

## 189. Oct. 2/15, 1975. Sts. Cyprian and Justina

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : September 16, 2016

Dear Alexey,

Rejoice in the Lord!

We received your letter only today (Wednesday) Have you been suffering like that all the time since Friday?! Your state is very familiar to us—we've been going through attacks of the same “disease” for some time now! Fortunately, when I get the “rash,” Fr. Herman is usually over his, and vice versa, and we are able to come out of the depths of despair and get on with the necessary work.

I think the cause of the “disease” is very simple: you, like us, are very trusting and always looking on the good side of people, no matter what they might do; and then, when their acts or words reveal that they have no such trust in return, but rather are spreading distrust everywhere, and then on top of it all accuse you of spreading distrust—it is truly enough to plunge one into discouragement.

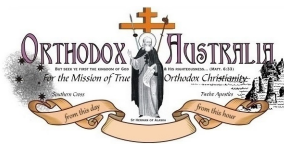
The remedy is simple, and consists of exactly the same thing we told you several years ago when you were last attacked by the “Greeks”: JUST PAY NO ATTENTION WHATEVER TO THEM. Don't answer them, don't justify yourself or anyone else before them, but also: don't trust a single word they say, and don't do anything they might demand.

We ourselves feel badly betrayed by our “Greeks.” All these years we trusted that they were of one mind and soul with us, giving everything they had for the cause of the English-speaking mission. But really, it seems that all this time they were only building for their own glory, cruelly abusing the trust of our simple Russian bishops, priests, and laymen, in order finally to “take over” and proclaim themselves the sole Orthodox authorities and experts.

We still pray that we are mistaken in this, but let them prove it now by their acts and words— not by their long-winded self-justifications.

For years we have “excused” their excesses and mistakes, and in fact we have defended Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Nektas on numerous occasions—to you also, as you may recall. But now, in order to retain our sanity and continue fruitful in the Orthodox mission, we must face the truth squarely

**THESE ARE COLLEGE BOYS PLAYING AT ORTHODOXY!**



The last Witness of Fr. Nektas (On Blessed Augustine) is an outrage. He calls “untrained theologically” and “Latin-leaning” the following:

1. Fr. Theodoritos and other Greek zealots who say of course Blessed Augustine is a Saint, if St. Nikodemos thought so.
2. Archbishop John, who had a service written to him and had great devotion for him.
3. St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, who put him in the Calendar.
4. The Greek and Russian theological tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries, which accepted St. Nikodemos’ judgment.
5. The Fifth Ecumenical Council, who ranked Augustine as a theological authority on the same level as Sts. Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom.
6. All the Holy Fathers contemporary with Augustine, not one (so far as we know) called him a heretic or denied him a place with the great teachers of the Church, even when they opposed his false teaching on grace.

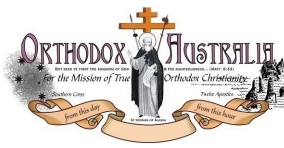
The universal tradition of the Orthodox Church accepts Blessed Augustine as a Holy Father, albeit with a flaw—very much like St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East. Fr. Nektas’ self-assured, authoritative proclamation is un-Orthodox and positively childish.

This is only one of many examples that reveal that our “Greeks” are, after all, incompetent to discuss theology—not because they are not smart or well-read enough—but because they are too passionately involved in showing how right they always are. This is not the spirit of Orthodox theology.

Concerning Nina: I had just written you a letter (superseded by this one) saying that “if Nina is being defensive about Fr. Panteleimon, it may well be that she has not quite cut the ties’ after all. If she doesn’t, she’s going to have trouble ahead!” Well, the trouble seems to be here, and Nina will have no peace until she either does make a complete cut with Fr. P., or else joins his sect.

His sect. because the way they are going, our “Greeks” will not be long with us, and it is hardly conceivable that they will stay long with the Mathewites either, unless there is much politics (or money) involved behind the scenes.

