

**MONASTIC RULES
OF THE HOLY TRINITY AND
ST. SERGEI MONASTERY IN RIGA**

**BY
BISHOP MAKARIOS TILLYRIDES**

MONASTIC RULES OF THE HOLY TRINITY AND ST. SERGEI MONASTERY IN RIGA

BY
BISHOP MAKARIOS TILLYRIDES

INTRODUCTION

Twenty five years ago, during my postgraduate studies at the University of Oxford, I dedicated much of my time to studying old manuscripts and documents. One of the main topics which attracted my attention was Monasticism/Monastic Life. As a result of my research, I wrote a short essay on a monastic manual which was a direct translation from the Greek. The following is part of the introduction:

«In recent years there has been a revival of Orthodox Monasticism, not only among the Greek-speaking people of the Holy Mountain, but also among Westerners who have been received into the Orthodox Church»¹.

Today, after preparation of the material which was discovered in one of the British archives in 1975, I present this authentic translation from the original Russian, «**The Rules of the Monastic Life of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergei Monastery in Riga**». This excellent translation was done by an English nobleman, whose name, unfortunately, remains unknown. It is my opinion that this translation was the work to one of the officials of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. Although this work was prepared for publication, for unknown reasons, it was never actually published.

Before presenting the actual information of the text, let me outline the history of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergei. (This is

1. "A Monastic Manual. Translation and Introduction", *Θεολογία*, April - June 1982 and *The Greek Review*, 11th April 1987, 16.

a translation from the original Russian).

As an appendix, an interesting report on the situation of Mount Athos, is also presented by a British diplomat.

HOLY TRINITY - ST. SERGIUS'S CONVENT

Holy Trinity - St. Sergius's Convent was founded in 1892. The Convent evolved out of the women's community that was created in 1891 thanks to the diligence and care of the Mocriya Nikolaevna Mansurova and her daughters, Ekaterina Borisovna and Nataliya Borisovna.

On the 1st of May 1891, in a small rented place in Klucheveya St., through efforts of the ladies Mansurov, an orphanage for girls was opened. Along with the orphanage a shelter - refuge was founded on December 1891. The orphanage was relocated into a new quarter: a small house with a garden. His Beatitude, Arseni, visited the new orphanage and gave blessings with the icon of the Holy Trinity, in whose name the founding ladies had decided to name their community. His Beatitude, Arseni, gave permission to petition *the Eugeniya* of the Raising of the Cross Convent of Jerusalem to send a few nuns in order to establish a correct way of life amongst the inhabitants of the new community according to the strict prayer order. In January 1892 a nun Mizoniya had arrived, with her arrival the correct order of Psottiz recording, the cycle of the daily prayers, occupations and work while in the rooms were established according to the rules of the community.

The absence of the temple grieved the ladies Mansurov and the sisters of the community. Besides, the owners of the house in which the quarters for the community were rented were non-Orthodox, as well as other inhabitants, and were incapable of respecting the hours of prayer with proper silence. This situation impelled Ekaterina Borisovna Mansurova to petition the authorities to open and to arrange the community officially. His Beatitude, Arseni, solicited the Holy Synod for an arrangement of an Orthodox Holy Trinity Convent in the town of Riga, for this arrangement may have an important and beneficial religious educational influence upon the local society: the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox.

On the 25th of September, a permission was received for a 3

*desyatin*² land allotment and for an official opening of Holy Trinity - St. Sergius's Convent. On the same day, the laying of the Church in the name of St. Sergius began. This was celebrated by a procession in the presence of the civil authorities and of the public that had gathered in great numbers.

The buildings and the fencing of the new convent were calculated to cost 30 thousand rubles. However, aside from the 4200 rubles that were received from the ober-procurer of the Holy Synod, there were no other funds on hand. The Lord had helped the pious start and the funds were provided. M. N. Mansurova and the directress of the community Mironiya had gathered 3850 rubles worth of donations in Riga. Tzar Alexander III made the community happy by a gift of 20000 rubles; then the Baltic monasteries gave 5000 rubles and Father John of Kronstadt gave 500 rubles.

