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Liturgical Ecumenism

**A Propaedeutic to the True Nature
of the Great Synod of 2016**



**Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece
Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle
2015**



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Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece



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Archbishop of Alexandria*



The Orthodox Informer

“For it is a commandment of the Lord not to be silent at a time when the Faith is in jeopardy. Speak, Scripture says, and hold not thy peace.... For this reason, I, the wretched one, fearing the Tribunal, also speak.”

(St. Theodore the Studite, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCIX, col. 1321)

Liturgical Ecumenism

A Propaedeutic to the True Nature of the Great Synod of 2016

I. Prefatory Remarks

We have already commented, in a special monograph,¹ on the problems raised by the anticipated Great Synod of 2016, and we sense that all of the events that occurred at the Phanar this past November (2014), amid an atmosphere of liturgical ecumenism, confirm our observations and also constitute, in some manner, a propaedeutic to the true nature of the Synod for which the ecumenists are making preparations.

In 1991, the ever-memorable Prof. Nikolaos Matsoukas, with reference to the harsh strictures against ecumenism on the part of “conservatives,” wrote that “insofar, of course, as [they] are based on profound theological reflection and are not untheological and hysterical expressions of mudslinging and fanatical bigotry, they are not only justified but also indispensable.”²

In what follows, we will endeavor to demonstrate at the very least that our anxieties and criticisms are justified.

¹ Presbyter Father Jiří Ján. “Journey to the ‘Holy and Great Synod’: An Unceasing Estrangement from Genuine Patristic Orthodoxy,” <http://hsir.org/p/fw>.

² Nikolaos Matsoukas, *Οἰκουμενικὴ Κίνησις: Ἱστορία-Θεολογία* (The ecumenical movement: its history and theology) (Thessalonike: 1991), p. 7.

Shortly before Pope Francis visited the Phanar in order to take an active part in the Feast of the Holy Apostle Andrew (November 29-30, 2014), Metropolitan Gennadios of Italy published an article in which he shows with the utmost clarity, and also underscores with exceptional emphasis, the ecclesiological significance of the now hallowed tradition of jointly celebrating the Patronal Feasts of the so-called “Sister Churches” of Rome and Constantinople.

The reader is informed in advance that at the Phanar a meeting will take place which “will abide in the life of the faithful people of God as an enduring and unrivalled experience and as a reification of reconciliation and brotherhood, more important and more noteworthy, to be sure, than the previous meetings.”

Metropolitan Gennadios ascribes particular significance to the fact that the Orthodox do not have even the slightest doubt about the theological standing of the protagonists of this meeting, which is characterized in the article as “a Paschal and fraternal journey and pilgrimage” as “an unprecedented and exceedingly gladsome celebration...of Christian unity.”

Those who are due to meet at the Phanar are “‘The two Patriarchs of East and West,’ ‘foremost Servants of the Church of Christ,’ ‘the two premier spiritual leaders of the Christian Church,’ ‘the two First Bishops of Christendom,’ ‘the two Divinely appointed and Divinely honored Bishops of Rome and Constantinople,’ ‘the two venerable Primates of the Christian Church,’” while the Churches that they represent are assuredly none other than “Sister Churches.”³



³ Metropolitan Gennadios of Italy, “Οἱ δύο Θεοπρόδῳλοι καὶ θεοτίμητοι Ἐπίσκοποι Ρώμης καὶ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως...” (The two Divinely appointed and Divinely honored Bishops of Rome and Constantinople...), http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2014/11/blog-post_288.html.



II. Syncretism in Worship

Shortly thereafter, the hermeneutical context provided by Metropolitan Gennadios was fully confirmed.

- On Saturday, November 29, 2014, Patriarch Bartholomew, together with the Hierarchs of the Holy Synod, received Pope Francis at the Church of St. George. A festal Doxology was chanted, at which a petition was offered “for Francis, the Most Holy Bishop and Pope of Rome.” In his homily at the end of the Doxology, the Patriarch deemed the first visit of Pope Francis to the Phanar a continuation of similar visits by his predecessors, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI.

