



St John's Church News No 44: February 2013

**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 ROCOR
Very Rev. Mark, Archbp of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain

For this newsletter in electronic form: www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/zchurchnews.htm

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Расписание богослужений / Services in February

Saturday 2 February

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 3 February

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

Saturday 9 February

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 10 February: The Holy New Martyrs and Confessors / Память святых новомучеников и исповедников российских

10.00 Hours and Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Thursday 14 February

Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Friday 15 February: The Meeting of the Lord / Сретение Господне

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy

Saturday 16 February

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 17 February

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

Saturday 23 February

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 24 February: The Publican and the Pharisee / Мытарь и Фарисей

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

**Dates for Your Diary / Важные Даты на
Следующий Год**

**Easter: Sunday 5 May / Пасха: Воскресенье
5 мая**

Patronal Feast: Saturday 29 June

Престольный праздник: Суббота 29 июня

Church News

Baptisms in December and January

15 December: Maria Nazarova

15 December: Xenia Alekseyeva

29 December: Emilia Tarata

11 January: Maria Bursacovschi

12 January: Dmitry Knyazev

Wedding in January

25 January: Vasile Bursacovschi and Irina Erimciuc

Birth in January

18 January: To Mary and Andrew Kisliakov: Anna

Missionary Travels

In the past three months Fr Andrew has travelled to Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Kent for the pastoral needs of far-scattered Orthodox. We have six parishioners in Kent and growing numbers in Norfolk (seventeen in Thetford alone) and in Lincolnshire. The fact is that there is no Russian priest between Manchester and Colchester! He estimates that he covers 10,000 miles (15,000 km) per year on Church business. As he is the only Orthodox prison chaplain for the eastern region, he also visits the prisons at High Point in Suffolk and at Chelmsford and Bullwood Hall in Essex.

A Nativity Message to the Pious Flock in the Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland

Today all things are filled with joy: Christ is born from a Virgin.

Since olden times the Birth of Christ has been thought of as a family holiday, which shows us a family ideal, an ideal of purity and chastity. Even in today's Europe where God is being forgotten, family members traditionally gather around the family table, trying to make each other happy with presents and are moved as they look at the image of the Infant lying in the manger. But can such an earthly outward celebration of the Birth of Christ *fill* our hearts with true *joy* and rejoicing, if the inward and Divine meaning of the family, of fatherhood and motherhood, has been lost by contemporary secular society?

Only in the Church of Christ does He Who is the Highest give us an example of the highest form

of fatherhood and motherhood. The Son of God is born from before eternity from the Father without beginning. He was born in time by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin-Mother. He was born to save mankind from sin and its hideous and fiendish consequence – death. This birth is higher than the heavens and purer than the stars. The Saviour of the world enters our world through the Most Holy and Most Pure Virgin. This is our understanding and so every year we, Orthodox Christians, experience this greatest of events anew. The Light of the Birth of Christ has shone forth to us and lit the path to Christ and his salvation. God has become man through His immeasurable love for His creation and has opened the path of deification for us!

How grateful we should be to Divine Providence for the fact that to this very day we celebrate the Birth of Christ according to the Church calendar which has been handed down to us by the Holy Fathers – when all the noise and futility of the Western celebration has died down and the world around us is returning to its measured everyday life. With the weeks of consumerist frenzy over, we can quietly prepare in our Orthodox churches and families for the spiritual celebration of the Birth of Christ, the event that unites heaven and earth.

The ideology of consumerism has perverted the meaning of this great Christian feast, reducing it to a set of various customs and rituals that have lost their original meaning. What can the feast of motherhood, and all the more, of pure, virginal and chaste motherhood, represent, if in contemporary society childbirth has long ago ceased to be considered as desirable and natural? Even at playschool children are already taught a perverted attitude to sex and sexual life. Instead of love they are taught an animal attraction. The satisfaction of sexual instincts is thought of as a sufficient value in itself, and not as naturally connected with the creation of a family, with the birth and bringing up of children. Many Western countries have already passed or are passing laws equating ‘single-sex’ marriage with the God-given union of husband and wife. And this is what children are being taught in State-run schools! So the State is betraying the millennial foundations of family life. Lawlessness is becoming the law, sin is proclaimed as normal and a lie as the truth...