By a decree of the Holy Synod dated 5 of October 1892 - 3972 the Holy Trinity Community in Riga was confirmed. The entire winter of 1892-93 was devoted to intensified building of the temple and the house. Already in May of 1893 the sisters were able to live in the new house. For the celebration of the consecration of the temple on the 20th of July 1893, the friend of the ober-procurer of the Holy Synod, the V. K. Sabler, had arrived, also the governor of Riga, as well as many other highly placed persons. At the time of the completion of the temple three wooden buildings were completed. One of the buildings is the dining room, a very beautiful kitchen, and living quarters. The second building a bakery; there were also a guard house and clerical house. In October 1892 a small lot was transformed into a candle factory, which now supplies the whole diocese.

In 1894 the Tzar donated 173 *desyatin* of land from the Mitayevskaya government summer forest house, 12 versts from Mitava. In this forest summer house a temple and a house were built and consecrated on 20th June 1899 by the Most Blessed Agathangel, in the presence of V. K. Sabler.

In September 1901 the founder of the community was tonsured into the monastic order and received the name Sergiya. On March 10, 1902 Sergiya was elevated to the position of Abbess, and the new Convent

2. A *desyatin* is a Russian measure of land equal to 1.0925 hectares.

officially opened on 19th May 1902.

At the present time the Convent owns many buildings. Aside the old temple a new, big and beautiful temple, layed on 30th May 1904, is being built. The Tzar had kindly subsidized the building of the new temple with 75000 rubles. The new temple will be in Byzantine style with 5 cupolas. The length of the temple is 134 feet, width 98 feet and height 175 feet.

The Convent runs a big dinner for the poor who come daily in a number exceeding 150 people. Also, there are a big candle factory, orphanage and a school for 30 and more children. The children of the school receive from the Convent everything, beginning with clothing, food and housing. Also there is the small hospital.

In the temple of the Convent there are the following relics: a piece of wood of life-giving Cross of the Lord, a piece of the life - bearing Tomb of the Lord, a piece of the Holy Mountain of Golgotha and parts of relics of the Apostle St. Andrew the First-called, that were sent by His Beatitude, Nicodim, former Patriarch of Jerusalem. With the relics there is a personal deed of the Patriarch. Also, there is an exact copy of the icon of Mother of God «*Umilyeniye*» from Pskovo-Pecherszkiy monastery.

The Chapel in commemoration of the salvation of the Tzar's family on 17th October 1888 was given into the management of the Trinity-Sergius's Convent in Riga.

At the present time there are 6 nuns and 98 novices in the Convent. The Convent stands in the end of the Syvozouskaya Street. Cabby from the train station costs 40 kopeks³.

Compare also the following information:

HOLY TRINITY - SERGIUS'S CONVENT IN THE TOWN OF RIGA

On the 1st of May of 1891 in the town of Riga, in a rented place in the Kleveyevaya Street, by the ladies of the Royal Court-Ekaterina and Nataliya Mansurov, an orphanage for poor girls was opened. The

3. *Tsezkovnaya Bidomosti*, 21 September 1902, 1330-1331.

former directress of the female gymnasium in the town of Kaluga - N. P. Bibikova was put in charge of the education and the upbringing of the girls. Simultaneously with the orphanage a shelter for the elderly was organised. This philanthropical institution that was founded by the Mansurov served as a grain from which in the town of Riga, the new standing Holy Trinity – Sergius's Convent grew.

