



## *Fire & Light*

### **St. Symeon Orthodox Church**

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✠ **November 17, 2013** ✠

### ☼ **The Advent Season** ☼

**St. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neo-Caesarea (266)**

**St. Gregory of Tours (594)**

**St. Nikon, Abbot of Radonezh (1426)**

Fasting is wonderful,  
because it tramples our  
sins like a dirty weed,  
while it cultivates and  
raises truth like a flower.

~ St. John Chrysostom

**We remember today our Founder of Blessed Memory,  
The Very Rev. Father George Gladky!  
*May his Memory be Eternal!***

✠ **Wed. November 20 6:30pm Vespers – Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos  
in the Temple**

✠ **Thurs. November 21 6:00am Liturgy – Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos  
in the Temple**

⇒ **Advent is a fasting season from now until Nativity – fasting from meat and dairy products.**

⇒ **Next Sunday is IOCC Sunday ~ International Orthodox Christian Charities Sunday**

**Two Prayers attributed to St. Philaret of Moscow (November 19):**

#### **Prayer at the Beginning of the Day**

O Lord, grant me to meet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Thy holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Thy will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul, and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by Thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray Thou Thyself in me. Amen.

#### **Teach Me to Pray**

My Lord, I know not what I ought to ask of Thee. Thou and Thou alone knowest my needs. Thou lovest me more than I am able to love Thee. O Father, grant unto me, Thy servant, all which I cannot ask. For a cross I dare not ask, nor for consolation; I dare only to stand in Thy presence. My heart is open to Thee. Thou seest my needs of which I myself am unaware. Behold and lift me up! In Thy presence I stand, awed and silenced by Thy will and Thy judgments, into which my mind cannot penetrate. To Thee I offer myself as a sacrifice. No other desire is mine but to fulfill Thy will. Teach me how to pray. Do Thyself pray within me. Amen.

## **This and That**

Just as it is a fearful sin to do something that would hinder someone's repentance, it is a fearful sin to hinder someone's approach to Orthodoxy by our lives, our actions, and our words. An ecumenism that pretends that the real differences between Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are insignificant is precisely such a sin of fearful proportions. It denies the Truth that so many former heterodox Christians have struggled to find and attempts to shut the door to others still searching. We must not be deceived by the smiley mask of ecumenism. Ecumenism is in opposition to someone seeking the Truth and striving to enter the Church of Christ at every single step. Ecumenism encourages feeling good about discovering a superficial unity, not compunction and a life of repentance. Ecumenism discourages a search for the Truth that would mean admitting that there is also falsehood.

Ecumenism does not really have the humility to listen to another perspective apart from its own, especially if it suggests that ecumenism is itself a lie. Ecumenism allows for comparisons, but not conclusions that one tradition is more genuine than another. And in the end, ecumenism discourages any decisive action that would be in opposition to its own goals. In truth, Christ's words to the Pharisees apply to the ecumenists, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

**Fr. Alexis Trader**

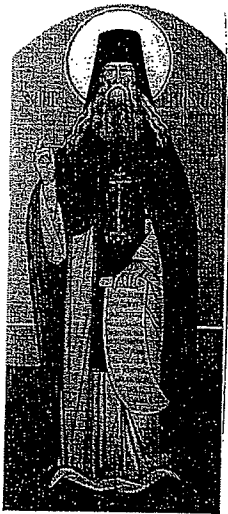
Humbly seeking in turn gives way to humbly submitting to the Truth, once the Truth has been found. Frank Schaeffer puts it in this way: "I no longer believed it was my duty to stand in arrogant judgment over the historical Church... as if it were merely a matter of personal taste, amusement, or comfort. Rather I began to see that it was the Holy Tradition of the historic Church that stood in judgment over *me* ... This is no theoretical or theological assertion, but a very practical one, since as a moral cripple I need the crutches - this historical certainty - offered by the historic community of belief." When Father Peter Gilquist was asked what prompted him to leave the Protestant world, he gave a similar response, "Ultimately the change came for us when we stopped trying to judge and re-evaluate Church history, and for once invited Church history to judge and evaluate *us*."

