

Documents from the Orthodox Christian Laity Archive

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1.

Sourozh Diocese Update from Adrian and Tanya Dean and Lyuba Alieva--Including Jonathan Price's Open Letter Asking Whether Sourozh's Shifting to Constantinople Has Been Discussed

Posted on January 25, 2003 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Friends,

I attach a slightly amended copy of the petition; the words 'and Father John Jillions' have been removed at his request. If you have signed and sent me the old petition, do not sign the amended version, as I will remove these words from your signed petition.

Below is an open letter from Jonathan Price, who was a financial advisor to the Cathedral.

We have received from various sources confirmations that at two times over the last year discussions have been held with third parties about the possibility of Sourozh changing jurisdictions. Jonathan's letter is therefore very relevant in that it calls for openness on this issue. Jonathan also asks for an explanation of the canonical position. Dr. Stephen Thomas, an Orthodox theologian is in the process of creating an article for the laity on this issue. This will be forwarded to you once it is available.

In November 2002, Sourozh Magazine published an article "European Reactions to Events within the Dioceses of Sourozh." Paula Nicholson, an Orthodox theologian who specialises in "modernity" (the quality of being current or of the present: "our own statutes would instill a spirit of modernity into our church") is in the process of putting together a Christian reply to the depressing and negative views expressed in this article. This will be forwarded to you once it is available.

Love in Christ,

Adrian and Tanya Dean

Lyuba Alieva.

* * *

Dear Dr Thomas,

I have been sent your and Mr Dean's exchange with Dn Peter Scorer. I received the documents from two different e-mail sources on the same day. One of those sources is here in Munich.

As a former parishioner of Lewes, director of Pushkin House and financial adviser to the Cathedral, I wish to add my name to the Petition that you and others have drafted.

If that Petition can be amended by way of rider in any way, I should like to add the following request, namely that Bp Basil should openly confirm whether or not he personally had conversations with clergy in France last year following the rejection of Bp Hilarion, concerning a shift of jurisdiction from Moscow to Constantinople. If such is the case, he should kindly state on what or on whose authority he conducted those conversations. He should also, if such is the case, kindly state the precise contents of and name all other participants in those conversations and mention the extent to which other UK/Irish colleagues were informed or involved before the conversations took place.

I have also a second, related request, namely that if, in anticipation of a shift to Constantinople, there have been conversations more recently at the Phanar or with Phanar clergy, the names of the Sourozh representatives should be openly stated. If such is the case, the same statement should similarly make it clear on what or on whose authority those conversations took place. Again, if such is the case, it would be helpful to know the precise content of those conversations, the names of the participants and the extent to which other UK/Irish colleagues were informed or involved before the conversations took place.

Finally, it would be helpful if you were kindly to state the basis on which the succession proceedings in Sourozh are said to conflict with the canons. The statement is, I recall, to be found in Dimitri Obolensky's writings; the original case, source or authority would make matters clearer for the nonprofessional. I do not see any reference to canonicity in Dn Peter's response to the Petition. This is surely a central procedural point, together with the evident conflict with the Cathedral statutes, whatever their authority.

We have never met nor do I know Mr Dean.

You will realise that, since I am in essence calling for openness and accountability, this message is not meant to be confidential in any way.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Price

2.

Response by Hilarion, Bishop of Kerch, Assistant Bishop of the Sourozh Diocese (London)

Posted on August 17, 2002 in Hierarchs

LONDON, July, 2002 -- The statement by the Diocesan Council the Sourozh Diocese delivered by Metropolitan Anthony at the Liturgy in the London Cathedral on the 16th of June plunged me into the state of deep shock. I was left speechless for several hours. As I was listening to the statement being read out in English by Metropolitan Anthony, I felt pain, bitterness and shame for Vladyka: he had been charged with this disgraceful mission by the members of the Council, who disregarded his great age, his infirmity and his irreproachable lifelong service to the Church. Then, as Ms Irina Kirillova sprang onto the ambo and started reading out the statement in Russian to the indignant clamour of the parishioners, it became clear who were its genuine authors and who are the instigators of the current turmoil and division in the diocese.

For several months I remained silent about the motives and instigators of the present disturbances. I hoped that this matter would be resolved peacefully and I did my utmost as not to publicise the the conflict, initiated by just a few individuals, so as to avoid further party-spirit in the diocese. Now that those people have themselves decided to give a wide publicity to the discord, I am compelled to defend myself and to disclose their names. I consider Bishop Basil of Sergievo, Archpriest Sergei Hackel, Priest Alexander Fostropoulos and Irina Kirillova to be the promoters of the ongoing conflict. Each of them has reasons of his or her own for this. It was particularly Bishop Basil who insisted that

I submitted the letter of resignation to the Patriarch, regardless even of the fact that the 2-3 month 'trial period' assigned to me by Vladyka Anthony has not yet expired. To explain such extraordinary haste he stated that the longer I remain in the diocese, the more support I would gain. As he explains it, this growing support splits the diocese.

Three of the persons whom I have named, Bishop Basil, Father Sergei Hackel and Irina Kirillova, are members of the Diocesan Council, on behalf of which the statement in question was issued. However, there are also some other members of the Council, who, as far as I know, neither took part in the discussion nor signed the Council's statement. This point raises the question of its legitimacy. For whom does this statement speak and whose position does it represent? Not to mention the fact that it was not even considered appropriate to consult the parishioners of either the London Cathedral or other diocesan parishes about ways of resolving the existing situation. The diocesan clergy, except for a few from the London Cathedral, were effectively sidelined from the discussion of the present issue, the opinions of many being ignored. Neither was there any discussion of the statement at the Diocesan Assembly on the 29th of June. Sentence has been passed upon me without any open discussion. Consequently, the events of 16th June in the London Cathedral provoked the protests of many people in the diocese who were shocked and astounded to witness the events scandalously unfolding before them, when they had come to pray in the church.

I now turn to the contents of the statement. It begins with accusations aimed at Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, against whom it is alleged that he suddenly, discourteously and, with complete disregard for Metropolitan Anthony's consent, removed Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch from his duties of Assistant Bishop and appointed me in his stead. Further on, the statement alleges that Metropolitan Anthony had invited me here as a priest, while Metropolitan Kirill insisted on my arriving as a bishop. To refute these lies I have no other alternative than to set out in detail the history of my appointment.

My appointment to this diocese had a long prehistory. I met Vladyka Anthony for the first time in Russia over twenty years ago. When I was a student at the University of Oxford between 1993 and 1995 I combined work on my doctoral thesis with celebrating services in various parishes of the Sourozh diocese. It was at that time that Vladyka first suggested that I came to the Great Britain, to permanently serve in the diocese. I declined, for I wished to return to Russia.

In 1999 Vladyka Anthony asked me once again, whether I would come to the Diocese of Sourozh. This time I responded positively. Vladyka wrote a letter to Metropolitan Kirill, with whom I was then working, with the request to send me here. Metropolitan Kirill was adamantly opposed to the idea. In March 2000 he wrote a letter to Vladyka Anthony informing him that he had other plans for me. Nonetheless, on 11 November 2000, i.e. a year and a half ago, Vladyka Anthony sent him another letter in which he mentioned for the first time of possible retirement of Archbishop Anatoly and my appointment to the diocese as an Assistant Bishop. I quote from Vladyka Anthony's letter on this occasion: 'Sooner or later Vladyka Anatoly will ask for retirement, and we would need another Assistant Bishop, purely Russian. When I retire or resettle to eternal abodes, his role, carefully conceived, may embrace a significant part of the pastoral work among our ever growing Russian flock. Vladyko, I BEG you: change your mind and grant us, and not only us but the ENTIRE Russian Church, a faithful and experienced labourer in the difficult and ever expanding field of pastoral and inter-church work. I insistently ask you, Vladyko, to follow my advice'. As far as I know, there was no response to this letter from Moscow.

In March 2001 Metropolitan Anthony wrote another letter, addressed this time to His Holiness Patriarch Alexis, wherein he, referring to his advanced age, asked to be relieved of his post and that

Bishop Basil be appointed the Diocesan Bishop. In this letter he once again raised the question of my appointment to this country as an Assistant Bishop to the diocese of Sourozh: 'I would like to ask you, Vladyko, to appoint Hegumen Hilarion to England as an Assistant Bishop for the Sourozh diocese. We need a Russian Bishop, to help Archbishop Anatoly and the new Diocesan Bishop. The number of Russians has grown so much that neither myself, nor Vladyka Anatoly can cope with the pastoral work, which requires education and spiritual formation of the newly-arriving Russians. From the letter enclosed you will see that Cambridge University has agreed to provide a stipend for him for three years in order that he should become the head of the Theological Institute, founded by our diocese. I ask you, dear Vladyko, not to postpone these decisions. I have never before addressed you with such persistence but time presses: my energy wanes, and ever opening horizons prove to grow wider and deeper'.

The decisions, however, were being postponed again and again, mainly because of Metropolitan Kirill's resistance, who was reluctant to release me from my duties in Moscow. A decision may have never been taken at all, had Metropolitan Kirill not visited London in November 2001, as a result of the repeated and urgent request of Vladyka Anthony. During this meeting Metropolitan Kirill at last agreed to Vladyka Anthony's arguments that I should be sent to the Sourozh diocese as an Assistant Bishop. Simultaneously, Vladyka Anthony promised to discuss with Archbishop Anatoly the latter's retirement. This discussion took place on the same day. Subsequently, when Metropolitan Kirill met with Archbishop Anatoly and offered him to choose between an appointment to another diocese and retirement, Vladika Anatoly opted for the latter.

In his letter to the Patriarch dated by 18 of December 2001 Vladyka Anthony wrote: 'I am now addressing you with an additional request: to appoint Father Hilarion an Assistant Bishop, who, as I have previously written to you, will be entrusted with lecturing at Cambridge University and with special care for the constantly growing Russian flock. Up to the present time it was Vladyka Anatoly who was occupied, heartily and successfully, with the Russians. But as you know from his own petition, the time has come for him to retire. I would ask you to 'formally' accommodate his request, while permitting him to remain in England until the church has been built and the parish has been finally formed in Manchester. The newly-consecrated Bishop Hilarion will be occupied with the Russians in London as well as throughout the whole diocese, both in Britain and Ireland'.

It was this letter of Metropolitan Anthony along with the personal petition of Archbishop Anatoly to grant him retirement on account of his age and deteriorating health that on 27 December 2001 prompted the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church to release Vladyka Anatoly from his duties of an Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Sourozh and to appoint me his successor. On 14 of January 2002 I was consecrated Bishop of Kerch at Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow. Bishop Basil of Sergievo was also among those whom I invited to take part in my ordination.

I give you this detailed account of my appointment with quotations from Metropolitan Anthony's letters (which are not confidential and are available from the archives of the Moscow Patriarchate) in order to dispel the following allegations: a) that my appointment was initiated by Metropolitan Kirill, b) that Moscow prompted Archbishop Anatoly's retirement without Metropolitan Anthony's consent, c) that I was invited here as priest but came as bishop.

In addition, I would like to point out that the belated gratitude of the Diocesan Council towards Vladyka Anatoly sounds rather as an offence and mockery than a sincere expression of love and sympathy. When Vladyka Anatoly came to England he was offered the same cold welcome as myself, if not worse. And it is still fresh in memories of many parishioners. On his arrival Vladyka Anatoly was neither provided with accommodation, nor with stipend. Afterwards, however, he was offered a

damp and cold basement to live in and a salary, which amounts, as far as I know, to £260 per month to cover his living costs. (In comparison, the salary of senior priests at the London Cathedral is around £1200 per month). Vladyka Anatoly still continues to live in a basement and comes to the Cathedral on foot (It is just a little less than an hour's walk). I find it hard to believe that any other hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church lives in such appalling conditions, or that any other diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church is so culpably neglectful of its bishops. If the Diocesan Council is so concerned about Vladyka Anatoly, why have not Bishop Basil, Irina Kirillova or other members of the Council done anything at all to improve his deplorable situation?

