



097. Nov. 1/14, 1971. Sts. Cosmas and Damian

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : September 2, 2016

Dear Father Nektas,

Evlogeite! Many thanks for your letters, and please forgive our usual long silence. As you notice, our OW is again late. Cold weather struck us already a month ago, and we were finally forced to finish our winter preparations; most likely we will have our hardest winter so far. Then two weeks ago I cut my finger badly in the linotype (carelessness) and had to have it stitched up. But God willing, the new issue will be out before Thanksgiving, and then we start on the calendar, which this year we will force upon our readers as the Sept.-Oct. issue, hoping to publish it regularly hereafter as a separate publication. We will see what the response is. It is slightly corrected from last year, and hopefully much more improved in future years.

Alexey Young was here several weeks ago, and we tried to give him as sober a view as possible about starting a new periodical; but he's still enthusiastic, so, God willing, the project will go on. We hear now that there is to be a new official Synod newspaper under Vladika Vitaly. May God prosper all these new shoots; but as for results, we will just have to wait and see. Sometimes a seemingly solid foundation just does not produce the expected results, and vice versa.... We only mentioned incidentally to Alexey an idea we have long had, for a newspaper to be called Orthodox America, somewhat modelled on Orthodox Russia, and viewed somewhat as an extension of your own Newsletter. In fact, we thought of you as the most likely to produce such a thing. But it's been only a vague dream with us. Doubtless the future of genuine American Orthodoxy itself will govern the possibility of such a periodical. In the meantime, we printers have to be patient and "humble ourselves" before reality....

Strange... we thought we would be the winners in our proposed trade arrangement. By the way, could you send us 5 copies of Bp. Ignaty's Arena?

Sorry to hear about John Shaw's offensive letter. We met him last year at St. Herman's canonization, and then he came here for a few hours with a group of seminarians. He's a Jordanville graduate of this year, a convert and orphan (some kind of descendant of G. B. Shaw) who, as I understand, was raised by Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov (who has the mission to Old Believers, which has always seemed to us rather an academic thing) and made himself noticeable at Jordanville by his adherence to some Old Believer customs. Recently he wrote an article in Orth. Russia on a visitation to Bp. Peter in Astoria, and he may well have picked up some hostility to Fr. Panteleimon there. But most of all he probably has a bad case of what Russians call "self-opinion," or just plain conceit (of the convert-young graduate type), and it's probably incidental to him just how he proves that he's "more Orthodox" than you or anyone else. Doubtless this will



pass, but how he will end up is another question. I've always found this type of petty bickering very sad, when the primary question of Orthodoxy itself is what is really at stake. Even some fundamental differences on minor points are not that important; but half the time the supposed differences are no more than temporary circumstances, as is the case with your new church building. Surely the few true Orthodox Christians of these last times should have more sympathy for each other, a disposition to believe the best possible and not the worst, and if necessary, to forgive the forgivable!

Some of the decrees of the recent Sobor of Bishops were encouraging, but some of the "undertones" worry us, if you know what I mean! But doubtless we will hear more of these and have something more solid to talk about in the future. From the first "milk" I drank in as an Orthodox Christian in the Synod, I was taught that we have two kinds (or perhaps "traditions") of bishops: on one side Vladikas John, Averky, Leonty, Nektary, Savva; on the other, those who now seem to have the governing positions. (Metr. Philaret would classify as an "independent," and as long as he is Metropolitan I see Vlad. Ioann's influence as somehow present.) Not to say that anyone is a heretic or enemy of any kind; but nonetheless the two characteristic dispositions, rather difficult to define, do seem to exist. The one group of bishops has now just about died out, and from them we have inherited some things which, I fear, may make us somewhat "out of fashion" in the Synod in the future, about which we've already had some hints. But perhaps this is too cryptic, or in any case is more suitable for oral communication than written. (Next August, perhaps?)

We were saddened to hear that Fr. Theodoritos didn't accept ordination. But thereby is only emphasized the necessity in these dangerous times for all of us to make an extra podvig of sympathy and understanding for our fellow True Orthodox Christians.

We anxiously await your service to St. Nectarios in 1972. In the meantime, could you send us a copy before his Feast next week, of the Paraklesis Canon to him? All we have is the Vespers and whatever is in the French version.

Please pray for us, and forgive my idle talk.

With love in Christ our Saviour,
Seraphim, monk

P.s. How is your progress on the "Convert's Manual"? Can you tell us some of your specific ideas for it?