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Here goes the answer of Hilarion Alfeyev to the accusations of Antony Blum. It is quite long, but one passage seems to be of special interest. Alfeyev states that English Russian Orthodox

"know very little about how the Moscow Patriarchate as a whole functions at present. For example, the complicated procedure of the election of the diocesan bishop, which presupposes a long correspondence between the Holy Synod and the Diocesan Assembly, with the possibility of many candidates being proposed by the Assembly and refused by the Synod, seems to be rather unrealistic. The Holy Synod meets four or five times a year, normally for one day each time, and takes decisions about the appointment of bishops to various dioceses."

Voila! I hope that for Western ear this sounds awful. How it be! Who governs Moscow Patriarchy? The Synod must be only a formal camouflage for dictatorship of the Patriarch! No rights for anyone.

ADDRESS by Bishop Hilarion of Kerch

at the Extraordinary Clergy Meeting of the Sourozh Diocese 25 May 2002

Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does? John 7:51

Your Eminences, Your Grace, Reverend fathers and brothers in Christ,

I was supposed to be absent from England until the beginning of June. This meeting, therefore, was meant to take place in my absence. However, having heard about its being scheduled for today, I decided to change my plans and come back in order to attend it. I believe that this is a unique opportunity for me to address you directly and to respond to some of the things that have been said about me in recent months. It will also be a precious chance for me to listen to your concerns and criticisms.

My appointment I shall begin by telling you about my appointment to this diocese on the initiative and at the request of Metropolitan Anthony. This appointment has a long pre-history. I met Vladyka Anthony for the first time more than twenty years ago in Russia. Then, in 1990, when I attended the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church as the official representative of the clergy of the Lithuanian diocese, I proposed that Metropolitan Anthony be elected the Patriarch of Moscow. I did it with his full consent, though neither he nor I believed that such nomination could possibly work. In 1991 Vladyka Anthony supported me when I openly opposed the Soviet intervention into Lithuania. From 1993 to 1995, when I was a student in England, I met Vladyka regularly, and our acquaintance grew into a deep spiritual relationship. It was at that time that Vladyka first asked me whether I would consider coming to England in order to serve in the Sourozh diocese. At that time I declined the invitation because I wanted to return to Russia. Having returned, I was appointed a staff member of the Department for External Church Relations and began to work under Metropolitan Kirill. In 1999 Vladyka Anthony asked me once again whether I would come to England. This time I responded positively. Vladyka then wrote a letter to Metropolitan Kirill, asking that I should be released from the Department and sent here. On my part, I approached Metropolitan Kirill with the same idea. The Metropolitan was adamantly against my moving to England. 'Just forget about it: you will NOT go there', he said. In March 2000 he wrote a letter to Vladyka Anthony informing him that he had other plans for me. On 11 November 2000, however, Vladyka Anthony sent him another letter in which he stressed the necessity of my coming to Cambridge University as a scholar. 'Apart from that', added Vladyka Anthony, 'sooner or later Vladyka Anatoly will ask for retirement, and we will need another Assistant Bishop, purely Russian. When I retire or migrate to eternal mansions, his role, carefully conceived, may embrace a significant part of the pastoral work among our ever growing Russian flock. Vladyko, I beg you: change your mind and grant us,-and not only us but the ENTIRE Russian Church,-a faithful and experienced labourer in the difficult and ever expanding field of pastoral and inter-church work. I insistently ask you, Vladyko, follow my advice'. As far as I know, there was no response to this letter; neither was there any reaction to a similar letter addressed to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. In March 2001 Metropolitan Anthony wrote another letter to the Patriarch, in which he complained about his poor health and asked that Bishop Basil be appointed the diocesan bishop. In his letter he once again raised the question of my appointment to this country: 'I would like to ask you, Vladyko, to appoint Hegumen Hilarion to England as an Assistant Bishop for the Sourozh diocese. We need a Russian bishop, to help Archbishop Anatoly and the new diocesan bishop. The quantity of Russians has grown so much that neither myself nor Vladyka Anatoly can cope with the pastoral work, which requires education and spiritual formation of the newly-arriving Russians. From the enclosed letter you will see that Cambridge University has agreed to provide a stipend for him for three years in order that he should become the head of the Theological Institute, founded by our diocese... Father Hilarion is already known in England through his theological works, and if he becomes the head of the Institute, this will help us gain a new victory... I ask you, dear Vladyko, not to postpone these decisions'. The decisions, however, were postponed again and again, mainly because of Metropolitan Kirill's resistance. They may not have been taken at all had Metropolitan Kirill not come to England in November 2001, accompanied by myself, in order to meet Vladyka Anthony. During this meeting he agreed, not without much hesitation, to release me from the Department for External Relations. He also asked Vladyka Anthony, on behalf of the Patriarch, not to retire but to remain the diocesan bishop. In his letter to the Patriarch of 18 December 2001 Vladyka Anthony wrote: 'I am now addressing you with an additional request: to appoint Father Hilarion an Assistant Bishop, who will be entrusted, as I wrote you before, with lecturing at Cambridge University and with special care for the Russian

