

THE GENUINE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GREECE
AN *Official* HISTORY

English Translation © 2024
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Official History of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece
Blessed by Metropolitan Demetrius of America.

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Chief Editor
Christophoros Gorman

Dedicated To

The Faithful Orthodox Christians of the
Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece



Table of Contents

Synodal Preface

Editors' Preface

Chapter I

The Preparation of the Calendar Reform
In the Orthodox Church, *1*

Chapter II

The Change of the Calendar in the Church of Greece &
The Praiseworthy Reaction of Orthodox Christians, *5*

Chapter III

Acquiring Episcopal Leadership &
The Reaction of the Innovators, *15*

Chapter IV:

New Persecutions of the Genuine Orthodox &
Their Inner Turmoil, *21*

Chapter V

The Great Persecution of 1951 & Subsequent Developments
Until the Repose of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, *27*

Chapter VI

Being Orphaned &
The Establishment of a New Holy Synod, *65*

Chapter VII

The Indisputable Apostolic Succession of the Church of the Genuine
Orthodox Christians of Greece, *73*

Chapter VIII

The Course of the Genuine Orthodox Church
After 1970, *79*

Chapter IX

A Period of Great Internal Trial, *85*

Chapter X

Period of Reconstruction & Hope, *97*

Appendix I

The Confession of Faith of the Genuine Orthodox Christian, *103*

Appendix II

The Ecclesiastical Union of the Orthodox Community in Resistance with
the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece, *107*

Bibliography, 123



Synodal Preface

The year 2014 marked the anniversary of the passing of ninety years since the calendar innovation of 1924. Then, under the pretext of a small and supposedly insignificant change in the date of the Feasts, a great and decisive step was taken for something new in the negative sense, for something completely novel in the life of the Orthodox Church: a new ecclesiological heresy, Ecumenism, began to be imposed.

The heresy of Ecumenism began to be implemented gradually, in a manner as imperceptibly as possible, so that it would not be noticed by most, and its poison, given in small doses, corroded the consciences of the faithful to such an extent that it made the church of the innovators “new,” i.e., a part of the heresy in which it was captured. In the name of supposed love, the Holy-Spiritual love of the Truth, the only true and salvific love, was abandoned.

From that first implementation of the innovation of 1924, a heroic struggle began for the preservation of the priceless treasure of Orthodoxy, that of the Holy Struggle of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, in our homeland and elsewhere.

This heroic yet tragic epic is largely unknown to modern Greeks, even to the faithful of our Church; it is either forgotten, misrepresented, or even distorted. Therefore, it is necessary to present it in a responsible, comprehensive, understandable, and concise manner.

Bearing this in mind, our Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, under His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos, proceeded to publish and circulate the present work. Its purpose is mainly informative, but also apologetic.

There is an urgent need for the new generations, our young people, to know the history of our Church. There is a need to clarify certain things. And also, there is a need to clarify the origins of our canonical clergy, because many things are unfortunately said and heard by those who are ignorant of reality or, worse, distort and severely misrepresent it.

It is necessary for all of us to appreciate the weight of the heritage and responsibility that we Genuine Orthodox Christians bear, in order to be inspired, to be guided, and to learn not only from the heroic, glorious, and excellent examples of the strugglers before us, but also from the mistakes that were made, so that they are not repeated.

With this work, the apparent lack of an informative and reliable study is somewhat addressed, providing objective information to every researcher, as well as to every well-intentioned seeker of truth among contemporary thinking people, on the subject of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, commonly known as the “Old Calendarists.”

Our work, despite its completeness and reliability, is not, by its nature and purpose, exhaustive and detailed. It states what is necessary with particular emphasis on certain topics, persons, and eras. It would be our joy and our wish for it to serve as the spark, the foundation, and the beginning for a more comprehensive and systematic work with direct references to sources and texts.

However, our present work should still be a testament of life and experience from the richness of the Church’s heritage for contemplation, reflection and self-criticism.

It is also the fulfillment of a debt to the recent history of those before us, those who are present and those who will come after, but also a promise, before God and men, that we will continue the good fight at all costs, “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith!”

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE GENUINE
ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GREECE



Editors' Preface

In 2015, the Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece produced this brief volume on the history and struggle of the GOC for the edification of those within the Church and for those who are discovering the True Orthodox Church for the first time. This volume does not present an all-encompassing history of the GOC but instead serves as a general timeline and explanation of events that have occurred in the Church's history, year by year, from the beginning of our struggle leading up to the unification of our GOC with the Orthodox Community in Resistance, along with our Old Calendar Sister Churches of Bulgaria under the leadership of Metropolitan Photiy of Triaditsa and His Eminence Metropolitan Agafangel, the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad.

The volume you now hold is the first English translation of the Greek original. During the editorial process, we found that much of the history presented, and the manner in which it was presented, would be more familiar to those living in Greece. Therefore, many explanatory footnotes were added out of necessity to expand the context and understanding throughout the book for those readers in the United States and elsewhere. All historical footnotes that were not part of the original Greek edition are annotated as (Editors' Footnote) and represent the historical understanding and interpretation of the editors, not the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece or its Sister Churches.

Additionally, this volume includes two appendices not found in the Greek original. These appendices contain our Official Confessional and Ecclesiological Statements produced by the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, agreed upon and signed by its Sister Churches. We ask for your forgiveness for any editorial shortcomings that may exist, and we pray that this brief overview of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece serves for your spiritual edification.

In Christ,
Subdeacon Nektarios Harrison, M.A.
Christophoros Gorman
Editors



Chapter I

The Preparation of the Calendar Reform In the Orthodox Church

From the beginning of the past 20th century, the influence of the surrounding atmosphere in the heterodox world became apparent in the realm of the Orthodox Church. The so-called unification processes, the ecumenical efforts, for coöperation and unification of the various Christian denominations, especially in the Protestant world, had begun. But the Papists were not above propagating their own heretical inventions, like their Western Gregorian Calendar.

The Orthodox Church until the end of the 19th century remained, in its official expression and confession, faithful to the tenets of its Synodal and Patristic Tradition, as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ on earth, the invincible Ark of Salvation. For this reason, it was never tempted until then by the “sirens” of supposed modernization in its divinely revealed Faith and Life, and decisively rejected every novelty and every kind of innovation as a dictate of the evil one.

In three Pan-Orthodox Synods, in 1583, 1587, and 1593, it condemned the new *Paschalion* and *Menologion* of Pope Gregory [XIII] of 1582, because it abolished the Paschal rule of the Church, as it had been divinely established by the First Ecumenical Synod of the Church in 325 in Nicaea of Bithynia.

In the early 20th century, however, a trend began in the Orthodox Church towards rapprochement with the Westerners, with the so-called “new branches” of Christianity, and a willingness to discuss changing the Patristic Calendar. This was expressed in an Encyclical of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1902. The Local Orthodox Churches responded negatively, and a possible change to the Ecclesiastical Calendar was considered — quite rightly — foolish, pointless, and dangerous for its unity.

Unfortunately, since then, fermentations began against the Tradition of the Church by high-ranking officials of the Orthodox Churches, who suffered a grievous alteration in their conscience, as they distanced themselves experientially from the sanctifying Tradition of the Church and adhered to the camp of secularized Christianity of the West or, worse, to anti-Christian secret societies and organizations. Thus, the Encyclical of the Patriarchate of Constantinople of 1920 *de facto* recognized all heretical communities as “Churches of Christ,” and proposed the necessary measures for promoting the formation of a “Fellowship of Churches,” modeled after the then “League of Nations,” with purely secular aims and objectives. As the first such measure for the fulfillment of this purpose, the establishment of a “common calendar” for the joint celebration of the feasts with all other Christians, regardless of their faith and origin, was foreseen.

However, this was something unprecedented and entirely unacceptable, according to the principles of Orthodox teaching and ecclesiology. That is why this ecumenical effort is known to have not brought any turn of repentance of the heterodox towards the Orthodox Church for nearly a century, but instead led the Ecumenists to distance themselves from the Church. To implement these foundationally destructive measures on both theoretical and practical levels, suitable individuals were found who coöperated in a fateful and decisive manner. For example, Meletios Metaxakis, who was uncanonically placed on the Throne of Constantinople in 1922, was undeniably a Mason.

He convened a Congress in Constantinople in May-June of 1923, which he even called “Pan-Orthodox,” although in reality only 10 individuals participated, with most patriarchates abstaining, and undertook the voting and promotion of ecumenical and secularizing reforms in the Orthodox Church. The Metaxakian Congress targeted the calendar of the Orthodox Church, according to the provisions of the preceding Encyclical

of 1920, and illegally and uncanonically decided on its “reform,” as well as that of the *Paschalion*, essentially accepting the condemned Papal Gregorian Calendar.

It must be emphasized in every way that the so-called “New Julian” or “Meletian” Calendar is synonymous and coincides with the Gregorian Papal Calendar, and this is what the New Calendarists accepted to their condemnation.

However, it is noteworthy that a Royal Decree in Greece, a few months earlier in January 1923, which was never revoked, established the new calendar for use by the State and stipulated the adherence to the Patristic Calendar for the Church.



Chapter II

The Change of the Calendar in the Church of Greece & The Praiseworthy Reaction of Orthodox Christians

In 1923, professor Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, was elected archbishop [of Athens] by a small Synod at the behest of the State. Within a short period, without consulting the other Orthodox Churches, without agreement, without notification or preparation, he unilaterally proceeded, despite the objections within his own Synod, to change the calendar. Thus, March 10, 1924, was suddenly renamed March 23 in a desperate leap of both height and depth.

The Orthodox faithful, despite the particularly difficult period at that time from every perspective (national division, the Asia Minor catastrophe, refugees, etc.), did not remain indifferent to that seemingly “small” change, but reacted with admirable persistence, fully justifying the description given to the People of God by the Orthodox Patriarchs of the Synod of 1848 as the “guardian of Orthodoxy.”

It is well known that the simple, disdained, but God-fearing Orthodox people of our country have said of the imposition of the New Calendar: “They have made us Franks!” The yoke of modernization has always been particularly repulsive and burdensome, and a great deal of blood was shed to prevent it from prevailing in the East. And now, with the seal of the archbishop and the [rifle] butt of the policeman, there has been imposed suddenly and dictatorially what could only have happened in the past in a nightmarish dream!

The faithful, inspired by their Orthodox conscience and intuition, opposed it decisively. They protested, they expressed their opposition in every Christian way, they felt betrayed and were imprisoned, but they did not lay down the “arms of justice.” The struggle began, a struggle that was enduring and dramatic. A struggle against the first practical implementation of the heresy of Ecumenism in the Church and for the inviolate retention of the deposit of Faith. It was therefore an anti-heretical struggle, for Faith and Tradition, always Godly and lawful. A schism was declared in the Church, which was the sole responsibility of the initiators of the innovation. It was not a struggle for 13 days, as they tried to present it, but a struggle for the true meaning of the Church and its salvific work.

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In the Metropolitan Church of Athens, the Orthodox faithful, despite the prohibitions, kept vigil on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1924 according to the Patristic Calendar and three astonishing miracles occurred: Our Lady healed a deaf and paralyzed 7-year-old child, who spoke and walked; a paralyzed 17-year-old young woman, who also walked; and a deaf and paralyzed 30-year-old man, who also spoke. All this is evidence of divine favor to those Orthodox Christians who did not accept the innovation.

It is characteristic that the first Orthodox strugglers were laymen, people of all classes, but mostly simple, poor and humble, but brave and courageous. A few days after the innovation, these invisible heroes set up the “Association of the Orthodox” in Athens and began with their meager means, but with their great Faith as a resource, to inform public opinion through publications, speeches and other activities. Their lectures were attended by local personalities, such as the Historian and Professor at the University of Athens, Paul Karolidis, the Archivist Manuel Gedeon, Professor of Byzantine Ecclesiastical Music Constantine Psachos, etc.

John Sideris became president of the Association, and its members were Andrew Vaporidis, Adrian Papadimitriou, Basil Delivorias, etc., as well as the Monks Paisios (Finokalliotakis) and Chrysanthos (Vrettaros).

They would gather for prayer in homes or chapels, initially alone and without clergy, under the threat of persecution and violence from the State Church. Their perseverance in Christ produced results. In August 1924, six months after the innovation, the first two Clergymen, Hieromonk Parthenios (Iberitis) and Father John Floros, joined, who were appointed as spiritual leaders of the members of the Association of the Orthodox.

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The first Nativity of Christ of 1924 was celebrated in the Chapel of St. Therapon in Goudi, outside Athens, at that time. Around 3,000 believers gathered and despite the intervention of the forces of the police and army, headed by the military Governor of Athens, the resolute Orthodox resisted fearlessly and celebrated their Feast and Vigil with their Priest, Fr. Parthenios, who received the Holy Mystery with devotion and divine blessing.

The first Theophany of 1925 at St. George Xirotagaros in Faliro also had a dramatic turn of events. The intervention of the forces of the *gendarmerie*,¹ because democracy was allegedly being undermined, and the detention of about 30 believers in the police station, proved the fury of the persecutors and the steadfastness of the Orthodox Confessors. The “triumphant” exclamation of the police commander, after the physical search of the accused and the finding of only ecclesiastical objects on them, has remained proverbial ever since: “Well, with Gospels and crosses and prayer ropes, the Republic does not fall!”

As the persecution grew fiercer, the faithful of the Patristic Calendar were surprisingly increasing and other heroic clergy began to join the ranks of the Holy Struggle of Orthodoxy.

At the Vigil of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, from September 13-14, 1925, according to the ecclesiastical calendar, in the then deserted Byzantine Monastery of Saint John the Theologian in the settlement of Papagos in Attica, at the foot of Mount Hymettus, the great Miracle of the Divine Confirmation of our Holy Struggle took place. Around midnight, presided by the blessed Father John Floros with 2,000 believers, and while the men of the *gendarmerie* arrived with a persecuting intent, the Holy and Life-Giving Cross appeared in the heavens, bright as day, right above the holy group of vigilant Orthodox, illumining their hearts, warming their zeal and flooding them with divine support and blessing! Thus, the Holy Struggle was blessed from above and its persecutors were put to shame and their corrupt thoughts destroyed.

1 *Gendarmerie*. Refers to a military force charged with police duties among civilian populations. It is a type of law enforcement organization that combines both military and police functions. The primary roles of a *gendarmerie* typically include maintaining public order, enforcing the law, and conducting investigations, particularly in areas where military and police functions intersect (Editors’ Footnote).

In December 1925, the Association of the Orthodox (with official recognition in May 1926) was transformed into the “Greek Religious Community of Genuine Orthodox Christians” (the word “Genuine,” found in the Definition of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, was preferred to the derisive “Old Calendarists”). The Community began to actively establish parishes and branches all over Greece, because it was then that the rebuilding of privately owned churches began in many parts of the country.

Although there were ministerial orders and assurances of religious freedom, the persecution continued to worsen, the pressures intensified, but the faithful multiplied and their zeal strengthened.