In this way, he said, “the fraternal and stable advance with the Orthodox Church for the restoration of full communion between our Churches” is maintained.⁴

- The following day, Sunday, November 30, 2014, in the Church of St. George a Patriarchal and Synodal Divine Liturgy was celebrated for the Feast of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called, the Founder and Patron of the Church of Constantinople. Pope Francis attended the Liturgy with his entourage.

- Just as in 2006, during the Divine Liturgy the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer was assigned to the Pope.

- Likewise, before the Symbol of Faith, the Patriarch exchanged the liturgical Kiss of Peace with the Pope.

- At the end, both the Patriarch and the Pope delivered homilies, after which the Patriarchal choir chanted “Εἰς πολλὰ ἔτη, Δέσποτα” to the “Most Holy and Most Blessed Pope Francis of Rome,” as the latter blessed the congregation.

- After the Liturgy, the Pope and the Œcumenical Patriarch jointly blessed those present from the balcony of the Patriarchate and then, in the reception hall, co-signed a Joint Declaration.

⁴ “Address by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to His Holiness Pope Francis during the Doxology in the Patriarchal Church (November 29, 2014),” <https://www.patriarchate.org/-/address-by-his-all-holiness-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-to-his-holiness-pope-francis-during-the-doxology-in-the-patriarchal-church-november-29-20>.



III. The Theological Dimension

The ever-memorable Stergios Sakkos, Professor *Emeritus* at the University of Athens, described as follows the syncretistic context in which the similar visit of Pope Benedict to the Phanar in 2006, for the Patronal Feast, took place:

In the name of ecumenical unity and love age-old institutions are flagrantly and shamelessly trampled upon. The holy *Πηδάλιον* of the Church is disregarded as passé and anachronistic, sacred Canons are written off, the Evangelical course that our Holy Fathers followed with exactitude and reverent awe is set aside, and attempts are made to ‘move the boundaries’ which they set and which they defended with self-sacrifice, tears, and blood.

He then very aptly observes that “the spiritual cost of these serious, illicit, and unprecedented violations is cleverly whitewashed. These same violations are billed, he notes, as “diplomatic successes,” the “theological dimension” of which “is completely suppressed.”⁵

* * *

However, the great ecclesiological significance of these serious violations is not suppressed by the anti-innovationist plenitude of the Orthodox Church, that is, by the Genuine Orthodox Church, which has a profound awareness of its responsibility for the preservation, safeguarding, and delineation of the Divine charism of the Primacy of Truth, of which it is the exponent, since, by the Grace of God, it follows the footsteps of the Holy Fathers in confronting the panheresy of ecumenism, not only in word but also in deed.

The Old Calendarist anti-ecumenists have repeatedly exposed, in a multitude of different documents, the theological and ecclesiological dimension of this alleged tradition, namely, of mutual participation every year in the Patronal Feasts of Rome and Constantinople, which was inaugurated in 1969 under Patriarch Athenagoras.

⁵ Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος, No. 1673 (January 19, 2007), p. 3.

In 2004, after the participation of Patriarch Bartholomew in the Patronal Feast of the Vatican, representatives of the anti-innovationist plentitude of the Church summarized as follows the ecclesiological significance of these meetings:

- they contribute to the gradual indoctrination of our people with ecumenism and Papism;
- they conduce to the “gradual exhaustion and weakening of the immune system of the Orthodox ecclesiastical organism”;
- they make very evident the “breach,” the “rupture with Tradition,” and the “excision” of the Orthodox ecumenists from the “Church of the Saints who are alive in Heaven”;
- they contribute to further “destruction,” to the “demolition of confessional boundaries,” and to keeping “the door wide open to the poison of heresy, syncretism, and ecumenism”;
- they stress most emphatically the lamentable truth that “the heroic Great Church of Constantinople, imprisoned in the Phanar, has been, for a century now, in a new captivity following that of the Turkish Yoke—the captivity of ecumenism.”⁶



⁶ “The Third Visit of the Ecumenist Patriarch Bartholomew to the Vatican,”
<http://hsir.org/p/6f>.



IV. Liturgical Ecumenism

Anyone attempting to interpret aright the liturgical ecumenism of the Phanar, with its unprecedented innovations, which truly reveal the depth to which what is, in essence, the Uniatization of the innovating ecumenists has progressed, should therefore keep this context in mind.

