



## **THE EASTERN ORTHODOX No 114: June 2019**

**ЦЕРКОВЬ СВТ. ИОАННА ШАНХАЙСКОГО  
ST JOHN'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
Military Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 2AN**

**His Holiness Kyrill, Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russias  
Most Rev. Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Church Outside Russia  
Rt. Rev. Bishop Irenei, Bishop of Richmond and Western Europe**

The Church of St John of Shanghai, built in 1855, is the largest Russian Orthodox church building in the British Isles and is attended by 3,000 Orthodox of 24 nationalities, with some 100 baptisms per year. It is a parish of the East of England Orthodox Church Trust (Charity No: 1081707), part of the Russian Orthodox Church, comprising Colchester, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, Ashford and Wisbech, looking after faithful Orthodox in the East of England.

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**Website:** [www.orthodoxengland.org.uk](http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk)

## Расписание Богослужений / Timetable of Services

### Saturday 1 June

5.30: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

### Sunday 2 June: Sunday of the Man Born Blind / Неделя о слепом

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

### Wednesday 5 June

5.30 pm: Vigil for the Ascension/ Всенощное бдение накануне праздника Вознесения Господня

### Thursday 6 June: Ascension Day / Вознесение Господне

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

### Saturday 8 June

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

### Sunday 9 June: The Holy Fathers of the First Universal Council / Свв. отцов I - ого Вселенского Собора

10.00: Hours and Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

### Saturday 15 June

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

### Sunday 16 June: Pentecost – Whitsun – The Feast of the Holy Trinity / Пятидесятница – День Св. Троицы - Сошествие Св. Духа на апостолов

10.00 am: Hours and Liturgy. Vespers with the Kneeling Prayers / Часы и Божественная Литургия. Вечерня с коленопреклонными молитвами

### Saturday 22 June

5.30: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

### Sunday 23 June: All Saints / Всех святых

10.00 am: Hours and Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

### Monday 24 June: Beginning of the Apostles' Fast / Начало Петрова поста

### Saturday 29 June: Patronal Feast / Престольный праздник: St John of Shanghai / День памяти Свт. Иоанна Шанхайского

10.00 am: Hours, Liturgy and Procession (Blessing of Water at 8.30 am). Meal in Halls / Часы, Божественная литургия и крестный ход (в 8.30 – малое освящение воды). Общая трапеза.

3.00 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

### Sunday 30 June: All the Saints who have Shone forth in Rus / Всех святых, в земле Русской просиявших

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная Литургия

### **Baptisms in May**

12 May: Cristian Gabriel

18 May: Nick Bizans

19 May: Patrik Profit

19 May: Stefan Alexandru

19 May: Aydan Ciuperca

25 May: Alexander Parfeni

25 May: Elizaveta Necrilov

### **Wedding in May:**

19 May: Valery and Olga Smirnov

## **WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL? A Parable by Elder Cleopa**

*[Archimandrite Cleopa \(Ilie\)](#)*

*When Elder Cleopa was asked, "Why does the Lord allow evil?" he answered with the following story.*



A long time ago in the Egyptian desert there lived a hermit monk. Sometimes he would go to Alexandria to sell the baskets he wove. The hermit would give almost all the money he made on his baskets to the poor, leaving only enough to buy himself the bare necessities.

One day while walking to the city he asked himself the question, “[Why does the Lord allow evil](#) in people’s lives if He is Good, Just, and Almighty?” His mind was disturbed because he had seen so much unhappiness and sorrow when he was last in the city.

Along the road he met another monk who was also going to Alexandria. They talked with each other, and he told his new travelling companion about his anguish. Seeing that the hermit was troubled, the monk comforted him and told him that the Lord will reveal the truth to him when they arrive at the city, but he will have to pray ceaselessly and never ask questions, no matter what happens.

The hermit promised to do as the monk said, and they continued along their way. They stopped at one home to spend the night. The householders received them with love and generously fed them. On the table was a beautiful silver vessel. Before they left to go to sleep, the monk surreptitiously took that vessel and put it in his rucksack. The hermit wanted to reproach his companion, but he remembered his promise and said nothing.

In the morning they came to the river. The monk took out the vessel, made the sign of the cross over it, and put it into the river.

By lunchtime the travellers had arrived at another village. They were invited to one of the houses for a meal. When they were leaving the house, a dog was barking in the yard. The monk killed it. Immediately a boy ran out of the house and started screaming. The hermit’s travelling companion grabbed him by the right arm, yanked it and broke it, then calmly continued his way. The indignant hermit wanted to tell him what he thought, but remembering his promise he again kept silence.