I now come to the accusations of the diocesan Council about me. I have been charged with 'having very quickly undertaken a series of visits to parishes all over the Diocese', during which I allegedly 'concentrated on contacts with the Russian community almost exclusively'. To this I reply as follows. From the letters of Vladyka Anthony quoted above, it should become evident that my pastoral duties were originally intended to be focussed on the Russian parishioners ('We would need another Assistant Bishop, purely Russian. When I retire or resettle to eternal abodes, his role, carefully conceived, may embrace a significant part of the pastoral work among our ever growing Russian flock' in the letter of 11 November 2000; 'The newly-consecrated Bishop Hilarion will be occupied with the Russians in London as well as throughout the whole diocese' in the letter of 18 December 2001). However, I saw my role as bishop in a slightly different light, because I thought that a bishop cannot only serve to one particular ethnic group, but according to the word of St. Paul the apostle, should be 'all for all'. That was the reason why from the very beginning I communicated with Russians, British, Greeks, Georgians, Ukrainians and Belorussians as well as with people of other ethnic backgrounds. Never did I exclude anyone from my ministry or see myself as exclusively 'the bishop for Russians'.

When I came to England, Vladyka Anthony suggested that I should not concentrate too much on the London Cathedral but should attend to other local parishes across the diocese and visit them. These were the instructions I followed. In March and April I visited parishes in Swindon, Walsingham, Norwich, Devon, Oxford, Cambridge, Portsmouth, and Exeter. I spent Lazarus Saturday in Durham, Palm Saturday in Nottingham, Easter in Dublin. Out of the parishes I name only two (Swindon and Dublin) are predominantly Russian-speaking. In these two parishes, I celebrated mostly in Church Slavonic. The language of other parishes is mainly English, so I celebrated in English there. In most cases the language I spoke with people was English, sometimes Russian, Greek or French. For example, I spent three days in Devon, communicating with Father Benedict Ramsden and his large congregation exclusively in English. On the contrary, in Dublin I mostly spoke Russian; in Durham and Cambridge I spoke English and Greek.

Everywhere, in all parishes, I was heartily and warmly welcomed by clergy and laity. Some parishes had not been visited by a bishop for several years. Priests felt isolated and marginalized there, their problems unattended and their letters, addressed to the diocesan leadership, unanswered. Many priests shared with me their frustrations and told me about the difficulties they were facing. Some said that when a serious problem arose in an outlying parish, bishops would not normally become involved to settle it, while if a problem arises in London, the entire diocese was called to resolve it. It seemed to them that all attention is focussed on London, as if other parishes did not exist at all. Almost all priests in the diocese, again, except London, have to work full-time elsewhere (as psychiatrists, booksellers etc.) to earn their living. They use their free time to serve their parishes, for which service they receive no compensation. As a result, many priests are overworked and exhausted; some are frustrated or on the point of breakdown. One of the major problems of the diocese is that the age of its priests on the average approximates 50-60 years. Some are well over

70, a younger generation of priests being almost entirely missing. This and much else was what I heard from the clergy of the diocese, and I hoped that in the course of time this situation could be at least partly improved.

The Diocesan Council states that my liturgical style presents a sharp contrast to that of the diocese. I am accustomed to celebrate in the rite of the Orthodox Church, and I cannot understand how the 'style' of a single diocese can contradict it. Indeed, liturgical celebration in the London Cathedral has a style of its own peculiar only to Vladyka Anthony. But in other parishes, for example, in Oxford, where Bishops Kallistos and Basil celebrate in rotation, the style closely follows canonical rite. When Bishop Basil celebrated in Nottingham, he vested outside the altar, started the service outside the altar and entered the altar only at the Small Entrance. This is exactly how an episcopal liturgy is normally celebrated, and this is exactly how I celebrated it in Nottingham and other parishes. As my style of celebration was being discussed during the clergy meeting of 25 of May, the diocesan clergy one after another described my celebration of liturgy in most positive tones. There was no criticism whatsoever on their part. Let me quote the letter I received on the 17th of June from one of the senior priests of the diocese, head of an English-speaking parish:

'Dear Bishop Hilarion, Give your blessing!

I am very saddened by events. I had hoped that the divisions within the Diocese could be healed and that progress towards the future could be made with others across the Diocese, we were encouraged by your visit to us. You were a channel of grace, we were moved by your kindness and generous spirit; your serving of the Divine Liturgy was inspirational, prayerful, unhurried, dignified and we were enabled to have a positive vision of what might have been our future: a young (not too young) bishop surrounded by young men to be priests. It seemed that you could bring a freshness, a newness, a renewal and a life-giving spirit. This was our vision, a privilege to share and we hoped that it would come to fruition.

Please know that you are loved and respected by many and we hope and pray that God will bless you and strengthen you in this difficult time. I do hope that we will meet again and that you will not look too unkindly on this Diocese which has treated you so badly yet, clearly, is not at this time ready for the necessary changes that the future will require. I hope that God in his great mercy will forgive our failings and our frustration of the opportunity which I believe He was giving us. The Patriarch sent us of his best and he was rejected by narrowness of view and misunderstanding which I am sure could have been healed with perseverance and prayer...

Now that you are in our hearts and prayers, we shall remember you every liturgy...'

And here is the letter from another priest, written in English, which I also received on the 17th of June:

'I am deeply distressed about what you have been put through, and feel ashamed that you have received such treatment in Great Britain. I am equally distressed to hear that you may now be going to serve elsewhere rather than staying here and I hope that even at this stage there remains the possibility of your remaining in this country.

As I said when I wrote briefly to welcome you here, your presence brought with it such possibilities for Church life in Britain both within and beyond the Diocese of Sourozh. I feel that is still true if only some people could opt for charity and openness. Your letter articulates a vision for Orthodoxy in Britain that I for one have yearned for over many years and I felt that a new era was dawning with your arrival. I cannot imagine what will happen if you leave. God alone knows whether such

possibilities as those embodied in your vision will arise again in Britain in this generation. I just cannot imagine who there is to put this vision into action or even to express it.'

I will not disclose the names of the authors of these letters in order not to subject them to persecution from those who are presently trying to split the diocese. I receive such letters from both clergy and laity of many parishes. Vladyka Anthony has also received an impressive number of letters in my defence. I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who, in one way or another, verbally or in writing, offered me their support in this difficult time. I was particularly amazed on 16 June at how people in the London Cathedral expressed their support and sympathy for me as they approached after the liturgy to venerate the cross. Such a reaction by the people must have been the very opposite of what had been expected by the authors of the statement read out during the service.

One might ask why my visits to various parishes, evaluated so positively by the parishes themselves, were given such a negative and, even caricatured description? I believe the reason for that lies in the fact that these visits greatly discomfited Bishop Basil. Before my arrival to this country it was his responsibility to supervise the parishes and to visit them. He did visit them but not as regularly as the clergy might have wished him to do so. When visiting one particular parish, I was told that Bishop Basil had been there just a week before my coming to it, but that this was his first and only visit in nine years of his episcopal service. I mention this not with the view of casting a shadow upon Bishop Basil: I am well aware that one cannot expect regular visits to other parishes from a person of his age and I know that these responsibilities take considerable physical and moral effort. But it seems distinctly odd that I should be blamed for the fact that, being thirty years his junior, I am able to help by filling this gap.

This is the first time that I have been so outspoken about my elder brother in episcopal service, and it causes me great pain to do so. God is the witness: I have made every effort to settle in private the discord between the two of us, the Assistant Bishops of the Sourozh diocese, without making it the subject of wide public discussion. Bishop Basil has taken a different course: he decided to appeal first to the clergy and then to the laity. First he hoped to win supporters among the priests at the clergy meeting of the 25th of May, but he did not succeed, for in one way or another, many priests and deacons expressed their support for me. Significantly it was at this point that the statement of the Diocesan Council was issued. As it is known, the statement was read out in the London Cathedral, but no discussion followed the reading, neither there will be any further discussion. People were just presented with a *fait accompli*. And many were stunned and offended by this.

At the clergy meeting of the 25th of May Bishop Basil sharply criticized the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church for what he regards, personally, as its erroneous policies concerning to the dioceses abroad. Bishop Basil has his own particular view, which is that the Patriarchate has taken the course of the 'russification' of those dioceses, and that all attention is paid to the Russians, to the marginalization of the faithful who are not of Russian origin. This, however, is far from truth. I will not deny the fact that in recent years in most dioceses abroad, except in the Sourozh diocese, the number of parishes has increased twofold or even threefold. The Russian Orthodox parishes are being open even in the countries where they have never existed before (such as India, Thailand, Iceland, Cuba, and so on). I also acknowledge that the main reason for that is an influx of emigrants from the former Soviet Union who need pastoral care. However, the expansion of dioceses does not mean that they are being turned into ethnic Russian-speaking ghettos. I have visited many Russian Orthodox dioceses and parishes overseas, and witnessed that their doors are open to everyone, no specific preference being given to one ethnic group over another, but all being equally received with love.

Further on, it is written in the Diocesan Council's statement that 'closure and opening of parishes or eucharistic communities were discussed', i.e. by myself, 'with no reference to Metropolitan Anthony'. This does not correspond to the truth. Never did I discuss 'closure' of any Sourozh parishes. On the contrary, I talked about how to preserve already existing parishes, including those where the number of parishioners is fast decreasing. I did emphasise the necessity of opening new parishes in London and elsewhere, but this was not, of course, in order to replace the existing ones: the new parishes were meant to be added to those that already exist. Besides, I first shared my every thought with Metropolitan Anthony and only after having received his approval, did I discuss them with others.

Various people ask me why I have agreed to write the letter of resignation myself and did not wait for others to do this for me. My answer is that I did this out of obedience to Metropolitan Anthony, who had told me that if I stay, some priests will change jurisdiction. I wrote the letter, then, out of respect to Metropolitan Anthony and not on the demand of the Diocesan Council, which is only a consultative body and has no canonical authority in the diocese. My own impression is that it is not I myself who splits the diocese, but rather those people whom I have at last decided to name. It is precisely they who aggravate the conflict, precisely they who have brought it into the public eye, setting people against one another, whilst at the same time striving to suppress the voices of those priests and lay people who disapprove of their course of action. Many times have I heard that my departure from these shores would not prevent the schism, that the schism is, indeed, inevitable and the way towards it had already been paved. I do not know whether it is true or not. But as for me, I am ready to sacrifice myself, if peace in the Church can be achieved by this means, and I have, consequently, sent the letter of resignation to the Patriarch, asking him to release me from the duties of an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Sourozh. In doing so I followed the example of St Gregory Nazianzen, who, as the question of his resignation was raised at the Council of Constantinople in 381, pronounced the following speech:

'You men whom God has brought together so that you might take a decision pleasing to God, let my question be a secondary one... You must raise your thoughts to something greater: come together and unite, even at this late hour. How long shall we be laughed at as uncivilised beings who only understand one thing, how to pant in the battle? Extend the hand of friendship cheerfully. But I have become the prophet Jonah: I give myself as means of saving the ship, although I am not responsible for the storm.'

In what is happening now in the Diocese of Sourozh, the question about my personal future is a secondary one. The question of paramount importance is the future of the diocese itself, the future of the Russian Orthodoxy on the British Isles. This is the motive behind their accusations aimed not only and solely at me, but also at the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. According to their words, the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church has apparently taken the wrong course and supposedly places 'an emphasis on explicit, hierarchical as opposed to conciliar authority'. Allegedly, it russifies foreign dioceses and intervenes with the affairs of the Diocese of Sourozh. (It is as if this Diocese no longer belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church.) All this slander reveals the intention to undermine trust to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod.

Today I am leaving for Moscow, where I hope to meet with His Holiness the Patriarch in order to discuss the Sourozh situation in detail. In Moscow I will be waiting for the decision of the Holy Synod,

whose session is scheduled for 17 July. In this time of trouble I pray not for myself and not for my own future, for having once and for all entrusted my life to God, I have not a shade of doubt that He will continue to look after me. I pray for the Diocese of Sourozh which I have already come to love, and for the people, who have come to love me despite the fact that the time of my stay was so brief. I pray that peace would be finally restored to the diocese: not the false peace, attained by the removal of a particular person, but that 'profound and integral' peace, which is the gift of God, peace as a vindication for people's courage, honesty and loyalty to the Church of Christ.

Let the blessing of the Lord and the protection of His All-Holy Mother be with all of us.

