

# Transcript of the Presentation of Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany

at the

## Roundtable for the Local Orthodox Russian Tradition (OLTR)

On February 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany was in Paris, where he participated in a roundtable devoted to the reestablishment of canonical communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. This meeting was organised by the Movement for the Local Russian Orthodox Tradition (*Orthodoxie Locale de Tradition Russe*); the meeting was hosted by the President of OLTR, Serafim Rebinder, who delivered the keynote address:

I am happy to announce the opening of the fifth Roundtable of our Movement. First I would like to thank Vladyka Mark, Archbishop of Berlin and Germany, who has agreed to appear before us, and also to welcome Bishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe, who has come to lend us support.

Before ceding the floor to Archbishop Mark, allow me to briefly remind you of the aims of the Movement of the OLTR, which are not always properly understood or interpreted. Our association was born of the complicated and unhealthy situation in which Orthodoxy exists in Western Europe. Historically divided into various jurisdictions, Orthodoxy is undergoing a difficult period today. It is our earnest desire to help overcome divisions and enable the unification of Orthodoxy, while fully preserving the traditions of each of its branches.

We decided that the first stage of our work will be to help the rapprochement between the three jurisdictions of the Russian Church which were divided as a result of the 1917 Revolution in Russia. Our association was formed based on the appeal of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy with the proposal to establish an independently-administered and unified Metropoliate in Western Europe. The Patriarch's appeal is exceedingly important to all of us, and it is necessary to be very attentive to the letter's contents. That is why, within the context of the forthcoming union of the two branches of the Russian church, to take place on May 17<sup>th</sup> in Moscow, we are especially pleased to see Archbishop Mark among us today.

Before coming to see us, he visited Archbishop Gabriel and also Archbishop Innokenty of Korsun. Vladyka Mark himself is a co-chairman, along with Vladyka Innokenty, of the

'Commissions' on the unification of the two branches of the Russian Church. This difficult task is almost finished and we hope that on May 17<sup>th</sup> in Moscow we can rejoice and thank the Lord together with all Russian Orthodox Christians.

I would like to add, too, that he is a native European, who learned the Russian language as a student, and whose interest in the history and life of the Russian Church gradually increased. His witness in many areas will be especially valuable for us.

## Archbishop Mark's Speech

**I**t is a joy to see so many people interested in our crucial ecclesiastical questions, especially at this late hour. This is a rare hour for a speech, and so I will not be offended if someone drifts off to sleep.

I think that everyone knows that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, from the beginning of its existence, has seen itself as an indissoluble part of the one Russian Church. In the eyes of many, this has put us to great disadvantage. That is why we must state plainly and clearly that we never sought to be an independent, separate Church, but always stressed—and this is right in the first paragraph of our Regulations—that we are a part of one Russian Church. This naturally resulted in the fact that for decades, for almost 90 years, we viewed our goal as two-sided. Moreover, we always set for ourselves the goal of nourishing the flock that surrounds us, but also saw our duty to help to the best of our abilities the believers in Russia.

Of course we know perfectly well that our sense of duty before the Orthodox Christians of Russia has led us to what many believe was an error, specifically, the consecration of a hierarchy within Russia itself. But we did not end there, and through the 1990s and the early part of this century we have come to understand that our relationship to the faithful in Russia could not be limited to what we have done over recent decades. Within our perception of the situation of the Church in Russia and our attitude towards her before 1990 and in the years afterwards were several fundamental problems which served as obstacles towards unity, the unity to which we are finally arriving. Usually these problems have simple names: "ecumenism, Sergianism, the veneration of the New Martyrs."

It seemed that the veneration of the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of Russia was an impossible barrier to overcome, with no resolution in sight. But in 2000, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, one might say surprisingly even for itself, glorified the Holy Martyrs. This untied our hands, which had restrained us for many decades. We understood that by the prayers of the Holy Martyrs, the way was cleared for the unity of the Russian Church.

That same Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in 2000 adopted a document which we examined painstakingly, which contains many points which fully reflect our understanding of ecclesiological matters. Our Council, held in December of that year, decreed to establish a Commission for discussions with the corresponding Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate. For various reasons, the work of these committees was delayed, and in fact it was only in 2004 that we began work in earnest.

