



313. August 21/September 3, 1981 Martyr Bassa

Categories : [Letters](#)

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our Grace, dear Vladika Gregory,

Blagoslovite!

We have heard from several sources that the Greek clergy in our Church are making a rather loud protest against our recent articles on Archimandrite Tavrion (The Orthodox Word #96). The main article was sent us by Metropolitan Philaret specifically for publication, and we printed also his short letter which stated this fact. We thought that the Metropolitans statement would prevent any adverse comment and would cause our Greek clergy to begin to rethink their own fanatical position with regard to the church situation in Russia.

Unfortunately, the result was something quite different, and the past two issues of Orthodox Christian Witness have contained articles by Father Michael Azkoul and by Holy Transfiguration Monastery which not only make statements very disrespectful towards the Metropolitans statement, but also set forth an ecclesiology which I believe is totally foreign to our Russian Church Outside of Russia: that the Orthodox Churches of Moscow and Constantinople (and presumably all the other Local Orthodox Churches, which are in communion with them) are without grace, that their “bishops are no bishops,” etc.

These are statements of such a serious kind that if they are allowed to go uncorrected they will create the strong impression that our Church has indeed become what our enemies would like to think it is: a sect.

Our Greeks would very much like everyone to think that all the converts and non-Russians in our Church, and many of the Russians also, share their fanatical views. We have just heard from one of our parishioners in the Portland area (where someone from our monastery goes occasionally to serve the Liturgy in Slavonic) that Father George Macris is insisting that the Russians there (who attend the English-language parish when there is no Slavonic service) write or sign letters of protest to ^ the Metropolitan against our articles; this has caused much confusion among the Russians, who cannot understand what this is all about.

We ourselves have received only two letters of protest against our issue #96, both of them from persons thoroughly under the influence of our Greeks; all other responses have been favorable— in fact, those who have responded have found the image of Father Tavrion to be a very inspiring one. I am enclosing my reply to Dr. John Johnstone concerning his letter of protest to the Metropolitan, which perhaps you have seen.



I think I mentioned once before in a letter to you that the “silent majority” of the members of our Church, both clergy and laymen, both Russians and converts—does not follow the fanatical party-line of our Greeks. We (and very many with us) certainly hope that the loudness of the outcry of our Greeks will not cause any statement on the part of our Church leadership that could be interpreted as favorable in any way to the cause of fanaticism such as our Greeks are now preaching so loudly. Our Russian Church Outside of Russia can continue to be a beacon-light to the other Orthodox Churches—but it will not be so if we become a sect such as our Greeks would make us out to be (and a sect which would only be warring with other small “sects” in Greece—for our Greeks have no oneness at all with the Old Calendar movement in Greece).

Please forgive my boldness in speaking so frankly. I have done so knowing that the non-fanatics in our Church (the vast majority, I am sure) are not organized and do not think it their business to make loud (and sometimes coerced) statements in the manner of our Greeks.

Asking your prayers and blessing,

With love and respect in Christ,
Unworthy Hieromonk Seraphim

P.s. We recently concluded a very successful week of lectures and courses in our summer St. Herman Pilgrimage. About 150 people attended the first day, and nearly 200 were present at some time during the week (most of them converts). We noted that in virtually none of them was there the “super-correct,” “know-it-all” attitude which is promoted by our Greeks; all, on the contrary, were eager to learn and most respectful of the authority of our bishops, two of whom (Bishops Alypy and Lauras) were present at some time.