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**Homily on the Occasion of the Commemoration of the Holy New Three Hierarchs,
Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark of Ephesus**
First Sunday in November, November 3, 2014 (Old Style)

Genuine Orthodoxy in View of the Challenge of 2016¹

† *Metropolitan Cyprian
of Oropos and Phyle*

*Reverend Fathers and Brethren;
Venerable Elders, Monks, and Nuns;
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

1. The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism

Today, the First Sunday in the month of November, we yet again render common honor, common glory, and common gratitude to the Holy New Three Hierarchs: St. Photios the Great, St. Gregory Palamas, and St. Mark of Ephesus.

They have been the special Patrons of our Holy Metropolis since 2005, and also our peerless guides—as they are, to be sure, of all Genuine Orthodox Christians—in the sacred endeavor of our struggle against the heresy of ecumenism.

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¹ A homily delivered at the Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of the Holy New Three Hierarchs, November 3, 2014 (Old Style), in Phyle, Athens.

This past March—March of 2014—as is now well known to all, our Lord, in His love for mankind, blessed our Church, the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece, with unity.



This God-pleasing Union was based on a very important theological and, to be precise, ecclesiological document.²

In this document there is a meticulous and detailed analysis of, *inter alia*, the syncretistic pan-heresy of ecumenism, and also of so-called “official” Orthodoxy and, of course, of the True Orthodox Church.

Our Church is the Genuine Orthodox Church; it is the now united Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece.

Our Church is not to be identified with so-called “official” Orthodoxy, which consists of the official local Churches, since their Episcopal leadership officially espouses the ecumenical movement, and participates synodally, unwaveringly, and unrepentantly therein.

The Genuine Orthodox Church is unable to have any prayerful, mysteriological, or administrative communion with those who resolutely promote the syncretistic pan-heresy of ecumenism.

This newly manifest heresy abolishes the exclusivity of the Orthodox Church and acknowledges the ecclesiality of heretical communities, as well as the validity of their mysteries.

In other words, by means of this heresy Light and darkness are put on the same level and mingled together, such that every heresy supposedly finds a place within the bounds of the Holy Church.

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² “The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism: Dogmatic and Canonical Issues” (March 2014—a text drawn up by the True Orthodox Churches of Greece and Romania and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), <http://hsir.org/p/be>.

2. The three principal heresies of Papism

In Her steadfast and resolute stand, that is, of refraining from communion with the ecumenists, the Genuine Orthodox Church has as Her unerring guides the New Three Hierarchs, who in their day faced similar situations and challenges, namely, the grave danger, deriving from the West, of the pan-heresy of Papism.



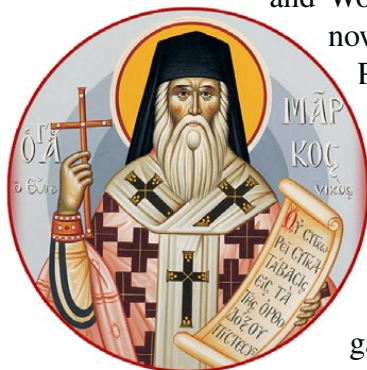
In two major Synods, which were convened in Constantinople in the ninth and fourteenth centuries, respectively, and which are justly and rightly characterized as Œcumenical, the three principal Western heresies were condemned: the heresy of the *Filioque*, the heresy of Papal Primacy, and the heresy of created Grace.

- The first heresy, that of the *Filioque*, is a Pneumatological and Trinitarian heresy; that is, it pertains to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, inasmuch as it maintains that the Holy Spirit proceeds “also from the Son.” Thus, it destroys the monarchy within the Holy Trinity and introduces a dyarchy.³

- The second heresy is an ecclesiological heresy; that is, it pertains to the doctrine of the Church, inasmuch as it declares the Bishop of Rome, the Patriarch of the West, the Pope, to be a super-bishop, without whom the Church, in essence, does not exist. Thus, it makes ecclesiastical totalitarianism into a dogma, on the basis of which the related heresy of Papal Infallibility was later proclaimed.

