

The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors of the 20th century by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) and its role in restoring Canonical Communion with the Russian Orthodox Church¹

Drd. Mihail MOTRICALĂ²

Abstract:

The history of the Russian Orthodox Church in 20th and 21st Century is a tragic one. This begins with the Bolshevik Revolution, known as one of the biggest fraternal conflicts, causing the martyrdom of thousands of people. The same painful event separated the Russian Orthodoxy into two parts. Therefore the Russian Orthodox diaspora was ruled since 1921 by an Archdiocesan Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR)³, formed abroad.

For ROCOR, the question of martyrdom following the bloody persecution of the communist regime against its own people has always been of fundamental importance. ROCOR has always considered itself as an integral part of the Russian Orthodox Church under the leadership of Patriarch Tihon (Bellavin) and has

¹ This article is part of the individual doctoral program, under the guidance of Pr.Conf.Univ.Dr.Habil. Daniel BUDA, who agreed it to be published.

² **Dr. Candidate Mihai MOTRICALĂ** is originally from Republic of Moldavia. He studied Orthodox Theology at "Lucian Blaga" University and historical theology at Humboldt University, Berlin. He submitted a doctoral dissertation on history, development, the process of unification with the Moscow Patriarchate and future perspectives of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

³ The acronym comes from english „Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia” which in romanian means: Biserica Ortodoxă Rusă din afara Rusiei. In russian this church it is called: Русская Православная Церковь за границей, shorted РПЦЗ. Other used names are: Русская Зарубежная Церковь, Русская Православная Церковь за рубежом. For german it is used: *Russische Orthodoxe Kirche im Ausland*, but for french: L'Église Orthodoxe Russe Hors Frontière (ÉORHF) and also: *L'Église des Russes de l'étranger* or *L'Église des Russes blancs*, see: Radu Preda, „La diaspora orthodoxe. Une perspective roumaine”, in: *Kanon* 22 (2012), p. 89.

The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors

repeatedly called on the West to help the Russian people and stop bloody repressions.

Because ROCOR wished that the martyrdom of thousands of believers would not remain insignificant decided in 1981, under the leadership of the new Primate of ROCOR, Metropolitan Filaret (Voznesenskij) to canonize New Russian martyrs and confessors of the 20th Century. This meant for all Orthodox Russian diaspora a victory of Orthodoxy over the atheist regime in Russia.

Moreover, after the fall of communism and the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the martyr's sacrifice proved to be one of the main points of negotiations throughout the process of restoring Canonical Communion to the Russian Orthodox Church. The Patriarchate of Moscow has canonized the martyrs at the Jubilee Sobor in 2000, which in May 2007 led to the signing of the „Canonical Communion Act,, and thus to the reunification of Russian Orthodoxy.

Key-words:

Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, ROCOR, AES, Moscow Patriarchate, russian orthodox diaspora, Canonical Communion, martyrdom, canonization of New russian martyrs and confessors, communism

Introduction

The 20th century is considered by many historians as the century in which the Orthodox Church, and not only, has declared as saints countless martyrs and confessors. This century is in many respects similar to the first Christian centuries, when the Church of Christ was persecuted, and many Christians gave their lives to confess the faith.

This aspect of the confession of Orthodoxy in the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century is closely connected with the establishment of the communist regime in Russia following the 1917 civil war and the Russian revolution.

The Bolshevik regime was totally hostile to Christianity in general and to any form of religious manifestation. The Russian Orthodox Church was the one who suffered the most under communism, but also the one who resisted the most. This has often happened at the cost of the lives of many of his spiritual sons.⁴

