

Memoirs by Archimandrite Nektary (Chernobyl) 1905 - 2000

As a young boy, still before the Revolution, I had a terrible dream: the south-west part of the sky was illuminated by a bloody, glowing sunset, like a fire, and on this bloody sky was written in huge, shining letters the word, "the end."

At that time I did not attribute any particular meaning to this dream. But I never forgot it. It was so vivid and stunning that my entire life afterwards was colored by the presentiment that this dream would definitely be fulfilled.

And so it did. It began in 1917, and with each passing year it became increasingly evident that the world was coming to an end. In the beginning old Russia was destroyed, the Tsar was overthrown, the antitheistic regime came to power, and then began the annihilation of thousands of innocent people and the persecution of Christians on an unprecedented scale.

Churches were blown up, monasteries were closed and blasphemously turned into the most disreputable places. All this was seen as the coming to power of the beast of the apocalypse.

In recent years we see that the power of this beast is beginning to spread over the whole world. The process of apostasy, begun several centuries ago, is today approaching its final stage. We are entering the age of the apocalypse.

And now the meaning of the dream I had so many years ago has finally become clear to me.

My Father

I was born in 1905, in the village of Utimovka, in the district of Kremenchugsk, Poltava province. My name in the world was Peter. I had two brothers and a sister; I was the eldest.

My parents, Michael Ivanovich Chernobyl and Anna Longinova, were both of peasant stock, but my father, a capable and energetic man, taught himself gardening and agronomy and went to work for the railway, planting trees and flowers at train stations. Later he was invited to the district town of Alexandria, in the Cherson province. The town was twenty-five kilometers from Cherson, on the river Berezovka, where it fell into the Ingulets. Up to the time of the Revolution, the town numbered about twenty thousand inhabitants. Here it was proposed to my father that he create on a vacant parcel of land an agricultural nursery affiliated with the district pedagogical seminary. It was a sizeable plot, thirty hectares, and on it he laid out a flower garden, an orangerie, hotbeds, gardens, and fields for sowing. In this nursery, students at the seminary, future village school teachers, were given hands-on training in agricultural production, learned about farm management, sowed rye and wheat, planted vegetables. There they raised saplings for sale to the surrounding population. The work provided my father with a decent salary (fifty rubles) for that time, and my family lived comfortably, in a house near the nursery. Like most people of that pre-revolutionary time, my father was not particularly religious.



He went to church on major feasts, but he frequently skipped church on Sundays, and did not always keep the fasts. The rest of the family followed suit.

An abrupt change in my father's worldview came soon after the Revolution, when he became acquainted with a certain layman by the name of Ivan Savich Mironov. He was a family man, no longer young, a profound believer and well versed in patristic literature. His was a strong and unique personality, and he had a great influence on my father. He introduced him to many spiritual books, which changed completely my father's views. Among these books were the Nomocanon and Great in Small. The former (containing the statutes of the Orthodox Church) indicated to him the path to salvation, while Nilus's book, Great in Small, convinced him that we have already drawn close to the time of Antichrist. My father began frequently to reflect on the fact that the end of the world and the Last Judgment might come soon, and that he, meanwhile, was living so carelessly, without any concern for his soul.

And so it was that my father, who before had been so indifferent, became an ardent believer, an Orthodox zealot, and he devoted the rest of his life to God and the Church. He began to keep strictly the Orthodox canons, and did not miss any church services. In spite of the increasing persecution and his prominent position in the town, he openly went to church and took an active part in church life. My mother followed his example. My parents began to help orphans, the elderly and sick; they welcomed in our home pilgrims and monastics.

Our entire family became acquainted with the books, Nomokanon, Great in Small, and other spiritual books that Mironov gave us, and we wholeheartedly embraced the truth of Orthodoxy. And when we realized the terrible and menacing character of the Soviet regime, we all clung to the Church as to a ship of salvation.

From that time our family began attending church services on Sundays and feastdays without fail. In the mornings we all gathered together for prayer, and we did the same in the evening before going to bed. Our father manifest the most zeal. Often he would even get up at night to pray and make many prostrations, sometimes provoking demonic attacks.

Our family began strictly to keep the fasts. On Wednesdays and Fridays, according to the ancient practice, we did not eat until three o'clock in the afternoon, regardless of what hard work there was to do. On the eve of Nativity and on other strict fast days, none of us ate anything "until the first star." In addition, we daily read together the New Testament, a chapter each day. Our home became a kind of monastery.

I should mention that earlier my father had expressed a decided sympathy for leftist parties. In the 1905 Revolution, in defending the rights of the peasants, he came into conflict with a local landowner, as a result of which he spent a month in jail. Now he became convinced that the leftist parties were not in fact on the side of truth, as had been his impression before; on the contrary, they were directed against truth, and, principally, against the truth of God and against the Church. My father straightway abandoned his former leftist persuasions and became a convinced monarchist. He very quickly grasped the essence of the Soviet power, seeing in it an evident manifestation of antichristian principles. When, in the '20s, they instituted a "five-day" and a "six-day," workdays began falling often on Sundays. My father categorically refused to work on Sunday. He himself did not work, and he forbade the workers at the nursery (by this time the nursery had become government property) to go out to work. He was lectured several times on

this account, and the authorities threateningly demanded that he submit to the decrees of the powers that be, but he replied that he would not work on Sundays or major Orthodox feastdays, since it was forbidden by the church canons.

In view of the exemplary state of the nursery, the local authorities tolerated my father's behavior for a time, but my father understood that this would not last, and at home he often prayed, "Lord, grant me to suffer for Thy Name's sake!"

Finally, in 1928, my father was arrested and sent to Siberia. In the local GPU he was told: "We know you are an irreplaceable worker, but because of your religion we can no longer tolerate you. We have to send you away!" My father was forced to walk more than a thousand kilometers through Siberia, in temperatures reaching sixty below, spending nights in freezing cold yurts. Conditions were so unbearably difficult that my father asked God to die. Finally, he was brought to civilization, to a small village on the island Kezhma, on the Angara River. There he lived some three years. The villagers treated him with love and respect. They visited him and brought him food, and he conversed with them on spiritual subjects and read to them from the Scriptures. Whenever he encountered any of them, he would greet them with whatever feast it was. For this he was charged with "religious agitation" and was sentenced to ten years in the isolated Krasnoyarsk prison.

At his arrest and during subsequent interrogations, my father showed himself to be fearless, although ordinarily he was very meek. And there in the prison, over the protests of the guards, my father would daily stand for prayer at the appointed times, fulfilling his rule. One of his fellow prisoners told me that being in the same cell with my father was for him a great consolation, while another said, "In the company of such a man as your father, one could bear a lifetime in prison." But my father's daily habit of prayer infuriated the employees of the GPU, and another ten years were added to his sentence. In all, he received twenty years. I visited him once, when he was in the prison at Karsnoyarsk. I never saw him again.

After my father's arrest, our family was evicted from its home near the nursery. My mother went to live with my sister in Sinelnikovo, while my brothers went to the Caucasus, where they found work as horticulturalists. After Krushchev's amnesty, my father was released. He was by that time already very old. He went to live with my sister in Sinelnikovo, and there he died.

Years of Revolution

My childhood was spent in the town of Alexandria, in the country, in the field and in the garden, for from an early age I was already helping my father with his work. Together with him I cultivated flowers in the greenhouses, planted vegetables, transplanted trees. In this way I learned from my father to work the earth. Following his wise advice, I also learned a number of trades: watchmaking, shoe repair, and carpentry. All this proved very useful in the years ahead.

On completing secondary school, I entered the pedagogical seminary where my father worked. By this time, many of the teachers and students there had already become spiritually corrupted. The Russian language teacher was a leftist. He was also the librarian, and when I requested a Bible, the Lives of Saints, or the magazine, Russian Pilgrim, he said to me: "You'd do better to read Shakespeare!"

After the February revolution, the seminary students began forming revolutionary groups; they organized stormy political gatherings and meetings with placards, shouting, and

sedition provocations. Some teachers went with the students to "May Day meetings," where they drank wine and sang revolutionary songs. Even a priest from our seminary attended these affairs. Seeing such corruption, I made haste to leave the seminary. With the coming of the Bolsheviks to power, there immediately began in the city of Alexandria a period of utter terror. The Chekists seized people at home and on the streets, and these people disappeared forever; somewhere they were "finished off." The procurator appointed for our town was a former cobbler by the name of Makarov; his solution for all problems was to invoke "the most extreme punishment" - execution. It seemed that everything in the city and in the outlying region was engulfed in a bloody chaos. In fact, everything was maneuvered by the Chekists in a definite, predetermined plan inspired by the powers of darkness. The executions were not random; people were marked for elimination: those who were the most talented, the most worthy, everyone who in pre-revolutionary society played a significant role. It was noticed likewise that if there lived in some village an independent thinker, someone whom the Bolsheviks suspected of being capable of understanding the lie of their propaganda, he was seized and executed. It was evident that the Bolsheviks purposed to eliminate the best part, the cream of the Russian populace.

It is well known that Lenin harbored an implacable hatred for the Orthodox Church, and he made no concessions on her behalf. Already in the first year of Soviet power, the execution of clergy began. In Kiev the Bolsheviks tortured Metropolitan Vladimir to death.

After the Revolution, groups of Bolsheviks and Komsomols began coming into our churches from time to time. They jeered at the believers, and scoffed at the icons. At first this was the extent of it, and for a while church life continued its usual course.