- The third heresy is a soteriological heresy; that is, it pertains to the doctrine of salvation, inasmuch as it asserts that Divine Grace, which illumines and sanctifies us, and leads us to salvation and deification, is created. Just as the heretic Arius taught that the Only-Begotten Son

³ “If the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son, the hypostatic properties of the Trinitarian Persons are confused with each other and annulled. The monarchy in the Godhead is impaired. The Father ceases to be the source of Divinity, from which the two other Persons of the Godhead derive—the Son through generation and the Spirit through procession. A dyarchy is introduced into the Godhead, and the dignity of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and His sanctifying work is demeaned” (Andreas Theodorou, “Ο Οικουμενισμός, τὸ πικρὸ φαρμάκι τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας” [Ecumenism, a bitter poison for Orthodoxy], <http://hsir.org/p/kvx>).



and Word of God was created, so also the West now teaches that the Divine Energy is created. Papism does not make a distinction in God between the Essence, which is certainly uncreated and imparticipable, and the Energy, which is likewise uncreated and inseparable from the Divine Essence, but is nonetheless participable, sanctifies us, deifies us, and “ontologically bridges the gap between the Uncreated Triune God and created man.”⁴

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3. The Eighth and Ninth Œcumenical Synods: criteria of Orthodoxy

These three great heresies of the West, then, were condemned by the Eighth Œcumenical Synod (879-880), under St. Photios the Great,⁵ and by the Ninth Œcumenical Synod (1341-1351), under St. Gregory Palamas.⁶

These Synods, by their Divinely inspired teaching, radically differentiate Genuine Orthodoxy from the heretical West, and specifically from Papism; and subsequently, in the fifteenth century, the third of the New Hierarchs, St. Mark of Ephesus, pursued the same Orthodox course.

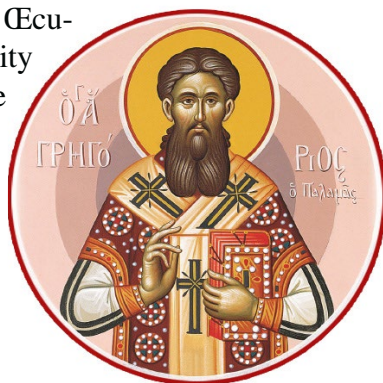
Any future Major Pan-Orthodox Synod, in order to demonstrate its authenticity, will first have to recognize and declare that these two Synods, the Eighth and the Ninth, are Œcumenical; that is, that their teaching is Divinely inspired and absolutely in conformity with the teaching of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

⁴ Demetrios I. Tselengides, *Προϋποθέσεις και Κριτήρια τοῦ Ὁρθοδόξου καὶ Ἀπλανῶς Θεολογεῖν: Θεολογικὲς καὶ Ἐκκλησιολογικὲς Προσεγγίσεις* (Preconditions and criteria for theologizing in an Orthodox and unerring manner: Theological and ecclesiological approaches) (Thessalonike: Ekdosis P. Pournara, 2013), p. 212.

⁵ Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, “Saint Photios the Great and the Eighth Œcumenical Synod: Patristic Conciliarity and Papism,” <http://hsir.org/p/j6a>.

⁶ Bishop Klemes of Gardikion, “The Hesychastic Synods of the Fourteenth Century as the Ninth Œcumenical Synod of the Orthodox Church,” <http://hsir.org/p/pwc>.

The unity of the teaching of the Holy Œcumenical Synods shows forth also the unity of the teaching of the Holy Prophets, the Holy Apostles, and the Holy Fathers of all the ages: the unity of the doctrine and ethos of the Holy Orthodox Church.