Dear brothers and sisters, we shall not dare to allow such a mockery of our children who wish to keep their virginity until marriage and keep chastity within marriage. Our children must not from their earliest years learn of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes (I Jn. 2, 16), they must not fall captive to legalised depravity.

The Church has kept and keeps the teaching, established by God, of the holiness of the family. The Church confesses the purity of the God-given order in family and in society. If marriage is considered, as it was before, as a holy sacrament, then childbirth will be a natural part of human life. If respect for our neighbour as the image of God is preached, then society will consist of people who will look at each other not as one wild animal looks at another wild animal, with malice and lust, but as one brother looks at another brother, with love and mercy. If human relations are based on chastity and a chaste marriage is considered holy, then family bonds will not fall apart in a multitude of inhuman divorces. If the Christian attitude to life and family values is restored, then Western humanity will cease to be a sick and withering tree which has more dying branches than new branches.

We do not need wars in which brother kills brother, we do not need illnesses which God allows

to take hold of whole continents and kill young people, who are seduced by the preaching of sexual licence and all sorts of perversion. We need the pure love of God and of His creation. We need adherence to the Divine commandments in the form in which the Church has proclaimed them to the faithful since ancient times. We need the purity which is so fully revealed to us by the Most Holy Mother of God, Who for the sake of this purity became the chosen vessel of the Incarnation of the Son of God on our earth.

And when our life – both family life and social life – is based on this, then fog and darkness will lift, and we will be able to raise up new generations for the light of the love of Christ. Then the Saviour of the world will again and again be able to become incarnate in our hearts. Then He will raise us up from the darkness to His wondrous Light and we shall for ever become partakers of His eternal Divine love. It is worth living on this earth for this alone!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

+ Archbishop Mark, Orthodox Christmas 2012

Рождество Христово издревле считается семейным праздником, являя нам идеал семьи, идеал чистоты и целомудрия. Даже в нынешней, забывающей Бога Европе в этот день члены семьи собираются по традиции за праздничным столом, стараются порадовать друг-друга подарками и умиляются, глядя на изображение лежащего в яслях Младенца. Но может ли такое приземленное, внешнее празднование Рождества *исполнить* сердце истинной *радости* и ликования, если внутренний, божественный смысл семьи, отцовства и материнства современным светским обществом утрачен?

Только в Церкви Христовой Сам Всевышний дает нам образец наивысшего отцовства и самого возвышенного материнства. Сын Божий рождается предвечно от безначального Отца. Во времени же Он рождается Духом Святым от Матери-Девы. Рождается для того, чтобы спасти человечество от греха и его уродливого исчадия – смерти. Выше небес и чище пресветлых звезд это рождение. Через Пресвятую и Пречистую Деву в наш мир входит Спаситель мира. Так воспринимаем и так каждый год заново переживаем мы, православные христиане, это величайшее событие. Свет Рождества воссиял нам и осветил путь ко Христу и Его спасению. Бог стал человеком по безмерной любви к Своему творению и открыл нам путь к обожению!

Как же мы должны быть благодарны Промыслу Божию за то, что доньше празднуем Рождество по преданному нам святыми Отцами церковному календарю – когда затихает шумная суета западного празднования, и окружающий нас мир возвращается к своей обыденной размеренной жизни. Когда кончаются недели потребительской вакханалии, мы можем в наших православных храмах и в наших семьях спокойно приготовиться к духовному празднованию Рождества Христова, этого небо-земного события.

Потребительская идеология извратила значение величайшего христианского праздника, сведя его к совокупности разных обычаев и утративших изначальный смысл ритуалов. Какой же может быть праздник материнства, тем более чистого, девственного,

целомудренного, если в современном обществе чадородие давно перестало считаться желанным и естественным. Детей уже в детских садах и в школах учат извращенному подходу к полу и половой жизни. Вместо любви превозносится животное влечение.