⁴ Николай Артёмов, прот., *Введение. Краткий обзор основных вех и векторов рассматриваемого периода*. Оп. в кн.: Русская Православная Церковь в XX в. Материалы конференции. Петрозаводск, 2002, p. 9; Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *A History of Soviet Atheism in Theory, and Practice, and the Believer*, vol 2: *Soviet Anti-Religious Campaigns and Persecutions*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1988, p. 10; Archbishop John Maximovich, „The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia”, in: *Orthodox Word*, March-April, 1971, p. 79.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) was born as a consequence of the Russian revolution of 1917⁵ and the exodus of the Russian people out of the territories of the former Russian Empire. At first this church organ was named the Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority of Southern Russia (AES). There were several Archbishops Synods (in Russian: Sobors) to discuss extraordinary ecclesiastical situations. Subsequently, after six months of staying in Istanbul under the protection of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the AES moved to Serbia. Here was the First General Sobor of the entire Russian orthodox diaspora in 1921 held in Sremski-Karlovcy. With this Sobor was officially established ROCOR, together with the Archbishops Synod as its executive body.

Due to political circumstances, a painful rupture occurred within the Russian Orthodox Church. However, the ROCOR has always stated that: „The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia is an indissoluble part of the Russian Orthodox Church and until the complete elimination of the atheist government in Russia, it is self-governed according to the principle of the Sobornicity, in accordance with the Patriarch's resolution, The Most Holy Synod and the Great Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church on 7/20 November”.⁶

This position was always supported by Saint Ioan Maximovici, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, one of the most prominent orthodox hierarchs of the twentieth century. For him, the separation between the two branches of the only Russian Orthodox Church was only temporary, which is why he always prayed and mentioned on *proschomidia* the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁷

⁵ Arhim. Sofronie Saharov, *Vom vedea pe Dumnezeu precum este*, trad. din limba rusă de Ierom. Rafail (Noica), Editura Sofia, București, 2004, p. 161.

⁶ „Regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia Confirmed by the Council of Bishops in 1956 and by a decision of the Council dated 5/18 June, 1964”, in: <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/english/pages/regulations/rocorregulations.html>, accessed on 15.09.2018.

⁷ Архиепископ Иоанн Максимович, *Русская Зарубежная Церковь*, Православное дело, Geneva, 1960, p. 1-16; *Краткие Очерки по истории РПЦЗ XXI века. Процесс диалога комиссии РПЦЗ и РПЦ МП, для восстановления канонического общения*. Интервью Михаила Григорьевича Мотрикалэ с доктором исторических наук, ведущим Научно-исследовательского отдела новейшей истории РПЦ, доцентом ПСТГУ, Андреем Александровичем Костюковым, Москва, 18.12.2017; Архиеп. Иоанн (Максимович), *Русская Зарубежная Церковь*, Монреали, 1979², in: *Владыка Иоанн - святитель Русского Зарубежья* / Сост. прот. Петр Перекрестов, Москва, Издательство Сретенского монастыря, 2008, p. 474-476, 765-781.

Canonization of New martyrs by ROCOR

The subject of martyrdom has had a profound importance for ROCOR from the very beginning. The martyrdom was intimately connected with the imperial family, the Russian people, and the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia. The memory of all those who have testified at the cost of their own life the Orthodox faith has been preserved.

Above all, the Archbishop Sobor of ROCOR decided the canonization of St. John of Kronstadt in 1964, St. Herman of Alaska in 1970 and St. Xenia of St. Petersburg in 1978.

The Archbishop's Sobor from 1981, following several years of preparation for the canonization files, decided to canonize the New Russian martyrs and confessors of the 20th century of the Russian Orthodox Church. This moment of great celebration for the Russian Orthodox diaspora took place on October 19th / November 1, 1981. Patriarch Tihon (Bellavin), the Tsar Nicolae II, members of the imperial family, bishops, priests, monks, monks and laymen were also included here.⁸ This moment marked a new moment of triumph of Orthodoxy over the oppressed and atheist power of the Soviet Union. More than 30,000 New Martyrs and Russian Confessors who were martyred during the Russian Revolution, the 1917-1918 Civil War, and the most recent communist persecution were canonized.⁹

In 1949, the ROCOR published the first volume¹⁰ of the book of Protopresbiter Mikhail Poliskij, „The New Russian Martyrs”, and the second volume¹¹ was published in 1957. This was the first systematic monography on the Russian confessors and martyrs who professed the orthodox faith during the persecution of the Communist regime. Many other volumes and monographies would be published on this subject: „By their suffering, Russia will be cleansed”,

