

Report of the Special Investigation Committee Re: Allegations of Misconduct by Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon)

Presented to the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America
Oyster Bay Cove, NY - November 16, 2010

Committee Members: His Grace, Bishop MICHAEL of New York
Archpriest Alexander Garklavs
Archpriest Gregory Safchuk
Dr. Nikita Eike

1. Introduction

The investigation arises out of an alleged incident of sexual misconduct committed on April 22, 2010 by thirty-four year old Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon). Fr. Simeon was, and technically still is, a priestmonk of the Greek Orthodox Church, a member of the Moni Petras Monastery in Karditsa, Greece. He was invited to come to the United States by His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH, who initially indicated that Fr. Simeon would be assigned to serve in a parish. Later His Beatitude advocated for Fr. Simeon to become a military chaplain. He was blessed by Metropolitan JONAH to serve and hear confessions at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington, DC. For a while his canonical status was not clear, but he is not now, nor has ever been a cleric of the Orthodox Church in America.

At the end of June, 2010, internet postings indicated that a “monk” associated with Metropolitan JONAH, who was living in the parish house of St. Nicholas Cathedral, had committed some kind of “sexual” assault on a woman. Police were summoned, the monk was arrested, but then released. There were also rumors of other acts of misconduct or disorderly conduct committed by this monk, possibly even rape. It was soon learned that the monk was Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon).

When the Church’s Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (the Office) learned of the incident (early in July, 2010), it initiated a discussion with the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC). Conversations took place with His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH and members of the Holy Synod. Although the canonical status of Fr. Simeon was questionable, and he was not formally received into the OCA, it was deemed necessary to conduct an investigation inasmuch as he was clearly associated with both Metropolitan JONAH and St. Nicholas Cathedral. By the middle of July, 2010, the SMPAC began notifying His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH and the Holy Synod about the need to initiate a proper investigation as mandated by the OCA’s policies and procedures regarding allegations of such misconduct. With the

blessing of the Metropolitan and the consent of the Holy Synod, the Special Investigation Committee was officially formed on July 25, 2010.

Because of the extraordinary nature of this case the “supervising” hierarch of the alleged respondent, Metropolitan JONAH, recused himself from the investigation process. Thereby, the Holy Synod became the “supervisory” body of the investigation. Thus this Report is presented to the entire Holy Synod for review, likewise the implementation of the recommendations are for the Holy Synod to consider.

This Report consists of six parts, including this Introduction. The remaining five parts are:

2. Objectives of the investigation
3. Summary of the investigation
4. A time-line
5. Conclusions
6. Recommendations

2. Objectives of the investigation

The Investigation Committee had an initial teleconference on August 4. Other teleconferences took place on August 12 and 23. A meeting of the Committee, together with the interview with Metropolitan JONAH took place on August 30. Another face to face meeting took place in Baltimore on September 16. Final teleconferences took place on November 8, 10, 12 and 15.

The Committee’s task was to conduct an investigation that would uncover facts that would answer the following questions:

- Who is Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon)?
- What is he doing in the United States?
- What is the nature of his involvement at St. Nicholas Cathedral?
- What is the alleged misconduct, when and where did it occur?
- Was the misconduct “sexual abuse”?
- Who knew about the incident, what was done about it?
- What are the pastoral implications of this case?

The information that the Committee obtained regarding this case came mostly from interviews. Members of the Committee were eyewitnesses to some things that were relevant to the case. Some information is readily available in the public domain. Several documents (attached) were critical in forming the time-line and filling in critical aspects.

A word about the “police report”: Several of the people interviewed spoke about a “police report” produced in conjunction with the “arrest” of Hieromonk Simeon. There is no question that police were summoned, that Fr. Simeon was taken into custody and spent a night in jail, and that he was subsequently required to appear in court (all this was corroborated by Fr. Simeon himself). Fr. Gregory Safchuk spent many hours in several attempts to procure the “police report.” It appears that a “full report” does not exist. Fr. Gregory did contact and speak with Police Officer Oladato who took Fr. Simeon into custody. He explained that since the victim did not press charges, the events were summarized in a log book at police headquarters. There is also indication that Fr. Simeon had been in custody earlier in 2010 (based on Metropolitan JONAH’s 5.19.10 letter). Though that earlier custody is important in understanding Fr. Simeon’s behavior, the Committee did not directly investigate the circumstances of it.

