



† *Metropolitan Cyprian
of Oropos and Phyle*

**The Sacred Commemoration
of the Eighth Holy Œcumenical Synod,
Under St. Photios the Great,
November 879 – March 880**

SAINT



PHOTOS

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

2015



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of the Eighth Holy Œcumenical Synod,**
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Presentation
at the *Synaxis*
of the Clergy of our Church
in Southern Greece

Piræus, November 18, 2015 (Old Style)

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



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)

Presentation at the *Synaxis* of the Clergy of our Church in Southern Greece
Piræus, November 18, 2015 (Old Style)

The Sacred Commemoration of the Eighth Holy Œcumenical Synod, Under St. Photios the Great

November 879 – March 880¹

In Memory of
our Elder and Father Metropolitan
Cyprian, of blessed memory
(† May 17, 2013 [Old Style])



*Your Beatitude, our Archbishop and Father;
Holy Hierarchs;
Reverend Fathers;
Beloved Concelebrants, both Presbyters and Deacons:*

I call upon your good wishes and prayers that Christ, the True Light, may sign the light of His countenance upon us and that He may direct aright the steps of our discourse and thoughts at this blessed Clergy *Synaxis*, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, St. Photios the Great, and of all the Saints. Amen!

¹ A presentation delivered and commented on at the *Synaxis* of the Clergy of our Church in Southern Greece, in Piræus, at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Theotokos, on November 18, 2015 (Old Style). See the chronicle (<http://www.ecclesiagoc.gr/index.php/nea/826-eratik-synaksis-notiou-llados>), the second presentation, by His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion (<http://www.ecclesiagoc.gr/index.php/istorika/827-eisigisis-ieratikis-synaxews-klirikwn-noteiou-ellados>), the homily, by His Eminence, Metropolitan Photios of Demetrias, (<http://www.ecclesiagoc.gr/index.php/istorika/39-uncategorised/828-h-omologia-pisteos-orthodoxou-xristianou>), and the resolution (<http://hsir.org/p/k5y>).



I. Ecclesiology: Theology, Christology, Pneumatology, and Triadology



In the first place, I must thank the Holy Synod, which showed confidence in my unworthiness and assigned to me such a responsible task: namely, that I discuss the Eighth Œcumenical Synod, its great significance, its extremely timely message, and the necessity of instituting its commemoration and of incorporating it into the Orthodox Festal Calendar along with the preceding Œcumenical Synods, from the First to the Seventh.

I wish, from the very outset, to emphasize, and remind you of, the importance for Genuine Orthodox Christians, and also for all those struggling against the pan-heresy of ecumenism, of the issue of ecclesiology and of our unshakable faith that the Church is the One and unique Church of the Holy Apostles, the Holy Fathers, and the Holy Synods, identical ontologically, exclusively, and solely with the Holy Orthodox Church.

All Orthodox who have an authentic ecclesiological outlook confess, in the Symbol of Faith, that they “believe in One God, the Father,” that they “believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ,” and that they “believe in the Holy Spirit”; that is, they believe in the Holy Trinity. But they also confess that they “believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.”

It is well known that the Holy Fathers underscore, in this connection, the following vital point: the Church is placed in the same category as the Holy Trinity, and the same expression “I believe,” which expresses the soteriological content of our Holy Faith, applies also to the Church.

In other words: theology, Christology, and Pneumatology constitute the basis of ecclesiology, and are also on the same level as ecclesiology; that is, if the truth concerning one of these cardinal points of our Faith is shaken, then the mutual bond between them is broken, the unity of our Faith and credo is sundered, and we enter into the realm of heterodoxy and heresy.

Thus, the reason why Orthodox ecclesiology is characterized as theocentric, Christocentric, Pneumatocentric, and ultimately, Triadocentric becomes straightforwardly comprehensible.

We can also understand, by virtue of this consideration of our credo, why genuine Orthodoxy, from 1920 onwards, immediately discerned an ecclesiological heresy in the visage of ecumenism, insofar as this heresy proclaims in many and

various ways that the boundaries of the Church extend to domains beyond the revealed Truth; that is, to domains in which a Christology, Pneumatology, and Trinitology in direct contradiction to the Apostolic, Patristic, and Synodal Tradition are believed and experienced.

