



**Blessed are the Faithful:  
On the Ninetieth  
Anniversary of the  
Russian Orthodox  
Church Outside Russia  
(ROCOR)**

Archpriest Andrew Phillips,  
St John's Orthodox Church,  
Colchester, England, 2010

**Blessed are the Faithful:  
On the Ninetieth Anniversary of ROCOR**

*They love all men and yet are persecuted by all men. They are unknown and yet are condemned. They are put to death and yet are restored to life. They are poor and yet make many rich. They lack all things and yet abound in all things. They are dishonoured and yet are glorified in their very dishonour. They are evilly spoken of and yet are justified. They are reviled and yet bless. They are insulted and yet repay the insult with honour. They do good and yet are punished as evildoers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life. They are attacked by the Jews as foreigners and are persecuted by the Greeks - yet those who hate them are unable to give any reason for their hatred.*

The Epistle to Diognetus, Chapter V

**Introduction: Ninety Years of ROCOR Witness**

*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Russian Orthodox churches existed outside Russia long before a separate Church administration was established for them by Decree No 362 of Patriarch Tikhon on 20 November 1920. In Scandinavia and in Holland for example, Russian churches had been founded in the late seventeenth century and in England in the eighteenth century.

Moreover, by the late nineteenth century, several very beautiful Russian churches had appeared in the great

cities and resorts of Germany, France, Italy and in the Holy Land. And there were also numbers of Russian Orthodox in Japan, Alaska, North America, South America and elsewhere. However, apart from Japan and also North America, where the Diocese had been transferred from Alaska to San Francisco, Russian Orthodox had no separate administrative structure, they were simply under a vicar-bishop of the Metropolitan of Saint Petersburg.

With great numbers of refugees fleeing from the former Russian Empire between 1917 and 1920 and the constant violent persecution and political interference of the new Soviet atheist regime, it was realised that a separate Church Authority would be required for all Russian Orthodox outside Russia. Ideally, this would have to unite native Alaskan Orthodox, those who had settled outside Russia before the Revolution, mainly former Uniats from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the masses of post-Revolutionary refugees under thirty-four exiled bishops. This Authority would have to be based among the faithful outside Russia, as free contact with Moscow was rapidly becoming impossible.

It was not by chance that the founder of this Authority, Patriarch Tikhon, knew the Diaspora well, previously having been Bishop of San Francisco and become an honorary citizen of the United States. He well knew that the Russian Orthodox Church in the American Diaspora was multinational, as indeed the Church inside Russia had itself always been and he rightly feared that contact with Moscow would soon be impossible. Patriarch Tikhon issued his founding Decree No 362 in November 1920, which was confirmed on 2 March 1921. It was also confirmed by Metropolitan Dorotheus of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on 29 December 1920 and in 1921 by

the Serbian Orthodox Church, on whose territory the Church Authority was invited to settle.

Thus ROCOR came into being. However, this exact name was not given until 31 August 1922, when it was accepted by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. This was on the recommendation of Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris, who, like others, had been concerned by the Soviet-dictated decree of 5 May 1922. Although it directly contradicted a freely-issued message from Patriarch Tikhon two days earlier on 3 May 1922, recognising the Higher Church Authority, this decree disbanded the Authority and so forced its reorganisation.

The formal reorganisation of the Higher Church Authority into a Synod of Bishops of the whole ‘Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia’ (ROCOR) was still in direct obedience to the terms of the original Patriarchal decree of November 1920, as confirmed by those of 16 May and 18 June 1922. (For many years the Russian name of the Church was translated as ‘The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad’ (ROCA), or even, incorrectly, as ‘The Russian Orthodox Church in Exile’. However, by the 1970s when most ROCOR members had been born outside Russia and were not therefore ‘abroad’, the translation was changed, though the older translations are still used by the older generation or those who do not know otherwise).