**Fr. Alexis Trader**

### **Fr. Stephen Freeman – *On Post-Soviet Russia*:**

"Regardless of how one feels about its present leadership – the significant question with the collapse of the Soviet system was "now what"? Communism had a mythology and a direction – a purpose – certainly misguided in many ways – but its utopianism (a kind of Christian heresy) served for a cultural identity. Afterwards, I heard the question being asked, "Did we suffer these 70 years only to be able to shop at Walmart?" There was a deep echoing emptiness for anyone who was listening as the question was put to the West. America failed miserably – I would argue that it is the single greatest failure in American history and a judgment on the American project. We had nothing to say and even less than nothing to offer to another nation that for a moment in its history was sincerely asking us a primal, existential question."

"In the aftermath of that failure, Putin has articulated the vision of an Orthodox Russia. People can argue that he is less than sincere, etc., and perhaps that is true. But, it seems to me, that such an articulation is much to be preferred to the vision of the EU (whatever that death-wish may be) or the blind consumption of America. China's headlong rush into consumer production and consumption is among the most soul-less journeys in history. It will end badly for them if it is not corrected, as will our own marriage to mammon. At present there seem to be but three clear voices in the world: the consumerists (among whom I include China, the U.S. and EU); the Islamists (tortured by their own demonic visions); and the Orthodox (at present only a mild voice being expressed in the whirlwind of everything else)."



## St. Paisius Velichkovsky (+1794) – November 15

There are three aspects of St. Paissius' life for which we venerate him: his personal holiness, his revival of monasticism and spirituality in Romania and Russia; and his translation from Greek into Slavonic and Romanian of many writings by the greatest Orthodox masters of prior centuries, edited into a collection which would be called the *Philokalia* ("Love of the Good"). For these reasons, he is a pivotal figure in Orthodox Church history.

St. Paisius grew up in a devout family, a reminder to us that Christian families are where saints are born and nurtured to begin their journey to heaven. Even as a child, St. Paisius had a profound inner spiritual life and love for God, which his parents and the general atmosphere of his household strongly encouraged. He loved church services and reading spiritual books, especially the lives of the Saints.

When he was 13, he went to the Kiev Theological Academy. But he longed for the monastic life and so, following the voice of his heart, he became a monk when he was 19. He wandered to Moldavia (northern Romania), where there were then a great many holy elders and hesychastic sketes. There he learned under his Elder Basil of Poiana Marului, the important lessons of obedience, humility and the practice of the "Prayer of the Heart."

Seeking further spiritual wealth, he went to Mt. Athos in northern Greece, which was, and still is, the greatest center of Orthodox monasticism. There he labored faithfully and was tonsured into the Lesser Schema, the secondary level of monastic obedience. Recognizing his gifts for spiritual leadership, other monks gathered around him. They insisted he become their priest. He was ordained a priest and always celebrated the Divine Liturgy profoundly with tears of joy and compunction. Soon there were many monks in his brotherhood, composed of Slavs and Romanians. They had to move to find a place to develop their brotherhood. Eventually, with a blessing, they were invited to take over Neamts Monastery in Moldavia, which grew to become the spiritual center of Romanian Orthodoxy, amongst many great spiritual monasteries. St. Paisius was tonsured to the Great Schema, the highest level of monastic order, and elevated to Archimandrite, the highest honor of monastic priesthood. His personal holiness, and gifts of spiritual counsel, and administrative leadership resulted in his monastery growing to 1,000 monks, making it then the largest Orthodox monastery in the world.