In 1922 and 1923, our city and others there in the Ukraine witnessed astonishing signs from above: In many churches, icons and even entire iconostases were miraculously renewed, as well as the paint on some church cupolas.

And this took place not only in churches but in private homes. In our city there lived a widow who had a darkened Kazan icon of the Mother of God. Suddenly, before the widow's very eyes, this icon began to grow lighter and soon appeared like new. The people were amazed and began serving molebens before these renewed icons.

These signs were harbingers of the coming persecution of the Church, and were sent by God to strengthen people in their faith. As for partisans of the GPU, they reacted to these divine signs with malice and vexation. They came to look at the renewed icons, and grilled the priests for a rational explanation, suspecting that the priests had somehow fabricated the icons' renewal.

Renovationism

In 1922 there arose in Russia the so-called "Living Church." This was a self-proclaimed group that rose up against the lawful Patriarch Tikhon and openly supported the Bolshevik regime. The Living Church permitted married bishops, the remarriage of clergy; it introduced a new church calendar and other innovations.

In our city there were four churches. In the center stood the imposing old Dormition Cathedral. There was also a stone church dedicated to the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, a cemetery church of All Saints, and a wooden church dedicated to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker. All the priests of these churches and their parishioners

(many out of ignorance) joined the Renovationists. However, my father and several of our acquaintances, Mironov among them, understood that Renovationism was not Orthodoxy, and they stopped receiving the Holy Mysteries in these renovationist churches.

There formed a group of Orthodox zealots, comprised of four families. We began seeking for a true Orthodox priest and, finally, we found him. Twenty kilometers from Alexandria, in the remote village of Ivanovka, there lived at that time Archpriest Nicholas Piskanovski; he had been among those who had left Western Ukraine when the First World War began.

With the rise of Renovationism, Fr. Nicholas Piskanovski, almost alone of all the priests in our district, remained faithful to Patriarch Tikhon. In his village church he openly denounced Renovationism. (Later he also came out against Sergianism, as a result of which he was arrested and sent to Solovki, where he became a father-confessor for the prisoner-clergy. Fr. Michael Polsky writes about him in the second volume of his book, *New Russian Martyrs*. In 1934, in exile, he was the personal secretary of Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich. Fr. Nicholas died in the mid-30s of tuberculosis. He was glorified by the Russian Church Abroad in 1981 as one of Russia's New Martyrs and Confessors -note of the Russian editor..) Fr. Nicholas came to Alexandria and served in private apartments. Occasionally we would go to see him, to his village church. I remember how we once went to see him on Pascha to bless eggs. There was a terrible snowstorm and we barely made it. That was in 1923; I was eighteen. We continued in this way for a year or two. Finally, Bishop Onouphry of Elisavetgrad (Gagaliuk, martyred by the godless on 1 June 1938; his life appears in *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, 1982 - ed.), who had remained faithful to Patriarch Tikhon, sent to our city Hieromonk Barsanouphy (Yurchenko).

Father Barsanouphy

Once, on a feastday, my father and I attended services at the Dormition Cathedral (my father and other members of our group would occasionally attend services at the renovationist churches, although they did not commune there), where we saw an unfamiliar priest. He was of middle age, attractive, tall, with noble features, a full beard and glasses; he was dressed in monastic garb and held a prayer rope in his hand. After the service, we approached him and asked who he was and from where. We learned that he was a hieromonk, that his name was Fr. Barsanouphy (Yurchenko), and that he belonged to the Tikhonite Church. We were very happy to hear this, and Mironov straightway invited him to his house. Our entire group gathered for this first meeting with Fr Barsanouphy. He told us that he had been sent to our city in order to combat Renovationism. We immediately decided to organize an Orthodox parish in the city, and to appeal for the return of one of the churches seized by the Renovationists. Soon Fr. Barsanouphy was arrested and imprisoned. We all took turns taking him parcels of foodstuffs, which, we discovered, he shared with his cell-mates.

Meanwhile, our petition had been approved. We were given the Holy Protection church, and, after his release from prison, Fr. Barsanouphy began to serve there. At the same time, he was appointed dean of the Alexandria district.

Father Barsanouphy was meek, personable, affectionate, and attentive, and soon we all grew very fond of him. I myself became very attached to him, and regarded him as my spiritual father. At the pedagogical seminary I had learned to read on the cliros and had

become familiar with the tones, for each seminary student was required to take his turn as acolyte, which we did in rotation. Now I began to assist Fr. Barsanouphy. During the Great Lent, there in the Holy Protection church I read the hours and the kathismatas, I sang on the cliros - in a word, I became a regular psalm-reader.

Although batiushka served in our parish church according to the monastic rule, his services were never tiring. You would come into the church on a weekday, and, hearing Batiushka's soft, measured voice before the altar, your soul would fill with tranquility and compunction.

Father Barsanouphy served with great attention and concentration, wholly giving himself over to prayer. He served daily, and did not allow any abbreviation of the service.

In his sermons he called people to repentance; he exposed the falsehood of Renovationism. At the same time, he exhorted people not to develop hatred towards their wayward brethren, caught in the snares of renovationism, but to pray for them.

Soon word of the new and extraordinary batiushka spread through the entire area, and outsiders began coming to our Protection church. At first they came simply to observe and to listen. Later many of them joined the parish. Village priests also came to see Batiushka. In their discussions with him, they became convinced of the errors of the Renovationists and returned under the omophorion of Patriarch Tikhon. And so it was that from this small group of four families, there grew an entire parish, there arose a whole movement that caught up the entire district; almost all the priests of our district, together with their parishioners, broke away from the Renovationists.

Fr. Barsanouphy stood at the center of this movement; he united everyone spiritually, he drew everyone to himself; I became attached to him as to my own father.

Towards his spiritual children Fr. Barsanouphy was very gentle and indulgent, but he could be stern if that was called for, and would give strict penances; he was even known to exclude a person from Holy Communion for a whole year. In matters concerning the observance of the Orthodox canons, he was unwavering.

Fr. Barsanouphy kept the fasts strictly. On Wednesdays and Fridays, and during the entire Great Lent, he ate nothing until evening, as specified by the typicon (it must be said that by that time far from all priests fulfilled this).

At each service, he would give a wonderful sermon on the subject of the feast or on moral issues. I liked these sermons so much that I even began to write them down.

Unfortunately, these notes disappeared after a search in my apartment.

I felt a great inner attraction to Fr. Barsanouphy. Whenever I had the opportunity I tried to go see him. I frequently spent the night in his quarters, and sometimes spent the whole night in spiritual discussions, sitting next to his bed.

Unfortunately, I know little about Fr. Barsanouphy's life before his arrival in our city. I don't know where he was born, or even his name in the world. I know only that he came from a well-to-do family of the Elisavetgrad district. He was tonsured at the Kiev Caves Lavra, probably when still a youth. Later he was ordained to the priesthood and became a teacher at the seminary affiliated with the Biziukov monastery not far from Ekaterinoslav.

In 1918 the Bolsheviks began to despoil the monastery. They threatened to summarily execute all the monks unless they handed over the sum of several thousands of rubles.

The brethren did not have such a sum, and the monks were put against a wall. "I felt then," Fr. Barsanouphy told me, "an extraordinary spiritual uplift - soon I would be in the

Kingdom of Heaven. And I was sorely disappointed when a monk ran up with the necessary sum and the execution was stayed."

The monks were released, but they were told that, regardless, all the monks would soon be dispersed. Thereafter the brethren were never left in peace: Bolshevik detachments made frequent raids on the monastery. Finally, Fr. Barsanouphy decided to run away. For some time he hid in his brother's house, but he was discovered, arrested and imprisoned. He sat in a stuffy, damp cellar. His cassock disintegrated from the dampness, and there were so many lice in the cell that one could rake them up with one's hands. After his release, he went to Elisavetgrad, to Bishop Onouphry, who assigned him to a nearby parish. The rise of Renovationism revealed him to be a steadfast champion of the truth of the Church and a fearless accuser of the renovationists. For this reason Bishop Onouphry assigned him to be a missionary in the struggle against Renovationism in the Alexandria district. When he came to our city, he was about forty.

Later, he travelled from Alexandria to Moscow, to Patriarch Tikhon, who elevated him to the rank of hegumen. From Moscow Fr. Barsanouphy brought back with him a written encyclical against Renovationism from Patriarch Tikhon himself, which he read in church before all the parishioners. This encyclical strengthened us all in our stand for Orthodoxy.

The First Arrest

The renovationist priests in Alexandria openly supported the Soviet regime; one of them did not hide even his ties with the GPU. For this reason Renovationism began losing ground among the people. Orthodoxy, by contrast, was gaining an increasing number of adherents. The renovationist cathedral in the middle of the city grew empty, while our Protection church was always full; people flocked there.

The renovationist priests despised Fr. Barsanouphy. They decided to get rid of him at any cost, and with this aim they made a secret agreement with the Soviets. The result was that on the eve of Palm Sunday, 1924, the renovationist bishop, Ioann, accompanied by his clergy, unexpectedly appeared in our church and presented an ukase, sent from Kharkov (the then capital of Ukraine) to the effect that from thenceforth the Protection church was to belong to the Orthodox and the Renovationists equally, with the right to serve in turn. The Orthodox, however, would have nothing to do with the Renovationists. They gathered from all over - there must have been nearly a thousand people - and, standing like a wall in front of the church, would not allow the renovationist bishop to enter. Neither detachments of militia, nor komsomols, nor even the mounted militia could disperse the crowd. Then, by order of the local authorities, the fire brigade was called, and, turning their hoses on the crowd, they scattered the people. Thereupon they summoned some locksmiths, who cut out the lock on the church doors.

