I'm going to fall asleep now."

"I haven't yet gone up to the cross," she replied.

"Quick," said Varenka hurriedly.

And indeed they hadn't reached the square before Varenka began to fall asleep. They had to go for a sledge to bring her to her house.

Sometimes while she was asleep she would describe in detail what she was seeing at that moment. These stories were written down and filled a thick notebook. But during the persecutions, for fear of the atheists, those close to her threw the notebook into the stove.

These revelations took place regularly in the course of almost ten years. She said that she had seen the Mother of God, that she had been led by St. Nicholas, that there is a fiery river which every soul must pass over after death, and she showed a place on her hand which had been burned to the bone when a drop from the river fell on her.

The authorities heard about Varenka. Members of the Komsomol used to come to her house while she was sleeping, they even beat her in the hope of awaking her and 'uncovering the deception'. Then doctors began to come from Gorky (Nizhni-Novgorod); they gave her fast-acting injections with the same aim as the komsomolites. They injected her with such strong doses and so often that when she woke up she couldn't raise her hands.

But, whatever they did, the atheists were unable to break her sleep. Then they decided to take her to a hospital so as to continue their experiments there. Once they had already come to the girl and were trying to lift her, but they found her so heavy that they couldn't tear her away from the bed.

"It doesn't matter," they said. "Tomorrow we'll come with the car and take her together with her bed."

After their departure Varenka woke up, and her mother, bitterly complaining that she could do nothing, told her what the doctors were intending to do. On the same day Varenka got her things together and left the house. And for the next several years she wandered round the holy places of the Volga region, sometimes alone, sometimes with some friends.

Varenka was a member of the Catacomb Church. She refused to have a passport or to take the pension that they imposed on her. When Metropolitan Sergius' declaration was published in 1927, she went round the churches reproaching the priests who accepted the declaration. Once she even rebuked a bishop, although he became very angry. A certain sergianist priest Ioann from Nizhni-Novogorod greatly venerated her and used to visit her. He always wanted to give her communion, but she said:

"I've already corrected myself" (that is received communion, for she did not receive communion in the sergianist churches).

When he died she wept very much, because she knew what happened to him after his death. Once the Lord showed her all the renovationists and Metropolitan Sergius. They were in a dark place and their hands were bound.

Once the priest Peter sent her the Holy Gifts. He put them in a specially adapted icon. When they came to arrest Fr. Peter in the house where he was hiding he suddenly had a heart attack and died.

In 1936, when she was only just twenty-two, she went with some friends to the elder Ioann Ardatovsky, who was famed throughout the region for his righteous life and gift of clairvoyance. He said to her:

"Go to Sarov - it's not far from here."

But her friends did not want to accompany her; they were in a hurry to go home. And so she, fearing that her mother would worry about her, did not go to Sarov.

"I'd better go home first, to warn Mama."

She left the house to go to Pilna, where she lived, fleeing persecution, with the Opariny sisters. She left them with the girl Damasha, and went to the station to go to Sarov. Six policemen were lying in wait for them in a remote

place. One of them had been her persecutor for a long time; his name was Gavrilov.

Varenka understood that they wouldn't let her go. And she prayed to the Mother of God.

The policemen beat her mercilessly, kicking her and hitting her with iron rods; they beat her in such a way that her face was turned into a purple mask, and blood poured from her ears and mouth. When they were preparing to dishonour her, the Mother of God defended her - an invisible force stopped them from approaching her.

They retreated, and took the girls to the police-station, but they did not abandon the thought of punishing her. When Varenka asked for a drink, they gave her instead, in the guise of medicine, some arsenic powder in the water. But Domasha, who was being kept in the police-station together with Varenka, stealthily poured away the arsenic, and gave her water. The policemen were waiting for the poison to work, but when they saw no signs of her being poisoned, they said:

"Well, you're a tenacious one. Probably a saint."

From that time Varenka was deprived of the use of her legs, and spent the next 40 years until her death lying down. She had control only over the upper half of her body.

"There's my Sarov, my disobedience," she would say.

Her falling asleep also stopped. But now she was persecuted by the authorities, so she couldn't stay long in one place, and had to go from place to place, whatever the weather. In the winter they transported her in a basket attached to the sledge.

One night when the weather was bad Varenka fell out of the basket into a snowdrift, and they didn't discover it immediately. They returned, but wandered round the whole night, having lost the way.

Varenka had to suffer not only from the atheists, but also from those close to her. At first she was looked after by Annushka, who was nicknamed Handless, and by Nyura. When Annushka didn't like something she beat the sick Varenka cruelly, while Nyura soon married, taking all Varenka's things except her icons and the bed on which she lay. Soon the house in which she lived with her husband burned down. Then they built another one - and it also burned down. Only then did the mother of Nyura understand that the Lord was punishing her because of the sick Varenka, and she came to ask forgiveness for her daughter.

Finally, Varenka managed to buy a small, but well-built house on the money collected by the Orthodox. Many people visited her, some sought her prayers, others - her spiritual advice. The authorities noticed that many people were visiting her, and when they found out why they decided to evict her. They began to demand from the former owner of the house that he return the money and take back the house. Frightened, the former owner agreed. But God is not mocked. The next day the former owner died, and the house remained Varenka's.

Once Darya Zaikina came to Varenka, sat with her for a while and then got ready to leave. But Varenka asked her:

"Don't go. There are so many evil spirits in the house..."

And she covered her head with the blanket.

"Varenka, look at me," said Darya.

"I can't open my eyes, they're so terrible."

At this point a woman arrived, began to pray and said:

"Go where you came from."

But the demon replied in a coarse masculine voice:

"None of us are there now, we're all here, on earth. Whoever has no straps we do whatever we like with." Then he said, turning to Varenka: "Drop it, take it off."

And Varenka replied: "I won't drop it, I won't take it off"

(They were talking about her prayer-rope and cross.)

Twice the demon repeated this, and twice Varenka replied. Suddenly he said with hatred:

"Ach, what a hunk of bread you are! You've hung up an internal lock, otherwise I'd wear you out completely!"

Then he lifted her up and shook her strongly.

The demon tormented her for days, trying to frighten her.

"Mother of God," she cried, "help me!"

At that time many demons came to the house, trying to frighten her. And they retreated only when the Queen of Heaven herself appeared and placed

an epitachelion on her head. At the appearance of the All-Holy one the demons disappeared in a puff of smoke.

All of Varenka's spiritual fathers died in prison. All the nearby churches were closed, and she began to beseech God to send her a spiritual father.

And in a subtle sleep after prayer she heard a voice saying:

"A priest will come to you on the day of the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God in the guise of a stove-repairer. His name is Philip - don't let him go until the end of your days."

She came to. What was that? she thought. Probably a demonic illusion - and she made the sign of the cross all around her.

Again she lost consciousness, and again she heard the same voice, repeating the same words. On coming to, she again made the sign of the cross all around her. And she lost consciousness a third time, and the same thing happened again.

It was the 21st - the day of the Vladimir icon. A peasant workman knocked, called himself a stove-repairer and asked:

"Don't you have anything to repair?"

She remembered her dream and asked:

"And what is your name?"

It turned out to be Philip.

"Well, come in then, and stay."

It was the priest **Fr. Philip Anikin**. He was born in 1878 (or 1880) in Chuvashia, and served in the Chuvash village of Kulatka (Ulyanovsk region). In 1915 he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Palladius (Dobronravov, +1922) of Saratov and Tsaritsyn. Fr. Philip was arrested in 1929 or 1930. The parishioners did not allow their church to be closed, and Fr. Philip was accused of inciting them. He was given ten years on Solovki. Fr. Philip rejected the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius and joined the Catacomb Church. He recounted how, on the first day of Pascha, they were being escorted from work. They stopped in the middle of a wood and immediately began the Paschal all-night vigil service. There were many bishops, priests and deacons. At first, when the priests stopped, the guards shouted at them, but then they fell silent and the service went off without incident. At the end they began to exchange the paschal kiss. And even the guards, who usually abused the prisoners, began to exchange kisses with everyone. Fr. Philip served his term with the Shamordino nuns who did not want to work for the

atheists in prison, and took no camp food. Fr. Philip and other priests brought them food from their own meagre rations. The nuns lived on Solovki during the summer, and were then taken somewhere and were reported killed.

Before being released, in 1940, Fr. Philip asked one of the Solovki bishops to bless him. And to his question: what should he do now? the bishop replied:

"Wherever you find one of the Lord's sheep, feed him."

First he went to Krasnovodsk in Central Asia. He went to the cemetery to pray. The authorities heard about it, and they wanted to arrest him. His spiritual children sent him to Ashkhabad, but he had to escape from there, too. Then Fr. Philip went to Shumerlyu, in Chuvashia, a place where dekulakized peasants were settled. Under the guise of a stove-repairer he would go from house to house serving. And very many people came to him. When the war began and they began to open the churches, many went into the Soviet churches, but he did not go, and many left him. He lived secretly with his matushka, Catherine, who died in 1946 when she was sixty-five years old. For the last eight years of her life she was blind. They had ten children, of whom five survived.

Fr. Philip's son, **Ivan**, was imprisoned for eight years in Archangelsk. He wrote: "Papa, there are people like you here, and they give us what you give us (i.e. communion)." Soon he died from hunger.

In his last years Fr. Philip used to sit most of the time on his bed - he could no longer use his legs. He died on April 17, 1974. His flock was looked after by **Fr. Andrew** from Chuvashia, and later **Fr. Nicetas Lekhan** from Kharkov.