While on the Holy Mountain, St. Paisius had gained great spiritual wisdom from reading the Church Fathers and observing the life of the Athonites. He was moved to translate and edit the Patristic writings, especially their writings on the Jesus Prayer and the ascetic practices, necessary to acquire the heights of inner illumination and union with God. He would continue his own personal translation work, despite all his responsibilities as abbot and elder, until his last days. Neamt Monastery became a center for this sacred scholarly work, as St. Paisius attracted to his monastery and encouraged a whole army of gifted monastic translators who translated previously unknown works of the Fathers and liturgical services from Greek into Romanian and Russian. St. Paisius' collection, *The Philokalia*, profoundly contributed to the subsequent flowering of monasticism and spirituality in Russia and Romania in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In Russia, the spiritual life of the monasteries had been in decline for a century due to the harsh laws and interfering policies of Tsars Peter and Catherine, which severely restricted monasteries and the life of the Church. The famous Optina Monastery, southwest of Moscow, grew and flourished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a direct result of St. Paisius' guidance through those taught by his disciples who settled there and developed the tradition of eldership. Optina, in turn, played a vital role in Russian spiritual revival through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and into the 20<sup>th</sup>. It cultivated several revered elders (startzi) who offered spiritual direction to those monastic and lay people, including the great 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian writers such as Dostoyevsky, who came from across Russia for their blessing, prayers and counsel.

***Through the prayers of our Holy Father Paisius, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us!***

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✦ A traveler setting out on a long, difficult and arduous journey and foreseeing that he may lose his way when he comes back, will put up signs and guideposts along his path in order to make his return simpler. The watchful man, foreseeing this same thing, will use the sacred texts to guide him.

**St. Hesychios of Jerusalem (5<sup>th</sup>C)**

## Wisdom from the Life of St. Paisius Velichkovsky (+1794)

St. Paisius Velichkovsky, searching for a monastery to live in, went to Kiev where he happened to meet his sister-in-law, the widow of his older brother Archpriest John. She informed him of his mother's sorrow when he left Kiev, and her mind seemed to be affected by her grief. Then one day an angel appeared to her and told her that instead of loving the Creator with her whole heart and soul, she loved His creation (her son) more. Because of this excessive love, the angel went on, she was thinking of starving herself to death, which would result in her eternal condemnation. The angel said that by God's grace, her son would become a monk, and that she should also renounce the world and become a nun. After this, she became calm and accepted God's will. She entered a convent and was tonsured with the name Juliana. After about ten years, she departed to the Lord.

While at Kiev, St. Paisius (named Platon before his tonsure) met two monks from Romania who were about to return to their country. After crossing the border into Moldavia, they came to the Skete of St Nicholas, which is called Treisteny, around 1745. The Elder of the Skete, Hieroschemamonk Michael, was away on business in Ukraine, so Platon and his companions were welcomed by the Superior, Fr Demetrius. Platon was placed under a general obedience and given a cell near the Skete, from which the church was visible.

As he was sleeping one night, the semantron (a wooden board hit with a hammer) was sounded calling the monks to Sunday Matins, but Platon did not hear it. He woke up and ran to the church, only to find that the Gospel had already been read, and the Canon was being sung. In his grief and shame, he did not enter the church, but returned to his cell and wept bitter tears. After the Liturgy, when it was time for the meal, the Superior and the Elder were surprised that Platon had not been seen at the services. The Elder ordered that the meal be delayed while he sent a Fr Athanasius to find out what had happened to Platon. Fr Athanasius found him and asked why he was weeping. With difficulty, Platon was able to tell him the cause of his sorrow. Fr Athanasius tried to console him and urged him to come to the Skete, where the others were waiting for him. Finally, he was persuaded to go.

Seeing the brethren at table but not eating, Platon fell down before them weeping and asking forgiveness. The Elder and the Superior lifted him up and heard from Fr Athanasius the reason for his sorrow. The Elder told Platon not to grieve so over something that had happened involuntarily, and did his best to console him. From that time, however, the Saint would not sleep lying down in bed, but sitting up on a bench.