At the end of 2003, the first meeting of the delegation of the Church Abroad with the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate took place, and the groundwork was prepared for a visit by our First Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, together with a delegation, which was made in 2004. Working meetings were held during this visit, at which the tasks of the corresponding Commissions were laid out.

The first question was the principle of the relationship between the Church and state in accordance with the teachings of the Church. The Commissions were instructed to work out these principles. The second matter set before them was to outline the principles of the relationship between the Orthodox Church and heterodox organizations.

The third question was the status of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia as a self-governing part of a unified Russian Orthodox Church. One must say straight away that it was to be understood that the Church Abroad, through her experience under utterly different situations, political, canonical and otherwise, different than that of Russia, must be seen within Russia as a single body; so it was immediately understood and accepted that the Church Abroad was to be preserved as she was. No one even raised the notion that the Church Abroad and her parishes must merge into the Moscow Patriarchate and cease her existence.

Finally, the issue was raised on the canonical conditions for establishing Eucharistic communion. Even before our discussions in 2004, several scholarly conferences were held at which ecclesiastical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were discussed. These studies were published, some of them have yet to be published, and it was recognised by both sides that it was necessary to continue this work in order to illuminate the events in the life of the church in the last century.

I do not wish to tarry on one point or another, I wish only to clarify the ones I think are important, those that characterise the general trend of our difficult task. I think that any person who has even the slightest interest in the events and relationship between the divided parts of the Russian Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries understands that the problem of the relationship between the Church and state plays an enormous role in our

minds. We know full well that both sides of the former Iron Curtain have had entirely different experiences, especially in church life. Naturally, this difference in experiences is reflected in our perception, in our evaluation of events. So when we began to discuss future unification, it would have been naïve to imagine that we could find a common denominator in five minutes, one we could all sign off on.

First of all, we studied the statements made by the hierarchs of the Russian Church in Russia who viewed the past decades and their lives under the godless regimes in different ways. But after analysing them, we saw how the perception of what happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century gradually changed. It is not surprising that the viewpoints of those who lived almost all their lives in unlimited freedom (in the West), contrast starkly with those of the hierarchs who lived under Communist oppression in Russia. Despite the many differences, however, our two Commissions managed to find a common tongue which today can satisfy us all.

We understand that since the very beginning and until the Second Coming, the Church never did nor will not exist in complete freedom or independently of the society in which she finds herself. Even if we take the very brief period of time during which France was occupied by foreign troops, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that during the occupation, much happened in the Church that would better not have happened.

We take full responsibility for the fact that a certain degree of loyalty is needed, tolerance of one's government. At the same time we understand that such loyalty must never limit a person's spiritual freedom. The Orthodox Christian cannot refuse the basic truths of his faith and his spiritual convictions for the sake of some dubious loyalty to some government. And in the document adopted by the 2000 Council of Bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate, in its *Principles of the Social Work of the Church*, the "Basic Social Concept," we also see expressions in this spirit, which we do not find in written form in a single other Local Church. It clearly states that the Christian is obliged to disobey the government when it demands that he act immorally or in conflict with Christian conviction.

Often, especially in conversation, the question of the relationship of the state and the Church or the Church with the state is connected with the person of Metropolitan Sergius and his declaration of 1927. We as Commission members could not act in a way different from that demanded of any Christian.

I vividly remember the words of the late Metropolitan Philaret, our First Hierarch, who said: 'It is not our business to condemn people who do or say things in Russia, who without a doubt are sinful. We must condemn the sin, but love the sinner.' It is within this

context that we must examine the spirit with which the declaration of 1927 is imbued, while not condemning the person who signed it.

Thus our Commissions drafted several documents, and decided that everything was fine. But two months later we saw that all this is unacceptable. To show how difficult this process was, I attest to you today that in two months, when we came to see that our work was unusable and that a great deal more work was needed, we drew up four documents on this matter in order to best outline this nebulous area.

