



“A Painful Remembrance”

1924-2004: The Eightieth Anniversary of the Calendar Reform

“His Beatitude Ended up Dyeing His Throne in the Blood of the Innocent and Devout Flock, Which Suffered Martyrdom for Orthodoxy”*



“If a Bishop inflicts any blows and torments whatever on men who fear the Lord, he is unworthy of the Episcopacy”

(Proceedings of the Seventh
Ecumenical Synod)

IT HAS BEEN repeatedly demonstrated that those who champion the innovation of the new Festal Calendar—censured as it has been by Church Councils—have no arguments at their disposal, and that whatever arguments they may have put forward up to now have been refuted and torn to shreds by those who resist this innovation with unshakable proofs based on the Fathers.¹

And yet, the innovators persist in drawing from the scraps of the worn-out fabric of their arguments, which have been repeatedly and

vociferously trounced, the same old contentions, covered with the dust of “ironclad logic,” that is, rationalization,² desperately attempting, like the heretics of old, to apply the tactics of the squid, which spreads out its “ink before it, so as to escape its predators or to hunt under its cover,” as St. Gregory the Theologian says.³

One of the arguments made by those who champion the innovation is that those who steadfastly abide by the order of the Festal Calendar handed down by the Fathers have acted uncanonically. To this end, the New Calendarists invoke Sacred Canons—in the manner of “quack” lawyers—to assess the activities and actions of resisters to the calendar innovation, supposedly in order to demonstrate their lack of canonicity, with the goal of blackening or even entirely abrogating the saving message of their Orthodox resistance and Patristic struggle against the panheresy of ecumenism.

So swift and impetuous are the innovators in this attempt, that they forget their innumerable and outrageous actions, which are not only uncanonical, but also contrary to the Gospel and inhuman, if not murderous, specifically in regard to their struggle against the opponents of the calendar innovation in 1924, because of which action the Christian character of the innovators is still in dispute.

* * *

Some years ago, an Old Calendarist clergyman, writing to another clergyman (a theoretician and great champion of the calendar innovation who has since died) about the persecutions which the New Calendarist Church had carried out against the Old Calendarist resisters “by force and with the gendarmerie,” said, among other things:

Think of the persecutions, which reached the point of sacrilege when you entered the holy Altar and, at the conclusion of the dread Liturgy, threw the Precious Gifts on the ground and trampled on the Body of the Lord! You blew up a Church with dynamite! You forcibly stripped Priests of their *rasa* and mistreated them in the basement of the Archdiocese! You violated nuns, while like new Isaurians [a reference to the Iconoclast, Leo the Isaurian—*Trans.*] your Priests smashed and tore away the Icons of the Old Calendarist Churches with axes; and you smashed the *Epitaphia*,

and desecrated the likeness of the entombed Christ, ‘treasuring up unto yourselves wrath against the Day of Wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God’!⁴ Woe to you, because you beat your breasts about the attacks of the Czechoslovak Uniates against the Orthodox, and you, supposing yourselves to be Orthodox, tortured Orthodox Priests and desecrated the Holy of Holies! And you come today, Father, to tell us that we were Ordained by two or by three [a reference to the deceptive characterization of the Consecrations of the Old Calendarist Greek Bishops by some New Calendarist writers—*Trans.*]....⁵

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Pasalimani, Piræus, Great Friday of 1952: the overturning and desecration of the Holy Epitaphios. Scenes from the inhuman persecutions of the Old Calendarist Orthodox (1951-1952), carried out at the instigation and direction of the Holy Synod of the New Calendar Church, under Archbishop Spyridon of Athens, which assured the government “that Old Calendarism is more dangerous than all the propaganda of the Communists”! (memorandum, July 1950).

These persecutions, uncanonical actions outrageously hushed up, sometimes reached such a level that the “innovating Hierarchs were more ardent persecutors than the State”!⁶ So it is that Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, the New Calendarist Archbishop of Athens, complained to the Synod of the State Church that “the police, with the coöperation of the local Hierarchs, arrest [the ‘Old Calendarist’ Priests], while the Ministry [of Religion] orders their release”!⁷