### **Humility and Grace ~ Elder Paisios of the Holy Mt. (+1994)**

✠ God wants and desires only one thing from us: our humbleness. He does not need anything else; just to humble ourselves, so He can make us partakers of His divine grace, which was granted to us through the mystery of holy Baptism. Although we did not love Him yet, neither had we struggled to acquire His grace, He gave it to us as a gift out of His extreme kindness. He is only asking from us to humble ourselves and respond out of gratefulness and appreciation to His love. Thus, divine grace, which abides in us, will be activated and function accordingly. It will make us love God and get to know Him; it will do everything for us, if only we humble ourselves and allow for it to act. The only obstacle to the energy of God's grace is our pride, our lack of humility.



# Christianity under Siege: Building a Common Front in Defense of the Faith

An Interview with Metropolitan Hilarion

*In early January 2013, a United Nations special envoy reported that the civil war in Syria had reached "unprecedented levels of horror" with an estimated death toll of more than 60,000 people. In the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings, the situation for Christians in Syria, and in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa, continues to deteriorate.*

*The Russian Orthodox Church has been among the most active witnesses against Christian persecution in Syria and other countries around the world. In a statement about the Middle East, the Russian Bishops' Council warned of "the vanishing of Christianity in the lands where it has existed for two millennia and where the main events of the Holy History took place would become a spiritual and historical tragedy."*

*The bishop in charge of external affairs for the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) of Volokolamsk, has compared the situation in Syria, after almost two years of fighting, to Iraq, which saw a virtual depopulation of Christians following the U.S. invasion in 2003.*

*Hilarion has also been active in ecumenical relations with Roman Catholics and conservative Protestants, including the Anglican Church of North America which represents U.S. and Canadian congregations. The Russian bishop has described the Roman Catholic Church as "the main bulwark" in the West standing in defense of traditional moral values. He has*

*worked to build stronger ties with other Christian communities but has also been outspoken about what he sees as a lack of "fidelity to Biblical principles in the realm of morality" in progressive Protestant churches.*

*Religion & Liberty Executive Editor John Couretas interviewed Hilarion in October 2012 at the Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Nashotah, Wis. He was at the Anglican seminary to receive an honorary Doctor of*



Pope Benedict XVI greets Alfeyev Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, upon his arrival for a private audience at the Vatican.

*Music degree. A noted composer as well as an accomplished Orthodox Christian theologian, he delivered a talk at Nashotah titled, "The Music of J.S. Bach as a Religious Phenomenon." In the interview, the Russian bishop talks about the situation in the Middle East, the Balkans and North Africa, and ecumenical relations.*

**R&L:** *What, in your mind, needs to happen in Syria to bring an end to the violence and to*

*begin the process of reconciliation in that part of the world?*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** *If we look at events which have been unfolding in the Middle East for the last 10 years, we can see a tendency, which is noticeable in many countries. And this has to do with the gradual extermination of Christianity in the Middle East due to various political reasons, due to great political instability,*

*which is peculiar to many countries of this region. I think if we look at the example of Iraq, for example, we'll see that 10 years ago there were 1.5 million Christians living in that country. Now, there are only 150,000 left. So nine-tenths of the Christian population of Iraq was either exterminated or had to flee.*

*The situation is also dire for the Copts.*

*We see a very grave situation of Christians in Egypt where thousands of Coptic*

*Christians have had to leave the country because they can no longer live there. We see a very difficult situation in Libya, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, and now even in Syria. I was recently in Rome addressing the Synod of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, and two senior Catholic prelates from the Middle East region approached me. One was a Maronite and the other one was a Melkite. And both of them thanked me for the position of the*