⁸ Александр Кравецкий, *Церковная миссия в эпоху перемен (между проповедью и диалогом)*, Круглый стол по религиозному образованию и диаконии, s.l., 2012, p. 429; Gerd Stricker, *Russische orthodoxe Kirchen in der Diaspora (1917-2007)*, in: Albert J. M. Davids und Fedor B. Poljakov (eds.), *Die russische Diaspora in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert. Religiöses und kulturelles Leben*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Mein, 2008, p. 29.

⁹ *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Band VIII, Pearson-Samuel, Herder Verlag, Freiburg, Basel, Rom, Wien, 1999, p. 1371-1372; Peter Hauptmann, Gerd Stricker, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in Russland. Dokumente ihrer Geschichte*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1988, p. 620.

¹⁰ Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Новые мученики Российские*, т.1, Издательство Джорданвилль, 1949.

¹¹ Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Новые мученики Российские*, т.2, Издательство Джорданвилль, 1957.

¹² „Suffering for Christ, the persecution against the Russian Orthodox Church 1917-1956”, ¹³ as well as the seven-volume collection of Hieromonk Serafim (Orlovskij) „Martyrs, Confessors and Sacrifices of the Russian Orthodox Church of the 20th Century”.¹⁴

The issue of the canonization of these „new martyrs and confessors” has been under discussion since the 1930s. The issue has become more and more current as the countless requests for canonization by the faithful. In Brussels, a church was dedicated to all the victims of the communist regime.¹⁵ In many churches and houses of Russian Orthodox emigrants, there was an icon of „All Saints of Russia”,¹⁶ whose honour was first introduced by the Holy and Great Sobor held in Moscow between 1917-1918.¹⁷

When the murder of the Russian imperial family was discovered, His Beatitude Patriarch Tihon (Bellavin) himself committed the *panahida* service for the martyrs. As a successor of the Russian Orthodox Church (Tichonite¹⁸), ROCOR, in turn, continued the regular commemoration of the imperial family. Although the pros and cons arguments of canonization have been many, however, this canonization must be seen on the whole and in connection with the canonization of many well-known and unknown confessors of faith and martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the Bolshevik persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁹

¹² *Их страданиями очистится Русь*, М.: Издательство Имени Святителя Игнатия Ставропольского, 1996.

¹³ *За Христа пострадавшие. Гонения на Русскую Православную Церковь 1917-1956*, Биографический справочник. Книга 1.

¹⁴ Иеромонах Дамаскин (Орловский), *Мученики, исповедники и подвижники благочестия Русской Православной Церкви XX столетия в семи томах*, Издательство: Булат, 1992-2002.

¹⁵ See the monography: *Храм-памятник в Брюсселе. (Документальная хроника)*. / Сост. А. М. Хитров, О. Л. Соломина. Под ред. гр. М. Н. Апраксиной. Москва, Паломникъ-Град Китеж, 2005.

¹⁶ *Русская Православная Церковь за границей 1918-1968*, Том 1, под Ред. А. А. Соллогуба, **Русская Духовная Миссия в Иерусалиме**, Нью-Йорк, 1968, **р. 526-527**.

¹⁷ Gernot Seide, *Geschichte der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche im Ausland von der Gründung bis in die Gegenwart*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1983, p. 115.

¹⁸ Here the term "tichonite" means that part (majority) of the Russian Orthodox Church that preserved the spiritual line and the canonical ecclesiastical structure of Patriarch Tihon (Bellavin). This distinction was made, because at that time there were other church structures with a doubtful canonicity like the “Gregorians” or schismatic ones such as the Renovationists movement.

¹⁹ „Православная Русь”, (1979), пр. 6, р. 8.