The polymorphous theology of the ecumenists concerning the supposed “Broad Church” is well known.² This innovative theology talks about “the Church in the broadest sense”; about “the Church of Christ in her totality” and “no longer about Orthodoxy alone”; about a “Church outside the Church,” “outside the walls,” “outside the canonical limits” and “ecclesiastical boundaries” of Orthodoxy.

For example, the late Metropolitan Damaskenos of Switzerland used to say: “We should be prepared to seek and to recognize the presence of the Spirit—which means the Church—outside our own canonical boundaries, with which we identify the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”;³ “only this attitude will allow us to recognize Churches outside our own ecclesiastical frontiers, frontiers which we tend all too often to equate in an exclusivistic way with salvation inside the One[, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church].”⁴

* * *

Holy Fathers:



II. Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and the Unifying Synod of 879–880



Permit me to remind you, in order to provide a firm foundation for the foregoing ideas, namely concerning the indissoluble relationship between theology, Christology, Pneumatology,

² See Archimandrite Cyprian Hagiokyprianites (now Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle), *Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement*, trans. Hieromonk Patapios and Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1997), p. 20.

³ Metropolitan Damaskenos of Switzerland, “Τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ” (The Holy Spirit in the Church), *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 260 (October 15, 1981), pp. 13-14 (an address that he delivered as Bishop of Tranoupolis, on October 18, 1981, in Lyons, France).

⁴ *Idem*, quotations from “Συνέδριο τοῦ ‘Συνδέσμου’ στὴ Γενεύη (31.3.–7.4.1995)” (The ‘Synedemos’ Congress in Geneva [March 31–April 7, 1995]), *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 517 (April 30, 1995), p. 10; *idem*, “Ἐἷς Κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα” (One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism), *Ἐπίσκεψις*, No. 518 (May 31, 1995), p. 16 (an address given on January 20, 1981, in Nice, France).

Triadology, and ecclesiology, that within the Church “God is glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,”⁵ as stated in the Apostolic Canons. The Holy Trinity dwells in the Church and directs everything in Her, as the Divine Chrysostomos says: “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit administer all things”⁶ in the Church; the Church, as St. Cyprian of Carthage teaches, is “a People united by the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”⁷

Where, therefore, there is the true Faith concerning the Holy Trinity, there too are the Church and salvation; and, as St. Irenæus teaches, all who “are outside the Truth...are outside the Church” (*omnes eos qui sunt extra veritatem, id est qui sunt extra Ecclesiam*).⁸

Possessing a profound and experiential understanding of the soteriological significance of all this, St. Photios the Great convened the Eighth Œcumenical Synod in Constantinople, in the Church of the Wisdom of God [Hagia Sophia—TRANS.] (November 879–March 880), during the reign of Emperor Basil the Macedonian (867–886).

This Synod was convened “for the purpose of accomplishing the restoration, on the one hand, of peace and unity in the Church of Constantinople, and on the other hand, of full communion between the Churches of Old and New Rome.”⁹

However, restoration of full communion between the Churches of Constantinople and Rome could not be attained, owing to previous decisions directed personally against St. Photios the Great by the Roman Popes Nicholas I (858–867) and Adrian II (867–872) and, especially, the decisions of the false Latin Synod of Constantinople held in 869–870, which has never been recognized by the Orthodox Church, although ever since the eleventh century the Roman Catholics have regarded it as, allegedly, the Eighth Œcumenical Synod.

The unjust and uncanonical decisions issued by the Latins against Patriarch Photios in Rome (863 and 869) and in Constantinople (869–870) provoked a schism. Since, therefore, that accursed schism was lifted by the true Eighth Œc-

⁵ Apostolic Canon XXXIV, in G. Ralles and M. Potles (eds.), *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν Κανόνων* (Collection of the Divine and sacred Canons) (Athens: G. Chartophylax, 1852–1859), Vol. II, p. 45.

⁶ “Homily LXXXVI on St. John,” §4, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LIX, col. 472.

⁷ *On the Lord’s Prayer*, 23, *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. IV, col. 553.

⁸ *Against Heresies*, IV.33.7, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, col. 1076BC.

⁹ Pavlos Menebisoglou, Metropolitan of Sweden, *Ἱστορικὴ Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τοὺς Κανόνας τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας* (Historical introduction to the Canons of the Orthodox Church) (Stockholm: 1990), p. 494; cf. Blasios I. Pheidias, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία* (Church history) (Athens: 1972), Vol. II, pp. 102–131.

umenical Synod (879–880), the Orthodox called it a “Synod of Union,”¹⁰ and there is no doubt that, as President of this unifying Synod, “St. Photios the Great contributed greatly to the restoration of peace.”