Clergymen, hieromonks and monks also came from Mount Athos, from the ranks of the so-called Zealot Fathers, who had ceased commemorating the New Calendarist Patriarch of Constantinople, in order to assist in the struggle for Patristic Tradition. They brought to the faithful the ascetic ideal and, in addition to parishes and communities, began to establish significant holy monasteries, primarily for women and a few for men, first in Attica and then in other regions.

For this reason, persecutions also took place on Mount Athos. In 1927, nineteen zealot monks were deported by the police of Mount Athos, and others were released throughout Greece, while others were placed under confinement in various monasteries.

Also known is the incident of the attempted cutting of the beard of the innovative archbishop, Chrysostomos of Athens, at St. Constantine’s in Piraeus in 1927, by Constantine Karagiannidis, a “disgruntled” follower of the Patristic Calendar, who was experiencing the drama of the painful ecclesiastical division in his own house: his wife was a strong supporter of the New Calendar and so because of the innovative archbishop, the man had a “civil war” within his own family! And how many such “civil wars” have been declared since then, dividing homes and families and dividing our country! That attempt failed in part, and Karagiannidis was brought before the police, where, after due apology, he was finally acquitted.

Such actions, of course, are not praised, but they show the magnitude and the parameters of the problem caused by the schism on a practical and social level, something that the innovators, in the frenzy of their illegality, neither thought of nor considered.

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The persecutions then intensified throughout the country. On the orders of either the innovative archbishop or the local bishops, the security forces attacked the liturgical assemblies of the faithful and arrested the clergy, whom they abused, disrobed, shaved, imprisoned or exiled, and the ordinary lay believers were also treated brutally.

At the Vigil of the Archangels, in a celebrating Church in Mandra, Attica, in November 1927, the worst happened: a police force, which had surrounded the church early on, attacked after the Vigil to arrest the celebrant, Hieromonk Christophoros (Psallidas) from Piraeus. In an attempt to protect the priest from the police attack, the 27-year-old young mother of two minor children, Catherine Routis, was fatally beaten in the head by a policeman's buttstock and was taken to the "Evangelismos" hospital where she succumbed to her fatal injury on November 15/28, crowned by our Lord with the glorious crown of martyrdom.

This unjustly murdered New Martyr, the Protomartyr of our Holy Struggle, cries out and condemns the innovators and persecutors of piety! The "Blood of Mandra" denounces the tyranny and violence of the innovators and proves their spiritual barbarity and brutality, their injustice and lawlessness! Who took responsibility for this crime? Who suffered the consequences for it? Who repented and expressed their remorse? No matter how many similar questions are posed, they will not be answered. Those who sinned mortally against the Holy Mother Church, the innovators, must make amends to receive forgiveness from God and man, before it is too late.

In 1929, two groups of monks were sent from the Zealots of Mount Athos, who essentially constituted the spiritual leadership of the Holy Struggle during that difficult period. In coöperation with the Board of Directors of the Community, they worked for the support of the struggling and persecuted believers, for the enlightenment of the Greek people, and even for the restoration of the traditional Patristic Calendar of Orthodoxy in the innovative church.

For the latter purpose, Memoranda of the Community were sent from time to time both to the Holy Synod of the hierarchy of the church of Greece, such as the one of June 27, 1929, and to individual hierarchs. This resulted in the writing and submission of texts, memoranda and protests by hierarchs of the innovative church to their Synod concerning the impropriety of the introduction of the New Calendar, with proposals for

the return to the Church of the so-called Old Calendar for the pacification and cessation of the schism.

From the interesting and revealing discussion that took place then in the Synod, on July 4, 1929, a significant Proposal-Protest was submitted by Metropolitan Irenaeus of Cassandra denouncing the *coup d'état* change of the Calendar and praising the “children of the Church” devoted to the Festal Tradition, also co-signed by Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Basil of Dryinoupolis, with a referral of the matter for resolution and settlement to a Major Synod. But unfortunately, those prudent voices were not heard, the innovating archbishop imposed himself with lies, and the majority of the bishops maintained and continued a rigid and harsh stance, so that instead of healing, the division deepened even further.

It is noteworthy, however, that even the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in an encyclical issued in 1931, accepted that the calendar issue remains in dispute before the forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Synod. That is, they did not consider their innovation as a definitive and validated act, even though they supported it in every way and tried to impose it by force. That year (1931), the Community, representing 245 branches across the country, again submitted a Memorandum to the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece for the reinstatement of the Old Calendar and the cessation of anti-Christian persecutions. The hierarchy indeed discussed the matter and concluded, like Constantinople, that this issue could only be resolved by an Ecumenical Synod, whose decision would be authoritative and binding for all Orthodox Churches. At the same time, it appointed a five-member Committee of Bishops to exchange views with the Genuine Orthodox; however, the Committee’s work proved to be an attempt to impose the innovation, thereby demonstrating its contradictory nature.

A debate was also held in the Parliament in 1931 on the persecution of the “Old Calendarists.” All parties agreed that it was a question of law-abiding citizens with the right to perform their religious services without any restrictions, so that they would cease to be persecuted, even though some MPs spoke of them contemptuously.² But the Official Hierarchy, which considered the Genuine Orthodox as “uncouth troublemakers,” unfortunately had the power to enforce its persecutory desires against them.

2 MP is an abbreviation for Member of Parliament (Editors’ Footnote).

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The Genuine Orthodox, hoping and awaiting a solution to the issue and unwaveringly fighting for their principles, gained ground despite the persecutions. They demonstrated enviable resilience and established themselves as an autonomous entity, struggling hard for ecclesiastical Tradition in general and to prevent the adulteration and secularization of ecclesiastical life. In the following years, they even reached about 800 parishes throughout the country. They also published various books and magazines (*The Voice of Orthodoxy*, *The Herald of the Orthodox* etc.).

The repression against them was tragic: persecuting metropolitans led persecutory “operations,” disrupted devotional assemblies, interrupted Divine Liturgies, and even reached the horrific and unheard-of point of trampling on the Sacred Vessels and disrespectfully and blasphemously emptying their Divine contents, as happened, for example, in Desfina, Phocis, in 1932.

In that year (1932), among many other abominations, there was an attempt to demolish the church of the then newly built Holy Women’s Monastery of Saint Irene Chrysovalantou, the very popular miracle-working saint, in Lykovrysi, Attica, but this was not accomplished thanks to the miracle of the saint, through the sacrificial resistance of the sisterhood under the heroic abbess, Gerontissa Meletia (Kontaxis).

Theophany on the Patristic Calendar in 1933 in Palaio Faliro was attended by an impressive 30,000 Orthodox, a bustling sea of people that demonstrated its adamant adherence to un-innovated Orthodoxy.

In the same year (1933), the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in a letter dated October 27, asked the Greek government for its assistance “by all possible means” against “the rampaging pseudo-zealots”! So, the persecutory fury of the *Phanariots* against the Genuine Orthodox and even the Zealot Fathers is old history, and the lawless ones, as it seems, unfortunately “have not been brought to their senses”!

But on October 11, 1933, the above-mentioned three bishops of the New Calendarists, Metropolitans Irenaeus of Cassandra, Germanos of Demetrias, and Basil of Dryinoupolis, along with Basil of Drama, submitted an “Opinion on the Calendar” to their hierarchical Synod, proposing as the only possible solution the return to the Royal Decree of January 1923, according to which the State may keep the New Calendar, and the Orthodox Church of Greece the Old Calendar, with a referral of the matter to an Ecumenical or Great Local Synod of the whole Orthodox

Church, although they did not insist on their proposal, because they were threatened with deposition. It is evident that the issue remained particularly serious and relevant, and proper solutions were still being proposed by traditional hierarchs of the innovative church, but unfortunately, the opinion of the majority prevailed through force.

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Young people also participated enthusiastically and actively in the Holy Struggle of Faith, and in 1934 they founded the “Union of Young Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece,” in order to strengthen the testimony and activities of Genuine Orthodoxy in those difficult years.

In that year (1934) it was revealed with dismay, that the Board of Directors of the Community had secretly made a reprehensible maneuver since 1931 of accepting the commemoration of the innovative archbishop to provide clergy to meet the needs of the Genuine Orthodox. The action was considered a betrayal of the principles of the Holy Struggle and in August of that year, a new Board of Directors was elected.

This led to an official renunciation of the innovating archbishop, as well as the “official Orthodox Church,” because it had become schismatic, with a decision to seek out “canonical bishops” so that “the leadership of the Church” could be handed over to them. This renunciation was also signed by prominent Zealot Athonite Hieromonks and Elders, who constituted the temporary spiritual leadership of the Genuine Orthodox.³

In fact, in October 1934, the Board of Directors of the Community addressed the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, which was still based in Karlovci in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, with a request for spiritual protection and the consecration and ordination of bishops and priests for the Holy Struggle in Greece. That effort remained unsuccessful, but we know that it was finally fulfilled 26 years later.

3 The Genuine Orthodox Christians relied on hieromonks and elders to lead them spiritually, but only temporarily, until they could secure hierarchs who adhered to Genuine Orthodoxy. This contrasts sharply with those who follow the “Resist Within” ecclesiological heresy within World Orthodoxy. These individuals have developed a form of Eastern Orthodox Presbyterianism (a church governance system led by presbyters rather than by a hierarchy of bishops) due to their Synodal Patriarchates officially preaching and teaching the heresies of Ecumenism and Sergianism (Editors’ Footnote).

It is noteworthy that in that year (1934), the Prime Minister of the country, P. Saldaris, in a meeting with the bishops of the official church, proposed the holding of a referendum on the calendar issue, but they refused! Apparently, they knew that the despised “Old Calendarists,” whom they estimated at only a few tens of thousands, were in fact a significant and considerable minority, numbering hundreds of thousands of believers.

On Theophany in 1935 at Phaleron Beach, they again had a powerful parade of about 30,000 believers in support of the Patristic Calendar. Despite the difficulties, the perseverance and faith in the worthy outcome of the Struggle remained strong and fervent.



Chapter III

Acquiring Episcopal Leadership & The Reaction of the Innovators

From the beginning of the Holy Struggle, the chief clergy and laity made appeals, as well as visits from time to time, to various friendly bishops, begging them to abandon the [New Calendar] innovation and undertake the pastoral care of the Genuine Orthodox.

Such calls were also made to the eminent Bishop Chrysostomos (Kavourides), the former Metropolitan of Florina, previously of Imbros and Tenedos, and then of Pelagonia.

He, as Metropolitan of Florina from 1926 to 1928, celebrated the feasts with both the Old and the New Calendar, but mainly with the Old, at the request of the local traditional population. The Holy Synod of the Innovators forced him to establish the New since the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul in 1928. On that day, however, there was an unexpectedly disastrous flood and the population of Florina, as well as the hierarch Chrysostomos himself, saw it as an act of God for abandoning the Fathers!⁴

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, exactly one year later, in June 1929, submitted a Memorandum to his Synod on the calendar issue, asking for it to be examined from the perspective of the differences with the Papists, for whom the Old Calendar constitutes a “barrier” for Orthodox Christians.

⁴ See Dem. Bekasis, The Great Flood of 1928, On the Website “Album of Florina – Florinapast” of November 9th, 2007. (See Editors’ Bibliographic Entry).

As soon as this barrier was removed by those who claimed to be the guards of Christ's fold, the flood of innovation and secularization rushed in, and the deplorable shipwrecks of the present-day heresy of Ecumenism are both evident and obvious.

From 1932, when Metropolitan Chrysostomos was no longer an active bishop, using the title "formerly of Florina," he began to follow the struggling Genuine Orthodox more closely and especially from 1934 stayed in tune with their pulse, and even wrote articles under the pen name "Ekklesiastikos" on their behalf. Besides, he himself, while he was still a provincial bishop, did not hesitate to suggest to the Synod of the Innovators the need to reintroduce the Orthodox Calendar, for the unification of [Orthodox] Christians and the pacification of the Church.

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On May 12/25, 1935, the Community addressed a letter-appeal to their Eminences, Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostomos, formerly of Florina, and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, in the name of Christ, Orthodoxy and the endangered Greek people, asking them to undertake the shepherding of the Holy Struggle "for the restoration of the Patristic Calendar to the Church."

In response, the three bishops declared that they severed all relations and ties to the Official Hierarchy, which was declared schismatic because the calendar innovation was contrary to Orthodoxy, and they also assumed the spiritual leadership and ecclesiastical governance of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, in order to continue the enduring historical course of the Orthodox Greek Church.

On May 13/26, 1935, a solemn Liturgy was celebrated in the historic Church of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* in Kolonaki, Athens, on the occasion of the three confessing bishops assuming the leadership of the Holy Struggle, which was attended by 25,000 faithful filled with pious enthusiasm for the historic event.

The next day, the three Metropolitans of Demetrias, of Florina, and of Zakynthos, sent a written proclamation to the Official Synod of the Innovators. They wrote that there was no justification to permit ecclesiastical economy in relation to the innovation, and that for reasons of conscience and out of pain for the unification of all Orthodox Greeks, out of faithfulness to the Calendar and Orthodox Tradition, they have interrupted ecclesiastical communion with the Official Synod, calling for the restoration of the Patristic Calendar for the peace of the Church

and nation. The Official Hierarchy, in the persons of its bishops, was considered to have parted with the spirit of the Holy Canons and from the body of Orthodoxy, and was declared schismatic for the unilateral and uncanonical introduction of the Gregorian Calendar, the disruption of the unity of Orthodoxy, and the division of Orthodox Christians.

Also, the three confessing hierarchs issued a Proclamation to the Greek People, a Proclamation to the Clergy and Monks, and a Proclamation to the Orthodox Churches concerning their petition.

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The three Bishops allowed a ten-day period to pass, to see if the official church would seek unity in Orthodoxy. Seeing, however, that on the contrary she was actively moving to suppress their godly Confession in every way and by every means, and fearing their imminent arrest with all the unpredictability that this would bring, they proceeded to consecrate four bishops, to constitute an episcopal Synod, organize church life and meet the spiritual needs of the flock.

Thus, at the Holy Monastery of the *Panagia Pefkovounogiatrissa* in Keratea, Attica, the following were consecrated bishops, in succession: Archimandrites Germanos Varykopoulos as Bishop of the Cyclades, Christophoros Hatzis as Bishop of Megara, Polycarp Liosis as Bishop of Diavleia, and Matthew Karpathakis, from Mount Athos, as Bishop of Bresthena.

The senior in terms of ordination, Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, was appointed President of the Holy Synod.

It is noteworthy that the Patriarchates of Constantinople and of Alexandria, as well as the Theological School of Athens, were quick to condemn the formation of the Synod of the Patristic Calendar with their resolutions.

The innovationist Greek hierarchy removed Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos from their Thrones by appointing *locum tenens* in their dioceses, and referred the three confessing prelates to an ecclesiastical court and requested the assistance of the government for the suppression of the whole movement, persuading it to take violent and oppressive measures against the Greek Orthodox prelates. The three hierarchs of Demetrias, of Florina, and of Zakynthos were placed under house arrest at the offices of the newly formed Synod in Athens. Similarly, the newly consecrated bishops were

placed under restriction in the offices of the Community. The referral of the blessed hierarchs to trial stirred up serious dissent within the Synod of the Innovators and three metropolitans resigned their synodal duties in protest.