In Sergach the church had been destroyed, and many believers from the town and nearby went for church services to Varenka. On great feasts and at Pascha up to 70 people came to her. When there was no priest there would be services at Varenka's according to a "catacomb typicon" which took place quite openly. The authorities knew about them but did not touch her. Varenka was too well-known, and knew too much, not only earthly things but also heavenly (in all she had spent 101 days in heaven at various times).

In spite of her weak health, she was a great faster. During Holy Week she ate nothing. Once at the beginning of the Great Fast her novices brought her some soft white bread and began to persuade her to eat it. She obeyed and ate a little piece, after which her ulcer became worse and she ate nothing during the whole of the Great Fast. Her head was constantly aching, and her liver was also painful. So as to relieve her sufferings somehow, she artificially made herself vomit, but she never complained, and was always joyful.

She knew the day of her death in advance. A week before her death the Mari Prot priest Gurias (+1995) gave her communion, and it was he who buried her. The day before her death she ordered the bath to be stoked up,

and when they took her across the courtyard she asked them to stop so that she could look at the starry sky and the snowy earth for the last time. She died on December 1/14, 1980, and was buried in the cemetery at Sergach. When they took her past the church, everyone sensed that the space around became many-coloured. Obvious miracles took place during the burial.

Twice a year, on her anniversary and at six months, up to 100 people gather to serve a pannikhida. Many believe that earth from her grave heals illnesses. In her house there live the two women who assisted her during her life, strictly keeping the testament Varenka gave them, serving the whole cycle of services daily. They do not think about food or material needs. Once when they had run out of peat for the stove, a lorry full of peat with some driver whom they did not know came up and unloaded some briquettes. God does not abandon His people!

42. HOLY HIEROMARTYRS ISHMAEL AND MICHAEL OF PETROGRAD

and those with them

Fr. Ishmael (Izmail) Vasilyevich Rozhdestvensky was born in the village of Khubets, Krestetsky uyezd, Novgorod province on June 10, 1894, and was the second son of six children of the priest of the church of the village of Perechino (or Peregino). In 1909 he finished his studies at the Starorussa theological school, and in 1915 - at the Novgorod theological seminary. In the same year he entered the Moscow Theological Academy. He knew eight foreign languages. In 1916 he served in a student battalion in Nizhni Novgorod. On graduating from the Academy in 1919, he went to the St. Anthony monastery in Novgorod (where the Novgorod seminary in which he had studied was situated), becoming the leader of the choir. After six months, in 1920, he had made up his mind what to do: he married Maria Vasilyevna Tretinskaya and was ordained to the priesthood in the Tikhvin cathedral. Very soon, on May 19 / June 2, 1921 he was arrested for the first time "for counter-revolutionary agitation" (probably for resisting the closure of the cathedral). After three months in the provincial cheka prison he was released after five days, but was forbidden to live in Cherepovets province (in which the town of Tikhvin was situated). In 1921 he was arrested for a second time in Moscow, and was cast into Butyrki prison. However, he was acquitted by a revolutionary court. However, according to another source he went to Petrograd in the autumn of 1921.

At the beginning of 1922 (according to another source, 1921), he was appointed rector of the Transfiguration church in Strelna, near Petrograd, and began to lead a very serious and conscientious priest's life. According to a member of the Makushin family, who lived not far from the church, "the honest glance of the pure eyes of Fr. Ishmael attracted many believers. At times they could not all get into the church and stood in the garden. They waited in hope until batyushka would come out to them and bless them. Some of them had come from distant places, sick and demon-possessed people came to be healed. It was enough for Fr. Ishmael to read a prayer and press the holy cross to their lips for the attack to cease, and for the sick to become normal instantaneously, getting up on their feet and looking around. We were more than once witnesses of such healings." The suffering women sometimes trembled even at the sight of his devoted, obedient spiritual children.

Fr. Ishmael was also clairvoyant. A man who lived fifteen miles away never came to church, even though he had heard of this exceptional priest who drew people to himself. One Sunday he decided to verify the rumours, and he came. At the end of the Liturgy, while standing among the faithful, he heard Fr. Ishmael say:

"Well, thank you, servant of God Peter, for praying for me,"

and he looked in his direction. He was indeed Peter, and this struck him so forcibly that from then on he became a constant visitor to the church and close to Fr. Ishmael.

In the spring of 1925 Fr. Ishmael was promoted to the rank of protopriest and made rector also of the Dormition cemetery church in Strelna.

On December 28, 1927, Fr. Ishmael and his brother, Fr. Michael signed a document rejecting the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius (their signatures were numbers 51 and 52), and joined the Catacomb Church.

The former renovationist deacon Anatoly Levitin-Krasnov writes: "Ecstatic speeches were uttered in Strelna, where at the head of the church stood the popular priest Fr. Ishmael, who was called 'the Strelna fanatic'. Fr. Ishmael was tall, with long hair falling on both sides to his waist which flew in all directions during his sermons. In a heart-rending voice he denounced the 'sergianist church', calling it 'the whore of Babylon', and he called the services of the sergianists and renovationists - between whom he made no distinction - the service of Satan..."

This led to his persecution. Once Fr. Ishmael said:

"I am going to Golgotha. Who will follow me?"

He was arrested in the night of February 12/25, 1928 in his house by the church in connection "with the sending to the OGPU of agents' information" concerning the fact that "he systematically conducted counter-revolutionary propaganda in church and went round the houses of believers stirring them up against Soviet power".

But it took four months for two false witnesses from Strelna to be found who could confirm this accusation. The assistant station chief of Strelna railway station (who had been sentenced to ten years' hard labour for stealing a bag of oats) declared that "Ishmael Rozhdestvensky built for himself a house and in general lived in style... He showed himself to be an enemy of Soviet power, making a public counter-revolutionary sermon in the church on November 20, 1927." The second witness, a woman, said that the priest "deliberately does not use the word 'Petrograd', but 'Petrograd', etc." In spite of a written petition signed by 403 parishioners that Fr. Ishmael should be released, these two false-witnesses were enough for the OGPU to sentence him, on August 17, to three years' exile in the Urals.

Fr. Ishmael's house, which had been built near the church in 1923, was now occupied by the family of a policeman.

But in 1931, at the end of his term, the authorities added three more years, forbidding him to live in 12 specified places. When they saw him off for the

last time, people wanted to run after the train, but the rifle-butts of the Red Army soldiers drove them back. Before going on his last journey, he handed over the care of his flock to his brother, Fr. Michael, and forbade his flock to have anything whatever to do with the Soviet church.

According to one source, a woman who was not well known to Fr. Ishmael once came to him for confession. When she returned home, perhaps desiring to please her daughter, who was married to an atheist, she declared that the priest had hit her while blessing her. Fr. Ishmael had the custom of as it were implanting the sign of the cross in the forehead and shoulders. A trial followed, and he was condemned to forced labour.

However, according to another source, in 1931 Fr. Ishmael remained to live in Perm, and in 1932 moved to the village of Bystritsa, Orichevsky region, Vyatka province, where he served in the local Josephite church. In April, 1936, in view of the church's closure and his inevitable arrest, he left Bystritsa and lived illegally in Petrograd province, carrying out secret services in the homes of believers.

On May 2/15, 1937 a daughter by the name of Maria was born to Fr. Ishmael. But he never saw her, since from April, 1937 he was forced to live in hiding.

Once Fr. Ishmael was serving before the icon of the Mother of God "Assuage My Sorrow". While he was reading the Gospel, before the eyes of those present there appeared a small rose-coloured cloud surrounding his head like a halo. This was not long before his arrest and martyr's death in 1937.

On July 18/31, 1937 Fr. Ishmael was again arrested in Cholovo station, Oredezhsy region, Petrograd district, and was sent under escort to Vyatka, where he was investigated as "one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary organization of churchmen, 'the True Orthodox Church'". Two months later, on September 16/29, a special troika of the Kirov district UNKVD sentenced him to be shot. "Citizen I.V. Rozhdestvensky" was accused as follows: "being one of the leaders of a counter-revolutionary-monarchist organization, he organized illegal meetings in his house, where questions relating to the organized struggle against Soviet power were discussed. He was closely linked to the leaders of counter-revolutionary organizations..." In accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11, he was sentenced to death.

Fr. Ishmael was shot on October 1/14, 1937 in Vyatka. It is possible that he was buried with other victims of the Bolshevik repressions in the Petelinskoye cemetery in Vyatka, where a general memorial was recently erected. Fr. Ishmael's matushka, **Maria Vasilyevna**, was left alone with her one-year-old daughter. She died of hunger in the terrible winter of 1942. By a miracle his daughter survived.

In the 1930s Fr. Ishmael had told his brother that if he heard that he had died of illness in prison or in the course of fleeing he should not believe it, but should know that he had been killed. And he asked him in that case to serve a burial service near the grave of the superior of the Saviour-Transfiguration church, Protopriest Nicholas Kedrov (+1904). In 1967, on hearing reliable news about his brother's death from returning prisoners, Fr. Michael carried out the will of his brother.

Protopriest Michael Vasilyevich Rozhdestvensky was born in 1901 in the village of Peregino, Starorussa uyezd, Novgorod province. In 1915 he finished his studies at the Starorussa theological school, and in 1917 - at the Novgorod (or Petrozavodsk) theological seminary. From the summer of 1918 he worked as a peasant in Peregino and served in the local church. Then, in 1919, he worked as a teacher in the Ostrov village school in Starorussa uyezd. In June, 1920 he was enrolled in the Red army, and served as a teacher of literacy for soldiers in the Penza rifle regiment. In December, 1922 he went on leave for two weeks, but was detained for several months for family reasons and was sentenced to one year in prison for desertion. In the middle of 1924 he was released early, was demobilized and returned to his village. He became a student at the Petrograd Higher Theological Courses. At the beginning of 1925 he was ordained to the diaconate and served in the local church. At the end of 1925 he was ordained to the priesthood by the future hieromartyr, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. He served with his brother in the Transfiguration church in Strelna, and also in the parish of Saints Peter and Paul in Vyritsy.