I think that during such discussions, one must always consider the fact that each side will come under fire from both sides, that there would be rebukes that they are not doing enough. And I must say that there were more than a few moments when we were on the brink of complete failure. Our discussions were held in the spirit of love and truth, and so sometimes in the evening we would depart thinking that we would not meet again the next morning. The most important element in my mind (though as I said we have four documents covering this matter), the single most important element as I see it is the fact that we all agree that the Church must not repeat such behaviour: the behaviour which is reflected in the declaration of 1927, and its consequences.

Another problem which caused very heated debate is ecumenism. Within the framework of the Church Abroad, many might have forgotten, or never realised, that until fairly recently we also participated in various ecumenical events. The ecumenical movement arose to a great degree with the help of specifically the Russian Orthodox Church. In the first few decades of the Russian emigration, all parts of the Russian Church Abroad participated in this movement.

Still, the overall situation has changed drastically since then, and those who belong to the heterodox communities have also changed, and in their doctrines and practices in many ways they have descended to making almost un-Christian declarations. Naturally, our attitude towards this movement has worsened. Especially since we in the West live surrounded by the heterodox and see their lives and their departure from true life, from the purity of the faith.

Based on our views on ecumenism we also developed several documents which complement each other and which, briefly, consist of the fact that the Orthodox clergyman or believer must always witness the true One Church, which is Orthodoxy alone, and that there is no other Church, and that he dares not smooth over or obscure what divides us, alas, from those who have departed from Orthodoxy.

A big problem facing our negotiations was the existence of parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in Russia itself. For us members of the Russian Church Abroad, the acceptance of these parishes was an organic extension of the help we provided over the course of many decades to the Catacomb Church and other Christians in the USSR. We had been able as far back as the 1950s to establish vital contact with the Catacomb Church in Russia, I personally participated in this, and so we have special empathy for these people.

But alas, we did not consider how much people in Russia had changed under the Soviet yoke. We did not understand a great deal that happened in Russia then, naïvely believing that in Russia we would find the kind of people that were left behind 80 years earlier. So we inflicted a great many wounds upon ourselves in our relations with the people from over there, and for our parishes in Russia under the omophorion of the Church Abroad, and for ourselves, this has proved to be an enormous problem.

That is why we did not limit ourselves to decide these questions ourselves, but invited a representative of our parishes in Russia, Bishop Evtikhii, whom we consecrated and who has many years of experience there. We came to a resolution: that these parishes, after the attainment of unity within the Russian Church, will remain under the authority of Vladyka Evtikhii during a transitional period, who will continue to be under the Church Abroad. We foresee this period as lasting for about five years, during which time these parishes will be prepared to enter into communion with the local dioceses of the Russian Church in the homeland.

As far as the mutual relationship is concerned between the two parts of the one Russian Church, please remember that I always speak of two parts. I heard at the beginning of this event today an expression of our being two Churches—I do not accept this at all, we are speaking of two parts of one Church.

The draft Act, which with God's help will be signed in May of this year, which will determine the relationship of these two parts of one Russian Church, has been prepared. The first paragraph of this Act states:

That the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, conducting its salvific service in the dioceses, parishes, monasteries, brotherhoods and other ecclesiastical bodies that were formed through history, remains an indissoluble part of the Local Russian Orthodox Church.

I ask that you note the term "remains," meaning that it had never broken her bonds with the Russian Church.

Further:

That the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is independent in pastoral, educational, administrative, management, property and civil matters, existing at the same time in canonical unity with the Fullness of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Also, the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia are elected by her Council of Bishops or, in cases foreseen by the Regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, by the Synod of Bishops. Such elections are confirmed in accordance with canonical norms by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The next point states that the Russian Church Abroad chooses its own archpastors, bishops and First Hierarch, who are approved in accordance with canonical norms by the Patriarch and Holy Synod, but this confirmation can only be withheld on the basis of canonical violation.

This Act reflects nothing new. This situation exists, for example, in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Churches of Latvia and Estonia. So we have actual examples showing how such a relationship works. Most importantly, this Act achieves the reestablishment of Eucharistic union of the separated parts of the Russian Church while preserving the *de facto* autonomy of the Church Abroad. We see that our experience abroad within the heterodox world is different than that of the Russian Church in the Homeland. This experience and this spirit which guides us cannot be stifled.