By 2008, eighty-six years later, ROCOR had been led by five Metropolitans, each of whom had governed the Church for an average of nearly 18 years. Today, in 2010, looking back over our ninety-year history, we can divide it into three periods. These are two periods of

forty-four years and a third period, which began two years ago under our sixth Metropolitan.

*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

### **Period One: 1920-1964: Survival and Expansion**

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

This period can be divided into two halves. The first half was a period of struggle for survival against all the powers of the world. The second half was marked by the invasion of Russia and the holocaust of thirty million Slavs in the Second World War. Paradoxically, this tragedy was to lead to a period of expansion, with new emigration, consolidation and mission. During this first period, the ROCOR Synod of Bishops was composed of those who had been adults in Imperial Russia, which also reflected the majority of its clergy and laity.

#### **1920-1936**

The Higher Church Authority was led by a great hierarch of universal Orthodox significance, the voice of Church Truth, the neo-patristic figure of Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev. The First Council of the Church, called by Metropolitan Antony, took place in November 1921 in Sremsky Karlovtsy, in what later became Yugoslavia, with the blessing of the Serbian Church. This was the formative period of the Church and this Council was devoted to organising the administrative and canonical structures of the Church. In this way, the thirty-four Russian bishops in exile were able to establish a united worldwide Church of Metropolias, dioceses and

parishes for their flocks, composed of Russian Orthodox settlers and refugees.

At this first Diaspora Council in Yugoslavia in 1921, as senior hierarch, Metropolitan Antony was unanimously confirmed as the leader of the Authority, which, as we have said, from 1922 became known as the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR). Sadly, in 1926, Metropolitan Eulogius in Paris, defying Synodal authority, together with Metropolitan Platon in the USA, broke away from ROCOR. This was despite the fact that the Synod's instructions had been confirmed from Moscow by the still free Metropolitan Sergius, who had replaced Patriarch, now St, Tikhon, who had probably been poisoned. Thus, seeking independence under political, financial and career pressures, two Metropolitans outside Russia left ROCOR, leading their small flocks to uncertain and unstable futures.

In 1935 both Metropolitan Eulogius and Metropolitan Theophilus (who had succeeded Metropolitan Platon in 1934) returned to the Church. However, Metropolitan Eulogius, who had already compromised himself by changing jurisdictions twice and suffered an internal schism, soon left the Russian Church yet again. This was under political pressure from the brotherhood of renovationists in Paris, which controlled the Church there. Metropolitan Theophilus also broke away again, but later in November 1946, under pressure from the pro-Soviet Council of Cleveland in the USA. There were also tiny numbers of others who put patriotism above the Church and put themselves under the jurisdiction of the Communist-controlled Patriarchal Church inside Russia.

Weakened by these regional schisms, which were encouraged by Soviet Communism, all members of the

Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia experienced this period as a time of bitter exile, survival and mission. There was exile because many hoped to go home, either very soon or else a few years later. There were those who slept with a suitcase packed under their beds ready for return. This was a period of survival, in which generals and professors of Imperial Russia worked as taxi-drivers, housepainters and factory workers. This was also a period of mission, as for the first time interested local Non-Orthodox were able to acquaint themselves with the Orthodox Church.

**a. 1936-1964**

On the repose of Metropolitan Antony in 1936, Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovsky) became the new leader of the Church. A man of prayer, he called the Second Council of the faithful Russian Orthodox Diaspora. This was held in August 1938, again in Sremsky Karlovtsy. This Council consolidated the organisation of the Church and discussed what to do for the spiritual care of the émigré flock and the new generation, taking measures against sectarianism, political schisms and the persecutions of the Church inside Russia.

Here, ROCOR continued to affirm, as before, that it was, ‘the part of the Russian Church which is outside Russia’, which is ‘an indissoluble, spiritually-united branch of the Russian Church. She does not separate Herself from the Mother Church and is not autocephalous’. In the darkest days of Stalinist oppression, when the Church inside Russia fell silent, this Council alone expressed the voice of Russian Orthodoxy.