The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors

The Canonization of the New Martyrs and Confessors by the ROCOR was hailed with great enthusiasm by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In May 1982, Patriarch Diodor received a delegation from ROCOR in Jerusalem. It consisted of archbishops Antonie de Geneva, Paul de Sydney, Lavru de Syracuse and bishop Grigore de Washington. These were received with great warmth in the throne room of the Patriarchal Residence of the Holy City. The bishops' delegation went to the Holy Land to carry the parts of the relics of the New Martyrs and to hand them over to the duke Elisabeta and the nun Varvara. Patriarch Diodor specified the importance of the canonization of the martyrs, adding: „The arrival of the holy relics is holy, and canonization in itself is holy. Both of them refer to the supreme sacrifice that these saints have been able to bring to Orthodoxy”.²⁰

Moreover, His Beatitude Patriarch Diodor added that „ROCOR, out of blessed causes, is outside the homeland and that the Russian Orthodox Church continuously „baptizes,, new martyrs, and millions follow the example of the Imperial Family's sacrifice.” He went on to say that „we cannot remain indifferent to such a great moment, the canonization of the martyrs, especially as their celebration takes place in the canonical territory of our jurisdiction. So we have decided to be present in the confession of the Orthodox unity and whether this act will strengthen its legitimacy”. Patriarch Diodor concluded his greeting message, saying, „may the innocent blood of the martyrs, who has been mercilessly shed, be as a sanctifying water that fits the trunk of Orthodoxy, and that through their prayers we can strengthen ourselves in the confession of unity and truth.”²¹

The words of His Beatitude Patriarch Diodor highlight here two extremely important elements: first, the fact that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem recognized the right of the ROCOR to act and speak within certain limits on behalf of the holy Russian Orthodox Church in the homeland, and secondly that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem considered ROCOR as an Orthodox Church "sister", proving the unity of Orthodoxy. This was of immense importance, for it countered the ideas of those who were against the ROCOR and its mission. Negative allegations were often made only for the purpose of disinformation, but the reality of the situation between the Churches results in the very truth of the words of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Diodor.²²

The ROCOR's activity was also very well known in Moscow. Even though the Patriarchate of Moscow wanted and felt the need for the canonization of many saints, it was very difficult, if not impossible, to do in a natural way at that time. However, somewhat later in 1977, the Patriarchate of Moscow managed to

²⁰ Gernot Seide, *Geschichte der Russische Orthodoxen Kirche im Ausland...*, p. 116.

²¹ „Bote der deutschen Diocese”, (1982), nr. 3, p. 4-5.

²² Gernot Seide, *Geschichte der Russische Orthodoxen Kirche im Ausland...*, p. 117.

canonize a saint, although this has been almost unnoticed by both the press and believers. Following the request from the North American Metropolitan Church (OCA) to the Patriarchate of Moscow, Metropolitan Inochentie (Veniaminov) was canonized as "Apostle of North America and Siberia." Although the OCA already celebrated its canonization, but because of conflicts between the parties, the ROCOR did not recognize canonization, but not the hierarchy's holiness.²³

The ROCOR, in turn, began to honour St. Veličkovski and the Holy Fathers of Optina since 1982. At the same time, he started the process of gathering the testimonies and documents necessary for the archives of Archbishop Ioan (Maximovič) of Shanghai and San Francisco. This great hierarch was canonized in 1993.²⁴

Canonization of the Russian Martyrs and Russian Confessors of the twentieth century in 1981 was not so much a nominal canonization,²⁵ especially as the martyrdom phenomenon during the rule of the Communist regime in Russia. Thus ROCOR wanted to remind the West of the Russian martyrs and the discovery the truth in Russia.

It should also be specified that the ROCOR wished that this canonization, centred on martyrdom, would also be the reason for the beginning of Russia's spiritual rebirth on the threshold of the 1000th anniversary of Russia's Christianisation.²⁶

In Russian ecclesiastical environments, this moment was very much disputed. On the one hand, many were glad to proclaim among the saints the ones who sacrificed their lives for the confession of the Truth and the Orthodox Faith, and on the other hand some criticisms appeared to the Archbishops Synod for the monarchy's support and the involvement of this church organ in politics.²⁷

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ Архиеп. Иоанн (Максимович), *Русская Зарубежная Церковь*, Монреаи, 1979², in: *Владыка Иоанн - святитель Русского Зарубежья* / Сост. прот. ПЕТР ПЕРЕКРЕСТОВ, Москва, Издательство Сретенского монастыря, 2008, p. 474-476, 765-781.

