Αἰώνια Ἑως Ἡγία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς Μητρὸς ὑμῶν τῆς κατά τὸν Ἐσπερίαν Ἐκκλησίας μεταδοσθείσα ἔνδοξα καὶ ἐν εἰρήνη ἑαυτῶν καὶ τῶν ἑαυτῶν ἐπισκόπων.
Η δὲ ἡμετέρα Μετριστής ἀπέστειλε κατ’ ἄρχας ὡς Ὅξαρχον αὐτῆς τὸν Ἱερώτατον Μητροπολίτην Γαλλίας κύριον Ἐμμανουήλ, προσκληθείσα πρὸς τούτο ἐπισήμως, συμφώνως πρὸς τὸν Θ’ ὅρον τοῦ Τόμου Αὐτοκεφαλίας, διὰ τοῦ ἀπὸ 10ης Ὀκτωβρίου ἔ. ἐ. γράμματος τῆς ὑμετέρας Ἱερότητος, ὑπὸ τὴν ἴδιοτὴν τοῦ Ἱεροτητῆτος, αἰτησαμένης τὴν ἐσοπλήρωσιν τοῦ ἀραίμον τῶν Ἰεραρχῶν - μελῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας (ὑ)ήμων, ὡστε αἱ ἀποφάσεις αὐτῆς νὰ πληρώσῃ τὰς ἐπιταγὰς τῶν Ἱερῶν Κανόνων τῆς Ἀγίας ἡμῶν Ὀρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας", αἰτίνες ἀποφάσεις ἄφεωρως εἰς τὴν πληρώσιν τῆς χρηματοφυσίας Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Πράγας, μὴ καταστάσας ἐν τέλει δυνατὴν λόγῳ μὴ πληρώσως τῶν προβλεπομένων ὑπὸ τῶν θείων καὶ ιερῶν κανόνων κριτηρίων ὡς πρὸς τοὺς προσταθέντας υποφησίας διὰ τὴν θέσιν ταύτην, ὡς ὑποβάλλει ἡ αὐτοῦ Ἱερότης, ὁ Μητροπολίτης Γαλλίας, ἐν τῇ ὑποβληθείσῃ ἡμίν ἑκτενεῖ καὶ λεπτομερεῖ ἐκθέσει αὐτοῦ.

Ὀμολογούμεν, ἀδελφὲ, ὃ ἡ Μήτηρ Ἐκκλησία λυπηθείσα διὰ τὴν τοιούτουτρόπους ἐξελίχθεισαν, οὐχὶ ὡς ἀνέμενετο καὶ ὡς ἂν ἔδει, κατάστασιν, ἐσυνέχειο τὸ ὀφειλετικὸν στοργικὸν ἐνδιαφέρον αὐτῆς, καὶ ἀνταποκριθείσα καὶ αὖθις εἰς τὴν διὰ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς 22ας Ὀκτωβρίου ἔ. ἐ. γράμματος πρόσκλησιν τῆς ὑμετέρας Ἱερότητος ἀπέστειλεν, ἡμετέρα ἷροτήτης καὶ ἀποφάσεις Συνοδική, ὡς Παρατηρήτας καὶ Συμβούλους τοὺς Ἱερωτάτους ἀδελφοὺς Μητροπολίτας Γαλλίας κύριον Ἐμμανουήλ καὶ Ἀντώνιος κύριον Ἀρσένιον, οὕτως καὶ παρέτησαν εἰς τὰς ἐργασίας τῆς συνελθούσης τῇ 9ῃ Δεκεμβρίου ἔ. Ἐ. Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τῆς Ἀγιωτάτης Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Τσεχίας καὶ Σλοβακίας, αἰφνιδίως ἐμφανισθέντων, ἀνευ προσκλήσεως, διαρκούσων τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου καὶ ἐκπροσώπων καὶ τῆς Ἀγιωτάτης Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ρωσίας -διερωτώμεθα ἐν ποῖα κανονικὴ ἀραγε ἀρμοδιότητι; (ὅταν δὲν ἐκλήθησαν ἐν τοιαύτῃ περιπτώσει καὶ ἐκπρόσωποι τῶν άλλων κατὰ τόπους Ὀρθόδοξων Ἐκκλησίων;), ὡς ἐπληροφορήθηκεν εὖ ἀναφορὰς τῶν εἰρημένων ἐκπροσώπων ἡμῶν.