It has been quite rightly observed that

Without doubt, the Synod of 879-880, which convened in the Church of the Wisdom of God, under the presidency of the great and most wise Patriarch Photios, with official representatives of all the other Patriarchs in attendance, and which deliberated freely and decided, according to precedent, on very important matters, bears ‘not only the external, but also all of the internal hallmarks of an Œcumenical Synod,’ issuing momentous decisions for the entire Church.¹¹

It should be noted that the Schism, which was lifted by the Eighth Œcumenical Synod, was due to the conflict between St. Photios and Pope Nicholas, owing to the Pope’s interference in Bulgaria and his adulteration of the Symbol of Faith through the heretical addition of the *Filioque*, and also on account of his attempt to impose Papal Primacy. All of these events undermined the aforementioned structural principles of the unitary Orthodox ecclesiology.

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¹⁰ Ioannes Karmires, *Tà Dogmatikà καὶ Συμβολικὰ Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (The dogmatic and credal monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church), 2nd ed. (Athens: 1960), p. 266.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 262-263; Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, Archbishop of Athens, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης* (The Primacy of the Bishop of Rome), 2nd ed. (Athens: “Ekklesia,” 1964), p. 198.



Your Beatitude; Holy Hierarchs; Reverend Fathers:

III. The Eighth Œcumenical Synod



I invoke your attention and patience, that I might offer a more detailed presentation of the Eighth Œcumenical Synod.

This Synod convened

- under the presidency of the “most holy Œcumenical Patriarch Photios”;¹²

- about three hundred and ninety Bishops and Episcopal representatives took part;¹³

- Pope John VIII appointed three delegates; and representatives of the three Patriarchates of the East also participated;

- the proceedings of the Synod commenced in November of 879 and concluded in March of 880;

- seven sessions were held in all, and the transactions of this historic Synod in Hagia Sophia, “composed in Greek and preserved”¹⁴ and published in 1705 by the illustrious Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem (1669–1707), as witnessed by a manuscript in the Athonite Monastery of Iveron.¹⁵

The Holy Synod of 879–880 “was one of the most important Synods in the history of the Church,”¹⁶ and, comprising three hundred and ninety “Fathers, both Eastern and Western, representing the five Patriarchates, presented an imposing spectacle such as had not been seen since the time of the Fourth Œcumenical Synod of Chalcedon.”¹⁷

The Synod of Hagia Sophia under St. Photios the Great bears all of the hall-

¹² Mansi, Vol. XVII, col. 373A.

¹³ Menebisoglou, *Ιστορική Εισαγωγή εις τούς Κανόνας*, pp. 499, 506-507.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 503.

¹⁵ Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, *Τόμος Χαράς* (Tome of joy) (Thessalonike: Ekdosis B. Regopoulou, 1985), pp. 257-386, 387-433. See also Karmires, *Δογματικά και Συμβολικά Μνημεία*, Vol. I, pp. 268-269; Protopresbyter John Romanides, *Δογματική και Συμβολική Θεολογία τής Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (The dogmatic and symbolic theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church) (Thessalonike: Ekdosis P. Pournara, 1982), Vol. II, pp. 164-187.

¹⁶ Menebisoglou, *Ιστορική Εισαγωγή εις τούς Κανόνας*, p. 263.

¹⁷ Karmires, *Δογματικά και Συμβολικά Μνημεία*, Vol. I, p. 262.

marks of an Œcumenical Synod, both outwardly and inwardly, and consequently “it is not at all surprising that it was regarded as the Eighth Œcumenical Synod by [Patriarch Euythmios I (907–917)], Theodore Balsamon, Neilos of Thessalonica, Neilos of Rhodes, Symeon of Thessalonica, Mark of Ephesus, Gennadios Scholarios, Dositheos of Jerusalem, Constantine Oikonomos, and” many “others,”¹⁸ such as the important “Dialogue of a Certain Hieromnemon,”¹⁹ and by our contemporaries, St. Nectarios of Pentapolis, Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadoupoulos, Francis Dvornik, Archimandrite Basileios Stephanides, Father John Romanides, Protopresbyter George Metallinos, Metropolitan Hierotheos Blachos, *et al.*²⁰

And this Synod also called itself Œcumenical in many places in its Proceedings and Canons,²¹ and Archimandrite Basileios Stephanides writes that “since it has not been officially recognized as the Eighth Œcumenical Synod, any Œcumenical Synod that may be convened in the future ought to deal with this issue.”²²

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¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Dositheos, *Τόμος Χαράς*, pp. 594–595, §§78–80.

