



255. June 16/29, 1978 St. Tikhon of Kaluga

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : October 10, 2016

Dear Father Chrysostomos,

Christ is in our midst!

From Fr. Auxentios we receive the impression that my last letter to you has caused a feeling of some hopelessness regarding any emergence from your state of isolation and any normal relationship with the priests and faithful of our Russian Church Abroad. I would like to correct the impression I seem to have given you, and at the same time give you a few words of encouragement as you prepare to begin your new life in Ohio.

In advising you to continue your “hidden” way of life, I did not really have in mind that you should always be as isolated as you are now. In fact, on the contrary, we would like to see you gradually enter into more contact with the members of our Church. My meaning was rather that you should always place first the leading of your own independent way of life, and let the relations with others develop gradually, take care of themselves so to speak. By the very nature of the situation in our Russian Church Abroad today, your very existence has a “political” significance, whether you wish it or not; but this need not be any overwhelming obstacle. Your existence is now becoming known in our Church, as we have recently heard, so you cannot really hide in any case.

Now, some days after starting to write this letter, we received Fr. Auxentios’ new letter, telling about your illness. May Christ our God heal and preserve you for many years of service in His Holy Church! We will be praying for you.

Thank you for the Xerox—we had not seen this document before, although we had seen another one of about the same time and with the same basic content. We had assumed that you were aware of such statements, and now we understand better how deep must be your sense of isolation. This document gives the general principle which governs the relationship of our Synod to yours; but in practice, of course, there may be local complications owing to the attitudes of the Greeks who are with us, who are unfortunately rather political-minded. This is why we have advised you to go slowly in your contacts with our clergy.

At the present time there is occurring something of a “reaction” in our Church against the over-zealousness (almost fanaticism) of some of our Greeks, and their political involvements. Several years ago one could say that Fr. Panteleimon was “setting the tone” for a large part of our Church;



but today, his influence is restricted to a “political party” within the Church, and no longer is his position such a central one. We ourselves would like to see a quite different “tone” prevail in our Church, but without having to battle against our Greeks to do it. Our two-part article on Blessed Augustine is an attempt in this direction—to correct the onesidedness of some upstart “theological experts” without engaging in a battle over it, pointing rather to the ordinary Christian virtues of moderation, forgiveness, tolerance, etc.—which are often lost sight of when the emphasis is placed on “correctness.”

As you begin to come into contact with more of our clergy (as I suppose you will in Ohio), you could help us in establishing a more moderate and normal Orthodox tone, especially among our converts who are still so immature and easily diverted from the path of a profounder Orthodoxy. Your very existence as “Greeks” who are not “fanatical,” who do not follow the “party-line” of our own Greeks,” but also do not engage in polemics with them—could help many to have a more balanced Orthodox outlook and place our “Greek party” in its proper place. Among many of our younger (especially Russian) priests there is already a good beginning in the direction of establishing such a tone.

I was planning to visit my mother in San Diego this summer, and had hoped to be able to come and visit you at the same time. Now, as it seems, my visit will be probably later in the summer. If by any chance you would be coming as far up the coast as Monterey (where a friend of ours says he saw you in church some time ago) before you leave, perhaps a meeting could still be arranged.

In any case, please know that our prayers and best wishes are with you. Your experience up to now has not been in vain; precisely such suffering and anguish gives understanding that is much needed in our days. Do not be afraid, by the way, to get into contact with Fr. Theodore in Cleveland; we would only advise not “involving” him to the extent of asking to use his church (for which he would have to ask his bishops permission in any case, which would further complicate matters).

Asking your prayers,

With love in Christ,
Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. A problem that could conceivably arise concerning yours and our jurisdictions: Some of those who have been “fanaticised” by some of the attitudes of our Greeks have now been expressing dissatisfaction with our Synod as too weak, compromising, etc. In Geneva Fr. Basile Sakkos (Fr. Ps offspring) has left our Church (to join the Mathewites, I believe) and in England a new group of fresh converts has just joined the Mathewites. Fr. P. and the priests with him would not do such a thing, if I understand them rightly, but some of this followers might. Presently there is a very unstable follower of his in Canada, Deacon Lev Puhalo, who has been spreading tales of the supposed lack of strictness of most of our bishops; he is now being challenged on a ridiculous



accusation he has made against the teaching of life after death as printed in *Orthodox Life* and *The Orthodox Word*, and it is entirely conceivable that he could suddenly decide to solve his problems by changing jurisdictions—in which case he might appeal to Metropolitan Akakios. Please keep this in mind, and if necessary warn His Eminence of the mentality of those who might want to make such a change—they will only bring him misery. A good and close cooperation between us would be the best answer to such problems, and with time we believe this could come about.