He rejected the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, and during the first wave of arrests had to hide. Once, at 11 p.m., he knocked at the door of Alexis and Zinaida Makushinsky and asked to stay the night. At that time he no longer had his own quarters near the church, since everything had been taken away. He went from house to house and stayed wherever people were not afraid to receive him. This time, after walking the dark, unlighted road from his spiritual daughter to the Makushinskys, he told them by the way that she had unexpectedly sent him away. After spending the night with them he set out on his way; but he did not in the least change his attitude towards his spiritual daughter, knowing that she was forced to do this because the secret police were looking for him to arrest him, and she had a family of her own to protect.

Fr. Ishmael's arrest left Fr. Michael as the only priest of the parish, and on February 25, 1928 he became rector. However, he was arrested on December 27, 1930 in connection with the case of the Petrograd branch of the True Orthodox Church, and on October 8, 1931, in accordance with articles 58-10 and 58-11, was sentenced to three years in the camps. He was sent to Sibltag, then, in 1932, to the Belomor canal, where he carried sand in wheelbarrows on starvation rations, and later to Dmitrovlag. Towards the end of his term his wife, too, was arrested.

He was released in August, 1933 without the right to live in twelve major cities and at least 110 kilometres from Petrograd for three years. He settled in the village of Malaya Vishera and worked on the railway. From the beginning of 1934 he was living in Peregino, served as a reader in the local church and secretly visited his family and believers in Strelna. In December, 1937 he moved to Strelna and lived illegally, secretly carrying out services in the homes of believers. He saw his children by night. During the German occupation he was living in Petrograd with his spiritual children. Just before his next arrest he was living with **Maria Fyodorovna** on Lekhtenbergskaya near the Baltic station. He was in contact with **Archimandrite Claudius**, who was shot in 1943, and with **Hieromonk Tikon (Zorin)**.

Alexis and Zinaida Makushinsky write: "Father Michael's deep understanding of Christianity and his faith in the future life, for which temporal earthly life is only a preparation, sometimes simply stunned people. And so an ever-increasing flock was drawn to Father Michael just as they had been to his arrested brother. He celebrated the Divine services, which at first were still in the church, reverently, penetratingly, and attentively. His sermons, which he considered indispensable, were penetrated with the desire to teach people to love God entirely, with a true, self-sacrificing love, preparing a soul for unavoidable trials, and perhaps for death for Him.

"The unforgettable meals after the Liturgy were a great joy, despite the poor food and, in addition, the strictly observed fasts! At table there sat poor and miserable people. To everyone Father Michael had the same attitude; everyone he encouraged. After one such pauper had been buried without charge, the widow was treated with special kindness and was asked to eat at the common table for the whole forty days afterwards. This was an apostolic family; everyone was kin and close, each suffering for the others. Having almost no income, since their flock was very poor, both brothers lived with a single thought: to help, rather than to receive.

"In those frightful times, when people were jailed and banished without trial or investigation, solely for faith in God, Father Michael went immediately wherever he was summoned, risking his life, supported only by his faith in God's Omnipresence. He went even to complete atheists in the hours before their death, if by inspiration from above he hoped to awaken their frozen souls. And a dying atheist would glance at the face which bent over him in love, would soften, and... repent.

"In 1934 Father Michael also was arrested with his wife and sent in banishment to various places; his two children were taken by their grandparents. After three years [in 1938] he was released, and then he could serve only in secret, having no right even to a place to stay. His wife could not endure such a life of suffering, and on being released from prison she did not return to him but found another man for herself. Still, Father Michael waited to see her when she would come to visit the children. He had no home where he could see his wife or children, and of course he could not meet them at the

catacomb services; and so he would meet his wife at various places in the country, and would see the children often at our place. Once she wished to take the children for a visit to her home in Alma Ata. Father Michael asked us to come with him to see them off at the train station. The tickets had already been bought and we sat there waiting for the train, when suddenly the little girl declared that she did not want to go but would remain with her father. The boy, however, went, and when he returned he was already quite different.

"After Metropolitan Sergius' 'Declaration', which delivered the Russian Church into the hands of the militant atheists, Father Michael, of course, became a 'Josephite' like his brother, and he allowed us no contact whatever with the Sergianist church. Once he became extremely angry with me for merely turning to look into a Sergianist church as I passed by on the street.

"After the Second World War broke out, life became ever more frightful. Here our father increased his prayer and began to prepare everyone to accept a yet more difficult cross. All of us were already prepared for death. Somewhere in a little village, in a hut located far from the main road, services would begin at 5 in the morning. When and where the services were to be held was communicated by word of mouth, and people would gather, but tried to come separately, at different times, so as not to attract anyone's attention. Afterwards, also, people would leave separately, one at a time.

"There were few people at a time for services. Each person was well known to Father Michael, all 'our own' people. No new person was accepted into the Catacomb Church until he, his life and outlook had been investigated. If you told an outsider, you might unwillingly become a traitor.

"In place of an altar table there was a simple table; on it were a Gospel, a Cross, and the Holy Chalice. On the wall were icons. Those who were going to sing would gather by the entrance. There were many icon-lamps, and they illuminated the room. Beeswax candles were obtained, apparently from whoever made them. Everything was quiet, orderly, reverent. In the reading and singing not a single letter was allowed to be added or taken away; the services were absolutely complete.

"By the beginning of the Proskomedia everyone would have gathered for the Liturgy. One can never forget it! Such prayer one cannot experience again in one's whole life! Father Michael with his arms outstretched, and tears streaming down his cheeks... Everyone would weep together, both for themselves and for him, who had, besides everything else, such great trials in his own family. He served slowly, penetratingly... When the dogs would bark outside our hearts froze; but it was for this that we were called, trying to strengthen ourselves.

"One's spiritual state at such catacomb services is difficult to express in human language. It is not at all like any service in our free Russian Church

Abroad, even though it is the same Orthodoxy. First of all, there is total fearlessness, peace of soul, a heavenly, unearthly joy, the desire not to leave, not to cease praying. One wished only to be with the faithful; let them take us away, let them deprive us of life!

"The Paschal service was entirely of heaven. Father Michael was in white linen vestments. His face was unforgettable; it entirely glowed from within, with a heavenly, angelic smile.

"Father Michael remained always calm. In moments that could be dangerous, when he, not having a roof of his own and for the sake of his flock not wishing to be arrested, would spend the night with us, suddenly all our fear vanished and we were ready to go with him wherever he might be sent. He was both friend, and brother, and father, and mother. If he had to celebrate a service at our place, he would come in lay clothes with a suitcase in his hand which contained his vestments, and, under cover of the noise made by the kerosene stoves in the common kitchen, he would peacefully and quietly celebrate the service. And God preserved him!

"The words which Father Michael spoke to us that last time we saw him were remarkable. The Second World War was raging. The approaching enemy was already bombarding Petrograd, when at night Father Michael secretly visited us on his way to give Holy Communion to his spiritual daughter in the city. All our pleas not to go because of the danger, or to come with us into occupied territory, were in vain, and nothing could stop him. He sat by our table, called us close to him, and said,

"Listen carefully. Now we are all about to part. Many of us will not remain alive, will be killed. But remember: no matter where you may be, at the hour of your death, I will come to you, will confess you and will give you Holy Communion and will myself lead you to the Heavenly Kingdom to the Altar of God, bearing witness for you; for my brother, Father Ishmael, entrusted you to me to take care of you as spiritual children, and I must give answer for you.'

"These were his last words to us. He got up, blessed us, and went away into the night that was charged with guns, fire and death."

On the feast of Theophany, January 19, 1943, during the first part of the Divine Liturgy, there was a knock at the door, NKVD agents burst into the flat, and arrested Fr. Michael. As he was being driven to prison, the NKVD investigator turned to him and said:

"Michael Vasilyevich, how fortunate you are!"

"It is a great happiness to be taken to prison," replied Fr. Michael.

It turned out that the day before, January 18, the blockade of Petrograd had been lifted and the death penalty rescinded!

"If they had managed to arrest you even yesterday morning, they would certainly have shot you," explained the investigator.

After an unusually quick trial, Fr. Michael was sentenced on March 13 to ten years in the Vorkuta camps, followed by deprivation of rights for five years, for being "a leader of an anti-Soviet illegal group of Josephite churchmen, followers of the so-called True Orthodox Church". Later he was transferred to the invalid section of the camp at Abezi. However, after serving his term, in 1953, he was arrested on the basis of a false accusation and sentenced to another ten years. Only on October 7, 1955 was he released after a medical commission certified him unfit.

His son took him to his domicile in Pechora. However, Fr. Michael still had to live in a dug-out and appear regularly before the local officials. In 1957, he was allowed to move south to the Bryansk region. There he continued to serve secretly. But in 1962 the authorities came to his house searching for rations and accusing him of murdering an old woman. As they left they said that if they found even one believer in the house during a service they would arrest him.

For two years Fr. Michael had to stop serving in his house. However, twice a year he would leave - ostensibly to see his son, but in fact to carry out the needs of Catacomb Christians in various regions as far afield as Petrograd, the Central Black Earth region, the Volga region, the Caucasus, Ukraine and Belorussia. However, he had to act in great secret, both for his own sake and so as not to cause trouble for his son. So no-one saw him leaving or entering his house.