Εἴποικοινοῦντες, λοιπόν, καθηκόντως καὶ ἐν τῇ ἴδιοτῇ ἡμῶν ὡς Προκαθη-
μένου τῆς Μητρός ὑμῶν Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ὡς ὑπέχοντος ἐν τούτῳ εὐθύνην, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὑμετέραν ἄγαπην τῆς Ἱερότητας διὰ τῶν μετὰ χείρας ἐγκυκλίων Πατριαρχικῶν ἡμῶν Γραμμάτων διαδηλοῦμεν τὴν ἐκπλήξιν καὶ τὴν ἀπορίαν διὰ τά γενόμενα καὶ πρότερον μὲν, ἵδια ὡς κατὰ τὴν τελευταίαν συνεδρίαν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τῆς Ὀρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας Τσεχίας καὶ Σλοβακίας, τῆς καταστάσεως ἐξυπνοίας μέχρι τῆς παύσεως τῆς ὑμετέρας Ἱερότητος ἀπὸ τῆς θέσεως τοῦ Ἱεροτητῆτοΰ οὐχὶ διὰ κανονικῶν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δι’ ἀδιαφάνες καὶ ἀδιευκρίνηστας διαδικασιῶν, ὡς διὰ γραμμάτων ὑμῶν καθηγεῖτε τὰ πληρώματι τῆς αὐτοῦ Ἐκκλησίας καὶ εὐφύτευτα τὰ γενόμενα οὐχὶ κατὰ τὴν κανονικὴν τάξιν καὶ ἀκριβεῖα, μὲ ἀποτελέσμα νὰ ἐπανείλθεται, ὡς διαθρυλεῖται, ὡς ἐκμυσίαν ὑπῆρξη ἢ ἐν τῇ πράξει· ἢ δημιουργία σχίσματος ἐν τοῖς κόλποις τῆς κατὰ Τσεχίαν καὶ Σλοβακίαν Ἐκκλησίας, ὲπερ ὀλέθριον τόσον διὰ τόν ἱερὸν θεσμόν αὐτῆς, διὰ τόν ἐμπεπιστευμένον αὐτῇ Ὀρθόδοξον λαὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄλλα καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῆς Μιᾶς καὶ Ἐνιαίας Ὀρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τὸν κόσμον.
Θά συμφωνήσει ἄσφαλῶς καὶ ἡ ὑμετέρα Ἱερότης ὅτι αἱ μὴ δυνάμεναι ἀλλὰς νά χαρακτηρισθῶσθαι ἐνέργειαι αἰτᾶται ἀποτελοῦν ἐνδείξεις μὴ ὑγιοῦς λειτουργίας τοῦ Συνοδικοῦ θεσμοῦ καὶ τοῦ αὐτοδιοικήτου πολιτεύματος μιᾶς Ὀρθοδόξου Αὐτοκεφάλου τοπικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, γεγονὸς ὅτερ προκαλεῖ ποικίλα ἑρωτηματικά καὶ ἀπορίας εἰς ἐμβηθεὶς κανονολογίας, θεολογίας καὶ Ἱεράρχας, ὁδηγεῖ δὲ εἰς τὸ συμπέρασμα ὅτι τὸ αὐτοκεφάλον τῆς ὑμετέρας αὐτόθι Ἐκκλησίας δικαίωται, ὅτε μὴ πληρουμένων τῶν σχετικῶν κανονικῶν κριτηρίων, ἐν τοῖς ὅποιοι καὶ δὴ βασικῶτατον εἶναι ἡ ἰκανότης αὐτοκεφάλου τινὸς Ἐκκλησίας ὅπως αὐτοδιοικῖται διὰ τῆς Ἱεραρχίας αὐτῆς, οὕτως ὁμίλου καὶ ἰκανῆς ὅπως ἀναδεικνύει κανονικῶς τὰ μέλη αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν μεταξὺ αὐτῶν πρόεδρον καὶ πρῶτον αὐτῆς, ἢτοι ἰκανότης ἐν προκειμένῳ ἐκ τῶν συμβάντων τίθεται ἐν ἀμέβοις. Τὸ γεγονὸς τοῦτο ὁδηγεῖ τὴν Μητέρα Ἐκκλησίαν εἰς τὴν δυσχερή θέσιν τῆς ἀναζητήσεως ἄλλων τρόπων ἀντιμετώπισεως τῆς δημιουργηθείσης καὶ ἐξυνομοῦντος ὁσμίρα ἐκφυγοῦν καταστάσεως, συμφωνοῦντος πρὸς τοὺς θείους καὶ ἱεροὺς κανόνας καὶ τὴν μεισματισμένην ἱστορικῶς παράδοσιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