²⁵ For the entire list of martyrs, see: *Канонизированные Новомученики и Исповедники Русской Православной Церкви*, in: <http://www.pstbi.ccas.ru/bin/code.exe/frames/mcanonf.html?ans>, (accessed on 25.09.2018).

²⁶ Семененко-Басин Илия Викторович, *Канонизация Святых в Русской Православной Церкви в контексте Эволюции Советской и Постсоветской культуры (1917-2000 гг.)*. Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук, Москва, 2002, p. 62.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors

The church leadership in Moscow, which kept silent on the „freedom” of the Church in the Soviet Union, did not want to confess the truth and deny the existence of any persecution in the Soviet Union. In the first place, they wanted to maintain a balance without creating new conflicts with the communist authorities and eventually a new wave of repression of the Church.²⁸ On the other hand, as was normal for the ROCOR Archbishop Synod, he was the church organ who continued to tell the truth about the persecutions suffered by the Russian people and clergy.²⁹

The process of rapprochement between the ROCOR and the Moscow Patriarchate and the issue of New Martyrs

Ever since the 1981 Archbishop's Sobor, when the New Russian martyrs and confessors of the 20th century were canonized, the Archbishop Synod of the ROCOR gave the Moscow Patriarchate a comprehension that was one of the conditions that it had to fulfil in order to bring the two branches of the Russian Orthodox Church closer together and to restore canonical communion.³⁰

There have been many attempts to approach. The first of this kind was attempted in the 1945s, but it did not enjoy success. Later, another attempt was made at the 1988 Archbishop's Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. In this commemorative year, both the ROCOR and the Russian Orthodox Church - the Moscow Patriarchate, celebrated with great joy the 1000th anniversary of Russian Christianization. On the occasion of this event, a letter was issued to all those outside the Canonical Communion with the Mother Church, through which ROCOR was called to dialogue.³¹ But this time, the dialogue proved unsuccessful.³²

Another important moment in the process of approaching the two churches was the canonization of the martyr and confessor Patriarch Tihon (Bellavin, 1865-1925). The patriarch was first canonized on November 1, 1981 by the Archbishop

²⁸ *Ibidem.*

²⁹ Gernot Seide, *Geschichte der Russische Orthodoxen Kirche im Ausland...*, p. 119.

³⁰ *История России XX век. Деградация тоталитарного государства и движение к новой России (1953-2008)*. Том III / под ред. А. Б. ЗУБОВА. Москва, ЭКСМО, 2017; С. Матвеев, „Анализ церковного раскола в Русской Православной Церкви Заграницей”, in: <<http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/4583467.html>> (accessed on 26.09.2018).

³¹ Анжелика КАРПИФАВЕ, *Святейший Патриарх Алексий II: Беседы о Церкви в мире*, Москва, ЭКСМО, 2014, p. 435.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 436.

Sobor of ROCOR, with the feast date on March 25.³³ Then the Patriarchate of Moscow canonized Patriarch Tihon (Bellavin) on October 9, 1989, placing him at the head of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.³⁴ This step symbolized a beginning for Moscow Patriarchate in the process of canonization of the new martyrs and witnesses of the Orthodox faith who suffered and gave their lives for Christ in the time of the revolutionary troubles and the Bolshevik atheist terror.³⁵

The importance of the sacrifice of the confessors and martyrs was once again underlined by Archbishop Genadie (Timofeev) of Berlin, under the jurisdiction of Moscow Patriarchate, at the local Archdiocesan Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in June 1990. The hierarch said: „We do not have to neglect all those who have given their lives for faith and we should not forget them.”³⁶

As a result, the Archbishop Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church of March 25, 1991 decided to commemorate the martyrs and confessors who have suffered for the faith in Christ. In 1992, January 25th / February 7th was the day of their commemoration.³⁷

Undoubtedly, the most important step taken by the Moscow Patriarchate in the process of approaching the ROCOR was the decisions of the Archbishop Sobor in 2000 held in Moscow.