flock, which ever grows... Until now it was Vladyka Anatoly who was occupied, heartily and successfully, with the Russians. But as you know from his own petition, the time has come for him to retire. I am now asking you to 'formally' comply with his request, permitting him, however, to remain in England until the time when the church is built and a parish is finally formed in Manchester. The newly-installed Bishop Hilarion will then be occupied with the Russians, both in London and on the entire territory of the diocese, both in Britain and in Ireland...' It was this correspondence that prompted the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church to comply with Archbishop Anatoly's request and to grant him retirement, electing me his successor and therefore transferring his title to me. I was consecrated on 14 January 2002, and Bishop Basil of Sergievo, whom I have known for almost ten years, was among those whom I invited to take part in my ordination. I gave you this detailed account of my appointment, with quotations from Metropolitan Anthony's letters (which were not confidential and are available from the archives of the Moscow Patriarchate) in order to dispel rumours and disprove various statements made in this regard, such as: a) that my appointment was initiated by Metropolitan Kirill, who sent me here as his 'agent'; b) that the Moscow Patriarchate, without Metropolitan Anthony's consent, initiated Archbishop Anatoly's retirement; c) that I was invited here as a priest but came as a bishop. I regret if, by quoting Vladyka Anthony's letters, I disclosed some information which was to remain under a bushel. But it seems there was no other way to answer the accusations made against me and against the leadership of my Church.

My first two months in the Sourozh diocese I came to London on the 1st of March and straight from the airport went to see Metropolitan Anthony in order to receive from him detailed instructions as to what I was expected to do. Vladyka told me that I should not concentrate too much on the London Cathedral but should spend most of my time visiting the other parishes in order to come to know personally the priests and the laity of the diocese. Apart from that, he said, I should serve at least once a month in Cambridge and begin working with the Orthodox Institute. The rest of my time, he concluded, could be dedicated to London. Having received these instructions, I first went to Cambridge to see what was the situation with my appointment there. To my regret, I discovered that little had been done before my arrival to prepare the ground. It is only after I came that people started to calculate what my salary should be, to investigate whether I needed a work permit, and to define my relationship with the Cambridge Orthodox Institute. Even now this work is still going on. Therefore, almost three months have passed since my arrival, but I have not yet been formally appointed by Cambridge. Being not formally appointed, I am not allowed even to use the Faculty building and therefore have not much to do in Cambridge. From my conversations with the present leadership of the Orthodox Institute I realize that there is no longer a question of me becoming its 'head', as had been suggested by Metropolitan Anthony. On the contrary, my role in the Institute is redefined and is now meant to be rather marginal. In particular, I am not asked to express any opinion about the future of the Institute, I have not been invited to any meeting of the Directors, and all decisions as to the Institute's management and development are taken in my absence. My involvement with the London parish has also been quite limited. Only once did I celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, only once was I allowed to preach. I did concelebrate with Vladyka Anthony two or three times, I did conduct a couple of Saturday vigils, and did give three talks to the people: one in English and two in Russian. Apart from that, however, I had not much chance to be exposed to the parish. This was not my choice: this was, as I said, the recommendation I received from Vladyka Anthony.