Through Fr. Lazarus (Zhurbenko) he petitioned Archbishop Leontius of Chile to come under his omophorion. In 1982 he was put forward by Fr. Lazarus as a candidate for the episcopate. However, he was not able to arrive on the appointed day for the ordination, and Fr. Lazarus was ordained in his stead.

In the spring of 1986 Fr. Michael was visiting some of his flock in Belorussia when the Chernobyl catastrophe took place. As a result he contracted cancer of the lung. However, in spite of his worsening health, he never stopped serving. In the difficult conditions of his life he constantly celebrated the Divine Liturgy during the night. Batiushka passed the whole of his life in constant prayer and strict fasting. He slept no more than four hours in the twenty-four. His constant food was bread, potatoes and water.

Father Michael strictly followed the canons of the Ecumenical Councils. In all his sufferings he was patient, placing all his hope on God. To his spiritual children he was condescending, affectionate and kind. He was sensitive and

responsive to suffering, was compassionate to poor people, helped widows and orphans and was truly a loving father to all, warming everybody by the warmth of his love. He was joyful with those who rejoiced, wept with those who wept and comforted everyone, teaching them to rely in all things on God.

On August 16/29, 1988, Fr. Michael celebrated his last Liturgy in Luga, Petrograd province, and on August 28 / September 10, 1988, at 11 p.m. he peacefully passed away at the age of 87. The news shook the hearts of many people. His faithful children were inconsolable. He was buried in the Vrevsky cemetery in Luga. His funeral service was carried out in absentia by Bishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko) of Tambov.

43. HOLY CONFESSOR PELAGIA OF BEREZOVO

Pelagia Arkhipovna was born in 1893 in a peasant family in the village of Berezovo, Gorshezhensky region, Voronezh province. Her father was the precentor in the church choir of the local church. For the rest of the time he cut and sewed short sheepskin coats for people and looked after the house.

The closest relatives of this family were pious people. Pelagia's grandmother, Martha, went twice to Jerusalem. Her husband, Pelagia's grandfather, Cosmas Vasilyevich, became a drunkard in his youth. Martha persuaded him to go to Fr. John of Kronstadt. He went to him, took communion and returned home a different man. The church now became for him the most important thing in life. At that time he was still young. He raised his son Archippus, Pelagia's father, in the faith. Archippus became a psalm-reader. His wife, Pelagia's mother, Alexandra Trofimovna, was also a believer. She went on foot to the opening of the relics of St. Joasaph (or as the peasants called him - Yesafy) of Belgorod. She died at the age of 45.

Pelagia's parents had six children in all - Pelagia, Alexander, Andrew, Gregory, Paul and Martha. Pelagia was the eldest, while Martha was the youngest. (Later four of the children died and only Pelagia and Martha remained.) The whole family worked together. Pelagia's mother and the oldest of her children made hay, and bound and stacked the sheaves. They worked barefoot. Archippus Kuzmich was a God-fearing man. Fearing to be late for the beginning of a service, he would deliberately choose to make hay in no far distant places, so that as soon as the bell began to ring he could immediately give up his work and go to the church.

The church where they went had two altars, the Pokrovskaya and the Akhtyrskaya. Archippus taught his daughters to sing and put them on the kliros - until then only men had sung there. He would bring The Lives of the Saints back from church and give it to his children so that they could look through them and read them. However, Pelagia never learned to read.

Her mother, Alexandra Trofimovna, was also illiterate. She taught her children by instruction:

"Daughter, this is a sin and that is a sin..."

That was how the children grew up as believers.

Although Pelagia was illiterate, she was the cleverest of the children. She was very beautiful and dressed well. Although they were not wealthy people, her father was well known in the town as the precentor.

Before the First World War they had two horses and began to get richer. But the revolution came and activists took away one of the horses. However, the horse did not let them ride her, and Archippus was forced to lead her.

Before the revolution Pelagia married. This marriage was not happy. Her father- and mother-in-law were atheists and her husband also mocked God. Before this Pelagia had had a fiancé - the cousin of her husband - a good, believing person. But he drowned in the sea when he was swimming - he had cramp in his legs. And his brother seduced Pelagia and became her husband.

The priest who served in their church was called **Fr. Valentine**. His father and grandfather had been priests before him. In 1927 Metropolitan Sergius issued his "Declaration". Fr. Valentine signed it. When the chanters in the church heard about this, one of them - a bass, the cousin of Archippus Kuzmich - stood up and declared that the priest had renounced God. Soon the authorities again brought Fr. Valentine papers to sign. But he tore them up - both the new ones and the ones he had signed earlier. After this they took him away and no one saw him alive again.

In Fr. Valentine's place they sent a renovationist priest to the church and the church began to be considered red.

Pelagia's father continued to go to this church and took his youngest daughter, Martha, there. Martha did not go there long - in this same year of 1927 she married and left the area.

Pelagia was a very believing person and paid careful attention to what was happening in the Church. Some kilometres from their village there was a women's monastery and she regularly ran to the nuns and asked their advice - could she now go to the church? They answered her:

"Sister, the times are such that it is impossible to go to church anymore. There is no true faith there."

And they exhorted her not to take a Soviet passport. Pelagia tried to persuade her father and sister to go along the same path, but without success.

During the war she lived in a cellar in the kitchen-garden. After her house had been bombed by the Germans, she lived for a time in a hollow, in a hut overgrown with trees. Next to her there lived other people, including her father. The Germans came into this hut, but did not touch anyone.

Pelagia had seven children. Three of them were taken to the front, where two of them were killed. After the war the remaining younger children went to the children of another Orthodox Christian woman living three kilometres from Berezovo. There they bumped into a mine and two of them were killed. So after the war there remained with her only two sons - the one who returned from the front, and her youngest.

Her husband was a drunkard. He died after an unsuccessful operation. Before his death he repented to his wife:

"The doctors have cut me up because I reviled a godly woman..."

Pelagia continued to tell her father that he should not go to the red church. Archippus Kuzmich's wife had died by this time and he had married again. His new wife went to the local village soviet to complain about Pelagia that she was forbidding her father to go to the Soviet church.

Pelagia was arrested together with her sister-in-law Anisia (whose daughter had also been killed by a mine), and two other true believers from Berezovo. Pelagia was also slandered before the authorities by her niece. But Pelagia had a combative character and she went triumphantly to prison, telling the authorities what was true in the words of her niece and what was false:

"I don't deny this, but that is a lie!..."

Pelagia was imprisoned first in the prison of the town of Niznedivitsk, and then she was driven to the far north (to Yakutia, it seems). There she spent eight years in the camps. Later she told her sister Martha about her life in the camps.

In one camp where she was held the believing women used to meet for common prayer. Among them were two Orthodox young women who knew the services well. They were put as readers in the centre while the other women surrounded them in a tight circle. There were so many of these praying women that the camp authorities were not able to push their way through into the centre and stop those who were leading the prayers and chanting. But later they arrested the two young women and subjected them to the following torture. They laid them on the ground and covered them with a huge mound of snow. When they dug them out again, they were still alive, but one of them died shortly after. The other one survived, but the authorities were not satisfied with the punishment they had already meted out and sent her out of the women's barracks to that of the criminals. Somehow she managed to meet one of the women from the women's barracks and asked them to pray for her, saying that, although she covered her face with soot and took on the dirtiest work in the hope of making herself look unattractive, she was perishing...

The camp authorities, before letting her and the other true believers go home, drove a cart with passports on it up to them. Pelagia and those who were with her were indignant:

"Passports? Haven't we been in prison because of [our refusal to take] passports? But if that's the way things are, then we are again [ready to go] to prison!"

And they were again sent off to the camp zone for another term. And so they eventually released them without passports.

She returned home to Berezovo. This place is very beautiful - the village itself and everything around it is full of birch-trees.

She went and visited her younger sister Martha and persuaded her not to go to the red church anymore. Before her arrest Pelagia had been very thin, and always ate very little. But when she returned from the camps she was very stout and her hair hung down to her heels. Martha looked at her and concluded:

"A person gets to know God more deeply, and God gives him such strength!"

Pelagia told Martha some of her prophetic dreams. Their dead brother, Paul Arkhipovich, had taken part in the destruction of a church. Pelagia dreamed that she was going along a path and saw that the Lord had covered the body of Paul Arkhipovich with bricks in such a way that only his head remained free. "Is it difficult for you, brother?" she asked him.

"Oh, so difficult!" he replied.

She described another dream as follows: "I was running and running along a path made of sand of the most indescribable beauty. Some guides were standing by.

"Where are you going?' they asked.

"I replied: 'I'm looking for Archippus Kuzmich.'"

"I heard them reply: 'Over there a beautiful little house had been prepared for him, but now it's in a decrepit state. But the house which had been prepared for him at the beginning has been handed over to his neighbour.'

(This neighbour had used bad language in his youth, and when he had died a very long tongue fell out of his mouth. But he had a sister in a monastery - she may have saved him by her prayers.)

"My father was lying on a stove with his face down and could neither turn nor breathe.

"He said to me: 'Polya, it's very difficult.'"

"This was the punishment the Lord gave him for betraying the faith and beginning to serve in the red church."

Pelagia never went to the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate. She feared them more than fire. She called the red priests who served in them "godless batyushkas". They invited a red priest to the funeral of her son. Even then she did not go to the funeral, but stood at a distance.

Pelagia Arkhipovna died on May 25, 1990, at the age of 97. She was buried by her neighbour, a woman of eighty with the same convictions. Pelagia's son invited a red priest to her burial, but when he arrived he was driven away.