Although Metropolitan JONAH recused himself from the Investigation, he provided a list of key persons who should be interviewed, with contact information. In the course of the investigation other persons were also interviewed.

The following were interviewed:

Metropolitan JONAH *
 Bishop MELCHISEDEK ***
 The alleged victim (“J”) **
 Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon) ***
 Police Officer Odeniyide Oladato **
 Fr. Constantine White **
 Fr. Valery Shemchuk ***
 Fr. George Kokhno ***
 Fr. Peter Dubinin ****
 Fr. [redacted] ***
 M S **
 R R ****
 Abbess Aemiliane (Hanson) •

- (* Interviewed by the entire Committee
- ** Interviewed by Fr. Gregory Safchuk
- *** Interviewed by Fr. Alexander Garklavs
- **** Interviewed by Dr. Nikita Eike
- Abbess Aemiliane responded with a letter)

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH also provided the following documents (attached to the Report):

Letter of “transfer” from Elder Dionysios (A)
Metropolitan’s 5.19.10 letter to Fr. Simeon (B)

Also attached is the letter (9.1.10) from Abbess Aemiliane to Dr. Eike (C)

3. Summary of the investigation

Who is Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon)?

Hieromonk Simeon (Kharon) was born John Kharon on September 25, 1976 in Odessa (formerly the Soviet Union, now a city in Ukraine). In 1989 he came with his family to the United States. His father, Alexander Kharon, is an artist and iconographer. The Kharon family currently lives in San Francisco. Fr. Simeon has an uncle, Archimandrite Gedeon (Kharon) who lived in the United States for a time but is currently in Kiev, Ukraine. In 1996 Fr. Simeon enters a monastery in Greece, under the elder Archimandrite Dionysios. He studied at the University of Athens, but we do not have specific information about when and where he was tonsured or ordained. At some point, with Fr. Dionysios, Fr. Simeon joined the Moni Petras Monastery in Karditsa.

Either in October or November, 2009, Fr. Simeon leaves Moni Petras. Credible information indicates that Fr. Simeon had a drinking problem at the monastery. He may have left “without leave” and apparently goes to Ukraine and then to Russia. In early December, 2009, he meets with His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH in Moscow. Fr. Simeon seems to have had in mind the possibility of serving at the OCA’s St. Catherine Representation Church in Moscow. Evidently this possibility was not feasible and Metropolitan JONAH invites Fr. Simeon to come to the United States. It is notable that a “release” of Hieromonk Simeon (a/k/a John Kharon) not by a bishop but by Archimandrite Dionysios is dated April 11, 2009 (see Document A).

What is he doing in the United States?

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH told us that he had thought that Fr. Simeon could be assigned to a parish, perhaps in New York or on the West Coast; a parish where there was a pastoral need for a Russian speaking priest. Early in 2010, His Beatitude indicated that Fr. Simeon’s reception into the OCA was *fait accompli*. This may have been based on the information in Document A. (Note: Document A was not conveyed to the Chancery until Metropolitan JONAH shared it with Fr. Alexander Garklavs at the end of July, 2010.) According to His Grace, Bishop MELCHISEDEK and to other sources, the transfer of priests who are attached to a monastery does depend on the agreement of the Abbott, but is made official only with the blessing of the respective diocesan hierarch. Unless done verbally by Metropolitan JONAH, no formal request was

ever made to Fr. Simeon's bishop (Metropolitan KIRILLOS II of Thessaliodida and Phanariophersalon), nor is there a formal release from Metropolitan KIRILLOS II.

What is the nature of his involvement at St. Nicholas Cathedral?