Our talks concluded last autumn, and only 10 days ago I entered the final brushstrokes in a conversation with the Patriarch in Moscow. By all indications, based on the decisions of the two Synods which are yet to take place (although everything has already been prepared in this regard), we can expect that on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the day of the Ascension of the Lord, this Act of Canonical Communion will be signed in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, after which the bishops of the two parts of the Russian Church will conduct their first divine service.

A few days later, with God's help, we will consecrate the Church of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in Butovo Field near Moscow. The laying of the foundation of this church was performed jointly by Patriarch Alexy and Metropolitan Laurus in 2004. I think that all this is no accident, that it is the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia themselves who opened this path for us, not by our plans but by the will of God, because our trip in 2004 was delayed four times, and no one planned that we would be present at the founding of this church and that through the prayers of the Holy New Martyrs we would reach the situation we are in today, when we can hope for the expedient reestablishment of the unity of the Russian Church. Thank you.

## Questions and Answers

*Q. Your Eminence, could you explain to us the complicated situation regarding the churches in Bari and the Holy Land?*

A. In Bari, Bishop Ambrose of Vevey had already come to terms with what has happened. The upper church is served by the clergymen of the Moscow Patriarchate, and the lower church is served by clergymen of the Church Abroad.

As far as the Holy Land, as is the case in all other disputed holy places, it was decided to maintain the *status quo* as of 2004, that is, to freeze the situation. That will be our basis.

*Q. How do you view secularisation?*

A. I think that a certain level of secularisation is seen throughout the world, among people who came or are still coming from the former "Russian Empire," many of whom grew up without any church or religious education at all. Of some of them were reared differently than we are accustomed to. That is why our aim is first of all catechisation, and we must strive to infuse our new parishioners with Church Tradition in the form that we inherited. I cannot judge the language problem, because in Germany it virtually doesn't exist.

*Q. Vladyka, in today's world, the press often talks about tolerance. What is tolerance in your view, and where is the border between indifference and love, if one is to use this term? Most often the media today use this false meaning, that is, instead of patience, the word tolerance is used, and it is unclear what that means.*

A. In matters of faith there can be no compromise. In matters of faith there is either "yes" or "no." That is why we cannot speak of "tolerance" in this area. We can respect the opinion of another, we respect him as a person who has his own viewpoint, his own vision of things, but that does not mean that we agree to subject faith to whim. I think that arbitrariness is that very border which must divide tolerance and love. We must stand precisely upon the foundations of our Faith, without demeaning anyone who holds a different opinion, yet not hide the truth from him.

*Q. Vladyka, please explain: will the bishops of the Russian Church Abroad become members of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church and will act as such in the future?*

A. Yes, I can confirm this: the bishops of the Church Abroad will automatically become members of the Councils of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland,



and they will be drafted to serve in the Synod according to the same cycle as the bishops of the Russian Church.

*Q. Did we understand correctly: the date of the reunification of the two parts of the Russian Church is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup>, but the document on the administrative status of the Russian Church Abroad is still in draft form? Don't you think that during discussion, and moreover when these documents are being adopted, that conflicts will arise between you and Moscow, which might lead to the signing of the document being postponed to another time?*

A. This document will continue to be called a Draft document until the final second before its signing. Only then will it be an executed document. There should not be any significant changes, because both Synods have already agreed that this is the final version.

*Q. Your Eminence, will Metropolitan Laurus be a permanent member of the Synod of the Russian Church?*

A. No, Vladyka Laurus will not be a permanent member of the Synod, he did not wish that, did not seek that, and so it was not inserted in the text of our agreements.