On the anniversary of the Archbishop Sobor, Patriarch Alexey II (Ridiger) called the rupture between the Homeland Church and the Church outside of Russia as „the historical tragedy of the Russian people.” He stressed that: „The Russian Orthodox Church - the Patriarchate of Moscow, constantly calls all Russian diaspora believers to acquire canonical communion.”

³³ „The New russian martyrs and confessors canonized by the Archbishop Sobor of ROCOR in 1981”, in: <http://sinod.ruschurchabroad.org/Arh%20Sobor%201981%20spisok%20novomuchenikov.htm> , accessed on 20.09.2018.

³⁴ „Определения Архиерейского Собора”, in: *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, (1990), nr. 1, p. 6-7.

³⁵ „Архиерейский Собор Русской Православной Церкви 9-11 Октября 1989 Г.”, in: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/76506.html> , accessed on 20.09.2018.

³⁶ „27 - 29 января этого года состоится Поместный Собор Русской Православной Церкви, на котором будет избран новый Предстоятель РПЦ - Патриарх Московский и всея Руси. Предлагаем Вашему вниманию архивные материалы о предыдущем Поместном Соборе 1990 года, на котором был избран ныне в Бозе почивший Святейший Патриарх Алексий II. Эти материалы приводятся по официальным публикациям в Журнале Московской Патриархии за 1990 год”, in: http://www.na-gore.ru/articles/izbranie_patr_alex.htm, (accessed on 25.09.2018).

³⁷ „Журнал Московской Патриархии”, (1991), nr. 6, p. 9.

The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors

Among the decisions of the Archbishop Sobor of 2000, the following documents were approved:

1. the canonization of the New Martyrs and Russian Confessors during the Communist regime;
2. the document: The foundation of the social conception of the Russian Orthodox Church, where the status of the Moscow Patriarchate regarding the state is clearly discussed;
3. the document on the relations of the Russian Orthodox Church towards the heterodox.³⁸

Professor A. A. Kostrjukov stresses the importance of the decisions of this Jubilee Sobor. He mentions that the canonization of the martyrs played an essential role in the whole process of negotiations in order to restore the Eucharistic communion.³⁹

This was the solemn moment of signing the Act of Canonical Communion.⁴⁰ On May 17, 2007, Patriarch Alexey II (Ridiger) of Moscow and the entire Russian Orthodox Church and Metropolitan Lavru (Škurla), the ROCOR Primate and the President of the Archbishop Synod at a festive moment signed the Act of Canonical Communion in Patriarchal Cathedral Christ the Saviour in Moscow.⁴¹

³⁸ Анжелика КАРПИФАВЕ, *Святейший Патриарх Алексий II*, op. cit., p. 439-440; *Краткие Очерки по истории РПЦЗ XXI века. Процесс диалога комиссии РПЦЗ и РПЦ МП, для восстановления канонического общения.*

³⁹ *Краткие Очерки по истории РПЦЗ XXI века. Процесс диалога комиссии РПЦЗ и РПЦ МП, для восстановления канонического общения.*

⁴⁰ „Акт О Каноническом Общении”, in: <https://mospat.ru/ru/documents/act-of-canonical-communication/> and „Акт О Каноническом Общении”, in: <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/engdocuments/enmat akt.html>, accessed on 20.09.2018.