On June 1/14, 1935, the hierarchs who had renounced the Synod for the sake of the Patristic Calendar were tried for founding a parasynagogue and contempt of the “canonical and legitimate Church,” and for similarly inciting clergy and the people to renounce the official church. A large number of people rushed to express their protest, as well as their support for the persecuted confessors, by chanting the *Paraklesis* to the *Theotokos* in the Metropolis Square, led by forty priests and sixty monks.

The illegal synodal court, instead of repentance and unity, condemned the Confessor Hierarchs to alleged deposition and five years of physical confinement! The news disappointed the assembled crowds, who protested vigorously and faced the brutal assault of the police and fire hoses. About one-hundred Genuine Orthodox believers were seriously injured, and three were killed in this or other similar clashes.

Within a week, the condemned bishops were forcibly abducted by the police, as the government fully aligned itself with the innovationist church and exiled them to their designated places of banishment: Germanos of Demetrias was taken to the Holy Monastery of *Hozoviotissa* on the island of Amorgos, Chrysostomos of Florina to the Holy Monastery of St. Dionysios on Mount Olympus, and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos to the Holy Monastery of Romvos in Acarnania.

Before going into exile, the three persecuted hierarchs issued a “Pastoral Encyclical” to the Orthodox Greek People, which was published in the press on June 21st, 1935. Through this Encyclical, they urged a struggle for the triumph of Orthodoxy and again made the statement that the Official Hierarchy had created a schism, adding that spiritual communion with it must be avoided at all costs, because “the Grace of the Holy Spirit has departed” from its ministers, since they have violated the resolutions of the Pan-Orthodox Synods that condemned the Gregorian Calendar.⁵

5 It is noteworthy that this statement regarding sacramental grace was issued only after their unjust deposition and exile by the official church. Prior to this, none of the texts released by the GOC Metropolitans to their followers reflected this strict understanding (Editors’ Footnote).

This position was widespread among the clergy and laity of the Patristic Calendar, especially among Athonite monks and pious Orthodox. It was formally expressed in the Declaration against the innovationist church in August 1934, but it did not originate there. The first to propagate it was the innovative Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) in 1926, using it in reverse (i.e., against the Genuine Orthodox), who did not commemorate him for reasons of Faith, in accordance with Canon 31 of the Holy Apostles⁶ and Canon 15 of the First-Second Synod⁷, and were consequently worthy of honor for this.

The newly consecrated bishops, who were also summoned to trial by the episcopal court as bishops and were subjected to the same alleged deposition and physical restriction, experienced different sentences. Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades was exiled to the Monastery of Strofades in Zakynthos, although, as it appears from a saved letter, was eventually exiled to the Monastery of Kathara in Ithaca. Bishop Matthew of Brethrena received simple confinement but remained hiding in the women's Monastery of the *Panagia Pefkounogiatrissa*, apparently to avoid the danger [of being captured].

6 “If any presbyter, despising his own bishop, shall collect a separate congregation, and erect another altar, *not having any grounds for condemning the bishop with regard to religion* or justice, let him be deposed for his ambition; for he is a tyrant; in like manner also the rest of the clergy, and as many as join him; and let laymen be excommunicated. Let this, however, be done after a first, second, and third admonition from the bishop.” – 31st Apostolic Canon

7 “Accordingly, these rules have been sealed and ordained as respecting those persons who under the pretext of charges against their own presidents stand aloof, and create a schism, and disrupt the union of the Church. But as for those persons, on the other hand, who, on account of some heresy condemned by holy Councils, *or Fathers*, withdrawing themselves from communion with their president, who, that is to say, *is preaching the heresy publicly*, and teaching it bareheaded in church, such persons not only are not subject to any canonical penalty on account of their having walled themselves off from any and all communion with the one called a Bishop *before* any conciliar or synodal verdict has been rendered, but, on the contrary, they shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honor which befits them among Orthodox Christians. For they have defied, not Bishops, but pseudo-bishops and pseudo-teachers; and they have not sundered the union of the Church with any schism, but, on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions.” – Canon 15 of the First-Second Council, (861 A.D.)

However, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, as well as Bishops Christophoros of Megara and Polycarp of Diavleia, having become cowardly, returned to the innovationists. And the Metropolitan of Zakynthos was restored to his seat, but those bishops of Megara and of Diavleia were not recognized as bishops; they, considering themselves bishops, did not officiate as clergy, awaiting the outcome of events, unable to exercise their episcopal authority, at least at that time, in the new calendar church.

During the period of his exile, while being guarded and degraded on Mount Olympus, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina composed an apologetic treatise entitled, “To the Orthodox Greek Conscience: The Ecclesiastical Calendar as a Criterion of Orthodoxy” (July 1/14, 1935).



Chapter IV

New Persecutions of the Genuine Orthodox & Their Inner Turmoil

The exiled bishops of Demetrias, of Florina, and of the Cyclades returned from exile in October 1935 with the tacit consent of the Government, under the pretext of their failing health, and regained their freedom of movement — but then a new method of persecution by the New Calendarists began. They were brought before the criminal courts on allegedly defying authority — that is, while they were allegedly deposed by the Official Hierarchy of the innovationists, they continued to exercise the episcopacy, officiating, ordaining clergy, consecrating churches, issuing documents, etc.

There were many such trials in the following years (1937, 1938, 1940), in which the accused confessing hierarchs were acquitted after brilliant defenses, especially on the part of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, the main “theoretician” of the Holy Struggle; he indeed bore the great burden of the compilation of the texts and wrote a number of confessional, apologetic, [and] hermeneutical works, etc. which are distinguished for their depth and thoroughness, but also for their passion and zeal for Christ.

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The fact that the confessing bishops of the Patristic Calendar did not accept the punishments imposed on them by the innovators of the New Calendar was in accordance with their firm conviction that they had not committed schism against a legitimate and canonical ecclesiastical authority, in which case they would have indeed been held accountable and justly sanctioned, but they disavowed the deceived innovative hierarchy

for ecclesiastical and canonical reasons, which concerned not only the Holy Canons of Divine Worship, but the unity of the one Church itself. Therefore, the hierarchy which deviated from the canons and Tradition had no right to validly judge those who returned to the Orthodox Tradition, but rather by its persecution of them, it proved its greatest alienation from truth and justice.

The innovators are responsible for the division and are accountable for the schism and the persecutions against the Orthodox before God and man. And as analyzed in the extensive written work of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, the Genuine Orthodox, who have not innovated, constitute the Orthodox Church of Greece in its true sense and preserve its true conscience, striving for the resolution of the provoked division and its valid and definitive solution by a Pan-Orthodox Synod, according to the understanding of the Church and its Tradition. For this purpose, the Metropolitan of Florina visited the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch from December 1935 to May 1936.

These Orthodox positions of the Confessor Hierarchs fully covered them against the accusations and other improprieties of the innovators, but they caused friction and divisions within the non-innovators [the Genuine Orthodox]. The interpretations, which the Metropolitan of Florina occasionally provided within the aforementioned context, concerning the meaning of the 1935 Declaration regarding the characterization of the innovators as schismatics and its sacramental implications, gave rise to hasty conclusions, out of excessive zeal by various elements within Genuine Orthodoxy, so that division was unfortunately created and solidified within its bosom.

The two hierarchs, the Bishops of the Cyclades [Germanos] and of Bresthena [Matthew], hastened in September 1937 to denounce the Bishops of Demetrias [Germanos] and of Florina [Chrysostomos] as having retreated from their original confession, and thus at that critical time, the front of the non-innovators suffered a weakening and was sorely tested. The fraternal strife, the turmoil, the disputes, and similar sad attention paid to minor things in the name of the pure confession of the Faith deepened a sorrowful division, which unfortunately has not been healed to this day. May the Lord heal it!

Attempts at rapprochement and reconciliation were made since then, explanations and clarifications were given, but they came up against the rigidity of the two separated bishops, and even of the entourage of Bishop Matthew of Bresthena.

From the relevant documents of 1937, and particularly from a document of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs dated June 16th, 1938, to the Synod of the Official Hierarchy, in which a note from the Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostomos of Florina with ten conditions for resolving the calendar issue is communicated, it is understood why the two Confessor Bishops wanted to present as moderate an attitude as possible towards the innovators since the previous year, 1937. From various indications, as well as promises given to them by politicians as well as ecclesiastical figures, they held reasonable hopes for a favorable resolution of the calendar issue and the reunification of the divided — by the return of the innovators to the Old Calendar.

Besides, the conviction of the Metropolitans of Demetrias and of Florina that the Calendar issue required resolution by a Great Orthodox Synod, so that the Orthodox declarations made by them in 1935 could receive ecclesiastical confirmation, was their firm belief and hope from previous years. Let us recall only the aforementioned proposals-protests to the Synod of the Innovators in the years 1929 and 1933, which were also signed by Metropolitan Germanos and certainly fully agreed with by the Metropolitan of Florina. Among the innovating hierarchs, there were also “Old Calendarists,” as Germanos of Demetrias affirmed from his exile in Amorgos in his letter of July 17th, 1935, who were expected to make themselves known and were holding back out of fear or other circumstances. It was not a time and moment then for an adamantly separatist and condemnatory position towards the innovators, with the constant emphasis and advocating of some strict points from the 1935 texts.

It should be noted that the Metropolitans of Demetrias and of Florina were already mature hierarchs of three decades, with enormous pastoral and administrative experience and with wisdom according to God and the world, not of the ordinary kind. They desired to act with an expanded perspective, with open horizons and bridges. All this and more was not understood by the excessively strict lovers of precision, who lived in a different climate and maintained a different mentality, closed and restrictive, unable to understand their motives and their expectations; they were thus misunderstood and accused of being cowardly or even “betraying” the principles of the Struggle, as long as they [the Metropolitans] did not satisfy them [the lovers of precision] with the answers they wanted to the simple questions constantly put to them to confirm the complete and definitive deposition of the innovators.

Another reason for the division was the observed disagreement between the administration of the Community and the Metropolitans of Demetrias and of Florina, because evidently the Community was not accustomed to working with experienced bishops, who had established a Holy Synod and now had the right to have the first say in the Holy Struggle. The result was the replacement of the Community by the “Pan-Hellenic Religious National Orthodox Society” (P.T.E.O.K.) in 1936.⁸

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In October 1939, a “Conference of Genuine Orthodox Throughout Greece” was held in Athens under the leadership of the Metropolitans of Demetrias and of Florina with decisions targeting better organization and operation. Various adversities, however, led the then-President of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, to resign in 1941, and thereafter he lived in seclusion until his repose in 1944, having remained, nonetheless, in Genuine Orthodoxy, despite this being disputed by some due to certain questionable actions of the late hierarchy.

The burden of the Struggle fell on the Confessor Hierarchy Chrysostomos of Florina, who, despite his advanced age, did not hesitate with youthful zeal to undertake the responsibilities of the Genuine Orthodox and to deal with all the needs and difficulties that arose. In 1942, Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades separated from Bishop Matthew of Bresthena with an exchange of accusations between them, and they went their separate ways. The two had disagreed earlier, in 1938, as to whom they would consecrate as new bishops and consequently did not proceed with episcopal consecrations.

In 1943, Elder Archimandrite Ieronymos of St. Paul’s Monastery on Mount Athos, the clairvoyant blind man with insightful charisma, and founder in 1930 of the Holy Women’s Monastery of St. Paraskevi in Acharnes, Attica, passed away in the Lord.

In 1944, Archimandrite Joseph of Desfina in Phocis, clergyman of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, was martyred for the Faith in mountainous Corinthia by Symmorites [criminals]. His bones emitted a fragrance of sanctity.

8 P.T.E.O.K. is the successor organization to the original “Association of the Orthodox,” which administered the Struggle of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece prior to 1935 (Editors’ Footnote).

In 1945, the two bishops who retreated from the Struggle, Christophoros of Megara and Polycarp of Diavleia, were reunited with Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, with renewed hopes for success.

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Since then, after the suffering of the occupation [by Nazi Germany], there had been growth in many areas of the Genuine Church in liturgical, catechetical, charitable and general pastoral work, with an intensification of witness through publications, lectures, etc.

However, the persecutions did not stop, as for example on the island of Chios, where the local bishop closed the monasteries of the Old Calendar and persecuted the clergy.

In 1946, the organization under the name “General Philoptochos Fund of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece” was founded, with the purpose of providing material aid to those in need, as well as financial support for the Church of the Genuine Orthodox.

In April 1947, the First Pan-Hellenic Conference of the P.T.E.O.K. was convened in Athens, as a protest to the [civil] authorities for the oppressive measures against the Genuine Orthodox Greek citizens and in order to better organize the conduct of the Holy Struggle. The work of the conference lasted for three days with the participation, apart from the bishops and clergy, of more than 500 representatives from the parishes of the whole country. Several Members of Parliament and other officials were present. Important addresses of the highest quality were read, both by the Bishops of Florina and of Diavleia, as well as by legal experts and other figures, such as by Monk Antonios (Moustakas) of Kavsokalyvia, a Zealot of Mount Athos. Also, testimonies of persecutions in various parts of the country were also reported, and a momentous resolution of adherence to the Faith and an appeal for an end to the persecutions was issued.

Both in December of that year, as well as in June 1948, attempts were made to unite with the side of Bishop Matthew of Bresthena, through the co-signing of a deed of recognition of Orthodoxy by both parties, but these were thwarted mainly due to the opposition of the supporters around the Monastery of Keratea.

In 1948 the innovationist hierarchy issued an encyclical, according to which the clergy of the “Old Calendarists,” being ordained by supposedly deposed bishops, are accepted by it through ordination! On the basis of this, blasphemous re-ordinations of unstable and renegade clergymen in some regions were already taking place. In the same year, Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades was imprisoned because he dared to ordain Patristic Calendar clergy.

The well-known New Calendar archimandrite Augustinos Kantiotis, through his magazine *Christianiki Spitha* [“Christian Spark”], spoke out against the uncanonical calendar innovation and the turmoil that was created because of it.

However, in the year 1948, Bishop Matthew of Bresthena, who had been alone since 1942, under pressure from his followers, at the age of 87 years, decided to proceed alone as a bishop, in violation of the Holy Canons, in consecrating new bishops and convening his own synod, believing that no other hope for preserving Orthodoxy remained! The canonical Holy Synod under Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina condemned this illegal and subversive act, and the P.T.E.O.K. took similar action.

Nevertheless, attempts to reach an agreement with the elderly Matthew of Bresthena were made. Shortly before Bishop Matthew’s death, in May 1950, during a visit by Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina to a house in Athens where Matthew was hospitalized, it is believed that a reconciliation took place, despite the uncharitable obstruction of his entourage.

At the beginning of 1950, Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades joined the canonical Holy Synod under Metropolitan Chrysostomos, a fact that brought joy to Genuine Orthodox believers. In the same year, anti-Christian Masonry was condemned by the Synod. Additionally, Bishop Christophoros of Megara asked for and received the title “of Christianoupolis” to avoid confusion with the use of his former title.



Chapter V

The Great Persecution of 1951 & Subsequent Developments Until The Repose of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina

From 1949, with the election of Spyridon (Vlachos), formerly of the See of Ioannina, as the new archbishop of the innovationist church, things again became seriously difficult. Spyridon made it his priority “to eliminate Old Calendarism.”