The next day the renovationist bishop Ioann came to the church. The renovationist clergy, on greeting the bishop, intoned, "Eis polla eti despota!" while the Orthodox stood to the side and escorted the bishop with cries of "Wolf in sheep's clothing!" Bishop Ioann served the entire Passion Week and Pascha in our church, but it was practically empty; the Orthodox refused to go there.

Meanwhile, although I lived at some distance from Fr. Barsanouphy, I came almost every day to listen to his spiritual discourses. I liked him so much that I clung to him with all my soul.

Once, when I had stayed to spend the night at Fr. Barsanouphy's, there was a loud knock at the door in the middle of the night. Chekists. One of them had in his pocket "An

Appeal to the People," an incendiary message fabricated by the GPU in order to frame Fr. Barsanouphy, whom they cast as its author. He unnoticeably slipped the paper into the Horologion that lay on my bed (I read the Horologion before going to sleep, and used it as a pillow).

"You," said the investigator to Fr. Barsanouphy, "are charged with inciting the people to revolt against the Soviet regime!"

"No," replied Fr. Barsanouphy calmly, "I didn't incite anyone. Everything happened simply as a matter of course."

The investigator approached my bed, opened the Horologion, and took from it the paper. "And what is this?!" he cried triumphantly, and proceeded to read aloud the "Summons." "This is a forgery," said Fr. Barsanouphy. "You yourselves wrote it and placed it in the book."

At this point I went up to the investigator and said to him,

"How could this be? This evening I was reading this book, and there was no paper in it." Nevertheless, the Chekists took Fr. Barsanouphy away with them. They did not take me this time, but in two weeks they arrested me and several other people, including some women.

I spent close to three months in an isolation cell with criminals-recidivists. The authorities would call me out for interrogation, accusing me of "insurgency" and threatening me with the firing squad if I did not sign a confession of guilt, but they got nothing out of me.

Finally, my case was closed and I was released. Fr. Barsanouphy had been released still earlier, also for lack of incriminating evidence.

Meanwhile, while we were in prison, our parishioners had gathered an enormous number of signatures and had sent representatives to Kharkov. Receiving a denial of their petition, they proceeded to Moscow, where they succeeded in obtaining the return of our church.

How elated I was when, on being released from prison, I came to church on the Feast of Transfiguration and saw Fr. Barsanouphy serving once again before a crowd of people in our Protection church!

Into the Catacombs (This section has been abbreviated)

Fr. Barsanouphy did not stay long in Alexandria. In 1925 or 1926 Bishop Onouphry transferred him to the town of Ol'viniopol (renamed by the Soviets Pervomaisk), on the South Bug River, to oppose Renovationism there. His rapid success evoked the ire of the local authorities, and he was arrested and sent to a prison in Kharkov. On one of my trips to the city to visit him, Bishop Onouphry, who was also there in Kharkov under surveillance of the GPU, tonsured me a reader.

On 16/29 July 1927, Metropolitan Sergius (Staragorodsky) signed his declaration of cooperation with the Soviet regime. /.../ Those hierarchs and priests who refused to recognize the Declaration (the overwhelming majority) were subject to persecution. Some of them, such as Archbishop Dimitri of Gdov and Bishop Basil of Poltava, were soon executed, while others were sent to concentration camps or exiled under extremely difficult conditions.

After his release from prison, Hieromonk Barsanouphy was forbidden to leave Kharkov. When the authorities closed the church belonging to the "non-commemorators," Fr. Barsanouphy organized a catacomb group, which I visited on my trips to Kharkov from

Pervomaisk.

Father Barsanouphy had a portable altar and an antimimension, and he secretly served the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and great feasts in various private homes, usually on the outskirts of the city. When our people came to pray, they would use a secret knock. The services were held at night and ended as morning was breaking.

On weekdays, Fr. Barsanouphy gathered his group at his place for spiritual discussions. He would take some book - the Scriptures or some patristic text, read an excerpt, and then expound on it. Most often he commented on the works of Bishop Ignatius (Brianchaninov), who, more than other religious writers of our time, wrote about the age of apostasy and the forthcoming persecution of Christians.

In early 1931, a massive arrest of Tikhonite bishops and priests swept Kharkov. Among those arrested was Fr. Barsanouphy.

The Second Arrest

All these years I lived in Pervomaisk. I lived in a private apartment, alone, like a monk; each day I read the entire cycle of services according to the monastic rule, although I was not yet tonsured.

At the end of 1931, the NKVD paid me a visit. In the course of their search they found a letter written by Bishop Seraphim of Uglich, protesting the Sergianist Declaration. I was arrested and hauled off to the investigative prison there in Alexandria.

At the first interrogation, the examiner told me that I was being charged under statute 54, paragraphs 10 and 11, for "dissemination of anti-soviet propaganda," and for belonging to some "counterrevolutionary organization." "You are doomed," said the examiner. "The firing squad awaits you. However, you can mitigate your sentence by an honest confession."

I answered that I had nothing to confess, since I didn't belong to any counterrevolutionary organization, nor did I take part in any politics, and I refused to sign the incriminatory protocol. Then they subjected me to various tortures in the so-called "standing chamber." There were other prisoners in this cell. Among them I recognized Matushka Nina, the wife of the priest Antony Kotovich, who had formerly served together with Father Barsanouphy in our Protection church. There was a sentry in the cell, and he did not permit us either to sit down or to sleep, day or night. We were given no food. And this continued for several days in a row.

It is hard to describe the sufferings of the people in this torture chamber. From enforced sleep deprivation some lost their minds. People were brought to such an excruciatingly unbearable state that they were ready to sign anything in order to be relieved of the torture. In such a state, it's possible they didn't even know what they were signing. Through these methods the NKVD was able to fabricate cases of groups of "subversives," "spies," and "counterrevolutionaries."

From the "standing chamber" I was taken several times for interrogation. The examiner blasted me with expletives and yelled:

"I'll make you stand there until the Second Coming! Then again, we might think up something better for you. We'll hang you by your heels. Then

He took out a revolver, put it close to my face, and threatened to shoot me then and there. Then he beat me with the handle of the revolver. I still refused to sign anything. I spent four or five days and nights in the "standing chamber." Then I was given a few days' reprieve, and again I was sent to the chamber. This time I stood there without sleep for

eleven days. Then they threw me into a cellar. The examiner came in after me with his revolver and said, "This your last place. Now we'll decided your fate. Tomorrow you'll be shot." It was February, there was a hard frost, the cellar was heaped with snow, but I was so exhausted and wanted so desperately to sleep that I collapsed onto the snow and immediately fell asleep. In the Poltava Detention Prison The next day I was taken to Poltava, where the district court was located. It was still some time before the trial took place, and the interrogations continued. As a rule they took place at night. At one of these nocturnal interrogations the examiner said to me: "In your Scriptures it is written, You should be obedient to all authority. Why is it that you do not submit to the Soviet regime?" I was silent. Then the examiner asked me point-blank: "Do you agree with the worldview of the Soviet regime?" "No, I do not," I replied. "I understand that you are against the civil power," said the examiner, "but why are you against the Church? Why don't you recognize Metropolitan Sergius as the lawful head?" Without waiting for me to reply, he gave an answer himself. "Because you don't need the Church; you need politics! And counterrevolution! That's why you have chosen as leaders for yourselves such counterrevolutionaries as your Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and Dimitri of Gdov and other pernicious enemies of the Soviet regime!" There in the Poltava detention prison we were fed poorly. We were given only 300 grams of bread a day, and the bread was half-baked and glutinous. We received hot water only once a day. For dinner we were given a gruel of groats that was often rotten and had maggots. One day, when I was sitting in the corridor in front of the examiner's room waiting to be called in for interrogation, to my astonishment a Red Army soldier brought me a sumptuous meal. This was a great temptation, for it was Great Lent, and the food was not lenten. Repressing my feeling of hunger, I did not touch the plate and gave it to the other prisoners sitting with me in the corridor. When I entered the examiner's office, his first question was, "Well, did they give you a treat? Was it a good dinner?" This time he was inexplicably kind to me, speaking to me as to a friend, an equal. He said to me confidently: "Look, we're not really against religion. We'll release you. Pray, serve, and just drop in here from time to time and..." It all became clear to me: the copious dinner, his soft manner... He simply wanted to recruit me as an informer. I voiced my refusal. The examiner abruptly changed his tone. "You'll regret this," he barked. And again came threats, beatings... Conditions in the Poltava prison were very difficult. A small cell, which in tsarist times had been designated for one or two prisoners, now held about twenty. Through the windows, which were covered nearly to the top by iron casings, the light barely entered the cell, and only a small patch of sky was visible. Fleas swarmed along the walls, and kept the prisoners from getting a decent night's sleep. The criminals occupied the best places, on the bunks, while the others were forced to sleep on the cold, dank floor. In a corner of the cell there stood a slop pail, and at night everyone would go there to relieve themselves, stepping over the heads of those sleeping on the floor. For a long time I slept next to this slop pail or under the bunks. The criminals bullied and sneered at the other prisoners; they were known on occasion to arrange a "black-out," i.e., they would cover a prisoner with a blanket and beat him, or they would dump the contents of the slop pail on a prisoner's head. The believers suffered not only from such "lessons" but also from the guards, who removed their crosses and confiscated their prayer books. I had a Bible that I happened upon in the prison, but during an inspection it was discovered by the guards and confiscated. My sole consolation was prayer. I had been a psalm-reader and knew by