⁴¹ „В храме Христа Спасителя состоялось подписание Акта о каноническом общении в единой Поместной Русской Православной Церкви” [V hrame Hrista Spasitelja sostojalosi podpisanie Akta o kanoničeskom obšenie v edinoj Pomesnoj Russoj Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi], in: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/242888.html>, accesed on 23.09.2018; Анжелика Карпифаве, *Святейший Патриарх Алексий II*, p. 439-440; John Garrard, Carol Garrard, *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent: Faith and Power in the New Russia*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2008, p. 201; Richard Potz, Eva Synek, *Orthodoxes Kirchenrecht. Kirche und Recht 28*, Verlag: Plöchl Druck, Freistadt, 2014; Georges Lemopoulos, „Orthodox Diaspora in Europe: An attempt to describe a range of old and new issues”, in: *Derecho Religion*, (2008), nr. 3, p. 59; Ioan Vasile Leb, Konstantin Nikolakopoulos, Ilie Ursa, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in der Selbstdarstellung: Ein Kompendium. Lehr- und Studienbücher Orthodoxe Theologie, Band 4*. LIT Verlag, Münster, 2017, p. 298-299; „The restoration of full communion between the two parts of

At this unique event for the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in particular and for Orthodoxy in general, there were numerous Russian hierarchs and some members of the ROCOR Archbishop Synod. The President of the Russian Federation, V. V. Putin, was also present.⁴²

After the signing of the Act, the Patriarch Alexey II (Ridiger) and Metropolitan Lavru (Škurla) officiated for the first time in history in the same cathedral the Divine Liturgy service. This meant that the ROCOR was brought back to the Patriarchate of Moscow and regained its canonical status recognized by the rest of Orthodoxy.⁴³

Conclusions

We can see the involvement of the ROCOR Archbishop Synod and the Russian Orthodox Diaspora in general on the issue of the canonization of the Russian witnesses and martyrs of the 20th century. This demonstrated for the Russian diaspora a double conviction. First of all, that the Bolshevik regime failed even by force and persecuted the Church of Christ that proved to be alive and victorious. Secondly, the fact that through the memory and honor given to these saints their sacrifice was not in vain. This supreme sacrifice was made to the glory of God and as a token of Orthodoxy victory over the atheist communist regime.

The model of the ROCOR's initiative to start a canonization process in those troubled times was subsequently an incentive for the Moscow Patriarchate to initiate a similar process. Even if it was not officially recognized by the Moscow Patriarchate, we cannot fail to notice the role ROCOR played in confessing the truth in all the years of communist rule in the Soviet Union and the crimes committed against the Russian people.

That is why, after 1965, when was chosen the new Primate of ROCOR, in the person of the Metropolitan Filaret (Voznesenskij), he laid the foundation for the process of preparing the canonization of the new Russian martyrs and martyrs of 20th century. The same was done by the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate much later when the communist power in Russia collapsed.

It should also be underlined that the issue of the canonization of Russian confessors and martyrs was one of the three essential points for the restoration of

the Russian Orthodox Church scheduled for 17 May", in: <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/120.aspx>, accessed on 15.09.2018.

⁴² Иларион (Алфеев), митр., *Патриарх Кирилл. Жизнь и мирозерцание*, Москва, Эксмо, 2010, p. 200; Tim Grass, *Modern Church History*, SCM Press, London, 2008, p. 272.

⁴³ „Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей”, [Russkaja Pravoslavnaja Cerkov Zagranicej], in: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2416490.html>, accessed on 18.09.2018.

The importance of the canonization of the New Russian martyrs and confessors

canonical communion between the two parts of Russian Orthodoxy. This process was a long and difficult one even for the Patriarchate of Moscow. Only in 2000, on the occasion of the Local Orthodox Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, the decision of those requirements, which constituted a great step closer to the Archdiocesan Synod of ROCOR, was achieved.

By signing the Act of Canonical Communion, ROCOR accomplished its double mission: first it restored the Eucharistic and Church communion to the Moscow Patriarchate, and honored all the Russian martyrs of the 20th century. This was much desired by the first ROCOR Primates, such as the metropolitans Antonie (Hrapovickij) and Anastasie (Gribanovskij), who too, longed for the martyrs' exaltation and the restoration of the canonical status of the ROCOR.