



“It behooves us to avoid communion with men whose outlook we abhor”

## St. Athanasios the Great: Teacher of Orthodox Walling-Off\*

### Epistle to Monks



**T**O THOSE who live the monastic life and are firm in their faith in God, beloved and dearest brethren, greetings in the Lord.

I thank the Lord Who has granted you to believe in Him, that you too may have eternal life with the Saints.

Since there are certain persons who are of like mind with Arios and go about the monasteries with no other purpose save that, under color of coming to you as envoys returning from us, they may deceive the naïve, and whereas there are some who, while they profess that they do not subscribe to Arian teaching, yet compromise themselves and pray together with the Arians in the same place, I have hastened perforce, at the urging of certain most sincere brethren, to write to you, in order that, keeping unalloyed and unadulterated the pious Faith that God’s Grace works in you, you may not give occasion of scandal to the brethren.

For when any see you, the faithful in Christ, associating and communing with such people, they will assuredly think it a matter of indifference and will fall into the mire of impiety.

Lest, then, this should happen, resolve, beloved, to shun those who openly espouse the impiety of Arios, and to be on your guard against those who, while they reckon themselves not to hold with Arios, yet commune with the impious; and especially does it behoove us to avoid communion with men whose outlook we abhor.

But if any pretends that he confesses the right faith, but appears to communicate with those others, exhort him to refrain from such communication; and if he promises to do so, treat him as a brother. But if he persists in a contentious spirit, repudiate him. For if you act in this way, you will preserve the Faith in purity, and they, seeing [that] you [refrain from praying with them], will derive benefit, fearing lest they be accounted as impious and as fellow travellers with Arios.



\* **Source:** St. Athanasios the Great, “Epistle to Monks,” *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXVI, cols. 1185D-1188C.

• This epistle is published without any notes, since it speaks for itself. Let those who commune with ecumenists study it attentively and let them reflect on their responsibilities!