

From: Father Nicholas <[inoknikolai@yahoo.com](mailto:inoknikolai@yahoo.com)>  
Date: Wed, 23 Aug 2006 03:09:09 -0700 (PDT)  
To: <[Orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com)>  
Subject: Reply to: Who are the Real Victims, Part 2

Reply to "Who are the Real Victims", Part 2

In Part 1 of this reply, I reiterated our position:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodox-tradition/message/93037>

As we stated in our introductory posting to this list, "We have no intention of discussing here the scandalous accusations made against us." We still stand by that statement: we feel no need to refute point by point all those lurid fabrications. Time will tell.

However, I will respond to this present thread since it deals with those of us monastics still struggling here at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, with the status of HTM then and now, and with certain details or misconceptions concerning how the so-called investigation of our case was carried out.

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Excerpts from some recent postings on this issue:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodox-tradition/message/89520>

June 10, 2006 Sex Scandal Deniers

Peter Chaplain wrote:

[snip:]

"What struck me was that many of them have deep psychological problems from the sexual abuse. Worse, some have left Orthodoxy." Because of what actually did transpire, a lot of them are messed up psychologically.

Thanks to God, there are exceptions monks who married and appear reasonably adjusted and happy. Let's pray for them all, and vow never again to continue to abuse them by maligning them to support the lies of HTM. God help us all!

Peter Chaplain

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodox-tradition/message/89684>

June 13, 2006 Who Are The Real Victims

[snip:]

You say you've had enough of talk about the abused monks, yet you slander another. Would you please leave the 24 abused monks alone....

Let's pray for the victims, (that they be left alone)

Peter Chaplain

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodox-tradition/message/89527>

June 10, 2006 RE: I told you so

Fr. Stephen Pavlenko wrote:

[snip:]

The post was made because people are claiming that no investigation took place. One most certainly did, and the evidence showed that abnormal and amoral activities took place at Holy Transfiguration Monastery. How cruel it is that men who had their souls ripped out and devoured along with their dignity as male human beings, are now, years later, accused of "sneaking out at night", "leaving monastic life", "getting married and divorced"... is this not attaching one self and sharing in the ORIGINAL DISCUSTING SIN against these men Have your arguments about whose jurisdiction is the purest of all but spare the battered souls of men who were ruined, some maybe (with the apparent LACK OF COMPASSION displayed on this and other lists) for eternity. The activities at Transfiguration Monastery were indeed examined by Bishops of the Church and no amount of shuffling things around can disparage that.

Archpriest Stefan Pavlenko

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodox-tradition/message/92433>

[To:orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com)

From: "(matushka) Ann Lardas" <[matanna@aol.com](mailto:matanna@aol.com)>

Date: Sat, 12 Aug 2006 19:47:06 -0000

Subject: [paradosis] Not that wretched letter again

> Our bishops were in no way "too busy to come." They spent time and  
> energy and money on an investigation which it grieved them to have to  
> instigate, and for which they were slandered, berrated, and  
> abandoned by the accused and those who trusted the accused. They  
> didn't conduct the investigation in the home of the investigated, and  
> for this you chide them?

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodox-tradition/message/92474>

To: [orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com)

From: "DDD" <[dimitradd@comcast.net](mailto:dimitradd@comcast.net)>

Date: Mon, 14 Aug 2006 00:01:03 -0400

Subject: Re: [paradosis] Apologize and Refute Malignment of Holy Metr.Philaret>

--- DDD <[dimitradd@comcast.net](mailto:dimitradd@comcast.net)> wrote:

[snip:]

>People did come -- just not where HTM could control  
> the proceedings.

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In all of the above messages, in all of the debates, polemics, accounts and postings over the years, there is one element missing from the equation: we monastics who remained at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, who did not leave our obediences, and who did not break our vows. Those who left are hearkened to, sympathized with, and pitied. We who remained are, at best, ignored, or else told to keep quiet, lest we cause additional trauma to those who left. It's a topsy-turvy case of guilt by association.