Удовлетворение половых инстинктов признается самоценным и самодостаточным, не связанным естественным образом с созданием семьи, с рождением и воспитанием детей. Во многих странах Запада уже приняты или принимаются законы, уравнивающие однополые "браки" с заповеданным Богом союзом между мужем и женой. И этому учат детей в государственных школах! Так государство становится предателем тысячелетних устоев семейной жизни. Беззаконие становится законом, грех объявляется нормой, ложь – истиной...

Не смеем мы, дорогие братья и сестры, допустить такого издевательства над нашими детьми, желающими соблюсти девство до брака и целомудрие в браке. Не должны наши дети с малолетства учиться *похоть плоти и похоть очес* (1 Ин 2, 16), не должны попасть в плен узаконенному разврату.

Церковь сохранила и сохраняет Богом учрежденное учение о святости семьи. Церковь исповедует чистоту Богом установленного порядка в семье и обществе. Если брак по-прежнему будет считаться святым таинством, то и деторождение будет естественной частью человеческой жизни. Если будет проповедоваться уважение к ближнему как образу Божию, тогда общество будет состоять из людей, которые смотрят друг на друга не как зверь на зверя – со злобой и похотью, а как брат на брата – с любовью и милосердием. Если целомудрие будет положено в основу человеческих отношений, а целомудренный брак будет почитаться святыней, тогда и семейные узы не будут распадаться в бесчисленных и бесчеловечных бракоразводных процессах. Если восстановится христианское отношение к жизни и семейным ценностям, западное человечество перестанет быть больным засыхающим деревом, у которого отмирает больше ветвей, чем появляется новых.

Нам не нужны братоубийственные войны, нам не нужны болезни, которые по попущению Божию охватывают целые континенты и убивают молодых людей, соблазненных проповедью половой невоздержности и всяческих извращений. Нам нужна чистая любовь к Богу и Его твари. Нам нужна приверженность Божиим заповедям в том виде, в котором Церковь их издревле провозвещала верующему народу. Нам нужна та чистота, которую столь полно являет нам Пресвятая Богородица, ставшая ради этой чистоты избранным сосудом воплощения Сына Божия на нашей земле.

И когда мы положим такое основание нашей жизни – семейной и общественной – тогда рассеется туман и сумрак, и мы сможем вывести новые поколения к свету любви Христовой. Тогда Спаситель мира сможет снова и снова воплощаться в наших любящих сердцах. Тогда Он выведет нас из мрака в чудный Свой Свет, и мы навсегда станем причастниками Его вечной Божественной любви. Только ради этого нам стоит жить на этой земле!

Monk Moses the Athonite: 'Europe is Committing Suicide'

Monk Moses the Athonite has been an ascetic on the Holy Mountain for thirty-five years. He is an icon-painter, poet, critic and writer. He has published 52 books and written over 1,000 articles. His works have been translated and published in many countries around the world. He is the senior secretary of the Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain. For some twenty-five years he has been the Elder of the hermitage of St John Chrysostom and of the hermitage of the holy great-martyr Panteleimon attached to Koutloumousiou Monastery.

We are publishing a few extracts from an article by Fr Moses, in which he analyses the contemporary situation in Europe and Greece.

'Greece has long been in a state of reanimation. The Greek language is being murdered every day. All around reigns the darkness of disintegration and a gloomy and violent national nihilism.

The desire to make money quickly and easily has led many into making tragic mistakes. Impatience and lack of seriousness are costing us dear. The thirst for riches has taken Europeans to extremes. Contemporary Europe is totally deChristianised.

The Vatican is reaping the fruits of deforming Christian teachings. The most horrific cases of child rape are taking place. Western people are running from 'God is dead' to Eastern gurus, desperately hoping to find at least some semblance of spiritual life. Some 2,000 branches of Protestantism are competing for a flock. The deChristianisation of Europe is on a very large scale and will lead to even more catastrophic consequences.