Ἡ δημιουργηθείσα καὶ ἐξελισσομένη κατάστασις αὐτῇ ἀνησυχεῖ μεγάλως, ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν, τὸ Ὀικουμενικὸν Πατριαρχεῖον, τὸ ὅποιον εἰς τοσάττας θυσίας προέβη διὰ τὴν ἐν ἁκμῇ πρόοδον καὶ κατὰ Θεὸν εὐθυμείαν τῆς τοπικῆς ὑμῶν Ἐκκλησίας, ἐφ᾽ ὧν καὶ προτρέπομεθα καὶ αἰτοῦμεν μετὰ τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Χρυσόστομον τὸν Πατριάρχη Ἐκκλησίας καὶ συνόδου ἐστὶν ὀνόμα (Εἰς τὸν ρυθμὸν Ψαλμόν, Π.Γ. 55,493) καὶ ὑπομιμητόκομοι ὑμῖν τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ ὅτι ὅστε τὸ αἷμα τοῦ μαρτυρίου δὲν θὰ καταστῇ ἰκανόν καὶ δὲν θὰ ἀρκέσαι να ἐξαλείψῃ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ σχίσασιν τινὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.

Ὅθεν, καλοῦμεν ἀπαντᾶς τοὺς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφοὺς τοὺς ἀποτελοῦντας τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τῆς κατὰ Τσεχίαν καὶ Σλοβακίαν Ἀγιωτάτης Ὀρθοδόξου Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας ὅπως ἀναλογισθῶσιν τὰς ὡς ὑπόχους καὶ ἐπιμένουται ἐνώπιον Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων εὐθυνῶς καὶ στοχυρίζεται τοῖς καθομολογήθεσι κατὰ τὴν εἰς Ἐπίσκοπον ἔκαστος χειροτονίαν αὐτοῦ, συνεργηθοῦσιν τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν, ἵνα μὴ εἴπωμεν τὸ ὑπέρ δύναμιν, ἐκαστός, ἐν ἀγάπῃ Χριστοῦ, ἐν συναλληλίᾳ, ἐν συνεργασίᾳ καὶ ἐν ὑμνοσκεῖοι, εἰς τὴν ρύθμισιν τῶν ἀπασχολοῦντος τὴν προσφυλή τοπικῆς ὑμῶν Ἐκκλησίαν ταύτην σπουδαίων περιστασιάκων ζητημάτων, ἦτοι τῆς ἰμέσου ἐκλογῆς Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Πράγας καὶ εἰς Ἀρχιτιμιχίμενον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὑμῶν, ἵνα τακτοποιηθῶσι τὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦς υμετέρου οἰκου καὶ ἵνα μὴ ἐπαληθεύη καὶ δι᾽ ὑμᾶς ἡ θεοτυπευτός Πατερική ὅρθος: «Καὶ γὰρ ἂν εἴημεν ὡς ἀληθῶς πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἀποτάτατοι, σχισματίκες καὶ κατακομμητές Ἐκκλησίων ἐφοδιώκει καὶ μὴ τὴν συνάφειαν τοὺς μελῶν τοῦ ὁματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἀγαθῶν τιθέμενον» (Μεγάλου Βασιλείου, Επίσκοπος, Ἐναγρίῳ προευθύνεσι, Π.Γ.32,613C) καὶ, τέλος, ὅτι μὴ εὑρεθή ὁ πανίερος Ὀικουμενικὸς Θρόνος εἰς τὴν ἀδήμοτον πλῆθος ὀφειλετικήν ἀνάγκην ἀντιμετώπισεως ἄλλως τοῦ ἀνακυπτώματος ζητήματος. Παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀδελφικῶς ὅπως μὴ διδῆτε τόπον εἰς τὰς ἐνεργείας τοῦ μισοκάλου, «ἵνα μὴ τὸ κακὸν χείρων γένηται». 