+Hilarion, Bishop of Kerch Assistant Bishop of the Sourozh Diocese

London

3.

Mariamni Yenikeyeff Wants Fr. John Marks' Compilation of Presbyters' Suggestions for the Diocese of Sourozh Removed From Our Website

Posted on December 19, 2002 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am shocked that this item Suggestions from Presbyters for the More Efficient Working of the Sourozh Diocese, by Fr. John Marks appeared on your news service, and more surprised that it has not been taken off your site. This is not news, any kind of editorial or an opinion poll, but a supposedly confidential attempt by the presbyters of our diocese to move forward after an extremely difficult year.

The circulation and publication of this item is highly inappropriate and does nothing to serve the Church at large, and in particular further harms the diocese of Sourozh. I do not understand how such an item came into your possession.

You have been informed that this item was never intended for publication, and I fail to understand why you do not have the discretion to remove it from your website.

With greetings for the approaching feast,

In XC,

Mariamni Yenikeyeff

(lay member of the diocese of Sourozh)

Editor's Note: The suggestions compiled by Fr. Marks are newsworthy for the Diocese of Sourozh and other Orthodox Churches around the world. We obtained and published the article in a legal and journalistically accepted manner. As we have previously stated, we regret that we were not initially informed, and therefore did not initially inform our readers, that the suggestions were compiled by Fr. Marks, not written by him. However, Fr. Marks later provided that information to us, and we in turn provided it to our readers, who are now properly informed of the context of the article. Accordingly, we respectfully decline to remove it from our website.

4.

Adrian Dean and Dr. Stephen Thomas Reply to Protodeacon Peter Scorer's Letter in Response to the Petition to Metropolitan Anthony of the Diocese of Sourozh

Posted on January 22, 2003 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Protodeacon Peter,

Thank you so much for your letter. I do appreciate that you have spent the time to think a number of these issues through in detail. Your commitment to the Moscow Patriarchate is noted and commended. Such commitment has not been forthcoming from your colleagues!

May I have the opportunity to reply? The reply below has been constructed by Dr Stephen Thomas and represents my and many other laypersons views. While you and I may differ in our views, I think we both have Christ as our centre so we have common ground to resolve these differences.

Yours in Christ,

Adrian Dean and Stephen Thomas.

* * *

Our Reply:

Our first issue is the statement that "The problems in the diocese are 'up to the ruling bishop', that is, Metropolitan Anthony. This is only partly true. The "ruling bishop" must act with the same mind as the Church as a whole, the mind which is expressed in our case by the Holy Synod.

M. Anthony has himself put the diocese into crisis firstly by his anti-Moscow sentiments in his Announcement of 19th May 2002, in which he openly criticised the decision of the Patriarch to consecrate Hilarion as Bishop of Kerch to replace the retiring Anatoly: here he refers to the Patriarch doing what is 'hurtful and tactless' and as 'adding insult to injury'. Secondly, M. Anthony sowed confusion by referring to the 'style' of the diocese, as if the diocese had a different kind of Orthodoxy from the rest of the Church. Thirdly, most recently M. Anthony has called an Extraordinary Meeting to propose his retirement and to recommend Bishop Basil as his successor. This move has created widespread alarm in view of Bishop Basil's frank anti-Moscow statements. It appears that M. Anthony is pre-empting the election of his successor. If so, it is a move which is uncanonical.

Since M. Anthony, the 'ruling bishop', is at least partly responsible for the crisis, it is not surprising that there is a pressing need for the Russian Orthodox Church as a whole to step in and set matters straight unless M. Anthony changes his behaviour. The petition is the expression of a popular instinct that something is badly wrong.

We disagree that 'if Bishop Basil and others were to be admitted to another communion that is their affair.' Bishop Basil was consecrated as a Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Church - of Sergievo, the place of the Saint and Confessor Bishop Stephen. Nothing that a Bishop does in the Church is 'his own affair'.

While Dn. Peter says that 'Church matters are not decided by populist propaganda' in order to discourage us from promulgating a petition. Although it is true that the populace does not decide Church matters, - this is ultimately for a Synod of the Bishops - the people may, and always have, in the Orthodox Church, exercised a lively influence upon Church matters and made their views known in a very populist way: through popular acclaim, through the deserting of certain basilicas where the bishop's view was unpopular; even rioting! A petition seems to me a very polite populism compared with the populism of the age of the Fathers of the Church.

An important point, in which we disagree with Dn. Peter, is that there is a legitimate Orthodox populism by which the people express their will and their fears, and by which the hierarchs are influenced by making their decisions. In early Church history the matters in which the populace exerted pressure extended from the appointment of a bishop to issues concerning Orthodoxy and heresy.

This Orthodox populism is soundly based theologically. We are all One Body having various gifts from God. The bishops, priests, and deacons derive their authority and powers from the One Body. The Holy Spirit can give authority to teach the Faith to any baptized and chrismated Orthodox person. Hence, in the Service of Baptism, the baptized person is called "illuminated" (ephotisthes) "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". In the Slavic use for the Reception of Converts the one chrismated promises to 'confess [the Orthodox Faith] whole and in its fullness and integrity, until my last breath, God being my helper; and I will teach and proclaim it so far as in me lieth.' In our Portsmouth Community, I recently stood as sponsor for a convert who uttered these words.

The Phenomenon of Clericalism.

A marked feature of Western Christianity from which Orthodoxy differs is clericalism, that is, the view that only the clergy ordained to the higher orders should teach or have a say in important Church matters.

Roman Catholicism teaches that its bishops constitute a magisterium, a body whose function is to teach the faith. An old distinction in Roman Catholicism was between *Ecclesia Docens*, "the Teaching Church" on the one hand, and, on the other, the laity who only learn and obey. In the Nineteenth Century Roman Catholic clericalism was at its height. Its logical consequence was that one bishop, the Pope of Rome, claimed the gift of Infallibility to define for the Church in matters of faith and of morals (1870). However, even during this period there were voices that argued for a teaching gift possessed by the laity. John Henry Newman's *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, (1859) raised a storm of controversy in a clericalised Church. Newman's bishop asked him: what was the laity and what had the laity to do with matters of the Faith and Church. Concerning the laity, Newman is supposed to have replied, "Your Grace, the Church would look foolish without it." In the Second Vatican Council attempts were made to accord a greater place for the laity in the Church than "pray, obey, and pay". However, Roman Catholicism remains a Church dominated by its clergy.

Clericalism is not restricted to Roman Catholicism. One might say that it is a peculiarly Western phenomenon which characterises the Western Christian non-Orthodox Churches even today. The derivation of the old word for an Anglican vicar, or Rector, says it all: the word "parson" derives from "person". The cleric was the person in a parish by virtue of his literacy. Now, Dn. Peter's Open Letter has, for us, a clerical feel about it. Its circulation is clerical, the major exception being Adrian Dean, a layman who has organised a petition to influence his bishop in a Church matter. It would be a pity if, just as other Christian confessions were starting to correct their clericalist past, the clergy of Sourozh

fell into the trap of clericalism. The clergy are due greater respect in all Church matters than the laity. The Hierarchy - the consensus of the bishops of our whole Church is our highest authority, although not infallible. However, the laity have every right, and indeed a duty, to express their views on an important Church matter. In this case laypersons are organising a petition asking M. Anthony to abide by the decision of the Holy Synod in the matter of his successor. They also say whom they do not want and why. It is clericalism to try to suppress this strong current of opinion. Our Church is hierarchical: it is not clerical. I do not think that the clergy are listening to us, the people, especially not to the Russian-speaking people whose Church the Russian Orthodox Church is. It is time that they started to listen.

Popularism in the History of the Orthodox Church.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity has always had a popularist dimension. The Most Christian Emperor, when we had one, was unwise to ignore the vocal feelings of the populace. As a layman himself, he exercised great influence upon the Church. We praise our Orthodox Emperors and we blame the heretical ones.

At Constantinople and Alexandria there always existed a populace strongly interested in theological and ecclesiastical matters. They knew how to make their existence rudely felt.

In the Fourth Century St. Athanasius stood "against the world" (Athanasius contra mundum) in defence of the Nicene Faith against Arianism, or the denial of the Divinity of Christ. St. Athanasius stood "against the world" of most of the bishops, the imperial courtiers, and the Emperor himself, and was forced into exile on four occasions. The Patriarch of Alexandria, his enemy, George, was highly unpopular in the city and had to be supported by Imperial troops against the populace. Once the Arian position lost ground Patriarch George was torn to pieces by an angry crowd. In another sense St. Athanasius was not alone. He had the support of the monks of Upper Egypt, monks who were neither priests nor deacons. He was loved too, by the populace of Alexandria. It seemed in A.D. 341, at the Council of Sirmium, that the whole hierarchy had proclaimed Arianism to be the Faith of the Church, so that in the words of St. Jerome, "the world woke and groaned to find itself Arian". The official denial of Christ's Divinity did not last. In the end hierarchs and people joined to reaffirm the faith in the Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. The activity of the populace played a big part in influencing the bishops.

In the Fifth Century St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, used the support of the Egyptian monks and of the populace of Alexandria to confound the heretical Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius.

In the Fifteenth Century, at the Council of Florence, many bishops of the Eastern Church, realising the need for Western military support against the Turks, agreed to the doctrines of Papal Supremacy and to the Filioque, and brought back this decision to Constantinople. But the populace, alerted by St. Mark of Ephesus and later by Gennadios Scholarios, threw it out. Popularism defeated worldly councils to compromise the Orthodox faith even to save Constantinople from the Turks. The people cried out "We want no aid from the Latins! We want no union!" The great Cathedral was empty of worshippers. Pamphlets were circulated by Gennadios appealing to the people. This popular pressure resulted in bringing the bishops around to a rejection of the false union of the Council of Florence. The Greek people kept the faith but finally lost their political independence and, without Western aid, Constantinople fell.

This popularism is still (thanks be to God) with us. We, the people, want our Church. Many laity now feel shut out of their own Church. We cry out to our Metropolitan Anthony to change his mind. We appeal to the Church as a whole, to the Patriarch and to the Holy Synod. We will never give up.

Conclusion.

Dn. Peter refers to the 'unique ethos' which M. Anthony has created in his diocese, and to the valuable work which may be destroyed. And what will destroy this remarkable work? Dn. Peter thinks that the presentation of a petition will destroy it.

One matter that he mentions is the importance of the celebration of the Holy Liturgy in English for English-speaking people. However, this is something to which the Patriarch of Moscow and the DECR is not opposed, provided that Russian-speaking people are also made to feel at home in their Church. In his time in England Bishop Hilarion made no break with the good work done here and celebrated entirely in English in the mainly English-speaking communities. But he was still driven out.

M. Anthony makes much of his democratic spirit. In a recent article published in the Surozh journal he is praised, intemperately, for promoting democracy rather than hierarchy - a compliment which M. Anthony may not welcome. It is true that M. Anthony has always said that he is open to receive the opinions of anyone in his Church. Now is his chance to put into practice in all its fullness this spirit of openness. He is to receive a petition asking him to change his mind and not to retire but to stay on. Or, if, despite all, he insists on retiring, not to predetermine the choice of his successor. The populace who will sign this petition are as loyal as Dn. Peter to the Moscow Patriarchate and the Holy Synod. There is no question of this popularism setting itself against the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church as a whole.

No doubt many of you whom I address who are clerics and to whom I have given a lecture on Church history, will be irritated. "Who is he to teach us?" some of you may say. Well, let the pride be mine and yours the humility in accepting a discourse from a mere layman. If some of you say "We knew all these things already", may I be confounded by seeing you act upon them. I shall be happy to be so confounded.

There is a saying *vox populi, vox Dei* - "the voice of the people is the voice of God". The original context of this phrase reveals a typical Latin Western view. In the words of the fastidious Alcuin (circa 735-804), "Those people should not be listened to who are accustomed to say "the voice of the people is the voice of God", since the riotousness of the people is always most close to madness." There is, however, another point of view as we have seen, that of the Eastern Orthodox Church which does not necessarily see popularism as hysteria or the destructiveness of a rabble, but as in certain circumstances an expression of the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does not divide Himself between priests and people. The Spirit is one. Let the clergy and especially the bishops recognise by virtue of their Apostolic authority that in the voice of the people which comes from God, and that which does not, "rightly dividing Thy Truth".