44. HOLY MARTYR JACOB OF THE ALTAI

Once at the end of a hot summer's day a wanderer with a pack on his back and a staff in his hand appeared in the small village of Alexandrovka, Kurgan *uyezd*, in the Altai mountains of Siberia. He went up to the gates of the house of Theodore Arkatov and stopped, fixing his eyes on a three-year-old child who was playing in the sand. For a long time he looked at him, and then when the mistress of the house came out he asked for a bed for the night. It was the year 1906.

In the evening, as they were sitting down to supper, the owners of the house asked their guest to sit with them. The wanderer did not refuse, but said that he would eat only his own food. Then he took a black crust of bread and a copper mug out of his bag. Then he went up filled a mug of water from the tub, put it on the table, crossed himself and got up to take part in the prayer before eating. Because of the negligence of the owners, the lampada in front of the icons was not lit. And it lit up of itself. Naturally, after such a phenomenon the owners were particularly interested in the opinion of the man of God on all questions, and especially on the issue which particularly worried people at that time: what was going to happen. The wanderer spoke much about the future; the main thing he said was that one could count the years to the enthronement of the power of the Antichrist. They would destroy monasteries and churches, and subject Christians, and especially the clergy, to tortures. Whether he spoke from himself or retold the prophecies of the Holy Fathers is not known. But his words were remembered in the village for a long time. The next morning, on saying goodbye to the owners, he said, pointing to little James: "Look after him: he will be a great man," Theodore remembered that, and when he had to punish his little son, he thought: "Here I am applying my belt to this 'great man'."

James's childhood passed normally, one might say, although God's mercy was sometimes clearly observed on him. Once, when he was four years old, he fell into the chute leading to the wheel of a water-mill, and of course he would certainly have been killed if, as he was borne along at a mad pace, he had not caught hold of a hanging branch. How long he could have held out, paddling in the water, is not known, but at that moment he was discovered and saved by his grandfather who was passing by and who was the owner of the mill.

James remembered an incident from his early childhood. One feast day he ran into the wood behind the kitchen garden, where he loved to run and romp around in the thick grass. Running out into a glade, he suddenly discovered a wonderful way to enjoy himself: over the glade there hung a shining golden chain. Unthinkingly James took hold of the chain and began to swing on it from one end of the glade to the other. He was delighted, and decided to share his joy with his sisters, who were older

than he. But when he brought them to the glade, a bitter disappointment awaited him: there was no chain, only traces of trampled-on grass. Moreover, his sisters mocked him, saying that there had been no chain to hold onto, but only empty sky...

James did not understand the meaning of this vision, although already at this time a firm faith in God and the invisible world was being forged in him.

Once when he was nine, his father sent him out in the evening to look for some grazing horses, so as to use them in pairs to plough the land. He pointed to where they were approximately. On arriving at the pasture, James did not see the horses, but in the distance he saw an old man sitting on a boulder. He decided to ask him. Moreover he was curious to know where he was from – there were no such old men in the village.

The old man replied to James's greeting and asked: "What do you call this mountain?" pointing to a mountain that was higher than the rest. Incidentally, this mountain was unusual; clearly of volcanic origin, it was higher than all the others, and from it ridges and valleys pushed out in all directions. Rivers which began in the mountain flowed down the valleys. Until halfway up it was wooded, but from then on it was bare and had a rounded top. Moreover, the whole of the upper part of the mountain was not composed of solid rock, but of piles of small stones no larger than a football. Hence its name: "bald".

James said: "Bald". "A good mountain," said the old man, "in time it will blossom." "Some hope!" cried James. "Until St. Peter's day it is covered with snow, and from St. Elijah's day it is again covered with snow." The old man smiled and said: "What I mean is: it will not be covered with flowers, but will be glorified. And your horses are grazing over there."

James went and found the horses precisely there. Everything was normal, and yet for some reason his soul was filled with a strange exaltation, and everything seemed to him not quite normal: how did the old man know that he was looking for horses, that his horses were there, that the Bald mountain would blossom one day. Moreover, the appearance of the old man was too unusual: his pure white hair and beard fell down to his waist, while the skin of his face was young, as on a child, and without a single wrinkle.

James found his family at supper, and immediately as he came in he began excitedly to tell them about what he had seen. However, nobody showed the slightest interest. He was offended that they weren't listening to him, and silently ate the food he was given. Only later did he understand that they simply didn't hear him.

However, this vision was only the beginning, and had a continuation. Four years later, his father again sent James to look for horses and again indicated the same place. And again James saw the same wonderful old man in the same place, and now he ran up to him joyfully with the words: "Hi, dedushka! I know you." "And I know you, young man. Are you looking for horses again? But don't hurry, listen to what I'm going to tell you." And the old man began to tell him much about what would happen soon to the world and to him. The Tsar would be overthrown, the new authorities would be against God, everyone would be forced to recognise it as lawful and given by God, and would be drawn into unfaithfulness to God. About James himself he said that he would remain faithful to God. However, he would have a difficult life. Soon he would be forced to leave his native land and go alone through life. Then he pointed to where his horses were grazing, and added: "Before you wanted to tell your people about me, but they didn't hear you, but now don't talk at all." "But where do you live, father?" asked James. The elder smiled again and replied: "Everywhere and here."

Now James returned home in a thoughtful and determined mood.

Soon he received proof of the truthfulness of what he had been told. Once, six months later, in the winter, James left the house in the morning and was amazed by the untimely festal rejoicing of his fellow villagers. He asked the first whom he met what this was for, and received the reply: "Freedom! Now there is freedom! The Tsar has been overthrown!"

James began to step backwards into the yard, ran into the stables, fell face down in the manger and sobbed inconsolably for a long time. In his imagination from that moment the world was covered in darkness. The incarnation of nobility and defender of the faith was no more, and now the antichrist would be enthroned without fail. In his ears there echoed the words of the elder: "The authorities will be against God."

And truly, from that moment darkness descended on the world, and James began in an adult way to prepare himself for coming trials. He now saw the meaning of life only in one thing: how to remain faithful to God in the face of universal apostasy. Already at that age (14) he had started to help his father in the heavy work of a peasant, and it helped to distract his mind a little from thoughts about the future, about the meaning of his future life. And he had to work hard. His elder brother Ivan was at the front.

At that time James's remote village lived on rumours from the front and on revolutionary news from central Russia. The villagers lived in dark presentiments induced by stories of wanderers and various events. And James's character was formed in this atmosphere. It was different from all the others. His inner torments once pushed him to decide to struggle with evil by force of arms: he attached himself to a unit of Whites who were

setting off to join the White Cossacks who were fighting on the Panuj river. But he was caught by the Reds. He was saved from death only by the appearance of a fellow-villager of his in the camp of the Reds who expressed his amazement that James was among the Whites. He had to say that he had come upon them accidentally while searching for lost horses. They let him go home...

But now in addition to all other woes his brother returned from the war as an atheist and a blasphemer. Life became unbearable. Once while he was quarrelling about ideology with his brother, in his youthful ardour he took up a gun and was almost on the point of shooting his brother. His father took away the gun and said: "It is dangerous for you to live together."

His father himself feared his communist son, and James, seeing this, decided to leave home and begin the life foretold by the strange elder. At first he went to live with his uncle, the brother of his father, helping him in his daily work. But he could still hear the words of his brother that had made him mad: "These popes... They go in front of the armies of the Whites and think that the cross will protect them: you fire - and off go the head and the cross."

Once his father came up to him and said: "Yasha, don't disgrace me: either leave here completely, or return home." And of course James decided to do the first. It was the summer of 1921. James went home to say goodbye. His mother fussed around, tried to feed him, put some bread and milk on the table. And this point his brother Ivan came in and said from the threshold: "you work somewhere and come here to wolf it down." James got up with the words: "Okay, I can also not eat here." He said goodbye to his mother and left. Without looking back, he set off out of the village onto the big road leading to the big world.

Beyond the village he ascended a hill from which he could see the whole village as if in the palm of his hand. He sat on the grass, immersed in thoughts. He was not upset with his brother, and had no fear of the unknown. In his ears there sounded the words of the mysterious elder that he would remain faithful to God, although he would live a hard life. The fire of determination lit up in his heart, and James cried out: "I will remain faithful to Thee, O Lord", striking his fist on the earth. Under his hand there was a stamen from last year's harvest, and he cut himself. Immediately he thought: "Well, Lord, I have sealed my promise with my blood." He got up and left without looking back.

Going from village to village, and meeting various people, James learned carpentry and sadlery. "A Christian living under the power of the Bolsheviks," he said later, "has to be able to do many things, otherwise he won't survive." He was helped by his physical strength: he could lift two bags of grain onto his shoulder and take them a long distance. This

enabled him to find work anywhere. His external appearance also instilled trust: he looked like one of the ancient Romans, and to some he looked like the saints on the icons...

However, simply finding the means to live was not his main purpose. He was always looking for like-minded people from whom he could acquire spiritual knowledge. He often mixed with priests, but only up to the 1930s. One priest from whom he learned much told him (this was about 1929) that the prosperous peasants would soon be exiled, after which all the unsuitables of all nationalities would be imprisoned, and first of all the clergy. Then would come the war with Germany. They would reach Moscow, but would not hold out, would return, and then the communists would triumph. James did not much want to believe this prophecy, but he had to: the priest was an unusual man.