Η Μήτηρ Έκκλησία, Ιερώτατε ἀδελφέ, κατά τὴν κανονικῆς τάξιν καὶ ἀκριβείαν, ὑποχρεοῦται ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων, ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν, νὰ ὑπηρετήθῃ θυσιαστικῶς τὴν πανορθόδοξον ἅφ’ ἐνός ἐνότητα, τὴν εὐστάθειαν δὲ καὶ εὐμερείαν ἐκάσης τοπικῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐξ ἔτερου, τῶν ουτοτρόπως δὲ νὰ τεχνουργῇ Ἀγιοπατερικῶς τὴν σωτηριώδη πορείαν τῆς Μιᾶς καὶ Ἐνιαίας Αγίας Ὁρθοδόξας, ἀκεφαλωνύσα ἐν φιλοδελφίᾳ ἡ Ἐκκλησία Κωνσταντινούπολεως ὀρθετικῶς τὸ μεμαλωπισμένον ἢ μαλακώσμενον κατὰ καιροῦς σώμα καὶ ἀποκαθιστώσα τὴν «ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης».

Οὐδαμῶς ἀμφιβάλλομεν ὅτι ἡ ἀνωτέρω μητρικὴ ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου καὶ ἡ Πατριαρχικὴ ἡμῶν προσωπικὴ προορισμὴ θέλουσιν εὑρεῖ εὐθύκος ὅπως ἐν τῷ παρώντι μᾶλιστα καιρῷ τῆς «μεγάλης χρείας τῆς στουδῆς καὶ πολλῆς τῆς ἐπιμελείας εὐεργετηθῆναι τῷ τάς Ἐκκλησίας. Εὐεργεσία δὲ ἐστὶν ἐνοωθῆναι τὰ τέως διεσπασμένα» (Μεγάλου Βασιλείου 113, Τοῖς ἐν Ταρσῷ προειρημένοις, P.G. 32,525C-D), διό καὶ ἀπεκδεχόμεθα τὴν ἀνάληψιν τῶν προσημοσιών ἀπὸ μέρους τῶν αὐτῶν Ἱεραρχῶν πρωτοβουλῶν καὶ τὴν ἀμέσων ἐνημέρωσιν καὶ τῆς Μητρὸς Ἐκκλησίας.

Εὐχόμενοι ἐπὶ τούτως τῇ ύμετέρᾳ Ἰερώτητι ὅπως ὁ ὀδηγηθῇ τοὺς μάγους ὀυράνιος ἀστήρ ἐν προσκύνησιν τοῦ Θεοῦ Βρέφους κατευθύνῃ τάς διανοίας καὶ φωτισθῇ τὰς σκέψεις ὑμῶν πάντων τῶν ἐν Τσεχίᾳ καὶ Σλοβακία ἡς ἐπιτέλεσιν τοῦ δέοντος καὶ ἐπιβαλλομένου πρὸς ἐπικράτησιν τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς εὐδοκίας ἐν τοῖς κόλποις τῆς αὐτοῦ Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, ἐπικαλούμεθα ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς τὴν Χάριν καὶ τὸ ἀπειρὸν ΄Ελεοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ὑμώνισιν ἀμοιβαὶ ἐν Χεριῶν Θαλάσσῃ.
Prot. No. 1127

Your Eminence Metropolitan Simeon of Olomouc and Brno, dearly beloved and precious brother in Christ our God and concelebrant of our Modesty: grace and peace from God be with you.