This hermeneutical context, which leads unfailingly to sound conclusions, may be defined by the following points.

a. Allocutions to the Pope

How, on the basis of the criteria of Patristic, canonical, and liturgical Tradition, are we to assess allocutions to the Pope as the supposedly canonical Bishop of the Sister Church of Rome, given that Papism, by virtue of the Great Schism of 1054, has completed the process of its excision from the Theandric Body of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church? Ever since then, there has developed in the Orthodox Church a strong and centuries-old tradition of anti-Papism, which bears unanimous witness to the *consensus Patrum* regarding the ecclesiological nature of Papism: Papism is a condemned heresy, and Roman Catholics have broken away from the Body of the Church.

It should never be forgotten that, over the course of ten centuries, from St. Photios the Great of Constantinople (ninth century) to the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is reckoned that there were some two hundred authors who wrote against the Latins and five anti-Papal Synods.⁷

It is clear as day that the innovating ecumenists, by their liturgical commemoration of the Pope and, in general, by their liturgical ecumenism, are proven to be deniers of this Patristic and Synodal consensus of the past ten centuries and of the dogmatic self-understanding of the Orthodox Church that derives therefrom. There is no misunderstanding the veritable tragedy

⁷ Archimandrite Andronikos Demetrakopoulos, *Ἐκκλησία Ἑλλάδος, ἥτοι περὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῶν γραψάντων κατὰ Λατίνων καὶ περὶ τῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτῶν* (Orthodox Greece, that is, concerning the Greeks who wrote against the Latins and concerning their writings) (Leipzig: Typois Metzger kai Wittig, 1872).

involved here, especially since the innovators admit their estrangement [from Holy Tradition] and proclaim it in Church.

In November of 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), of the Moscow Patriarchate, delivered a lecture at the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the topic of inter-Christian relations. According to the website of the Russian Orthodox Church's Department of External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion set forth the new ecclesiological self-understanding of official Orthodoxy in the following way:

Up until the nineteenth century, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church viewed one another as heretical. A consequence of this was the absence of mysteriological communion. In the nineteenth, and primarily the twentieth centuries, we observe a de facto recognition of the existence of mysteries without communion in the mysteries.⁸

b. The Liturgical Kiss of Peace

Now, does the practice of the liturgical Kiss of Peace at the Eucharist not lead those participating in the Liturgy to their awaited union with Christ in the Divine Eucharist?

According to Orthodox Eucharistic theology, this longed-for union must be preceded by unity between concelebrants, and the source of union is nothing other than the unity in the right Faith that they will confess immediately after their joint recitation of the Creed.

Could it be that the meaning of this liturgical Kiss of Peace pertains to an actually existing common faith of Pope and Patriarch? Not to the Faith of the Fathers and the Synods, but to a faith in the syncretistic confession of the ecumenists?

c. Recitation of the Lord's Prayer

But have the ecumenists also forgotten that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the people was incorporated into the order of the Liturgy by the Holy Fathers as a prayer of preparation for partaking of our Daily Bread?

⁸ See <https://mospat.ru/en/2013/12/23/news96201/>.

On what theological basis does the Pope, whom the Sacred Canons prohibit from participating in the Mystical Supper of the sacrificed Lamb of God, recite this prayer? How is it possible for the Pope, whom the Orthodox Church regards as an heresiarch, to represent the assembled People of God at the crowning moment of the Divine Mystagogy?

d. The Ministry of the Word of God

It constitutes patent contempt for, and a denial of, the dogmatic conscience of Orthodoxy for the Patriarch to assign instruction of the faithful to the Pope, who believes, among other cacodoxies, that the ecclesiastical nature of Orthodoxy is defective, since it is not in communion with the Pope and does not acknowledge his primacy or his infallibility.

Shortly before his visit to Constantinople, Pope Francis, during a general audience in St. Peter's Square in Rome, on November 5, 2014, stated that the Orthodox Church is "sick," because it "is not united to the Pope in the one Church of the Lord Jesus, that is, our Hierarchical Holy Mother Church" [viz., the Roman Catholic Church].⁹



⁹ See <http://www.news.va/en/news/general-audience-of-5-november-2014>.