On May 26th, 1950, a few days after the death of Matthew of Bresthena, the then four-member Holy Synod under Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina issued an encyclical, reiterating the principles of the 1935 Confession on the proclamation of the new calendar church as schismatic and its mysteries as deprived of sanctifying grace, and exhorting the clergy of the Old Calendar Church not to minister to new calendarists without their prior confession and chrismation. It also appealed for unity to the divided followers of the Patristic Calendar, with an assurance of renunciation of those positions advocated after 1937 which were not in agreement with the principles of the Orthodox Church and the Holy Struggle.

This move was clearly intended, among other things, to create a united front of non-innovators in the face of the innovators’ persecutory tendencies against them. In October of that year, the Theological School of Athens announced that it was barring students of the “Old Calendar” from attending.

As early as July 1950, the New Calendarist hierarchy in a memorandum to the government had been speaking out against the “madness of old calendarism,” which it considered propaganda more dangerous than Communism, but also a precursor of Slavism, and proposed measures of incredible cruelty and brutality for its suppression, persecution and dissolution.

One justification for the prepared persecution was the reference to scandals, which had been denounced as having occurred in the women’s Holy Monastery of the *Panagia Pefkovounogiatrissa*, by followers of the late Bishop Matthew of Bresthena.

The Holy Synod, under Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, condemned the alleged misdeeds at the monastery, providing assurance that it had no spiritual connection with the community and, of course, bore no responsibility for whatever might have happened.

It also provided thorough defensive responses through the press to malicious accusations by the New Calendarists, emphasizing, among other things, that the Genuine Orthodox were proven nationalists and had no connection with atheistic Communism.

The Minister of Public Order and Security, Mr. Theologitis, stated to the press at the time that the Old Calendarists amount to several hundred thousand citizens and are entitled to religious freedom and constitutional protection.

From the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox, in view of the looming persecution, two Committees of Struggle were formed to coordinate and promote the appeals and protests to avert this eventuality.

Finally, the government, following the July 1950 memorandum of the New Calendarists and the opinion of a committee of professors, proceeded to issue Act 45 of the Council of Ministers of January 3rd, 1951, with a decision for the cruel and inhuman persecution of the “Old Calendarists.”

In spite of this, the Holy Synod, with great effort, won and obtained permission for the performance of the 1951 Theophany celebrations in Palaio Faliro, with an incredible crowd despite the unfavorable weather conditions. At that time, there were about one-hundred clergy under the authority of the Holy Synod, who served in about three-hundred and fifty churches.

Immediately afterwards, the persecution against the Genuine Orthodox erupted with great intensity and tragic results: arrest warrants for the hierarchs were issued, the closing and sealing of churches, built with sweat and blood, began with the intention of seizing them; priests were arrested, abused, insulted, disrobed, shaved, exiled, and subjected to all kinds of humiliations; monasteries and monks and nuns were inhumanely persecuted, Divine Services were prohibited, Divine Liturgies were interrupted and the Holy Mysteries desecrated, processions were disrupted, epitaphs were overturned, and the simple, pure, and faithful people of the Old Calendar were mocked, beaten, disgraced, bruised, and displaced.

Very justly, part of the press denounced the persecutions of the innocent and law-abiding “Old Calendarists,” referring to “ridiculous governors” and “false Neros,” although, of course, the moral instigators were the grandiose clergy of the new calendar.

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On February 1st, 1951, in Stamata, Attica, the President of the Holy Synod, the venerable Metropolitan of Florina, Chrysostomos, was arrested and imprisoned. The condition set by the persecuting New Calendar archbishop, Spyridon, namely his commemoration, in order to be released and receive his episcopal salary and pensions from 1935 with interest and increments, along with generous gifts, was decisively rejected.

To a colleague who visited him in prison, the confessing hierarch assured him that he was very well physically and more so mentally, because he was living one of the most beautiful times of his life; when asked if he felt tired (he was then 81 years old), he replied that one does not get tired when suffering for a cause he believes in.

His place of exile was chosen to be the inaccessible Holy Monastery of Saint John the Theologian Ypsilou (altitude 850 meters) on the island of Lesbos.⁹ The remaining three hierarchs, until the repose of Chrysostomos of Florina, hastened to hide and lived in seclusion.

Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades, aged 87 years, passed away from hardship and grief on March 24th, 1951. His last anointing was held in secret at the hospital by the then-Archimandrite Chrysostomos (Kiouis)

9 850 Meters is 2,788 Feet Above Sea Level (Editors’ Footnote).

and he was buried in Athens, without clergy, in the presence of a large crowd of people, who faced persecution with detentions and arrests for “illegal assembly.”

A multitude of faithful gathered in the Church of Saint Paul in Palia Kokkinia and began fasting and praying with the slogan, “We want freedom, we want our bishops and priests!” resulting in the police intervening and forcibly removing them. As they were being persecuted, they chanted a moving variation of the acclamation for the exiled Shepherd: “Many years to Chrysostomos, the captive and Confessor of Orthodoxy!”

In addition to many influential figures in Greece and abroad who protested against these medieval and undemocratic persecutions, the then Patriarch of Alexandria, Christopher [II], expressed his concern and sorrow.

It is noteworthy that while the martyric Metropolitan of Florina was in exile, he received a letter from the Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras, who had formerly served as his deacon, inviting him to Constantinople as his beloved “Elder,” to offer him one of the best Metropolises and every other honor and repose. The exiled Confessor replied with confidence that his only repose would be for the Patriarch to ensure the unity of Orthodox Christians through the reintroduction of the Patristic Calendar to the Church.

It is remarkable that the Confessor Hierarch, despite his exile, never ceased to support his spiritual children through letters, especially the lay theologians Stavros Karamitsos and Dionysios Batistatos, who were collaborating in the Lord’s work and striving for the success of the Holy Struggle.

Following the actions of many parties, especially the government officials, Chios MP Nikolaos Zorbas, Serres MP Christodoulos Gorgias, and Boeotia MP Charalambos Skouteris, the President of the Government, Nikolaos Plastiras, issued an order on July 16th, 1952, to end the exile of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, and allow his return to Athens.

The following day, the radiant hierarch returned by plane to the capital and to his home, after a 17-month exile. On July 19th, 1952, a meeting was held at the Synod Offices with the two other bishops, Christophoros of Christianoupolis and Polycarp of Diavleia, and with the clergy and people. Despite all the existing difficulties, the bishop began to shepherd the confessing flock with new strength.

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Despite the cessation of the persecution and the beginning of favorable conditions, the difficulties had not yet been remedied and much remained to be done. During that period, however, a new problem arose. The recourse of the Genuine Orthodox to political figures, seeking the lifting of the restrictive measures against them, had unpleasant repercussions within their ranks. At that time (1952) it happened to be an election period, and sharp partisan rivalry was transferred to the leaders of the Struggle, resulting in pressure being exerted on the three bishops and the faithful to vote for one or another political party.

This resulted in the announcement of the resignation of the bishops (on November 6th, 1952) from the pastoral leadership of the Old Calendarists. And in order to convince Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina to revoke his resignation and to resume the leadership of the Holy Struggle, it was necessary for the Board of Directors of the P.T.E.O.K. to resign, as they were affiliated with a particular political party, and for another Board of Directors to be selected, affiliated with different political party.

In this way Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina was indeed restored to his duties, but the two other bishops, Christophoros and Polycarp, definitively withdrew from the Holy Struggle, were accepted by the New Calendarists as bishops during this period, and were subsequently assigned to Metropolitan Sees.

In the meantime, and despite the dashed hopes in the promises of politicians, the non-innovators regrouped and continued the Struggle with a pacification that came under the guidance of Metropolitan Chrysostomos. The persecution, however, continued in various parts of our country. Priests were arrested and imprisoned, such as the renowned Elder Fr. Eugenios (Lemonis) the Athonite, and also the indomitable fighter Fr. Mercurios Kaloskamis in Piraeus.

The Confessor Hierarch, the former Metropolitan of Florina, tireless in his trials, was beginning to feel a decline and also disappointment with the course of events. The official church did not seem inclined to resolve the calendar issue through an Orthodox Synod, the New Calendarists continued the persecutions, and the second defection, especially that of Polykarp of Diavleia, on whom he had pinned his hopes for the continuation of the Holy Struggle, deeply saddened him. Also, an attempt to collaborate with Metropolitan Eulogios (Kourilas) of Korçë

[in Albania] was unsuccessful. The venerable hierarch, after preparation and confession to the grace-filled spiritual father, Fr. John Vaxevanopoulos from Amfali, peacefully surrendered his soul to the Lord on September 7th, 1955, to find rest from his toils, especially during the last 20 years of his eventful life, and to receive the crown of confession and victory!

The funeral service was chanted at the historic Holy Church of the Transfiguration in Kypseli, Athens, where he usually presided, and he was laid to rest at the Holy Monastery of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* in Thrakomakedones, Attica. The multitude of bereaved faithful promised him earnestly: “Father, we will continue the struggle!” as they did. It is noteworthy that the Memorial Service of an Orthodox Hierarch was served by Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria at the Patriarchal Church of Saint Savvas in Alexandria.

When the Confessor Bishop was exhumed six years after his falling asleep, a fragrance spread throughout the entire monastery, which lasted for forty days! A nun, who had doubts about whether she had been baptized, saw the hierarch in glory telling her that she was not baptized, and she was then baptized properly. Another girl from Archarnes, suffering from tuberculosis, received some oil from the lamp of his tomb and anointed herself, resulting in her healing.



Metropolitan Germanos (Maurommates) of Demetrias (1859-1944),
served as Archbishop from 1935 until 1941.



Metropolitan St. Chrysostomos (Kavourides) of Florina (1870-1955),
served as Archbishop from 1941 until 1955.



Archbishop Akakios (Pappas) of [the younger] Talantion (1888-1963),
served as Archbishop from 1960 until 1963.



Archbishop Auxentios (Pastras) of Athens and All Greece (1912-1994),
served as Archbishop from 1963 until 1985.



Archbishop Chrysostomos II (Kiouisis) of Athens and All Greece
(1920-2010), served as Archbishop from 1986 to 2010.



Archbishop Kallinikos (Sarantopoulos) of Athens and All Greece
(Born: 1946), Currently Serving as Archbishop since 2010.

ΤΟ ΜΕΓΑΛΥΤΕΡΟ ΘΑΥΜΑ ΤΟΥ 20ΟΥ ΑΙΩΝΟΣ



Ἡ Γ' ΘΕΙΑ ΕΜΦΑΝΙΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΙΜΙΟΥ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΥ ΤΗΝ 14ῃ
ΣΕΠΤΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ 1925 (ΠΑΤΡΙΟΝ ΕΟΡΤΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ), ΑΝΩΘΕΝ ΤΗΣ
ΙΕΡΑΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΑΓ. ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΥ ΣΤΟΝ ΥΜΗΤΤΟ

«Μετά τὴν ἀλλαγὴν τοῦ εορτολογίου (10.3.1924) οἱ μετ' ἀποσχισθέντες Ὀρθόδοξοι (χρυσόστοκος ἀποκαλούμενος Παλαμμερολόγιος) ὑπὸ διαγερνὸν εὐρησκόμενοι, συνεκινεώθησαν τὴν κίβδη τῆς παρεμπιπτόσης τῆς Ἐπίσεως τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ, δοῦν τὴν κρυφὴν ἐλέων ἀγγελίαν ἐπὶ τῇ ἐργασίᾳ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τοῦ Τριητητοῦ, ἀνέστην τοῦ Χωλοαγοῦ. Περὶ ἡμέραν 11.307 πρὸ τοῦ μεσονυκτίου, ἐπεφανίσθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν λαυσεύματος καὶ φαινομένου Σταυροῦ, κατιστοῦζων ΜΟΝΟΝ τὸ μοναστήριον καὶ τὴν περιβολὴν αὐτοῦ. Διηγουμένη ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς θέλει νὰ ἀποκαταστήσῃ τὸ Πατριὸν παλαιὸν εορτολόγιον. Τὸ θαῦμα τοῦτο εἶδον ὅχι μόνον οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἀποσηκόμενοι, οἵτινες κατέφθασαν διὰ νὰ διαλέξωσι αὐτοὺς». (Πόλεπε Ἑφημερίδα «Σκρίπ», 26 Σεπτεμβρίου 1925 - 15 Σεπτεμβρίου μετ' τοῦ πατρίου Εορτολογίου - Ἀθελῆθ' τῆς ἐπομένης ἡμέρας τοῦ θαύματος.

ΣΚΡΙΠ

ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ 26 ΣΕΠΤΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ 1925

ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ

ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ
ΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΥΣΙΝ ΤΟ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΝ ΕΟΡΤΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ

ΜΑΡΤΥΡΕΣ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΣ

Newspaper report of the Miracle of the Cross in 1925
over the Old Calendarist Church.



St. Catherine (Routis) The New Martyr



In 1933 Thirty-Thousand Old Calendarists gathered in Palaio Faliro against new calendar innovatonists.



On May 13/26, 1935, Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the historic Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Kolonos, Athens.



On June 1/14, 1935, Old Calendarists faithful gathered to protest the arrest and trial of Orthodox Hierarchs who refused to follow the innovators. The official state jurisdiction employed government forces to persecute the Old Calendarist faithful.



St. Chrysostomos, formerly of Florina, in exile on Mount Olympus with visiting colleagues.



St. Chrysostomos of Florina



Old Calendarist procession during Holy Theophany 1936.



In 1945 Bishop Christophoros of Megara and Bishop Polycarp of Diavleia reunited with the former Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina.



First Pan-Hellenic Conference of the P.T.E.O.K



First Pan-Hellenic Conference of the P.T.E.O.K



Holy Synod celebrating Holy Theophany (1951) in Palaio Faliro, Greece, despite the active government persecution of Old Calendarists.





In the 1950s, the Greek government began a campaign of persecution against Old Calendarists, during which they arrested clergymen, attacked the laity, seized and defiled Holy Churches, and blasphemed the Holy Mysteries.





Nikolaos Plastiras issued an order on July 16, 1952, for the cessation of the exile of the former Metropolitan of Florina, Chrysostomos, and for his return to Athens.





St. Chrysostomos of Florina reposed in the Lord on September 7, 1955.





Holy Theophany procession in 1957 attended by thousands of Old Calendarist faithful.



Holy Theophany procession in 1957 led by Archimandrites Akakios (Pappas) the Elder and Chrysostomos (Kiouisis).



In October 1958, the Second Panhellenic Conference of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians convened in Athens.



On December 9/22, 1960, Akakios (Pappas) was consecrated a bishop by Bishops Seraphim of Chicago and Theophilus of Severon of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Detroit, Michigan.



Ordination of Bishop Auxentios of Gardiki by Archbishop Leonty. Bishop Akakios of Talantion is not visible. Archimandrite Chrysostomos Naslimes, who was ordained Bishop of Magnesia the following day, is present.



New bishops of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece after their consecration to the episcopacy by Archbishop Leonty of Chile in 1962.



Holy Theophany Procession 1963.