The petition has been put forth openly and in the light by Adrian Dean. Now Dn. Peter asks him to stifle it. I (Dr Stephen Thomas) support the petition and think that everyone in our Church should have the opportunity at least to consider it. Adrian Dean is not placing people under pressure to sign it. We have express our view frankly and openly. Nevertheless we respect those who may not wish to sign the petition but to take action in their own way as their conscience dictates to them.

In his anxiety to avoid further trouble and more division Dn. Peter has articulated yet another polarity, that between clergy and populace to add to all the other false polarities of this sad business: polarities between English person and Russian person; between "migr" Russian and new Russian; between Bishop Hilarion and Bishop Basil; between the "style" of Surozh and the rest of

the Church; between Diocese and Patriarchate. I fear also that Dn. Peter is making a division between those who know best and those who do not.

We cannot be a diocese whose very nature is to be perpetually in crisis. It is Christ's will that "all should be one." (John17:21-22) The Orthodox Church has the means within herself to set things right. It has a Synod of Bishops; it has the Canons; it has the Scripture and the Fathers; it has the voice of the populace as a spontaneous expression of the Holy Spirit groaning within the Body. All these things the Holy Spirit can make real in such a way as to solve this problematic situation. There is no doubt, then, that our problem can be solved if it is approached in a fully Orthodox way. Part of the solution must be to have the humility to ask for help from the greater Church. If, however, this problem is approached in a worldly-wise way, using Realpolitik with its plots, slanders and secrets, it will go on and great damage will indeed be done not only to the fabric of the diocese but to the souls of every one of us.

Dr. Stephen Thomas,

Orthodox Patriarchal Community of St. Peter and St. Paul, Diocese of Sourozh, Portsmouth. 22nd January 2003

Adrian Dean. Layperson

5.

Protodeacon Peter Scorer: Open Letter to Adrian Dean in Response to Petition to Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Posted on January 21, 2003 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Adrian,

I trust you will take a minute or two to read my letter, even though you probably know that I am not in agreement with much of what you say, and am totally opposed to the very idea of putting out petitions where the Church is concerned. Church matters are not decided by populist propaganda.

Of course it would have been best if we could have proceeded according to our own statutes, but unfortunately these have not yet been adopted by the Holy Synod. Metropolitan Anthony is free to do as he chooses, and the Assembly is also free to reject his desire to resign and not to elect bishop Basil as his successor.

As Chairman of the Diocesan Council bishop Basil can do no more than act on the decisions of that Council, and can make no decisions without the approval of the ruling bishop, our Metropolitan Anthony. He cannot act in any way nor undertake any actions without the approval of Metropolitan Anthony, and I do not believe that he has ever acted without that approval.

You say that you have not seen evidence of bishop Basil's activities. I can assure you that I have, and our Parish in Devon is very appreciative of the way he has helped us, visited us on numerous occasions, and has individually given great pastoral support to a number of our parishioners. You say he has not opened a single parish, but that is because it is not his job to do so.

You say that 'if Bishop Basil is capable of taking the diocese out of crises why has he not done this to date?' It is not up to bishop Basil to sort out the problems of the diocese, some of which are not helped by your actions, as this again is up to the ruling bishop.

I do not agree that his behaviour towards Bishop Hilarion was not brotherly. I believe it was the other way round, but this is not the place to discuss this.

The question of language is extremely important. The majority of the laity in this diocese are English speaking. It is only in the London cathedral that there is a predominance of Russian speakers, most of whom are recent arrivals in this country, and in one generation or less their children will all be English speaking. Bishop Basil celebrates well in Slavonic, but his pastoral concerns will be predominantly in English. If it were to be a problem, Moscow could be asked to send a few Russian priests to take care of the Russians in London and to open one or two parishes for them thus allowing the cathedral to be representative of the diocese as a whole, which it certainly is not at the moment.

If bishop Basil and others were to seek to be admitted to another jurisdiction, that is their affair. No one has said anything as far as I am aware of taking the diocese somewhere, nor could they. The diocese of Sourozh is and will continue to be a diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate.

You are probably aware of the fact that I am a Russian, but have lived in this country all my life. I have always been a faithful member of this diocese, and have served as a deacon for the past 30 years. I am as deeply concerned for the well being of this diocese as anyone. It pains me that some of those who have not seen the growth and development of this diocese from its beginnings and who seem to have no awareness of or love for the unique ethos that Metropolitan Anthony has created are behaving in a way which could destroy something that will not be easy to replace.

Protodeacon Peter Scorer 21 January 2003

6.

Letter of Metropolitan Herman to His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksey II on the Sourozh crisis

Orthodox Church in America

Posted on January 11, 2007 in World News

December 18, 2006

His Holiness ALEKSY II Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Moscow, Russia

Your Holiness, Beloved Brother and Concelebrant in the Lord:

Your letter of 15 August describes the painful events related to the divisions and disturbances in the Russian Orthodox Church's Diocese of Sourozh. At the heart of your concern is the reception of His

Grace Bishop Basil (Osborne) by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the absence of a canonical release by the Patriarchate of Moscow, his election as vicar bishop to His Eminence Archbishop

Gabriel of Comana, with the title of Bishop of Amphipolis, and his reception into the Western European Exarchate of Orthodox Parishes of the Russian Tradition under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Orthodox Church in America has observed these events from a distance. We shared with the late Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) a common vision of Orthodox presence and mission in Western societies. We are aware that the current divisions bring much pain and confusion into the hearts of Orthodox faithful in the United Kingdom. Your Holiness's letter has led us to deeper reflection on the canonical responsibilities and pastoral burdens we all face.

As the Orthodox Church in America we are aware that we are charged with the task of Orthodox mission in North America, as intended by the Patriarchate of Moscow in the Tomos establishing our autocephaly. At the same time, we are aware that in the eyes of some Orthodox Churches we abide in the so-called "diaspora" Not feeling ourselves to be in diaspora, and affirmed by the Tomos of Autocephaly as a canonical local Church, we are nevertheless mindful that several Orthodox patriarchates have dioceses in their jurisdiction in the United State and Canada. In observance of the Tomos of Autocephaly, we endeavor to maintain brotherly relations with the Orthodox jurisdictions in North America, and are often successful, together with them, in coordinated and collaborative Orthodox witness, mission, and action.

In such complex circumstances, one of the important safeguards of church order has been the general observance of canonical norms with regard to transfers of clergy from one canonical jurisdiction to another. Canonical peace and order have been maintained, even within the contradictions of territorially overlapping jurisdictions, when clergy and parishes have transferred from one church to another only with the proper canonical releases. Thus, we have seen every violation of these norms as significantly undermining Orthodox collaboration and coordination, indeed as a contradiction of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

At the same time, Your Holiness and Beloved Brother in Christ, we continue to pray for the collaboration of all Orthodox Churches in a conciliar process of reflection on Orthodoxy in the so-called diaspora. We fervently hope that such a process can clarify and resolve the confusions and contradictions of the actual situation of Orthodoxy in North America, Western Europe, and other regions in which Orthodoxy is outside the traditional and historic lands of Orthodoxy.

Orthodox witness in the world, and the ability of Orthodoxy to respond to the challenges and opportunities of today's world, will depend on the commitment of the Orthodox patriarchates and autocephalous churches to dialogue and collaboration and canonical integrity. Your contribution,

Your Holiness, and the contribution of the Russian Orthodox Church, will be essential for the achievement of conciliarity and ecclesiological truth.

We pray that the love and abundant mercy of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, whose Nativity we are about to celebrate, will always be with you.

With abiding brotherly love,

+ HERMAN Archbishop of Washington and New York Metropolitan of All America and Canada

7.

Bishop Hilarion of Podolsk Says the Sourozh Story Should be Better Passed Over in Silence

Posted on December 28, 2002 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am disappointed by the fact that, almost half a year after my departure from England, you continue to publish materials related to the so-called 'Sourozh story'. I am not surprised that the editor of the 'Sourozh', who in fact orchestrated the whole story even before my arrival to England, continues to use his periodical to further reproach, offend, humiliate and slander me, but why should you be keen on reprinting this material?

My deep conviction has always been that this kind of story should be better passed over in silence. When in mid-June 2002 I wrote my resignation letter to the Patriarch, both Metropolitan Anthony and Bishop Basil promised that they would allow me to 'depart in peace', with no further publicity. On the following Sunday, however, 'The Statement of the Diocesan Council' was read aloud in the Church, after which a massive campaign was launched within the diocese and in Western mass media against me.

As far as I am concerned, until now I have not given a single interview to any English-speaking media on this subject. I did respond to criticisms, but at a 'local' level. All English materials which appeared on the web under my name were not intended for publication, and I regret that they were reprinted by your news agency without my permission. In particular, you reprinted my address to the Sourozh clergy given on 25 May 2002. You also reprinted, from the 'Sourozh' periodical, an unauthorized translation of my article '130 days in the Diocese of Sourozh'. Again, I am not surprised that this unauthorized translation appeared in the 'Sourozh', but I did not expect such a move from your news agency, of which I have always had profound respect.

I am equally disappointed that, when reprinting materials such as 'European Reactions to Events in the Sourozh Diocese', you do not publish Sourozh reactions to these publications, such as the Open letter by Fr John Jillions to Bishop Basil. This does not appear to be an objective approach. It looks like preference is always given to one side of the conflict, while another side is never given a proper hearing.

The Sourozh diocese has for some years been in a deep crisis. This crisis began long before my arrival and has not finished with my departure, as is clear from the material compiled by Fr John Marks (which, as I understand, you also published without the author's permission). If instead of discussing - time and again - 'events' of spring 2002, the 'Sourozh' periodical would present the vision that its editor has for the future of the diocese, or describe the way he is planning to solve the existing problems, this would be much more profitable for the diocese. This would surely be something worth reprinting by your news agency.

I hope this my letter, together with a similar letter by Fr John Marks, which you published not long ago, will prompt you to revise your editorial policy in order to better serve the unity of the Orthodox Church.

Please be assured of my continuous respect and admiration at your otherwise highly commendable work.

+Bishop Hilarion of Podolsk

Editor's Note: The Sourozh Story is indeed such a painful one that we confess we were personally tempted not to cover it. However, our editorial policy does not permit us to censor newsworthy stories based on our personal feelings about them. It is that policy, which many subjects of our stories feel is ruthless, and many readers of our stories feel is objective, that we feel is the basis for whatever respect and admiration may come our way, for which we are very grateful. Our editorial staff is not large, so we rely largely on our contributors to submit newsworthy stories about the Orthodox Church from a variety of perspectives. If we sometimes seem to cover one "side" of a particular story more than another, we hope that is a reflection of the contributions we receive, not our own personal feelings. The open letter by Fr. John Jillions is published in this issue.

8.

Sourozh Diocese Update from Adrian and Tanya Dean and Lyuba Alieva--Including Jonathan Price's Open Letter Asking Whether Sourozh's Shifting to Constantinople Has Been Discussed

Posted on January 25, 2003 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Friends,

I attach a slightly amended copy of the petition; the words 'and Father John Jillions' have been removed at his request. If you have signed and sent me the old petition, do not sign the amended version, as I will remove these words from your signed petition.

Below is an open letter from Jonathan Price, who was a financial advisor to the Cathedral.

We have received from various sources confirmations that at two times over the last year discussions have been held with third parties about the possibility of Sourozh changing jurisdictions. Jonathan's letter is therefore very relevant in that it calls for openness on this issue. Jonathan also asks for an explanation of the canonical position. Dr. Stephen Thomas, an Orthodox theologian is in the process of creating an article for the laity on this issue. This will be forwarded to you once it is available.

In November 2002, Sourozh Magazine published an article "European Reactions to Events within the Dioceses of Sourozh." Paula Nicholson, an Orthodox theologian who specialises in "modernity" (the quality of being current or of the present: "our own statutes would instill a spirit of modernity into our church") is in the process of putting together a Christian reply to the depressing and negative views expressed in this article. This will be forwarded to you once it is available.

Love in Christ,

Adrian and Tanya Dean

Lyuba Alieva.