Europe has forgotten Christ and is embracing Islam. It seems as if it wants to commit suicide. Mosques are rising up in place of churches.

We are not against other religions, but we do want to defend Orthodoxy. Or do they now want to take away from us even this last right?

We look to the resistance of people who cannot be bought off. There are quite a few of them. It is time to stop being quiet. Our country needs spiritual regeneration.'

Source: <http://www.agioritikovima.gr>

Моисей Святогорец: «Европа совершает самоубийство»

Монах Моисей Святогорец

12 декабря 2012 г.

Источник: [Святая Гора](#)

Монах Моисей Святогорец подвизается на Святой Горе Афон около тридцати пяти лет. Он является иконописцем, поэтом, критиком и писателем. Издал 52 книги и написал более 1000 статей. Его труды переведены и изданы во многих странах мира. Занимал должность старшего секретаря в Священном Киноте Святой Горы. Около двадцати

пяти лет является Старцем каливы святителя Иоанна Златоуста скита святого великомученика Пантелеимона от монастыря Кутлумуш.



Публикуем несколько отрывков из статьи отца Моисея, в которой он анализирует современное положение Европы и Греции.

«Греция уже давно в реанимации. Ежедневно убивают греческий язык. Вокруг царит дезинтегрирующая тьма и насильственный и мрачный национальный нигилизм.

Спешное желание легко обогатиться привело многих к трагическим ошибкам. За нетерпеливость и легкомыслие приходится дорого платить. Жажда богатства довела европейцев до крайностей. Современная Европа полностью дехристианизирована.

Ватикан пожинает плоды искажения церковного учения. Имеют место вопиющие случаи изнасилования детей. От «мертвого бога» западные люди бегут к восточным гуру в стремлении найти хоть какую-то духовную жизнь. Около двух тысяч ответвлений протестантизма сражаются за паству. Дехристианизация Европы приобрела большие масштабы и приведет к еще более катастрофическим последствиям.

Европа забыла Христа и открывает объятия исламу. Похоже, она хочет совершить самоубийство. На месте храмов вырастают мечети.

Мы не против других религий, но хотим защитить православие. Или у нас хотят отнять уже и это последнее право? (...)

Мы надеемся на сопротивление неподкупных людей. Их немало. Пора перестать молчать. Наша страна нуждается в духовном возрождении».

Источник: <http://www.agioritikovima.gr>

"Everything has fallen into place"

An interview with Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov)

In October 2012, the choir and several clergy of Moscow Sretensky Monastery, at the invitation of Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral), travelled to parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in North America. The trip was dedicated to the five-year anniversary of the reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church. We asked Fr. Tikhon to share some of his impressions from these travels.

“After the reunification of the Russian Church, everything has come into place”

—Fr. Tikhon, you recently returned from your trip to America with the Sretensky Monastery Choir. Five years ago, soon after the Act of Canonical Unity was signed, you travelled around the world with the choir, spending time in dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia all over the globe. What has changed since then?

—During the past five years, our brotherly communion and concelebrating of the divine services has become something very natural and habitual. That is what amazes me the most.



[Archpriest Victor Potapov and Archimandrite Tikhon. Photo: Mikhail Rodionov/Pravoslavie.ru](http://Pravoslavie.ru)

Even in Russia I have noticed that clergy and laity of ROCOR readily come to us like coming home, as if they were priests or pilgrims from Omsk or Tula. And when we were in America, it was hard to remember that there had been many long years when we did not receive Communion from the same chalice. Everything has come into place—at times quite unexpectedly. This was eloquently expressed by, for example, the portraits of A. I. Denikin, Metropolitan Anastasia

(Gribanovsky), and Patriarch Kirill, all placed right next to each other on the walls of parish halls.