It is therefore quite painful for me to hear that I am 'inaccessible' and that people in London do not see much of me. I hope that in the future I will be allowed to be more actively involved in the life of the parish, otherwise I will never have a chance to come to know it, neither will people have a chance to know me. Following Vladyka's instruction, I gave most of my attention in March and April to the parishes outside London. I embarked with much enthusiasm on visiting them and in two months covered more than 7.000 miles, travelling westwards to Oxford, Swindon, Tavistock and Truro, eastwards to Cambridge, Walsingham and Norwich, northwards to Nottingham and Durham, southwards to Portsmouth and Exeter. I spent Easter in Dublin, celebrating, for the very first time, in the newly opened church of St Peter and St Paul. I learned how to drive on the left side of the road (in the beginning I tried the right side, but soon discovered that this discomforted quite a number of other drivers). What I did not learn was to drive and to read the map at the same time: I entrusted the latter task to one of the subdeacons travelling with me. My impression of all the parishes was very positive, and I learned a lot from talking to the priests and the congregations. It seemed to me that good personal relations between me and at least some of the priests began to be built, and that mutual trust began to grow. At the same time I started to hear criticism of myself as being an 'inspector' sent by Metropolitan Kirill to audit the diocese and to implement the changes which would result in the diocese being transformed into a branch of the 'Moscow Church'. These accusations were made against me, in particular, by Father Sergei Hackel (whose parish I did not visit) at a small meeting in the London Cathedral on Holy Wednesday. Father Sergei pointed out that I was not personally responsible for the situation and that it was the way I was appointed by Moscow that had created dissatisfaction among the clergy. The problem, Father Sergei said, is not so much with Bishop Hilarion, who is young and only begins his service as a bishop, but with Metropolitan Kirill and the Moscow Patriarchate in general, who have wrong ideas about the diocese and charged the newly ordained bishop with implementing them. During this meeting Vladyka Anthony expressed some of the thoughts which he later repeated at the annual general meeting of the London parish. From his comments I realized that there is a group of people in the diocese which repeatedly give Vladyka misleading or one-sided information about my activity and, more generally, about what is going on in the diocese and outside it. They are trying to build a wall between him and me, to incite him against me by presenting me as an agent of 'Moscow', by ascribing to me the sayings which I never pronounced and the things I never did. They also slander the leadership of the Russian Church, including the Patriarch, the Holy Synod and

Metropolitan Kirill. One piece of information they spread was especially peculiar: during Passion Week they told Vladyka Anthony that he would be forced to retire and that I would be made his successor. This, to me, was a clear provocation, but Vladyka did send an urgent fax to the Patriarch asking not to release him of his duties. The Patriarch was highly surprised and disappointed by this request, for neither he, nor the Holy Synod had wanted Vladyka Anthony to retire. Another incident of a slightly different kind took place on Holy Saturday. Several weeks before I asked Vladyka Anthony whether it would not be a good idea to write some kind of message addressed to those people who come to church on Easter to see the procession with icons and then leave the church. I thought such a message could be distributed among them some ten or fifteen minutes before the service starts. Vladyka supported the idea and asked me to write this message. Having written it, I left it to Vladyka for approval. In about a week I asked him about his reaction and he said that the message was fine. 'Should anything be changed, or added, or omitted', I asked. 'No, everything is OK', he answered. 'Can we proceed with photocopying and distributing it?', I asked. 'Yes, sure', he said. On Holy Saturday some copies of the message were brought to the altar of the London Cathedral. Here they were discovered by one of the priests, who read the text and went straight to Vladyka Anthony. I do not know what he was telling Vladyka, but as a result of this talk my message was banned from distribution in London. Subsequently I was accused in having written a message which was not approved by Metropolitan Anthony. I do appreciate that the diocesan bishop has the full right to change his mind even at the last minute, but I do not think what happened in this particular case (as in other similar cases) was my fault. I acted in the interests of the diocese and with the blessing and approval of the diocesan bishop.