* * *

Dear Dr Thomas,

I have been sent your and Mr Dean's exchange with Dn Peter Scorer. I received the documents from two different e-mail sources on the same day. One of those sources is here in Munich.

As a former parishioner of Lewes, director of Pushkin House and financial adviser to the Cathedral, I wish to add my name to the Petition that you and others have drafted.

If that Petition can be amended by way of rider in any way, I should like to add the following request, namely that Bp Basil should openly confirm whether or not he personally had conversations with clergy in France last year following the rejection of Bp Hilarion, concerning a shift of jurisdiction from Moscow to Constantinople. If such is the case, he should kindly state on what or on whose authority he conducted those conversations. He should also, if such is the case, kindly state the precise contents of and name all other participants in those conversations and mention the extent to which other UK/Irish colleagues were informed or involved before the conversations took place.

I have also a second, related request, namely that if, in anticipation of a shift to Constantinople, there have been conversations more recently at the Phanar or with Phanar clergy, the names of the Sourozh representatives should be openly stated. If such is the case, the same statement should similarly make it clear on what or on whose authority those conversations took place. Again, if such is the case, it would be helpful to know the precise content of those conversations, the names of the participants and the extent to which other UK/Irish colleagues were informed or involved before the conversations took place.

Finally, it would be helpful if you were kindly to state the basis on which the succession proceedings in Sourozh are said to conflict with the canons. The statement is, I recall, to be found in Dimitri Obolensky's writings; the original case, source or authority would make matters clearer for the nonprofessional. I do not see any reference to canonicity in Dn Peter's response to the Petition. This is surely a central procedural point, together with the evident conflict with the Cathedral statutes, whatever their authority.

We have never met nor do I know Mr Dean.

You will realise that, since I am in essence calling for openness and accountability, this message is not meant to be confidential in any way.

Yours sincerely,

9.

Open Letter from Fr. John Jillions to Bishop Basil Regarding the Sourozh Diocese

Posted on December 12, 2002 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Bishop Basil,

A few days ago I received my copy of Sourozh (No. 90, November 2002). I find it deeply disturbing that a journal sponsored by the Diocese should continue to stir up a campaign of Hilarion-bashing under the guise of reporting 'European Reactions to Events in the Diocese of Sourozh'.

High-minded debate about ecclesiology, canonical order and the special character of the Sourozh diocese cannot cover up an ugly run-of-the-mill injustice that we as a diocese still have not acknowledged: how a new assistant bishop was publicly accused, humiliated, effectively put on trial and dismissed by the diocesan leadership. Whatever his perceived flaws, the fact remains that Bishop Hilarion was not given the due process that should be accorded to anyone in the Church, let alone a bishop. His trial by public propaganda was worthy of Soviet justice, not a diocese claiming to be heir of the 1917-18 Council. Indeed, if today any priest or bishop in Russia had been treated this way there would have been a huge public outcry from Orthodox in the West.

The events of last summer are being turned into a matter of diocesan pride, when instead they should be mourned, especially when so many people in the diocese are still grieving the anti-Christian manner in which Bishop Hilarion was treated.

Yours in Christ,

Fr John

10.

Protodeacon Peter Scorer: Open Letter to Adrian Dean in Response to Petition to Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Posted on January 21, 2003 in Letters to the Editor

Dear Adrian,

I trust you will take a minute or two to read my letter, even though you probably know that I am not in agreement with much of what you say, and am totally opposed to the very idea of putting out petitions where the Church is concerned. Church matters are not decided by populist propaganda.

Of course it would have been best if we could have proceeded according to our own statutes, but unfortunately these have not yet been adopted by the Holy Synod. Metropolitan Anthony is free to do as he chooses, and the Assembly is also free to reject his desire to resign and not to elect bishop Basil as his successor.

As Chairman of the Diocesan Council bishop Basil can do no more than act on the decisions of that Council, and can make no decisions without the approval of the ruling bishop, our Metropolitan Anthony. He cannot act in any way nor undertake any actions without the approval of Metropolitan Anthony, and I do not believe that he has ever acted without that approval.

You say that you have not seen evidence of bishop Basil's activities. I can assure you that I have, and our Parish in Devon is very appreciative of the way he has helped us, visited us on numerous occasions, and has individually given great pastoral support to a number of our parishioners. You say he has not opened a single parish, but that is because it is not his job to do so.

You say that 'if Bishop Basil is capable of taking the diocese out of crises why has he not done this to date?' It is not up to bishop Basil to sort out the problems of the diocese, some of which are not helped by your actions, as this again is up to the ruling bishop.

I do not agree that his behaviour towards Bishop Hilarion was not brotherly. I believe it was the other way round, but this is not the place to discuss this.

The question of language is extremely important. The majority of the laity in this diocese are English speaking. It is only in the London cathedral that there is a predominance of Russian speakers, most of whom are recent arrivals in this country, and in one generation or less their children will all be English speaking. Bishop Basil celebrates well in Slavonic, but his pastoral concerns will be predominantly in English. If it were to be a problem, Moscow could be asked to send a few Russian priests to take care of the Russians in London and to open one or two parishes for them thus allowing the cathedral to be representative of the diocese as a whole, which it certainly is not at the moment.

If bishop Basil and others were to seek to be admitted to another jurisdiction, that is their affair. No one has said anything as far as I am aware of taking the diocese somewhere, nor could they. The diocese of Sourozh is and will continue to be a diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate.

You are probably aware of the fact that I am a Russian, but have lived in this country all my life. I have always been a faithful member of this diocese, and have served as a deacon for the past 30 years. I am as deeply concerned for the well being of this diocese as anyone. It pains me that some

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of those who have not seen the growth and development of this diocese from its beginnings and who seem to have no awareness of or love for the unique ethos that Metropolitan Anthony has created are behaving in a way which could destroy something that will not be easy to replace.

Protodeacon Peter Scorer 21 January 2003

11.

Fr. John Marks: Suggestions from Presbyters for the More Efficient Working of the Surozh Diocese

Posted on December 08, 2002 in Editorials & Opinion

By Fr. John Marks

LONDON, December 8, 2002 -- The assumption that sending Bishop Hilarion packing was the way to get rid of all our problems is just infantile: whether he was right for Britain or not, the problems are still here. There are guilt trip calls to be united when we have not addressed the problems that could cause divisions; which is therefore manipulative and dishonest.

I wonder whether the three Bishops have regular meetings about how they can help the church in this country. I am concerned about what seems to be Episcopal dismissiveness of, for example, the normal ecclesiastical awards system and, much more importantly, of monastic life in this country. There is a very serious lack of priests and deacons and only lip service is paid to the fact that virtually all of us work either part time or full time.

I was encouraged by the last clergy meeting but mystified that the Metropolitan thinks the diocese can simply move ahead with approving its statutes under the Moscow Patriarchate as if nothing has happened. Some sign of apology is surely required after all the bitter accusations that have been made about the Patriarchate's motives and intentions, the many very hurt Russian parishioners, let alone the treatment of Bishop Hilarion. If there were some admission that mistakes were made, even if the motivations were good (let's assume this), if there were some concrete steps taken to serve the pastoral needs of Russians in this country (with the collaboration of the Patriarchate) then there is a much better chance for proper reconciliation. There is no need for the diocese to abandon its principles or its willingness to fight for its statutes. As I've said before this is a fight worth having. But Metropolitan Anthony is continuing to be less than conciliatory toward the Moscow Patriarchate, judging by reports of his recent interviews and statements at the Cathedral.

Any diocese of the Orthodox Church canonically requires only one bishop, and such a bishop should be physically active enough to travel round and see for himself what it actually happening. This travelling around must also include unannounced visits, if he is to get a true picture of the local scene without any pre-arranged window-dressing or drumming up of numbers. If the diocesan bishop is unable to do this, then he should, just like presbyters who cannot manage any longer, honourably hand over to someone else. With modern flexible methods of communication, a travelling bishop could remain "in the saddle" for any period, contactable by mobile phone or laptop computer, but with secretarial help at some fixed point, which does not need to be in London - though that might be a shock to some mind-sets!

To ensure a "sense of belonging" within the diocese each parish should have an Episcopal visit at least once every twelve months. Often there are three bishops at the Liturgy at the Cathedral while the other parishes seldom see a bishop. Inevitably, this will place a further burden on Bishop Basil.

Bishop Basil's workload is impossible for one man to fulfil. If money could be found for him to be relieved of parish responsibility and if he is agreeable to this, it would give him more time for his key role as Assistant Bishop.

Secretary

The Secretary for the Metropolitan should be in place no later than 1st January, 2003. In the meantime, all Presbyters should be made aware of the Metropolitan's telephone number, holding it in strict confidence.

The Presbyters

When I became Orthodox, I did not join a sect, with all its appealing characteristics - exclusiveness; symbolism and mystery; filling the void of our secular society with psychological safety and security; religious walls that protect us from facing our own reality, preventing us from growing into the fullness of the image of God etc. This is the reduction of Christianity to a religion, another ideology, capable of being explained away through the analysis of sociology, psychology, philosophy, and politics. The secular world will readily set us free from these delusions.

There is a need to pass on to the Bishops - through the Deans if necessary - any thoughts and suggestions that presbyters might not wish to make on an individual basis. There is a desperate need to discuss the realities of Orthodoxy in the 21st. century. Any retreat by Orthodoxy into a cultural and psychological enclave is eventually doomed to failure - the alternative attraction of secular culture is stronger and ultimately far more appealing. An Orthodoxy that is concerned solely - to the exclusion of all else - with providing a "home from home" for the new Russians is a betrayal of Orthodoxy. It is so easy to disguise this under convincing layers of camouflage - yes - there are legitimate needs for Russian immigrants. Although, if one listens to the words of some of the defenders of this new immigrant Orthodoxy? - then one often encounters a narrow, insular, nationalistic and restricted outlook. This vision of Orthodoxy is far too small - it often seems to rest on fear - Orthodoxy as the hidden talent that must not be tarnished - let alone tested by reality. Sadly, it reduces Orthodoxy to a religion, a cult, or a sect - particularly when it cloaks itself in excessive correctness and the strict observance of the externals of Orthodoxy. (This temptation also applies to some English converts for whom "things Russian", instead of being a means to the Kingdom of God, may become a substitute for the Kingdom of God.) Also, it is a betrayal of those persons who have found their home in this diocese with the vision and experience of an Orthodoxy that speaks across the divide of culture and time - an Orthodoxy that is true to the Gospel and which is not found elsewhere in this country.

We must plan for priests who have both Russian and English, and who are committed to Metropolitan Anthony's vision for our diocese in the first instance, to find out how many are needed to help to relieve the pressure on the Cathedral, and to care for any large populations of Russian migrants elsewhere, at a level proportionate to the likely numbers of churchgoers from these groups. We should obtain the best available figures for populations from the former USSR in principal cities. Figures will be available soon from the 2001 census we should find out when, and if they will be too delayed we should look for ways of making best available estimates in the meantime. Then we should apply Russian levels of church attendance as a guide to possible

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churchgoing populations, and estimate the number of priests needed, and how many need to speak Russian as well as English.

We must try to identify possible sources for these priests, and find ways of financing them, or helping them to find jobs compatible with serving the church. We should review these possible sources and means of support, and consider how far we may need to come to a concordat with the

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DECR, as the most obvious source, in the course of negotiating our statutes, and how far we can hope to draw on a range of alternatives, bearing in mind that the more alternatives we can identify, the greater our room for manoeuvre.

Meetings

It is clear to me that, as the numbers of presbyters have increased and people are no longer known to one another prior to ordination (and often remain so afterwards!), it is not possible to expect us to express in open meetings our thoughts, fears, aspirations, needs. A system of prizing them out, in confidence, will need to be developed and then someone (the Dean of Presbyters?) could summarise and present them to the bishop(s) and the presbytery itself. Witness the excellent work Fr John Marks and Fr Alexander Williams did along these lines over the recent events.

There is a lack of open discussion when it comes to the crunch at clergy meetings. For example, it just is true that there are some clergy who have said for years that we should be part of the Greek Archdiocese, but the one place where it is never said is at the meetings - which is a bit daft: it is an understandable position whether I agree with it or not. Cliques and power struggles are developing within the clergy - rendering all our talk of brotherhood a bit thin - and a lack of straightforwardness of individuals about their agenda.

