



068. Dec, 28/Jan. 10, 1970/71. Sunday after Christmas

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : May 3, 2016

Dear Brother in Christ, Lavrenty [Campbell],

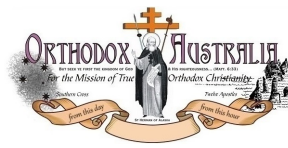
Rejoice in the Lord! We tried to call you Friday night to tell of the conclusion of our visit with its trials (from Elena Yurevna's), but no answer. I rested at her place for a while, while Fr. Herman conversed, and we left in time to reach here safely by daybreak Saturday.

As you are our brother, and furthermore are directly exposed to Vladika Anthony, I must give you a brief outline of our most unpleasant experience with him. Please keep it to yourself, but do not forget it either.

Thank you for your phone call of Friday morning. While we were quite conscious of our obligation to visit Vlad. Anthony on the way back, we would not at all have been prepared for what happened if you hadn't warned us. You sounded quite troubled by what Vladika told you about us; and undoubtedly you had cause. Frankly, I think the man is sick — and his disease is the state of being unable to trust anyone except himself, which leads him to build fantasies out of nothing — either much better or much worse than they really are.

Of course, we ourselves are to blame for not trying harder to see him before anyone else — I called his upstairs phone without even thinking that he was very likely downstairs and we made a few other mistakes like that. But others are more debatable — that we were obliged to be at the late Liturgy so everyone (or at least Vlad.) could look at us, etc. But all this is secondary and was only a pretext for Vlad's real concern: to show that he is our boss, that we will do nothing without him, that otherwise we are "disobedient" and he will reform us or break us trying. And the means he uses are cheap: he made me wait downstairs for 2 hours while, using every trick of Russian psychology (I, being an American, am apparently unimportant and will simply do whatever the Russians tell me!), he shouted and bullied Fr. Herman to tears and breakdown, until Fr. H. finally rallied himself to give it back to him punch for punch. I meanwhile was in a similar state downstairs, and barely overmastered the temptation to do something desperate like break in on them and demand to hear for myself what was being done to my brother and our monastery. (I haven't prayed so fervently, especially to our real Vladika downstairs, in a long time!) I was finally ushered in to attend the rather calm conclusion to the whole affair, when Vlad's wrath was finally changed into something resembling mercy.

Legitimate chastisement from ecclesiastical superiors should begin and end in mutual trust and without undue disturbance. But we for two days have been turned inside out and have no peace, feeling our very consciences to be violated. I have experienced one of the greatest disillusionments



of my life, and both of us have been given a wound that will last for life. Vlad, had loosed his very demons on us, and something is dreadfully wrong. He has “played” at being Staretz and Abbot, and it is a grim game, [letter ends]