We just received a long letter from Vladika Laurus. (By the way, talk about “sowing sinful dissension and mistrust in the Church”—what does one call what the “Greeks” have been doing about Vladika Laurus? Ask anyone under Fr. P.’s influence about Vladika Laurus—oh, him, we can’t trust him, etc...) VI. Laurus wrote us a long letter on the Greek Old Calendar situation, and it



corresponds very much to what Dr. Kalomiros has written us. Reading between the lines, it seems that the Synod's decision temporarily to have no communion with Bp. Petros (until he regularizes his relation to his own Synod) is only a means of "humoring" Fr. P. and keeping him from jumping jurisdictions right away. But if the Synod were now to treat Fr. Panteleimon equally, and ask him to have no communion with the Mathewites until they rejoin the Auxentios group, and not to do anything in Greece without the knowledge and blessing of his bishop—what do you think Fr. P. would say and do?

The end of our "Greek adventure" seems near! We only grieve for the scandal and divisions which the vainglory of our "Greeks" is causing. Our poor "American mission"! How the Metropolia and Greek Archdiocese will laugh!

But therefore: we who are left must continue exactly in the same sober path, without great dreams of being anybody: just saving our souls and trying to share the riches of Orthodoxy with others.

Do not even think of abandoning Nikodemos. It is more valuable than you can imagine—not because you are a "great theologian" or "expert" of any kind (God preserve us from any more of those!), but because you are naive and provincial enough to believe that Orthodoxy is really the Truth which brings freshness and inspiration into life, not something to be subjected to petty politics and passions.

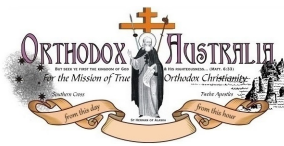
Enclosed at last is the new OW—complete after very frustrating delays, culminating in the conking out of our generator. Fortunately we were able, but only after two full weeks, to obtain a good new one, and today we demonstrated its worth by printing both sides of the cover almost simultaneously on our two presses!

We had planned for a year, by the way, to have Vladika Averky on the cover—but the final push came just now! Let them think what they will—this is a real Orthodox archpastor and theologian without any fakery or politics whatever, and he has suffered greatly himself from "politics" in the Church. We find the cover very comforting—we've done our duty by this righteous man!

A quote from the Ancient Patericon, used by Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava to encourage us poor strugglers of the latter times:

The Holy Fathers of the Skete (of Egypt) prophesied about the last generation, saying: What did we do? And one of them, great in life, Iskharion by name, said: we fulfilled, the commandments of God. They asked again: Those who come after us, will they do anything? He said: They will achieve half of what we did. And after them, what? And Ishirion said: The men of that generation will have no deeds whatever; but there will come upon them temptation, and those who are worthy in this temptation will be higher than us and our fathers."

Other Fathers have said: the psychological trials of dwellers in the last times will equal the physical



trials of the martyrs.

But in order to face these trials we must be **LIVING IN A DIFFERENT WORLD**. Do you have a notebook for taking down quotes from Holy Fathers in your reading? Do you always have a book of Holy Fathers that you are reading, and can turn to in a moment of gloom? **START NOW**— this is essential.

Pray for us.

With love in Christ,  
Seraphim, monk

P.s. John Shaw we know—he visited us with other seminarians at the time of St. Herman's canonization. He is a convert, an orphan brought up by Fr. Dimitry Alexandrov, and rather “touched” on the subject of Old Believers. He thinks they are “right” and the Orthodox “wrong,” he crosses himself demonstratively with two fingers, etc.—which makes him a good match for Fr. Panteleimon and his followers, for whom he long ago developed some kind of distaste. He is Archbishop Nikon’s secretary. Let them fight it out together, and we who have more important things to do can peacefully do them!

P.p.s. We are reading the book of talks of Fr. Dimitry Dudko, given last year in his parish (before he was arrested) in Moscow. Very inspiring! He’s in the Moscow Patriarchate, and his philosophy is sometimes imprecise—but how boldly he speaks against hypocrisy, atheism, church politics! The people he speaks to (he answers their questions) are on a very primitive level—and the thought keeps coming back to us (as Mrs. Kontzevitch has told us)—the Shroud of Turin is for them! It is precisely the “scientific” answer to a whole generation of people stupefied by “scientific atheism.” But we would still like to see a better investigation into the evidence of it in Orthodox history and iconography. Fr. Panteleimon is so concerned about having a “right opinion” about the Shroud (for which he gives no evidence whatever), that he is, of course, totally insensitive to the needs of such believers.

p.p.p.s. Do you have any plans for getting Vladimir's press to you?