Blood from the persecutions of those who resisted the innovation in the Festal Calendar

dyed the churches, streets, and squares of the Greek land. During these anti-Christian persecutions, ‘the scenes were totally heart-rending. Christians with the Cross in their hands were beaten like utter knaves. Mothers and white-haired old women were stomped on by the police agents,’⁸ Priests were tortured, blood flowed, and deaths were counted. On Great Thursday of the year 1932 the New Calendarists, still reeking with blood, attacked the Holy Church in Mandra, Attika. The District Administrator of Mandra, inside the Church, ‘fell upon the Priest, seizing him by his beard,’ and beat ‘the Faithful with his whip, principally women, among whom was the Presbytera, whom he gravely beat.’⁹ Previously, in 1927, also in Mandra, the resisters had been beaten with the butts of the gendarmes’ weapons and assailed by gunfire, as a result of which one



A scene from the inhuman persecutions of the Old Calendarist Orthodox (1951-1952), carried out at the instigation and direction of the Holy Synod of the New Calendar Church, under Archbishop Spyridon of Athens.

woman was wounded. It was then, too, that Katherine, the wife of Constantine Routtis, was fatally struck on the head by the butt of a police rifle. The wounded woman was transferred to the Annunciation Hospital, where she died a few days later. Her funeral had the character of a martyr’s entombment. ‘Thousands of Faithful escorted the procession, some holding flowers, others torches, and others palms.’^{10, 11}

* * *

In the Proceedings of the Seventh Œcumenical Synod it is decreed that Hierarchs who engage in persecution are to be deposed and are unworthy of the Episcopacy:

The Most Holy Patriarch Tarasios declared: ‘If a Bishop inflicts any blows and torments whatever on men who fear the Lord, he

is unworthy of the Episcopacy.’ The Holy Synod replied: ‘He is not worthy.’¹²

St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, interpreting the Ninth Canon of the First-and-Second Synod, in connection with the Twenty-seventh Apostolic Canon, says that “any clergyman who strikes anyone, whether he does so with his own hand or incites others to do so, should be deposed.”¹³

What would the Holy Fathers say today, when clergymen have reached the point even of committing murder—let alone murdering pious people struggling to preserve the sacred traditions of the Church?

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Next, with regard to the foregoing accounts of the persecutions, we quote a short text of the Confessor-Hierarch Chrysostomos, the former Metropolitan of the State Church Diocese of Florina.

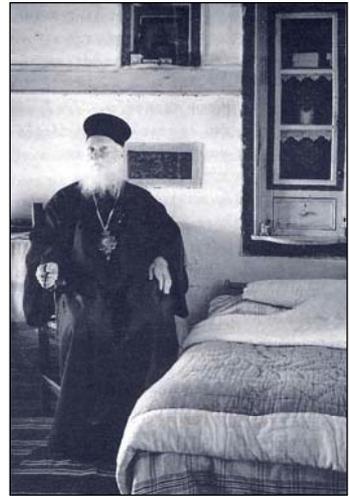
The printed text constitutes a selection from a marvelous book by the blessed Metropolitan with the title *Τὸ Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον ὡς Κριτήριον τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας* [*The Church Calendar as a Criterion of Orthodoxy*]. The eighty-seven, densely-written pages were completed on 1/14 July 1935 by the Confessor-Hierarch in the Holy Monastery of St. Dionysios in Olympos, where he had been banished by the New Calendarist innovators because of his maintenance of the Church Calendar of the Fathers.

This enlightened and highly revealing treatise is, according to the Martyr-Hierarch, an “*Apologia*,” in which “the deepest motives of this ecclesiastical issue” are examined, and wherein it is shown “what meaning and significance this issue has for the universal Orthodox Church and how much damage it has visited upon the Orthodox Church of Greece” (p. 14).

The text that we are citing is found on pp. 68-69 of the first edition of the book, and the emphases, notes, elucidations, and general editing are ours.¹⁴

* * *

It was only among the unflaggingly religious Greek Orthodox Faithful that the announcement¹⁵ of our Orthodox struggle was



The Holy Monastery of St. John the Theologian, Mytilene. At the age of eighty, the Confessor-Hierarch Chrysostomos, the former Metropolitan of Florina, was exiled here (1951-1952). At right, Metropolitan Chrysostomos in the simple cell in which he spent his exile.

duly echoed. They alone, like Confessors, placed themselves on our side and demonstrated their Orthodox spirit through the outpouring of congratulatory telegrams that they sent to us, calling us pillars of Orthodoxy and assuring us that they would remain faithful unto death, struggling beside us to restore the Orthodoxy of the Greek Church.¹⁶