[The St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Washington, D.C., ROCOR. Photo: Mikhail Rodionov/Pravoslavie.ru](#)

—Well, God’s will has been fulfilled. But you notice when you look at the photographs of the Church services taken during the trip is that there is a marked difference between the ROCOR parishes and those of the OCA (Orthodox Church in America). In the former you see life bubbling over, but in the latter, a kind of frozenness.



[The St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington D.C., Orthodox Church in America. Photo: Mikhail Rodionov/Pravoslavie.ru](#)

—The Orthodox Church in America right now is not experiencing its best times, and we pray for our brothers with our whole hearts and hope that they can quickly get through this crisis. The word “crisis” here is no exaggeration. That is how they themselves recognize their current situation.

“Our main goal was to participate in the Divine Services”

—Did people meet the choir everywhere like old friends, or did America discover it all over again?

—Our main goal was to participate in the Divine Services in the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and the Orthodox Church in America. Alongside this, the choir gave performances in those cities where we visited and served. This performance tour was organized by a large American company.



As for the services our choir sang, they were the main church events in those places we visited. The choir was received with sincere love and gratitude, like a generous spiritual gift from Russia.

I am very pleased with our choir—they spent that month in true self-denial. The schedule was extremely difficult; over the course of twenty days we travelled to nine different cities, and during the entire time they had only one break. The flights were long—not only those from Russia to America and back, but also the American domestic flights. After all, it is a vast country, and it takes five hours to fly from coast to coast.

Often we would arrive at the airport and then have to rush through traffic to the evening services, and only afterwards settle into the hotel. In the morning would go to the Liturgy, in the afternoon would be a recital, and in the evening, a concert. After the concert, late in the evening, again we would drive through traffic to the airport, again go through all the checkpoints, wait for the flight, arrive in the next city, go through baggage claim, more traffic, the hotel, a short night's sleep, then Liturgy in the morning...

—So perhaps the *Washington Post* critic was right when she compared you to commandos?

—You could say that. None of our guys ever once complained, although the conditions were rigorous. Nowadays people throw the word *podvig* (ascetic labors or struggles) around; of course, I would refrain from using such a lofty concept to describe our choir, but the trial was truly serious—they had to give it 100 percent. Well, in fact that is really as it should be.

—After all, they couldn't lose face before the secular audiences.

—Of course, our guys were trying very hard first and foremost to please the people at church services. No matter how tired they were, and at times they were barely alive, they were sometimes asked to sing even more—at dinner, for example, and they never turned these requests down. They understood that this was a holiday for those gathered.

—As for the secular audience—the standard was set very high from the start. After all, the tour began not just anywhere, but in the hall of Library of Congress of the United States, to a very elite public. This concert was only of sacred hymns, from ancient chants to modern church music.

The choir sang secular music in the two most famous concert halls in the U.S.—Washington, D.C.’s Kennedy Center, and Carnegie Hall in New York. Then they went on to other cities. But despite their success at the secular concerts and the flattering articles in some of America’s foremost newspapers, the main thing for us was the services in the American Orthodox churches—some large, others tiny.



[Sretensky Monastery Choir concert, Chicago Symphony Hall.](#)

—**I read on the internet that concert halls were sold out, and leading newspapers in America published ecstatic articles about the choir. The *New York Times* talked about its “amazing renditions”, and the music critic for the *Washington Post* declared outright that the choir was “without a doubt one of the best in the world”.**

—Yes, we were warmly received. The agents who worked for the company that organized the tour asked us later, “Tell us, where do you dream of performing?” But we only answered, “We are dreaming of getting a good night’s sleep!” It was a very intense trip.

—**Regardless of the tight schedule, you had to return to Moscow for a few days after beginning the tour.**

—Yes, that did happen...

—Spending ten hours in the airplane, taking care of business in Moscow, and then flying back over the ocean... How do you manage to endure such a rhythm?

—I am used to it. I sleep very well in airplanes.