V. An Alteration of Liturgical Conscience

In 2006, this liturgical ecumenism of the Phanar provoked great consternation and disapproval within official Orthodoxy, when it was promoted for the first time at the Feast of St. Andrew, during the visit of the then Pope Benedict. Yet, no matter how distressing spectacle it may be, it cannot be considered a surprise. Quite to the contrary: it was an inevitable consequence and certainly a natural continuation of the alteration and erosion of the dogmatic conscience of the ecumenists.

* * *

In his epistle to the monk Dionysios, St. Gregory Palamas describes in brief three kinds of atheism, the third being defined as rejection and denial of the theologies of the Holy Fathers, since “the theological teachings of the Saints are a delineation of true piety,” a “barrier and fortification of the true Faith.”

In a case, continues St. Gregory, in which someone should dare to eliminate even one of the theological teachings of the Fathers, “a mighty swarm of heretical perversities will rush in.”¹⁰

This is fully confirmed by the historical development of Orthodox ecumenism. This true piety, which must be encircled by the wall of Patristic theology, is characterized by St. Irenæus of Lyons as a “corpus veritatis,” a body of truth.¹¹ He who desires to receive nourishment and delight from this body of truth ought to listen to those who “have received a sure charism of truth with their succession of the Episcopate.”¹² The Saint calls us to be attentive, since there are also those who do not “keep unswerving in themselves the rule of truth [*regula veritatis*] which they received through Baptism.”¹³

¹⁰ *Συγγράμματα* (Writings), Vol. II, ed. Panagiotes Chrestou (Thessalonike: 1966), p. 483.

¹¹ *Against Heresies*, II.27.1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, col. 802C.

¹² *Ibid.*, IV.26.2, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, cols. 1053C-1054A.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I.9.4, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, col. 545B.

* * *

Among these last we should without doubt include also the innovating ecumenists, who, by reason of their acceptance of the syncretistic heresy of ecumenism, have forfeited the charism of truth and no longer possess experiential knowledge of the rule of truth. Consequently, their influence on the Church is proving tragic, since instead of guarding the *corpus veritatis* as the apple of their eye, they destroy it, "...dismembering the truth; and they transfer [passages] and transform [them], and make one thing out of another, and so deceive many."¹⁴



¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I.8.1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, col. 521A.



VI. Worship and Dogma

The body of truth, which is preserved in the Church and constitutes the essence of Orthodoxy, has had, and continues to have, two expressions in history: the worship of the Church and the dogmatic theology of the Church.

This is, moreover, indicated by the very term “Orthodoxy”: that is, on the one hand, right belief (ὀρθή δοξασία), a correct belief and understanding about God, and, on the other hand, right glorification (ὀρθή δοξολογία) of God, for the irrefragable bond between these two expressions has always been an especial hallmark of Orthodoxy.

In the early Church, this unity between worship and dogmatic teaching was expressed by the famous dictum: “*legem credendi lex statuat orandi*” (let the rule of prayer define the rule of faith).

* * *

Any Orthodox who are still capable, notwithstanding ever-increasing doses of the poison of the heresy of ecumenism, of scrutinizing these liturgical innovations of Patriarch Bartholomew with the criteria of the Patristic, Synodal, and liturgical Tradition, cannot fail to be led to the conclusion that the *lex orandi* of the Synod of Constantinople and of the ecumenists in general is in complete antithesis [to Orthodoxy] and defines a different *lex credendi*, to wit, a different rule of faith, a different faith from that sanctioned by the Œcumenical and local Synods and by the Divinely inspired writings of the Holy Fathers: in other words, the Orthodoxy of the ecumenists is one thing and that of the Holy Fathers is another.

Only with great pain of heart is it possible for one to follow this truly tragic development, observing that the heretical *lex credendi* of the ecumenists of the Phanar, as a deadly venom, is being increasingly transmitted, consolidated, and adopted by the official Orthodox Churches.





VII. Genuine Orthodoxy

The ever-memorable Archbishop Averky (†1976), of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, frequently referred in his homilies to the mutual exclusivity of genuine Orthodoxy and the inauthentic Orthodoxy of the ecumenists.