Due to the activity of the same group of people, to which, very unfortunately, several priests belong, all sorts of rumours were spread about me. Though I am receiving no salary either from the diocese or from Cambridge and in fact support myself and my mother mostly from my savings, these people began to refer to me as someone 'possessed with money', pointing to the fact that I bought a car upon my arrival to this country. They criticize my liturgical style, which they describe as 'pompous', though I sincerely believe that an episcopal celebration, while being solemn and dignified, can also be humble and prayerful. They try to oppose me to Bishop Basil, to create the situation of unhealthy competition between the two Assistant Bishops: such competition, I believe, should be avoided at all costs. Many of you have been contacted by these people who retold you what I had allegedly said. Some of my sayings returned to me in a completely unrecognizable form. I will give you just a few examples. During my meeting with the English-speaking part of the London parish I said that eventually some more parishes should be opened in London because London is far too big to have only one Russian Orthodox parish. The corrupted version of these words was as follows: 'He said that the London parish should be split into two'. At the same meeting I said that we must begin to think about the next generation of the clergy and that there are a number of candidates for ordination, both of English and Russian origins, including some from among the theology students. It was then reported that I am planning to expel all English priests and ordain Russian students in their stead. Speaking of the parish in Walsingham, I mentioned that it is very small and that I see its future in further developing it as a pilgrimage centre. The corrupted version of this was that I am saying that this parish should be closed. Never in my life was I faced with so much misinterpretation, misunderstanding, misjudging and misquoting. I regret to say that some of these my alleged sayings are spread among you and among your parishioners deliberately by those who oppose the very idea of my presence here. I beg you, dear brothers and concelebrants in Christ, if you hear from someone that I said something and if this my alleged saying sounds silly, or offensive, or indecent, give me a ring and ask whether I really said it or not. From now on I will record all my presentations and talks: not because they are worth anything, but in order to have a proof of what I said and what I did not. You have all received an invitation to this meeting which ends with a rather mysterious phrase about the diocesan statutes that are 'not worth the paper they are printed on'. Though the letter is signed by Bishop Basil, this phrase is singled out as a quotation from someone else. Because the meeting was to discuss my situation within the diocese, I took it (so, I am sure, did some of you) as one of my alleged sayings and rang Bishop Basil to find out more. It turned out that the quotation was not from me. Why, then, was it included in the letter of invitation? I am now charged by Vladyka Anthony with always using the word 'rule' and not 'serve' in my presentations. When and where was I using this word? Did you, Vladyka, hear it or did someone else tell you about me using it? You attended my presentation only once and expressed a very positive opinion about what I said: when I asked you, as I always do, whether anything from what I said was wrong or mistaken, you said that everything was fine. My other presentations took place in your absence, and I deny that I expressed the view of the bishop as a 'ruler' that is now ascribed to me.

My views of the episcopal service were expressed in my acceptance speech, which was translated into English and published by the 'Sourozh' magazine. These views have not changed. I came here not to 'rule', but to serve. First of all, to serve you, Vladyka, to help you, together with Bishop Basil, in looking after the diocese. Secondly, I came here to serve all of you, the priests and the deacons of the diocese: to visit you, to listen to your concerns, to help you in whatever way I can, to pray for you, as I always do, to learn from you, to share my ideas with you and to seek your advice. And finally, I came here to serve the people, not only the Russians, but everybody: the English, the Irish, the Ukrainians, the Belorussians, the Georgians, the Moldavians, all those who constitute this unique diocese or are its potential members. Vladyka, you have now announced that you gave me two or three months 'to form an opinion whether I am prepared or not to continue in the style, and with the ideals, which you have developed in the course of now fifty-three years'. I do not need three months to form an opinion: I had more than ten years to form it. If my opinion were not formed, I would not have nominated you as the Patriarch of Moscow in 1990. If my opinion were not formed, I would not have propagated

your teachings and would not have written forewords to your books, referring to you as one of the Fathers of the Church. If my opinion were not formed, I would not have asked you to be my spiritual director and would not have come to you for confession. If my opinion were not formed, I would not have agreed to come to serve you and your diocese, having previously spent two years in it. If, however, three months are necessary for the diocese to form an opinion about me, then of course I am prepared to wait, and not only three months, but if necessary, three or ten or thirty years. Frankly speaking, I cannot see how any honest opinion can be made about me in three months. You, Vladyka, spent here fifty-three years, while I am now given three months to 'find my feet in the diocese'. Many of those sitting in this room saw me once or twice, some see me for the very first time. Do you really believe we can 'form a unit' in such a short period? Do you really think I can 'make a very rich contribution' to the diocese in three months? One thing in your announcement is particularly hurtful: your statement that I came here as a bishop 'without having had any experience of the life and the style of life of the Diocese of Sourozh'. Vladyka, in 1993-1995 I spent two years in this country as a hieromonk, serving regularly in the Sourozh parishes. My 'home' parish was in Oxford, but for some time I also visited Bristol every fortnight. Apart from that, I came occasionally to London, attended diocesan conferences and other similar events. Was there any problem with me at that time? No, all the problems arose now, when I came here as a bishop. But are these problems related to my personality, or to my views of the diocese, or to what people say about my views, or to what people say about the instructions that I allegedly received from Moscow? Since I have not yet had a chance to explain what I think about the diocese and about my role in it, I will ask you to allow me to do this now, the more so that the next clergy meeting will take place only in October, while my three month 'trial period' will expire in mid-August.