When dusk fell, the monk and the hermit decided to spend the night in a ramshackle house, which turned out to be inhabited by some children. Their parents had died and they had no one to take care of them. The travellers spent the night there, but in the morning before leaving the monk took a firebrand out of the furnace and burned down the house. And again the hermit was indignant, but again he could say nothing.

They came to a third village. There they saw a ruined church, but it was still possible to go into it and pray. The monk took up a stone and flung it through the church window, shattering it. Then he took his bemused brother to a tavern. When he entered, the monk made three prostrations. The hermit by now had resigned himself to his companion’s strange behavior and just prayed.

On the last night the travellers were invited to spend the night in a house on the edge of a wood. There lived a young couple who [had no children](#). In the morning the couple set out to work in the field, and the travellers went on their way. But suddenly the monk returned and burned down that house as well.

Finally they arrived at Alexandria. The hermit could no longer wait to understand the essence of what had happened to them on the road. So he asked his companion, “Tell me after all, who are you?”

“I am an angel,” the other replied.

“You! An angel?!” the hermit scoffed disdainfully. “You are a real devil! Only a demon could do all those dreadful things you’ve done. Those good people showed you hospitality you repaid them all with black ingratitude. You were a thief, an arsonist, a murderer, and a sacrilegious desecrator. And you even wear monastic clothing!”

“You are mistaken,” the travelling companion answered. “I really am an angel. And I was sent to you because the Lord saw your anguish and wanted to answer the questions that tormented you. I know that you want to know why I did all those things. I will start from the beginning.

“Why did I steal the vessel? I’ll answer you. Our host’s grandfather stole it from one monastery church, and because of that sacrilege his family was punished for three generations with illnesses and other problems. As a sign of gratitude for their hospitality I decided to deliver them from this punishment. I signed the vessel with the sign of the cross and put it into the river. Some monks will come there to wash their clothes, find it and return it to the monastery.

“I knew that the dog was already rabid. It would have bitten its owners and that is why I killed it. And I broke their son’s arm because I could foresee that when he grows up he would become a robber. But with a bad arm like that you can’t do much robbing.

“Why did I burn down the children’s house? Those children would soon have died without any care, and now in the place of their burned house they’ll find the silver their parents hid, and they can now go to Alexandria to their grandfather who is a bishop—he’ll take care of them. When they grow up, the boys will become priests and the girls will marry.

“I know that you are puzzled as to why I threw the stone through the church window and made prostrations in the tavern. I saw that the demons were dancing at the church window and I chased them away with that stone. That church will soon be repaired. In the tavern was a wealthy merchant who had promised the priest that he would pay the cost of repairing the church. That is why I bowed to him.

"And finally, about the last house. I burned it down in order to save the young couple from the curse of childlessness. The husband had made a dirty deal and built that house with the money he got from it. That is why they didn't have any children. I saw that he is repenting of his deed and doesn't know how to get rid of his house. Now he will build a more modest house but on honestly earned money. And the Lord will bless them with children."

Do you understand? [God's mercy](#) for people is shown in everything, but they don't see it and can't understand it. The Lord never commits evil. But people look at His works as misfortunes and sorrows, while the Lord does these things only for the sake of good and for their correction. Therefore do not look at the external side, but try to see God's all-encompassing justice in everything.

[Archimandrite Cleopa \(Ilie\)](#)

*Translated from the [Russian version](#) by Nun Cornelia (Rees)*

[Pravoslaven Sviat](#)

6/1/2019

## MY FATHER SAW HEAVEN AND HELL

[Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl](#)



*Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl with his mother*

For a child, there's no such thing as bad parents, and for parents—bad children. Our father and mother had nine of us, but the Lord took one of us away from this life during infancy. We had a Christian upbringing and had a very religious mother and grandmother on my mother's side. However, our father was a **Protestant**. Although we were born in such a family, all of us were baptized in the Orthodox Church eight days after our birth. Our father never forbade us to go to church, although he himself only prayed the "Our Father" and never made the sign of the cross. He was strict in our upbringing and always said, "One that's been caned is worth two that haven't". We would also remember the following words that he used to say: "I'd rather endure pain once than be ashamed of my children for the rest of my life."