Bishop Parthenios of the Cyclades reposes in the Lord in December of 1962.



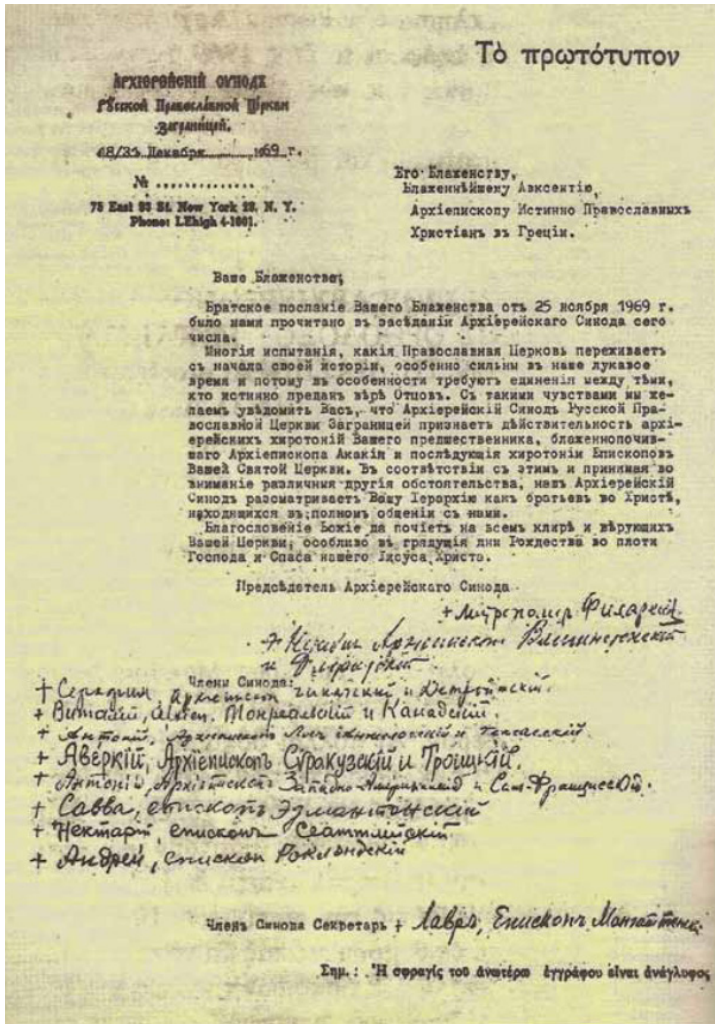
In the years 1964 and 1966, Pan-Clerical Conferences were convened.





Top: St. Philaret, Archbishop Leonty, and Bishop Petros. Below is St. Philaret and Bishop Auxentios of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece.





ROCOR Synodal Recognition of the GOC Episcopal Consecrations and Declaration of Full Communion (Russian).

Ἡ μετάφρασις

ΣΥΝΟΔΟΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΡΩΣΣΙΚΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΥ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ
ΕΝ ΤΗ ΔΙΑΣΠΟΡᾷ

18/31 Δεκεμβρίου 1969

Πρὸς τὴν Αὐτοῦ Μακαριότητα

Κύρ Κύρ Αὐξέντιον,

Ἀρχιεπίσκοπον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῶν Γνησίων Ὁρθόδοξων Χριστιανῶν τῆς
Ελλάδος.

Μακαριώτατε,

Ἡ ἀδελφικὴ ἐπιστολὴ τῆς Ὑμετέρας Μακαριότητος τῆς 25ης Νοεμβρίου τοῦ 1969, ἀνεγνώσθη εἰς Συνεδρίασιν τῆς Συνόδου ἡμῶν σήμερον. Αἱ πολλαὶ δοκιμασίαι τὰς ὁποίας ὑπέστη ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχῶν τῆς ἱστορίας της, εἶναι ἰδιαίτερος μεγάλαι, κατὰ τοὺς χαλεποὺς καιροὺς τοὺς ὁποίους διερχόμεθα καὶ συνεπῶς ἀπαιτοῦν μεγαλυτέραν καὶ ἰσχυροτέραν ἐνωσιν (ἐνότητα) μεταξύ ἐκείνων οἱ ὁποῖοι εἶναι ἀληθῶς ἀφοσιωμένοι εἰς τὴν πίστιν τῶν Πατέρων μας. Μὲ τὰ αἰσθήματα αὐτὰ ἐπιθυμοῦμεν ἅπαξ ἔτι νὰ σᾶς πληροφορήσωμεν ὅτι ἡ Σύνοδος τῶν Ἐπισκόπων τῆς Ρωστικῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν Διασπορᾷ, ἀναγνωρίζει τὴν ἰσχύν τῶν ἐπισκοπικῶν χειροτονιῶν τοῦ εὐλογημένης μνήμης, προκατόχου Ὑμῶν, μακαρίτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀκακίου καὶ τὰς ἐν συνεχείᾳ χειροτονίας, ἐν τῇ Ἱερᾷ Ὑμῶν Ἐκκλησίᾳ. Συνεπῶς καὶ λαμβανομένων ὑπ' ὄψιν διαφορῶν ἄλλων περιστατικῶν, ἡ Ἀρχιερατικὴ ἡμῶν Σύνοδος, θεωρεῖ τὴν Ἱεραρχίᾳ Ὑμῶν ὡς Ἀδελφούς, ἐν Χριστῷ, ἐν πλήρει κοινωνίᾳ μεθ' ἡμῶν.

Εἶθε ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Θεοῦ νὰ εἶναι μετὰ τοῦ Κλήρου καὶ τῶν Πιστῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ὑμῶν, ἰδίως κατὰ τὰς προσεχεῖς ἡμέρας τῆς ἐν σαρκὶ Γεννήσεως ἡμετέρου Κυρίου καὶ Σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ὁ Πρόεδρος τῆς Συνόδου τῶν Ἐπισκόπων

† ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ ΦΙΛΑΡΕΤΟΣ

Τὰ Μέλη

† ΝΙΚΩΝ Ἀρχ/πος Οὐασινγκτῶνος καὶ Φλωρίδος.

† ΣΕΡΑΦΕΙΜ Ἀρχ/πος Σικάγου καὶ Νητρύιτ.

† ΒΙΤΑΛΙΟΣ Ἀρχ/πος Μόντρεαλ καὶ Καναδᾶ.

† ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΣ Ἀρχ/πος Λός Ἀντζελες καὶ Τέξας.

† ΑΒΕΡΚΙΟΣ Ἀρχ/πος Συρακουσσῶν καὶ Τρόισκυ.

† ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΣ Ἀρχ/πος Σάν Φραντζίσκο.

† ΣΑΒΒΑΣ Ἐπίσκοπος τοῦ Ἐντμοντον.

† ΝΕΚΤΑΡΙΟΣ Ἐπίσκοπος Ἐντμοντον.

† ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ Ἐπίσκοπος τοῦ Ρόκλαντ.

† ΠΑΥΛΟΣ Ἐπίσκοπος τοῦ Μανχάταν.

ROCOR Synodal Recognition of the GOC Episcopal Consecrations
and Declaration of Full Communion (Greek).



Saint Metropolitan Philaret giving a blessing with Saint Archbishop John (Maximovitch) co-blessing, along with Bishops Nektarios of Seattle and Savva of Edmonton.



The Hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad, Saint Archbishop John (Maximovitch), Archbishop Leonty of Chile, Archbishop Averky of Syracuse, Bishop Nektarios of Seattle, and Bishop Savva of Edmonton, made a fraternal visit to Bishop Petros of Astoria at his cathedral.



Saint Philaret with Bishop Kallistos (Matthewites) after Divine Liturgy.



In August 1970, Bishop Laurus of Manhattan, Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, came to Athens and concelebrated with Archbishop Auxentios and the other Hierarchs (Akakios, Gerontios, and Peter) and the Clergy of our Church to seal the proclaimed Unity.



Left to Right: Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus and Salamis, St. Philaret of New York, Archbishop Auxentios of Athens, and Metropolitan Petros of Astoria.



The 1971 episcopal consecrations of Chrysostomos of Thessaloniki (Kiouisis), Paisios of Euripus (Euthymiades), Kallinikos of Thavmakos (Chaniotis), and Akakios of Canada (Douskos).



St. Philaret of New York with Matthewite Bishops, Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth and Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition.



Holy Theophany 1998 in Piraeus, Greece.



Archimandrite Paul (Stratigéas) was consecrated Metropolitan of America in 1998.



Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece (2013).



Holy Synod of the Metropolis of America (2024).



On Sunday, March 10/23, 2014, concelebration and unification of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, Romanian Old Calendar Church under Metropolitan Vlasios, and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad under Metropolitan Agafangel.



Chapter VI

Being Orphaned & The Establishment of a New Holy Synod

Immediately after the falling asleep of the ever-memorable leader, Chrysostomos, the former Metropolitan of Florina, a temporary three-member committee of archimandrites was formed to administer the Holy Struggle.

On September 16th, 1955, the presbytery convened at the First Pan-Hellenic Clergy Conference and entrusted the administrative duties of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians to a twelve-member Ecclesiastical Committee. This committee was under the leadership of Archimandrite Akakios (Pappas) the Elder, the Hagiorite and Founder of the Holy Women's Monastery of St. Nicholas in Paiania, Attica. The main objective of the committee was the necessary effort to find a way to consecrate new hierarchs. The active Archimandrite Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) was appointed as the Secretary of the committee. Collaboration with the parish committees throughout Greece was also noted for the seamless organization and continuation of ecclesiastical life and activities in all areas, yielding positive results.

The passing away of the innovative persecutor, Archbishop Spyridon Vlachos, in the following year 1956 brought great relief, because the repressive measures of the persecution against the Genuine Orthodox were reduced, without, of course, ceasing completely.

Thus, on Theophany in 1957, the diving for the Holy Cross was allowed at St George's in Keratsini, with the participation of a large number of faithful, led by Archimandrites Akakios (Pappas) the Elder and Chrysostomos (Kiouisis).

In October of 1957, the Second Pan-Hellenic Clergy Conference convened in Athens, attended by almost all the clergy of the Genuine Orthodox in Greece, and representatives of the Zealots of Mount Athos were invited as well. However, the entry of lay representatives was not allowed. A report of the work was presented, and a new twelve-member Ecclesiastical Committee was elected. Additionally, three archimandrites were elected by ballot as candidates for bishop, namely Akakios (Pappas) the Elder, Chrysostomos (Naslimes), and Chrysostomos (Kiouisis).

In the same year, the Church also purchased its own offices at 32 Kaningos Street.

The following year, 1958, efforts to find a solution to the issue of episcopal consecrations were intensified in various directions.

Calls were also made for the resolution of the calendar issue to Patriarch Christophoros of Alexandria, a friend of the Holy Struggle, who promised to help. In fact, he addressed an official letter to the then — Archbishop of Athens of the innovative church, Theokletos, concerning the Church. He expressed his regret that he himself had accepted the Gregorian Calendar for Alexandria and asked the Church of Greece to deal with the issue of returning to the Patristic Calendar.

A memorandum urging resolution of the calendar issue was also sent that year by the Ecclesiastical Committee for the Administration of the Genuine Orthodox to the innovative hierarchy in a very moderate tone, unfortunately without results.

Proponents of the Patristic Calendar from Greece traveled to the Holy Land and came into contact with officials of both the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR) on the issue of their ecclesiastical protection. A proposal for possible spiritual sheltering by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem had been put forward as early as 1956 with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Committee for the Administration of the Holy Struggle.

It should be noted that it was believed even then that the Local Churches that adhered to the Patristic Calendar were not in the same category as those that accepted the New, although their communion with and their tolerance of the New Calendar was considered contemptible and reprehensible.

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From preserved correspondence of the time (1958), it appears that the Russian Monk Anthony of the Holy Lavra of St. Savvas made efforts by appealing to hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad regarding the issue of consecrating a bishop for the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece. Archbishop Seraphim (Ivanov) of Chicago showed willingness to travel to Europe for this purpose, intending to collaborate with then Archbishop of [Brussels and] Western Europe, John (Maximovitch), who was also eager to support and assist the Greek Old Calendarists in consecrating candidates to the episcopate. Archbishop John (Maximovitch) was proposed to consecrate the bishops, and he agreed to provide this assistance. However, there seemed to be difficulty in obtaining official Synodal approval for all these actions from the then First-Hierarchy of the Russian Synod, Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky). The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad faced hostility from other official churches and feared repressive measures against it. Therefore, Metropolitan Anastasy did not appear moved by appeals for help, as was evident in a letter from then-Archimandrite Petros (Astyfidis), imploring him for the “salvation” of the Old Calendar movement in Greece.

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In October 1958, the Second Pan-Hellenic Conference of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians was held in Athens with representatives of the clergy and people from all the parishes, the Board of Directors of the P.T.E.O.K., representatives of the Zealots of Mount Athos, etc. Unity and solidarity were stressed, and decisions were taken for the future.

Appeals regarding the issue of assuming their pastoral care were also made to traditional bishops of the new calendar, who recognized the justice of the Holy Struggle but did not have the courage to undertake it. There is a perception that sympathy and interest were shown by Metropolitan Iakovos (Makrygiannis) of Ellassona, but it is unclear to what extent he was truly willing to take on the responsibility of the Holy Struggle.

At the beginning of 1960, the Third Pan-Hellenic Clergy Conference was convened and the mandate to find a solution to the issue of episcopal consecrations was renewed again.

Archimandrites Chrysostomos Kiouisis and Akakios Pappas the Younger traveled for this purpose to West Germany and France, but apart from promises and encouragement, they did not receive anything more concrete.

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Finally, with the help of the archimandrite in America, Fr. Petros (Astyfidis) from Chios, Archimandrite Akakios (Pappas) the Elder, President of the Ecclesiastical Committee all these years, with his nephew Fr. Akakios (Pappas) the Younger, went to America with great difficulty. There, after many efforts and struggles, the longed-for consecration was finally accomplished: Fr. Akakios [the Elder] received the grace of the episcopacy with the title of Bishop of Talantion, in the Church of St. Nicholas in Detroit, USA, on December 9/22, 1960, from Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, with the participation of Bishop Theophil of Sevres, of Romanian origin, who was at that time subject to the Russian Synod. There is a certificate of this ordination from Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago.

Bishop Akakios of Talantion came to Greece and was received with a great sense of relief by the clergy and people of the Patristic Calendar because, by the grace of God, he now served as their leader. The first task was the ordination of new clergy to meet pastoral needs.

However, Bishop Akakios' activity had to remain secret for at least six months, because the authorities, at the urging of the New Calendarist archbishop, were searching for him to arrest him. However, through the actions of various agents, the persecution was suspended, and thus from the summer of 1961, Bishop Akakios of Talantion was able to carry out his work openly. He was assisted by a Committee of Archimandrites with Archimandrite Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) as the first *protosyncellus*.

In December 1961, the iron chain-wearing and miracle-working Elder, Fr. Eugenios (Lemonis) of Mount Athos, who served in Piraeus, fell asleep in the Lord, having been crowned with the crowns of asceticism and confession.

