

Fr. Ephraim's first
letter to the Metropolitan



HOLY TRANSFIGURATION MONASTERY

278 Warren Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146

(617) 734-0608

March 30, 1986
St. John of the Ladder

Most respected Vladika,

Blagoslovite

I make a poklon before you and ask for your blessing.

Together with the other material which I am enclosing, I have also included the texts of some relevant canons.

According to the 138th canon of the Council of Carthage, we are forbidden to accept the accusations of "those who have the stain of infamy, that is actors, and persons subject to turpitudes (that is, base or shameful conduct, wickedness or depravity), also heretics, or heathen, or Jews."

Beloved Vladika, we ask: is it permitted to allow Jews and heretics to testify in matters that concern the Orthodox faith? Would we allow Pimen, the apostate Patriarch of Moscow, to bear witness against one of our Synod bishops in a spiritual court concerning canonical matters?

Of course not, because the holy canons forbid us to accept the testimony of "untrustworthy witnesses."

If this is so, then how can we allow the testimony of individuals who themselves are under this canonical censure and who even contradict their own testimony in their letters and oral confessions?

It is very evident from his own admission during his testimony against Father Panteleimon that Fr. Mamas falls under the censure and prohibition of the aforementioned 138th canon, as well as the 137th canon of the same Council regarding those who are excommunicated.

This is so because:

1) Fr. Mamas admitted during his testimony that while he was still at the monastery, he was having secret meetings with women. Yet, without confessing this to his spiritual father, he continued to receive the Holy Mysteries.

2) After he left the monastery, Fr. Mamas was living at the house of his present female companion. Despite the fact that it is forbidden for a schemamonk to marry, they were "married" in the Syrian new calendarist church here in Boston in 1985. But even a year before this, Fr. Mamas contracted a civil "marriage" with her on the Saturday before Pentecost in 1984 -- that is, about ten days after he left the monastery. Such a ceremony is not recognized by the Orthodox Church for its flock, and therefore is accounted as sin. Both of them knew this very well. Yet, despite the divine commandments and the holy canons of the Church, they continued to live together as "man and wife."

Under such circumstances, how does Fr. Mamas qualify as a "trustworthy witness" which the holy canons call for?

Likewise in the case of Fr. Gregory. He now swears on his priesthood that what he says is true. This is precisely the point. Fr. Gregory was able to become a priest only by lying (he told everyone that he had a blessing to leave our monastery, even though he had never received such a blessing, nor even a release).

The point here is that we have both written and oral proof (from their own letters and testimony) that both Fr. Gregory and Fr. Mamas have consistently spoken falsehoods and acted in a dishonorable manner before this. What proof do we have that they are not doing the same now? None whatsoever.

In both letter and word, both before they left and after they left, these "witnesses" used to praise Fr. Panteleimon, as also did Fr. Athanasy. Now all have changed their stories. Why?

Beloved Vladika, if this were a civil court, this so-called "case" would have been thrown out in the first session.

If the only witnesses which can be brought against our abbot are individuals who

- 1) in writing contradict their own testimony (Frs. Gregory, Mamas and Athanasy);
- 2) are mentally ill (Fr. Athanasy);
- 3) cohabit with a woman in an ungodly and forbidden marriage and are excommunicated (Fr. Mamas);
- 4) broke their vows and fled from the monastery so that they would not get an epitimion for their drunken and disorderly behavior, and finally, who now are officialy under the jurisdiction of the renovationist Ecumenical Patriarchate, and, in fact, commemorate the apostate Soviet patriarch, Pimen, when they serve with Soviet priestmonks on the Holy Mountain (Fr. Theodore),

if these, I say, are the "trustworthy witnesses" who testify against him, then we feel very privileged and honored to have such a man as Fr. Panteleimon as our spiritual father in the monastic life.

It is also very obvious -- especially in view of the type of witnesses which they are using -- that the ones who desire to bring accusations against our abbot have no interest whatsoever in canonical order or ecclesiastical truth.

St. Athanasius the Great was accused of having committed both murder and

fornication -- and the witnesses against him were not one or two, nor even four or five, but a whole "Council" of Arian bishops in the city of Tyre. As proof of their charges against the Saint, they even had the severed right hand of the "murdered" man, and furthermore, they even produced the woman with whom the Saint had sinned! Thus, dear Vladika, we can see that if one chooses to ignore the holy canons, then one can produce any number of "witnesses" to "prove" anything one wishes.

Beloved Vladika, we are not quoting these canons in order to protect or defend our abbot. We are quoting them because we know, and it is also quite obvious in this case, why these "witnesses" are attacking our abbot. And that is precisely why these holy canons were formulated: to protect the innocent.

Since Vladika Antony of Los Angeles assured us that this was to be a "thorough investigation," we hereby formally request that there be a thorough investigation of the character and trustworthiness of each of these "witnesses," as the holy canons clearly and strictly specify.

Surely, if this ecclesiastical investigation is not to be carried out on the basis of the holy canons, then on what basis is it to be carried out?

Most beloved Vladika, please continue to pray for us, even as we always remember you with love in our humble prayers.

With the love of our Saviour,
Your son in our holy faith,

*Ephraim monk
& my guardian angel*