But why were we never taken into consideration, neither then, nor now? And why should we be muzzled or intimidated into silence by those who choose to believe our detractors and who declare that every discussion of our side of this story causes those "victims" more "pain and anguish"? How much "pain and anguish" do you think has been caused to us, our families, and friends by those fathers' lurid tales on Pokrov, HOCNA-info, and elsewhere? Why does no one ever stop to think of that? Well, this one time our voice is going to be heard, and we monastics who are still here at HTM are going to state our case. (However, we do **not** intend to return to this topic endlessly.)

Contrary to the statements above, we did not expect the bishops to "conduct the investigation" solely "in the home of the investigated" which is, after all, not some private residence, but a monastery occupied by thirty five other Orthodox monks. Nor did we try to "control the proceedings". However, we do think that out of Christian love and common decency the investigating clergy themselves should have wished to speak to us and hear us out. And actually, how could the monastery seek to control an "investigation" concerning which it was told next to nothing? Regardless of what others may think of our long letter to Bishop Hilarion of Jan. 28/Feb. 10, 1987, as one who was in monastery at the time, I can testify that it does relate the course of events as experienced by us here at the center of the storm.

<http://htmadmin.phpwebhosting.com/86-11.htm>

The **only** time anyone from the ROCOR Synod visited us concerning this case, was when our superiors constrained Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles and Bishop Alypy to stop by the monastery briefly after their strange meeting with Fr. Panteleimon at the motel in April of 1986. (Sadly, the hierarchs themselves had had no intention of even coming by the monastery.) It was a very odd and strained visit, during which they told us nothing of consequence, nor did they ask us much of anything. During this brief encounter Archbishop Anthony stated that it was to be a "thorough investigation". We kept wondering, "How can this investigation be thorough if they don't even want to speak with us who

lived and worked with all these fathers for so many years?" If our detractors can cite twenty-four accusers, what of the thirty-five monastics here in the monastery (plus former novices and others) who declare that such things never took place here?

Since no one else ever bothered to come to hear our opinion, our religious superiors gave us the opportunity to write our thoughts on this case to Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Alypy. No one was compelled to write, but we were allowed to do so, if we wished. I myself wrote to Archbishop Anthony in Russian, hoping thereby to avoid any possible "language barrier". Archbishop Anthony never replied to any of us, nor even acknowledged receiving our letters. Bishop Alypy simply returned them unopened.

The only official, written communication we ever received from the ROCOR Synod during the course of the eleven months prior to our leaving the Synod was the short, ambiguous ukaze of Sept. 4/17, 1986, appointing Archbishop Anthony of L. A. as "acting Abbot". When we inquired what precisely was meant by "acting Abbot", we were told by both Metropolitan Vitaly and Bishop Hilarion that that was a "mistranslation". Requests for a copy of the Russian original of the ukaze went unanswered. [More on this aspect of the case another time. FN]

During all that time I often wondered how those who believed the accusations perceived of us who remained here in the monastery < and how do they perceive of us at present. (Well, at least Fr. Alexander Lebedeff has been candid enough to express himself: "The path of HTM is strewn with the victims of the cult mentality they fostered and maintain even to this day") But then, shouldn't love have dictated that attempts be made to dissuade us poor souls from our "delusions" and free us from the "cult"? But no one came to talk to us or contacted us.

Pray tell, what were our options, as monastics, if we did not (and still do not) believe the accusations? What courses of action were open to us? What level did the number of accusers have to reach before we would be justified in telling our religious superiors: "We do not believe any of the slanders, in fact we know that they are false, but since you have been accused by so many, we have to abandon you and our vows in order to appear integral"? At what point were we simply to cut and run? Rather, as Orthodox Christians and monastics, were we not morally bound to remain in the monastery and under obedience, since we knew the accusations to be slanderous? (One of the demonstrations of the oddness of this whole case is the fact that we even have to argue

such a point.)

