

THE BITTER FRUITS OF THE UNION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD AND THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

In 1983 the Russian Church Abroad under the leadership of His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret (whom the ROCA glorified in 2008) anathematized the heresy of ecumenism.

In 2012 the ROCA MP filed a lawsuit against the parish of the Protection of the Mother of God in Buena, N.J., during the course of which bishop Gabriel was asked: Is it true that in 1983 the ROCA anathematized ecumenism? To this bishop Gabriel replied that if one refers to the document entitled “Act of Canonical Communion” it states that *“previously issued acts which impede the fullness of canonical communion are deemed to be invalid or have expired”* (point 13). It is strange to hear such words from a hierarch of the Orthodox Church. For when the Church anathematizes a certain heresy, this is for eternity and no hierarchs can annul this anathema, particularly the Moscow Patriarchate which is actively involved in ecumenism. For example when the Orthodox Church anathematized the heretic Arius, he personally was not able to lift that anathema.

Since the ROCA united with the Moscow Patriarchate and in its services commemorates as its lord and Father the most holy patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, hence it also has fallen under this anathema. And as we read in the prayers before confession the words, *“has fallen under one’s own anathema”*.

When the first commission was formed in 2004 for dialogue between the Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate many among the ROCA flock reacted with great caution to this, knowing that the Moscow Patriarchate participates actively in the ecumenical movement. Likewise, the issue of sergianism is no less important for the ROCA faithful. But the ROCA hierarchs assured us that they would work on the Moscow Patriarchate from the inside. In other words, they would actively oppose the heresy of ecumenism and sergianism. But they did not keep their promise.

It is interesting that in 2013 the Moscow Patriarchate decanonized dozens of the confessors and new martyrs of Russia and none of the hierarchs or clergy of the ROCA MP voiced objection to this action except for Protopriest Vladimir Malchenko from Toronto (a fellow classmate of mine from seminary) who wrote a letter in defense of the decanonized new martyrs of Russia.

Another interesting fact is that at the pre-sobor meetings in Shambeze (10-17 October, 2015 and 21-28 January, 2016 a document entitled “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian World” was developed and which was subsequently ratified at the Hierarchical Sobor of the ROC MP in February, 2016. There is no information as to whether even a single hierarch of the ROCA MP at this Sobor expressed opposition to this document.

“The announcement of the forthcoming meeting of the most holy Patriarch Kyrill with Pope Francis of Rome” according to the words of Protopriest Alexander Lebedev (Secretary of Inter-orthodox relations of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA MP) *“was received by the clergy and faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad **completely calmly**”* which also eloquently bears witness to the real attitude of the higher clergy and members of the ROCA MP toward ecumenism.

Where is the active resistance from inside which the ROCA MP hierarchs promised us? Can we then assert that the ROCA MP has become that very yeast which, according to the words of Archbishop Mark (Arndt) should be leaven for the dough of the Moscow Patriarchate?

The hierarchs of the ROCA always openly and freely spoke out and wrote in defense of Orthodoxy and their voices were heard by the entire Orthodox world. Examples of how our hierarchs abroad defended the faith were: Metropolitan Anthony, Metropolitan Anastasy, the Holy Hierarch Metropolitan Philaret, Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishop Averky (Taushev), Holy Hierarch Archbishop John of Shanghai and many others. If the current hierarchs of the ROCA MP are themselves a part of the ecumenical community and speak out against certain of its decisions, then their voices no longer have the former freedom and power, do not sound convincing and are not capable of changing anything. The impression

being created is that the purpose of these statements is not to resist ecumenical innovations, but the aim in resorting to demonstrations of “control over the situation”, is to lull the vigilance of their own flock, among which there are still many people who are not indifferent toward the future of the Church Abroad and Holy Orthodoxy.

+Andronik

Archbishop of Syracuse and St. Nicolas Church

7/20 April, Venerable George, bishop of Miletene.