Although the canonical status was not regularized, His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH did bless Fr. Simeon to serve at St. Nicholas Cathedral. He was also, at certain times, blessed to hear confessions. Reports conveyed to the Investigation Committee were that some people who went to Fr. Simeon for confession were puzzled by unusual questions and penances. According to the May 19, 2010 letter of Metropolitan JONAH (Document B), which was written after the April 22, 2010 incident, some kind of misbehavior resulted in Fr. Simeon's being "in custody for three days." This could have occurred in January or February, 2010.

Sometime in March, 2010, Metropolitan JONAH asked Fr. Peter Dubinin, an OCA Chaplain (Major) whose assignment is to recruit for military chaplaincy, to speak with Fr. Simeon about becoming a chaplain. It appears that Fr. Simeon did not speak with Fr. Peter at that time.

What is the alleged misconduct, when and where did it occur?

Based on the information that the Committee has received, Fr. Simeon lived at first in the basement of the house next to the Cathedral which was being rented for His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH. Later (in March?) he contacted M S because he was uncomfortable living in the basement. For a while he was put up at a hotel. Ms. S then allowed Fr. Simeon to live in an apartment

Fr. Simeon stayed at that apartment about three weeks. On one occasion, Ms. S came into the apartment when Fr. Simeon was absent. The place was full of empty beer and liquor bottles and icons on the wall were "turned around, facing the wall."

Late on the evening of April 22, 2010 Fr. Simeon went to the apartment of J , who lived above . She allowed him to use her internet access code for the Wi-Fi connection. He claimed that he went to her apartment because his computer internet wasn't working. J told us that he came to her door with a bottle of "Everclear" (190° neutral grain alcohol) which he was drinking with orange juice. He asked her if she wanted to have a drink and asked for a cigarette. She did not allow him into her apartment but suggested they go out into the courtyard to smoke and to talk. There was some conversation between them. At one point Fr. Simeon pulled out a knife to show J . He also spoke about smoking marijuana. He consistently "invaded" her space, and finally attempted to put his arm around J and kiss her. He claimed that he only put his arm on her to "say 'bravo' and pat her on the back." She

pushed him away, ran to her apartment and locked the door. Fr. Simeon came back to her apartment and knocked on the door. J told him to stop or she'll call the police. Fr. Simeon replies "Maybe you f---ing should." She does call the police, Fr. Simeon returns to apartment.

The version of what took place next is based on J's testimony, on Fr. Simeon's account and on that of Police Officer Oladato. Fr. Simeon's account is confusing. When asked if he was drinking, he replied, "I may have had a shot of something." J's account was that he came to her door with a bottle of "Everclear." Police Officer Oladato also stated that Fr. Simeon was "highly intoxicated." Fr. Simeon stated that the nuns (that would include Abbess Ameliane and Sister Veronica) had driven to the apartment with a delivery of food for him. At the same time, the police came to his door. They entered the apartment and began looking around, but Fr. Simeon rebuked them for "entering a holy place." Loud, foul language was heard. "I'm a f---ing priest," Fr. Simeon told them. He took a swing and tried to hit a police officer. He was taken by the police and incarcerated. The next day, he was released to Abbess Ameliane.

Fr. Simeon confirmed that he had to make a court appearance on June 15, 2010. He appeared in court in full clerical garb and was accompanied by Abbess Ameliane and Sister Veronica. The nuns spoke to the Judge on Fr. Simeon's behalf, vouching for his good conduct. After the incident Fr. Simeon lived with the nuns at the St. Nicholas rectory for several weeks.

On or around May 10, 2010, Fr. Simeon was hospitalized with a bleeding ulcer.

Was the misconduct "sexual abuse"?

The Committee must answer yes to this question. The level of abuse did not rise to the level of physical contact, but there can be no doubt that the attempt to forcefully embrace and kiss J was sexual in nature. Other forms of abuse (e.g., verbal, emotional) were also evident.

Who knew about the incident, what was done about it?