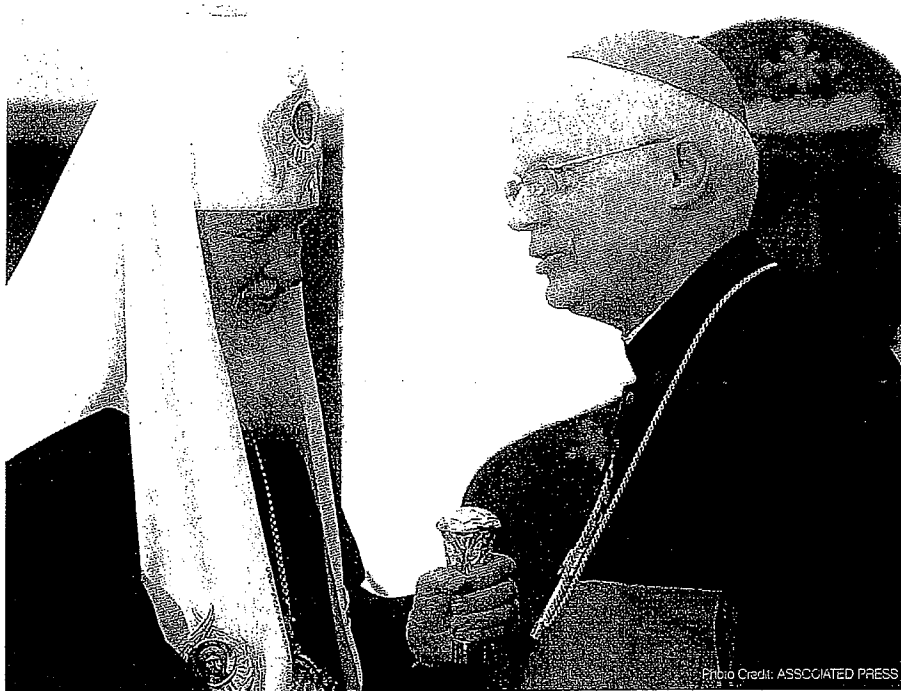
ssian Orthodox Church and also for  
e position of the Russian Federation on  
e international scene with regards to  
ria, because the Russian Federation  
es not take position in favor of one or  
other party of the country. But we  
lieve that all parties of the conflict  
ould be partners of the dialogue. If  
u simply ignore one party, then it  
esn't lead anywhere.

*Are there any areas in Syria now where religious  
minorities are secure?*

What we see now is that the inter-reli-  
gious situation in the  
regions which are still  
controlled by the  
government is stable.  
It is as stable as it  
used to be for many  
decades, if not centu-  
s. In the places  
where rebels take  
power, for example  
the city of Homs,  
we see that immedi-  
ately the Iraqi sce-  
rio is being put in  
practice. We see that  
Christians are in  
grave danger. They  
have to flee; they  
have to leave their  
homes. And people  
in Syria, the reli-  
gious leaders with  
whom I spoke, they  
say that if the regime  
is overthrown, then

they will have to leave their country. This  
is what was happening in Iraq. This is  
what is happening in Egypt. And this is  
what is likely to happen in Syria. So I  
think the foreign powers, which try to  
work for democracy in these countries—in  
order to achieve it they intervene. They  
could always think about the Christian  
minority because it seems to me that these  
people are simply ignored. Nobody takes  
into account their existence, their suffer-  
ings, and the fact that they become the  
victims of the unrest when the politi-  
cal situation of these countries changes.

I spoke about this at the Synod of Bishops  
in Rome. And most recently I spoke  
about this at the session of the Third  
Committee of the United Nations in New  
York. And I cited examples of several  
countries where the rights of Christians  
are violated. And I called on the interna-  
tional community to create a mechanism  
of defense of Christians in the Middle  
East, in particular, and in other countries  
as well. And this mechanism should in-  
volve the granting of political support or  
economic aid only in exchange for guar-  
antees for Christian minorities.