*Q. Your Eminence, the Movement, which invited you here today, is called the OLTR. This association strives to the rapprochement of various Orthodox Christians. A great deal of work has been done, especially after the historic appeal to us by Patriarch Alexy of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. I congratulate you on reaching an agreement through your efforts. I wish to ask you: how will the Local Church organise itself? I visit Russia often and see that there are many problems and much confusion.*

A. We faced today's realities in our discussions. Clearly, in many places we have bishops from different jurisdictions, different Local Churches and even within a single Local Church, all coexisting. This is an abnormal situation, without a doubt, but we have solidarity in our effort to create unity. First of all, we must face reality, which has developed over many decades, and so we cannot reformulate them in several weeks. This demands time, but we do not throw up our hands and give up. I can say that a Commission has already been set up which will address the specific matter of the relationship between bishops who work abroad, and the first such meeting is scheduled for this fall, at which all bishops who minister outside the borders of Russia will meet and decide pressing matters in daily life.

*Q. Thank you, Vladyka, for your interesting analysis. The Russian Church Abroad exists all over the world. If Patriarch Alexy's proposal becomes a reality, then can we hope that his appeal of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003, will lead to the creation of a Local Church here in Europe?*

A. In our inevitably difficult conversations we did not touch upon this notion. But we assume that this will sooner or later arise and that we must think about this and be prepared for it. Again, we must take one step at a time. We must heal one wound and then address others, or we may lose our way. Naturally, we understand that some form of organization of various parishes on the territory of one government or region or another is needed for the future, but things must happen organically. The Church is not the Prussian Army, where an ukase is issued and the next day everyone marches in a different direction. The Church is a living organism, and a living organism should not be cut into, but its wounds must be tended to, wounds that were inflicted over decades, and maybe centuries. We must gradually heal them, correct mistakes and create a situation where we can witness the truth of Orthodoxy before the heterodox in peace and unity.

*Q. Vladyka, one last question from me, a purely practical one: What does the Church Abroad itself consist of today, how many parishes are there throughout the world?*

A. Numbers are not my speciality, but if I am not mistaken, some 420 parishes.

*Q. The events in the Sourozh Diocese in England have broken the Orthodox apart and some moved towards France. This has caused virulent discussions even in Russia. Your Eminence, you personally participated in the special committee on the Sourozh affair. Could you share with us your thoughts on the matter?*

A. As far as I can evaluate the situation, which I was able to follow for some 20 years in England, a kind of polarisation had been forming in the Sourozh Diocese. One side, as I see it, developed along the lines of the personality of Metropolitan Anthony, who led the Diocese along individualistic lines. And we spoke about this, I asked him this when he was still alive. I said, 'Vladyka, maybe you will not live forever. What will happen after you?' But as is the case with many old people, he could not answer, he merely referred to God's help.

I think that the more or less great elders who should have assumed the diocese and parish after him, naturally, could not continue to lead them along the path upon which he built them and left them. This charisma, so natural for him, was so personal that practically no one could replace it. It is a great thing when charisma fits within the framework of a healthy diocesan or parish structure. Obviously, this was not the case here. Missing in this case was the spiritual "cushion," so to speak, which could have

softened the blow of his death, that is, which could have filled the vacuum left the moment Vladyka Anthony could no longer work, and there was no replacement for him. I think that this is a deeply personal tragedy which illustrates, of course, how dangerous it is to establish relationships on such a strictly personal level within the Church.

I would like to add that division cannot heal wounds, it can only open them up more and doom those who participate in division.

*Q. Your Eminence, after the ceremonial unification of the Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate, beginning on May 18<sup>th</sup>, how will relationships develop between the new united structure and the Constantinople Patriarchate?*

A. I am no prophet, so I cannot say what will happen, I can only point to certain milestones. This began on a grand scale in 1917, during the Revolution, when the Istanbul Patriarchate meddled in Russian affairs, and this continues now in Estonia, Moldavia... This is very sad, and if it continues, then it will not help the peaceful witness of Orthodoxy. We hope that those who are in positions of responsibility come to their senses and find the strength to correct this crisis.

*Q. Vladyka, please tell us, will work continue towards establishing closer ties after May 17<sup>th</sup>? Because after May 17<sup>th</sup>, dissatisfaction among the laity abroad could flare up, and they should be told that nothing has ended, that discussions continue and that is necessary to think about and resolve the more difficult problems from the past...*

A. At the beginning of my speech I said that when both sides met in Moscow in 2004, we came to an agreement and concordance on continuing historical research on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was no accident. These problems are also on the agenda for discussion between the bishops at the meeting I mentioned. This agenda includes 30 points so far, so we have a great deal to discuss.