In 1892 the philanthropical institution, founded by the Mansurov, was transformed by the Holy Synod into Holy Trinity Women's Community. The direct aim of that community was to give a shelter to the persons of female sex, who were dedicating their lives for the deeds of piety and charity, and for sheltering those small children who are needing care and protection. $3\frac{1}{2}$ *desyatin* of land that belonged to the Department of Spirituality and Education, in the end of Suvorovskaya Street were allotted by the Holy Synod as a place for a building for a community. On the 25th of September 1892, during the 500 years of commemoration of St. Sergius of Radonez, the Miracle Worker, a ceremonial laying of the church and the house was done for the newly opened Community.

The new community had immediately called a full hearted sympathy to itself of the Orthodox inhabitants of Riga. Its means were increasing, and its activities widened. In November 1892 the community was made happy by a donation of the resting in God *Cosudar* (*Powerful*) Emperor Alexander Alexandrovich to the amount of 29,000 rubles. There were also other large donations: from Ober-procurer of the Holy Synod, K. P. Popedons'zev 9,200 rubles, from Baltic Orthodox *Brotherhood* 5000, from Riga's Orthodox merchants 3,850 and from father John of Kronstadt 500, and from other persons. Such generous donations strongly helped the development of the community and of its charitable activities. On 20th June 1893 the temple of the community was solemnly consecrated by a former Archbishop of Riga, Arseni.

The Most Reverend Agathangel arrived in the diocese of Riga on December 12th, 1897, with the wisdom of experience, and in the fulness of spiritual and physical strength. Under his direction the diocese had progressed in the peaceful development of religious and moral life, strengthened by the foundation of Orthodoxy, and the strong protection of its Orthodox flock from sectarian influence.

The ten years of the direction of the diocese by Archbishop Agathangel had been remarkable for the number of religious festivals celebrated with great magnificence, enthusiasm, and edification. Among

them had been the consecration of the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Reval, and many other Churches; in the Retreat of the Saviour of the Transfiguration near Mitau; at Dorpat; in the St. Petersburg Hostel of the Convent of Pukhtitz, and other places; the latest being the consecration of the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity in the Convent at Riga. There had also occurred the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the diocese of Riga, of the Clerical Seminary there, and of some of the parishes.

The 25th Anniversary of the commencement of his public service the Most Reverend Agathangel spent at the Convent of Pukhtitz, and there prayed for his flock, receiving numerous deputations and congratulatory telegrams; but the event in the life of its Head was not even known to the whole diocese, and therefore not in all the Churches was prayer made for him on that day. Let us pray that he may long be spared to continue his labours for the Glory of God and the welfare of His Church and people»⁴.

Along with the monetary donations, the Holy Trinity community received of the Tzar's generosity and from the Holy Synod land allotments. Aside of the plot that was ceded at the founding of the community, at the same year by the Holy Synod, holy fields in Spilona, near Riga, were given to the community. These fields the community rented then. In 1894, from the highest allotment, by the Ministry of State properties the community was gifted by 170 *desyatin*, 500 square *sajen* in the Mitavskaya state dacha. In this dacha in 1899 a branch of the community was opened, named Holy-Transfiguration desert with a

4. EIRINI, October 1908, 4-9. *Books of Needs of the Holy Orthodox Church with an Appendix containing offices for the laying on of hands done into English* by G. V. SHANN, London 1894: *The General Menaion or the Book of Services common to the festivals of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Virgin and of the different Orders of Saints. Translated from the Slavonian sixteenth edition of 1862 printed in Moscow and published by the Most Holy Governing Synod of Russia*, London 1988, 223-242.

For more scientific works see also: Michael Wawryk, «The Offices of Monastic Initiation in the Euchologium Sinaiticum and their Greek Sources», in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. X. June 1986, 5-47. Compare by the same author: «Initiatio monastica in liturgia byzantina: Officiorum schematis monastici magni et parvi reconon rasophoratus exordia et evolutio, in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 180 (Rome, 1968), 123, 128, 134-135, 143, 156, 182, 194, 255.

seperate stone temple (that was consecrated on 20th June of the same year) a chapel and buildings of the sisters and the clerics and with a pilgrim house in which a Church School is situated on the top floor.