Patriarch Kirill, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, left, and head of Poland's Roman Catholic church archbishop Jozef Michalik shake hands after talks in Warsaw, Poland

*Some people are looking at Syria and drawing  
parallels to Kosovo or Northern Cyprus, places  
where Christianity is in danger of being de-  
stroyed or has disappeared altogether.*

Yes. Kosovo is another example of the  
negligence of the Christian population  
because politicians had their own politi-  
cal goals, which they achieved with the  
separation of Kosovo from Serbia. But  
the result for the Christian population  
was disastrous. I visited Kosovo twice,  
and I must say that Christians simply left  
this region. And those who remain, they

live in very difficult conditions. For ex-  
ample, I visited one Orthodox Church in  
Kosovo where four ladies live under the  
protection of the guards. One lady has  
her house across the street. For the last  
four years she could not visit her house  
even once, because as soon as she leaves  
the compound, she will lose the protection  
and she is likely to be killed.

*A question about your visit to the Roman  
Catholic synod of bishops in October 2012,  
which Pope Benedict called to talk about the  
New Evangelization. The message out of this  
gathering, according to news reports, was that*

*despite the growth of  
secularism, increased  
hostility towards Chris-  
tianity, and sinful be-  
havior by some church  
members, there is cause  
for real optimism about  
the future because of  
Christ's promises of sal-  
vation. Do you see  
Rome's New Evangeli-  
zation project as a posi-  
tive development for all  
Christians in Western  
Europe? And are you  
personally optimistic  
about the future in  
light of Christ's promise  
to us?*

I think the church has  
survived in very dif-  
ferent circumstances  
across the 2,000 years  
of its existence. And,

yes, I am optimistic in the terms of Christ's  
promise to the church that the gates of  
Hell will not prevail against the church.

*As we saw in Russia?*

We saw it in Russia. We saw it in many  
places. And in this way I'm optimistic,  
because I believe that Christ continues to  
lead His church, that the Holy Spirit con-  
tinues to vivify it. If we take the example  
of Russia, we see that the revival of the  
church is very noticeable. It is unprece-  
dented in scale. And we see that many  
new people come to church.

I'll give you another example. People in the West very often complain about the shortage of vocations to the priesthood and monastic life. Twenty five years ago we had, in the Russian Church, 18 monasteries. Now, we have more than 800 monasteries. So almost 800 new monasteries were built or old monasteries were restarted, and all of them are filled with monks and nuns, mostly young people. This indicates that there is no such thing as a post-Christian epoch of which some people in the West are talking. You just come to Russia, to the Ukraine, you visit these monasteries, you visit our theological schools, and you will see that the church is flourishing. And I believe that even if, in some places, the church may seem to be in decline, it will always be flourishing in some other places.

*In one of your essays, you say that "militant*

church, any kind of visible role of the church in the public sphere. Secularism tolerates the church as long as it is hidden behind the walls of parishes or family homes, but it denies the right of the church to be present in the public domain, to have voice in social affairs and political life. One of the examples is the constant dissatisfaction with the presence of Christian symbols in public places. The notorious case of *Lautsi v. Italy* is but one example of this, one of many. So we, in the Russian Orthodox Church, believe that secularism and atheism cannot be a common denominator for all religious trends, for all world views. We should be a multi-polar society where representatives of all religions can live peacefully and can live according to their faith and where they can also freely express their views and positions.

structures but that we are allies in the process of evangelization and the mission. We don't have many common missionary projects, but we have a similar missionary strategy and I think we, in spite of certain differences in theology, essentially are united on all social and moral issues. And this provides us with the possibility to form a common front to defend traditional Christianity, in particular against the challenges of militant secularism and atheism.

