



To His Eminence,
Bishop Agafangel of Odessa and Tavriss and
the Clergy and Laity of the Russian Church Abroad
Assembled in Astoria, New York

[translated from the original Greek]

26 June 2007 (Old Style)

Your Eminence, Dear Brothers and
Sisters in Christ our God and Saviour,

IT is with the greatest pain of heart that we have witnessed the fall of the illustrious Russian Church Abroad from its confession of Orthodoxy to the twin evils of Ecumenism and Sergianism, and its acceptance, not only of subjection to the Moscow Patriarchate, but also of full communion with all of the other local Orthodox Churches, almost all of which are more deeply involved in the apostasy of ecumenism than the Moscow Patriarchate itself. The Russian Church Abroad, which, over the years 1992-2004, was in full and official communion with the Old Calendar Churches of Romania, Greece (i.e., the Holy Synod in Resistance), and Bulgaria (having only last year, at the request of the Moscow Patriarchate, severed communion with them), advised these three Churches to follow its own example and unite with their putative New Calendarist “Moth-

er Churches.” This call we have all, naturally, rejected, as we are fully aware of what the purpose of our struggle is as Orthodox pastors.

Our pain is, despite this, relieved by the fact that one of the Bishops of our sister Russian Church, who—most significantly—had consistently refused to accept the severance of official communion with us, has resolutely refused to follow the path of apostasy, or, as has been succinctly expressed by our brother, Bishop Photii of Bulgaria, of descent, from the cross of Orthodox confession, and, followed by a number of clergy of the ROCA, has resolved to continue its witness and its confession of pure Orthodoxy.

Since Bishop Agafangel has never severed communion with us, nor we with him, he continues to be, for us, the representative of the Russian Church Abroad, and we encourage all those who wish to continue the witness of the ROCA to follow him and to help him reorganize the structure of the remaining faithful part of your Church.

In order for this to be realized, it is clear that other Bishops will have to be consecrated, and we have already expressed to Vladyka Agafangel our willingness to take part, together with representatives of the Romanian and Bulgarian Churches, in such ordinations at some date in the future. This would be a wonderful way in which to repay the debt that we owe to the Russian Church Abroad, which in 1960 and 1962 consecrated a new Episcopate for the Old Calendar Greek Church, which had been without Bishops since 1955.

We also take this occasion to warn you that there will be other Old Calendarist “groups” from Greece which may well approach you, perhaps with their various and false charges against us. These false accusations were fully investigated by the Episcopate of the ROCA, which decided, in 1994, that they were baseless and that our ecclesiological position corresponded precisely to that of the ROCA. From then until the [recent] falling-away of the majority of the ROCA, this Church was in full union with both us and our Sister Churches in Romania and Bulgaria.

The process of union with Moscow has been underway for several years, as a result of which, a number of groups broke away from the ROCA previous to the union itself. Some of these have adopted positions inconsistent with the history of the ROCA, while others have divided in such a way as to lose all semblance of ecclesial reality. However, the one group that has preserved both a sober witness of, and true continuity with, the teaching of the ROCA is that headed by the late Archbishop Lazar, and now headed by Archbishop Tikhon. We fully recognize the canonical problems herein involved, but there are ways in which these can be overcome; and at this critical moment for the Russian Church, it would be tragic if its forces were divided between these two entities, whose aims are, in essence, identical.

As we have received from this group their appeal to serve as intercessors, we implore you to find every way possible, within the context of good reason, to achieve unity with it. We are certain that such an event would convince many others, who are at present uncertain as to where to turn, to follow your good example.

We pray that our gracious Lord may enlighten all of you, Vladyka and dear brothers in Christ, to make wise and well-considered decisions which may assure the future of the Russian Church Abroad.

It is our prayer that you, together with our three local Orthodox Churches here in the Balkans, may continue, in harmony, the same struggle for the preservation and preaching of our true Orthodox faith.

In the love of Christ, our Lord and God and Saviour,

† Cyprian, Metropolitan of Oropos and Fili,

President of the Holy Synod