



265. Sunday April 30/May 13, 1979 Apostle James

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Date : October 10, 2016

Dear Fr. Herman,

Christ is Risen!

We were glad to hear from you from Jordanville, and look forward to news from Mt. Athos. Friday night we sang the canon to St. Demetrius the Great Martyr, praying that he would be able to open the way to the Holy Mount for you, and every day we sing his magnification.

Why do they want you to stay in Jordanville for two weeks? If it's absolutely necessary or useful, then of course you should. But if it's just so they can "test" you and see if you're "worthy" to be having an independent existence outside of Jordanville, or to prepare you for bishop—then run from it as fast as possible. Vladika Nektary on his last visit mentioned again his desire to retire with us here, but said that now he would not, because now we will be taken away for bishops in 2 or 3 years, and then no one knows who will be "appointed to Platina," and he wouldn't like it. I suggested to him that we would take the path of Sergius of Radonezh instead of George Grabbe (who says that according to Metr. Anthony one can not refuse to be a bishop), and he was consoled a little.

I deeply, deeply feel that we have God's work to do here, and if we allow ourselves to be taken from it we will betray our calling, and probably be flops besides. Vladika Laurus apparently looks on us with the eyes of the organization, not giving much importance or value to what we do, and only looking for the right hole to plug us into for the "good of the whole." Your two weeks in Jordanville (if it is not really very necessary or useful) would hurt not so much we as our common work—making it seem less urgent to the church world, and making you very "visible."

Forgive me if I'm not looking at this right. You will know best what to do when you return.

We have been all right this week, working fairly well, and with only a few visitors. I find myself rather nervous being "in charge" and having to read the mail, but there's no great suffering yet. Pray for Dima—his family is visiting next week and want to take him home for a "normal life," and he is frightened that he will do whatever they say. But it's probably best for him to be scared. If he goes, of course, it will be difficult for us. Guma and Sergei are behaving well. The kids are due today in Wildwood. The sisters are about as usual.

I think most of all about our summer Pilgrimage, which could be a magnificent opportunity for "Orthodox enlightenment" such as is not being given very much nowadays. How are the sermons



in Jordanville? I have the impression that a heavy “church” atmosphere is hanging over everything and stifling a much needed freshness, and we could be helping to give this freshness. Perhaps when we’re dead they’ll even recognize our labors—but at least we have to help those we can. Is this wrong?

I watched Fr. Alexey serve twice, and he will do fine. I gave him some general advice on confession, and he basically understands it. I confessed Ian and Susan by telephone on Friday.

Robert Murray (Iakov’s father) was in a terrible accident at the time of the ordinations, and miraculously escaped with only a sprained ankle and bruises. Fr. Alexey and I went to visit him and I liked him—I think he wants faith but just can’t break out of his rut. I gave him Fr. Dimitry Dudko’s book, and he promised to read it.

Today was the wedding in Etna, and next Sunday the first service in Medford.

A few days ago it was snowing in Wildwood, and today it’s 80 degrees—real summer weather.

Pray for us. May God make your trip fruitful.

With love in Christ,
Your brother, hieromonk Seraphim

P.S. Chuck and Roberta came yesterday with their baby Timothy, who is healthy. They have 30 people now, with 10 children in school.

P.P.S. Someone sent us a Xerox from Jordanville of your Zutie Ctareza Theodosius—76 pp.—is this right?

P.S. I had a long talk With Dima. He is preparing himself psychologically to leave, and I can’t “push” him not to—his mother wrote him that he is “brainwashed” and that we are “exploiting” him, and he probably begins to believe it a little. Obviously, he is being given a “test” of his freedom—he will have to respect his place here more if he will be able to stay.

Don’t write him a letter “demanding” or “forcing” anything on him?—he already thinks you “force” him too much. May Gods will be done. This is evidently a “test” that he needs. I will grieve more for him than for us if he leaves, but of course it will be discouraging to have so few hands with so much to do. I grieve most of all the “church public opinion” (Jordanville, etc.) doesn’t seem to approve of our existence. But God is with us!

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to Fr. Roman Lukianov.