

Address by the Synod of Bishops of the RTOC to all pastors and laity of our Church.

Dear-in-the-Lord clergy, monastics, and all children of our Russian True-Orthodox Church!

The Synod of Bishops of the RTOC, having convened in the city of Omsk in October, imparts its pastoral blessing to you all and fervently prays to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Theotokos, and the entire Host of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia that we may not falter in our spiritual struggle, but rather grow stronger in spiritual sobriety and the labor of attaining our salvation amidst a world—politically and in terms of statehood—that has completely surrounded us and is becoming increasingly aggressive under the influence of the spirit of the Antichrist and the forces of apostasy. Above all, we pray that our primary weapon against this—our brotherly love in Christ—does not fail, but is preserved and grows, even as it continues to undergo severe trials amidst the escalating events of the bloody war in Ukraine. The goal of the globalist political forces acting in the Spirit of the Antichrist is becoming increasingly evident: the enslavement and fragmentation—and even the loudly proclaimed desire for the total destruction—of the Russian people, who possess the deep roots of Holy Orthodoxy that the godless Soviet regime attempted, yet failed, to eradicate. It was precisely the spiritual feat of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia that acted—and continues to act—gracefully upon the spiritual and moral roots of the Russian people. And it is precisely this that has now placed the Russian people—along with all the nationalities that became part of them during the era of Russian Orthodox statehood—at the forefront of resistance against the plans to corrupt all nations with the satanic spirit of the Antichrist. Having suffered greatly since revolutionary political and state figures betrayed the Orthodox Autocracy and the ideal of Holiness, the Russian people—through their living Orthodox roots and the hearts of the many who pray—remain the primary obstacle to the plans of global satanic forces. Yes, as we have stated in previous messages: "Wars have occurred and continue to occur as God's punishment for betraying Him through falling away from the faith and embracing all manner of idolatry—namely, the service of our own passions." Yet, even amidst the sorrowful events befalling our people, we believe that God's benevolent Providence continues to work for the sake of the many Orthodox believers, shielding them from schemes to fragment the peoples of Russia by destroying the Russian Federation's statehood and subsequently dismantling "Orthodox Russianness" in stages. This is visibly unfolding in Ukraine—now enslaved by the satanic West—where the Russian language, the centuries-old bearer of Orthodox culture and the ideal of Holiness, is being banned, and where even the relics of great Russian saints in the "Mother of Russian Cities" have been subjected to persecution. These events are, in essence, a continuation of the disintegration of the once-united Orthodox Russian nation. The Catacomb Church in Russia bore this "Orthodox Russianness" through its Cross; the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) proclaimed and upheld it through its spiritual feats, celebrating it in the ranks of its eminent hierarchs—shining

stars in the firmament of its confessional spirituality—such as Metropolitans Anthony and Anastassy, the holy Metropolitans Philaret (Voznesensky) and John of Shanghai, and Archbishops Averky, Nikon, Vitaly (Maximenko), and Andrei Rymarenko. Vitaly, the last Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR)—following the example of Grigory Grabbe and many others—bequeathed to us the charge to preserve it with all our hearts. The only effective way to invoke God's almighty aid for an end to the fratricidal war, the disintegration of the Russian nation within it, and the danger of this conflict spreading to the peoples of the Russian Federation is through a call to repent of our apostasy, through penitential prayer for our entire people, and through the example of our unity within the True Church of Christ. We must cherish and preserve the unity of the historic Russian Orthodox people as a single nation.

Further to our call for spiritual sobriety, we must offer a special pastoral warning: following the initial apocalyptic woe—which has already befallen all nations—further trials are to come. Behind the smokescreen of bloody military conflicts unleashed by provocations, the apostate world is being ushered into a new, God-defying phase of restructuring socio-economic relations. Here, the Antichrist's forces—embodied by immensely powerful transnational financial corporations—have already begun to seize power over the sovereignty of nation-states. They are employing psychophysical technologies to enslave the human psyche and are substituting the spiritual rebirth of humanity—bestowed by our Lord and God-Man Christ through His accomplished Redemption—with intellectual, logic-based, and information-driven progress. In essence, this is a temptation of the soul: a drive to satisfy passions unhealed by faith and repentance, and a quest to master natural forces through intellectual technologies—extending even to the illusory pursuit of earthly "immortality" within corruptible bodies via physical and technical alterations to their biological state. This represents a God-defying choice of free will and an Antichrist-like rejection of the promise granted to all humanity regarding the inevitable General Resurrection—the rising in blessed, Christ-like bodies wherein "the righteous will shine like the sun." Those who choose otherwise march with the devil into the fire of eternal torment. A particularly perilous step in this direction is the development of "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) technologies. According to authoritative Orthodox experts, the reckless use of AI for intellectual tasks and the online search for information regarding the soul and morality inevitably subjects the human brain to the influence of covert, cognitive-level psychophysical programming. Particular warnings are issued regarding this influence on children and the need to delay—as long as possible, given that completely avoiding it has become virtually impossible in modern society—allowing them unrestricted use of smartphones and computers. Our Synod has published warnings and clarifications on its website concerning the dangers for Orthodox believers in participating in online networks, many of which are designed to covertly gain control over the human psyche through artificial intelligence.

In concluding our Address, we offer a profound spiritual exhortation and source of comfort from the Apostle John the Theologian, applicable to the "last times" of this world, taken from his First Epistle:

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour."

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (Ch. 2:15–18).

"Little children, you are of God and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us." By this we recognize the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (Ch. 4:5–8)

May the Lord and the Most Holy Theotokos bless and strengthen us all in preserving and increasing our brotherly love in Christ and the purity of the Orthodox Faith!