There is tension between London and not-London, although this is due probably just to lack of communication.

Travelling to London for Clergy Meetings is much more tedious for provincial clergy than it is for those from London and the Home Counties. It should not be assumed that clergy who have secular jobs and family concerns are willing and/or able to get to the Cathedral by 11 am or be expected to stay the night in London, especially for a meeting which is inadequately "chaired", with too loose or broad an agenda. Do we actually need full clergy meetings in London at all?

Meetings should not be called without regard to the fact that some provincial parishes follow the New Calendar. (The Sept 02 meeting was on the eve of the Exaltation of the Cross NS, which meant that some parishes were deprived of the vigil because presbyters could not get back in time to take the service).

How about Presbytery meetings being half business and half worship? I just feel that endless discussion often solves nothing, whereas shared worship may lead to a common mind over the most contentious issues. This could only happen if the meeting had been carefully prepared for in advance: topics introduced, material e-mailed beforehand etc.

There is need for Clergy Meetings also, for that matter to be streamlined. I suggest that other than the address by the Bishop, there be no oral reports. All reports and other presentations be circulated to members at least 10 days before the meeting. This will reduce the length of meetings and give members time to consider questions before the meeting.

Presbytery meetings should be open to a most structured input/presentations by fellow priests on different topics/concerns and with an emphasis to understand the nature of our work and mission in the whole of the diocese. London, especially in its recent experience at the Cathedral, may be in danger of letting us "take our eye off the ball" and possibly "losing the plot" altogether. A full and long-term understanding is needed of what we have come from/through to get here. And I don't mean just Metropolitan Anthony (whose own story we know well by know) but our own, as priests, and those of our families!

Visiting and concelebrating with one other should become a must! No priest, especially those recently ordained, should be left on their own or only in one place, without the active and physical presence of another (older in service) priest (never mind a bishop!) visiting them from another place.

Related to the above, is the point I made at the last but one presbytery meeting of the need to be able to rely on the total trust of one or more fellow priests in difficult times. The question is often asked, "Who do you, the priests, turn to when you need help?" Well, I do wonder if it true to say that we turn to the bishop(s)! Even if that was the case with Metropolitan Anthony in the past I doubt whether this is the norm or will be the case for us in the future.

I feel more and more the need to have the presbyters meeting open to the priests only; the deacons have other concerns or, rather do not, "when push comes to shove", have the same charge or exposure to people's pastoral reality. Meeting alone and as equals among ourselves will help us realise the huge responsibility that comes with it!

Somewhat related to the above, the whole issue of confidentiality and trust, expected but, alas, not always experienced, will need to be addressed. We had such a blatant breakdown of both in recent earlier this year! Incidentally, I am not sure we can trust e-mail circulars even among the priests. It only offers fast and immediate opportunity to those who want to "leak" what is communicated and/or help outsiders "spy " on our deliberations.

We need to create a culture of trust and honesty, where consultation and discussion between clergy is encouraged and promoted. This does not take place at present. The clergy meetings still seem to be dominated by certain individuals who are there to score prestige points; too many associations with Oxbridge? There is a need for clergy to feel secure enough to express uncertainties, fears, and problems. Clearly we have not reached this basic dimension of Christian trust between ourselves.

Local "Deaneries"?

The presbyters and deacons ought to meet more regularly in the different areas of the country, if they don't already (I suggest at least once every two months), to share problems, if that is thought appropriate, but mainly to co-operate in a tangible way: concelebrating with each other, attending each other's feast-days, and giving mutual support. Clearly Devon and Cornwall could make one unit, as could Cambridge, Norwich and Walsingham: also Derby and Nottingham: Oxford, Hereford, Swindon and perhaps, Bristol, together. Whether Canterbury, Tunbridge Wells, Lewes and Portsmouth would tend towards London, I don't know. But all these would be possibilities. If we could actually demonstrate local co-operating and care, then I believe it would extend throughout the country: i.e. we would get into the habit of doing things together rather than individually.

Training

We also need an archive (i.e. a dedicated website or discussion group on e-mail) where information about what to do and how to do things could be stored and help could be asked for. This is essential, because there appears to be no "after-ordination" training, except where people are fortunate enough to be working already with experienced colleagues, and then only if they are willing to share what they have. I am not looking here for some sort of artificial "uniform practice", but rather a pool of "good/best practice" which will help us to avoid idiosyncrasies and those individualist and unchecked deviations which can creep in: and so that we can also "test" any types of "experiments" that we want to carry out.

Consideration should be given to having two or three young, fully bi-lingual Russian missionary priests assigned to the Diocese - and responsible solely to our Bishop - for tours of a maximum of

two years. This would enable the diocese to better minister to Russian immigrants, as is the policy of the Patriarchate, while (hopefully) alleviating fear of the Department of External Affairs establishing a “bridgehead” in the Diocese.

There is a need to pass on and communicate the benefits of experience and knowledge between Clergy. There is a large range of experience within the Diocese - and not just among the Clergy - but nothing is done to share it among the Clergy. Individually, we are expected to reinvent the wheel. We need communication that is supportive - and not point scoring. There seems to be little or no appreciation of the difficulties faced by parishes outside the larger centres at Oxford/London.

Each presbyter should submit a written report to the Bishop at the end of every calendar year advising on the life of each parish/eucharistic community he serves. The Bishop might then usefully invite each presbyter to meet him to discuss the report.

Dean of Presbyters

I wonder whether the Dean could be useful in directing specific skilled help to a parish needing such eg choir, liturgical material, building plan, legal matters etc. Perhaps he could also put presbyters in contact with each other if he finds that they have similar problems to face in their parishes.

If there are any presbyters who have personal problems making it difficult to relate to the Bishop, the Dean could obviously be a channel for contact. There may sometimes be personal problems that could be more easily shared with a fellow presbyter.

The Dean needs to be involved in addressing the issue of the changing nature of the Diocese following the large influx of Russians from abroad. Serious areas of friction and conflict are arising which ultimately could destroy the diocese. Nothing at present is done to address this issue - instead things are left to drift and matters are simply getting worse. The vision and aims of the Diocese are limited to handouts of the Metropolitan’s speeches. There is no follow up or discussion among Clergy, and this leaves a dangerous vacuum. We have to face up to and discuss the things that divide us as well as the things that unite us. The Dean should be a link between clergy and Bishops on this important issue. There should be an active policy to promote good relations and understanding between English and Russians that is linked to the vision of the Diocese.

Our Future

Probably most of us have no written evidence that we were ever ordained. In the event of a split in the Diocese, which is still on the cards, it seems to me, what would become of us? The Metropolitan really should give this matter some thought after all the years of service we have given him.

Some of us have asked for a letter of canonical release to be used if things get out of control after the death or retirement of Metropolitan Anthony, but there has been no response of any kind to this request.

The Diocese

There is in the diocese an unhealthy desire for a patched-up unity, a fear of passion and confrontation and this can only perpetuate problems. Indeed, the main accusation against Bp Hilarion seemed to be that he was a source of division. But as today’s gospel makes plain (Luke 12:48-59), Jesus himself was a cause of division and was not ashamed of “casting a fire upon the

earth". It's not too late to have such a fire in the diocese, not a fire of destruction, but of purification and creation, like gold in the furnace.

I see the Diocese essentially as "back-up" for the parishes, but that is only in the context of the fact that the Bishop's position is, of course, at the centre of our faith. So, it is essential that his presence be felt more within each parish. I wonder if we could arrange for REGIONAL "diocesan liturgies" so that his presence in worship could be felt more than just the one time in the year, and release him from feeling that he must visit each parish in order to celebrate an Episcopal liturgy there. In fact, he is not able to do this hence the idea of regional liturgies, perhaps four a year, perhaps a Saturday morning, geographically central.

Despite the stated policy of the Patriarchate, it is clear that the UK is an "open market" when it comes to carrying the good news to our fellow countrymen and women. I believe a working group could usefully be set up to develop a strategy for evangelism within the diocese, to ensure that each county in England and Scotland has at least one functioning eucharistic community or parish (English speaking, or bi-lingual) by December, 2007.

We are expected to "seek out" Russian immigrants to the UK. The Diocese should establish a "Mission Fund" from which clergy can claim reimbursement of travel expenses, and the cost of Bibles, catechetical material, other books, icons etc. distributed to such groups.

I think the Diocese should leave the Moscow Patriarchate. I do not want to be associated with their narrow, nationalistic, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, anti-Protestant, anti-Western stance.

The Metropolitan seems attracted to some sort of deal with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. I have had a good personal experience of ROCOR, but it severed contact with all the canonical Patriarchates, even the Serbian Church that was traditionally its final link with Orthodoxy. If this remains its position, then it is no more than a schismatic sect.

The writing is on the wall for the Diocese, as we have known it. As soon as the Metropolitan dies, the Patriarchate will install a hierarchy, with presbyters and deacons, and financial backing. All that we have worked for will be swallowed up.

Our Diocese has unprecedented experience in bridging the gulf between Russians and English members of the Church. It has been the hallmark of all that has been achieved over the last 50 years. This experience must not be lost or overlooked under any circumstances. Indeed, it is of the utmost importance that the lessons of this experience are developed even further. I believe that to marginalise this experience, placing it in a position other than that of the utmost priority in the Diocese, will have disastrous consequences. If sadly, the view of the Diocese as a "home from home" for Russians comes to predominate, then I do not see any long-term future for us.

We must re-discover the universality of Orthodoxy. This is the real vocation of Orthodoxy in Britain and lies at the heart of the whole question facing this Diocese. If the ultimate and defining criterion of Orthodoxy for us in Britain is to be the imitation of another country or another culture (it could be Russia or it might just as well be Byzantium/Romania, Serbia etc. for that matter), if this is the "ideal" of how we relate and belong to Orthodoxy in this country, then this parochialism will stultify

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and choke the Church. It will eventually become another museum piece, which is where Lenin wanted it to belong.

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To reduce the immediate vulnerability of the diocese to take-over of control and of assets by the DECR, if Metropolitan Anthony dies, we should continue and conclude present efforts to place assets in trust, under local control. We should endeavour to negotiate our statutes, and if possible a measure of independence from the DECR and the powers assigned to it in the Synod's statute of 2000.

"New Russians"

After the last war there were several Slav Orthodox parishes set up in this country - particularly in the midlands. Today - virtually nothing remains of these ethnic communities. They have all but disappeared as the second generation became assimilated into English culture. The enormous losses from the Greek Church in this country are another case in point. When demographic factors "kick in" as the average age of the parishioners rises - then the down turn comes with alarming rapidity - and it is too late to reverse this trend.

I remember talking with a Slav some 20 years ago who told us that there was no future for Orthodoxy here. He had been part of a completely Slav Parish in the midlands, set up after the war, where they had Church premises, a school to teach the children etc. 30 years later it was all gone. The second generation had voted with their feet and left the Church completely - they saw themselves as English - and that meant Orthodoxy had nothing to do with their lives. He told us that we were silly to waste our time hoping for a future with Orthodoxy in this country! The new wave of Russians ultimately face either adapting to English culture - or living in a psychological and culturally isolated enclave. Their children will certainly vote with their feet and leave the Church - especially if they understand Orthodoxy as something foreign and alien to being English.

The Russian missionaries to the New World in the 19th century - particularly Alaska - did not bring Christianity to replace the indigenous culture of the Native Americans. Rather, they brought Christianity to the Alaskans as the fulfilment of their culture. This radical approach is the teaching of the Gospel. If the missionaries had viewed Orthodoxy as providing a "home from home" for their own Russians - then Orthodoxy would not have survived two generations in Alaska. Instead, the Orthodox Church survived the oppression and deliberate attempts to exterminate it by the US government. If the Russian Orthodox Church applied the Gospel message in this way to pagan Alaskans, how much more should it apply here in Britain - with 1,900 years of Christianity behind us - as well as 2+ generations of Orthodox families living here?