In 1941 the Soviet Union was invaded on 22 June, the feast of all the Saints who have shone forth in the land of Rus. This Second Great Patriotic War was a call to all Orthodox to repentance. It was won by hope in the Resurrection, the Russian Orthodox faith and the love of God. And Metropolitan Anastasius, whose name means resurrection, showed the same hope, faith and love. I remember being told, by one who accompanied him, how at the end of the War, amid chaos and destruction and as a refugee from the new Communist government in Yugoslavia, the elderly Metropolitan escaped the advancing atheists and made his way on foot through war-torn Bavaria, accompanied by the Kursk Root Icon.

Meanwhile, inside Russia there began a new wave of State interference and repression of Church life. Outside Russia, our churches in Manchuria were taken over by Soviet forces. However, under Metropolitan Anastasius, ROCOR resisted Communist intimidation from Moscow and we kept our freedom and independence. And after the War there came expansion, especially in the Americas, North and South, and Australia. Thus, ROCOR remained a worldwide Church, present there as well as in Western Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.*

## **Period Two: 1964-2008: Guardianship and Reconciliation**

*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

This second period can also be divided into two halves. The first half was a period of guardianship, of protecting

Church Truth. This faithfulness was vital amid the dramatic loss of faith, spiritual collapse, cultural vandalism and outright apostasy of the heterodox world. All the more so when this trend also affected Greek and other parts of the Orthodox world under Western domination, bringing decadence of Orthodox practice. The second half, after 1985, was marked by the end of the atheist regime in the Soviet Union and ROCOR's careful verification and acceptance of changes made necessary as a result. During this period the Synod of Bishops was composed either of those who had been children in Imperial Russia, or of those who came from the post-1945 emigration, or else by Non-Russians whose souls had recognised the purity of Holy Orthodoxy and joined ROCOR.

#### **a. 1964-1985**

This was the period when ROCOR was led by Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky), whose first name means virtuous and second name means ascension. He was a pure and saintly monk, who loved holiness and was himself nominated Metropolitan by a saint - St John of Shanghai. Unlike others, who had broken away from the Russian Church in North America and France, Metropolitan Philaret, in his 'Letters of Sorrow', and ROCOR as a whole, in the anathema it was to place on syncretism, bravely refused to swim with the tide of worldliness. Two turning-points marked this period of resistance to the secularist and modernist tide. The first turning-point was the Third Council of the faithful Diaspora in 1974, which was held at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY.

This Council examined Church affairs in the ever more difficult conditions of the modern world and called for

unity among the parts of the Diaspora that were still in schism from the Church Outside Russia. It noted the great dangers of ecumenism and modernism in Orthodox Church life, resistance to which brought ROCOR persecution and aggressive attacks against her. The Council also drew attention to the continuing persecution of the Church inside Russia. Here, the integrity of Holy Orthodoxy was affirmed and Archbishop Antony of Geneva warned of isolation and unreasoning zealotry. Metropolitan Philaret also recognised the danger of Donatism, after baptisms by old calendarist zealots of ROCOR members who had for years been receiving communion within ROCOR.

The second turning-point was the 1981 canonisation of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. Like the other canonisations moved forward by Metropolitan Philaret, this canonisation was made necessary by the captivity of the Church inside Russia, which was not allowed by the Soviet government to canonise its own saints. This event was to change the course of history, for the prayers of these new saints at last brought to a peaceful end the tyranny of Soviet atheism and prepared the way for the Second Baptism of Russia, which began in earnest in 1988.

A year after the canonisation this great event was presaged by the appearance of the Montreal Icon of the Mother of God in 1982. She streamed the grace-bearing myrrh of healing and mercy on all who approached Her. This was the reward of those who like Metropolitan Philaret, had been reviled and condemned by the world and those who confessed the spirit of the world, who foolishly declared that our Church was ‘without grace’ or ‘uncanonical’ (!). On the contrary, the saintly Metropolitan Philaret and those with him had had the

courage to preach the freedom of the Church and to defend the purity of Orthodoxy, glorifying the new saints of God and spreading their veneration around the world. The heritage of the Church had been guarded, in preparation for better times.