In May 1962, another bishop of the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, Archbishop Leonty (Filippovich) of Chile, came to Greece with numerous precautions, with the encouragement and recommendation, and even with the financial support of Archbishops John (Maximovitch) and Seraphim of Chicago.

Despite the prohibition of the authorities, the consecration of archimandrites as bishops for the establishment of a Holy Synod were carried out secretly with the collaboration of Bishop Akakios of Talantion in the Holy Monastery of St. Nicholas in Painia: Bishops Parthenios (Skourlis) of the Cyclades (Athonite, founder and Elder of the Holy Monastery of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* in Thrakomakedones) and Auxentios (Pastras) of Gardikion were consecrated, then Chrysostomos (Naslmies) of Magnesia (of Volos), Akakios (Pappas the Younger) of Diavleia (nephew of the same Elder, and the only survivor to this day), and Gerontios (Mariolis) of Salamis.

Thus, was formed the first Holy Synod of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece after the falling asleep of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, under the presidency of Bishop Akakios of Talantion, which serves as the primary source of episcopal orders and clergy ordinations in our Church to this day.

The new bishops took over their ecclesiastical and pastoral work, renewing the zeal and giving new breath and vitality to the Holy Struggle, with liturgies, panegyrics, ordinations of clergy, Church consecrations, addresses, [and] events.

In the same year, Bishop Petros (Astyfidis) of Astoria was consecrated in America, also by Archbishop Leonty of Chile, and Bishop Seraphim of Caracas (Venezuela), both of the Russian Church Abroad, with the support of the traditional hierarchs of this Synod, Archbishop John (Maximovitch), Archbishop Averky of Syracuse, Bishop Nektary of Seattle, etc.

In December 1962, the elder Bishop Parthenios of the Cyclades reposed in the Lord. On Theophany of 1963 served as a reminder of the old glories of the Struggle during the era of the late archbishop [of the G.O.C.], Chrysostomos of Florina. From the middle of that year, the Holy Synod along with the P.T.E.O.K. began to send letters, telegrams, memoranda, etc., to the heads of the so-called official churches, reminding them of their duty to cease their modernizing ways and ecumenical involvement, and to resolve the calendar issue in an Orthodox manner by returning to the Patristic traditions for the peace of the Church.

Those appeals unfortunately remained without response. Nevertheless, Genuine Orthodoxy still awaited with hope of a possible Great Synod for the resolution of the pending calendar issue. Of course, the foundations for a Great Pan-Orthodox Synod that the official churches

were laying at that time were unorthodox, and we now clearly know that they aim and intend to abolish [True] Orthodoxy!

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In early December 1963, Archbishop Akakios of Talantion fell asleep, and on Dec 7/20, 1963, Bishop Auxentios of Gardikion was elected [archbishop], although the initial agreement among the hierarchs, following the proposal of Bishop Chrysostomos of Magnesia, was to let the feasts pass and then subsequently to establish a large Clergy-Laity Committee for the election of an archbishop, due to the peculiarities of the circumstances at that time. Nevertheless, the election was hastily carried out, and thus the four-member Synod under Archbishop Auxentios had as members Bishops Chrysostomos of Magnesia, Akakios of Diavleia, and Gerontios of Salamis. However, this did not bode well for the continuation and progress of the Holy Struggle, as was clearly evident from the outcome of events in the following decades.

In August 1964, the Holy Synod appointed a committee, under the chairmanship of Bishop Chrysostomos of Magnesia, to prepare the necessary Statutory Charter for the Administration of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece. The committee did indeed proceed to draft a Charter, but surprisingly, by the end of that year, it was not approved by the Holy Synod.

Towards the end of 1965, an agreement was reached, achieving peace in a conflict that existed between the hierarchs and the P.T.E.O.K. on various issues of the Holy Struggle. Bishop Chrysostomos of Magnesia, who had been pressured by the P.T.E.O.K. for almost two years to renounce the other hierarchs and take over the Struggle, did not commit such an act, possessing a genuine ecclesiastical conscience.

In January 1966, the Elder Archimandrite John (Vaxevanopoulos), manifestly adorned with signs of God's grace, fell asleep [in the Lord]. In April of that year, the charismatic and erudite Bishop Chrysostomos of Magnesia fell ill from hemiplegia [partial paralysis], and thus the Genuine Orthodox Church was deprived of his valuable services. In October of that year, the famous grace-filled Elder Ieronymos of Aegina, whose funeral Liturgy was performed by the Bishop Akakios of Diavleia, fell asleep in the Lord.

In 1967, the new First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad since 1964, Metropolitan Philaret, who had already given a more clearly anti-ecumenical direction and course to his Synod, confirmed in a letter to Archbishop Auxentios that his predecessor, Akakios of Talantion, was consecrated by hierarchs of his Synod, Archbishop Seraphim and Bishop Theophil, and that there was no doubt about the validity of that consecration which had taken place in 1960.

That year, Bishop Petros of Astoria was united with the Holy Synod in Greece under Archbishop Auxentios, who had gained the episcopacy from 1962 from Russian bishops and was based in Astoria, New York. In a new letter from Metropolitan Philaret to Archbishop Auxentios in May 1969, it was confirmed that the consecrations of his predecessor, Archbishop Akakios, for the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, are recognized by the Russian Church Abroad and that the Greek hierarchy is considered a Sister Church in Full Communion.

That year, the men's Holy Monastery of Saints Kyprianos and Justina in Phyle, Attica, under its energetic Abbot Archimandrite Fr. Kyprianos, also joined Genuine Orthodoxy. The issuance of the official Synodal recognition of the consecrations of the Greeks and their recognition as brethren in full ecclesiastical communion was done by a letter dated December 18th, 1969, signed by Metropolitan Philaret and ten other hierarchs of the historic, and universally recognized as valid, Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.



Chapter VII

The Indisputable Apostolic Succession of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece

Following what has been previously stated, it becomes clear that there is no problem regarding the valid origin of the consecrations of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, which derive from entirely canonical hierarchs with full and undisputed Apostolic Succession. No one dared to question the canonicity of the episcopate of the Russian bishops, who, because of the persecution and the flight of a large part of their flock from Russia after the Communist Revolution of 1917, were forced to flee and seek refuge in the free world.

They were given ecclesiastical refuge on the territory of the Patriarchate of Serbia as the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad or Outside of Russia, with the illustrious Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev as the First Primate and with initially more than twenty hierarchs. Later, after World War II, they moved their headquarters to New York, USA. Most local Orthodox Churches maintained ecclesiastical communion with them,¹⁰ which is why the collaboration of the then-Archbishop Anastasy of

10 The recognition of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia occurred primarily during World War II. After the war, most of the official patriarchates began to recognize the Soviet-created Moscow Patriarchate and to enter communion with it. At the same time, these official churches urged the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to recognize the Soviet Patriarchate and unite with them. However, the Holy Synod of the Church Abroad was unwilling to do so until the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate demonstrated full repentance and became truly a free Church (Editors' Footnote).

Kishinev, a member of the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, was requested by Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem in 1921 for the consecration of Bishop Timotheos, who later succeeded Damianos on the Patriarchal Throne of Jerusalem.

The Russian Church Abroad has always been distinguished for its traditional outlook and defended the Orthodox Faith against the temptations and innovations of the 20th century. From the outset, it was formally opposed to Ecumenism and did not accept the calendar innovation, which it strongly opposed. Indeed, it produced holy and revered figures and personalities, especially the great wonderworking Saint, Archbishop John (Maximovitch), with his incorrupt holy relics (+1966), a fervent supporter of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece.

During the primacy of Metropolitan Philaret (1964-1985), the anti-ecumenical witness of this Church reached its peak with remarkable theological critiques and a rejection of the heresy of Ecumenism, which was ultimately anathematized (1983). Metropolitan Philaret, thirteen years after his repose in 1985, that is in 1998, was also found to have incorrupt holy relics, fragrant and wonderworking, and was officially glorified as a saint by his true descendants in 2008.

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The consecrations of our bishops in 1960 and 1962 for the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece took place during a period of persecution of the faith in our country. The fact that Bishop Akakios of Talantion was consecrated “beyond the borders,” that is, in another distant geographical area from the one for which he received episcopal consecration, and by an ecclesiastical authority of another Synod, is justified by the prevailing situation in Greece at that time. In a period of ecclesiastical confusion and turmoil, the priority is the preservation of the genuine Faith, which is why the history of the Church records instances of individuals traveling to distant regions, to other ecclesiastical environments, to receive consecration, in order to ensure a blameless consecration by Orthodox [bishops] and not by heretics or schismatics.

St. John of Gothia, for example, who is celebrated on June 26, went in the 8th century [758 AD] from Tauroscythia, not to Constantinople, as was the order, but to Iberia (Georgia), to receive the episcopacy, in order to avoid the Iconoclasts who had prevailed in the center of the Empire. That those consecrations in 1960 and 1962 did not have the approval of the First-

Hierarchy of that Synod, Metropolitan Anastasy, was understandable due to the difficulties that that Synod itself was facing at the time, as mentioned earlier. The fact that the most traditional and respected members of that Synod were clearly in favor of assisting the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece is an honor for us and a guarantee of canonicity and validity, and it in essence indicates Synodal approval. Moreover, that formal deficiency was overcome a few years later with the Synodal recognition of the consecrations by Metropolitan Philaret in 1969.

That Bishop Theophil of Sevre (France), who participated in the consecration of Bishop Akakios of Talantion in 1960 along with the main consecrator, Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago, also followed the New Calendar is, of course, a reality, but it does not affect the validity of the consecration. Nor does the fact of the incomplete communion of the Russian Church Abroad with the other official local Churches have such an inhibiting effect.

The schism that was introduced in the Orthodox Church from 1924 with the calendar reform took several decades to complete, despite the fact that it was not addressed and resolved by a Great Orthodox Synod, as was expected. This, of course, does not mean that the schismatic and already heretical for decades Ecumenists enjoy impunity, because they are “self-condemned” and suffer primarily in terms of sacramental and soteriological matters. However, for the period under consideration (1960), the communion of those who kept the Old Calendar and had an Orthodox anti-ecumenical mindset with those who accepted the innovation, whether directly or indirectly, did not deprive them of the sacramental Grace of the Holy Spirit.

If within the life of the Church, the grace of the priesthood is automatically cut off due to violations of the Holy Canons or transgressions of the Faith, then, as St. Theodore the Studite affirms, it would have been lost “retroactively” a very long time ago. Therefore, it is well understood that the resolute and unwavering stance of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina against the innovators after 1935, which caused him so much pain, stress, and accusations from overbearing zealot brethren, was precisely of prophetic and precautionary significance for what would follow several decades later. Although he himself did not manage to consecrate successors, as he was left the only hierarchy, he nevertheless theoretically secured the framework for the valid performance of such consecrations later on, which indeed happened.

For this reason, the consecrations of 1960 and 1962, with their Official Synodal confirmation a few years later, attracted the opposition of the new calendar innovationists, as well as the followers of Matthew of Bresthena. And the New Calendarists, willingly or not, accepted the majority of the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad in 2007 into communion under its Metropolitan Laurus after its tragic union with the Patriarchate of Moscow, without any act of restoration of their priesthood, which was never questioned.

The followers of Matthew of Bresthena appealed to this very same Synod in September 1971 to resolve the issue of the uncanonical nature of their single-handed consecration from 1948. The Russian Synod, as is well known, regularized the episcopal status of their two representative hierarchs, Metropolitans Kallistos of Corinth and Epiphanius of Kition (Cyprus), and they in turn corrected the rest of their bishops here in Greece, with the directive to unite with the hierarchy under Archbishop Auxentios and to cease the unholy division between them.

Reality itself, therefore, literally heralds the obvious conclusion that no matter how much the Apostolic Succession of our Genuine Orthodox Church is irrationally and blasphemously attacked, it is absolutely valid and demonstrably existing, accepted and unquestionable. But we need to do a little more in-depth and persistent work on this serious issue.

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The so-called Apostolic Succession is not simply the uninterrupted historical sequence and continuity of episcopal consecrations and ordinations. This is certainly required and is an essential component of it, but it is not enough and not sufficient on its own to truly constitute Apostolic Succession. After all, even the heretical Latins, Monophysites, Anglicans, etc. can prove that they have such an uninterrupted succession. For this reason, in order to ensure Succession, beyond historical succession, the same order and the same teaching as the Apostles are needed, according to St. Irenaeus of Lyons (2nd century). Apostolic Succession has always been not only a series of ordinations, a transmission of the priesthood in a magical way, but it was the transfusion of the entire Life and Tradition of the Church, or, as the late eminent theologian Fr. John Romanides would say, it was not just the laying on of hands on the head of the one being ordained, but it was the accompanying transmission of the tradition of purification, illumination, and *theosis*. It was the transmission of the Orthodox mindset and experience of the Church.

However, when the doctrine of the Church is affected, as happens with Ecumenism and its beginnings (namely the calendar innovation), with the great confusion it brought, then a serious problem arises with sacramental efficacy, since doctrine and piety cannot be separated. Therefore, the great issue of questioning the Apostolic Succession is that the New Calendarist innovators, and those who commune with them, especially since 1965 and particularly in the last decades with the progress and rise of Ecumenism, have reached an incredible point of corruption, decline, and apostasy.

For the things that are included, said, and committed in Ecumenism, both inter-Christian and inter-religious, have absolutely no relation to the mindset, experience, order, and doctrine of the Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church, and thus it is the innovators who become — as we mentioned earlier — completely “self-condemned,” even if they possess the historical continuity of their consecrations.

Of course, their irregularities with their “special” synods from 1918 onwards are glaring, and they should not “swallow the camel” of the Orthodox Christians of Greece, as there is indisputable evidence of their own dogmatic and canonical violations and falls, hypocritically “straining out the gnat” of the so-called irregularities of our Orthodox consecrations, solely to attack and suppress the Truth! However, the Truth “is not bound.”



Chapter VIII

The Course of the Genuine Orthodox Church After 1970

After the confirmation by the authorities in the late 1960's that the Mysteries of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians are registered without hindrance in the Civil Registries of the State, as they are recognized by the Greek Judiciary (1947/1972), but also the attempt by the innovating church to seize the dozens of Holy Monasteries of our Church, most of which, out of necessity, became *metochia* of the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou on Mount Athos, a course of reconstruction but also of destabilization followed.

In August 1970, Bishop Laurus of Manhattan, Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, came to Athens and concelebrated with Archbishop Auxentios and the other hierarchs (Akakios, Gerontios, Petros) and the clergy of our Church to seal the proclaimed unity.

That visit was reciprocated by a Synodal delegation from Greece under Archbishop Auxentios, which went to America the following year and entered into official communion with the Russian Synod under Metropolitan Philaret.

It was the time when Metropolitan Philaret was respected and honored in Greece and throughout the world for his famous anti-ecumenical texts, the well-known "Sorrowful Epistles," which he addressed to the prelates of official Orthodoxy, who were sinking into the ecumenical abyss. These were monuments of Orthodox witness and confession, which served as milestones and the ultimate effort towards the awakening of the official Orthodox administrations stricken with Ecumenism.