Abbess Ameliane, together with Sister Veronica, certainly knew that something happened. According to Fr. Simeon, they were in the car outside of the apartment building when the police arrived on April 22. Fr. Simeon also told us that they came to take him home from jail that day after the incident. That would have been on April 23, 2010. It seems that they did not report anything to Metropolitan JONAH nor to anyone else associated with St. Nicholas Cathedral.

Ms. S and Fr. Valery Shemchuk were in Russia at the time of the incident. They learned that "something happened" from a supervisor at the

building about a week later, at the beginning of May. Ms. S then speaks with J and learns of the entire incident.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH told the Committee that he learned about the incident around the middle of May. On May 19, 2010 he sent Fr. Simeon a letter (attached as Document B). He “suspends” Fr. Simeon and encourages him to deal with his alcoholism. What conversations took place between Metropolitan JONAH and Fr. Simeon is not clear.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH asked Fr. George Kokhno, a priest attached to St. Nicholas Cathedral, a recovering alcoholic and participant at AA meetings to help Fr. Simeon. Fr. George spoke with Fr. Simeon on a few occasions. Fr. Simeon’s response to Fr. George in regard to drinking was “I do not have a problem with alcohol.” Fr. George’s assessment: “Fr. Simeon has many problems on many levels and needs professional help.”

On June 17, 2010, His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH asked Fr. Alexander Garklavs to arrange with Fr. Peter Dubinin for a meeting with Fr. Simeon in Washington, at St. Nicholas Cathedral. His Beatitude indicated that military chaplaincy could be a good option for Fr. Simeon; he did not mention anything about a drinking problem or the misconduct incident. A meeting was arranged for Sunday, June 20. Fr. Peter meets with Fr. Simeon at the Cathedral. Fr. Simeon was surprised and did not seem interested in speaking with Fr. Peter.

What are the pastoral implications of this case?

a) Implications for Fr. Simeon.

Fr. Simeon’s alcoholism is self-evident and severe. His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH claims that he knew that Fr. Simeon was an alcoholic shortly after he met him in Moscow. His Beatitude’s subsequent endorsement of Fr. Simeon for assignment (e.g., to His Grace, Bishop MICHAEL or for the military chaplaincy) is therefore puzzling and troubling. Fr. Simeon’s condition would preclude his canonical entry into the OCA to function in any pastoral capacity. Certainly after the incident with J and incarceration, it is incomprehensible that he should become a military chaplain. The Committee asked His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH why he encouraged a discussion between Fr. Simeon and Fr. Peter Dubinin in June, 2010, well after the incident. His response was that he (+MJ) thought that Fr. Simeon could “go through recovery from his alcoholism in the military.” However, His Beatitude neglected to tell either Fr. Alexander Garklavs or Fr. Peter Dubinin about Fr. Simeon’s condition, but rather gave the impression that this would be about entry into military chaplaincy.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH did “suspend” Fr. Simeon, according to the May 19, 2010 letter. In the discussion with Metropolitan JONAH, the Committee asked

about the nature of that suspension. Because Fr. Simeon was never formally received into the OCA, neither the Metropolitan nor any OCA bishop would have canonical authority to impose a suspension. His Beatitude admitted that this was improper; he saw this action in the way of “rescinding the blessing for Fr. Simeon to serve.” Following the June 15, 2010 court appearance, His Beatitude accepted the claims of Fr. Simeon and Abbess Ameliane that Fr. Simeon was “exonerated” and there were “no charges against him.” Evidently, Metropolitan then “lifted the suspension,” though the exact nature of what Fr. Simeon was blessed to do is unclear.

The confusion evidently allowed Fr. Simeon believed that he could perform priestly services. He befriended a young couple _____ who invited him to perform their marriage ceremony _____. At the end of August, 2010, Fr. Simeon came to the pastor _____ and introduced himself as an “OCA priest,” who had Metropolitan’s blessing to perform the wedding of his friends. When questioned by Fr. _____, he said that “Syosset has the information about me.” Fr. _____ called the Chancery to inquire about Fr. Simeon. This was about a month after the Committee began its investigation, at which time it was understood that Fr. Simeon had absolutely no blessing to serve. Keeping in mind the severity of his condition and the seriousness of the incident with J _____, the fact that Fr. Simeon felt that he could function as a priest is extraordinary.