The number of the communities' sisters (including the desert) at the present time reached 114, amongst them 2 robed names, 37 ryassofof nuns and 75 novices. At the present time the community possesses the following institutions: a factory for church candles with a warehouse; children orphanage in which no girls have a full permission; a two class school in which more girls study every year; an Icon workshop and sewing workshop - both workshops for an inexpensive fee paint icons and make vestments for parishes and private persons. At last, a dinner for the poor exists, where daily 100 - 150 people receive free food, and 20-30 families have food delivered to their homes.

By an appointment of the Holy Synod of 31 December 1901 the community was renamed into Holy-Trinity-Sergius's on 2 January 1902 and the founding lady Ekaterina Bozisoovna Mansurova, monastic name Sergia, was appointed directress.

On 10th March by His Beatitude Agathangel, Bishop of Riga, Mother Sergia was elected into the rank of Abbess and when handing the staff to her, His Beatitude Agathangel said an edifying word about the high obligation and responsibility of the call of the directress of a convent.

On 15th September by His Beatitude Agathangel Bishop of Riga, a celebration opening of Holy-Trinity-Sergius's Convent was done.

Towards the end of the Liturgy processions with the Cross from all Riga's Churches had arrived into the Convent. After serving a *meleben* the procession with the Cross moved around the Convent singing holy hymns and accompanied by the bells.

Four clerics bore on their shoulders the miracle-working icon of the Mother of God «*Umilyenie*» upon a special stretcher, before which two deacons unceasingly censed. The procession with the Cross stopped before each of the four sides of the Convent. Then the procession returned, with bells ringing, into the Convent's Church, where the service was completed»⁵.

5. A. A. Pavlovskii, *Fseopchii Illustritovanni, Putevogitel no Monastiria sviatim Mestam Rosiskoi Uperii i Afonu, Niznii Novgorod, 1907* (in Russian).

«THE MOST REVEREND AGATHANGEL, ARCHBISHOP
OF RIGA

On the 15th of August, 1906, the Most Reverend Agathangel, Archbishop of Riga and Mitau, completed 25 years of educational and ecclesiastical service.

Born in the Government of Tula, Alexander Preobrazhensky, as he was named in the world, on ending his theological course in the Moscow Clerical Academy on August 15th, 1881, was appointed Master of Latin in the Clerical School at Rannenburg, in the Government of Riazan. At the end of the same year, December 7th, 1881, the young tutor was chosen by the Committee of the Clerical School at Skopinsl for the post of Assistant Inspector. In this position, as master and manager, he remained five years. During the first four years after leaving the Academy, Alexander Preobrazhensky married, and a son was born to him, but within a very short time he lost both wife and child, and was inspired by the wish to unite himself more closely to Christ and His Holy Church by entering religion. On the 7th of March, 1885, after passing his novitiate, Alexander Preobrazhensky became the monk Agathangel, and on March 10th he was ordained Priest by Bishop Theoktistos of Riazan.

On December 4th, 1886, the Holy Synod appointed him Inspector of the Clerical Seminary of Tomsk, and on December 14th he was raised to the rank of Abbot. In this post Abbot Agathangel remained somewhat over a year; but in this short time he evinced remarkable administrative and educational ability, and was appointed to make a special revision of the Clerical School of Tomsk, receiving the benediction of the Holy Synod. On January 20th 1888, Abbot Agathangel was appointed by the Holy Synod to the post of Rector of the Clerical Seminary of Irkutsk, with the rank of Archimandrite bestowed on February 28th; and the next year, on June 15th, 1889, on the nomination of the Holy Synod, Archimandrite Agathangel was appointed Bishop of Kirensk, Suffragan of the diocese of Irkutsk. The consecration took place at Irkutsk on September 10th, 1889, and the young Bishop Agathangel, at 33 years of age, became an energetic, spiritual force within the Diocese. His Lordship was the Superior of the Monastery (of the first class, with communal life) of the Ascension and of St. Innocent, near Irkutsk; Head of the Irkutsk Orthodox Mission; Assistant President of the Committee of the Orthodox Missionary Society; President of the Diocesan School Council, President of the Irkutsk Charitable Society and President of the

Diocesan Committee for the collection of funds in aid of the sufferers in the districts affected by the famine.