## **b. 1985-2008**

After the repose of Metropolitan Philaret in 1985 came the election of Metropolitan Vitaly, who continued canonisations of saints and also tightened Church discipline. Metropolitan Vitaly was concerned by fringe zealot elements, who had abused the compassion, goodwill and purity of Metropolitan Philaret and were inclined to Donatism. In the end, many, but not all, of these elements preferred to leave the Church rather than face Church courts and Church standards. At the same time there began the period of perestroika and glasnost inside the Soviet Union. 1988 marked the thousandth anniversary of the Baptism of Rus and this was celebrated inside the Soviet Union. Thus began the Second Baptism, the Soviet Communist Party no longer able to suppress the wishes of the people to re-enter the Church. Although Communism fell in 1991, it was clear that the old Soviet mentality was still very strong and the Church inside Russia was still not free. This was a period of great confusion, when in Russia, for example, portraits of the martyred Tsar Nicholas were carried alongside portraits of Bolshevik murderers.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Vitaly's health was gradually declining and many both in ROCOR and the Church inside Russia hesitated as to what to do for the best. Indeed, it took the Church inside Russia nine years until its Jubilee Council in 2000 for it to decide to meet the three requirements of ROCOR for recognition of its

return to canonical practice. These requirements were the condemnation of sergianism (the obedience of Patriarchal bishops hostage to the atheist State), of ecumenism (unprincipled compromise with the secular world) and the canonisation in Moscow of the New Martyrs and Confessors, who had struggled or died, whereas the sergianists and ecumenists had co-operated with the militant atheists. Even after 2000 ROCOR wisely remained cautious and waited for the slow implementation of these three changes, which defined the return to canonical practice in Church life. Indeed, many of these changes were not introduced at once, for example, in England their introduction did not even begin until 2006.

In 2001 Metropolitan Vitaly retired through chronic ill health and the ROCOR bishops elected a humble monk in his place. This was Metropolitan Laurus, whose name means the laureate or prize-winner. He was the first Metropolitan to have been born outside Russia and after the Revolution. Meanwhile, a tiny group of extremists decided to break away from the Church, claiming that the retired and sick Metropolitan Vitaly was at their head. This tiny nationalistic group soon divided up into several even smaller groups. In 2003 Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, visited the ROCOR Synod in New York, becoming the intermediary between the Patriarchal Church inside Russia and ROCOR. After a little-publicised, consultative meeting of some ROCOR clergy at Nyack in North America in 2003, the Council of Bishops of the Church Outside Russia entered into formal dialogue with the Church inside Russia. Six joint meetings of Church Commissions, drawn from both sides, were held. It was clear that it was time for ROCOR to hold its Fourth Council, that of May 2006 in San Francisco. Vital questions had arisen for the Church,

relating to ROCOR's temporary self-governance, dating from 1920, and steps towards normalising relations with the newly-freed Church inside Russia.

We shall never forget the scene as Metropolitan Laurus, by origin a poor Lemko peasant boy from the Beskid Carpathians of Slovakia, stepped onto the world stage at the All-Diaspora Council in San Francisco, before the relics of St John of Shanghai. There was opposition to unity by a few sectarian elements. They refused to recognise the new, positive direction of Russian renewal and for their own reasons chose to see only the old, negative vestiges of Soviet decadence. Like the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, they would not forgive their former persecutors and were frightened of mass Orthodoxy. Thus, sadly, these elements left the Church, setting themselves up in judgement over Her. At once they divided into even tinier mutually hostile factions, all of them claiming to be more 'pure' than the other. As a result of this Council, in May 2007 there came reconciliation between the always free Church Outside Russia and the newly free Church inside Russia and the mass rebirth of the Russian Orthodox Tradition there. The next year, in 2008 the two men of destiny and reconcilers, Patriarch Alexis II and Metropolitan Laurus, who had been put there by God to fulfil their missions and complete the task of reconciliation, both reposed in the sleep of the blessed.