²⁰ St. Nectarios, Metropolitan of Pentapolis, *Μελέτη Ιστορική περι τῶν Αιτίων τοῦ Σχίσματος* (An Historical Study Concerning the Causes of the Schism) (Athens: Ekdoseis N.D. Panagopoulou, 1988), Vol. I, pp. 273–292; Menebisoglou, *Ιστορική Εισαγωγή εἰς τοὺς Κανόνας*, p. 510; Archimandrite Basileios K. Stephanides, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία* (Church history), 6th ed. (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos “Aster,” 1998), p. 364; Archimandrite Basileios Karagiannes, “Ἡ Σύνοδος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ 879–880 εἶναι Οἰκουμενική Σύνοδος” (The Synod of Constantinople of 879–880 is an Œcumenical Synod), *Ἀπόστολος Βαρνάβας* (Cyprus), No. 10 (October 1991), p. 317.

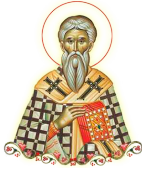
²¹ Karmires, *Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα*, Vol. I, p. 262; Menebisoglou, *Ιστορική Εισαγωγή εἰς τοὺς Κανόνας*, p. 510.

²² Stephanides, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία*, p. 364.



Reverend Fathers:

IV. The Canonical Elements and the Work of a Truly Œcumenical Synod



It is, however, time for us to identify “all of the canonical elements necessary for the convocation, work, and decisions of an Œcumenical Synod,”²³ which elements, indeed, the illustrious and clearly anti-Papist Synod of Constantinople brings together in (1) “its convocation as an Œcumenical Synod, at which the five ancient Patriarchal thrones were represented”; (2) “its convocation by Emperor Basil I the Macedonian (867–886),” who “in fact, together with his sons, was the first to sign the dogmatic decree (“Ορθος) of the Synod and its Acts”; (3) “the large number of its members (338–390 Bishops)”; (4) “the functioning of the Synod in conformity with the traditional canonical functioning of the Œcumenical Synods”; (5) “its canonical regulations” (it promulgated three Canons); (6) “its stipulations about matters of Faith,” wherein, on pain of anathema, it designated that the Sacred Symbol of Faith (the Creed) was unalterable and inviolable; (7) “its clear awareness of its authenticity as an Œcumenical Synod,” as this is expressed “in its decision to number the Seventh Œcumenical Synod with the preceding Œcumenical Synods, which only Œcumenical Synods were entitled to do”;²⁴ (8) “the decisions made in this Synod, which were consonant with the decrees of the previous Œcumenical Synods, in accordance with the Tradition of the Church.”²⁵

The work accomplished by the great Synod of 879-880 was momentous both for that troubled period and for the future of the Church

- it functioned in a unitive spirit on the basis of dogmatic Truth and canonical Tradition;
- it condemned the alteration of the Symbol of Faith through the addition of the *Filioque*;
- ratified the Sacred Symbol as it was handed down to us by the first two Œcumenical Synods;
- and rejected the distortion of the simple Primacy of Honor due to the

²³ Karagiannes, “Η Σύνοδος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ 879-880,” p. 315.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

²⁵ Papadopoulos, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, p. 198.

Bishop of Rome, who had transformed this into an administrative Primacy of Power over the entire Church.

St. Photios the Great also acted in a unitive spirit, refuted the Papal Primacy of Power and the adulteration of the Symbol of Faith with incontrovertible arguments, set forth the Orthodox positions with candor and clarity, and called upon the representatives of Pope John VIII to renounce their errors, which had led to the schism of 867.

St. Nectarios of Pentapolis states emphatically that

[t]he Eighth Œcumenical Synod has great importance [because] in this Synod Photios was triumphant... his struggles for the independence of the Eastern Church were crowned with total success, and the Truth of Orthodoxy, for which he had toiled so hard, prevailed... In a word, the triumph was complete: it was a political, an ecclesiastical, and a personal triumph.²⁶

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²⁶ St. Nectarios, *Μελέτη Ιστορική περί τῶν Αἰτίων τοῦ Σχίσματος*, Vol. I, pp. 288-289.