When I was about sixteen or seventeen years old and was in high school, then, out of interest, I visited some Protestant congregations a few times. I wanted to understand their perception of the faith, what kind of spiritual state they were in, and what they do during their so-called services. But there I saw the absurdity and emptiness of these people. Truly: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me* (Mt. 15:8). If a person pulls out the bricks holding together his house, it will surely fall. The same happens when people abolish the dogmas of the Church, the structure of the services, the Holy Tradition of the Church and the Apostles.

In 1985, when I was a student at the Moscow Theological Academy, I asked my father to disown me. My father looked at me with pity and said, "You're a foolish person. I really wanted children, but the Lord wouldn't give me any—your mother was sick at that time. But I prayed and asked, and the Lord gave me you. How can I disown you? And the rest of you too? You're my flesh and blood, my life and my joy".

I said these things because I really wanted my father to get **baptized**. I didn't have the right to pray for him in the altar or commemorate him during Liturgy, and that was very painful for me. I loved my father with all my heart, as he did me. Dad always helped mom, never offended us, and never punished us without good cause. When we were little, he would win us over with candy and cookies, took us sledding, played hide and seek, and went skiing with us.

To put it shortly, back then, in 1985, we talked on the Nativity of Christ, and, having achieved nothing again, I was heading back to my "alma mater", Trinity Sergius Lavra, where my spiritual birth would begin. Two days after the **Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple**, I received a telegram inviting me to have a conversation over the phone with my parents.

“What joy!” said my mother. “On the eve of the Presentation your father was baptized. All of the children and grandchildren were there with lighted candles. He arranged everything with the priest himself, chose who his godparents would be, got ready, and it happened—it’s a miracle”. I think that first and foremost this was a miracle for me.

Then on the next day my father went to church for the feast to participate in the [Eucharist](#). However, he just couldn’t understand: how can one [receive the Body and Blood of Christ](#)? This seems to have disquieted his soul a little bit. Something like this can happen with one whose heart the Lord has not yet touched. After “the Holy Gifts are for the Holy” was chanted, my father started coming up to the Chalice with the other people. And lo, what a wondrous miracle! The Lord works out the salvation of people in different ways. Instead of seeing bread in the spoon, my father saw the Risen Christ standing and looking at him.

My father later on told us: “I wasn’t just afraid—I didn’t even know if I was standing on the ground, or if it had disappeared from under my feet. And a thought scorched my mind: ‘How can I receive Him inside myself?!’ So I stood frozen for about a minute, but the people behind me started nudging me, saying: ‘Lebed (they were used to calling us by our surname in the village), go on!’ And at that point the Risen Christ had changed back into the form of a piece of bread, and I received Communion”. The priest would later recall: “I saw that in an instant he became covered with sweat, which was pouring off of him like raindrops, and I couldn’t understand what had happened”. When my father walked away from the chalice and went to partake of the antidoron and wine, he again saw the small radiant figure of the Risen Christ. This was how the Lord had strengthened him and dispelled his doubts.

I can’t say that my father was very diligent in going to church—he didn’t attend every Sunday service, but he always did attend services on the twelve Great Feast days, and later on he kept the fasts together with my mother. After this the question of completing the third sacrament arose—the sacrament of [Holy Matrimony](#) (marriage). But the enemy of the human race kept diverting him away from the truth, and when I would talk about the wedding, my father would either say that he doesn’t have dress shoes, or a shirt, or a suit. At one point I went to the store and bought everything that was needed, carried it home, and said: “Here’s everything you need for the wedding”. And it was as if the devil had taken precautions after perceiving my father’s good intention and my perseverance! My father got into a quarrel with my mother and stopped talking with her right before the day he planned to visit me in Novovolynsk in 1988 on the eve of his name day. But my sisters Natasha, Nina and Valya started telling them that they have to go: “Batushka is waiting”. And so in the morning they left for Lutsk, still not having reconciled with each other; but after getting on the bus from Lutsk to Novovolynsk, my father started saying: “Do you want your wish to be fulfilled? It will be, because I gave a promise to God and batushka”.



My father and mother had arrived, and I completed the Sacrament of Matrimony for my parents—Dmitry and Nadezhda; and also for the parents of Fr. Victor—Alexei and Sophia, with whom I had lived for some time. My father was fifty-five years old at the time and my mother was fifty-three. The Sacrament was fulfilled in a very festive manner; it was a great joy for me, because I had wedded them myself. The choir sang beautifully, and our relatives were there. After the wedding we gathered together and had a modest celebration. And afterwards with the help of God they continued living together.



*Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl*

Years passed, the children grew up and went away, and my parents were alone again. One morning my father woke up and told my mother about a dream he had. He saw all of our loved ones who had passed away, and they were all sitting at a table in our garden and asking him for a drink of cognac. It's worth mentioning that my father helped many people out. Our parents were looking after two women, and also after an elderly family—our neighbors old man Sidor and his wife Maria, whose daughter had refused to support them—and my father would bring them food. Sidor had taught me a lot about the historical understanding of the

Holy Scriptures, and, thanks to his knowledge, when I entered seminary, I didn't have to open up any books on this topic for two years, because I already knew all of the material.

And then, after that dream (though I don't believe in dreams), my father said to my mother, "Nadya, my time has come; I'm going to die soon". But she didn't take his words seriously: "What are you going on about again?! Stop cluttering up your mind with that". But he remained firm and said: "You'll see". This was in September. Before father would sometimes say that if he were to get cancer, then might kill himself, because he was afraid of suffering and didn't want to burden anyone. He was never sick and was so strong that he could lift more than 100 kilograms using his teeth. But I prayed to the Lord that if He were to send such a spiritual trial, that He would not allow anything to happen that would not be in accordance with His will, even if it meant that my father would have to pay with his arms and legs for it. And the Lord heard my prayers.

My father had lung cancer, which he had since 1972, and everyone knew about it. But the disease was sort of "locked up" and was not spreading. But then, having received a rib fracture that punctured his lungs to a certain depth, even though they healed afterwards, the injury caused the cancer to progress. He underwent an MRI scan in Lutsk which discovered two brain tumors that had already metastasized. Then, when Alexander Yurievich Usenko, the professor and director of the Shalimov Institute, who, when it came to diseases, was the savior of me and my family, did another MRI scan, the number of metastatic tumors shown was now twenty-two. My father and I decided not to have the surgery done. He said: "My time has come".

I'll never forget this one time back in 2000, when we were struggling for our newly built [Dormition cathedral](#). My father couldn't walk at that time, but moved around by hopping and leaning on his hands. Having reached the car this way, he sat down in the front seat, and we drove up to the church. I can't remember this without crying. I asked him: "Dad, do you need help?" But he didn't let me help him, and said: "No, son, I'm alright". He entered the church by crawling up the steps of the side-chapel of St. Stephan the Protomartyr and got up close to the central altar of the Dormition cathedral and prayed for a long time. I don't know what he was praying for, but afterwards he turned to me and said, "Son, if there be something you have to die for, then let it be this church. I give you my blessing as your father, even though you're a bishop". He would always speak to me in a formal manner and would kiss my hand, but this time he didn't.

In the morning we did as my mother had requested and left for home a bit early, and along the entire way there my father sang, "Oh soon, soon, I shall not be; far away the train will take me..."

When the next day came, my father couldn't get up anymore. He practically did not take any painkillers, except during his last few days, although it seemed like he was experiencing

much pain. He received Communion every day. May God grant me the same feeling of repentance and humility that he had then. When people would come and say: “Mitya, you’ll get better!” he would answer: “Yesterday I was drooling on my chest, but now—on my beard; and you’re saying I’ll get better? What are you troubling me for?! I’m going to live eternally, I won’t die. But there comes a time for all of us when we have to leave this life”.

And then something extraordinary happened. I had come home early from Jerusalem then, and my father was even angry at my mother because of that and said, “Why did you call Vladyka over? It’s not time yet!” He seemed to be sleeping, but then he started yelling so loudly that it was as if the Last Judgment had started! My blood ran cold—he was lying there and shouting in a way that’s impossible to put into words! I began reading the Canon for the Departure of the Soul and prayed to the Mother of God. About twenty minutes later my father came to his senses. He couldn’t make the sign of the cross over himself, but nervously uttered: “Son! Vladyka! Thank you for taking me back!” I leaned over him and asked: “What happened?” He looked at me with eyes full of inexpressible fear. “I was in hell! If only you’d have seen what it’s like there! Everything depicted on the wall at the entrance of the Near Caves is real! (A fresco by the entrance of the Near Caves in the Kiev Caves Lavra depicts the twenty [Toll Houses](#) that the soul passes through after death.—Ed.) It’s all true! I went through everything. There was only one Toll House that I wasn’t taken through—the one where the unwedded are taken, because I was married.”