*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

### **Period Three: 2008 - : The Window of Opportunity**

*Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

Thus, the third period in our history began in 2008 with the election of Metropolitan Hilarion, our first Metropolitan to have been born in the New World. Although we divided the two previous periods into forty-four years each, this does not necessarily mean that this third period will also last forty-four years. That would take us to 2052. Of the future there can only be uncertainty, given the apocalyptic tendencies now unfurling in the world, but all is possible.

After decades of persecution and the almost tangible outpouring of grace which followed the reconciliation of the Church inside Russia and ROCOR in 2007, putting an end to the absurd and unhistorical accusations of a 'schism' between the two parts of the Russian Church, today our part of the Russian Church is fully accepted by the rest of the Orthodox world. The politically-forced division within the Russian Church and the Soviet-inspired persecution and lack of recognition of ROCOR are in the past. If there are any who still absurdly call St John of Shanghai a schismatic, they simply deprive themselves of grace. The division inside the Russian Church was caused uniquely by now dead Soviet politics, which opposed the freedom of the Church. Today that part of the Orthodox world which was once conditioned by the demands of Soviet atheism is dead.

Moreover, that part of the Orthodox world which was once conditioned by Western-financed ecumenist and modernist conformism is also dying. Both these parts of the Orthodox world are beginning to realise that the Tradition, which ROCOR at one time had struggled to keep almost alone down all the lonely decades, was the path ahead. The voice of canonicity that cried for so long in the wilderness was heard. Both new calendarist liberalism and old calendarist conservatism are

increasingly seen as what they were and are – human ideologies. Now is the time to return to the Tradition, the continuous revelations of the Holy Spirit, above mere human liberalism and conservatism.

In this context, we are faced by two great tasks. On the one hand, a gradual but massive return to Orthodoxy is taking place in the Russian-speaking lands. Most there have now received baptism, but only a few have as yet been Churched. A great spiritual and so moral revival has hardly begun there and there is far to go to change daily behaviour to Orthodox Christian norms, to the Ten Commandments. There remains much to do in this post-Soviet world, with its old Soviet reflexes. And some have emigrated from that world to us and become our parishioners, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It is the duty of ROCOR to fill them with the pre-revolutionary traditions of Russian Orthodoxy, which only by the grace of God we have conserved.

At the same time, in the Western world there is mass apostasy. It is almost as though the Western world is undergoing voluntary Sovietisation, despite the repeated warnings to the West of present Russian leaders. In spite of and because of the wave of Western consumerism or self-gratification, there are those in the Western world who also hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is the duty of ROCOR to fill them also with the same traditions which we have conserved. Our identity is therefore to bring to the world the Russian Word, the fullness of the Orthodox Tradition, and to preach it worldwide

ROCOR today unites four waves of immigrants and their descendants as well as native Orthodox. Its territory spreads not only to North and South America, Australia and Western Europe, but also to relatively new territories

like Indonesia, New Zealand, South Korea, Hawaii, Haiti and Costa Rica. The nature of ROCOR is multinational and multilingual and it keeps its diverse and multi-generational flock together by the divine and human glue of Orthodoxy.

Global electronic technology, also at our disposition, means that we have opportunities to spread our Russian Orthodox Faith in ways which we could only have dreamed of before. The fact that our Church has taken English, the only globally accessible language, as one of its liturgical languages and has all the liturgical books in this language, means that anyone from any country in the world can now translate the texts of the Russian Orthodox Tradition into their own language. As a ROCOR priest, every week I am contacted by individuals, not just locally, but from all parts of the world, from the Congo to Pakistan, from the Philippines to Ireland, from Brazil to Australia, who seek the life-giving Word of Holy Russia. And I have no doubt that I am not alone in this. The world has become our parish. All this gives us a window of opportunity, the like of which we have never seen before.

