



WORDS SPOKEN BY HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN VLASIE, CHIEF HIERARCH OF
THE OLD CALENDAR ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ROMANIA AT THE FUNERAL
OF HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN CYPRIAN OF OROPOS AND PHYLE*

19 May 2013 (Old Style), Holy Monastery of
Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle (Athens), Greece

Venerable Hierarchs, beloved Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters:

Christ is Risen!

Today one of the great pillars of the Church has gone from among us to Heaven. He came first to our country, Romania, in 1977. He was then an Archimandrite, Bishop Ambrose a Deacon, and I, myself, also a Deacon. It was the Feast of the Transfiguration, and St. Glicherie asked him to perform the Blessing of Waters in our monastery Chapel. We held Metropolitan Cyprian in the highest esteem because he loved our country. He loved our Church and our Metropolitan, St. Glicherie, and later our Metropolitan Silvestru. He loved all of us in general. He was a great Apostle of his epoch.

On two occasions when he visited us in Romania [during Communist times], His Eminence was arrested and deported from the country. One time, he travelled as far as Târgu Neamț, where the police, waiting for him in the home of [one of the Romanian clergymen], arrested him and escorted him to Bucharest, where he was placed on an airplane [for Athens]. The other time, he arrived at the Romanian border with Bulgaria, but he was not allowed to enter Romania. Yet out of his great discretion, and in order not to place our country in a bad light, on this occasion he returned to Greece and spent the same number of days that he would have been absent in Romania sequestered at a hermitage in Euboea, so as not to give reason for anyone among the Greek faithful to criticize Romania. Afterwards, he returned to the monastery in Phyle as though he had just arrived from Romania. But none of this discouraged him, and the next year he once again travelled to our country, and this time he was allowed to enter.

For us in Romania, Metropolitan Cyprian was a light amidst the darkness that then held forth. We were cut off, and no one knew of us. Metropolitan Cyprian made us known not only in Greece, but to the entire world. In those difficult times, the simple fact of their knowing that we had friends beyond the borders of our country impeded those who wished to eliminate us, and they thus left our Old Calendar Church in peace. The work of this revered Metropolitan was not undertaken just in Greece; he established large missions in Africa and in many countries of the world. The Catholics, as they are called, do missionary work throughout the world, largely because of the riches that they possess. But Metropolitan Cyprian, despite the poverty in which he travailed, undertook with immense faith great missionary efforts throughout the world, along with those coworkers—and especially His Grace, Bishop Ambrose—who surrounded him. And he had no fear of any threat, though indeed he was threatened for the work that he did.

Since are all mortal, whether Emperor, Patriarch, Metropolitan, Bishop, or Priest, or lay Christian, we are all going back to the earth from which God created us. Some pass through great trials, just as Metropolitan Cyprian passed through a great ordeal (lying in a coma) for five and a half years. But we should all know that none of this happens outside the judgment of our Righteous God. God has His own criteria, which are incomprehensible to the human mind. As the Psalmist David says, “We went through fire and through water, but Thou broughtest us out into refreshment” (Psalm 65:12, LXX). Thus it is that I am here today from Romania, along with His Grace, Bishop Sofronie, His Grace, Bishop Dionisie, and Father Michael, in order to accompany our esteemed Father, Metropolitan Cyprian, on this, his last journey; for I loved him greatly and since our Church so loved him. We have come today to greet him for the last time. In the future, when we come again, of course, we

will venerate his tomb and recite a prayer.

But today we come to see him face to face for the last time. All people, great and insignificant, rich and poor—all take this same road. And to the tomb they take absolutely nothing with them. Not long ago, the mayor of the city of Bacău, in Romania, died. He was fifty-four years of age. He was a wealthy man. He died at a young age. But he left orders, as it is said that Alexander the Great of Macedonia also did, that his hands remain dangling outside his casket during his funeral, so that all could see that he was taking nothing with him. We take with us only our good acts and our works of mercy; and if we have had no money in life, St. John Chrysostomos tells us, we can all leave behind us a good word. We will have nothing but our charitable acts. As St. Ephraim the Syrian tells us, we not only leave this life with nothing, but alone. While others may accompany us to the grave, from there we are totally alone.

And so, we now implore God and the Mother of God to reward Metropolitan Cyprian for all of the good deeds that he did in this life, that he might find there, in the other life, rest and joy as recompense for his good works in this world. As the Apostle Paul says, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (II St. Timothy 4:7-8). Indeed, we believe that as Metropolitan Cyprian goes forth today, he will receive the crown of righteousness from the Savior, Whom he served. Let us all say together, “May God forgive him and give him rest.” As humans, we all err. Once more, God grant him forgiveness. No one on earth is without sin, even if he lives but one day on earth.

Christ is Risen!

* Transcribed and translated from the simultaneous oral Greek translation by His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone, of the Romanian in which His Eminence delivered his extemporaneous comments.