The translator of Everyday Saints was baptized in Sretensky Monastery

—In America you presented the English translation of your book, [Everyday Saints](#), and met with readers. It is interesting that the original, *Несвятые святые*, received several different titles in its translations into other languages: the literal translation of the Russian title would be “Unsaintly Saints”, but the Greek title became *Almost Saints* (“Σχεδόν άγιοι”), and the English title became *Everyday Saints*. How was the book received in America?

—It seems to me that they have received it warmly, and are interested.

—I spoke about this with a specialist at the Russian collection of the Library of Congress, [Harold Liech](#). Although he belongs to the Episcopal Church, he said that the book is very close to him.

—Mr. Liech and his director, Dr. James Billington, organized a presentation of the English edition in the Library of Congress. It is important that Americans who are not Orthodox have received with such interest a book about the Russian Church.

—On the English edition of the website, [Pravoslavie.ru](#), there have been a number of responses to the book. One person wrote just recently that after reading the story of Mother Frosya, who managed to keep the fasts even in prison, he felt ashamed, and resolved to always keep the Wednesday and Friday fasts...

—This kind of relationship to the book is rewarding to me, an author and a priest.

—By the time you returned home, *Everyday Saints* had been sold for over a month in America and elsewhere; information about it had appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and positive responses had come not only from Orthodox readers, but also from Catholics and Protestants. Into what other languages is the book being translated?

—I just recently learned that they are preparing a second print run for the English version. The book has already appeared in Greek and Serbian, and currently work is being done on Spanish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Swedish, French, Chinese, and Japanese editions. It is even being translated into Esperanto.

—I heard that work on the translation of the book had an effect on the translator himself. Tell us a little about this person.

—His name is Julian Lowenfeld. Many consider his translations of Pushkin, Tyutchev, and Lermontov, to be the best there is today. For me it was very important that such a translator decided to be the one to introduce the English speaking public to *Everyday Saints*.

Julian was raised in a Catholic family but considered himself an agnostic. It took him about a half a year to translate the book, and when the final editing work was being done in Moscow, he came here to our monastery and unexpectedly announced his firm decision to become Orthodox. Julian wanted to be baptized precisely here, in Moscow. He was told, “You can come and be baptized any time.” Then, without knowing about the ancient Christian tradition of baptizing catechumens on Great Saturday, he arrived in Moscow no earlier or later than Great Friday, and with no other intention than to receive holy Baptism. So, on Great Saturday, we performed the Baptism according to all the rules and canons of the Church. His Godmother was Nun Cornelia, also an American, and one of the editors of the English translation. Of course, I cannot but be overjoyed that the book he translated at least in part influenced him to make that decision.

—**The book seems to have a life of its own. For the editors of the website, *Pravoslavie.ru* who moderate the readers’ comments sent to the address, <http://www.ot-stories.ru/comments.htm> , this is obvious. And there are incomparably more responses to the book throughout the internet.**

—For me this is, I have to admit, the highest reward. I watch the life of the book from a distance; and I have to say, with extraordinary interest.

“America is not the same everywhere”

—**You have said that after becoming acquainted with the American public you were amazed at the piety of many Americans. Russia generally has a negative image of America because all the information we receive about that country comes mainly either through news dispatches showing their government’s unseemly role in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., or from the movies in which Americans portray themselves as Rambo and Terminators. What do you think: is there really such a perceptible contrast between our concept and the true America, especially “one-story” America?**

—It has been said many times that New York is not America. It’s not for me to judge, but that is what Americans themselves confirm. And truly, New York is very different from the rest of the U.S., even at the superficial glance of a tourist. But what is amazing (and this immediately overthrew some of my stereotypes): in New York on Sundays the churches are full, and that’s to say nothing of the provincial areas. According to the Gallup polls, 43.1 percent of all adult Americans (these statistics do not include children) attend church every week. That is a lot. Compare that to us at three percent.

As for the American countryside... I have had the opportunity to be in America several times, and I have not ceased to be amazed at their backbone—I cannot say, “piety”, because I do not know their spiritual life, but precisely their religious backbone.