It’s important to note that those twenty minutes lasted an eternity for the suffering one. Having come to his senses a little, he told me that for breaking the fast on Wednesdays and Fridays our adversaries (i.e. the demons.—Ed.) forced him to eat disgusting worms. For using foul language he was terribly smacked on the mouth. It’s impossible to put into words the horror and suffering that the soul undergoes there!

I didn’t even know what to think about what I had heard. I mean, it was amazing. On the second day my father lay motionless again, as if he were asleep, but this time he had a pleasant appearance, a rosy face, and was smiling. So together with my friend Fr. Anatoly we started reading the Canon for the Departure of the Soul again. My father came to his senses in half an hour, and said: “Son, why did you take me back? Today I was in Heaven. The Lord showed me everything that I was allowed to see. I can’t say I saw too many familiar people there, but there were some. If only you knew what joy and blessedness is there! I didn’t want to leave, but I heard you praying and reading, and was let go”. This all happened three times: one time he was in hell (perhaps for his past in which he was a Protestant) and two times in Heaven.

On the fifth of November I got ready to go to Kiev where His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir was waiting for me. I had to consecrate the crosses on the dome of a church which was located at the birth place of Leonid Danilovich Kuchma, who was the president of the country at that time. I took my father by his hand and said: “Dad, I’ll come on the eighth to greet you on your name day, and then we’ll spend more time together, but right now I have to go—I got a call from our Primate”. (I thank God that I was able to stand at the feet of His

Beatitude, for he was a holy person who opened the world up to me in a different perspective and had influenced my view of the world.) My father answered: “Don’t rush yourself, son; we’ll be having my funeral on that day. Or, at best, I’ll die on that day.” And I replied, “Wait for me to return.” He nodded: “I will, but we won’t be able to talk then.” I asked him to forgive me and kissed him, as was appropriate in this situation.

In the morning on November 7 together with His Beatitude we consecrated the crosses on the church of the Great Martyr Paraskeva in Chaikino village, where Kuchma was born. At ten minutes to ten o’clock the Litany for the Departed was being served. There are no coincidences in life, but only the Providence of God; and as the parents of Leonid Kuchma were being commemorated, at that moment I began commemorating the newly-reposed Dmitry. Such a thing has happened to me twice in my life. In 1986, when metropolitan Anthony had died, we were serving a Litany for the Reposed in the evening, during which I commemorated the newly-reposed Alexandra; however, I didn’t know who that was, and thought: who could have died? Then after that I came to my cell and received a telegram saying that my grandmother Alexandra had died. And now the same thing had happened with Dmitry.

I began feeling a bit sunken-hearted. We came and took a seat at the table, and Leonid Danilovich asked to sing something relevant about his mother from one of His Beatitude’s poems. But I couldn’t sing anything—my throat had become stiff, and I was thinking: “Who is that Dmitry? Who did I commemorate? My father is still alive”. And His Beatitude says to me, “Vladyka, you’re not yourself today.” I agreed. “I myself don’t understand why,” I said. “Well, don’t pay attention to it”. But then, ten minutes later, the president’s bodyguard came in and said: “Leonid Danilovich, Vladyka Paul is being asked to come to the phone”. My heart automatically skipped a beat! I picked up the phone and could hear shouting and weeping, “Vladyka, dad is gone! He died twenty minutes ago.” So, that’s how things happened. He received Communion in the morning on Monday, fell asleep, and didn’t wake up afterwards. Only when he was about to die did he open his eyes, look around at everyone, and then he smiled, closed his eyes, sighed, and he was gone. That’s the short story of the blessed repose of my father.

I remember when I went to receive the blessing to become a monk, my mother strictly objected and said: “Never! Over my dead body!” But my wise father said: “This is what I’ll say to you: Don’t disgrace what it is that you’re striving for, so that I won’t Have to be ashamed of you.” I remembered these words for the rest of my life. My father didn’t talk a lot, but if you deserved to be punished, you’d get it from him. He had a caring attitude towards everyone; he would never pass by a single beggar. Sometimes someone would come to us and my mother would hold something back, like some women might sometimes do, and then he’d rebuke her and say: “Do you think you can lead a double life? Why didn’t you share? Other people are needier than we are!” My mother is also a kind-hearted person, but my father’s kindness and wisdom was always a higher example for all of us.