Fr. Simeon is in deep denial about his condition. This was confirmed by Metropolitan JONAH, Fr. George Kokno, Fr. Constantine White, and Fr. Valery Shemchuk. It was also confirmed in the telephonic conversation with Fr. Simeon (e.g., “I don’t have a problem with alcohol,” or in response to what occurred on April 22: “I may have had a shot, but I was not drunk”). Until such a time that he comes to properly address his condition, or until he “hits bottom” he remains a volatile person, and unfit for priestly ministry. At the end of September, 2010, Fr. Valery Shemchuk informed the Chancery that Fr. Simeon had been visiting a young Russian woman _____.

_____ Fr. Simeon was given to all sorts of rude and bizarre behavior. He appeared in a restaurant in a strange white garb, singing loud and offensive songs. He was carrying a small gun, which he offered to the young woman to shoot, and then shot a couple of bullets into the ground.

That Fr. Simeon desperately needs professional help and therapy is clear. All who know him and care for him should pray for his healing. Encouragement for him to be a functioning priest is only enabling a critical condition. His conduct and behavior is also incompatible with his monastic vocation. How his problems should be addressed raises significant questions: Who is responsible for his spiritual, psychological and physical well-being? What is the responsibility of the OCA? Should his bishop and/or elder in Greece be notified? We know that Fr. Simeon has a family in California, where he may be at the present time.

b) Implications for how Fr. Simeon's case was addressed

The role and actions of His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH vis-à-vis Fr. Simeon present a quandary. His Beatitude told the Committee that he was aware of Fr. Simeon's drinking problem "almost from the beginning," yet he did not share that fact with anyone at the Chancery until after rumors of misconduct began to surface. Metropolitan JONAH's advocacy of Fr. Simeon for assignment in a parish as well as for military chaplaincy was not appropriate for someone with such glaring personal problems. Metropolitan's letter of May 19, 2010 was an appropriate response to His Beatitude's becoming aware of the April 22 incident. However, neither the letter nor the information about Fr. Simeon's conduct were conveyed to the Chancery, nor to the Diocese of Washington Chancellor. Just what was rescinded by His Beatitude after June 15, what was communicated to Fr. Simeon and how Fr. Simeon interpreted it, are unclear. There is no reason why that should have been the case.

The role and involvement of Abbess Ameliane is puzzling and troubling. Why did Abbess Ameliane not report the April 22 incident to Metropolitan JONAH or to Fr. Constantine White (Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral)? Did Abbess Ameliane fail to understand the severity of Fr. Simeon's problems and the seriousness of the misconduct incident? Or did she deliberately suppress information to protect Fr. Simeon?

When (in June, 2010) the rumors of the incident began to circulate on internet postings, there were exaggerated versions of what took place. Some accounts of the incident were inflated to surmise that "some monk" had committed "rape," perhaps even of the nuns. The exaggerated report was conveyed to Fr. Simeon and to Abbess Ameliane. Understandably they were extremely upset by the unfounded rumors. Their reaction, however, was excessive. Fr. Simeon responded with threats of bringing a law suit against those who spread these rumors. Abbess Ameliane's reaction was similar. Later, when contacted, she did not offer objective testimony about what occurred, even though she may have been a first-hand witness to some of the events in question. Instead, Abbess Ameliane continues to stand by claims that Fr. Simeon "never did anything to compromise his priesthood," and that the "perpetrator of the electronic crime" be arrested (see her letter to Dr. Eike, Document C).

4. Time line (until the beginning of the investigation)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Person(s) Events</u>	<u>Source of info</u>
9.25.76	Fr SK born in Odessa	Letter to +BB
1989	Fr SK & family come to USA	ibid.
1996	Fr SK joins Greek Monastery	ibid.