My vision for the future of the Sourozh diocese It seems to me that the diocese is unique in that it is a creation of one man, who is still in charge of it and, I hope, will continue to serve it as the diocesan bishop for many more years. Vladyka Anthony's personality and spirituality has so deeply affected all levels of the diocesan life that it is practically impossible to imagine the diocese without his active participation. A most difficult task will be laid upon the shoulders of his successor, whoever he may be and whenever he may step in: to preserve intact what has been achieved during more than half-a-century of Vladyka Anthony's service to the diocese. To preserve, however, does not mean to conserve. The diocese cannot only be looking at the past without developing any strategy for the future. And if one were to think about the future of the diocese, several points, I think, could be made. First of all, the Sourozh diocese is international, open to people of various backgrounds. It should never be transformed into a national ghetto, be it Russian, or English, or any other. The English language must be the principal language of the diocese, simply because the diocese is located in an English-speaking country. But each particular parish, depending on its demographic balance, may choose any other language to be used on an equal basis with the English; in some parishes other languages than English, such as Slavonic or, for example, Georgian, can predominate. The decision about the use of language, as also that about following a particular calendar, should be a prerogative of each parish, and no universal pattern can possibly be applied to all the parishes. I am deeply convinced that people of different national backgrounds can peacefully coexist with each other. Tensions can be overcome, but in order to do this, a very careful consideration should be given to people's concerns with regard to the present situation. I have heard from a number of English-speaking people, for example, that they are frightened by the flow of immigrants from the former Soviet Union: these now constitute the majority of parishioners in London. On the other hand, I hear many complaints from the Russian-speaking people, who say that they are 'second class citizens' in the diocese, that they are underrepresented in the diocesan structures, that they fear the diocese may one day be transformed into an English Orthodox Church (there is a lot of talk on this particular subject) and that even that loose connection which the diocese now has with Moscow may be lost. There is a Russian Orthodox parish in this country which considers itself under the Patriarchate of Moscow but not within the Sourozh diocese, and this is precisely because of the fear that the diocese will move towards a kind of independence which many people will not welcome. Some London parishioners are even saying that under the guise of protecting the diocese from 'Moscow intervention', another project is being developed, namely the surrender of the diocese, or at least the London parish, to the Greeks. The tensions between the 'anti-Moscow' faction and a group loyal to Moscow within the diocese have now grown, and, very unfortunately, my arrival to this country has contributed to this growth. The 'anti-Moscow' faction, to which a few priests and some lay people belong, is against any real link with what they still consider the 'soviet church': for them I am the evil personified and they do whatever they can to expel me from the diocese. On the contrary, the other group, which, I think, is much more numerous but much less vocal and less influential, feels that I should be defended. The real issue, however, is not myself but the position of the diocese with regards to the Russian Church in general. My proposal would be that instead of repeating various stereotypes about the Russian Church and its leadership, instead of stirring up passions around the alleged 'Moscow intervention', a serious consideration be given to the very question of the diocese's relationship with Moscow. There are tensions, there are fears, there are rumours, but little is done to come to a better understanding of what is truly the Russian Church's view of itself, of the Sourozh diocese, and of its relationship with the diocese. It is my deep conviction that the diocese must preserve its unique character and should not become a branch of the Department for External Relations or any other similar structure of the Moscow Patriarchate. In order to protect the diocese from this, its statutes must be brought to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod for approval. There is a controversy around the statutes: some regard them as an implementation of the decisions of the Local Council of 1917-1918, some see in them a significant step towards an independent English Orthodox Church, others say, to quote Bishop Basil's letter, that 'they are not worth the paper they are printed on'. My personal view of this matter is the following: I think the statutes are