Holy Fathers:

V. Three Crucial Observations



I will conclude my analysis with three crucial observations.

First: an awareness that the Great Synod of Hagia Sophia, of 879–880, was the work of the inspired and far-sighted Patriarch Photios of Constantinople, the Confessor and Equal to the Apostles, the great Father and Œcumenical Teacher of the Church, impels us to believe that “the most fitting honor for the Saint... is that this Synod be reckoned as the Eighth, together with the other seven Œcumenical Synods.”²⁷

Second: the conception of this great Synod as unifying renders it a model in any sincere endeavor to reunite the divided Christians of East and West, since it attests to the Divine Mystery of Tradition imparted through the Holy Fathers and to authentic Patristic conciliarity.²⁸

1. “It sought the unity of the Church first and foremost in the unity of Faith and in the preservation not only of the content of the Faith, but also of the formulation thereof by the Œcumenical Synods, and it anathematized any verbal addition, subtraction, or alteration of that content”,²⁹

2. “the unity of the Church is founded also on the canonical regulations of the Œcumenical Synods”,³⁰

3. “ecclesiology ought to be expressed through the Synodal system.”³¹

Third: the two preceding observations lead us to understand why the so-called Great Synod of 2016, under the aegis of the ecumenists, has excluded from its agenda any reference to the Holy Synod of St. Photios the Great and has also avoided calling it an Œcumenical Synod.

If the ecumenist Synod of 2016 were to accept these two points, then it would

²⁷ Karagiannes, “Η Σύνοδος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ 879-880,” p. 319.

²⁸ Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, “The Divine Mystery of the Primacy of Truth” (a Panegyric on the occasion of the *Synaxis* of the Three Holy New Hierarchs, Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Eugenikos), in “Synodal Celebration of the *Synaxis* of the Three Holy New Hierarchs,” <http://hsir.org/p/svr>.

²⁹ Karagiannes, “Η Σύνοδος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ 879-880,” p. 318.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 319

have to recognize the Holy Synod of 879–880 as the Eighth Œcumenical Synod; then it would have to accept the anti-Papist theology of this Holy Synod; then it would have to adopt the criteria that it sanctioned for any well-intentioned unitive process, in order to be God-pleasing and Orthodox.

* * *





Reverend Fathers:

VI. Message and Witness



I have addressed in a concise fashion the significance of what is truly the Eighth Œcumenical Synod, under St. Photios the Great.

Its Divinely inspired dogmatic decree and its decisions clearly and categorically prohibited any alteration or adulteration of Orthodox ecclesiology, since they preserved the Symbol of Faith undistorted, as well as the theocentric, Christocentric, Pneumatocentric, and Triadocentric character of its ecclesiology.

In view of the crowning apostasy of the ecumenists in 2016, we ought to send them a forceful message: it is the message of the Eighth Œcumenical Synod, which is anti-Papist and, at the same time, preëminently anti-ecumenist.

Our Holy Synod has already recognized the ecumenical authority of this Holy Synod, thereby expressing the ecclesiological conscience of Orthodoxy, through its Confession of Faith,³² with which His Eminence, Metropolitan Photios of Demetrias will treat subsequently.

It is the obligation and task of a Great and Genuine Pan-Orthodox Synod to issue a formal proclamation of its ecumenical status and also to number it with the Seven Œcumenical Synods.

For the time being, we can institute its celebration on an annual basis, which has, moreover, already occurred in various places.³³

Along with all of the analyses and proposals of the two following speakers, we will, by the Grace of God, be able to send out a very strong message *against* ecumenism and to offer a correct witness *for* Genuine Orthodoxy, “that the world may believe.” Amen!

* * *

³² See “The Confession of Faith of the Genuine Orthodox Christian,” on p. 19 of the Appendix.

³³ An admirable service in honor of the Eighth Œcumenical Synod is available at http://www.im-pantokratoros.gr/dat/storage/dat/270AA753/8_oik_synodos.pdf. Our Holy Synod has decided that the Eighth Œcumenical Synod be celebrated on November 14, the commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas, if it falls on a Sunday, or on the Sunday after November 14, together with the Ninth Œcumenical Synod, since both of these Synods are clearly anti-Papist in nature. Furthermore, the Eighth Œcumenical Synod commenced its proceedings in November of 879.