Thus, besides the more direct duties of a diocesan Suffragan, the Most Reverend Agathangel was active in a variety of ways, and gained great experience. With considerable knowledge of men and of administrative matters His Lordship began his advance as Father in God from the East to the West of Russian territory. On July 17th, 1893, on the nomination of the Holy Synod, the Most Reverend Agathangel became by Imperial appointment Bishop of Tobolsk and Siberia, and four years later, on October 4th, 1897, Bishop of Riga and Mitau.

By reason of his experience and ability, His Lordship was called by Imperial appointment to take part in the deliberations of the Holy Synod, in 1897 and in 1902. For his labours and prominent services His Lordship had received numerous marks of distinction: on June 24th, 1891, the Heir to the Throne presented him with a Pastoral Icon (Panagia), set with precious stones; on December 2nd, 1906, H.I.M. the Emperor expressed his thanks for the activity shown in the speedy building of Churches in the diocese of Tobolsk with money given from the fund in the name of the Emperor Alexander III. The Archbishop is decorated with all the orders up to that of St. Alexander Nevsky.

On May 6th, 1904, by Imperial *Ukase* given in the name of the Holy Synod, he was raised to the rank of Archbishop. The Most Reverend Agathangel was an Honorary Member of many charitable and educational societies in Irkutsk, Tobolsk, and Riga, and of the Baltic Orthodox Brotherhood in St. Petersburg.

For many months during the year 1907 the Most Reverend Agathangel had presided at the deliberations of the Holy Synod, during the absence, through illness, of the Metropolitan Antonius of St. Petersburg.

RULE OF THE CONVENT OF THE HOLY TRINITY AND ST. SERGIUS IN RIGA.

Basis of Monasticism and its Rule

1. Monastic life should be well ordered on the immutable foundation of the Word of God, with the help of the instruction and example of the Holy Fathers (Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow).

2. One who takes the vow of Obedience and renunciation of his own will and reasoning should find it on the word of our Lord: «If any

man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me» (Matth. XVI. 24).

3. One who takes the vow of Chastity should consider the word of Christ: «He that is able to receive it, let him receive it» (Matthew XIX. 12) and the words of the Apostle; «He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord» (I Cor. VII. 32).

4. One who takes the vow of Poverty should stay himself on the word of Christ. «If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me» (Matth. XIX. 21).

5. In order to fulfil these vows rightly and steadfastly he should be moved by the word of Christ. «No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God» (Luke IX. 62).

6. The benefit of obedience, the necessity of spiritual guidance, the danger of the inclination to live according to one's will should be learned by the Wisdom of Solomon: «Where no counsel is the people fall, but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety» (Prov. XI. 14).

7. The general rule of the Convent is communal; it consists of two establishments:

I. The Convent of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius in Riga, and

II. The Retreat of the Transfiguration near Mitau.

8. The Sisters of both establishments constitute one Community, united by one spirit, direction and administration (St. Pachomius the Great of Egypt).

9. Food, clothing and all necessaries are provided by the Community. For the sick and the aged there should be a separate dwelling (St. Pachomius the Great of Egypt).

10. There should also be a separate building for strangers and for feeding the poor, near or beyond the confines (St. Pachomius the Great of Egypt).

11. Separate work-rooms should be arranged for Icon-painting, Needlework, Spinning, Weaving, and Book-binding. Work in the cells is as a rule forbidden (St. Pachomius the Great of Egypt).

12. Each cell should as a rule be occupied by three Sisters, but in consideration for age, or by special permission of the Superior, exceptions may be made (St. Pachomius the Great of Egypt).