It is well known and substantiated, both from church history but even from the development of the militant Church in the world through the ages to this day, that our Most Holy Apostolic and Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne, in addition to its other privileges and responsibilities, also possesses the dutiful ministry and concern for the stability and godly welfare as well as the uninterrupted continuity of the salvific service toward humanity among all local Most Holy Orthodox Churches. Moreover, it always practices what is appropriate, with proper consequences with regard to the principles of the Orthodox canonical order and tradition, serving their interests as best understood whether for the prevention or the solution to every possible or probable deviation from the established boundaries, which were put into place by our fathers and synodally ratified by the Church in the Holy Spirit.

In accordance with this canonical and ecclesiological principle, the Holy Mother and Great Church of Christ, after duly assessing the request of the late Archbishop Dorotheus of Prague and All the Czech Lands and Slovakia, of blessed memory, making use of its exclusive canonical responsibility and right, deemed that the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia then fulfilled all of the prerequisite canonical criteria for its elevation to the status of an autocephalous and self-administered Church, thereby blessing its autocephaly in 1998 by means of our Patriarchal and Synodal Tome.
As known, together with the transmission of the light of Orthodox truth almost twelve centuries ago to the peoples of this region, as well as to the entire wider Moravia, the Mother Church of Constantinople also proceeded with all these actions and canonical acts, while creating the autocephalous Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia with many sacrifices and risks, in order that the latter may continue to grow on a firm rock and foundation in its salvific mission, with maturity, for the edification of the body of Christ, the Orthodox faithful.

As witnessed by the extensive correspondence between the two Churches, especially recently, the Mother Church has always closely followed the ecclesiastical situation pursuant to the submission of resignation by His Beatitude Archbishop Christopher, until a short time ago the head of the Church there, which has not unfolded fluently, as might have been expected, making every effort to support the Hierarchy, the clergy and the people to maintain unity.

Indeed, our Modesty originally sent as its Exarch His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, following formal invitation, according to the 9th paragraph of the Tome of Autocephaly, expressed in the letter dated October 10, 2013, from Your Eminence, in your capacity as Locum Tenens, wherein you requested “the realization of the number of Hierarchs-members of the Holy Synod of [y]our Church, so that its decisions may fulfill the charges of the Sacred Canons of our Holy Orthodox Church,” which decisions pertained to filling the vacant Holy Archdiocese of Prague, which ultimately was impossible because the proposed candidates for this position did not fulfill the prerequisite criteria foreseen by the sacred and holy canons, as reported by His Eminence the Metropolitan of France in his lengthy and detailed report submitted to us.
Dear brother, we confess that the Mother Church was disappointed about such a development in the situation in an unexpected and improper manner. Nevertheless, it continued its dutiful and caring concern, responding once again to the invitation extended in writing by Your Eminence in your letter dated October 22, 2013, sending – at our proposal and the Synod’s decision – our brothers, Their Eminences Metropolitans Emmanuel of France and Arsenios of Austria, as Observers and Advisors, who also attended the deliberations of the Holy Synod of the Most Holy Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, which met on December 9, 2013, where there suddenly appeared, without being invited, during the Synodal sessions, representatives also of the Most Holy Church of Russia – in fact, we wonder in what canonical capacity? (After all, why were the representatives of the other local Orthodox Churches not invited as well?) – as we were informed in the report of our abovementioned representatives.