In one of these homilies, this true Zealot of the Traditions of the Fathers posed the following painful, but necessary question: “Do the terms ‘Christian’ and ‘Orthodox’ today reflect the essence of things?” His response was clear and categorical: No!

As a true Shepherd, he was concerned to raise the consciousness of the flock entrusted to him, so that they might be in a position to discern how the term “Orthodox” is used in our day. He would often remind the faithful that we are living in a era in which the term “Orthodox” is used even by those who “have apostatized from true Orthodoxy and become traitors to the Orthodox Faith and Church”; who “reject the true spirit of Orthodoxy,” together with all those who “have started down the path of mutual relations with the enemies of Orthodoxy, who propagandize for common prayer and even liturgical communion with those who do not belong to the Holy Orthodox Church,” as well as “the Ecumenical Patriarchs who recognize the Pope of Rome as the ‘head of the whole Christian Church’”; and all those who “actively participate in the ecumenical movement.”

And the Russian Confessor-Hierarch goes on to pose the following legitimate question: “Who will dare to deny us our lawful right not to recognize such people as Orthodox, even though they may persist in using that name and in bearing various high ranks and titles?”

* * *

These are the words that the ever-memorable Vladyka Averky had in mind when at various opportunities he would emphasize that [it is necessary] to re-examine the terminology that has been accepted up to the pres-

ent. It is insufficient in our time to say... “Orthodox”—it is essential to emphasize that one is not referring to an innovating modernist “Orthodox,” but to a true Orthodox.’¹⁵



¹⁵ “Are the Terms ‘Christian’ and ‘Orthodox’ Accurate for Our Times?” <http://hsir.org/p/pz>.



VIII. The Athonite Leadership

However, as much as the heart of the Orthodox believer is gladdened and edified when he reads the homilies of this great and important personality of genuine Orthodoxy of the twentieth century, namely, Archbishop Averky, so much—on the contrary—is he overcome by profound grief when he studies and analyzes what the superiors of the twenty ruling monasteries of the Holy Mountain wrote in their epistle to Patriarch Bartholomew in reaction to the recent ecumenical concelebration at the Phanar.

Likewise, we are perplexed and disquieted that a well-known polemical newspaper¹⁶ esteems this epistle, saying that it supposedly “satisfies the faithful people,” when at the same time this newspaper, in one of its lead articles,¹⁷ characterizes what took place at the Feast of St. Andrew as follows: “During the concelebration of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Pope at the Phanar the dogmas of the Faith were demolished.”

Now, are the editors carefully weighing their words? Do they really grasp the meaning of what they are saying? That is, do they actually understand what they are writing? Or are they heading toward superficial sentimentalism and an injudicious brand of anti-ecumenism, by indulging in populist sloganeering? How is it possible for them to present this epistle as satisfactory and anti-Papist, when it is quite obvious that its contents are blatantly disproportionate to the serious soteriological issues that they address in their lead article, in which the demolition of Orthodox dogmas at the Phanar is denounced in stentorian tones?

In their epistle, the Athonites certainly mention the anti-Papist tradition of their forefathers and state that

We find it hard to understand what went on during the festivities in commemoration of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called... We are beset by unease, since the foregoing events are an assault on the dogmatic and liturgical sensitivities of the Orthodox and provoke confusion in the consciences of Christians throughout the world.

¹⁶ *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Τύπος*, No. 2057 (February 13, 2015), p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Τύπος*, No. 2048 (December 5, 2014), p. 1.

In what follows, however, they state that there is something which disquiets them yet more than the destruction of Orthodoxy that has been effected and promoted for decades by their spiritual Father and Bishop, the ecumenist Patriarch of Constantinople:

We make no secret of the fact that we are especially grieved and unsettled by the possibility of a revival of the events that occurred here fifty years ago, which we hope will not recur, since we are still coping with their distressing aftermath.¹⁸

In truth, the questions that this mildly curious unease on the part of the Athonites poses for the conscience of every Orthodox Christian are most deeply distressing: What, in the end, is the problem, and what is it that bothers us? The apostasy of the Ecumenical Throne? or the proper reaction, anti-heretical in nature, namely, the act of breaking communion, envisioned and dictated by Patristic and Synodal Tradition; that is, walling off?