heart many of the church hymns, stichera, and kontakia, and this helped me immensely in the prison. In spite of the constant movement, the noise, the swearing, I would stand in a corner at the appointed times and sing all the church services; likewise, every day I would fulfill my prayer rule. This was for me a source of great strength and support. And I have to say that my regular prayers had a beneficial effect on the criminals. They were so amazed that, when I stood for prayer, some of them whispered in a respectful tone: "The father is praying. Be quiet and don't mess with him." I know that Fr. Barsanouphy prayed regularly when he was in prison. During my first internment in Alexandria, when Fr. Barsanouphy and I were in the same prison, although in different cells, when I was out in the exercise yard I would see him at the window of his cell, praying. In spite of the noise, the foul language, the thick tobacco smoke, he stood praying for hours, as if oblivious to his surroundings. From others I heard that his lengthy prayers so impressed his cell-mates that even the most hardened criminals became friendly and sympathetic towards him. Some of them grew so attached to him that after their release they began corresponding with him. Among them were those who, under Fr. Barsanouphy's influence, broke away from their criminal past and became his spiritual children. In the Temnikov Camps Finally I was given my sentence: three years (at that time they still gave such short terms) in the Temnikov labor camps in Mordovia. I was ordered to gather my things and, together with other prisoners, I was marched under escort through the city to the train station. One of the cars was fitted with iron cages, and several prisoners were placed in each cage. In front of the cages was a corridor along which walked a guard. The cages were so low that one could not stand erect, and so we were compelled to ride bent over for several hours until we reached Kharkov. From Kharkov we were taken further in ordinary heated box cars. In Temnikov we were quartered in wooden barracks. The barracks had three-tiered wooden plank beds. The barracks were not heated in winter, and we were given neither blankets nor pillows. We slept on the bare boards. There was no electricity; torches were used which emitted a foul odor. The walls concealed myriads of bedbugs that emerged at night and bit the prisoners. At first I worked cutting wood, but when they learned that I knew something about shoe repair, I was transferred to the shop to repair the prisoners' footwear. There was a stove in the shop and we were fed better there. The language used in the camp was foul in the extreme. And it was not only the ordinary criminals and guards who cursed habitually - "in God, in mother, in three tiers, and to the seventh heaven" - even intelligent people swore, intellectuals, professors. Everyone was caught up in obscenities. Only those who believed in God were able to preserve themselves from the sin of cursing. There in the camp we Orthodox clung to one another; we prayed together, and if there happened to be a priest among us who did not commemorate Metropolitan Sergius, then on Pascha, on Nativity and on other great feasts we would gather secretly and read and sing the entire services. Among these priests was an abbot from one of the monasteries there in Kherson; I don't remember his name. Sometimes I would go alone to the swamp where, in the thick growth, I would perform my prayer rule and sing the church services. The mosquitoes were fierce, but one had to endure. In the Temnikov camps I came down with dysentery and was sent to the camp hospital, located some seven kilometers from the camp. When I returned to the camp, I met Fr. Barsanouphy, who had been sent there to finish out his sentence. This was quite unexpected, and I was so happy to see again my spiritual father. To my great joy, he was put in our barracks, and now we could, as before, pray together, do the services, and have

spiritual discussions. This contact with him was for me a great consolation. Each time I received his blessing, I experienced a feeling of joy, and if my heart was burdened with some grief or trouble, it was immediately relieved. And I was not the only one; other believing prisoners likewise received solace from batiushka, who was able to relieve their sorrows and difficulties. Everyone was drawn to his kindly manner and shining countenance. We were not together for long. My three-year stint was drawing to a close, while batiushka, who had received five years, remained in Temnikov. I never saw him again. Word had it that he was later transferred to a camp in Sarov. On the way to Sarov, the escort guards, who despised clergy, convinced the criminals to arrange a "black-out" for Fr. Barsanouphy. The criminals did so, and beat him until he was half-dead. Fr. Barsanouphy survived but became deformed as a result. He walked bent over, like Saint Seraphim of Sarov, and for the rest of his life he had to use crutches. It was hard to recognize in the humpbacked invalid the former tall and well-built Fr. Barsanouphy. Again in Pervomaisk I was released from Temnikov in 1934. Not long prior to that there was a famine in the Ukraine, as a result of which hundreds of thousands of people perished. The famine was deliberately created by Stalin in order to break the resistance of independent peasant farmers and force them onto the state farms. In passing villages and hamlets, I saw many houses boarded up, their yards overgrown with tall weeds. These were the homes of peasants who had died of starvation. I returned to Pervomaisk and settled in the very same apartment. Since I belonged to the clergy (I was a reader), Fr. Barsanouphy blessed me in his absence to nurture his spiritual children there in Pervomaisk. They would come to me, and sometimes I would go to them. I would read Fr. Barsanouphy's letters from the camp with his instructions and counsels, and occasionally I would myself, as far as I was able, answer their questions and offer spiritual advice. On Sundays and feastdays we would gather in some private home, in deep secrecy, and together we would read and sing quietly the church services. In 1934 I travelled to Krasnoyarsk, where my father was serving out his sentence. We were able to spend several days together. On my return journey I stopped in Sarov, where Fr. Barsanouphy was serving his sentence. The former Sarov Monastery had been turned into a labor camp. I was able to make contact with some of the prisoners, those under light escort, and through them Fr. Barsanouphy relayed to me a letter with counsels and instructions for his spiritual children in Pervomaisk. On my return, we all read this letter together in our catacomb group. Soon came the Feast of Nativity. We gathered secretly in the home of a certain slave of God by the name of Prokopy and held the feastday service. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Members of the NKVD, revolvers in hand, burst in and began a search. I managed to hide Fr. Barsanouphy's letters under a mat covering a bench, and they escaped detection. Nor were any other incriminating papers found. Nevertheless, Prokopy and I, and several other members of our group were arrested. Prokopy and I were taken to the detention center in Odessa and placed in a cell for especially dangerous criminals.

The Third Arrest - The White Sea Canal

I sat in a detention cell with a Jew who was a Trotsky sympathizer. Although he was a communist, he was not a bad fellow, and he shared with me the content of parcels he was sent.

One day, during my walk in the prison yard, Prokopy threw me a note from the window of his cell on the third floor. I wrote him a response, gluing it together on all sides with

doughy bread crumbs. The result was something like a dumpling. The next time I went for a walk, I tried to throw this "dumpling" into the window of Prokopy's cell, but I missed, and my dumpling fell back onto the ground. I tried a second time, and it fell onto a drainpipe. My neighbor, the Jew, jumped up and managed to rescue the dumpling from the drainpipe. My third attempt was successful.

I was frequently called in for interrogation. At that time, after Kirov's assassination, the NKVD examiners were particularly vicious. As a "c/r" (counterrevolutionary) I was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Again we were taken to the train station, again we were shoved into cages.

This time we were taken to a transit prison in Kiev. The prison had been in existence since before the Revolution, and it had a chapel. The Bolsheviks put prisoners in the chapel, and I spent there several days. From there I was sent to the White Sea Canal. At first I was on general work detail, trundling wheelbarrows full of sand. However, on my documents, under "specialty," I had indicated that I was a watch repairman, and I was soon transferred to a workshop of precision machinery. It was a privileged place: there was no guard, and the workshop was located outside the prison compound in a building housing the administrative offices for the entire WSBC (White Sea-Baltic Canal) prison camp complex.

In this workshop we were given the most varied tasks: we repaired measuring instruments for ships and watches for those working on the canal; we had an optician's shop where we made and repaired eyeglasses for prisoners. Sometimes I was called to the home of one of the camp administrators to fix a wall clock.

I had a separate room in the workshop, and there I was able to perform my prayer rule undisturbed. I hid my service books there; in the barracks religious literature was confiscated if it was discovered during an inspection.

In 1936, a new "plot" was discovered "against leaders of the Bolshevik party," and repressions again intensified. Political prisoners were executed at the slightest provocation. I myself came very close to the firing squad. This is how it happened.

Besides our workshop, there were other so-called work stations outside the labor camp precincts. At the end of each workday, an escort guard was supposed to make the rounds of these work stations, gather the prisoners, and conduct them back to the camp.

Sometimes he was lazy and ordered us to assemble ourselves at a designated place. This was a violation of the rules, which strictly forbade any prisoner from walking outside the camp without a guard. One day, as I was walking alone to the train station, where the escort guard was waiting for us, I was seized by some guards and accused of "attempted escape." The punishment was execution.

The workshop supervisor (he was a hired worker) went to the chief administrator of the camp to plead my case. When, however, the administrator learned that I was a "c/r" (counterrevolutionary), he dismissed any thought of pardon. Then the workshop supervisor went to Levshin. This Levshin was markedly different from the other Chekists. There in the camp, we "politicos" were considered non-people. Levshin, by contrast, was respectful, considerate; he would extend to us his hand. They say that he helped many prisoners who were clergy. I often repaired a watch for him, or a pair of glasses. When Levshin learned that I was threatened with execution, he closed my case and thereby saved my life. Subsequently, during a "purge" of the NKVD, Levshin was dismissed from his work and imprisoned.

My release came at the time of the Finnish war. It was dangerous for me to return to Pervomaisk, and I went to Donbass, to the town of Kramatorsk, where there lived a family I knew. These were people who shared my church orientation, who did not attend the Sergianist churches. I lived with them for a time, and then made my way to Kharkov. There I lived in hiding, without a permit; I did not appear before the NKVD for the required registration.