Once they were travelling on business to a town that was about 15 kilometres from the village. On the way they talked. Suddenly the priest pointed upwards, James looked and saw two swiftly flying crows racing each other. The priest shouted: "Where are you hurrying to?" One of the crows turned and replied: "We have to go fast." "You see, the demons are hurrying to some evil deed," he said to James. In the town they saw a crowd of people near a house discussing something. Some said that a man had fallen from a balcony and hurt himself for some unknown reason. Others said that it looked as if some force had pushed him. "This is where they were hurrying to," said the priest.

Soon the church in that village was closed and the priest was exiled. But James continued to live there.

James had many revelations from God, especially in visions in sleep. Knowing many things beforehand through these revelations, he was able to escape from very difficult circumstances. He tried to warn many, especially those who, as he foresaw, would be sent to prison or exile.

Thus he once went up to his friend Timothy and heard him joyfully telling of his plans for the future. He was going to sell bread, and buy seed and some other things. James sadly told him that he had to prepare himself for a long journey. "They're going to put you in a carriage with other families and take you to the north, where your bones will lie!" "Don't talk such rubbish," said Timothy, "otherwise I'll hit you." "Okay, you can hit me later, if they do not take you away this year." And truly, that year Timothy's family was put into two carts with all their insignificant belongings. Timothy went up to James and said: "Forgive me, Yasha, you were right. Pray for us here."

James's family, his parents and sisters, as he later learned, were also sent into exile, to the city of Narym.

Until the beginning of collectivisation, James was able to live comparatively easily, the authorities did not trouble him. And there were still people he could talk to and learn from. And there was even the danger of becoming worldly. Among those around him he was distinguished by his piety and good looks, and the girls were constantly wanting to get to know him. He even became engaged to the daughter of one prosperous townsman. However, his bride once went to the baths and discovered a blister on her leg, which began to grow rapidly. It burst and she soon died.

Another incident showed that it was not God's will that James marry. Once on a feast day he was walking in a field with a girl who had fallen in love with him. Then he had a vision: not far away he saw a table and a young woman leaning over it and weeping. He got up from the grass and went up to her. He lifted her eyes full of tears to him and said: "Oh, you... I chose you to be a conqueror-vessel, but what are you doing?" James suddenly woke up. Silently he got up and left. Later, on meeting the girl, he explained, as best he could, why he had suddenly left. And from that moment he began to avoid getting close to girls, having made the firm decision not to marry. In any case, it was not the time to think of marriage - the time of fiery trials had arrived.

The beginning of collectivisation was proclaimed. For the peasants it was a diabolical noose. From that moment everything and everyone was compelled to work for the victory of the idea of Bolshevism. James understood well the true nature of this idea. Its purpose was to extirpate the image of God from man and replace it with the image of the beast. And under socialism it was practically impossible to buy or sell or earn money without entering into it, without becoming part of the system. James, like other True Orthodox Christians, refused to enter the collective farms. But it was more difficult for him to survive outside them because he did not have his own vegetable garden. He remained alive only by the mercy of God. Once someone ordered some shoes from him in exchange for a sack of potatoes. Another time some unknown visitors would simply turn up and feed him. Once a close friend came up to him and was horrified: "James, what's wrong with you? Come with us and do some road-building. You will immediately receive six kilograms of groats, salt and sugar, and you will receive bread." "Okay, I'll think about it," replied James. "That was a temptation," said James later. "I suddenly began to feel good at the possibility of receiving these good things. But then I immediately thought: why have I been suffering all this time, if I so easily go over to the kingdom of satan for a piece of bread?!" And of course he didn't go over.

With great difficulty he survived to the summer. In the forest the bird-cherry and other berries were beginning to ripen. "Now," he thought, "I'll survive somehow. There are berries in the forest, and enough edible herbs." In the morning he set off for the forest, which was about five kilometres from his house. He reached the forest at about lunchtime, and

immediately set about the bird-cherry. He did not eat much, but began to pick them and put them into a bucket he had brought from the house. He already filled half the bucket when his leg got caught on a blackberry bush. He fell face down and lost consciousness. He came to and was appalled: there were pools of water all around. The bucket had not turned over in the thick grass, and was standing, full of water, so that the bird-cherry was pouring over the sides. "This is no dream, since such a downpour was not able to wake me up," decided James. "I'll go back home, dress in white and go out into the forest. It's better to die in the forest so that my enemies should not rejoice over me and mock my body."

By evening he was already home. He lay down from exhaustion and fell asleep. And suddenly he heard words coming through his sleep, the words of Altai Tatars, Altai names of villages, villages in which he later came to live. Suddenly he woke up and thought: there are people from the Altai here. Their villages began a hundred kilometres from his village, and on the way to the town they went through this settlement. He listened. He could hear the squeaking of cart wheels. James got up, looked through the window and saw some Altai people coming to his gates and up to the house. "Master of the house, greetings! Will you let us stay the night?" "Why not?" replied James. "Only, what are you going to sleep on? I have only one jacket as a bed and blanket." "We have brought everything with us," they replied. And in exchange for him making shoes for them, they gave him bread and meat.

In the morning he went off with them to the Altai. There, in the wilds of the High Altai he lived almost beyond the bounds of the Bolshevik state. The Altai people were good-hearted, the more so in that they needed his skills.

Two years later, James returned to his village. He heard that socialism was progressing triumphantly, and that almost everyone had been driven into the collective farms. Those who resisted were starved to death, and the remaining "individualists" were stripped of everything to pay for impossibly high taxes.

James's village was called Yarki (later re-named to "Verkh-Katunskoye"). It was on the Chuisk road 15 kilometres from Biisk. James first came to it in the middle of the 1920s, on a cold autumn day. He tried to find a place to sleep for the night in several cottages, but was refused. Seeing some steam coming from a bath-house in one courtyard, he quietly went in there and lay down for the night. Later he often returned and lived with the owners of the bath-house. And at the end of the 1950s they simply gave him the house. It was in this house that he died. He lived in this village as if chained to it, although he was always burning with the desire to run away from it. For it was renowned throughout the Altai for its hooliganism and blasphemy. However, when they called him to move to another place, he replied: "It is not the will of God."

James decided to change his behaviour in view of the changed circumstances around him. While previously he had tried to live as a model citizen, now he tried to look lost and disorderly. This method of survival soon had to undergo a trial. A few days after his return he was summoned to the village soviet. When they told him that he must go into a collective farm, and shouted at him that the people was building socialism, while he was an "enemy", James began to chuckle and through his laughs said: "Go and build it! You very much want to marry soon and raise a family. So get together and build a happy life for your families. Or you want me to till the earth for your families. But I still have to have a good time. So when I've done enough of that, I'll raise a family and have more children than you. And then I'll come and join you." And more in the same spirit. His first summons to the village soviet went well. They continued to call him, but by that time they had begun to spread the rumour that he was a real drunkard who would get drunk at the most unearthly hour. But nobody suspected him of acting, and the Lord closed their eyes. This went on for two or three years. James was more and more often summoned to the regional headquarters for a working over. There they sometimes kept him under lock and key for three days at a time as a warning. He was saved by constant prayer.

James prayed much, but nobody suspected him of it. He could see what none of those around him could see. Once, before collectivisation, he was with friends. Everybody was sitting on the floor and chatting. At that point James saw an unknown person enter and lie behind his back. Nobody paid any attention to him. Soon everybody got up and went out. The unknown person also went out. He went up to James and began to speak about the future, clearly warning him and preparing him in advance. When, the next day, James mentioned the previous day's visitor to his friends, it turned out that nobody had seen him. There were many such instances.

James also had visions of demons. Once at the setting of the sun he looked through the window into the kitchen-garden and saw the whole garden and beyond it filled with beings that looked like men about a metre tall. He noticed that those which were slightly taller commanded the others. Suddenly the door burst open and the first column invaded the room with shouts. In their hands they had weapons, hooks and spears of an unseen variety. James stood with his back to the icons and began to make the sign of the cross with the words: "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen." A shout was heard, and whistling. Some rushed back towards the door, while the others disappeared. He heard them speaking outside: "Cowards! You couldn't conquer one man! "But he was burning us with fire!" This went on for some time, and then everything stopped. James heard some knocking on the door. The door turned out to be on the bolt. The neighbour had come for something. A similar incident took place while he was sleeping in somebody's house on the steppes.

The terrible year of 1937 arrived. They were arresting and taking away even those whom it was difficult to suspect of anything, they were clearly settling scores. James was inwardly ready for this. At this point one of his friends, who understood the situation quite well, began earnestly to advise him to go away with him to Izhevsk. There were many factories there, and one could get lost in the masses of people, the more so in that work could be found for such a skilled worker. James was about to agree and had already begun to prepare to leave.

One morning he was sitting sewing shoes. The mistress of the house took a pail and was going out for water. On her way out she reviled James: "You're sitting down, you idler!" She was quite a quarrelsome woman. As she understood it, work was only cutting wood and, ploughing the fields, but not doing some kind of sewing. James, as usual, did not react to her. She went out and soon came back with a man and said: "James Fyodorovich! I've brought a man who will tell you the whole course of your future life," and then she left. "There's an actress for you," thought James, "and she even knows how to act in a cultured manner when necessary." "But I don't believe in soothsayers," said James to her as she was leaving. "I'm not a soothsayer," said the man. He went up to the table, thrust onto it a map the size of a playing card and added: "Here is my map." (A bright green twig was drawn on it.) Then without a pause he continued: "You're planning to go to the west, but you won't go there. You will go to the east, and not in accordance with your will. The first place they will take you to you will be full of people. But don't look for like-minded people there, there won't be a single one. However, you will not be held there long." This manner continued his strange story in the same tone for perhaps half an hour. Then he took his map from the table and said: "I've said everything." Then he turned and left. At this point the mistress of the house came in. "What kind of man did you bring in?" "What are you talking about? You were sitting here playing the fool, and I bring someone to you?! I was out at the well talking with the women."