The attitude of the contemporary spiritual leaders of the Holy Mountain toward the confessional walling-off of their Fathers from the heretical Patriarch Athenagoras is clear and is expressed in a variety of ways.

In May of 1964 it was stated in print: "...at least ninety-five percent of the Athonite Fathers disapprove of the pro-Papal policy of the Ecumenical Patriarch, whom they have ceased to commemorate."¹⁹

Today, the Athonite Abbots do completely the opposite: they "do not aspire" to walk in the footsteps of their Fathers, desiring "that the ecclesiastical unity of the Orthodox everywhere and of this body of Hagiorites remain unshaken."²⁰

* * *

It would not be superfluous for us to emphasize, by way of reminder, that for Patristic Orthodoxy the sine qua non is not just any kind of unity, but the unity that is based, in the words of St. Maximos the Confessor, on "the correct and saving confession of the Faith."²¹

¹⁸ Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος, No. 2057 (February 13, 2015), p. 7.

¹⁹ Τύπος Ἑλληνικός - Ὁρθόδοξος, No. 40 (May 1964), pp. 1, 3.

²⁰ See note 17.

²¹ *On the Life and Contest of Our Holy Father Maximos the Confessor*, §24, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XC, col. 93D; St. Maximos the Confessor, "Epistle XII, 'To John the Cham-

This stance of the Neo-Athonites reveals a profound rift that separates these two generations of Athonites:

- The sons do not have the criteria for understanding the thinking of their Elders in such a way as to realize that at that time (1964), by virtue of their walling-off, they “were sedulous to deliver the Church from schisms and divisions”;²²
- consequently, it would be fitting for them, as those “who were walled off,” to receive now from their sons the “honor due to the Orthodox,” and for the sons to acknowledge their gratitude to them and not to “deprecate” them as parricides!



berlain, Concerning the Correct Dogmas of the Church of God, and Against Severos the Heretic”: “...the correct Faith in God, which is proclaimed in accordance with the Catholic Church of God” (*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XCI, col. 461C).

²² Canon XV of the First-Second Synod (see “A Contribution to the Theology of Orthodox Resistance and Walling-Off,” <http://hsir.org/p/r44>).



IX. The New Calendarist Anti-Ecumenists

The content and the spirit of the epistle of the Athonites to the Patriarch, a specimen of profound spiritual crisis, reminds us in many ways of the thinking and the spirit of the theological meeting organized by the New Calendar Metropolis of Piræus precisely two days before the visit of Pope Francis to the Phanar, on the subject: “The Fifteenth Canon of the First-Second Synod and Rupture of Ecclesiastical Communion.”

The message that is being sent by these two primary centers of New Calendarist anti-ecumenism (the Holy Mountain and the Metropolis of Piræus) to Patriarch Bartholomew, the ringleader in the process of consolidating the panheresy of ecumenism within the realm of official Orthodoxy, is very clear: “We hasten to reassure you that this is just a war of words,” as the ever-memorable Professor Ioannes Kornarakes used to say.

* * *

The epistle of the Holy Community to Patriarch Bartholomew cannot in any way be deemed “satisfactory and anti-Papist,” on the basis of the criteria of the Orthodox Church’s anti-Papist Tradition of the past ten past centuries, to which we have previously referred. On the contrary, it completely justifies the concerns that certain Athonite Hieromonks and monks expressed in their open letter to the Abbots of the twenty ruling monasteries, strenuously protesting the stand of the Abbots toward the events at the Phanar during the Patronal Feast in 2006:

... The spiritual leadership of the Holy Mountain has, in recent years, not confronted these instances of apostasy with a vigorous and courageous confession, as Athonite Fathers did in the past... We have been scandalized by the silence and inaction of our spiritual leaders on the Holy Mountain.