Therefore, we too are obliged to communicate with Your beloved Eminence, in our capacity as First-Hierarch of Your Mother Church and as the one who bears responsibility in this matter, by means of this encyclical Patriarchal Letter, in order to declare our surprise and dismay for these occurrences both in the earlier instance but particularly during the last meeting of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, a situation that was exacerbated until the termination of Your Eminence from the position of Locum Tenens not through a canonical process, but rather through nontransparent and indiscernible means, as you denounced in writing to the plenitude of the Church there and more broadly regarding the events that did not occur in accordance with canonical order and precision. As a result, there are rumors about the threat – if it has not already actually taken place – of the creation of schism within the embrace
of the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, which would prove disastrous for its sacred institution, for the Orthodox people of God entrusted to it, as well as for the witness of the One and United Orthodox Church to the world.

Surely Your Eminence will also agree that these actions, which cannot otherwise be described, comprise indications of an unhealthy functioning of the Synodal institution and the self-administered status of a local Orthodox Autocephalous Church. This fact raises diverse questions and queries for knowledgeable canon lawyers, theologians and Hierarchs, while leading to the conclusion that the autocephaly of your Church there is experiencing tribulation, inasmuch as the relevant canonical criteria are not being met, one of the most fundamental of which is the ability of an autocephalous Church to be self-administered by its Hierarchy, which should be mature and capable to canonically recognize its members as well as the president and first-hierarch among them. It is this ability that is now questioned by the events that occurred. All this leads the Mother Church to the unfortunate position of seeking other ways of resolving irregular situation, which has been created and increasingly intensified, in accordance with the sacred and holy canons as well as historically substantiated tradition of the Church.

We repeat that this emerging and evolving situation greatly disturbs the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which has undergone so many sacrifices for the excellent progress and godly welfare of your local Church. Wherefore, we exhort and stipulate, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, that “the reputation of a Church lies in its synodal system” (*On Psalm 149, PG55.493*), reminding you also of his words that not even the blood of martyrdom can ever suffice to erase the sin of someone who brings schism to the Church.
Thus, we call upon all our brothers in Christ comprising the members of the Holy Synod of the Most Holy Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia to consider the responsibilities that they possess and bear before God and people in order that, each one adhering to what was confessed during his ordination to the Episcopate, you may each collaborate as much as you can — not to say, even more than you can — in partnership, cooperation and concord, in order to rectify the important circumstantial issues facing your precious local Church, namely the immediate election of the Archbishop of Prague and afterward the First-Hierarch of your Church, so that you may settle the affairs of your household and not realize the inspired patristic words: “Indeed, we are truly the worst of all people if we create schisms and divisions in the Church, rather than considering as our greatest service the unity of the members of the body of Christ.” (Basil the Great, Letter 156: To Evagrius the Presbyter, PG32.613C) Finally, in order that the most sacred Ecumenical Throne may not find itself in the inevitable, albeit obligatory position of resolving the emerging matter in another way, we fraternally entreat you not to give way to the actions of the evil one, “so that the wrong may not be compounded.”

Your Eminence, dear brother, in accordance with canonical order and precision, we repeat that the Mother Church is obliged by events to serve sacrificially on the one hand the Panorthodox unity and on the other hand the stability as well as welfare of each local Orthodox Church, thereby pursuing traditional ways of preserving the salvific development of the One and United Holy Orthodox Church, while as Church of Constantinople fraternally and dutifully integrating the body of Christ that has been divided or is being divided from time to time so as to restore the “unity of the spirit in the fellowship of peace.”
We have no doubt that the above maternal plea of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and our own personal Patriarchal exhortation will find an attentive ear, particularly in the present time when “there is a great need for attentiveness and much heedfulness to assist the Churches. And what is beneficial is to bring unity to what was formerly divided.” (Basil the Great, *Letter 113: To the Presbyters in Tarsus*, PG32.525CD) Thus, we expect that the Hierarchs there will assume responsibility for the proper initiatives as well as the immediate advisement of the Mother Church.

Finally, Your Eminence, we pray that the heavenly star, which led the wise men to the adoration of the divine infant, may also guide your minds and enlighten the thoughts of everyone in the Czech Lands and Slovakia to achieve what is necessary and mandatory for peace and goodwill to prevail in the embrace of the Orthodox Church there, and we invoke upon you the grace and boundless mercy of God.

December 31, 2013