In Greece, after the serious illness of Bishop Chrysostomos of Magnesia, who had withdrawn from active service without signs of recovery, Archbishop Auxentios and Bishop Gerontios of Salamis wished to proceed with the consecrations of bishops, while Bishop Akakios of Diavleia was hesitant. Eventually, Auxentios and Gerontios, with the agreement of Bishop Petros of Astoria, proceeded with the ordination of four new bishops in the year 1971; Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) of Thessalonica, with the specific approval of the ailing Chrysostomos of Magnesia, Paisios (Euthymiades) of Euripus, Kallinikos (Chaniotis) of Thavmakos, and Akakios (Douskos) of Canada. Moreover, the existing bishops received additions to their titles: Archbishop Auxentios, “of Athens and All Greece,” Bishop Akakios of Diavleia “and Attica,” and Bishop Gerontios of Salamis “and Piraeus.”

In September 1971, as mentioned above, the consecrations of the successors of Matthew of Bresthena were also carried out by the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, through the “laying on of hands” [*cheirothesia*] of Metropolitans Kallistos of Corinth and Epiphanius of Kition. Efforts were made for the unity of the two sides in Greece, namely the Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios and the Synod of the “Matthewites” under Archbishop Andreas, but unfortunately, these efforts did not succeed, as they were mostly hindered by the intransigence of the recently regularized side.

In the year 1973, the Elder Monk Victor, who had labored greatly in the effort for unity, passed away. He was the well-known publisher of the *Great Synaxaristes* and other Patristic and spiritual publications. Also, in July of the same year, after a long illness, the blessed Bishop Chrysostomos (Naslimes) of Magnesia passed away in the Lord in Volos, a rare and exceptional figure of the Holy Struggle, to find rest from his labors in the heavens. That year, two more bishops were ordained: Metropolitans Gabriel (Kalamisakis) of the Cyclades from the Holy Monastery of Saint Irene Chrysovalantou in Lykovrysi, Attica, and Antonios (Thanasis) of Megara.

It was [also] during that time that the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou on Mount Athos became [completely] zealot, breaking off all relations with the Holy Community because of the commemoration of the patriarch and generally due to the heresy of Ecumenism.

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In 1974, after some complications regarding its publication, an encyclical was signed and addressed to the clergy of our Church, urging them not to provide sacramental ministrations to the New Calendarists. It included the well-known position from similar declarations of the past that the innovating church had become schismatic and that its mysteries are deprived of sanctifying grace, and that those returning from it must be Chrismated.

At that time, among other things, there was also pressure from the side of the successors of Matthew of Bresthena, who, now recognized and restored, were spreading their zealot position with force, and there was an influence on the flock, suggesting that they were the ones who held the correct Orthodox view with boldness, while those of the canonical Synod were faltering. However, the repetition of the declarations from 1935 and 1950 significantly facilitated a group of clergy from the “Matthewite” side to join the canonical Holy Synod without doubt regarding the Confession they sought.

Nevertheless, that encyclical was not signed by Bishop Petros of Astoria from America, who maintained the position of the Russian Church Abroad regarding the non-definitive resolution on this sensitive issue, as it requires a special extended [Ecumenical] Synodal judgment. As a result, he was dismissed from the Holy Synod, but he continued his ecclesiastical communion with some hierarchs in the following years.

It is nevertheless noteworthy that after his removal, Bishop Petros of Astoria sought to be received into the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, which, although it did not endorse the 1974 Greek Encyclical, did not accept him, but rather encouraged him to find a way to restore his relationship with his fellow Greek bishops of the Old Calendar.

In that same year (1974), another blessed and good Elder of the Holy Struggle, Archimandrite Kyprianos Athanasiou of Nea Ionia, Attica, fell asleep in the Lord. Also, during that period, the devout Archimandrite Ephraim (Karagiannis) of the *Myrtidiotissa* Monastery in Stamata, Attica, who served in Volos and was a disciple of Elder Joseph the Cave-dweller, passed away.

In the following years, we experienced a trial both administratively and spiritually. Bishops complained about the improper management and handling of ecclesiastical affairs by the archbishop and others, about the ordination or appointment of unsuitable persons as clergy, and about the inadequate and indecisive handling of emerging issues. The result was a sense of distancing and alienation. The synodal system was not functioning well, and the situation was deteriorating, despite, of course, some promising and positive achievements and events.

An important affirmation of our religious freedom was the statement of a representative of the then-government on April 23rd, 1975, that the so-called Genuine Orthodox Christians of the Old Calendar are free to perform their religious duties without hindrance, which was recorded in the official records of the Fifth Greek Revisional Parliament.

The “Matthewites” after 1975 decided to sever communion with the Russian Church Abroad, which they had maintained separately without uniting with the canonical Holy Synod in Greece, considering that the Russians were not Orthodox according to their own established standards. And it is indeed true, as has already been mentioned, that the Russians did not make decisive declarations regarding the validity of the mysteries of the innovators, and moreover, they continued — individually and unofficially — a form of customary communion with the Serbs or with those in Jerusalem.¹¹

As a result, the Russians, in turn, considered that since they were not recognized as Orthodox, the “laying on of hands” [*cheirothesia*] they performed for the Matthewite bishops in 1971 were also deemed invalid. Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth, not accepting this, but also for some other reasons, joined the canonical Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios in 1977 with a unifying concelebration. This joyful event

11 The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia did not maintain official Eucharistic communion with the Serbian and Jerusalem Patriarchate. Both of these official patriarchates recognized the Sergianist Soviet Moscow Patriarchate as the true and canonical Russian Orthodox Church at that time. This caused the Russian Church Abroad to sever official Eucharistic communion with them. However, there were some individual hierarchs, such as Anthony of Geneva, who, known for his liberalism, concelebrated with both the New Calendarists, Serbian and Jerusalem Patriarchate despite the official position of the ROCOR Synod (Editors’ Footnote).

seemed to give a positive impetus to matters that were not going well in the functioning of the Synod, but soon new issues arose.

Archbishop Auxentios, along with some of the bishops, decided to accept a clergyman from Portugal belonging to the Russian Church Abroad, but without consulting the Russians. After “regularizing” him, he elevated him to the episcopate as Metropolitan Gabriel of Portugal in 1978. This event, as expected, caused discontent on the Russian side, which, on the basis of its 1975 Resolution, considered that it was unable to maintain communion with any Holy Synod in Greece and thus severed the relationship with Archbishop Auxentios as well.

On the part of the “Matthewites,” a unifying effort was made by Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, who in 1978 began correspondence with Bishop Antonios of Attica and Megara of the Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios, Metropolitan Glicherie of the Romanian Old Calendarists, and Metropolitan Philaret of the Russian Church Abroad, without, however, any concrete result, beyond good intentions and the creation of a positive atmosphere.

With the Genuine Orthodox of Romania, under the holy hierarch Glicherie, there was a spiritual relationship established in 1977, through the Holy Monastery of St. Kyprianos in Phylli, but at that time, the relationship did not yet take on an official ecclesiastical form. In the year 1977, the zealous and scholarly monk Father Markos (Chaniotis) of Paros fell asleep in the Lord. For decades, he had been at the forefront of confessional events and activities in support of the Patristic Calendar and against the innovators.

Another distinguished monk, Elder Dositheos the Blind of Katounakia (+1991), the melodious teacher of traditional ecclesiastical music, left a lasting legacy with his marvelous chanting in the churches of the Old Calendar from the time of the late Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina. He taught Byzantine music to many students, as well as to many of the women’s monasteries of the Genuine Orthodox.



Chapter IX

A Period of Great Internal Trial

Following what we have previously described about events of the 1970's, we have arrived at the year 1979, when the beginning of ruptures occurred, with tragic results. Of course, we must note that in the history of our Orthodox Church, both in earlier times and in more recent periods, phenomena of great crises and severe internal upheavals, with tragic results, were not unknown, especially during difficult periods of anti-heretical struggles for the Faith. It is well known and established that the devil's war against the Church exploits human weaknesses, even those of Shepherds, so that conflicts arise, and the salvific work of the Church is hindered.

In the aforementioned Synodal crisis that existed and seemed to be worsening in our Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, it was decided by some to take a bold step as an attempt to find a way out and bring about renewal. According to some, with the agreement and encouragement of Archbishop Auxentios himself, and according to others, without it, movements began for the performance of new episcopal consecrations, with the intention that these would subsequently be accepted, in order to introduce new blood into the Synod, and thus prevent the promotion of individuals considered unfit to the episcopacy.

These efforts resulted in the early February 1979 consecrations of eight new bishops by Metropolitans Kallistos of Corinth and Antonios of Attica and Megara: of Oropos and Phyle, Kyprianos (Koutsoumbas), Abbot of the Holy Monastery of St. Kyprianos of Phyle, where the consecrations took place), Maximus (Tsitsimpakos) of Magnesia, Kallinikos (Sarantopoulos) of Achaia, Matthew (Langis) of Oinoi, Germanos (Athanasiou) of Aeolia, Kalliopios (Giannakouloupoulos) of Pentapolis, Mercurius (Kaloskamis) of Knossos, and Kallinikos (Karafyllakis) of the

Dodecanese. However, these consecrations were considered a “*coup d'état*” and were not accepted; as a result, those who participated in this movement, which they themselves characterized as a necessary “deviation,” were compelled to issue a denunciation of the Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios (February 14/27, 1979) and, under the slogan of “purification,” to proceed with the defrocking of certain clergy.

The Holy Synod, that is, Archbishop Auxentios, with Metropolitans Gerontios of Piraeus and Kallinikos of Phthiotis — because the other bishops either had previously distanced themselves (Metropolitans Akakios of Attica and Diavleia, Chrysostomos of Thessalonica, Gabriel of the Cyclades), or did not participate in the events of '79 (former Bishops Paisios of Euripus, Akakios of Canada) — proceeded directly, in turn, to the consecration of ten new bishops: Euthymios (Orphanos) of Stavroupolis (later of Thessalonica), Paisios (Loulourgas) of Gardikion (later of [North and South] America), Theophilos (Tsirbas) of Christianoupolis (later of Patras), Athanasios (Postalas) of Platamon (later of Larissa as well), Maximus (Vallianatos) of the Seven Islands (later of Cephalonia), Stephanos (Tsikouras) of Kardamyla (later of Chios), Athanasios (Haralampidis) of Grevena (later of Acharnae), Gerasimos (Vrakas) of Talantion (later of Thebes), Paisios (Phinikaliotis) of Aegina, and Justin (Kolotouras) of Marathon (later of Euripus and Euboea).

The now expanded Holy Synod summarily judged and imposed penances on the hierarchs of the other side under Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth, thereby creating a sad division with all its negative consequences. The majority of the clergy and people remained, of course, with the Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios. The side of Kallistos of Corinth made an effort to reconnect with the Russian Church Abroad, which showed sympathy, but during this period of great internal trial, did not take a position in the division, although its clergy at times communicated with the faction under Kallistos.

Also, in October, Kallistos established official ecclesiastical communion with the Genuine Orthodox Church of Romania under Metropolitan Glicherie. Furthermore, he defended St. Nektarios of Aegina, who was disputed by some, established the celebration of the Third Appearance of the Holy Cross of 1925, and generally showed concern for administrative and publishing educational activities, despite its lack of significant acceptance and its condemnation by the Holy Synod.

In the year 1980, Bishop Mercurius of Knossos of the side of Kallistos of Corinth passed away, a veteran struggler and a venerable figure

of the Holy Struggle from the beginning. In 1981, the elder Archimandrite Chrysanthos (Vrettaros) passed away, a great spiritual figure of the Holy Struggle, a modern Neptic Father, and a gifted spiritual guide. The year 1982 saw the death of Bishops Paisios of Aegina and Theophilos of Patras. In that year, Kallistos of Corinth also consecrated Giovanni (Bascio) of Sardinia and appointed him Exarch of Italy.

By 1983, three bishops of the Kallistos faction joined the Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios, namely Maximos of Magnesia, Kallinikos of the Dodecanese and Germanos of Aeolia. However, the Synod under Archbishop Auxentios also faced a great internal crisis. A written accusation of moral misconduct against one of the newly consecrated bishops caused an uproar; efforts were made to neutralize it, and subsequently, it was used on occasion by various individuals. But the most important symptom of this crisis was the split of the Synod itself, due to differences that arose mainly concerning the control of the *Philoptochos* Fund.¹² On the side of Archbishop Auxentios stood Metropolitans Paisios of America, Athanasios of Larissa, Maximos of Cephalonia, Gerasimos of Thebes, Gerasimos of Aeolia and Kallinikos of the Dodecanese. On the side of Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus stood Metropolitans Kallinikos of Phthiotis, Euthymios of Thessalonica, Stephanos of Chios, Athanasios of Acharnae, Justin of Euboea, and Maximos of Magnesia and Demetrias. The dispute became very severe, with both sides imposing penalties.

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The Synod under Archbishop Auxentios, during this period of division, deemed it appropriate to proceed with the consecration of an auxiliary bishop for Gabriel of Portugal, James of Coimbra in 1984, an event that opened the way for uncontrolled consecrations in Europe.

Gabriel of Portugal, along with his auxiliary bishop James, using the excuse that they received a handwritten decision, dated September

12 The *Philoptochos* Fund refers to the philanthropic fund associated with the Greek Orthodox Church. “*Philoptochos*” means “friends of the poor” in Greek, reflecting its mission to support charitable initiatives aimed at helping those in need. This fund is typically administered by the church or its affiliated organizations and is used to provide financial assistance, support social services, and contribute to various charitable activities within the community. It plays a crucial role in providing aid and relief to individuals and families facing financial hardship or other challenges. The administration and oversight of the fund can sometimes become a point of contention or disagreement within church structures, as seen in the historical context mentioned earlier (Editors’ Footnote).

14th, 1984, from Archbishop Auxentios granting them autonomy but with administrative dependence on the Synod in Greece, proceeded to consecrate another bishop for Portugal, Theodore of Evora, and subsequently to consecrate bishops for Italy, such as Gregory of Turin, Evloghios of Milan, and others. These individuals were dubious and had no relation, either in theory or practice, to Genuine Orthodoxy. And Gabriel, James and Theodore of Portugal were accepted, at their request, as bishops by the Ecumenist local Orthodox Church of Poland in 1989.

In 1990, Evloghios of Milan set up his own “Autonomous Metropolis of Western Europe and the Americas,” consecrated many unknown persons as so-called bishops, and entered into communion with the schismatic “Patriarchate of Kiev” in Ukraine under the Ecumenist Filaret Denysenko, from whom he received a new so-called “*Tomos* of Autonomy.” Subsequently, after many transformations and friendly relations even with the Anti-Chalcedonian Syro-Jacobites, he came into communion after 2000 with various fringe groups of alleged “Old Calendarists” in Greece.

The only certain thing is, as has already been emphasized, that this situation, which is reprehensible from every perspective, has no relation to the Genuine Orthodox Church in Greece and abroad. The same applies to any fringe groups from Greece or elsewhere that have maintained or maintain relations with this Evloghian formation, especially in the last two decades.