VII. Appendix

1. The Personality of St. Photios the Great



It would be good to advert to the robust personality of our Father among the Saints Photios the Great, Equal to the Apostles, Patriarch of Constantinople, the Confessor (*ca.* 820–891), whose memory is celebrated on February 6.

St. Photios the Great, a very gifted man, was one of the most important figures in the spiritual and ecclesiastical life of the Byzantine period. He received a very broad education, since from his youth “he showed great zeal for the study of philosophy, theology, mathematics, logic, philology, rhetoric, medicine, natural science, and, more generally, every discipline of his era.”³⁴

Even the West, in spite of its prejudices, bows before his greatness, for it recognizes that “Photius was one of the most wonderful men of all the Middle Ages” and regards him “as the greatest scholar of his time, and as, in every way, the greatest man in the Byzantine Church”; he was “a sort of universal genius, philosopher, philologist, theologian, lawyer, mathematician, natural scientist, orator, poet. His extant works fill five volumes of Migne.”³⁵

This Saint, who is synonymous with light, was from an aristocratic family, which belonged to the Iconodules, and on account of this “suffered severe persecution from the Iconoclasts during the second period of Iconoclasm (813-843).”³⁶ His parents, Sergios the *Spatharios* [a member of the imperial ceremonial bodyguard—TRANS.] and Irene, are celebrated by our Church as Saints and Confessors on May 13. “Byzantine by nationality (Sergios the Confessor), the son of noble and wealthy parents, he flourished in the time of the Iconoclasts,” during the reign of Theophilos (829-842), “in disagreement with whom he departed from Constantinople with his wife Irene and their children, and died in exile.”³⁷ Photios himself writes that an “heretical synod” and an “as-

³⁴ Blasios I. Pheidas, “Φώτιος ὁ Μέγας” (Photios the Great), in *Παγκόσμιο Βιογραφικὸ Λεξικὸ* (Universal biographical dictionary), Vol. IX-b (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1991), p. 375d.

³⁵ Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, 2nd ed. (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1908), pp. 138-139.

³⁶ Pheidas, “Φώτιος ὁ Μέγας,” p. 375d.

³⁷ Menebisoglou, *Ιστορικὴ Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τοὺς Κανόνας*, p. 501, n.

sembly of Iconoclasts...anathematized” not only his family, but also himself.³⁸

After the collapse of Iconoclasm (843), he assumed high office in the Palace as Protospatharios [head of the imperial ceremonial bodyguard—TRANS.] and Protoasekretes [chief imperial secretary—TRANS.] and taught in the Higher School of Magnaura. He ascended to the Patriarchal Throne of Constantinople for the first time in 858. He came into conflict with Pope Nicholas owing the interference of the latter in Bulgaria and the adulteration of the Symbol of Faith through the heretical addition of the *Filioque*, and also owing to the attempt to impose Papal Primacy. Uncanonically dethroned in 867, he ascended the throne again in 878, but was dethroned anew in 886. He reposed in peace as a monk on February 6, 891.

It has been very rightly observed that “the truly astounding missionary activity of the Byzantines throughout the Slavic world,” which altered the religious map of Eastern Europe in the ninth century, “was the lofty and inspired plan of the great Patriarch, who believed fully in the œcumenical outlook of the Christian Empire of Byzantium.”³⁹

The Divine Photios “proved through circumstances to be equal to the demands and dangers of his era,” and “was a twofold symbol throughout the Turkish domination: for the Orthodox...he was a symbol of Orthodoxy, whereas for the Latins he was a hated sign of contradiction.”⁴⁰

Objective Testimony from Niketas of Paphlagonia, the most implacable enemy of St. Photios the Great

Photios was not a man of ignoble and obscure origins, but was born to parents who were noble and eminent in worldly terms, and for his secular wisdom and understanding he was most highly esteemed of all who were involved with affairs of state. Indeed, he so excelled in grammar and poetry, in rhetoric and philosophy, and also in medicine, and in practically every secular discipline that he not only, one might say, surpassed those of his own generation, but also rivalled the ancients. For all things came together in him: natural aptitude, zeal, and wealth. On account of the latter he was able to acquire books of all kinds.⁴¹

³⁸ “Epistle LXIV,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CII, col. 877BC.

³⁹ Pheidias, “Φώτιος ὁ Μέγας,” p. 377d.

⁴⁰ Nikolaos B. Tomadakes, “Φώτιος ὁ Α” (Photios I), in *Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἱστορικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια*, Vol. XII (Athens: 1968), col. 30.