Meetings

Other than the address by the Bishop there should be no oral reports. All reports and other presentations should be circulated to members at least 10 days before the meeting. This will reduce the length of meetings and give members time to consider questions before the meeting. While the work of other bodies, e.g. St Gregory's Foundation may be interesting, they are not part of the Diocese and we have no decision-making role. Reports on their activities should not be allowed to take up valuable time. Again, written reports should be circulated prior to the meeting, while the meeting itself would raise questions, only if time permits.

Representative groups

We must organise our representative groups (Presbytery, Diocesan Council, Assembly, and on down to local communities) more effectively, both to formulate policy and to react to events consistently in pursuit of these aims. Members of these bodies should be given briefing documents before meetings and specific proposals with accompanying argument and evidence for them to think about

beforehand and vote on, or put forward amendments. All of this can continue to be subject to defining or redirecting statements by the Bishops where necessary, but we need to get over a level of vagueness and hesitancy in these bodies which is due to having to respond without preparation, and to being uncertain of the background facts, or of who knows them. In preparing documents for these bodies, and in reacting to new events and information, there also needs to be a known system for informing and consulting people with responsibilities for oversight of specific areas, and for prompting continuous feedback from them to the Bishops. E-mail could be used to ensure that cumulative comments from responsible people are preserved and passed on. All this in addition to consultation with, and feedback from, members of these bodies of the kind being pioneered here, which is a very positive development.

To ensure that election to the Assembly accurately reflects the make-up of the Eucharistic gathering, by encouraging similar levels of nominating and voting in all important groups, and if possible by monitoring to estimate whether groups, which we do not want to be under-represented, actually are so. Election to the Assembly communities should be encouraged to monitor groups that may be under-represented by recording who is present at the Eucharist, and who votes, separately from collecting the ballots. Where congregations are too large for total recording an estimate can be made by, for example, stewards recording the name of every tenth person leaving, and every tenth voter.

Chairman of the Diocesan Assembly

I sense that Irina Kirillova has lost the confidence of many in the diocese and should stand down as Chairman of the Diocesan Assembly. A new Chairman would demonstrate that “healing of the wounds” extends to the entire diocese.

Newsletter

The Newsletter must be less London-centred. Could there usefully be a proper Diocesan one? Are there sources in the parish newsletters?

The Local Communities

The fulness of Orthodoxy is found at the local level. This is what I experienced when I first encountered the Church. Therefore my loyalty is first to the Parish, second to the Diocese, and third to the Patriarch - whoever he may be.

There is a need to completely think through the role and relationship of the parishes and the cathedral. The position and role of the cathedral is very important - it must serve the whole Diocese - and not just be a parish in itself. If the cathedral is hived off to a Russian majority this will have detrimental effects on the rest of the Diocese - if it has not already happened. The Clergy Dean of Presbyters should work with the Dean of the cathedral to promote these ends. A Diocesan newsletter - rather than a Cathedral Newsletter - might be a start.

The task of Orthodox Christianity is to realise and manifest through the Church, here and now, the presence of the Kingdom of God in the lives of ordinary men and women living in this culture and society. The answer is not surrender to the transitory values of western secular culture. We are not here to achieve “modernity”, becoming acceptable within human society through imitating the secular values of western denominations - making us relevant, efficient, useful, up to date, a “help” to modern man etc. This temptation is another road that leads to destruction. “Meaningfulness” and “relevance” to transitory secular values result in us living out a faith that leaves untouched the real world that Christ came to save and redeem. When these things take priority over the building of the

Kingdom of God in people's hearts and minds, they become false gods, serving to create human temples of religion that pass away with the rest of the things of this world.

12.

Announcement by Metropolitan Anthony at the London Parish AGM, May, 19 2002

Posted on July 12, 2002 in Hierarchs

We are coming towards the end of our meeting, and I want to say just a little. For the first time in the 53 years that I have been at the head of this parish, we have had real tensions, and unpleasant tensions, between members of the parish. And this is something which must be resolved by an honest and reflective attitude to the situation. And the situation is this.

Vladyka Hilarion has come to this parish. First it was planned that he would be a lecturer in Cambridge; and then it was suggested by Vladyka Kyril that he should come as a bishop. Now, since he has come, there has been a great deal of misunderstanding and dividedness among people. First of all his appointment here has hurt a great many people because it coincided with Vladyka Anatoly no longer being an active bishop, but retired. This was done very quickly, without warning, without preparation, as a decision from the Patriarchate that has hurt many of us. To add insult to injury, if I may put it that way, his title was transferred to Bishop Hilarion, which people felt was a hurtful and tactless thing.

The second thing is that a rumour was spread -- and a rumour that is not a lying rumour, because I have confirmation of it officially from the Department of Foreign Relations of the Church, with the assent of the Patriarch -- that Vladyka Hilarion will be my successor when I retire.

He is a junior bishop in our Diocese, he knows about the Diocese very little, and it has hurt and puzzled many people.

The moment of my retirement was not fixed, but it is in the air simply because I am already 88 years of age, and one can expect a decision. I have applied five times for retirement since I was seventy, and every time the retirement was refused. The last time I got a letter from the Patriarch saying that: "even if you are incapable of doing anything, your name is useful for us, so stay where you are". But this is not a very convincing reason, or very encouraging assessment of my capabilities.

I have written to the Patriarch a personal fax letter saying that since Vladyka Hilarion has come into the Diocese, a great many tensions have arisen and a great amount of worry is abroad; and that I ask him not to retire me until I have given my written consent to it; because I do not believe that my disappearance of a sudden would solve any problem.

Bishop Hilarion is someone whom I have known for many years. He has been a friend. I have been his father confessor. So in a sense there is between us a deep link. But there is one thing that is unfortunate: it is his appointment as a bishop without having had any experience of the life and the style of life of the Diocese of Sourozh. I hoped that he would come and start to discover what our Diocese is about, its characteristics; and he has not done it from the start. We discussed that with him several times. We had a meeting of several of us with him, for him to hear the voice of certain members of the clergy. And he has heard the voice of a number of members of the laity. And things are not yet settled.

I told him at our last meeting that I give him two months -- three months including this month now -- for him to discover what the Diocese of Sourozh is about, and to form an opinion whether he is prepared or not to continue in the style, and with the ideals, which we have developed in the course of now fifty three years. If he is dissatisfied, and we are, then we will by common consent part company. It will be very hurtful for him. It will also be hurtful for me because he has been, as I said, my spiritual child, and a personal friend. But it is essential for us that he should learn what the Diocese of Sourozh is, in particular. And the particularities of the Diocese to me are, in brief, as follows.

First of all, it is a diocese of people, the clergy of which, and the bishop of which, consider themselves as servants. We have learned from the Gospel that he who wants to be first must be last. I quoted to him a passage from a letter I had in due time -- or undue -- from Father Sophrony, whom he admired greatly, in which he said to me that the Church is a pyramid, but a pyramid reversed, with the point being at the lowest point; and at the lowest point it is one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then comes another row of people, as servants: the Apostles, then the disciples, and so forth. And it is if you want to be a member of the Church in the true sense, you must be at the rock bottom and not at the top of things. We discussed that because he was told in Russia after his ordination "his consecration as a bishop" that he must learn to be 'a bishop', which he took to be a ruler in the diocese.

He has been using always the word 'rule' and not 'serve' in his presentations. And for the moment we are discussing the matter as deeply as we can - on the spiritual level, and on the practical level - with him. I hope that within the three months which we have decided to devote to this work he will have learnt to be a member, a living and creative member, of the Diocese of Sourozh, with the spirit of the Diocese, which is a spirit of "service" on the part of the clergy, a spirit of "brotherhood and sisterhood" on the part of the laity; not a hierarchical system.

For the moment I do not propose to have a discussion on the subject, because each of us has got his own views and reactions, and they are premature. We will have, soon, a meeting of the clergy of the Diocese in which we will discuss the same problem; and then have a period of expectation and common work, that will allow us to understand him, him to understand us, and form a unit that will be, I believe, a creative one, because he has got gifts which I never possessed and shall never possess. He is young; he is strong; he is a Doctor in Theology; he has written a number of theological works that are highly praised; and he can make a very rich contribution - but only if we can form a unit and be one all together.

Now, I do not want to have contributions now because we will have pros and cons. I would like you to think, and to ask yourselves: what can you contribute to his understanding of the Diocese, and to your understanding of a very remarkable young man whom I wanted to have here, and who has not yet found his feet in the Diocese and in our work.

That is the end of my contribution. In private I am prepared of course to explain myself to anyone. But as far as the meeting is concerned I am not going to open it to discussion and argument. And I think at this point we can make an end to our meeting and start, again and again, to grow into a family of people who trust one another, who are prepared to love one another, and loving means making sacrifices for the sake of each other. Shall we read a prayer, and part.

Sourozh Diocese Cathedral Newsletter: Meeting of the Sourozh Diocesan Assembly

Posted on January 03, 2003 in World News

Sourozh Diocese Cathedral Newsletter

November 30, 2002 (SDCN) -- Our meeting got off to a joyful start with our Chairman, Irina Kirillova, reading a message of congratulation from Patriarch Alexis to Metropolitan Anthony on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of his episcopal consecration, including the announcement that he had been awarded the honour of the Order of St. Makarios of Moscow, Second Class.

Most of the morning session was taken up with a presentation by Bishop Basil and then Metropolitan Anthony on the place of our Diocese in the Orthodox diaspora and our role vis-à-vis the Russian Church and our life in Britain.

Bishop Basil began by looking at various émigré groups in relation to the 1917-18 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, which for political reasons could not be implemented by the Mother Church herself. In America, for instance, the Metropolia and the parishes of the Paris Jurisdiction had been explicitly founded on the principles of this Council; the Church in Exile had paid no attention to it, followed the unreformed nineteenth century model of the Russian Church; and the parishes belonging to the Patriarchate of Moscow had deemed it more important to remain faithful to the Mother Church than to implement the Council's decisions.

These three groupings were found throughout the Russian Diaspora, with one exception: here in our diocese Metropolitan Anthony combined faithfulness to the Patriarchate and to the Council. This makes us a unique diocese within the Patriarchate itself, and has created a different type of ecclesial life for us.

Metropolitan Anthony then spoke about his personal loyalty to the Patriarchate, with illustrations from his many years of experience, including painful reminiscences of opposition in Paris to those who like him had remained faithful to Moscow in her darkest hours of persecution.

The result had been his creation, at the bidding of Patriarch Alexis I, of a diocese in this country that was purely Orthodox, in the Russian Tradition, and yet open to anyone searching for Christ, and open to the use of whatever languages people needed. Ideally there ought to be an Orthodox Church of Britain, but it was impossible to achieve now; we could in our diocese strive to be a model of what this future Church would be, open to all nationalities.

In the ensuing discussion questions were raised as to the practical challenge to stay on this inspired course beyond the episcopacy of Metropolitan Anthony himself. Regarding the acceptance of our Statutes by the Patriarchate, Metropolitan Anthony announced that the Patriarch would be coming to this country in February for the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury and it was hoped to talk informally to him on the subject. Later the plan was to send a small delegation to Moscow to present our Statutes to the Holy Synod. Irina von Schlippe pointed out the role our diocese plays in Russia itself as an example of church life.

Metropolitan Anthony repeated the announcement he had made at a meeting on the preceding Thursday that he had suggested that a committee should be formed to reflect on how to create in London a purely Russian parish with Russian priests, which would operate in the Russian language

until it would inevitably, in the next generation, evolve into the multilingual style of the Cathedral parish.

He also explained how the Manchester parish, for various reasons, was at present stavropegic (directly under the guidance of the Patriarch). Archbishop Anatoly enlarged on this, and also announced the good news that half a million pounds, all from private individuals, had been collected for the rebuilding of the church there.

An additional point was made that those English parishioners who had been received during the era of the Cold War had also faced hostility from their own countrymen. Marina Bezmenova regretted that proposed meetings where people of all nationalities could tell their stories to one another and share cultural differences had never been arranged in London. There was still a problem of lack of communication.

Apart from this lively discussion item there were plenty of other topics for the Assembly to get its teeth into. The Secretary reported the outcome of the recent Diocesan Election and the Chairman welcomed the new members. An election was held for the four lay/deacons places on the Diocesan Council; Marina Bezmenova, Andrew Walker, Jessica Rose and Karin Greenhead were elected out of a total of six candidates.

