



236. Aug. 13/26, 1976 St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

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Date : October 10, 2016

Dear Alexey,

Thank you for the “message” from Fr. Neketas. We are rather puzzled as to why he should be so agitated. Perhaps there is a personal element in it, but it seems to have more to do with fears and suspicions on a general church level, which would also explain why the fathers at Boston were so upset with his letter. (The letter, by the way, didn’t really disturb us at all, since we were expecting it, and in our exchange with him we were able to express things which had been until then tensely covered up.) Perhaps they suspect that we are “joining the Russian bishops” and are about to betray the Old-Calendar cause, join the ecumenist bandwagon, etc. (If they do think this, I wish they would say so!) Or perhaps the real root is, once more, the old question of “authority”—we’ve made it pretty clear that we don’t accept the authority of Fr. Panteleimon, and to some people that seems to be a terrible blow. Well, we will write Fr. N. in a few days and try to allay some of his possible fears.

I trust Barbara and David arrived safely. Vladika Anthony stayed overnight with us for the first time, and in general had his best visit with us. We talked at length with him on questions of “rebaptism” etc., and found ourselves in complete agreement with him. We translated for him all the “controversial” passages in our Metr. Philaret article, after hearing which he crossed himself and thanked us for writing it. It is obvious that the “zeal not according to knowledge” is becoming a matter of some concern for him and many of our bishops, and I’m afraid the solution to it, if any, will not be easy. As long as Fr. Panteleimon has his own “psychological diocese” within our Church, there will be a constant source of friction and misunderstanding. “Two or three days” with Fr. Panteleimon will not resolve it, either! I think probably the basic quality needed is a certain deep humility of mind that enables one to accept other ways of looking at things, other emphases—as equally Orthodox with one’s own. On their side, that would involve ceasing to protest against catechisms, accept Blessed Augustine for his good side, ceasing to be terribly upset about the Shroud, etc. If they could do this, I think the tension on our side would cease to exist. On the whole, it is probably good that they have gotten upset, because this might give them a better chance to see things as others see them, and rethink things a little for themselves. But we shall see.

As for the rest of us—we should just keep on the same independent path, with no particular thought of being “for or against” Fr. Panteleimon. He has much to offer himself, and there is much others can give that he can’t.

We send you greetings for the Dormition. I’ll try to get you the new chapter on Sederholm before long. Also a new sermon of Vladika John.



With love in Christ,
Seraphim, monk