The German Occupation

From my youth I remember yet another ominous sign. It came several days before the beginning of the First World War. I was nine years old. In broad daylight there was a solar eclipse. It grew dark. Animals became restless; birds shrieked, oxen moaned. This eclipse foretold that dreadful catastrophe which soon befell Russia, for the war began and the insurgents took advantage of a weakened government to stage a rebellion and overthrow the monarchy.

When news reached our city of Alexandria of the February Revolution and the overthrow of the Tsar, myopic people rejoiced and said, "Now we'll see some better living standards!" while more thoughtful people, Orthodox (unfortunately, there were not many of them), wept and said that now Russia had perished.

I would submit that for us, Orthodox, the only divinely-established form of rule is monarchy joined with the true Church, while the Soviet rule, whose aim is to destroy the true Church, is a satanic power.

Therefore, it was my opinion that to work for such an anti-theistic regime meant strengthening it, and for this reason I never worked for a Soviet company. I earned a living by repairing small items for private people. There were those who refused not only to work in the Soviet system, but even to take a Soviet passport (the so-called "passportless"). But this was extreme, and dangerous, since one couldn't go anywhere at that time without a passport: on trains and at train stations there were frequent checks, and in border zones one simply couldn't live without a passport.

In 1941, when the war with the Germans began, I was of an age to be mobilized and sent to the front. I was required to appear before the war commissariat, but since I had just returned from the camps I had no desire to serve in the army. Furthermore, I did not want to defend the antitheistic Soviet regime, which we Orthodox regarded as a regime leading straight to the Antichrist.

I found a family that concealed me in the basement of their house, and there I hid until the coming of the Germans. During the German occupation I opened a watch-repair shop on the main street of Kharkov, and thereby managed to feed myself during this time of hunger.

In those years in Kharkov, I became closely acquainted with Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky. For his open antipathy towards Sergianism, the Bolsheviks imprisoned Fr. Nicholas and later sent him into exile. At the end of his term, he went to live in Oboyan, near Kursk. With the coming of the Germans he returned to Kharkov and set up a house church in his apartment. I would come there for services together with other people, have confession and receive communion. I also knew his devoted cell-attendant, Ulyana Nozdrina, who did not abandon him even when he was exiled. She is now an elderly nun, Mother Magdalena, in the Lesna Convent in France (see below - ed.)

Fr. Nicholas' son-in-law was at that time the director of the Kharkov Opera Theater. When the Red Army approached Kharkov, Fr. Nicholas and I were registered as theater

employees, and we were evacuated together with the actors. En route our train was bombed by Soviet planes.

For a period of time Fr. Nicholas and I lived in Zhitomir. There I attended services at the Russian convent, where Vladika Leonty, the future archbishop of Chile and Peru, sometimes came and served. Then we moved further west. Finally, we reached Peremyshl, in western Ukraine, where Fr. Nicholas (Hieromonk Seraphim in monasticism - ed.) died and was buried. There in the western Ukraine, I had a terrible scare. One day some SS seized me. Because of my beard they thought I was a Jew and they wanted to shoot me on the spot. Fortunately, I had with me a document from the archbishop in Kharkov, attesting to the fact that I was a church reader.

Several times I was on the brink of death, but each time the Lord miraculously saved me. On another occasion, when I was still in Pervomaisk, I was hurrying to church for the Nativity vigil. It was dark, and in crossing the river on the ice I didn't notice that I was heading towards a spot where the ice had melted. Just then I happened to feel in front of me with a stick, and - I became numb with fear: water! I was literally a hair's breadth from death. Again, the Lord had preserved me.

In the Russian Church Abroad



On this photo left to right:

Archbishop Seraphim, Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Averky, Bishop Leonty, Archimandrite Nektary

Meanwhile, the Red Army was approaching Peremyshl. What to do? I decided that I would leave the city and live in the forest; that was better than falling again into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

A peasant suggested that I go with him to Czechoslovakia, which at that time was a part of the German Reich. We succeeded in crossing the border, and found ourselves in a camp for "Ostebeiders," Russian workers. People at the camp were being recruited for work in Pressburg (Bratislava). I signed up, and that saved my life, for no sooner had I left than the camp was besieged by Red partisans.

In Bratislava I worked at first on an assembly line together with other "Osts." Later I was able to find work in a watch repair shop located in the city center.

One day I was walking along the street, when I saw two Russian monks. Running, I

caught up with them and asked where they were from. They replied that they were from the Russian Church Abroad. One of them was Fr. Gelasiy (Maibord), and the other was Fr. Sergius (Romberg) - both were future archimandrites. They told me that they were part of the printing brotherhood of Saint Job of Pochaev, located in the town of Ladomirovo, in Carpatho-Russia. With the advance of the Red Army, the brotherhood had moved to Bratislava. There an old Russian emigré had given them a spacious warehouse, and in this building, on the shores of the Danube, they had built a temporary church and living quarters for the monks.

I was very glad of this encounter, as I had known about the existence of the Russian Church Abroad when I was still in Russia, and, on finding myself in Czechoslovakia, I had been thinking how to locate it. And so I joined the St Job of Pochaev Brotherhood as a novice. My first obedience was singing on the cliros.

At that time the superior of the brotherhood was Archimandrite Seraphim (Ivanov), the future archbishop of Chicago and Detroit. Other members of the brotherhood included Archimandrite Nathaniel (Lvov, later bishop) and Hieromonk Vitaly (Ustinov, the current Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad).

Meanwhile, the Red Army was approaching, and in January 1945 our brotherhood moved to Berlin. Shortly thereafter General Vlasov requested that the Church Abroad send clergy to minister to the soldiers of his army. Our Church sent Hieromonk Anthony (Medvedev, currently the Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco), and myself in the capacity of a reader.

This was not long before the end of the war.

It should be noted that the majority of Vlasov's soldiers were men who had been raised under the Soviets; few of them believed in God. However, when we served Divine Liturgy, all the soldiers and officers attended. I myself never did meet Vlasov in person. In April 1945, Vlasov's division that we were serving was ordered to move towards Prague. We made our way mostly at night to avoid being spotted by American planes, which flew by day. Once an American fighter plane flew over our column. Bullets rained down to the right and to the left of Fr. Anthony and myself; they riddled the vestments and church vessels we were carrying with us in the cart, but fortunately we were not hurt. Before reaching Prague, we received news of Germany's surrender. Vlasov's soldiers scattered, and Fr. Anthony and I were left by ourselves, without horses or carts. I came across an abandoned baby carriage, and, after I had fixed it, we loaded our church accouterments onto it and moved west, towards the American zone.

En route we stumbled upon a Soviet border post. We tried to pass ourselves off as Czechs: Fr. Anthony had a Czech passport and spoke Czech. The chief of the post looked at us suspiciously nevertheless and said to another guard: "Still, we should take them to the commissar." But the other border guard waved his hand, "Aw, let them go home." The officer in charge thought for a moment and agreed. "Well, all right. Let them pass." And thus we entered the American zone. There we learned that our brotherhood had moved from Berlin to Munich, and there we directed our steps. Along the way we knocked at the doors of German homes and asked for a night's lodging. Some received us, while others refused, in which case we spent the night in the woods. Whatever our situation, we always read through the daily cycle of services, and once we even served Divine Liturgy in the woods.

We travelled on foot for many days until finally, in some town, we came upon an

abandoned cart and two unclaimed horses roaming the streets. We harnessed them, loaded our church belongings onto the carts, and continued our way.

At last we reached Munich, but we did not find the brotherhood; they had already moved to Switzerland. We were able to obtain Swiss visas, and arrived in Geneva. There we met for the first time the then Chief Hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky) of blessed memory. His residence was located in Munich, but he came from time to time to Geneva, and served in the church of the former embassy. There lived in Geneva at that time Princess Tatiana Konstantinovna, the daughter of Grand Duke Constantine Konstantinovich, who later became Abbess Tamara, the superior of the Mount of Olives convent in the Holy Land.

On 29 November/12 December 1946, Archimandrite Seraphim (Ivanov) tonsured me, giving me the name of the saint commemorated that day, Saint Nektary of the Kiev Caves, the Obedient. A few days later Metropolitan Anastassy ordained me to the diaconate.

Not long afterwards, I came down with tuberculosis (a result of my years in the camps), and I was sent for treatment to a mountain sanatorium near Lausanne. There I spent half a year. I was glad to find a Russian doctor at the sanatorium. The treatment was successful, and I recovered. Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko)

Meanwhile, our brotherhood prepared to move to Jordanville. Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) helped us to obtain our visas for entry into America. Vladika Vitaly (1873-1960) was one of the most illustrious hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Up to the time of the Revolution, his activity was centered in the Pochaev Lavra in Volhynia. There he founded a chapter of the Union of Russian People, which stood for the defense of Orthodoxy and autocracy.

At that time the Lavra's print shop, which had originally been founded by Saint Job of Pochaev in the 17th century, was totally obsolete.

Archimandrite Vitaly equipped it with new presses, gathered around himself some monastic printers, and in a short time the Pochaev print shop became a center of spiritual enlightenment for the whole of Russia. The brotherhood was particularly active in the battle against Unia.

In 1919 Archimandrite Vitaly was arrested by the Poles and sentenced to be shot. He was spared and released thanks to the intercessions of the Serbian Patriarch Barnabas.