* * *

So it is that only the truly pious Orthodox Greek People proved worthy of their glorious Orthodox past. With their natural religious sensitivities and the conscience of an Orthodox people, they perceived the danger threatening the Orthodoxy of the Greek Church. They rose up in one body against His Beatitude, the Archbishop of Athens¹⁷ and the innovating Hierarchs of his Church, demonstrating against them as betrayers of Orthodoxy, of which they [the lay people] were appointed a sentinel and unsleeping guardian Angel by Divine Providence.¹⁸ In one strikingly



1/14 June 1935: Thousands of Old Calendarist Orthodox in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens, protesting the persecution of the three Confessor-Hierarchs (at left). Armed police attacking the “innocent and truly religious flock” of Christ (at right).

massive demonstration, which these truly pious Greek Faithful raised in a display of protest on the day of our trial by the Synodal Tribunal, if the police had not intervened, the people would have swept everything clean and restored the Orthodox Calendar to the Church through popular power, and in this way the ecclesiastical Schism would have been forestalled.¹⁹

* * *

In this religious demonstration of the Greek people against His Beatitude and the members of the Synodal Court,²⁰ such was their passion and dedication to their Orthodox traditions, that in one clash with the armed police three of them were killed and more than a hundred were severely beaten and bruised. Indeed, in this way, His Beatitude came to dye his throne with the blood of the innocent and truly religious flock of Greece, which was martyred for Orthodoxy,²¹ and not only did his stiff-necked and uncircumcised heart not relent [Acts 7:51], but he was also still more hardened against us.²² Such was the attitude of the truly religious Orthodox Greek Faithful toward our Orthodox and pious ecclesiastical undertaking.

*Source: Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία, Nos. 22-23 (January-June 1991), pp. 218-225.

Notes

1. As evidence of this, suffice it to cite, in chronological order: (1) Gregorios Evstratiades, *Ἡ πραγματικὴ ἀλήθεια περὶ τοῦ Ἑκκλησιαστικοῦ Ἡμερολογίου* [*The Real Truth About the Church Calendar*] (Athens: 1929); (2) Monk (now Hieromonk) Theodoretos, *Διαλόγοι τῆς Ἐρήμου περὶ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ* [*Dialogues of the Desert Concerning Ecumenism*] (Athens: 1971); (3) Alexander Kalomiros, *Τὸ Σύγκριμα* [*The Verdict*] (Thessaloniki: 1976); (4) Aristotle D. Delembases, *Πάσχα Κυρίου* [*The Lord's Pascha*] (Athens: 1985), (5) Lambros D. Ktenas, *Πίσω ἀπ' ὅ, τι φαίνεται στὸ ἡμερολογιακὸ* [*Behind the Appearances in the Calendar Issue*] (Patras: 1989); and (6) Hieromonk Theodoretos of the Holy Mountain, *Τὸ Ἀντίδοτον* [*The Antidote*] (Athens: 1990).

2. See the most recent instance, Archimandrite Jeremiah Foundas “Οἱ Παλαιοημερολογίτες τῆς Ἑλλάδος εἶναι ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν” [“The Greek Old Calendarists are Outside the Church”], in the magazine *Θυμίαμα* (No. 3 [November 1990], pp. 77-130).

3. See St. Gregory the Theologian, Oration 42, §13 (“The Last Farewell”), *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXVI, col. 473A.

4. Cf. Romans 2:5.

5. See Hieromonk Theodoretos, *Τὸ Ἀντίδοτον*, p. 35 (Priest Basile Sakkas, Ἀπάντησις εἰς τὸν αἰδεσιμ. π. Ἐπιφάνιον Θεοδορόπουλον-Ἀθήνας [*Reply to the Rev. Fr. Epiphanius Theodoropoulos of Athens*] [Geneva: August 1969], p. 28).

6. Delembases, *Πάσχα Κυρίου*, p. 755.

7. Chrysostomos Papadopoulos said this “at the 22nd session of the Holy Synod, 14 February 1927” (See Archimandrite Theokletos (Strangas), *Ἐκκλησίας Ἑλλάδος Ἱστορία ἐκ πηγῶν ἀψευδῶν (1817-1967)* [*History of the Church of Greece From Reliable Sources (1817-1967)*] (Athens: 1971), Vol. III, p. 1505).

8. See Stavros Karamitsos-Gamvroulias, *Ἡ Ἀγωνία ἐν τῷ Κήπῳ τῆς Γεθσημανῆ* [*The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*] (Athens: 1961), p. 92. This paragraph continues: “...And in this way the throne of Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos was dyed yet again with the blood of the strugglers.”

