



## 187. Sept. 21 /Oct. 4, 1975. St. Demetrius of Rostov

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Date : September 13, 2016

Dear Alexey,

Just a note to go with Daniel tonight. He seems to be in the best state we've seen him in two years. We discussed the "Fr. Panteleimon situation" with him, and he had already decided, when he just heard of the breaking of communion, that he himself would not even think of leaving the Synod if Fr. P., should. The "whole mess" which is supposedly cleared up now is, of course, 90% a "Fr. Panteleimon mess," and far from being cleared up, it bodes very ill for the future. About that we shall have to wait and see, remembering that Fr. P. is no authority in our Church and that his next "dramatic move" must be regarded with extreme suspicion. There is a strong smell of politics behind him, and one day he is going to make the fatal political mistake. Let us be sober and prepared.

About the Hudanish-Old Believer visit. Yes, you are blowing it up too much. It is not possible to have a "dialogue" with them. They are sectarians, and their spirit, not just their externals, separates them from Orthodoxy. If God can somehow draw one or many of them to Orthodoxy, very good, but the measures of "penitence" which John Hudanish describes would be simply a flattering of their sectarian pride. Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky was against receiving Old Believers even if they asked nothing but to keep the two-fingered cross—not because of the small act, but because this revealed they still had the sectarian mentality. Of course, since then the Russian Church has allowed Old Believers to retain the two-fingered Cross and their service books, but as a gesture of economy rather than an admission that Patriarch Nikon was wrong. For an Old Believer to become Orthodox there must be an awareness that the externals they preserve are not of the essence of Orthodoxy. Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov, by the way, has visited them, or at least some O.B.'s in Oregon, and saw no hope for "dialogue."

As for the visit, let it be just a visit. Talk about what interests you and them, but don't be defensive about not living according to "rules" like theirs. If they want to dispute anything, have an answer, as the Apostle Peter says, to the best of your ability.

John Hudanish, from his letter, is an "idealistic" American full of unrealistic hopes. His talk of repentance and of learning from you does not seem to strike true. Be as simple and unpretentious as possible, and don't even think of being the representative of a "dialogue."

Our green truck runs fine. How should we arrange to get it to you for a weekend or more?

With love in Christ,



Seraphim, monk

P.s. The Old Believer Pimen Sofronov (the iconographer), under the persuasion of Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov, received Holy Communion some months before he died, in one of our churches in the Holy Land. But, of course, he was not at all a “strict” Old Believer as the real sectarians are. I don’t know if he was “in communion” with the Oregon “O.B.’s” or not, but if so, they would never believe that he had done such a thing!