Father Benedict Ramsden outlined his Cornwall community's need formally to enter into a Sharing Agreement with the Methodist Church in order to be able to continue to use their current building, a Methodist Chapel with a history. The Assembly gave its unanimous approval to this undertaking.

Minor changes were agreed to the Diocesan Statutes - clarifying the voting procedure for the election of a diocesan bishop - to correct an oversight arising from the recent amendments. These will be put to the Assembly again in June for final adoption and then included in the published Statutes.

It was decided that legal advice should be taken on several issues. Firstly, regarding the recent changes in the law regulating the Trustees of charities, it was pointed out that, for instance, undischarged bankrupts could not be trustees. That might affect eligibility for Assembly membership. Secondly, issues surrounding the Data Protection Act and diocesan registration with the Criminal Records Bureau also needed legal advice before a person could be appointed to deal with these matters.

Our Treasurer, Simon Kirsop, presented the Budget for 2003. Total Income and Expenditure was estimated at £26,550, with a slight increase in subscriptions from parishes - the bulk of our income - foreseen, giving a figure of £20,750. Deeds of Covenant (Gift Aid) were still set at a stagnant £2,200. We 'could do better' in this area. A large part of our expenditure (£18,100) was spent on episcopal expenditure, as salaries and expenses. There was a slight increase in the honorarium paid to the editor of 'Sourozh' (Bishop Basil) bringing that figure to £2,900. Other expected expenditure remained unchanged. Jessica Rose updated us on St Stephen's Press and circulated the latest catalogue. Titles in the pipeline included the 2003 Calendar and Lectionary, a Slavonic/English edition of the Liturgy, Bishop Kallistos' introduction to fasting from the Lenten Triodion, to be printed in separate booklet form, a collection of Father John Lee's talks on contemporary moral and ethical subjects and, with DLT, a collection of talks and articles by Metropolitan Anthony. All publications are self-funding at present.

The future role and content of the Diocesan Website was discussed and various suggestions made. For instance, parishes might be invited to contribute presentations on their life. Assembly members

agreed that there was plenty of appalling material purporting to be Orthodox on the Internet, and our site should become a beacon of Orthodoxy.

Several brief items rounded off the day. A suggestion had been made that an association of 'Friends of the Diocese' might be formed for the benefit of overseas visitors who felt close to the life of our diocese and who wanted to keep in touch on a regular basis. This is an idea which hopefully will be taken forward by the Diocesan Council. Similarly, it was felt that the content of the English and Russian editions of the Cathedral Newsletter should be looked at, firstly to bring them closer together and secondly in order to ensure that more information and news were included.

Finally, Father Raphael Armour from Cambridge gave a brief description of his work with Russianspeaking asylum seekers held in detention centres in his area. We will remember him in our prayers.

The day had been one in which we had looked closely at the life of our diocese and the direction in which Metropolitan Anthony had led it with such brave inspiration over the last 45 years. We sang 'Spasi, Christe Bozhe' for Metropolitan Anthony in the hope that he will continue to lead our diocese for some time to come. At the same time, we were also made aware during the whole day how we must all be prepared to carry his singular vision forward.

Gillian Crow Diocesan Secretary

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Congratulatory telegram from Patriarch Alexis to Metropolitan Anthony

YOUR EMINENCE, Dear Vladyka,

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on occasion of the 45th anniversary of your episcopal consecration.

As you look back on the many years of your varied service to the Church, you are now able to offer prayerful thanks to Our Lord, the Giver of all good, for His mercies which He abundantly bestowed upon you.

You have been entrusted with the pastoral care of the parishes and flock of the Sourozh diocese of the Patriarchate of Moscow, and heeding the call of Our Lord Jesus Christ the High Priest, you are carrying out a multitude of responsibilities. For this reason, you have inspired sincere love from the clergy and laity both in Great Britain and beyond.

You have given all your strength in rejuvenating pastoral life of the diocese in all its fullness; you have contributed greatly to the cause of Orthodox unity and loyalty to the Mother Church. In your dealings with representatives of other faiths, you have shown in word and deed the eternal beauty and truth of Orthodoxy. You speak as an authoritative and senior hierarch of our Church, calling people to embrace love, patience, compassion and to live according to the commandments of Christ.

For many years, our people have been forcibly separated from God, and now, as a result, the Church's restorative work concerns not only the desecrated shrines, but also human souls disfigured by atheistic upbringing.

Never has this task been more relevant than today. It is a source of joy to me that you apply yourself so diligently to this ministry, heeding the call of the Church, 'Proclaim from day to day the salvation of our God'.

In recognition of your archpastoral, educational and missionary work and in connection with the 45th anniversary of your Episcopal consecration, I would like to present you with the Order of St Macarius of Moscow, 2nd class.

May the all-merciful Lord grant you, Dear Vladyka, spiritual and physical strength to continue your zealous and fruitful ministry for the good of the Holy Church.

Through the intercessions of the Queen of Heaven, may the Lord preserve you in health and length of days unto many years. With love in Christ,

ALEXIS, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

14.

Announcement by Metropolitan Anthony at the London Parish AGM, May, 19 2002

Posted on July 12, 2002 in Hierarchs

We are coming towards the end of our meeting, and I want to say just a little. For the first time in the 53 years that I have been at the head of this parish, we have had real tensions, and unpleasant tensions, between members of the parish. And this is something which must be resolved by an honest and reflective attitude to the situation. And the situation is this.

Vladyka Hilarion has come to this parish. First it was planned that he would be a lecturer in Cambridge; and then it was suggested by Vladyka Kyril that he should come as a bishop. Now, since he has come, there has been a great deal of misunderstanding and dividedness among people. First of all his appointment here has hurt a great many people because it coincided with Vladyka Anatoly no longer being an active bishop, but retired. This was done very quickly, without warning, without preparation, as a decision from the Patriarchate that has hurt many of us. To add insult to injury, if I may put it that way, his title was transferred to Bishop Hilarion, which people felt was a hurtful and tactless thing.

The second thing is that a rumour was spread -- and a rumour that is not a lying rumour, because I have confirmation of it officially from the Department of Foreign Relations of the Church, with the assent of the Patriarch -- that Vladyka Hilarion will be my successor when I retire.

He is a junior bishop in our Diocese, he knows about the Diocese very little, and it has hurt and puzzled many people.

The moment of my retirement was not fixed, but it is in the air simply because I am already 88 years of age, and one can expect a decision. I have applied five times for retirement since I was seventy, and every time the retirement was refused. The last time I got a letter from the Patriarch saying that: "even if you are incapable of doing anything, your name is useful for us, so stay where you are". But this is not a very convincing reason, or very encouraging assessment of my capabilities.

I have written to the Patriarch a personal fax letter saying that since Vladyka Hilarion has come into the Diocese, a great many tensions have arisen and a great amount of worry is abroad; and that I ask him not to retire me until I have given my written consent to it; because I do not believe that my disappearance of a sudden would solve any problem.

Bishop Hilarion is someone whom I have known for many years. He has been a friend. I have been his father confessor. So in a sense there is between us a deep link. But there is one thing that is

unfortunate: it is his appointment as a bishop without having had any experience of the life and the style of life of the Diocese of Sourozh. I hoped that he would come and start to discover what our

Diocese is about, its characteristics; and he has not done it from the start. We discussed that with him several times. We had a meeting of several of us with him, for him to hear the voice of certain members of the clergy. And he has heard the voice of a number of members of the laity. And things are not yet settled.

I told him at our last meeting that I give him two months -- three months including this month now -- for him to discover what the Diocese of Sourozh is about, and to form an opinion whether he is prepared or not to continue in the style, and with the ideals, which we have developed in the course of now fifty three years. If he is dissatisfied, and we are, then we will by common consent part company. It will be very hurtful for him. It will also be hurtful for me because he has been, as I said, my spiritual child, and a personal friend. But it is essential for us that he should learn what the Diocese of Sourozh is, in particular. And the particularities of the Diocese to me are, in brief, as follows.

First of all, it is a diocese of people, the clergy of which, and the bishop of which, consider themselves as servants. We have learned from the Gospel that he who wants to be first must be last. I quoted to him a passage from a letter I had in due time -- or undue -- from Father Sophrony, whom he admired greatly, in which he said to me that the Church is a pyramid, but a pyramid reversed, with the point being at the lowest point; and at the lowest point it is one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then comes another row of people, as servants: the Apostles, then the disciples, and so forth. And it is if you want to be a member of the Church in the true sense, you must be at the rock bottom and not at the top of things. We discussed that because he was told in Russia after his ordination "his consecration as a bishop" that he must learn to be 'a bishop', which he took to be a ruler in the diocese.

He has been using always the word 'rule' and not 'serve' in his presentations. And for the moment we are discussing the matter as deeply as we can - on the spiritual level, and on the practical level - with him. I hope that within the three months which we have decided to devote to this work he will have learnt to be a member, a living and creative member, of the Diocese of Sourozh, with the spirit of the Diocese, which is a spirit of "service" on the part of the clergy, a spirit of "brotherhood and sisterhood" on the part of the laity; not a hierarchical system.

For the moment I do not propose to have a discussion on the subject, because each of us has got his own views and reactions, and they are premature. We will have, soon, a meeting of the clergy of the Diocese in which we will discuss the same problem; and then have a period of expectation and common work, that will allow us to understand him, him to understand us, and form a unit that will be, I believe, a creative one, because he has got gifts which I never possessed and shall never possess. He is young; he is strong; he is a Doctor in Theology; he has written a number of theological works that are highly praised; and he can make a very rich contribution - but only if we can form a unit and be one all together.

Now, I do not want to have contributions now because we will have pros and cons. I would like you to think, and to ask yourselves: what can you contribute to his understanding of the Diocese, and to your understanding of a very remarkable young man whom I wanted to have here, and who has not yet found his feet in the Diocese and in our work.

That is the end of my contribution. In private I am prepared of course to explain myself to anyone. But as far as the meeting is concerned, I am not going to open it to discussion and argument. And I

think at this point we can make an end to our meeting and start, again and again, to grow into a family of people who trust one another, who are prepared to love one another, and loving means making sacrifices for the sake of each other. Shall we read a prayer, and part

15.

Diocese of Sourozh: News Briefs

Posted on June 13, 2002 in World News

Diocese of Sourozh: News Briefs

Archbishop Anatoly (Kuznetzov), who for more than ten years has served as bishop of Kerch and suffragan bishop in the diocese of Sourozh, has been granted his request to retire from official duties by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. Igumen Hilarion Alfeyev, Secretary for Inter-Christian Relations in the Department of External Church Relations, has been nominated by the Holy Synod as his successor.

16.

Announcement made by Metropolitan Anthony on December 30, 2001

I want to share with you two important items of news. On the one hand, having reached the age of seventy last year, Vladyka Anatoly has applied for permission no longer to be a suffragan bishop in our Diocese - but to remain here to continue his pastoral work in our midst, which is a great blessing. Since he has been here he has done more than I ever expected. He has been preaching; he has been giving talks; he has been teaching; he has been hearing confessions; he has been celebrating, with a depth and a devotion from which I have learnt a great deal and I am certain the clergy also have.

So he remains in our midst indefinitely; particularly in charge of the parish in Manchester which he is creating and also in our midst to continue his work of pastoral direction and enlightenment.

The second thing which I want to share with you is that Father Hilarion Alfeyev, whom a number of you know, who is a theologian with a doctorate from Oxford, with an infinite knowledge of languages, has been appointed - at my request - to our Diocese as a young suffragan bishop, to help in all the ways in which a suffragan bishop can, but also to teach in the Orthodox Institute in Cambridge, within the University, the Theological Faculty of Cambridge.

He will also take part in the life of our Diocese at large and particularly of London, and he will be able to help in the field of our Russian parishioners as we have now, as you know, more and more, and they need help.

So: let us rejoice; and, as I said in Russian a moment ago, there is one thing which the Patriarchate has refused. I have applied for the fifth time for permission to retire but the answer has been five times no, and on the last occasion a few months ago the Patriarch said, in a very friendly and firm way, that even if I proved incapable of doing anything I should still remain here in our midst.