Settling in Czechoslovakia, in the village of Ladomirovo, Archimandrite Vitaly gathered around himself a group of monks and revived the printing brotherhood of Saint Job of Pochaev. The brotherhood published a periodical, Orthodox Carpatho-Russia (later renamed Orthodox Russia), and printed church calendars, as well as liturgical and spiritual books, with which they supplied churches and parishes of the entire Russian diaspora.

In 1934 Archimandrite Vitaly was consecrated bishop and sent to New York to minister to the Russian migrants in America. In his stead, he appointed Archimandrite Seraphim (Ivanov) as head of the brotherhood.

It was about this same time that Archimandrite Panteleimon (Nizhnik) of the Russian Church Abroad bought a parcel of land near the village of Jordanville in upstate New York. On the parcel was a house, some arable land, and pasturage. Surrounding the parcel were woods, and for several miles around there were no factories, just small farms. The nearest city, Utica, was twenty miles away, and it was seven miles to the nearest town,

Richfield Springs. In spite of there being two roads through the property, the place was fairly secluded and was suitable for the establishment of a monastery.

It should be added that the climate there was fairly severe: summers were very humid with heavy rains, while winters brought frosts down to thirty below (Celsius) and drifting snow - which partly explained why the area was sparsely settled. There used to be a narrow-gauge railway passing through, but it was later shut down. For all these reasons, the property was very affordable. Fr. Panteleimon and his assistant, monk Jacob (Masharuk), earned money to purchase the property by working at the Sikorsky helicopter factory in Connecticut.

For a long time just the two of them, Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Jacob, lived in Jordanville. Later they were joined by Fr. Joseph. However, by working hard they were able to start a farm, to build a chapel, and to lay the foundation for a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

Soon after the end of the war, Vladika Vitaly (Maximenko) arranged for our brotherhood of Saint Job of Pochaev to come from Switzerland, and on 15 December 1946, fourteen monks arrived in Jordanville. Vladika Vitaly again became our superior, while Bishop Seraphim was entrusted with the editorship of the newspaper, Orthodox Russia. We brought to Jordanville the icon of our patron saint, Job of Pochaev, with a particle of his relics. We had received the icon from the print shop of the Pochaev Lavra and it had stood in the print shop in Lodomirovo. Today this icon stands in the print shop of Holy Trinity Monastery.

Vladika Vitaly was the superior not only of our brotherhood but also of Holy Trinity Monastery. One can say that almost all that we now have in Jordanville, we owe to Vladika Vitaly: he founded the seminary and was its first rector; he directed the construction of the Holy Trinity cathedral; he organized the print shop; he strengthened the monastery by sending for monks from the Saint Job monastery near Munich and from other places, thanks to which, in a short period of time the number of monks grew to fifty.

Vladika Vitaly was a man of strong and resolute character. They say that a certain monk came to Lodomirovo, who upset the other monks with his insolent behavior. Once Vladika Vitaly caught him in the act of some egregious misbehavior. Without saying a word, Vladika Vitaly grabbed him firmly by the hand, led him out onto the porch, and silently indicated that he take the road.

Vladika Vitaly stood firmly on the path of Orthodoxy. After the war, the "Leontiev Church" (so-called after its head, Metropolitan Leonty) split off from the Russian Church Abroad and entered into communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. Some people demanded that Vladika Vitaly join them. But he categorically refused any such proposition, and thanks to his firm position some of the American parishes remained loyal to the Russian Church Abroad. Vladika Vitaly reposed 8/21 March 1960, and was buried in the memorial church of Equal-to-the-Apostles Saint Vladimir in Casseville (Jackson), New Jersey.

In Jordanville

When we, thirteen monks from the Saint Job of Pochaev Brotherhood, arrived in Jordanville, construction on the Holy Trinity church had already begun. Only the foundation was completed. Fr. Panteleimon and several other monks and laymen had been working on the construction, and were utterly spent. We, with our fresh reserves of

strength, in addition to the assistance of some hired workers, eagerly applied ourselves to the task, and in a short time the lower church was completed. Soon thereafter work began on the upper church, which was consecrated by Metropolitan Anastassy in November 1950.

In the course of the next ten years, we likewise built (true, this was also with the help of hired workmen) the monks' residence and the seminary building. We also built a print shop.

Vladika Vitaly often came to Jordanville from his residence in New York City; he officiated at the Divine services, gave directives, and instructed the monks. And so it was that our brotherhood, under the direction of Vladika Vitaly, prospered in all respects: in the construction of the church, in the printing of books, and in the spiritual life.

All thirteen new arrivals were then young and energetic. Among them were:

1. Bishop Seraphim (Ivanov), the future archbishop of Chicago and Detroit (+1987).
2. Hegumen Philemon (Nikitin), the brotherhood's father-confessor in Vladimirovo and also in Jordanville; he was likewise the stitcher in the print shop. A former Valaam monk, now deceased.
3. Hieromonk Cyprian (Pizhov), now an archimandrite; a talented iconographer, among many others, who painted two magnificent icons: one of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, and a second, All the Saints of Russia. He also frescoed the Holy Virgin "Joy of All who Sorrow" Cathedral in San Francisco, where the relics of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco are located, and many other churches of the Russian Church Abroad.
4. Hegumen Nikon (Rklitsky), the future archbishop of Washington and author of the multi-volume life of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovistky).
5. Hieromonk Anthony (Medvedev), currently Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco.
6. Hegumen Antony (Yamshchikov), later an archimandrite, a spiritual confessor of the monastery and the principal printer in Jordanville. He reposed in 1993.
7. Archdeacon Sergius (Romberg), later archimandrite; book printer and steward of the monastery in Jordanville. He reposed in 1992.
8. Novice Nikolai (Gamanovich), now Archbishop Alypy of Chicago and Detroit; an iconographer and student of Archimandrite Cyprian.
9. Novice Vasily (Shkurla), now Archbishop Laurus of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery, the superior of Holy Trinity Monastery and rector of Holy Trinity Seminary.
10. Novice Vasily (Vanko), now Archimandrite Flor.

There were also Hieromonk Seraphim (Popov), Archdeacon Pimen (Kachan), and finally, myself, Nektary (Chernobyl), at that time still a hieromonk.

Soon after our arrival in Jordanville, Archbishop Vitaly ordained me to the priesthood.

Later, Archbishop Averky (Taushev) raised me to the rank of hegumen.

I was at that time at the peak of my energies and I did not know what it meant to be tired. In the monastery in Jordanville I fulfilled several obediences simultaneously: I was choir director, I was in charge of the typicon, I was a mechanic, gardener, bookbinder, and typesetter.

I have already related how Vladika Vitaly revived the printing work of our brotherhood, which had been suspended by the war. Upon his instruction, Archimandrite Panteleimon (Nizhnik) purchased two printing presses. I, with my mechanical abilities, was able soon

to have them in working order, and, on learning how to set type, began working in the print shop.

We typeset Pravoslavnaya Rus' (Orthodox Russia), published biweekly, and its supplements: the annual, Pravoslavny Puts (Orthodox Way), and the monthly, Pravoslavnaya Zhizn (Orthodox Life). Holy Trinity Orthodox Russian Calendar, Saint Vladimir Calendar, and various liturgical and spiritual books were also published. I worked on the Linotype. At that time the typesetting was also done in part manually, letter by letter. The elements were prepared from hot lead, which emitted noxious fumes. I became very ill with lead poisoning, which affected my kidneys (uremia). When I recovered, Vladika Vitaly relieved me of my obedience in the print shop, and assigned me to the garden (I had learned about gardening through helping my father in my youth). In summer I worked in the garden, while in winter I worked in the bookbinding shop, which I myself organized: in New York I bought two binding machines and fixed them up. Three fellows worked in the shop under my supervision. We bound the books that were printed in our print shop. Our garden in Jordanville was enormous, producing sufficient produce to feed all the residents of the monastery. I had two or three helpers, novices, but the bulk of the work I did myself. We planted tomatoes, cabbages, carrots, cantaloupe. Some years the harvest was so abundant that we sent vegetables to the Synod, to Novo-Diveyevo convent, and to the Kursk Hermitage in Mahopac, New York. Many pilgrims would come each year for the feast of Pentecost, not only from nearby cities - Utica, Syracuse, Albany - but also from New York City and Boston. We fed them using the vegetables from our garden. I remember making borscht for several hundred people.

Archimandrite Constantine (Zaitsev) and other staff members of Orthodox Russia

When I was in Bratislava and in Geneva, I confessed to Hegumen Philemon (Nikitin). Fr. Philemon had been a monk on Valaam, but he left when the New Calendar was introduced there. Every night for the rest of his life, Fr. Philemon would get up at two o'clock in the morning to fulfill his prayer rule, as was the tradition on Valaam. After his repose, I confessed to Fr. Antony (Yamshchikov). There was also a time when Archimandrite Constantine (Zaitsev) was my confessor. Archimandrite Constantine (Cyril Zaitsev in the world) was born in St Petersburg in 1888. He received a law degree and went on to work as an official in government offices. After participating in the White Movement, he left for China, where he was ordained to the priesthood. From China he went to America together with Bishop John of Shanghai. When, in 1949, Bishop Seraphim (Ivanov) was assigned to a diocesan see, Vladika Vitaly invited Fr. Constantine to take his place as editor of Orthodox Russia. Fr. Constantine remained at this post almost to the end of his days. He reposed in 1975 at the age of 87. Fr. Constantine was very reserved, always preserving an inner concentration. He preferred solitude. Every day he would take walks by himself along the monastery roads. In church he served with the same concentration and often gave sermons. Everyone regarded him with utmost respect. He had numerous spiritual children among both monastics and laymen, and he was the most popular confessor among the seminarians. His cell was piled with letters from readers from all over the Russian diaspora, and he could barely keep up with this correspondence. Archimandrite Constantine was highly educated and responded to all current events. He was fiercely opposed to communism, he was a strong supporter of autocratic monarchy, he sensed the nearness of the time of antichrist, and in this spirit he wrote his numerous articles and editorials which appeared in almost every issue of

Orthodox Russia and its annual, *The Orthodox Way*. I worked under his supervision in the print shop, typesetting issues of these publications.