And at the end of their confessional epistle, these protesting Athonites, clearly realizing the contradictory nature of their endeavor, since they are protesting while remaining in communion with the ecumenists, state:

Letters of protest sent from time to time by the Holy Community

to the Œcumenical Patriarch have brought about no results. It is no longer a time for words, but for actions.... We believe that after so many written and vocal protests and objections, and the retractions, withdrawals, and compromises, the only thing that will gladden the Orthodox and shame those of wrong belief is a cessation of the commemoration of the Patriarch and of all of those Bishops who are in agreement or are keeping silent.²³



²³ “In an Open Letter to the Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain, Monks Call for a Cessation of the Commemoration of the Œcumenical Patriarch,” <http://hsir.org/np5>.



X. Legitimate Questions

Now, how many more concelebrations of this type would the New Calendarist anti-ecumenists, who for various reasons still maintain communion with the ecumenists, have to observe in order to become fully aware of the impasse of their un-Patristic stance, and also of the corresponding responsibility that they bear for the entrenchment of Papocentric ecumenism within the ranks of the official local Orthodox Churches? Do they not understand that they are already too late? And that the tragic *déroutement* which, in their inconsistency, they themselves foresee, is inevitable?

We have seen this sort of thing [the Patronal Feast of 2006] before, and to all appearances we will see it more and more frequently, so that we might become more easily inured to it and thus proceed gradually, without reactions or controversies, to the restoration—as His All-Holiness has told us—of ‘full communion’ with the ‘primatial Sister Church of Rome.’²⁴

Perhaps the undisguised liturgical ecumenism of the Phanar, and more generally, indeed, of official Orthodoxy, ought finally to wake them up, in view of 2016, since it is without a shadow of doubt a propaedeutic to the true nature of the Great Synod of 2016?



²⁴ Presbyter Father Anastasios Gotsopoulos, ““Ἐν τοῖς Πατριαρχείοις... ‘Θρονική Ἐορτή με τὸν Ἁγώτατο’ ἢ ὅταν τὸ ὑπερφυῆς μυστήριον χρησιμοποιεῖται γιὰ νὰ ὑπηρετήσῃ σκοπιμότητες...” (‘In the Patriarchate’... ‘a Patronal Feast with His Holiness,’ or when the supreme Mystery is used in the service of expediency...), http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2014/12/blog-post_12.html.



XI. Concluding Postscript: The Boundaries and Yardstick of Holy Tradition

The “immaculate theology of Christians”²⁵ perennially teaches us that the faithful pray, worship, and glorify the Holy Trinity, confessing the Faith in which they were baptized and which the Saints and the Synods preserved and handed down to us.

Baptism and Faith, doxology and worship, Saints and Synods, are the boundaries and yardstick²⁶ of the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox. When the bond and reciprocity between these is shaken or even broken, we are already outside the realm of truth and salvation.

That is, the Christ of Baptism and Faith is not different from the Christ of doxology and worship, neither is He different from the Christ of the Saints and the Synods.

- We believe “in One” unique “Apostolic Church”;
- We are baptized in “one” unique Baptism;
- We glorify the Holy Spirit, Who “proceedeth from the Father” alone;
- We confess “with all the Saints”²⁷ that “this is the Faith of the Orthodox.”²⁸

* * *

(a) Let us remember that this conviction of the faithful, which the innovating ecumenists forthrightly reject, is incontrovertible and was decisively expressed by St. Basil the Great, the Revealer of heavenly things:

- “If, from the tradition of Baptism (for according to the logic of piety, as we are baptized, so also ought we to believe), we put forth a

²⁵ Cf. St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, XVIII.47, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 153C.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, XXIX.73, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 204C.

²⁷ Ephesians 3:18.

²⁸ “Συνοδικὸν τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Οἰκουμενικῆς Ζ' Συνόδου ὑπὲρ τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας” [“Synodal Decree of the Holy Seventh (Ecumenical) Synod in Defense of Orthodoxy”], in *Τριώδιον Κατανυκτικόν* (Athens: Ekdoseis “Phos,” 1987), p. 157a.

confession similar to our Baptism, [let our opponents grant us, by the same logic,] to ascribe glory in a manner similar to our Faith.”²⁹

• “We have made the confession of Faith, as it were, a source and mother of doxology. . . . So, are they [the innovators] now going to instruct us not to baptize according to the tradition that we have received; or not to believe as we have been baptized; or not to give glory as we have believed? Just let someone show that the sequential relationship of these to each other is not necessary and irrefragable, or that innovation in these matters is not the destruction of everything.”³⁰

• The faithful ought to go to the Lord, preserving the Faith “inviolate,” “maintaining the teaching received at Baptism in both the confession of Faith and in the offering of glory.”³¹

(b) Let us also remember that Sacred Tradition provides experiential testimony to the fact that Papist worship, liturgy, and doxology are not accepted by God or the Saints, a point which the innovating ecumenists now frankly and openly reject.