⁴¹ *Life of St. Ignatios, Archbishop of Constantinople*, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CV, col. 509AB.

2. The Confession of Faith of the Genuine Orthodox Christian

Part One

1. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all Ages. Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from the Heavens and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became Man.

And, crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried.

And on the third day He arose, according to the Scriptures.

And ascended into the Heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father.

And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who

together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; Who spake through the Prophets.

In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.

2. In addition to this, I embrace and accept the Holy Seven Œcumenical Synods, convened for the purpose of safeguarding the Orthodox dogmas of the Church, and the local Synods that they endorsed and confirmed.

3. I espouse all of the definitions of the right Faith set forth by the Holy Fathers, under the guidance of the illuminating Grace of the All-Holy Spirit, as well as the Sacred Canons, which those blessed men handed down to the Church for the governance of the Holy Church of Christ and the good ordering of morals, composing them in accordance with the Apostolic Traditions and the intent of the Divine teaching of the Gospels.

4. All that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of the Orthodox professes and teaches, this do I, too, profess and believe, adding nothing, subtracting nothing, changing nothing, either of the dogmas or the traditions, but

abiding by these and accepting them with fear of God and in good conscience; all that She condemns as heterodox teaching and repudiates, this do I, too, condemn and repudiate forever.

5. I offer ready obedience in ecclesiastical matters to the Holy Synod, as the highest authority of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, which constitutes the succession of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in Greece, and to the canonical Bishops and Presbyters under Her.

6. I believe and confess that the Orthodox Faith is not “of men,” but derives from the revelation of Jesus Christ, preached by the Holy Apostles, confirmed by the Holy Œcumenical Synods, handed down by the most wise Œcumenical Teachers, and authenticated by the blood of the Holy Martyrs.

7. I accept, along with the decisions of the Holy Seven Œcumenical Synods, those of the First-Second Synod of 861; in addition to these, I unwaveringly espouse the decisions of the Holy Synod convened by St. Photios in Constantinople, in 879–880, as well as the Synodal Tome of the Synod of Blachernae in Constantinople, in 1351, at the time of St. Gregory Palamas and the Holy Patriarch Kallistos I, in the firm belief that these Synods possess Œcumenical and Catholic validity and authority in the Orthodox Church.

8. Moreover, I give assent and credence to the decisions of the Holy Pan-Orthodox Synods convened in 1583, 1587, and 1593, which abhorred and condemned the introduction into the Orthodox Church of the so-called Gregorian (New) Calendar promulgated by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582.

9. In furtherance thereof, I accept and acknowledge as Œcumenical and Catholic documents of the Orthodox Faith both the Patriarchal Tome of 1756 concerning Baptism of the heterodox and the Synodal Encyclical of 1848 of the Most Holy Patriarchs of the East, as well as the Synodal Decree of 1872, which condemned phyletism.

Part Two

1. I regard ecumenism as a syncretistic pan-heresy, and participation in the so-called ecumenical movement, which was inaugurated at the beginning of the twentieth century, as a denial of the genuine Catholicity and uniqueness of the Orthodox Church, firmly believing that one who agrees with and participates in this heresy is lapsed in the Faith and is not in communion with the Church.

2. Likewise, I reject and in no way accept the 1920 Proclamation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople “To the Churches of Christ Everywhere,” on the grounds that it contains a complete plan for implementing the heresy of ecu-

menism in practice and that it anticipates the calendar reform prepared by the so-called Pan-Orthodox Congress of 1923 and put into effect in Greece in 1924, thereby violating the decisions of the three Pan-Orthodox Synods of the sixteenth century.

3. In consequence of the foregoing, I also regard those Orthodox who took part in the foundation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 and who since then have been active and functioning members thereof, thus cultivating inter-Christian and interfaith ecumenism, as lapsed in the Faith.

4. Finally, I reject and in no way endorse the so-called Pan-Orthodox Consultations (1961 to the present), which facilitated the reprehensible, invalid, and meaningless “Lifting of the Anathemas Between the Eastern and the Western Church” in 1965, and which have since then been paving the way, from an ecumenist perspective, for the convocation of the so-called Great Pan-Orthodox Synod, with a view to the complete acceptance, ratification, and dogmatization of the syncretistic heresy of ecumenism.

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Unto God
be glory and thanksgiving!
Amen!