To put it in a non-monastic setting, one closer to home for the rest of you:

What if your father, mother, brother, sister, or spouse someone you know intimately and trust implicitly was falsely slandered by a multitude of people? What if it became the talk of the town, or of the whole country, and was in all the media? What if you became a laughingstock in the eyes of all for “stupidly” remaining loyal to your relative or friend because in the depths of your soul you knew that he was innocent? How long would you hold out before caving in to popular opinion and the many “proofs”? What would your moral obligations be in this situation, no matter what? Now please raise that to a spiritual plane and reconsider our case.

For, you see:

We are not stupid dolts, not hopelessly naïve simpletons, not co-conspirators, not accomplices in sin, not brain-washed zombies, not cowed cult members, not prisoners, not spin doctors, not deniers, not victims. We are weak, sinful, Orthodox monastics simply struggling to save our souls. With God's grace, and through the prayers of our monastic superiors, we hope to remain here in the monastery and attain unto our goal of salvation. We wish the same for all of you.

We know our religious superiors well: Fr. Panteleimon, our founder, Fr. Isaac, our abbot, and the now Metropolitan Ephraim, our hierarch. Therefore, we do not “think” that the accusations against them are not true; we do not <sup>3</sup>hope<sup>2</sup> so; we do not “wish” so we *know* that they are not true. Period.

We likewise know the fathers who have left. In fact, no one knows them better than we do, and no one loves them more than we do, and no one grieves over them more than we do. But we love them for eternity, and not for this vain world only; therefore we pray that they repent and return to the monastic discipline which they had embraced and wherein alone is found salvation for them. May God grant that it come to pass before the end. Amen.

Fr. Nicholas  
HTM

PS: In one of his messages above, Peter Chaplain made the following, startling, remark:

“Thanks to God, there are exceptions monks who married and appear

reasonably adjusted and happy.”

Firstly, the chronology here is wrong. It is not as though those fathers left the monastery, then got over their “traumatic experience”, and only later got married. Several left **in order** to get married, and only later made their slanderous accusations to cover their sin. For example, Fr. Mamas, the first of them, had “proposed” to the widow woman even **before** he left the monastery. They got “married” in a civil ceremony, but later had their “marriage” “blessed” by a Syrian priest. They then sought to impose their fait accompli on the parishioners in our area. When the faithful refused to accept their marriage, they became embittered, blamed the monastery, and vowed to do everything they could to destroy us, and thus avenge themselves. The outcome was the malicious letter written by Fr. Mamas at the request of Fr. Gregory some months later. Many of the phrases and arguments betray the thought patterns and expressions of a psychologist, which Fr. Mamas is not, but he was “married” to one at the time.

Secondly, an Orthodox Christian **cannot** thank God that schema-monks have gotten “married” and are adjusted and happy. A schema-monk did not vow to be well-adjusted and happily married!

As Fr. Panteleimon explained in his letter of April 13, 1986 (written at the request of Metropolitan Vitaly) to Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles:

“But aside from my accusers, something which grieved me when we met, Vladyka, was the attitude of Bishop Alypy. At one point, Bishop Alypy said that if things were as Fr Mamas claims, then he did well to get married. I never expected to hear such a thing from a monastic and bishop. No! Fr Mamas did not do well to get married. Even if everything were true (and both I and all here with me emphatically deny that they areŠ), Fr. Mamas would not be justified in getting married. Fr. Mamas is a monk of the Great Schema. He was not tonsured as a child or as a teenager. He was an adult who was well-educated both here and abroad and had seen the world. He had lived in the monastic discipline four full years (two at Holy Trinity, Jordanville and two at Holy Transfiguration, Boston) before he was tonsured into the Angelic Schema the canons provide for the minimum of three years before tonsure. If, therefore, after making his full vows, he came to the conclusion that he wished to depart because of reasons of Faith or morals, this would not give him license to renounce his vows, but rather to seek another monastery in order to continue his monastic vocation. In the instance of Fr. Mamas, he could have returned to Holy Trinity from whence he came. He could have gone to the Holy Mountain where there are other Synodal monks. He could have joined Vladyka Metropolitan Vitaly's

community in Montreal, etc., but certainly not break his vows and marry.”