From that time James's life proceeded as he had been told it would. Later he recalled episodes in his life which were such that if he had not been warned about them in advance, he would not have known how to act. For example, when he was in prison, before his escape, two good friends of his were giving him contradictory advice. "Flee, James, the Lord will help you." But the other said: "Don't flee, they'll catch you, the dogs will eat you." Then he remembered the words of the prophet who had been sent to him, that there would be two friends who would give him different advice. "Both are good people, but don't listen to the one who will say: don't go, but the one who will say: go." And James went.

Another example. The prophet had told James that he would injure himself in a wood after fall over a cliff. Then, on entering a village, he was not to go into the first or second house, but on seeing near the third house

a fair-haired man with a girl in his arms, he should address him and ask for what he needed – he would help. This happened with absolute accuracy. When James went up to this man, he immediately understood that he was dealing with a runaway prisoner and pointed out to him a safe way out.

When the prophet left him, James understood that he had perhaps only hours before he was arrested. He gathered his things and in the evening gave them to a man he trusted for keeping. The night passed without incident, but with thought and preparation. In the morning James was arrested and taken away.

Again new conditions of life. Again it was necessary to adapt both inwardly and in his external behaviour.

The first prison in the town of Biisk was full of people. Many of his fellow villagers were there. They understood little, and had nothing to do with politics or ideology. James went up to one of them, laughed, and, pointing with his finger, proclaimed: “A contra!” The peasants, overcome with sorrow, began to laugh, understanding the stupidity of what was happening. Thus began the life in prison of a completely uncriminal man. Transfers and convoys and labour camps lay ahead of him. To they took him far away to the east to the city of Kamertal.

Life in prison was the same for James as for all the other political prisoners in the Soviet camps. Perhaps with this difference: that he behaved as an unbending opponent of socialism, refusing outright to work and passing most of his time in the punishment cell. Once the boss of the third section gathered all the prisoners and conducted a “conversation” with them. “There are among us,” he said, “those who refuse to work, saying: we will not work for a satanic order.” “Who are they? Shoot them!” “Arkatov!” said the boss of the zone and pointed to James.

James began to prepare for his end.

However, he was fading away on the punishment cell rations. Once it reached such a stage that he crawled under the bunk to wait for them to drag him out as a corpse. A criminal he knew came up and shouted at him: “Yashka, what are you doing there?” “That’s it, it’s the end for me.” James pointed at the muscle of his leg and showed him a hole in his body as he pressed it with his finger. It didn’t come back – a sure sign of approaching death. The thief swore and said that he shouldn’t fear: “Take my rations and get up.” “And how are you going to survive?” asked James. “I’ve fixed myself up in the kitchen and feed myself there.”

Wonderful are Thy works, O Lord! James began to get better, thanks to the wise thief...

James refused to do any work linked with the building of socialism: he would not go lumber-jacking or building, but he would not refuse to work even for the boss of the zone, because this work was not for socialism, but for a private individual, whoever he might be. Nor did he reject carrying water and cutting wood to bring to the kitchen. Once he was again approaching death. By the mercy of God he was sent with other prisoners to saw wood and lay it out in the flat of the leader of the guards. The wife of the boss came out onto the porch and watched. At the end of the work her mother went up to James, thrust a bread ration into his hand and said: "My daughter has been watching you and said: 'Mama, this one is a man, while the other is a wild animal. From today let him (James) come each day and take a man's ration, and when the cow has calved - a litre of milk.' Please don't say no, otherwise my daughter will be sorrowful," added the old woman. James thanked her and left. From that day he came to them every day, although it was very unpleasant for him. But what was he to do? As always, when he went to them, either the mother or the daughter took a bread ration and a bottle of milk from the table and gave it to him. He drank the milk, clutched the rations to his chest, thanked them and left. This went on for a long time, but his conscience tormented him more and more. "What if I am impudently using their kindness, and they repent of their decision?" For several days he did not visit them, and then the wife of the boss met him and scolded him. When James said that it was necessary to have a conscience, she exploded: "Then how are we to be saved?" James was soon sent off on convoy, but from that day he began to pray for that servant of God.

Time passed. The war began. Stalin began to take volunteers from the camps to the front, promising to give them freedom. But James could not go along with this, although the feeling grew in him that they would not let him get out of there alive. He again began to weaken. Once a boss came up to him and said: "Can you deal with horses?" "Can I?!" replied James. "I can give a lesson to Dzhigit!" "There, in the kitchen, they can't transport water on the old nag, while the stallion doesn't let anyone come near him. The old carrier has died, and nobody can deal with him any more." James really knew how to deal with horses. He caressed him, put a huge barrel on the cart, and did not take him more than twice a day for water, while getting enough food from the kitchen. Soon he was quite manageable. But now he could think only of escaping. Once the boss came up to him, slapped him on the shoulder and said: "Good! It's time to give you interest!" "Yes, yes. That's the way I feel, too," agreed James with a show of gaiety. He had already thought up his plan of escape, which involved working at the general labours. And he began to work there.

First he had to go lumber-jacking. There he tried to put an axe into the hollow of a tree and matches in a prominent place - just in case. But soon the work changed to carting earth in wheelbarrows on boards far beyond the zone and throwing it over a cliff into the wood. They were doing this because they were building some kind of boiler in the zone. James set

about this work with great zeal, he ran with the wheelbarrow like a boy. He fulfilled three norms per day, and his exploits were announced over the radio. And nobody guessed that he was not doing this out of madness. He was training himself for his escape, and deadening their watchfulness. With great longing he would look at the wood, which was not far away under the cliff. The woods continued for a long distance, while beyond the zone on the other side was a lake. It was very suitable for an escape.

It was Sunday. That night James had a dream from which he understood that the Lord blessed him to do what he was thinking of. In the morning he abstained from excessive food. A Jew who was sitting next to him looked at him attentively, shook his head and said: "James, I saw you today in a dream. I saw a white horse grazing. You jumped on it and it took you off. They were shooting at you, but you rushed away on her and in this way she took you away." James gave the impression that he was talking nonsense, but in his heart he thanked him.

James made three trips with his wheelbarrow and then noticed that the guard who was standing on the edge of the cliff was looking attentively in the direction of the zone without paying attention to what was happening on the cliff-top. Then James hurled the wheelbarrow over the cliff and then hurled himself after it, as if trying to overtake it and stop it. He heard shots and the whistling of bullets. He spurted off to the side, but then ran towards the wood. The zone was immediately transformed into a kennel with dogs barking everywhere. He had to run a long time through the wood. His aim was to go round the lake and hide in the hummocks there. For a long time he went through the water, and even swam occasionally. Finally, he immersed himself, hiding his head among the hummocks.

The dogs were now yelping all around him, and he could even see some of them on his scent. James entrusted himself completely to the mercy of God and prayed intensely. Eventually the day, which had seemed like an eternity, drew to its close. It was dark and quiet. It was time to get out of the water. But then James found that his legs would not move. After all, it was Siberia and the water was cold, even though it was the middle of May. He had to crawl out onto dry land and rub some life back into his legs. Finally, with a staff in his hand, he set off for the axe and matches he had hidden in the tree. Only towards the morning did he find them. At dawn he hid in some bushes in a ravine, Then, when it was night again, he set off towards the south-west, towards his native land.

Sometimes James asked for food from those working in the fields or in the woods. Only occasionally did he go into a village, remembering what the prophet had told him about a fair-haired man with a girl in his arms. He fed on grass, bird-cherries, lungwort and wild onions. Later, when he would list the edible herbs, he mentioned young sprouts of willow, wormwood and others. When he could he grilled mushrooms on a bonfire.

The Lord preserved him in various ways. At the slightest danger he felt alarmed and hid or passed by the dangerous place. Later he found out that the place truly was dangerous. Often during moon-lit nights a cloud would cover the moon, and James already knew that he had to be careful and make a detour. Later he discovered that he would have had to pass a collective farmer's house in a field or tractor-drivers and their technicians.

Once James went off the path into the wood and sat down on a stump in order to rest. Suddenly a bird hurled himself at his feet. He looked up and saw that it wanted to devour a bug. James pushed it away thinking to himself: "I'm like this bug." This happened again, and James was on his guard, taking this as a warning. He wanted to get up and go into hiding, but did not have time. Along the path two detectives with a dog were walking. "Who's this? Documents," - the usual question. "What documents?" replied James. "Can't I go to the toilet without documents?!" "What are you doing here? Show me what you've got there." James took his axe wrapped in string out of his bag. The other detective waved his hand and said with irritation: "Leave him. Don't you see: he's a peasant going about his business here," and went off. The other one trudged after him, but then stopped and said to the first: "We should take him." "You want to get mixed up with him?" And the first started walking more quickly with his dog. The second then grudgingly went after him.

James spent the summer under the open sky, trying to keep closer to the forest. But he was in trouble when the winter came. He had to look for a shelter somewhere in a village. Moreover, the indications of the prophet were not enough; he had to look for a place to sleep trusting the commands of his spirit. Once he asked for a place to sleep in an unfamiliar village in a house which pleased him for some reason. The master of the house agreed to let him in, but he had to sleep on a sleeping bench and not move out, because some guests were coming. James gladly agreed to lie quietly.