4.11.09	Letter of "release" from Fr. Dionysius	from +MJ 7.12.10
10 or 11.09	Fr SK awol from Monastery	info from +BM
12.09	Fr SK in Moscow with +MJ	+MJ
12.09	Fr SK in USA (at Chancery)	Fr AG
1.10 (?)	Possible "incident"	+MJ letter (5.19)
2-3.10	Fr SK lives in basement of +MJ's residence in DC	info from Fr VS
3.15.10	Fr Peter Dubinin e-mail to +MJ re Fr SK	Fr PD
4.10	Fr SK briefly lives in hotel courtesy of M S	Fr VS
4.10	Fr SK lives in apt.	ibid. and others
4.22.10	Incident (w/ J) and incarceration	Fr. SK, J , Police Officer
4-5.10	Fr SK lives with nuns	+MJ letter (5.19)
5.10	Fr SK hospitalized w/ ulcer	ibid.
5.19.10	Letter of suspension to Fr SK	ibid.
5.22.10	+MJ asks Fr G Kokhno to help	Fr GK
6.15.10	Court hearing	Fr SK
6.17.10	+MJ asks Fr AG to arrange for Fr P Dubinin to meet Fr SK	Fr AG
6.20.10	Fr PD meets Fr SK in DC	Fr PD
6.22.10	Melanie at Pokrov sends e-mail	Frs Matsko & Bobosh
6.23.10	Fr MM contacts Fr AG	
6.23.10	F S calls +MJ	
7.7.10	The Office and SMPAC discuss the allegations	
7.12.10	SMPAC writes to HS about the need to investigate	
7.12.10	+MJ recuses himself	e-mail 7.12.10

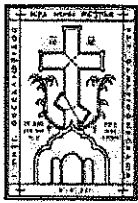
- 7.25.10 Special Investigation Committee is formed
- 8.4.10 First meeting (teleconference) of Investigative Committee (Bp Michael, Fr GS, Dr N Eike & Fr AG)

5. Conclusions

1. In the course of this investigation, the Committee has concluded that sexual misconduct was committed by Fr. Simeon (Kharon) on April 22, 2010.
2. Fr. Simeon presents signs of being an alcoholic. When intoxicated he exhibits aggressive acts (foul language and rude behavior), sometimes manifesting dangerous conduct (e.g., pulling out a knife, shooting off a hand-gun).
3. Fr. Simeon was in police custody on two occasions during 2010.
4. Fr. Simeon's canonical status and involvement with the OCA was handled in an irregular and improper manner.
5. The attempts to "place" Fr. Simeon for pastoral assignment were unwise.
6. Persons who were aware about Fr. Simeon's drinking issues and the incident that occurred on April 22 (Metropolitan JONAH, Abbess Ameliane) failed to report it to appropriate Church officials.
7. Abbess Ameliane's conduct is unbecoming and perplexing. Her contention is that Fr. Simeon is innocent while those question his actions are disreputable. She goes so far as to state that retribution should be sought against those who have discredited Fr. Simeon. As a one-sided, unfounded, extremely subjective defense, this simply does not correspond with the facts which have been concretely established. This puts into question the establishment of a monastic community in which Abbess Ameliane is involved.

6. Recommendations

1. Prayers should be said for Fr. Simeon, for J [redacted], for Abbess Ameliane.
2. Fr. Simeon is in need of immediate comprehensive professional treatment, in addition to regular participation in a twelve-step program. In whatever way the OCA can facilitate this should be given consideration.
3. The possibility of the OCA canonically receiving Fr. Simeon is out of the question, until such time as long-term sobriety is manifested and after a thorough psychological examination.
4. In this case His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH's pastoral judgment was questionable; the Holy Synod should encourage His Beatitude to regularly consult and brief his Chancellor and Chancery staff about pastoral issues (receptions, assignments, inter-jurisdictional transfers, etc.).
5. Abbess Ameliane's conduct has compromised her desire to found a monastic community within the Orthodox Church in America. There is also the issue of her unusual and nonsensical canonical allegiance: simultaneously to the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America and to Elder Dionysios, who lives in Greece. The Holy Synod should not endorse any monastic community that is associated with the Elder Dionysios.



