



195. Oct. 22/Nov. 4, 1975. Kazan Mother of God. Equal to the Apostles Averky

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : September 28, 2016

Dear Alexey,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, and congratulations on the namesday of Vladika Averky! We just asked Fr. Michael Pomazansky: who is an authentic Orthodox theological guide for today, and his reply: Archbishop Averky. Fr. Michael told us some other important things which we'll share with you when we see you. (When?)

Concerning the Old Believers: your observations (and Nina's) seem sober, and give about the picture of them that we expected. Certainly there's no harm in continued personal contact with them—but as you correctly see, don't even think of being any kind of intermediary between them and the Synod. If they want to become Orthodox, it will come up in due time; if they want you to adopt Old Believer customs, they should know it's a waste of time. John Hudanish seems to be the convert enthusiast type—who will easily fall into disillusionment when his dreams are punctured! With him it's best to be as open as possible, and not to let him keep illusions that will be exploded by everyday reality.

Br. Laurence returned safely and, after thinking it over, wants to “try again” to stay. What can we say? By now it's obvious that he just isn't after what we're striving for, but is just tagging along, and is emotionally attached to us; we hate simply to tell him to find someplace else where he can be of one mind and soul (knowing he will never find such a place), and we also hate just to “drag him along” with us, requiring him to act in a way which must be voluntary in order to work. His “fits” sometimes (as for example, this time) make an immense drain on me, and Fr. Herman also, for actually what he does is call into question our whole way of life, not seeing or valuing it; and this way of life is already so difficult, requiring great struggle and sensitivity, that it can be destroyed. He wants an “idiorhythmic” way—i.e., old-maidism—and he just can't see that this is ridiculous and tragic when we have someone like Fr. Herman who can lead us in oneness of soul and mind (something we poor Americans can't do, as long as Orthodoxy is so frail in us). All the other brothers who have stayed here for any length of time have seen this, at least to some extent; but Br. L. seems to remain closed to it. Probably he will stay for a while longer on “probation,” to see if he can grasp at least a little of what we are after. I only pray that our “softness” does not bring harm to anyone. We especially regret that you have to be dragged into it, with all your problems already. Br. L. feels the warmth of your community, but again, would never be able to sacrifice himself enough to be a real part of such a community. If he ever wants to come and live with you—watch out, and don't make any “special conditions” for him. In general, you are going to have



problems enough with people who “think they can fit in” but are not willing to do the hard work necessary for this.

We get the impression that Nina is upset with us for our “harsh words’ about Fr. P. Does she really think this is some kind of “personal feud”? There seems little point in trying to “persuade” her that Fr. P. is “wrong” about anything. Your best insurance against any uneasiness she may cause you is your calm awareness that Fr. P. & Co. are no authority for you; you have your own work to do and he has nothing whatever to do with it. If she tries to get you involved in thinking about Fr. P. at all—just get across this idea, calmly and firmly. I don’t think she knows what I mean when I say she had better “break” with him—I don’t mean “personal ties,” of course; I mean emotional dependence, the “convert fear” that if you aren’t with him you might be “wrong.”

Vladika Averky, by the way, replied to us, thanking us for our “moral support” in a very difficult time for him. [letter ends]