a real achievement, a fruit of several decades of work, and they generally reflect the spirit of the diocese. But the overall impression which one gets when reading them is that their authors know very little about how the Moscow Patriarchate as a whole functions at present. For example, the complicated procedure of the election of the diocesan bishop, which presupposes a long correspondence between the Holy Synod and the Diocesan Assembly, with the possibility of many candidates being proposed by the Assembly and refused by the Synod, seems to be rather unrealistic. The Holy Synod meets four or five times a year, normally for one day each time, and takes decisions about the appointment of bishops to various dioceses. The last session of the Synod, for example, elected five bishops in one day. It is rather difficult to imagine that the Synod would be engaged in a lengthy correspondence with the Assembly and would postpone its decisions until the correspondence is completed. Another problem about the statutes is that some of their articles do not entirely correspond to the statutes of the Russian Orthodox Church. This does not mean that they should be changed, but it does mean that some kind of negotiations between Sourozh and Moscow is necessary in order to have the statutes approved. My suggestion would be that a working group be created, consisting, perhaps, of two people from the diocese and two from the Patriarchate, and that the Sourozh half of the group go to Moscow and meet the other half in order to read the statutes together and identify the areas of disagreement. If you entrust me with this task, I would be prepared to lead such a group and to negotiate the statutes with the Patriarchate on behalf of the diocese. The other area which is worth looking into is the formation of the clergy of the diocese. I have heard bitter complaints from some of you about the fact that deacons and priests are being ordained but nobody is particularly in charge of preparing them for ordination, of training them theologically and liturgically. Previously, when I was still in Moscow, I was occupied with preparing people for ordination: many of my students are now serving as priests in various parts of the world. If any of you would be interested, I can help you with this: I can, for example, invite newly-ordained deacons for a week or a weekend, celebrate the Liturgy and other services together with them and help them to feel more comfortable, less insecure in the altar and in front of the holy table. It seems to me that the relationship between the priests and the bishops in the diocese can be improved. There are a few priests who have constant access to Vladyka Anthony, but there are many who hardly have any possibility to see him. There are parishes in which two or three or now four bishops serve together, while there are other parishes which have not been visited by a bishop for several years. In some outlying parishes priests feel isolated and marginalized: their involvement with the diocese is limited to a couple of clergy meetings and one diocesan meeting per year; their anniversaries pass unnoticed; they do not receive any signs of appreciation of their service from the diocesan leadership. One theme constantly returned in my conversations with the priests of the diocese: the ecclesiastical awards. It is generally assumed that the Sourozh clergy do not need any awards (it is even claimed that Vladyka Anthony is against awards in principal, which, as I discovered, is not true), and some of the priests who have served the Church for decades are not awarded even a gilded cross. One can, of course, question the very necessity of the elaborate system of awards peculiar to the Russian Church, but one cannot deny that it is the only existing system that allows the bishops to show a sign of appreciation to the priests. As far as I am concerned, I would be prepared to keep a diary of your anniversaries, patronal feasts and other occasions which you do not want to pass unnoticed and in due time to present your names to our diocesan bishop for consideration and appropriate action. More important, perhaps, than the question of the ecclesiastical awards is that of the priests' salaries. In most parishes priests receive a symbolic stipend from the parish or no stipend at all: they are therefore obliged to work full time elsewhere and dedicate their free time to the church. As a result, many priests are overworked and permanently exhausted, there have been cases of breakdown. I have no immediate answer to this crucial issue but would be prepared to investigate the possibilities of attracting additional funds in order to at least partly sponsor some of the priests. At present no systematic fundraising is going on in the diocese, while I am sure that there are sponsors who can contribute to the diocese's well-being and development. Looking for the future of the diocese, one must also think about bringing to the Church those people who have their roots in the Orthodox tradition. There is an estimated number of 200.000 or 250.000 Russian-speaking people in this country, of whom some would come to our parishes if such parishes existed in the places where these people live. There are no Sourozh parishes even in such big cities as Birmingham, Liverpool, Reading, Sheffield, not to speak of many smaller cities and towns. Where we are not present, some other groups become active, such as the so-called 'Russian Autonomous Church' headed by 'Metropolitan' Valentin of Souzdal: this group have now opened a parish in Birmingham. I have frequently spoken of the necessity to open new parishes, and my words were, as usually, misinterpreted and misquoted: some people started to talk about an 'expansionist strategy' orchestrated by Moscow, others of the proposed 'russification' of the diocese. I would like to assure you that there is no such danger both because any newly created parish will be open to everybody, and because any parish which starts as predominantly Russian-speaking will be gradually transformed into an English-speaking one. But there are a lot of Orthodox or potentially Orthodox people in this country who are not 'covered' by the Sourozh diocese, and I am convinced that we must do more to help them to find their spiritual homeland. In order to work with them, we need a 'fresh blood', we need a younger generation of priests, which is now almost absent from the diocese. There should be a mixture of generations in the diocesan clergy in order that the younger ones learn from the older ones and in order that continuity be provided. If we do not do something now, in five or ten years the diocese will be faced with a big vocational crisis, similar to that faced by some other Christian Churches in the West. The candidates for ordination, however, must not be 'imported' from Russia or elsewhere: they must either be of the local origin or, if they are from outside, grow into the local situation; they must speak good English and appreciate English culture; there must not be any cultural barrier between them and the society in which they live. The diocese also needs a