The guests came. Quite a stormy conversation began. It went into various theological questions and especially into the interpretation of the prophecies on the end of the world. James attentively listened to their judgements, which were full of the most improbable errors - and, moreover, with a sectarian bent. It turned out that they were all Old Ritualists, while being the cream of collective farm society: the president, the brigadiers, the accountant. For James it was impossible to listen to these corruptions of the truth: it would have been better to sleep in the frost than under the bombardment of such lies. Finally, he could stand it no longer and, lifting his head from the bench, said: "You've been talking for an hour now about the coming Antichrist. Allow me to ask you: to what seal or trumpet or vial do you refer this regime under which we are living?" At first the guests were perplexed by the presence of a stranger, and even the master of the house was embarrassed. One of them said: "If you want to say something, say it."

Then James briefly expounded his understanding of the basic prophecies. First, all the prophecies spoke not only about one time of the reign of the Antichrist, but about three sections of the last times: the first was called "the beginning of sorrows", according to the prophetic word of the Saviour, or "apostasy", according to the Apostle Paul, and in the Revelation of the Apostle John it is referred to as the coming out and reign of the beast from the sea with his head-followers. The second section of the last times is "the beast who was and is not" or the time of the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world, and, finally, the third period, which is in fact the time of the enthronement of the Antichrist. The Saviour calls it "the end", the beginning of which is the placing of "the abomination of desolation" or the coming out "of the beast from the abyss" (St. John the Theologian), who is the eighth in number in the dynasty of the beasts and is of the number of the seven, or the appearance of "the man of sin" (St. Paul the Apostle). As for the "whore", is it not clear to you that this image refers to a traitor-church that has betrayed Christ, that which should be "the bride of Christ", but which has been united with the scarlet beast. In the Apocalypse there are three "women", and all three signify the Church, it is only by their clothes and their activity that we can distinguish them: on the way into the wilderness she is clothed in the sun, but there she is divided into her who is clothed in scarlet and her who goes out to meet Christ, clothed in pure white, which is the righteousness of the saints."

Already from the beginning James's words had amazed his listeners, and at this point they asked him to leave his bunk and continue. The conversation ended with their asking him in turn to stay with them and enlighten their families. And when they knew that he was also a cobbler, they found a job for him for the whole winter. It was hardly coincidental that he asked for a bed for the night at the place where those who were seeking his knowledge were gathered...

So winter after winter James went where the Lord decreed for him, while in the summer he went into the forest and on his travels. He saw much that was miraculous and improbable during the years of his wanderings. And he spent about ten years being pursued by the beast, in constant alarm and constant hunger.

Once, during the summer, he caught a cold and his body was covered with boils and scabs. He had to buy some ointment in a chemist's, but the chemist's was on the other side of a river, and in order to cross the bridge over the river he would have to pass the police who would check his papers. What was he to do? Trusting in God, he took the risk. As he was crossing the bridge, James saw a girl running from the pavement on the other side to his side. Coming up to him, she raised her hand and said: "James, have no fear," and immediately mixed with the crowd. At first James was surprised, but then he understood the Providence of God and went ahead boldly. And it turned out that four policemen were

surrounding a car and were searching it for a long time. During this period they stopped checking the documents of passers-by. James was able to walk past them freely. There were many such incidents of God's helping him.

He prayed constantly, and most of the day he spent standing in prayer. He often gave himself a rule in the form of a vow - say, for half a year. Thus once, when he saw a collective farm worker beating some horses, whom he very much loved, he began to ask God to lighten their burden and in their defence established a prayer rule for several months. There were other reasons, too. He said that the demons often attacked him at such times.

James knew that he would have to wander for ten years, but he did not know how this period would come to an end. Once he was in a place not far from the place of his imprisonment. He had a revelation which told him that he would soon go into the world and establish his life among men, but how? Finally, he decided to go into a village, and there things would happen as the Lord would decide. But he was full of doubts. After all, he had no documents: surely someone would inform on him. He decided to lie down and sleep. In his sleep he saw himself going to Verkh-Katunsky, which was between two rivers: the Bia and the Katun'. Then he saw a canal from Bia to Katun' full of water, which blocked his way. He went up to the edge of the canal and began to weep. Then a young woman came up to him and asked him: "Well, why are you crying?" "I've been hiding now for ten years, I wanted to go and live in freedom, but my way has been blocked!" She went up to him, took a piece of onion from his head and hurled it fiercely into a ditch. Then she got a spade from somewhere and began to fill up the ditch. Then she began to dig at the edge of the ditch and fill it in. Finally she walked to and fro over it and stamped out a path. Then she went up to him, slapped him on the shoulder and said: "Go, and have no fear." James woke up. Now it was time to set off, and without any doubts he set off for the village.

He could not have expected what the Lord had prepared for him. Before his arrest, the destiny of a family had been revealed to James: the father and two older sons would be killed at the front, but the third, youngest son would run away and survive. When James recounted this revelation, the youngest son was listening. Now, as he entered the village, who should meet him but this youngest son! He was amazed at James' appearance, and when he heard that he had no documents, joyfully undertook to help him. He was very close to the president of the village soviet, and decided to use some cunning and influence him so as to inscribe James in the list of the permanent dwellers in the village. In the section for imbeciles. This is what happened: James was numbered among the imbeciles in the village, and this even gave him some privileges, which enabled him to remain faithful to God. However, he then had to take upon himself the exploit of being a fool for Christ's sake. He told everyone that

he had been released from prison and had already been signed up in the village soviet. And he showed himself to be not in his right mind. Many were amazed and swore at the authorities for corrupting the man.

At first he had to live with the woman from whose house he had been taken to prison. But then a complication arose. The elder daughter of the woman conceived a violent hatred for him and even tried to kill him. Once James had a dream: he was lying on his bed in a hospital ward when a demon came up to him and tried to strangle him with a piece of cloth torn out of a towel. James prepared himself and when the demon began to move his hand he caught him by the hand and said: "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." At that time he woke up feeling a blow and something sharp falling on his chest. His hand was really holding someone else's hand. "Who is it?" shouted James. "It's me," replied the elder daughter of the mistress of the house. It turned out that she was aiming to strike him with a knife in the chest. But James, during his sleep, had caught her by the hand. The knife fell on his chest, cutting him slightly.

He had to find another place to live. The Lord directed him for three years to the house of the writer of this life. Later, an old woman, on leaving the village, donated her hut to James, and then he began to live independently. Later the family of the writer also had to leave, and he was left completely on his own.

His life was hard. He was living as a prisoner in his own country: completely without rights, persecuted and always in fear of being exposed for escaping from camp. Then there was the atmosphere of hatred of monsters who were ready to kill him at any moment. Every Soviet feast was accompanied by complete drunkenness, blasphemy and threats to kill the "believer in God". He was for them an uncomfortable reminder of the existence of God and His commandments. One winter he had to live in a cellar because almost every night they came and looked over his hut, searching for him. But his time had not yet come...

Especially terrible were the collective farm feasts: "the day of the furrow" in spring and "the day of harvest" in autumn. Then to the drunkenness was added demonic pride: everyone boasted of his labours for Soviet power, his zeal and devotion to it. And when arguments were not enough, there were always fisticuffs.

The days of "voting" for Soviet power forced him to live in fear both before and after the elections. The agitator-communists did not always understand that fools don't vote: they still felt intuitively that he was their enemy. Once an agitator-communist, the local teacher, came and announced: "James, it's time to vote." "For whom must I vote?" asked James in surprise. "What do you mean: for whom? For the party and non-party bloc." "But I (an unmentionable word) your party and non-party

bloc," replied James boldly. "What then? Lenin also?" asked the disturbed Bolshevik. "Lenin still more..."

Two years later the teacher met James and said: "James, I've written twice to the regional executive committee about your reply, quoting it verbatim, and there has been no reply or greeting. Either the people there are like you, or God is defending you."

Yes, of course, God was defending him, but still it was difficult to live with the constant preparedness to go to prison or be killed by bestial men. It was also intolerable to live with the consciousness that there was nobody around him who thought like him, and no possibility of persuading anyone. Significant in this respect was the following incident. Once James saw some children doing something or getting up to some mischief beyond the kitchen-gardens. He went to gather some brushwood in the wood, and as he was passing them asked: "What are you doing there?" "We're helping some people who are hanging themselves," they replied. When he left he understood that they were demons. He turned round - but they had disappeared. On returning home, he said to his neighbours: "At Paul Antonievich's there will be a hanging. Probably Pelagia will do away with herself. I saw the demons near their kitchen-garden and they said they were helping some people who are hanging themselves."

In the morning a neighbour shouted: "Hey, you, fool! You said that Pelagia would do away with herself, but it's her brother-in-law who's done it, not her."

James lived until he was 87. He would always say: "I will live until I see the white flag over Russia. Then I will die in peace."

He saw that during the elections, which were now free, they no longer voted for the communists' candidate, but for someone else, even though he was not ideal. And although they had not yet removed the Bolsheviks from their posts, they raised the double-headed eagle and the three-coloured flag.

And the time came when the Lord allowed James's bloodthirsty enemies to carry out their will. On August 9, 1991, ten days before the communist putsch, and only a few months before the fall of Soviet power, the murderers burst into his little hut and cruelly beat him up. In the morning they found him unconscious.

For three days he lay, almost lifeless. Then he recovered consciousness and said: "Yes, the communards know how to beat one up!" But he did not say who had beaten him, although he knew.

On August 12 he died.

Once in conversation James said: "How terrible must be the essence of evil, if, in order that there should not be any inclination towards it in the eternity to come, such saints as the Forerunner, the Apostles and the host of hieromartyrs and martyrs, besides hardening their will in the struggle against sin, have also to suffer violence and death from this evil."

He confirmed this by his own sufferings...