9. See *ibid.*, pp. 84-85: “There, as I wrote, on Great Thursday the Blood of the God-Man was united with the blood shed by the Priest and the Faithful.”

10. See *Τὰ Πάτρια*, No. 4 (October-December 1976), p. 129. (The entire issue is dedicated to “the bloody events of Mandra, Eleusis and the New Martyr Katherine Routtis”).

11. See Delembases, *Πάσχα Κυρίου*, p. 755.

12. Mansi, Vol. XII, col. 1115/Πρακτικὰ τῶν Ἁγίων καὶ Οἰκουμενικῶν Συνόδων [*Proceedings of the Holy Œcumenical Synods*], ed. Spyridon Melias (Holy Mountain: Kalyve of the Venerable Forerunner Publications, 1981), Vol. II, p. 758a.

13. See *Ἡ Πηδάλιον* [*The Rudder*] (Athens: “Aster,” 1970), 7th ed., p. 354.

14. In *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία*, No. 17 (October-December 1989), pp. 67-78, we printed another important section of the work in question

by the Confessor-Hierarch with the title: “Οἱ ἔμπνευσταὶ καὶ πρωτεργάται τῆς καινοτομίας: οἱ δύο οὗτοι Λουθηροὶ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας” [“The Inspirers and Ringleaders of the Innovation: ‘These Two Luthers of the Orthodox Church’”].

15. The three Metropolitans, Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostomos (formerly) of Florina and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, at the time that they assumed pastoral responsibilities for the Faithful who resisted innovation and followed the Old Calendar (May 1935), circulated the following five pamphlets: (1) a “Protest” to the Orthodox Churches against the unilateral and uncanonical introduction of the New Calendar; (2) a “Clarification” concerning the question of the Church Calendar; (3) a “Proclamation” to the parish clergy and the monastics of the Orthodox Church concerning the question of the Church Calendar; (4) an “Edict” to the pious Orthodox Greek People concerning the Church Calendar; and (5) an “Appeal” to all the religious and ethnic organizations of Greece concerning the Church Calendar.

16. The three Confessor-Hierarchs officially walled themselves off in a solemn service held on 13 May 1935 (Old Style) (Sunday of the Samaritan Woman). On this historic day, a festive public Divine Liturgy was held in the Church of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* in Kolonos, at which more than 25,000 Faithful were present and in which all of the Old Calendar Priests took part. The three Hierarchs presided; Chrysostomos of Zakynthos gave the homily, following the Gospel, after declaring that he was being placed at the head of the Orthodox in resistance, and there followed a most impressive procession as far as St. Constantine Square, where Germanos of Demetrias spoke, and finally Chrysostomos of Florina read the “Edict to the Pious Orthodox Greek People Concerning the Church Calendar” (see Karamitsos-Gamvroulias, *Ἡ Ἀγωνία*, pp. 118-119; see also *Τὰ Πάτρια* (Piraeus: 1987), Vol. VII, pp. 35-37).

17. Chrysostomos Papadopoulos (1868-1938). From Madytos in Eastern Thrace. Professor at the University of Athens (1914-1923), having previously been Principal of the Holy Cross School in Jerusalem and the Rizareios School in Athens.

A friend and collaborator of Meletios (Metaxakis), he actively took part from the beginning in the so-called ecumenical movement (see Monk Paul of Cyprus, *Νεοημερολογιτισμός-Οἰκουμεινισμός* [*New Calendarism and Ecumenism*] [Athens: 1982], pp. 59-63).

At the funeral oration on the occasion of the death of Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, delivered by Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, the deceased Hierarch was praised for “his superhuman labors” on behalf of the approaching union of “all the Christian Churches, for which he put forth such great efforts” (see Archimandrite Theokletos, *Ἐκκλησίας Ἑλλάδος Ἱστορία*, Vol. III, p. 2160). • In a footnote, the author notes that “after Meletios [Metaxakis], he [Chrysostomos Papadopoulos], too, was a pro-ecumenist and, in addition, a pro-unionist.”