After my father was gone, I immediately told Fr. Vasily to ask my friends to pray for my newly-reposed parent. Matushka Stephania read the entire Psalter during the night, praying for the repose of his soul. But having become tired after service, I laid down a bit to rest and had a dream in which I saw an extraordinary white house. And my father was there and was joyous, and said: "They built a house for me. Do you see how beautiful it is? And I received seventy-two gifts for my name day. I'm so thankful to you. This is such a wonderful day for me!" I woke up and told everyone about the dream. Matushka Stefania proposed: "Perhaps it's because I read the entire Psalter?" But when I came home, Fr. Vasily met me and said: "Vladyka, I ordered commemorations at seventy-two Divine Liturgies and seventy-two Panikhidas for November 8". Seventy-two! Now there's proof for you of how powerful and grace-bearing the Orthodox Liturgy is, and also that our reposed loved ones are ever close to us. The funeral was held on the eighth of November, on the Feast Day of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrios of Thessaloniki, my father's patron saint, just as he said it would be before he had departed.

He was very kind, and his funeral was attended by a large number of people, about 700 in total. Four bishops took part in the service. What was amazing was that when the coffin was placed on the wagon, the horses refused to go, they wouldn't move off of the yard, so we waited for the car to come. At nighttime a snowstorm broke out, but in the morning everything was calm and the sun was shining. After we had buried my father, everyone came over for the memorial lunch. The people ate and sat for forty minutes. Then, suddenly, lightning struck and rain came pouring down; everything was soaked within three minutes, and everyone ran to their homes. And that's it. Explain it all however you want. The "land of the living" is ever near us, and our souls sometimes come into close proximity with it even while we're still living here in this world.

The following story, which happened with old man Sidor, whom I've already mentioned, can also serve as an example of this. Back when I was still studying at a trade and economics college, we had agreed with him once that if I die before he does, then I'll visit him in a dream; but if he dies first, then he'll come to me in a dream and tell me how it all happened. Time went on and I had forgotten about what was said and didn't know anything about the old man. Then, one time in the winter, the snow had covered everything up so much that I couldn't come home for the weekend. I came the next Saturday and asked my mom about old man Sidor, but she replied, "It's been a week since he died". And I had a dream Tuesday night, on the eve of Wednesday. "On that day your father went to bring him some food", mother continued as she sat down on a chair. And in my dream Sidor had also told me me: "We talked with each other, and I said to him: if I die, don't wash me. And your father left. I sat for a little while longer and was mending a pair of mittens. When I started feeling sick, I took seventeen rubles and sixty-two kopeks out of my pocket, put them on the windowsill and opened the door. As soon as I lay down, I died. And so that you know that this is the truth, I'll tell you that on such and such a day a girl from our village will die (and he called her by her name)". My mother and I talked about what had happened, and I left for college again. After I came the next time and asked my mother about that girl, she said: "She died". So, that's another thing that happened.

Today I read about our elders in books, I read about their blessed repose and have the opportunity, thanks be to God, the Mother of God, and the saints, to experience the phenomenon of the death of our brethren. Here's an example that happened without my intention. We were talking with Fr. Makary, the archimandrite of the Lavra, two days before his death, and I said to him: "You're going to go soon". And in two days he died. I remember also how I had talked with Fr. Aleksy. He was an old monk of holy life who not long before his repose had heard beautiful voices singing the Cherubic hymn, and he asked me to pray for him. During the course of our conversation we began talking about **death**, and he said: "There is no death, Vladyka! There is eternal life".

Such people, who in this life had a deep understanding of the spiritual life, give us also an example of a blessed repose. God glorifies those who labor in His name in due time, but also gives us the chance to reflect on our own lives.

*A written account by Valentina Serikova  
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[Pravoslavie.ru](http://Pravoslavie.ru)

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## **"OUR GOAL IS NOT TO PLEASE THE SECULAR WEST, BUT TO SERVE CHRIST"**

**An Odessa priest of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church talks  
about a Uniate invasion**

[Archpriest Andrei Novikov](#)

This article was posted in Russian by Interfax-Religion back in 2010. We are posting a translation of this interview now as one example of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church's (Uniate's) methods currently being implemented in eastern and southern Ukraine. These regions have always been staunchly Orthodox, and in fact, until the 1990's there was never a Uniate presence in them. Uniatism was historically centered in Western Ukraine, with its archdiocese in Lvov. During the time of the Brest Unia, what is now Southern and Eastern Ukraine was not even under the same political power as what is now Western Ukraine. Odessa in particular was part of the territory annexed to the Russian Empire by Catherine the

Great. Therefore, any claim by the Uniates to this region are absolutely not historical, and can only be described as an invasion into historically Orthodox regions.