13. In connection with the Convent there is to be an Orphanage with a Church-School (St. Pachomius the Great of Egypt).

14. For household requirements there must be: a barn, a storehouse, a cellar, a bath and washhouse, and a cow-house.

NOTE. It is well to accommodate not more than 12 cells in one building, that order may be more easily kept.

OF DIVINE SERVICE AND PRAYER

15. Divine Service and the rule of common prayer form the chief subject of the attention of the Superior and her delegates, and the fervent care of the Sisters (Philaret Metropolitan of Moscow).

Regular and reverent assistance and attendance should be their first duty.

16. The object of exercise in recitation and prayer is to acquire the habit of unceasing prayer and recollection of God and to avoid distraction (St. Basil the Great).

Distraction excludes recollectedness and absorption.

17. Those present at prayer should persevere with patience and attention unto the end, considering it a great deprivation to shorten it (St. Basil the Great).

18. Half an hour before the ringing of the bell for the Morning-Office, consisting of 1) Prayers on rising from sleep, 2) Nocturnes, and 3) Matins, the Sister whose turn it is to awaken the others, having received the sanction¹ of the Superior or her delegate, calls at each cell with the appointed words of prayer for timely warning² (Phil. Met. of M.).

19. At the ringing of the bell for each Office, every Sister should endeavour to be in Church before the beginning (Phil Met. of M.).

20. Directly after service the same Sister informs the Superior or her delegate of the absent or those who were late, that the matter may be looked into (Phil. Met. of M.).

21. Those whose appointed duties prevent their taking full part in the Morning Office, remain in Church until the recitation of the Psalms.

22. Only such Nuns as have the care of the Church are allowed to enter the Sanctuary, or those who are specially authorised by the Superior.

1. This is called «Blessing», the Sister saying: «Mother, give the Blessing», the Abbess answering «God bless thee».

2. The words are: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon us. After the response «Amen», the Sister adds: «The time of praise, the hour of prayer».

23. The Novice-Mistress attends to the conduct of postulants and novices during service, seeing that they do not look round, do not talk, nor move from place to place without necessity; that they keep the Church's regulations, attending to the rules for bowing on ferial and common days; and not allowing unregulated kneeling. Thus, at Mass prostration³ is allowed thrice: 1) during the time of the Great Entrance at the words «The Lord God remember you and all Orthodox Christians in His Kingdom», 2) at the consecration of the Elements⁴ at the conclusion of the Chant: «Thee we hymn, Thee we praise». 3) Before the Lord's prayer. At vigils prostration does not take place.

24. On Wednesdays and Fridays all are to attend Mass, either early or late (Philaret Metropolitan of Moscow).

25. After Vespers the appointed Prayers are read for professed Nuns.

26. After the evening refectory and the reading of the evening prayers and general intercession, the *Acathistos* to the Redeemer or to the Mother of God is read before all the Sisters, all joining in the singing. After the *Acathistos* is ended all the Sisters approach the Superior to take leave, and on the eves of festivals they do so after the Vigil-Service and not during the time of the Office.

NOTE. On the eves of Sundays and greater festivals, from Christmas to Epiphany, and from Palm-Sunday to Low-Sunday, called the Sunday of the Apostle Thomas, and on all red-letter days, the general intercession is replaced by the prayer «for those who hate and offend us».

27. Strict fulfilment of the Church's regulations guards against personal relaxation or novel introductions in the Church offices, excluding individual reasoning (Phil. Met. of M.).

28. On the way to and from Church it is well not to stop to speak to outsiders, and if addressed by anyone, answer should be limited to strict necessity.

OF RECEIVING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

29. Most precious for those in Religion is the reception of the Holy Mysteries, Whose divine influence is so helpful in the victory over passions and the invisible enemies who incite to them.

3. Kneeling down and touching the ground with the forehead.

4. Called the Holy Gifts.