ΙΕΡΑ ΜΟΝΗ ΠΕΤΡΑΣ * ΒΑΤΑΦΥΓΙΟΝ ΒΑΡΑΙΤΣΗΣ

TEL: 697.8118604 * FAX: 244.1080716 * E-MAIL: MONIPETRAS@FHC.ORG * WEB SITE: WWW.MONIPETRAS.ORG
HOLY MONASTERY OF PETRA * GR 431 00 BARAITSA

Αριθμ. Πρωτ. 18

11.04.2009

“Α”

ΚΑΝΟΝΙΚΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΓΡΑΜΜΑ

Διά τοῦ παρόντος ἱεροσφραγίστου καί ἐνυπογράφου Μοναστηριακοῦ ἡμῶν Γράμματος, δυνάμει τῆ ὑπό στοιχείοις Συνεδρία Δ'/Πρακτικόν Β'/11.04.2009 ἀποφάσει τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς Γεροντίας, βάσει τοῦ ἀπό 08.04.2009 σεπτοῦ παρακλητικοῦ Γράμματος τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Οὐασινγκτῶνος καί Νέας Ὑόρκης, Μητροπολίτου πάσης Ἀμερικῆς καί Καναδά, κ.κ. ΙΩΝΑ, ΟΣΑ, πρὸς ἡμᾶς,

Ἀπολύομεν

τόν ἀγαπητόν ἡμῖν μεγαλόσχημον ἀδελφόν πανοσιολογιώτατον ἀρχιμανδρίτην κ. Σεραφεῖμ, θεολόγον, κατὰ κόσμον Gkeorgki Starkof τοῦ Λεωνίδου καί τῆς Δαρείας, κάτοχον τοῦ ὑπ' ἀριθμ. ΑΒ5810757/06.02.2007 Ἑλληνικοῦ Διαβατηρίου, δι' ἴδρουσιν Ἱερῶν Μονῶν εἰς Ντάλλας Τέξας ΗΠΑ, καί συνοδόν αὐτοῦ τόν ὀσιολογιώτατον ἡμέτερον ἱερομόναχον κ. Συμεών, θεολόγον-ἀγιογράφον, κατὰ κόσμον John Kharon τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου καί τῆς Ludmilla, κάτοχον τοῦ ὑπ' ἀριθμ. 711936810/28.07.2006 Ἀμερικανικοῦ Διαβατηρίου, ὑπό τήν δικαιοδοσίαν τῆς Αὐτοῦ Μακαριότητος, τοῦ καί Τοποτηρητοῦ Ντάλλας, τῆ εὐλογίᾳ τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου ἡμῶν Μητροπολίτου Θεσσαλιώτιδος καί Φαναριοφερσάλων κ.κ. ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ Β'.



Ο ΚΑΘΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΠΕΤΡΑΣ

Ἀρχ. Διονύσιος

ΑΡΧΙΜΑΝΔΡΙΤΗΣ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ

καί οἱ σύν ἐμοί ἐν Χριστῷ Ἀδελφοί

Translation: We release the beloved to us great schema brother, the all-venerable Archimandrite Lord Seraphim, theologian, in the world, George Starkof, son of Leonid and Daria, who has the Greek visa/passport number [], for the establishment of Sacred Monasteries in Dallas, TX, USA; and also his colleague, our most-venerable Hieromonk John Kharon, theologian and iconographer, son of Alexander and Ludmilla, who has an American passport number [], to the jurisdiction of His Beatitude, also the locum tenens of Dallas, with the blessing of His Eminence, our Metropolitan of Thessaliotida and Phanariophersalon, KIRILLOS II.

May 19, 2010

Dear Fr Symeon,

The Lord bless you!

There are a number of issues that we need to discuss. I am very sorry for your recent hospitalization and the precarious state of your health. I care about you, and want the best for you. However, there are some very serious consequences to your actions, of which I have only recently been informed.