**"In many Protestant communities of the West and of the North, the process of liberalization has gone very far."**



*I'd like to close with a question about ecumenical relations. You spoke earlier here at Nashotah House about your warm feelings for traditionalist Anglicans, but also about the drift away from tradition as you see it in the wider Episcopal Church. How would you describe the state of inter-Christian relations with Protestants and Roman Catholics*

*secularism becomes as dangerous for religion as militant atheism." Are there parallels, contrasts between an aggressive secularism, sometimes advanced by government policies, and the state-sponsored atheism of former communist regimes?*

*vis-a-vis the Moscow Patriarchate?*

Well, as I was speaking about the danger of militant secularism, I was first and foremost referring to the processes, which are going on in Western liberal society and which affect many Christians. Because, for example, the ideology which is now prevailing in secular society and the social discourse in relations between the church and the state is basically the one which does not allow any public exposure of the

I think the whole field of ecumenical relations can be divided into two major sectors—for us at least. One is the relations between the Orthodox and the Catholics. And another one is the relations between Orthodox on the one hand and the Protestants—Anglicans, Baptists, and others. And here I see two very different tendencies. With regards to Orthodox-Catholic relations, I see that generally, on the worldwide level, these relations are constantly improving and that there is a sense of *rapprochement* between the two traditions. We more and more realize that we are not competing

With regards to Anglican and Protestant communities, of course the situation is very different. In many Protestant communities of the West and of the North, the process of liberalization has gone very far. And we can no longer regard these communities as representing the authentic church tradition. On the contrary, we see that theological teaching, moral teaching, as well as church order is gravely affected in these communities by liberal trends. And with some of them we have to break relations. For example, we had to break the dialogue with the Episcopal Church of the USA in 2003 in spite of the fact that we had been in dialogue with this church for over 30 years. We had to suspend this dialogue because of the unacceptable events happening in this church, in particular the ordination of an openly-practicing homosexual into the episcopate. And we are now more involved in dialogue with the conservative wing of the Episcopal Church, in particular with the newly formed Anglican Church of North America, with the representatives of whom I met here at Nashotah House. And I believe that we will continue to support them. ■■■■

## **Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow**

**1782 - 1867**

One of the most outstanding hierarchs of the Russian Church in any century, he was born Basil Drozdov, the son of a priest. Although small in stature, he stood out among his fellow students at the St Sergius-Holy Trinity Seminary by reason of his lively intelligence and genuine piety. His early talents for preaching brought him to the attention of Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, who said of him, "I give sermons like a man, but he speaks like an angel."

In 1808 he received the monastic tonsure with the name Philaret, after Saint Philaret the Almsgiver. After being ordained to the diaconate, he taught Greek, Hebrew, and rhetoric at the St Petersburg Theological Academy, where he prevailed upon the authorities to have courses taught in Russian rather than in Latin. This concern to make the understanding of Orthodoxy as accessible as possible motivated many of his subsequent undertakings in the course of his fifty years in the episcopal rank. He was responsible for having the Holy Scripture translated into Russian, and he himself wrote a Catechism, which has remained a standard text of the Russian Church ever since its initial publication in 1823.

As Metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret succeeded in having restored some measure of independence from the State, which the Church had lost in the "reforms" of Peter I. He labored to improve the caliber of seminaries and theological school, and he gave crucial support to the spiritual revival generated by Saint Paisius Velichkovsky and his monastic followers, at a time when many hierarchs and clergy looked askance at the institution of eldership, or "starchestvo" and the practice of unceasing prayer which this revival promoted. Metropolitan Philaret's own spiritual father was a close disciple of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, and although Philaret kept concealed his inner life, its excellence is manifest in the various miracles wrought by his prayers: a girl dumb for thirteen years began to speak, a merchant was spared the necessity of having his arm amputated, an eight-year-old paralyzed girl began to walk...

Metropolitan Philaret reposed 19 November 1867, being forewarned of the date two months earlier by his father in a dream.

In his theological writings, Metropolitan Philaret often focused on the life of grace that is opened to believers in Christ. It is clear that he himself experienced this grace while still in this temporal world, and certain that he now enjoys it in the fullest measure in the company of the Saints.

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