more permanent monastic presence. As you know, there is no monastery in the diocese, and the monastic species is practically extinct from it (bishops constitute the only exception). The monastery in Essex continues to be the main centre of Orthodox monasticism in this country, but there is an ongoing tension between it and the Sourozh diocese: something, I believe, must be done to ensure a better mutual understanding. People speak of the Sourozh diocese as 'anti-monastic': I personally do not believe this is the case, but I do think more can be done to create an ample space for the development of monastic tradition within the diocese.

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To conclude, I would like to state very clearly that I came here to help Vladyka Anthony and that I received no official word from either the Patriarch or the Synod or Metropolitan Kirill about Vladyka's retirement and the appointment of his successor. On the contrary, I was told that Vladyka will stay for as long as he wants and was instructed to help him and to obey his orders: this is what I have been doing and will do in the future. I will also make every effort to cooperate with the other Bishops in the diocese in order to ensure that unity, peace and mutual trust should be reigning among us. I can guarantee that I will not impose anything on the clergy, will not attempt to 'rule' the diocese, will not visit those priests who do not want me to visit them and their parishes. I can guarantee that I will initiate the process of my retirement or removal from the diocese if after some time it becomes clear that most of you are against me. But I do not think three months would be sufficient for you to form your opinion and am therefore asking for more indulgence and patience on your part. If you would be willing to offer me your love, your trust, your support and your advice, you will soon discover in me someone who is ready to help you and to serve you in many ways. I am prepared to work for forming one unit with you, using Vladyka Anthony's expression. Whether we shall achieve this goal, however, depends not only on me: it also depends on you. Let us work together, let us be open, let us not judge one another, let us trust one another, and 'let us love one another that with one mind we may confess Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity consubstantial and undivided'.

June 18, 2002, Moscow, 8.15

Here is the speech of Metr. Anthony Blum, who has problems because Moscow Patriarchy wants to replace him by more "Soviet" type of the bushop.

Announcement by Metropolitan Anthony at the London Parish AGM, 19th May 2002

We are coming towards the end of our meeting, and I want to say just a little. For the first time in the 53 years that I have been at the head of this parish, we have had real tensions, and unpleasant tensions, between members of the parish. And this is something which must be resolved by an honest and reflective attitude to the situation. And the situation is this.

Vladyka Hilarion has come to this parish. First it was planned that he would be a lecturer in Cambridge; and then it was suggested by Vladyka Kyril that he should come as a bishop. Now, since he has come, there has been a great deal of misunderstanding and dividedness among people. First of all his appointment here has hurt a great many people because it coincided with Vladyka Anatoly no longer being an active bishop, but retired. This was done very quickly, without warning, without preparation, as a decision from the Patriarchate that has hurt many of us. To add insult to injury, if I may put it that way, his title was transferred to Bishop Hilarion, which people felt was a hurtful and tactless thing.