Ninety years on from our foundation, we see the wisdom of the timing of our entry into canonical communion with the now free Patriarchal Church inside Russia, which gives us support which we did not have before. But we also see the great wisdom of retaining our independent, self-governing status. For this reason alone, we shall not be 'swallowed up' by the Patriarchate, as some mistakenly think. ROCOR is outside and beyond the internal politics of the contemporary Russian-speaking lands, whose post-Soviet reflexes, attitudes and debates, sometimes very unfortunate ones, do not concern us. They are simply not part of our Church culture. Most

ROCOR parishes have guarded a wealth of pre-revolutionary traditions, pastoral experience and subtlety which the parishes of the post-Soviet Patriarchate do not have. Many of the debates in the Patriarchal Church today are those which we had, and solved, over the past, thirty, forty and fifty years ago.

For example, there is the question of ecumenism, where the Patriarchal Church, perturbed by the views of individuals of one extreme or another and nineteenth century concepts about Roman Catholicism, is still trying to find the correct and balanced approach of truth and mercy. These were found long ago by ROCOR: after all, we live in the West, we know reality on a daily basis. Another example: for pastoral reasons we are accustomed to using a mixture of liturgical languages, realising that languages are only different orders of consonants and vowels. What is important is to keep the same prayerful and traditional atmosphere in our churches, the sense of the sacred, whatever liturgical language pastoral needs oblige us to use. Parishes of the Patriarchal Church are still finding their way here. Finally, there is the dawning realisation in the Patriarchal Church of the need to venerate local Western saints of the first millennium and great debate. Here too is a debate which we had thirty and forty years ago, solved and moved on from. Our experience is invaluable to those who accept it.

*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

### **Conclusion: The Guiding Star of Holiness**

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

Questions have been raised concerning the future of ROCOR. Thus, some have remarked that with the fall of

Soviet Communism and the Cold War, ROCOR can be abolished. This suggestion can be rejected outright. Since the fall of Communism the number of Russian Orthodox outside Russia has increased enormously. It is notable that the Patriarchal Church inside Russia has itself opened numbers of parishes outside Russia for the fourth wave of emigrants from the old Soviet Union, especially in Western Europe.

There is the future possibility that Patriarchal parishes outside Russia, or other parishes now in other jurisdictions but wishing to forsake old-fashioned modernism, could one day merge with ROCOR. After all, Patriarchal parishes outside Russia are precisely 'outside Russia' and logically therefore should be part of ROCOR. As long as ROCOR has resident and competent bishops for its dioceses, parishes will continue to remain with ROCOR. As for parishes at present under other Local Orthodox Churches, they may one day wish to follow the Russian Orthodox Tradition in its integrity, whatever their main liturgical language may be. The fact is that, whatever our make-up or precise structure, ROCOR will continue to exist, because Russian Orthodox churches outside Russia will continue to exist.

Questions have also been raised concerning the liturgical languages which will predominate in ROCOR in the future. Much is uncertain here. However, what we do know is that our future, as our past, is in our faithfulness to our heritage, the Russian Orthodox Tradition brought to us from before the Revolution. However, in our context, this does not necessarily mean faithfulness to Church Slavonic. Our Russian Orthodoxy, by definition even more than inside Russia, is a multinational and multilingual faith. And the glue to our unity is precisely in our faithfulness to the Russian Orthodox Tradition.

Our firm adherence to this Tradition, which is so much greater than ourselves, is at present marked by our bilingualism. Most of our churches use more than one liturgical language, but they share the same melodies, the same atmosphere, the same spirit, the same faithfulness to the purity of Holy Orthodoxy. And this is what counts.

There was a time when we lost young people who would tell us that they would not come to church because they did not understand. Massive efforts were made by gallant individuals to translate and sing the Church services in our main languages, German, Dutch, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and even other languages, especially in Asia. At the moment, however, there is a tendency to use more Slavonic in our services because of the new wave of Russian-speaking immigrants. However, we are now able at any time to use local languages liturgically. Thus, there can be no more excuses from the young of, 'I don't go to church because I don't understand'. Many of our parishes now practically have dual nationalities. They are not held together by nationalistic interests, but by the glue of the faith of Holy Russia, whichever language we use.