When the sacred Relics of St. Nicholas were translated and deposited in Bari, Italy (in the eleventh century), Divine myrrh began to flow in abundance from his blessed feet as though from two springs while the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated at the annual solemnity of the Translation of his Relics (May 20). This myrrh was collected in basins and pitchers.

The Divine Liturgy was chanted slowly, lasting up to three hours, so that the myrrh might run more abundantly and that the pitchers and vessels might be filled. So much heavenly fragrance was emitted from that source that the entire area of the Church was filled with it and the Christians almost fainted from its sweet scent, which was more powerful than the most precious of worldly perfumes. When the Divine Liturgy ended, that Divine myrrh ceased flowing. It was distributed throughout Italy or, more to be precise, throughout Europe, and through it innumerable miracles were wrought that counteracted every ailment of those who applied it with faith.

Such miracles occurred as long the Western Church was not anathematized and separated from the Eastern Church. But after it was anath-

²⁹ Cf. St. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, XXVII.67, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 193A.

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 193C.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, X.67, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 113C.

ematized, abiding in its heretical doctrines, and was finally separated from us, then it was that St. Nicholas ceased to accept the liturgy of the Latins and Papists. Indeed, if a Papist priest liturgized on that day, the myrrh did not run from his feet. For this reason, the Latins were compelled to summon an Orthodox Priest, who held to the dogmas of the Eastern Church, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. As soon as such a Priest began the Divine Liturgy—oh, the wonder!—that heavenly myrrh began at once to run from the Saint’s feet.

This is an awesome miracle, which should persuade all that the Divine Nicholas was not only a champion and herald, when alive, of the theology (Divinity) of the Son, teaching in the midst of the First Œcumenical Synod the doctrine that the Son is coëssential with the Father, but that, even after death, he is a defender of the true theology of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming with a silent tongue through his deeds that He does not proceed from the two Persons of the Holy Trinity, that is, the Father and the Son, according to the heretical babble of the Westerners, but from the Father alone, as the Eastern and Apostolic Holy Church of Christ professes in Orthodox manner.³²

(c) Let us remember, finally, that the Pan-Orthodox Encyclical of 1848, which expresses collectively and synodally (it was signed by the four Patriarchs of the East and their Holy Synods) the steadfast convictions of Orthodoxy vis-à-vis Papism, clearly and unconditionally proclaimed that which the innovating ecumenists now frankly and openly reject.

- “Among the heresies diffused, by what judgments the Lord knows, over a great part of the inhabited earth, at one time there was Arianism, and today there is Papism”;

- “Wherefore, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church...teaches in synod, yet again today, that the said novel doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son is essentially heresy, and that its adherents, whoever they may be, are heretics”;

- “This heresy has very many innovations linked to it, ...[and these have,] like monstrous births, together overcome even Old Rome,” which “has obtained the distinction and appellation of Papism.”³³

³² *Ὁ Μέγας Συνναξαριστὴς τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας*, Vbl. V [May], 5th ed. (Athens: Matthaios Langes, 1999), p. 508.

³³ Ioannes N. Karmires (ed.), *Τὰ Δογματικὰ καὶ Συμβολικὰ Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου*

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Now, is it possible for the innovating ecumenists to be within the bounds and criteria of dogmatic Faith and Truth when in word and deed they continually, consciously, and deliberately sunder the irrefragable connection between Baptism, Faith, and doxology (the rule of worship and the rule of faith), shifting and moving “the eternal boundaries, which our Fathers set”?³⁴



Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας (The Dogmatic and Credal Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church), Vol. II, 2nd ed. (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), pp. 986 (§ 4), 988 (§ 5), and 988-989 (§ 6).

³⁴ Cf. Proverbs 22:28.