The second thing is that a rumour was spread -- and a rumour that is not a lying rumour, because I have confirmation of it officially from the Department of Foreign Relations of the Church, with the assent of the Patriarch -- that Vladyka Hilarion will be my successor when I retire.

He is a junior bishop in our Diocese, he knows about the Diocese very little, and it has hurt and puzzled many people.

The moment of my retirement was not fixed, but it is in the air simply because I am already 88 years of age, and one can expect a decision. I have applied five times for retirement since I was seventy, and every time the retirement was refused. The last time I got a letter from the Patriarch saying that: even if you are incapable of doing anything, your name is useful for us, so stay where you are. But this is not a very convincing reason, or very encouraging assessment of my capabilities.

I have written to the Patriarch a personal fax letter saying that since Vladyka Hilarion has come into the Diocese, a great many tensions have arisen and a great amount of worry is abroad; and that I ask him not to retire me until I have given my written consent to it; because I do not believe that my disappearance of a sudden would solve any problem.

Bishop Hilarion is someone whom I have known for many years. He has been a friend. I have been his father confessor. So in a sense there is between us a deep link. But there is one thing that is unfortunate: it is his appointment as a bishop without having had any experience of the life and the style of life of the Diocese of Sourozh. I hoped that he would come and start to discover what our Diocese is about, its characteristics; and he has not done it from the start. We discussed that with him several times. We had a meeting of several of us with him, for him to hear the voice of certain members of the clergy. And he has heard the voice of a number of members of the laity. And things are not yet settled.

I told him at our last meeting that I give him two months -- three months including this month now -- for him to discover what the Diocese of Sourozh is about, and to form an opinion whether he is prepared or not to continue in the style, and with the ideals, which we have developed in the course of now fifty three years. If he is dissatisfied, and we are, then we will by common consent part company. It will be very hurtful for him. It will also be hurtful for me because he has been, as I said, my spiritual child, and a personal friend. But it is essential for us that he should learn what the Diocese of Sourozh is, in particular. And the particularities of the Diocese to me are, in brief, as follows.

First of all, it is a diocese of people, the clergy of which, and the bishop of which, consider themselves as servants. We have learned from the Gospel that he who wants to be first must be last. I quoted to him a passage from a letter I had in due time -- or undue -- from Father Sophrony, whom he admired greatly, in which he said to me that the Church is a pyramid, but a pyramid reversed, with the point being at the lowest point; and at the lowest point it is one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then comes another row of people, as servants: the Apostles, then the disciples, and so forth. And it is if you want to be a member of the Church in the true sense, you must be at the rock bottom and not at the top of things. We discussed that because he was told in Russia after his ordination -- his consecration as a bishop -- that he must learn to be 'a bishop', which he took to be a ruler in the diocese.

He has been using always the word 'rule' and not 'serve' in his presentations. And for the moment we are discussing the matter as deeply as we can -- on the spiritual level, and on the practical level -- with him. I hope that within the three months which we have decided to devote to this work he will have learnt to be a member, a living and creative member, of the Diocese of Sourozh, with the spirit of the Diocese, which is a spirit of service on the part of the clergy, a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood on the part of the laity; not a hierarchical system.

For the moment I do not propose to have a discussion on the subject, because each of us has got his own views and reactions, and they are premature. We will have, soon, a meeting of the clergy of the Diocese in which we will discuss the same problem; and then have a period of expectation and common work, that will allow us to understand him, him to understand us, and form a unit that will be, I believe, a creative one, because he has got gifts which I never possessed and shall never possess. He is young; he is strong; he is a Doctor in Theology; he has written a number of theological works that are highly praised; and he can make a very rich contribution -- but only if we can form a unit and be one all together.

Now, I do not want to have contributions now because we will have pros and cons. I would like you to think, and to ask yourselves: what can you contribute to his understanding of the Diocese, and to your understanding of a very remarkable young man whom I wanted to have here, and who has not yet found his feet in the Diocese and in our work.

That is the end of my contribution. In private I am prepared of course to explain myself to anyone. But as far as the meeting is concerned I am not going to open it to discussion and argument. And I think at this point we can make an end to our meeting and start, again and again, to grow into a family of people who trust one another, who are prepared to love one another -- and loving means making sacrifices for the sake of each other. Shall we read a prayer, and part.