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4. The so-called Great Pan-Orthodox Synod of 2016

In the light of these thoughts, the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, our Church, observes with distress and disquiet the efforts of the so-called official Churches, which have adopted the syncretistic pan-heresy of ecumenism, to convoke a Great Pan-Orthodox Synod on Pentecost of 2016.

This Synod will truly be a false synod, which will cause grave turmoil for the People of God and will render the chasm between the Genuine Orthodox and the ecumenists henceforth unbridgeable.

The primary reasons that apply in favor of characterizing the so-called Synod of 2016 in advance as a false synod are the following:

1. It has been in preparation for many decades, now, in a spirit that is not charismatic, but patently bureaucratic and scholastic; it functions within the framework of the ecumenical movement, on the basis of the Patriarchal Encyclical of 1920, which was clearly and fundamentally ecumenist; and it has an ecumenical outlook.

2. The documents already prepared regarding relations with the herodox⁷ attest to the intention of the ecumenists to recognize the ecclesiality of heretics, which they have, however, now recognized *de facto* and in a variety of ways.

3. There is no provision for recognizing the Eighth and Ninth Syn-

⁷ See “Σχέσεις τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τὸν λοιπὸν χριστιανικὸν κόσμον” (Relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world), *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 369 (December 15, 1986), pp. 9-17 (final texts and resolutions of the Third Pre-Synodal Pan-Orthodox Consultation, Chambésy, October 28–November 6, 1986).

ods as Ecumenical; in fact, a proposal to include this issue on the agenda was rejected.

4. During the whole process of so-called “Pre-Synodal Pan-Orthodox Consultations,” which “draw up the theological and ecclesiastical topics that the Synod due to be convened in 2016 will deal with,” never have these topics “been put before the entire body of the Hierarchy” of the local official Churches, “so that the Hierarchs might take a synodal position on such topics,” as an eminent university professor points out; that is, “no guarantees” are provided “for the Church to express Herself in accordance with the Holy Spirit”; “complete transparency” is nonexistent; “the functioning of the synodal institution of the Church, which is governed by the Holy Spirit” has been abolished; “there is a ‘dearth’ of conciliarity”; “some form of Papism in the domain of the Orthodox Church is on the horizon”; and, as the aforementioned professor correctly observes, there is an accelerated movement “along the lines of Papism,” since “someone is aspiring to be placed over all of the Bishops, and ultimately over the entire Church.”⁸

5. The so-called official Churches, namely the ecumenists, are approaching the Synod of 2016 deeply divided and at odds with each other for many different reasons. However, the principal topic for a truly Great Pan-Orthodox Synod ought to be the unity, the union, the reunion, and the concurrence of all the Orthodox in the Apostolic teaching and the Apostolic ethos of genuine Orthodoxy, “that the world may believe.”⁹

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

5. Awakening, zeal, and repentance.

The Holy New Three Hierarchs, Sts. Photios, St. Gregory, and St.

⁸ Demetrios I. Tselengides, “Επιστολή του Καθηγητού Δ. Τσελεγγίδη για τον Διμερή Θεολογικό Διάλογο Ὁρθοδόξων καὶ Ρωμαιοκαθολικῶν, στὸ Ἄμμάν τῆς Ἰορδανίας (15-19.9.2014)” (A letter of Prof. D. Tselengides concerning the bilateral Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, in Amman, Jordan (September 15–19, 2014), <http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2014/11/15-19-2014.html>.

⁹ St. John 17:21.

Mark, awaken us today to a very critical turning point in history, especially in view of 2016.

We need prayerful alertness, Godly zeal, and sincere repentance, so that we may be vouchsafed—even if we find ourselves in the furnace of tribulation—to chant a doxology of thanksgiving to our Lord and Savior:

Most glorified art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our Fathers as luminaries upon the earth, and through them hast guided us all to the true Faith. O Most Merciful One, glory to Thee.¹⁰

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To God

be glory and thanksgiving!



¹⁰ *Apolytikion* of the 318 God-bearing Fathers of the First Œcumenical Synod in Nicæa.