18. “Since with us neither Patriarchs nor Synods have ever been able to introduce novelties, because the defender of our religion is the very Body of the Church, that is, the People of God themselves, who wish their religion to be eternally unchanging and identical with that of their Fathers” (from the “Reply of the Orthodox Patriarchs of the East to Pope Pius IX” (May 1848), during the reign of Patriarch Anthimos

of Constantinople, in John Karmiris, *Τὰ Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* [*The Dogmatic and Credal Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church*], Vol. II, p. 920).

19. The trial of the three Confessor-Hierarchs occurred on 1/14 June 1935. “After receiving information about the convening of the trial from the newspapers, the Old Calendarist people, not only from Athens, but also from Piræus and the provinces, hastened with their wives and children to gather in Athens from very early in the morning and to proceed to the Square of the Metropolis,” and finally “the police allowed the people to enter the Square. All those people, indeed, were like a torrent and a single body before the Metropolitan Church. There, gathered around forty Priests and more than sixty monks they began, at about 11 a.m., to chant with the utmost contrition the *Paraklesis* to the Mother of God. Shivers of emotion seized everyone. This *Paraklesis* will remain fixed in the memory of all those who on bended knee besought the Mother of God for the sacred unity of Holy Orthodoxy. The asphalt in the square was red-hot, but the Divine flame of the uncreated Divine Light warmed the breasts of all, and neutralized the burning of the asphalt.”

After the announcement of the sentence of condemnation around 2:30 p.m. “there followed grievous events, for which the Synodal Hierarchs” of the New Calendar Church “were responsible. Immediately they started up the pumps of the fire engines, which fell like a frightful torrent upon the heads of the crowd. The people, refusing to be dispersed, calmly accepted the soaking. At the same time, the police were ordered to break up the gathering with police batons and whatever means necessary. The pious strugglers endured the blows of the police batons and the repeated punches and kicks from the agents of law and order, these delivered at the command of the Archbishop.... And these strugglers were silent, holding in their hands the trophy of victory, the Precious Cross, and small Icons. One man, who dared to put a stop to the soaking, was even beaten with an axe. More than a hundred people were wounded that year on Friday, 1 June [Old Style]” (see Karamitsos-Gamvroulias, *Ἡ Ἀγωνία*, pp. 128-130; see also *Τὰ Πάτρια*, Vol. VII, pp. 222-242).

20. “The Synodal Court of the first instance convened against the Hierarchs” was composed of the following twelve New Calendarist Hierarchs: Alexander of Kerkyra and Paxos (President), Ambrose of Phthiotis, Synesios of Thebes and Levadeia, Spyridon of Arta, Gervasios of Grevena, Constantine of Serrai, Joachim of Servia and Kozane, Basil of Drama and Philippi, Polycarp of Trikke and Stagai, Dionysios of Gytheion and Oitylon, Joachim of Alexandroupolis and Kallinikos of Elasson. The State Commissioner, Demetrios Petrakakos, and the Secretary, Archimandrite Spyridon Alivizatos, were present at the session of 1/14 June 1935. (See *Ἐκκλησία*, No. 25 [22 June 1935], pp. 193-196).

21. It was not, alas, the first time, but it would have been fitting for Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos of Athens—and, of course, those of like mind who collaborated with him—to have renounced his Episcopal mitre immediately and to have gone off to some desert for the remainder of his life in repentance, weeping and lamenting for his crimes. Unfortunately, he did not have such blessed tactfulness. But those who speak today about our being uncanonical, overlooking and pardoning such homicidal actions—are they not embarrassed? Do they forget the canonical

dictum, according to which "all clergymen who commit murder, either willingly or unwillingly, either themselves with their own hands or by inciting others to murder, are deposed"? (see St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, *Πηδάλιον*, p. 87, "Concord" to the Sixty-sixth Apostolic Canon).

22. The three Confessor-Hierarchs were proclaimed guilty of "factionalism, intrigue, illicit assembly, secession, and contempt for the canonical and lawful Church of Greece and for inciting the clergy and the people to disavow the canonical and lawful Church of Greece," and the following punishment was imposed on them: "deposition from the Hierarchical office, reduction to the status of monks, and a five-year period of physical exile in a monastery; they are to be stripped entirely of every Hierarchical title and rank" (See *Ἐκκλησία*, No. 25, p. 195). It is worth noting that "the verdict of the Court was reached by nine votes to three. Among the latter were included the Metropolitan of Drama, who voted "innocent," and the Metropolitans of Trikke and Arta, who cast votes of acquittal" (See *Τύπος*, 14 June 1935; quoted in *Τὰ Πάτρια*, Vol. VII, p. 226).