Other questions have been raised concerning the future structures of ROCOR. For instance, some think that one day ROCOR will be composed of three Metropolias, one in the Americas, a second in Australasia and a third in Western Europe. Although this is purely speculative, it is interesting to note that this would in some ways be a return to the ROCOR structures of Metropolitan districts in the early 1920s, when there were also several Metropolitans and districts, in North America, Western Europe, the Balkans and China. Perhaps in this sense we shall yet return to our roots, with several Metropolitans, but one of them a First Hierarchy, senior to the others.

However, all such questions of outward organisation are ultimately secondary, even superficial, they do not concern the real, inward essence of ROCOR.

And what is this inward essence? The great saint and soul-friend of St John of Shanghai, St Nikola of Zhicha, said: 'A Church without miracles is no more than a welfare organisation like the Red Cross'. In other words, without holiness, the Church is merely a human institution. And the wisdom to steer the ship of the Church has always been granted to us by the star of holiness that brightly shines in the sky above us. We can build only on holiness, on the purity of Holy Orthodoxy. I foresee a time when we shall venerate not only St Jonah of Manchuria and St John of Shanghai, but other ROCOR saints. Of names that can be put forward as righteous and perhaps some as saints, here is a shortlist, not at all comprehensive:

- 1 January** Archimandrite Mitrofan of Jordanville (1986)
- 24 January** Nectarius, Bishop of Seattle (1982)
- 10 February** Archimandrite Nikandr of Lesna (1978)
- 11 February** Simon, Archbishop of Shanghai and Beijing (1933)
- 13 February** Seraphim, Archbishop of Boguchar (1950)
- 8 March** Vitaly, Archbishop of Eastern America (1960)
- 16 March** Laurus, Metropolitan of New York (2008)
- 17 March** Tikhon, Archbishop of San Francisco (1963)
- 31 March** Averky, Archbishop of Syracuse (1976)
- 5 April** Igumen Philemon of Jordanville (1953)
- 26 April** Anastasius, Metropolitan of New York (1965)
- 15 June** Innocent, Archbishop of Beijing (1931)
- 28 July** Antony, Metropolitan of Kiev (1936)
- 3 August** Hieroschemamonk Ignatius of Harbin (1958)
- 7 August** Archimandrite Vladimir of Jordanville (1988)
- 15 August** Abbess Rufina of Shanghai (1937)

**20 August** Hieromonk Seraphim of California (1982)  
**10 September** Antony, Archbishop of San Francisco (2000)  
**23 September** Archimandrite Antony of Jordanville (1993)  
**31 October** Joseph, Guardian of the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God (1997)  
**8 November** Philaret, Metropolitan of New York (1985)  
**21 December** Schemamonk Michael of Harbin (1939)

It may now be time to establish a Canonisation Commission to begin collecting and examining material facts and testimonies concerning such righteous. Some of them may be saints, whom God has yet to reveal to us unworthy.

Of course, there are also many, many others, modest Russian Orthodox exiles, with their descendants and their disciples. With their unnoticed lives they rest in unnoticed graves which we must seek out and tend. They are buried all over the world, lying out in the rain and the sun in the cemeteries of great cities, where people quicken their pace, and in obscure villages, where the clocks go slow. The whole world has become the burial place of these holy exiles and righteous souls, who faithfully struggled for the purity of Holy Orthodoxy. Although persecuted by all in the lonely decades, they were the voice of the free Russian Orthodox Church and so brought the word of Holy Russia to the very ends of the world. Although God will reveal His saints in His own good time, we would do well to think of them and be inspired by them and pray for them, that they too may pray for us in the great tasks that await us ahead.

*Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.*

Archpriest Andrew Phillips,  
Church of St John of Shanghai,  
Colchester,  
England

27 November /10 December 2010  
Icon of the Mother of God of the Sign