\* \* \*

*The protests of the Orthodox residents of Odessa against the plans for building a Uniate Cathedral in that city, were accompanied by an active [opposing] PR campaign of the Uniates [Greek Catholics]. The Secretary of the Odessa Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and member of the synodical Biblical-Theological commission of the Moscow Patriarchate – Archpriest Andrei Novikov – talked with Interfax-Religion about how justifiable is the Uniate church's desire to have a cathedral in Odessa, and what is behind their attempt to build it.*

**—Father Andrei, what triggered the protest of the Odessa diocese against the construction of a cathedral of the Ukrainian Greek catholic Church in Odessa? <sup>1</sup>**

—When the question was raised at a session of the Odessa City Council about the allocation of land for the construction of a Uniate Cathedral, this provoked strong protest from many Orthodox members of the city council.<sup>2</sup> The deputies could not understand the need for building a Uniate cathedral, considering that there are practically no representatives of that religious organization in Odessa; more than 90% of the citizens of Odessa belong to the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The answer for all of this is clear – proselytism. A resolution was adopted to postpone this issue, awaiting review in communal hearings.



*Uniates marching with Nazi war criminal portrait of Bandera*

The question immediately received a wide response. Once by one, [government] deputies, representatives of the Orthodox intelligentsia, the public at large, and ordinary Odessites turned to His Eminence, Metropolitan Agafangel personally, in the Odessa Diocesan administration, expressing their indignation at the fact, that in the historical center of Odessa, a Cathedral could be built by the very same “religious confession” which stained its history by cooperating [in WW2] with the occupying [Nazi regime](#), by “blessing” members of the Nazi-Waffen SS, and militants of the so-called “Ukrainian Insurgent Army”, infamously known by the people as “Banderists”.<sup>3</sup>

They also noted the fact that Greek Catholic Uniates were among the leaders of those paramilitary groups that organized the pogroms against Polish people and Jews<sup>4</sup>, and carried out terror [against Orthodox clergy](#).<sup>5</sup>

Among all who came to us, there was one question: Will the Odessa Diocese determine its attitude towards the fact of the possible construction of a Uniate Cathedral in Odessa; will the Church raise her voice in the defense of the position of Orthodox Odessites?



Therefore, the statement of the press service of the Odessa diocese was in many ways a reaction to the needs of the flock, even though, naturally, both Vladyka Agafangel himself and the clergy of the diocese fully share the anxiety of the Orthodox community in relation to the plans of the Uniates in Odessa.



**—You mentioned words such as “proselytism” and “expansion”. What in this situation, is being expressed, in your opinion?**

—As I already said, it is quite obvious there is no need for the construction of a Uniate church in Odessa. Odessa is an Orthodox city. Yes, representatives of various confessions and religions peacefully coexist within it, having their own historical religious buildings in the city—which, by the way, we never objected to restoring.

—But here we have a completely different case. Seeing as there is no noticeable presence of Greek Catholics (Uniates) in Odessa, from whom do the Uniate preachers intended to form their flock? It’s obvious—at the expense of the Orthodox residents of Odessa, whom they will try to catch with the help of various cunning tricks and bind into the *Unia*<sup>6</sup>.

—We know well the [history](#) of the *Unia*, and we know that the Uniates did not reject any methods in their fight [against the Orthodox Church](#). After all, what is this “Union”, if not the missionary project of the Vatican, a project whose very principle is based on the idea of promoting of Catholicism to the East, under the guise of “orthodox” orders and rituals. The purpose for which the Greek Catholic Church was created in its day was the liquidation of the Orthodox Church, and its transformation into an eastern branch of Roman Catholicism. Without these ideas, the very existence of the Unia becomes meaningless.

—When the Uniates transferred their capital from Lvov to Kiev, it was not without reason that the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the clergy and Orthodox people so strongly protested against this, and warned against the subsequent expansion of the Greek Catholics to the eastern regions of Ukraine. And here we see the realization of those just concerns.

**—You speak of the absence of the Greek Catholic [Uniate] congregation in Odessa, but at the same time, the official statement of the synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church mentions that ten thousand Greek Catholics live in Odessa...**

—And why not fifty thousand, or one hundred thousand, why not go for really massive numbers? But seriously, all of this “data” about the high number of Uniates in Odessa is taken literally out of the sky. They link to a certain opinion poll, but this only speaks to someone’s opinion; it’s not an official statistic. If we talk about a specific opinion poll, then the character of its “doctored” data would be confirmed by reality.