In 1996, Alexander Nikolaevich Krutov, his family, and I flew to Colorado Springs. This was our first trip to America—we had gone there to receive a copy of the Shroud of Turin, which the famous Shroud researcher John Jackson had expressed a readiness to present to our monastery.

From the very beginning, to be honest, I was pleasantly surprised that there in Colorado Springs was a whole group of serious scholars of many different disciplines (both Catholics and Protestants) who study the Shroud of Turin. But that is another subject. On that trip, when we had a free day, they took us to a rodeo.

This was an ordinary rodeo show, with about three thousand people attending. When the show was over, there were long tables set for all the guests of this holiday. But before anyone starting eating, the cowboy who headed this ceremony rose and called all to prayer. Then everyone there—all without exception (!)—rose, and there were, I remind you, three thousand people. No one snickered, no one disdained this call, no one wrinkled their noses or smirked ironically. No, they all rose and prayed. I myself looked all around and saw with complete astonishment that people were praying sincerely. They all recited the Lord's Prayer; Protestants folded their hands, Catholics crossed themselves, and we Orthodox also crossed ourselves... We prayed and only then began to eat. That is how I, by the way, participated in ecumenical prayer...

Having eaten a little, I looked around, thinking, "Where are the police?" There are very many people here, and on the tables there was not just food, but also a certain amount of alcoholic beverages. Knowing how this usually ends at analogous youthful gatherings in Russia, I estimated that in an hour or two police intervention would be unavoidable. But there were no police. After a while it dawned on me that they would not be needed. That is because no one behaved aggressively, or brashly, or mischievously.

The head cowboy announced some songs. Someone came up and played the banjo, someone sang, or read poetry. The entire three thousand-strong audience received it all with the warmest welcome. The people were basically unfamiliar with each other. Many, as I found out, simply travelled around America and had just happened in on this holiday.

It was all a very homey atmosphere. The head cowboy, for example, said, "We have with us today John and Mary. They are on their honeymoon trip. Let's give them a warm welcome! Let's be glad for them, that they are so beautiful and young, have had their wedding and are now travelling around our country. John and Mary, come on up!" This young couple comes forward and everyone shouts, "John and Mary, hello! All the best to you!" This was touching, what can I say... This is what we have lost—such goodwill towards each other!... Then they wished someone else a happy birthday, congratulated another on the birth of a grandson...

A crowd of people immediately gathered around us... They were shaking our hands and smiling. When they had sat down again, the man sitting next to us began a conversation with us. He was thin, modest, with work-worn hands. He asked me, "Are you a priest?" "Yes," I answered. "We are also Christians. We're very glad to have made the acquaintance of a priest." He said that he and his wife are Protestants. I inquired whether he goes to church. He answered in the affirmative. As it turns out, he was an oil man from Texas. Then it turns out that he was not just an oil man, but the owner of one of the largest oil companies in the U.S. Now he and his wife

were travelling around America—something they do every year. They had never been out of the country. They had five children. He also said that he had only once skipped Sunday services, when he was in the hospital. So, America is not the same everywhere you go.

—Especially since there are, according to statistics, already five million Orthodox Christians there. Tell us, how does this piety of ordinary Americans jibe with the imperialistic politics of their country? Many of our readers ask that question.

—I would least of all like to talk about politics. But since you have already asked the question, I will answer as best I can; but don't judge me for it.

The international politics of any empire—and the U.S.A. is undoubtedly an empire—are the unbending defense of its own interests, often at the cost of other countries. I will not be “discovering America” if I say that the strategic aims of the external politics of the “Good Empire” are not complicated, but perfectly clear: to try to control the entire world. No more, no less. This task has been set by that very elite, which, you might say, controls the country. Thinking Americans understand this quite well and do not hide the fact from either themselves or others.

But let's end the discussion of this boring topic for today. In fact, it's better if we return to that subject less often.

—Well, Father, we'll do what we can!

—Let's try hard!

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