Among the staff of Orthodox Russia at that time, I. M. Andreyev and N. D. Talberg stand out in particular.

Professor Ivan Andreyev (1894-1974), as a professor in St Petersburg, was a member of the delegation which, in 1927, tried to dissuade Metropolitan Sergius from his Declaration. Later he joined the Catacomb Church. He was incarcerated on Solovki. After the war he found himself in Germany, and from there he came to Jordanville. In his articles he described the life of the catacomb Christians of Stalin's era.

Professor Nicholas Talberg (1886-1977) was a pre-revolutionary law school graduate. A man of distinctly monarchist convictions, he became an ?migr? church historian, and wrote *A History of the Russian Church*.

These religiously oriented writers were Orthodox zealots, who admitted no compromise with any manifestations of apostasy in the contemporary world, including the ecumenism and Sergianism of the Moscow Patriarchate. They were like-minded and in solidarity with Vladika Vitaly and, after his death, with Archbishop Averky. Highly gifted and widely educated, they were not only church writers but also teachers at the Jordanville seminary: Archimandrite Constantine taught pastoral theology and Russian literature, while Professor Andreyev, who had been a doctor-psychiatrist, gave courses in psychology as well as in moral theology.

There were also other talented writers on the staff of Orthodox Russia at that time: Archpriest Nicholas Deputatov, Protopriest Basil Boshcha-novsky, Professor G. Znamensky, Peter Marr, N. Bobrov, and others.

Metropolitan Anastassy and Archbishop John of Shanghai and San Francisco

The head of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky) often came to Jordanville from his residence in New York City. In spite of his high position and rank, Metropolitan Anastassy was very simple and unassuming. I drove him around the monastery property in a dilapidated, stripped down old Ford that had no roof, and he was not phased in the least. He would come to the garden, pick a cucumber, and eat it right there and then.

He was very fond of the singing of the monastery choir. At that time I was the choir director (I had learned to read notes when I was at the pedagogical seminary in Alexandria).

Metropolitan Anastassy was a true hierarch, a man of firm and unwavering convictions, who led a strict, ascetic life.

He was a resolute opponent of any rapprochement with the Moscow Patriarchate. In his Legacy he wrote: "As regards the Moscow Patriarchate and its hierarchs, inasmuch as they are in close, active and amicable union with the Soviet regime, which openly confesses its absolute godlessness and strives to implant atheism in the Russian people, the Church Abroad, guarding its purity, cannot have any canonical, prayerful or even everyday relations with them. At the same time, it leaves each of them ultimately to the judgment of a Sobor of the future free Russian Church."

He reposed 9/22 May 1960 and was buried in Jordanville, in a crypt at the back of the main church, next to the tomb of of the renown Orthodox zealot and ascetic, Archbishop Tikhon of San Francisco.

I shall also say a few words about the now glorified hierarch John of Shanghai and San

Francisco (although I did not know him well and rarely saw him).

This was a very simple man, magnetic and accessible. He was always surrounded by people.

He communed daily. He adamantly opposed any violation of the church typicon, and if anyone on the cliros skipped anything, or did not read or chant in full the appointed text, Vladika would compel him to read it again, beginning from the place where the omission had been made. This displeased some of the clergy, but the simple people loved him, and he had numerous followers who, even in his lifetime, considered him to be a saint.

Archbishop Averky (Taushev)

In 1951 there came to Jordanville from Munich Archimandrite Averky, who later became Archbishop of Syracuse and Holy Trinity. He brought with him the most sacred object belonging to the Russian Diaspora - the wonderworking Kursk-Root icon of the Mother of God.

Vladika Averky, Alexander Taushev in the world, was born in 1906 in the Russian city of Kazan, in the family of a military prosecutor. After the Revolution the family fled to Bulgaria. There, in Sofia, Alexander entered the theological faculty. During that time he became a student of the well-known ascetic, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, who had been a father-confessor of the Russian Royal Family. Later Vladika Averky compiled a biography of Archbishop Theo-phan, which was published as a separate booklet.

After graduating from the theological faculty, he served for a time as a parish priest in Carpatho-Russia. Then he moved to Belgrade, where he was an assistant and father-confessor of Metropolitan Anastassy. In 1945 he moved to Munich, and from there to Jordanville, where he began to teach at the seminary (he gave courses in New Testament scripture). In 1953 he was ordained Bishop of Syracuse and Holy Trinity.

Later, when Archbishop Vitaly had grown old and infirm and was no longer able to leave his residence in the Bronx, Vladika Averky assumed the responsibilities of superior of the monastery and rector of the seminary in Jordanville. And when Archimandrite Constantine fell ill, Vladika Averky also took over as editor of Orthodox Russia.

Vladika Averky led a serious and concentrated life. He arose at four o'clock, perhaps even earlier, and performed his monastic rule. He was very strict in fulfilling the church canons. Seminarians taking his courses were obliged to learn and to know the Nomokanon (compilation of canons of the Orthodox Church). He guided the monastery and the seminary with a firm hand, and did not allow any self-will -neither among the monks nor among the seminarians.

It should be added that his firmness of character was combined with a kindly and benevolent disposition: he was very considerate and attentive towards people. In his sermons at funerals, he always found warm and sincere words to say about the deceased (some of these eulogies were published in the anthology of his works).

For the most part, his sermons concerned the subject of eschatology. He also compiled a commentary on the Apocalypse (the book of Revelation). He felt strongly that we were living on the threshold of the coming of antichrist, and that we must prepare for the Last Judgment. Some people listened to him with skepticism, but, nevertheless, we now see that his sorrowful predictions, made thirty years ago, have clearly begun to be fulfilled. He revered Bishop Theophan the Recluse, considering him to be his patron, and he frequently repeated his predictions concerning the fate of Russia and the world, many of which have already come to pass.

Vladika Averky was a member of the Synod [of Bishops] of the Russian Church Abroad. In almost every issue of Orthodox Russia, there appeared his editorials and long articles, in which he defended Orthodoxy, battled against the spirit of apostasy and against ecumenism. A majority of his articles were published during his life in a four-volume collection of works titled, *Modernity in the Light of the Word of God*. He often exposed the falsehood of the Moscow Patriarchate and was a staunch opponent of any rapprochement with it.

I deeply revered Vladika Averky, and he, on his part, was very kindly disposed towards me and presented me with gifts of his books inscribed with his own hand.

He became my father confessor. Unfortunately, I was with him for only five years: in 1966 I was sent to Mount Athos, and then to the Holy Land. But we corresponded regularly, and I continued to receive spiritual counsel from him until he died.

He reposed at the age of seventy, on Lazarus Saturday, 31 March/3 April, 1976, and was buried with great honor in a crypt at the back of the Holy Trinity Monastery church in Jordanville. Many people gathered for his funeral, among them were not only Russians but also Greeks and Bulgarians. On Mount Athos

I spent twenty years in Jordanville (from 1946-1966), and was then sent to St Elias Skete on Mount Athos. Before my departure, Metropolitan Philaret raised me to the rank of archimandrite. At that time, the superior of St Elias Skete, Fr. Nicholas, was very old and no longer able to govern the skete, and I took his place as superior.

I had been on Athos once before, as a pilgrim, and it had made a great impression on me. For this reason, although I had grown accustomed to Jordanville and had no desire to leave it, it gave me great joy to return again to the Holy Mountain.

I went first to Athens and began the process of obtaining a visa to Athos. This turned out to be no easy task, but Bishop Anatoly, a Russian ?migr? living at that time in Greece, assisted me, and I succeeded.

I arrived on Athos in the spring. Everything was in bloom, and there was greenery all around. The mountains, the monasteries, the sea - it was all magnificent.

Saint Elias Skete is situated high in the mountains. Access is difficult: the road is a continual, steep ascent. I reached the skete partly on foot, and partly by donkey. Saint Elias Skete is a dependency of the Greek monastery of Pantocrator, and it is located seven kilometers from Karyes, the capital of Athos. It was founded in the eighteenth century by Saint Paisius Velichkovsky. For some time the skete remained quite small, both in physical size and in the number of monks. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that it began to expand and was settled by Russian monks; before the Revolution, their number reached 300. The magnificent church, in honor of the Prophet Elias, was completed not long before the Revolution and was consecrated by Archbishop Anastassy (Gribanovsky).

It is said that when the church was being built, a fool-for-Christ ran around it shouting: "Build, build! It will be empty all the same!" And so it was. Not long before the Revolution, the Russian ambassador in Athens advised the superior at the skete to gather all the monastery's funds which were kept in various banks in Odessa, as there was danger of a coup. The superior was sure that Russia stood firm and inviolable. The ambassador, however, proved to be right. The Bolsheviks expropriated the monastery's funds, and the monks were compelled to work strenuously in towns and villages near Athos in order to pay off the debts incurred by the building of the church. Many monks

exhausted their strength in this labor, and died prematurely.

When I came to Saint Elias Skete, there remained only three residents: the former superior, Fr. Nicholas, who was already very elderly; a hieromonk, also infirm; and a third, the steward.