In the same opinion poll—conducted by an organization that openly supports nationalists and schismatics, by the way—it is said that, for example, far fewer people belong to the canonical Orthodox church in Odessa than to the schismatic structures. And yet at the same time, even as the dozens of Orthodox churches in our cities can’t contain all those many people who gather for services, the two or three churches which are illegally occupied by schismatics stand empty.

The same can be said about the only Uniate church in Odessa. I can refer not only to the numerous eyewitness accounts here, but also to personal knowledge. Here is the fact—on the way to services, I have to drive past this church; I see that it’s usually closed. On holidays, only a few people go there, often Polish Catholic nuns, clearly sent there to create an illusion of masses.

What a surprise I had when I read the interview online, in which the “Chancellor” of the Uniate diocese shamelessly asserted that three to four hundred people reliably gather for services in this church!

Such a blatant lie, uttered in the media by a person who considers himself a clergymen, once again proves that the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church does not intend to abandon the old, “tried and true” Jesuit motto: “The ends justify the means”.

**—How at the current moment are events developing around the issue of the construction of the Uniate Cathedral in Odessa; in what state is this issue? Because very contradictory information is coming in.**

—After the issue was submitted to a community hearing, the protests of the Orthodox citizens of Odessa intensified. In preparation for the hearings, a survey was conducted of the residents of the surrounding houses (as provided for in the procedure of the hearing). This given survey, I emphasize, was conducted by representatives of the deputies and community organizations of Odessa, without any participation of the Odessa diocese. Eighty percent of the people<sup>7</sup> were “*strongly opposed*” to the construction of the Uniate church. It is very important to note that among the remaining twenty percent, there was not a single *active supporter* of the construction of the church, and not a single Uniate. These twenty percent are mainly those who take an indifferent position, that is, they don’t care whether or not the Uniate church would be near to them.

In the end, as the result of active protests by representatives from the Orthodox community, deputies of the city council and the overwhelming majority of the residents of the nearby micro-district, the Odessa City Council canceled the public hearings “indefinitely”, justifying their decision by the large public response (a negative response).

**—According to some Ukrainian publications, the protest of the Odessa Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate against the construction of a Uniate cathedral in Odessa received international resonance.**

—The information you mentioned, appeared in some specific Ukrainian publications which have long been biased in their anti-Church, pro-Uniate, pro-schismatic, nationalist, and Russophobic positions; therefore, they do not provide objective information, but are instead engaged in the collection of hatred against the Russian Orthodox Church throughout the world.

And so here they have become the mouthpiece of Uniate propaganda. What is this supposed “international resonance”?

They speak about *many* Greek Catholic Bishops of Europe and America who supported the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in this situation. But pardon me... this seems to be an obvious failure of propaganda: They speak of the support of *many*—but not all of their own people. This means that even in their own environment, the leaders of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church could not achieve unanimous support.

The opinions of *three*... experts from different European churches are also mentioned. Moreover, these experts are far from the top echelon, one of whom by his first words revealed his negative attitude towards the Orthodox Church in general. Far from everything, even Uniate bishops and some not very prominent “experts”—whose worthiness, of course, proceeds from the fact that they have European passports and membership in certain Western structures—and that’s all that has been achieved at the cost of incredible efforts by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

Well, the transformation of such a very pitiful picture into “international resonance”—[that’s a matter for the PR experts.](#)<sup>8</sup>

By the way, a real resonance, that is to say, a real intervention by Western supporters of the Uniate expansions would also not frighten us.

After all, our goal is not to please the secular west, but to serve Holy Orthodoxy, and protect the Orthodox flock entrusted unto us by God.

Moreover, I would really love to ask the “experts” who were concerned about the alleged violation of the rights of the Uniates: where were they when the Western Ukrainian dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church were ravaged by Uniates; when Orthodox clergy and laity were subjected to physical violence, and Orthodox churches were forcibly seized?

Where were they, when Uniates seized a Cathedral from the Orthodox people of Lvov?

And why are these “defenders of rights and freedoms” silent today, when in Lvov, thousands of Orthodox believers of the canonical Church are forced to pray in the open air, forbidden to get at least some piece of land for the construction of an Orthodox cathedral?

[Archpriest Andrei Novikov](#)  
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[Interfax-Religion](#)

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