Our consciousness, our solidarity, gives us the strength to maintain this unity despite external efforts from various sides. I think that this is a rare example of unity in the history of the Church. Of course, we must always keep in mind that the Russian Church is a single whole, it is an enormous organism, and there is no other Local Church of such magnitude. Naturally, this incurs some fear in many, but if we approach the life of the Church in fear, then we are on the wrong path. We must *a priori* trust our neighbour.

*Q. Tell us, if you did not presume full autonomy from the beginning, do you think you would have attempted unity, or would this have been impossible as a matter of principle?*

A. This question never arose during our conversations. We immediately began talking about our independence, our self-governance, and we assumed this from the beginning. At the beginning of our first meeting, it was stated: the greatest autonomy, this is what we must base our conversations on. We did not request this, or fight for it: this was set as a prerequisite. I think that our self-consciousness would not have allowed this, (we are speaking in the abstract), otherwise we probably would have had to fight for it. But since the Moscow Patriarchate did not have a clear understanding of our position, this question never came up. Also, I wish to add that our Regulations, our very situation do not presume any other course of action. Ukase No. 362, upon which we based our existence for these decades, says that the bishops who operated on their own (at a certain time, when it was possible) would return and report on their activities.

*Q. Priests who left the Moscow Patriarchate and are now in your jurisdiction, as you said, in the next five years they will be in a transitional phase. Then what? What do you think their fate will be?*

A. The priests who are with me now, they will gradually be transferred to local dioceses. That is, let us say in many cases this was a purely personal matter between the priest who left the Moscow Patriarchate and their bishops. In most cases, these bishops are no longer on the same cathedras, so this removes the question.

In other places, one must gradually smooth things over and create conditions for them to naturally flow into the dioceses. One must remember another thing — there is a whole group of priests whom we accepted who serve abroad now. A special committee was set up to examine all the questions and have already contacted the bishops. There were clergymen who transferred in both directions. The committee has displayed the maximum condescension towards them, studied their cases, and with rare exceptions, have been accepted in their present positions. In general, this question is covered by the canons, too.

Of course, the work of the Council of 1917-1918 established the foundation of our life abroad. In Russia this work is being done gradually. In the 1917-1918 Council, there were a great many stumbling blocks. It is instructive that this Council, held during the Revolution, is fully reflected in the decisions it made.

Let me state as an example the basic question of our church life — the Parish By-laws, which we naïve emigrés took from the Council, and we suffered greatly, because it is awash in democracy. This is a typical example, that not everything said at this Council can be carried out to the letter. Times changed, people changed, so it is impossible to carry this over mechanically to our times. One cannot close one's eyes and just go where

we were told—no, one must open ones eyes. Further, it is necessary to develop points which address the current situation. This Council produced a great many wonderful materials which have not been revealed, but which demand that we develop them.

*Q. Vladyka, allow us to ask you: in your conversations, complicated and sometimes remarkable, can one say that the same autonomy granted to the American Church was studied by you and used as a cornerstone? Can it be said that what Vladyka Nikodim (Rotov) did help you, what Fr Alexander Schmemmann and Fr John Meyendorff did acted as a link of a sort which could have inspired you?*

A. Never in our conversations did I see or feel anything in common with the American autocephaly. This has no relationship to our work. I remind you that we are talking about diametrically opposed positions and intentions: the American Metropoliate strove for full independence, while we never broke from the Russian Church. For which, by the way, as I said, we were criticised in every way, but our fathers held to this and followed this path, preserving our adherence to the Russian Church, maybe even despite common sense.

*Seraphim Rebinder:* Vladyka, allow me to extend our fervent thanks to you, first of all, for being here, secondly, for your wonderful, calm responses to all our questions. You have touched upon problems which concern many Orthodox people in Western Europe. I would like to thank you for your prayers, which we sense, and which you raise up for the benefit of our Orthodox Church.