I understand that you were arrested and spent a night in jail, for assault, against a young woman from the apartment complex in which you were staying. Until that matter is legally resolved, you are suspended from all priestly functions, though you may receive communion in the altar as a priest. It is for me to decide, once I have seen the documents, when and whether you can be restored to priestly function. This is a very serious matter, and you may have cut yourself off from the priesthood.

Of course, you have personally said nothing to me about this, and this is also unacceptable. Further, I was told there was another encounter with the police earlier this year, in which you ended up in custody for three days. You told me nothing about this either.

Most important, the reason for your illness, and I presume these other incidents, is alcohol abuse. My friend, you are killing yourself. This has to stop. Shortly after you arrived, I was suspicious that you were abusing alcohol. With the drinking, your behavior gets out of control. I understand you were belligerent with the police, and not cooperative. I also have been told of your being drunk in public, in parish functions. This is totally unacceptable behavior for a priest and a monk.

I am putting you under strict monastic obedience to stay with the nuns, in their top floor, until June 4. You may not go out with friends, or leave the house except to go to church or to work. You are to be at daily prayers, morning and evening, and to eat with them at regular meals. You may not touch any alcohol. One other exception is to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, daily, with someone the nuns trust. It is unacceptable for you to stay alone, which is one reason I do not want you to use my residence.

I know you want to deny your problem. But this is self-delusion. You know you are in deep trouble. This is a wakeup call. Accept that you have a problem with alcohol, and start dealing with it.

In the meantime, you need to cooperate with the people around you, especially the nuns and M , who care about you very much and only desire your good. You should find a residential alcohol treatment program that will accept you as a charity client, as you have no insurance or other resources, and enter that program by June 4. After that, you may go to St Tikhon's Monastery for a time.

Given your legal entanglements, you can not leave the country. This would make your life even more complicated.



P.O. Box 675
Syosset, NY 11791-0675
Tel: 516.922.0550
Fax: 516.922.0954
Website: www.oca.org

Perhaps the reason you had to come to America is to deal with your alcoholism, and thus save both your life and your priesthood. As it is, these are in grave danger because of your drinking. You have the chance to save both.

With fatherly love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name 'Jonah' in a cursive script.

+Jonah
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Holy Monastery of the Twelve Apostles «Red Church»
Karditsa, Greece

September 1, 2010

Honorable
Dr. Nikita Eike
Psychiatrist, Advisor
Orthodox Church in America

Honorable Dr. Eike,

Thank you for re-sending your e-mail, mandated as you are by the Holy Synod of the OCA, with the indication of His Beatitude that I know about what you are investigating.

So, as for whatever pertains to our Very Reverend brother, Hieromonk Fr. Symeon Kharon: to my mind, as soon as you received the mandate you got, there should have been mandated immediately the arrest of the perpetrator of the electronic crime. Beyond that, this bears chiefly upon myself – although I did not manage it because of my obligations here – and it will be my first concern as soon as I return. Because our brother never did anything to compromise his priesthood or another person, nor did he ever harass anyone, and we have known him since he was a young boy, together with his blessed family.

I am obliged to proceed to lawsuits and conclusive legal claims against every perpetrator responsible for this electronic crime/depravity, of which we were informed by His Beatitude.

I remember you from our warm meeting on Holy Wednesday in Baltimore; certainly, I have been hoping to see you again.

Would that all the ecclesiastical institutions and agents work through direct investigations, like the Synod of the OCA and yourself under its mandate, because the discovery of the truth liberates, heals, illumines, glorifies victims with the crown of martyrdom, as in this case, our spiritual brother, the above-mentioned hieromonk.

With a foretaste of the joy of every collaboration with you in Christ, in the future, as well, I close with much appreciation,

Abbess Acemiliane

Holy Monastery of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple, OCA
Washington, D.C.

- Cc: 1. The Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of all America & Canada, His Beatitude **JONAH**.
2. The Very Reverend Hieromonk Fr. **Symeon** Petrite, Washington.
3. The Honorable Mrs. **R** **R**
4. The Honorable Mrs. **M** **S**