The skete had three or four churches, among which was a rectory church where daily liturgy was served. The service (Matins, Midnight Office, and Divine Liturgy) began at one o'clock in the morning, following the Athonite tradition, and ended towards morning. Afterwards everyone rested before going to their obediences.

I quickly found myself work to which I was accustomed: I selected a suitable plot of ground and planted a garden, which proved sufficient to feed me and all the residents. The work occupied all my free time away from services. There were three of us in the priestly rank, and we took turns serving, while the steward sang on the cliros.

The Athonite rule is very demanding for a Russian. Russian churches very rarely have night services: only once or twice a year, on Pascha and sometimes Nativity. I was unaccustomed to the night services, and became very tired from standing all night long. And there were few amenities on Athos, which also made life difficult: we would go around in the evening and at night with lanterns or candles.

In spite of all the difficulties, it was absolutely wonderful there on Mount Athos. It was so quiet and tranquil. During the day, from the top of the mountain on which the skete was located, one could see the sea. I recall the time I spent on Athos as the happiest period of my life, and I would gladly live there again. Afterwards I asked several times if I could be reappointed there, but this was not granted. While on Athos I visited the Russian hermits - Fr. Nikodim of Karoulia and others.

I spent over a year on Mount Athos, and then, at the insistence of Archbishop Averky, I returned to Jordanville.

In the Russian Monasteries of Jerusalem

In Jordanville I planted my garden, and there was a bountiful harvest. That fall, however, the Synod unexpectedly reassigned me to Jerusalem. I did not want to go. First of all, the monasteries there are large, there are many pilgrims, many tourists from all over the world, and consequently there are many temptations. In Jerusalem there was not that solitude that I found on Mount Athos, nor even the tranquility of Jordanville. Jordanville received its share of pilgrims, but they were "ours," from the local Russian ?migr?s; very rarely were there tourists. I therefore asked Vladika Averky to request, on my behalf, that I remain in Jordanville, but he said that it was not possible to rescind the Synod's decision.

I arrived in the Holy Land in 1968. The Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission at that time was Archimandrite Antony (Grabbe). His residence was located at the Russian Excavations, and I was at first given a cell there, where I lived for about a year.

In Jerusalem I met two old acquaintances: the superior of the Mount Olives Convent, Abbess Ta-mara, with whom I became acquainted in Geneva, and Archimandrite Dimitri (Biakai), whom I knew in Europe. (When I came to Jerusalem, he was living in retirement at the Mount of Olives convent.) I used to visit them often there on the Mount of Olives.

On Thursdays I served Divine Liturgy at the Russian Excavations, in the church of Saint Alexander Nevsky; on Fridays I served at the Bethany School; other days I served at Gethsemane, at the convent of Saint Mary Magdalene. On days that I was not assigned to

serve, I would go to Jericho, where we had two fruit orchards, and there I worked. There in the Russian monasteries of Jerusalem I met a number of remarkable people, representatives of old, Imperial Russia. They had all left their homeland after the Revolution. Among them were: the superior of the Gethsemane convent, Abbess Barbara (Tsvetkova), who in Russia was close to the Tikhonite bishops; the elderly spiritual father of the Gethsemane convent, Fr. Seraphim, a former aide-de-camp of Tsar Nicholas II; Hegumen Stefan, also a father-confessor at the Gethsemane convent and a former soldier of the Imperial Army; Archimandrite Modeste, spiritual father of the Mount of Olives convent, formerly a monk of New Athos monastery [in Russia - trans.]; after the dispersal of the monastery, he was in the catacombs; at the end of the '30s he hid in the Caucasus; Nun Alexandra, whose father served at the court in Tsarskoe Selo; General M. Khripunov, president of the Palestine Society, formerly also at the Imperial Court. Another remarkable person was the abbess of Gethsemane convent, Mary Robinson, an Anglican convert to Orthodoxy.

Frs. Seraphim and Stefan served at that time in Gethsemane. When they could no longer serve because of infirmities brought by old age, I began serving daily at Gethsemane. In addition, at the Mount of Olives Convent I engaged in my usual work - as a gardener. With a tractor, I tilled the olive orchard, and pruned and fertilized the trees. Given this attention, the withering olive trees came to life and gave an abundant harvest. I also planted a garden, where I grew vegetables for the monastery kitchen.

At the same time I began work in the mechanic and woodworking shops at the monastery. I cut crosses out of wood and prepared icons for pilgrims; I repaired candlestands and other church furnishings and fixed sewing machines. Soon people began coming to me with requests - to glue a chair, to tin-plate a kettle, to repair a watch. I had virtually no free time: mornings were taken up with services, the afternoons with work in the gardens or in the shops, and besides that there were confessions and my own prayer rule that I performed in my cell. I was always busy, always wrestling with time. And so it continued for many years of my life as a priest and as a spiritual father in the Russian monasteries of Jerusalem.

About the Holy Land

I love Mount Athos, but I am also very attached to the Holy Land. Every time that I leave Jerusalem for any time to go to America, I feel a pull to go back, as if to a place that is dear to me, and I impatiently await my return to Jerusalem.

Everything in the Holy Land is dear to me: the Tomb of Our Lord, the Russian Excavations - this house that was built by our Russian people receives me as if it were a small corner of Russia.

Here in the Holy Land, each stone, each place serves as a reminder of the events in Holy Scripture. After all, most of what is written about in the Gospels has been preserved as it was in the time of the earthly life of Jesus Christ, and this confirms the truth of the Gospels.

I always liked very much to take part in the annual procession of Great Thursday, when, late at night, after the reading of the Twelve Gospels, all the nuns and pilgrims walk from the monastery of Gethsemane and, with the chanting of the troparion of Great Thursday, "When the glorious disciple..," with candles and lanterns in hand, follow the way of the Cross. En route they stop at the prison where Christ was held, and at other places associated with Christ's Passions, and read passages from the Gospels corresponding to

these events. The procession ends at the Russian Excavations, at the threshold of the Judgment Gate, through which Christ passed on His way to Golgotha, and there again the Gospel is read and the Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission gives a homily about the events of Great and Holy Thursday.

Similarly, I always joined the solemn procession that the Greeks organize before the Feast of Dormition, when, to the chanting of spiritual hymns, the image of the Holy Virgin is taken from the Greek metochion near the Holy Sepulchre to the Greek church in Gethsemane where the tomb of the Mother of God is located. (This image, it should be noted, was given to the Greeks by some Russians.) Many monks and nuns, priests, local Christians, and pilgrims from different countries take part in the procession.

I also liked to go to Mount Tabor for the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. On this day a bus takes nuns from the Russian convents, to Tabor.

I used always to walk up the mountain (at that time I was still full of energy) - not along the road but straight up - to the top of Tabor, where we would serve a moleben.

On the third day of the feast of the Holy Trinity it was an old custom to visit without fail our Russian monastery at the Oak of Mamre in Hebron, where, in the presence of a great gathering of Russians, Greeks and Orthodox Arabs, I would serve a solemn Liturgy near the Oak in the open air. Likewise, we served the Divine Liturgy at our school in Bethany on Lazarus Saturday, its patronal feast, and then visited the nearby cave of the resurrected Lazarus, where the Gospel was read.

We also made an annual trip to Phar on the day of Saint Chariton, and visited his cave high up in a cliff. We would bring a ladder to climb up into the cave and there served Matins and Liturgy.

On the first day of Christ's Nativity, all the Russian nuns would go to Bethlehem and venerate the sacred sites of the Cave and the Shepherds' Field, and there serve molebens.

On Nativity and on Pascha we always paid a visit to the Jerusalem patriarch to greet him with the Feast, and there at the Patriarchate we would be treated to a festive reception.

On Theophany we would go to the Jordan River, to the place where Jesus Christ was baptized. Later, when, because of the political situation, access to the Jordan at this place (near Jericho) was closed, we began going to the Jordan in Galilee, and there we blessed the water, and whoever so desired immersed themselves in the waters of the Jordan.

In this measured way the life of our Russian monasteries in the Holy Land flows, from one great feast to another. Of course, between these feasts there are also ordinary days, but here in the Holy Land even these are special, for almost daily there come pilgrims from all corners of the world - in groups and individually - and we, residents of the Holy Land, must show them some attention, tell them about the holy places and show them these sacred sites connected to the feasts of Christ's Nativity, His Transfiguration, Ascension, and other great events from the Gospel narrative.

For this reason, the life of the monastics in the Holy Land is constantly festively adorned.

Epilogue

I must say that by nature I have a particular trait - to be accurate in all that I do. This trait revealed itself in my relation to the Church as well, and this striving - to observe the church canons no matter what - this striving for the Truth, led me away from renovationism and from Sergianism, to the Catacomb Church.

When I found myself abroad, I sought there also the True Church, a Church that was truly orthodox, where all the Orthodox canons were observed - and I found such a Church: our

Russian Church Abroad, headed at that time by Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky). In this Church I have experienced many spiritual joys: in Jordanville, then on Mount Athos, and, finally, in the Holy Land.

Every Christian, in every age, has considered it the greatest joy to visit the Holy Land at least once, even if only for a short time. I have been granted the great joy of living here for nearly thirty years.

After the difficult and agonizing life in the camps and in prisons, where for a long time I could not imagine life "outside," and where I was once under threat of execution, I managed to reach freedom - something I didn't even dream of. What is more, in my old age I have the consolation of living in the Holy Land, where our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the salvation of the human race.

Jerusalem 1996

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