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A consecration, also in 1984 in America, of Bishop Vikentios of Avlon as auxiliary to Metropolitan Paisios of America, with the assistance of two bishops from Greece, Metropolitans Athanasios of Acharnae and Justin of Euboea, created additional complications in what was in every respect an unclear and confusing period. In the remaining faction of Kallistos of Corinth, there was also an internal division over ecclesiological issues, prompted by a visit from Metropolitan Augustinos (Kantiotis) of Florina, of the official innovationist new calendar church, in an attempt for a possible rapprochement in 1983. Kallistos of Corinth personally issued [confessional] pamphlets and then withdrew into seclusion until his repose (1986), after which his position was taken over in 1983 by Metropolitan Antonios of Attica and Megara.

The following year, 1984, Metropolitans Antonios of Attica and Megara, Kallinikos of Achaia, Matthew of Oinoi, and Kalliopios of

Pentapolis proceeded to unite with the side of Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus and then, at the beginning of 1985, they were united in a common Synod under Archbishop Auxentios, with the lifting of the penalties that had been imposed on both sides.

In February 1985, an encyclical was issued regarding the union, and the separation and boundaries of the dioceses were clarified. The remaining members of the Kallistos faction, Kyprianos of Oropos and Phyli and Giovanni of Sardinia, having compiled the text “An Ecclesiological Position Paper for Orthodox Opposed to the Pan-Heresy of Ecumenism” in 1984, proceeded on an independent course. In 1985, they established the so-called Holy Synod in Resistance, and proceeded to consecrate bishops, some of them completely unknown and controversial, mainly from foreign countries, for missionary communities in Europe, America and Africa.¹³ They also continued ecclesiastical communion with the Genuine Orthodox of Romania.

In 1985, the holy Metropolitans Glicherie of Romania and Philaret of the Russian Church Abroad passed away. Two years earlier, Metropolitan Philaret, along with his Synod, had pronounced an anathema against the heresy of Ecumenism. For Romania, Metropolitan Silvestru was appointed as his successor, and for the Russians Abroad, Metropolitan Vitaly (Ustinov) was appointed.

In 1985, on the initiative of Metropolitan Paisios of America, the Holy Synod under Archbishop Auxentios came into ecclesiastical communion with the so-called Church of the “Free Serbs” under Metropolitan Ireney, consisting of anti-regime Serb immigrants abroad in, America, Western Europe and Australia, which seems to have been formally maintained for only a few years.

A noteworthy anti-ecumenist action of major significance was the visit to the United States and Canada by Metropolitan Gabriel of the Cyclades and Islands in the summer of 1983, where he delivered and published a document of Orthodox protest against the aims of the “World Council of Churches” and its corrupting activities.

13 Since the text’s publication by the Holy Synod in 2015, it has been noted that the sentence regarding “bishops, completely unknown and controversial” will be revised in future editions and did not specifically refer to the Synod in Resistance’s American bishops (Editors’ Footnote).

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At the governmental and legal level, a ministerial decision in 1982 permitted the construction of churches following the Patristic Calendar. In 1985 and 1989, favorable decisions were made for Old Calendar clergy regarding medical care. Additionally, attempts by New Calendarists to obstruct the construction of Churches and impose conscription obligations on Old Calendar clergy were rejected by rulings of the Council of State.

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Shortly after the union of 1985, in July of that year, a new scandal erupted within the Holy Synod following the revelation that a clergyman defrocked by the new calendar church for moral offenses, Dorotheos Tsakos, had been elevated to the episcopate in 1984 or 1985 by the order of Archbishop Auxentios, by two of his bishops, Metropolitans Maximos of Cephalonia and Gerasimos of Thebes. The archbishop denied this, as did the two bishops, but eventually, Gerasimos of Thebes, as well as a layman who was present at the event as a chanter, officially confessed that the event had indeed taken place.

Archbishop Auxentios with a few of his faithful bishops (Athanasios of Larissa, Maximos of Cephalonia, Gerasimos of Thebes and Germanos of Aeolia) convened a Synod and proceeded to condemn various bishops and clergy, turning from the accused into the accuser. A twelve-member Synod under Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus, who had been Vice President until then, was convened in October 1985 and proceeded to depose Archbishop Auxentios and those with him.

It is noteworthy that the deposed Gerasimos of Thebes, after his aforementioned confession, distanced himself from the former Archbishop Auxentios and collaborated with Dorotheos Tsakos, in order to consecrate other supposed bishops, among them Germanos Kephalas, Isaiah Karlaftis, and others. They, in turn, created or participated in the formation of other such fringe groups, which lack any notion of seriousness or legitimacy. Although they use the name of the "Genuine Orthodox" or "Old Calendarists," etc., they have no connection with the Genuine Orthodox Church, acting in a completely deceptive and parasitic manner, without, of course, any conscious acceptance by the true flock of the Genuine Orthodox.

The former Archbishop Auxentios did not accept his condemnation and continued his independent course, claiming that he was the legitimate archbishop. Apart from the aforementioned bishops, he was followed by

a small number of clergy and people. In the following years, the monks of the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Boston appealed to him out of necessity after breaking away from the Russian Church Abroad, citing reasons of “precision of faith.” In reality, however, their leader, the abbot of the monastery, Panteleimon, was facing charges of a moral nature. The former archbishop received them gladly and even proceeded to consecrate supposed bishops for them in Boston and Toronto, as well as for a similar group from France and a group of Catacomb Christians from Russia.

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After the conclusion of the distressing Tsakos affair, the Holy Synod called upon the hierarchs who had been dissatisfied for years to join forces to help during this critical moment. Those who responded to the call were Bishop Petros of Astoria and Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Thessalonica, although the latter had previously opposed the Synod. Meanwhile, Metropolitans Akakios of Attica and Diavleia and Gabriel of the Cyclades resisted this move and continued on their independent path.

Following a vote in January 1986, Metropolitan Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) of Thessalonica was elected as Archbishop of Athens and President of the Holy Synod. His enthronement took place on January 16th, 1986 (O.S.), at the Holy Church of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* in Agia Paraskevi, Attica. In July 1986, the former Bishop Paisios of Euripus passed away, and his funeral was conducted by Archbishop Chrysostomos with the bishops and clergy of the Holy Synod.

In the fall of that year, Kyprianos of Oropos and Phyli was summoned to be judged due to the establishment of a Synod and the consecration of bishops, as well as because of his ecclesiological position, which were considered to be contrary to the principles of the Holy Struggle and the official declarations and encyclicals over time. Since he did not appear and declared in writing that he was not a member of the formed Synod, he and his followers were tried and condemned.

It should be noted, however, that the leader of those “in Resistance” continued his communion with the Romanians, which he cultivated and maintained, contributed to the establishment of the Old Calendar Church of Bulgaria (1993), entered into communion with the Russian Church Abroad under Metropolitan Vitaly (1994), and after its union with the Patriarchate of Moscow (2007), maintained communion with Bishop

Agafangel of Odessa, who did not accept the union.¹⁴ Generally, he actively engaged in missionary efforts across various continents, as well as in the anti-ecumenist struggle with significant results, without competing with the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church by either attempting to replace or oppose it.

In 1988, the Holy Synod under His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos anathematized the blasphemous author Nikos Kazantzakis, as well as anti-Christian Chiliasm and Freemasonry. From 1988 to 1992, a “Theological Dialogue” was conducted with the “Matthewite” synod under Archbishop Andreas, with the aim of addressing possible differences and ecclesiastical unity. However, this dialogue did not progress because there was disagreement regarding the 1937 split between the Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina and Bishop Matthew of Bresthena.

In 1990 His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos was acquitted by the Single-member Court of First Instance of Thebes, where he was accused by the innovators of allegedly usurping authority! In the early 1990’s, the then tradition-affirming Patriarch of Jerusalem, Diodoros (+2000), tried to reach out to the Genuine Orthodox Christians, and simultaneously announced an anti-ecumenical position for the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. However, that hopeful effort was obstructed and ultimately halted by the violent intervention of the Ecumenists of Constantinople, who took drastic measures against the Patriarch of Jerusalem and forced him to retreat.

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It is noteworthy that while Ecumenism was developing throughout this period and increasingly revealing its true apostate nature (Assemblies of the “World Council of Churches” in Vancouver and Canberra, Official Dialogue with the Papists following the events of 1965 and 1980, the signing of Ecumenical Agreements-Decrees of Chambésy, Geneva, with the Anti-Chalcedonians in 1990, and of Balamand, Lebanon, with the Papists in 1993, etc.), Genuine Orthodoxy was struggling, through severe

14 Referring to the False Union of 2007 where the majority of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia capitulated to the Soviet-created Moscow Patriarchate without the latter officially repenting of or renouncing their practices of Ecumenism and Sergianism. To this day, the Moscow Patriarchate remains a dues-paying member of the heretical World Council of Churches (Editors’ Footnote).

internal conflicts, as we have seen and shall see, to barely maintain its cohesion and to stand upright.

It is evident that unsuitable individuals infiltrated and rose within it, individuals who were inadequate for the circumstances. As a result, many successive mistakes were made — even if unknowingly or with good faith and intention — such that during a most critical period, it was not possible to firmly confront the heresy, to provide a credible and effective testimony, or generally to carry out respectable spiritual and pastoral activity and ministry.

Despite this, the banner of the Holy Struggle was not lowered, and the hope for better days always dawned in the hearts of the pure and selfless fighters, who always existed, exist, and will exist in the blessed and confessing “little flock” of the Old Calendar! Genuine Orthodoxy, therefore, awaited yet another terrible upheaval, which, despite its sorrowfulness, led to a necessary clearing of the Lord’s Vineyard from alien and harmful elements.

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After the repose of Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus in November 1994 (a few days earlier, former Archbishop Auxentios had also passed away), a crisis that had been brewing within the Synod over various issues became more evident, such as concerning the controversial figure of Metropolitan Euthymios of Thessalonica, or the ambiguous stance of Metropolitan Paisios and Bishop Vikentios in America on matters of Faith, through their efforts to commune with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which, although it had shown good signs in matters of Faith for a short time, remained in full communion with all the so-called official Churches and, of course, was not in communion with the Genuine Orthodox. The long-standing effort to adjudicate the accusations against the aforementioned hierarchs had been averted, but now things took a different turn.

A group of bishops in the summer of 1995, namely Kallinikos of Phthiotis, Euthymios of Thessalonica, Paisios of America, Stephanos of Chios, Justin of Euboea, and Vikentios of Avlona, rebelled against their canonical ecclesiastical authority and separated from the Holy Synod, citing various weak and insubstantial reasons for such an action. Metropolitans Antonios of Attica and Megara and Athanasios of Acharnae remained neutral. The Holy Synod under Archbishop Chrysostomos immediately tried and condemned the seditionists, particularly Metropolitan Euthymios

of Thessalonica, for very serious moral reasons, as well as some of the hieromonks who followed them. The mutineers formed an anti-synod with former Kallinikos of Phthiotis as president and proceeded to elect former Vikentios of Avlona as the ostensible Metropolitan of Piraeus.

However, by the end of that year, 1995, they separated from each other. Paisios and Vikentios allied themselves with Stephanos of Chios and Justin of Euboea, as well as with the neutral Athanasios of Acharnae, to whom they also entrusted the “presidency” of their “synod,” even declaring former Kallinikos of Phthiotis and former Euthymios of Thessalonica deposed from their thrones. Later, Paisios and Vikentios applied for acceptance to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which received them in 1998 with blasphemous re-ordinations and re-consecrations, and eventually deposed them for various scandals after stripping them of their properties in the United States!

The remaining Kallinikos and Euthymios, after being rejected even by their collaborators in the schism, proceeded to consecrate four so-called bishops in the Spring of 1996 in order to also form a synodical structure, so as to provide others with the illusion that they supposedly constituted the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece. Their new bishops were Makarios (Kavakidis) of Petra, who from 2004 was their so-called archbishop, Ambrosios (Nikiforides) of Philippi, Anthimos (Karamitros) of Gardikion, and Christophoros (Angelopoulos) of Aegina. The reason given to them afterward to intensify their fierce opposition against the Holy Synod was its legal organization through the establishment of an association under the Church’s name to secure its title, as well as its long-prepared Statutory Charter.

In the following year, 1997, the deposed Stephanos of Chios and Justin of Euboea returned to the canonical Holy Synod and were restored, like Athanasios of Acharnae. Also, that year, Antonios of Attica and Megara, and Petros of Astoria died, whose brother in the flesh, Archimandrite Niphon, a kind and discerning spiritual father, had passed away in 1994. [Also, in 1997] The Holy Synod expressed its opposition to the State’s bills “for the protection of personal data” through special cards, electronic identities, etc., because under the guise of protecting the citizen, they pave the way for and essentially legitimize the electronic monitoring of all citizens.

In 1998, Archimandrite Pavlos (Stratigeas) was consecrated Metropolitan of America, and Maximos of Demetrias was given the title of Metropolitan of Thessalonica, since he had been assigned *locum*

tenens of the See since 1995, following the deposition of Euthymios. That year, Metropolitan Kalliopios of Pentapolis passed away, who had been publishing his magazine on the history of the Holy Struggle of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, *Ta Patria*, since 1976, as did Metropolitan Gabriel of the Cyclades, who remained independent until his death. The Holy Synod also proceeded with the Anathema against Ecumenism that year.¹⁵

Metropolitans Athanasios of Acharnae and Kallinikos of the Dodecanese were also removed from office, the former for his constant backbiting and the latter for preaching heterodoxy and scheming. And the former Archbishop Auxentios was restored through *economia*, in order to facilitate the incorporation into the canonical Holy Synod of those who had adhered to him and remained in a deadlock after his death, and the complete disorganization of his successors.

In late 1998, Archimandrite Niphon (Anastasopoulos), the Abbot of the Holy Protection Monastery in Keratea, Attica, broke away from the Holy Synod due to his embitterment over the Synod's attempt to limit the extensive establishment of *metochia*, even in America. He cited various alleged grievances he had gathered against the Holy Synod, including issues related to the promotion of the Statutory Charter. This dissenter was defrocked, prompting those around Kallinikos of Phthiotis, where he fled in mid-1999, to consecrate him as the supposed Metropolitan of Piraeus. Later, the archimandrite associated with him, Arethas (Antoniadis), was also promoted to the post of Metropolitan of Crete.

It is also noteworthy that in 1995, the previously unified synod of the "Matthewites" underwent an internal schism, citing reasons of "Neo-Iconoclasm," leading to a division into two groups. Subsequently, each faction experienced further splits, resulting in four separate groups!

15 "1998 Anathema Against Ecumenism," The Orthodox Archive, accessed August 15th, 2024, <https://www.theorthodoxarchive.org/post/1998-against-ecumenism-by-the-genuine-orthodox-church-of-greece-goc> (Editors' Footnote).



Chapter X

Period of Reconstruction and Hope

After the repose of Bishop Matthew of Oinoi in 1999, the Holy Synod proceeded to elect and consecrate five new bishops: Metropolitans Gerontios II (Loudaros) of Piraeus and Salamis, Chrysostomos (Maniotis) of Attica and Boeotia, Gregory (Markopoulos) of Christianoupolis, Photios (Mantalis) of Marathon, and Theodosios (Vasileiou) of Bresthena. In this way, the hierarchy was renewed, and hopes were raised for the beginning of a period of reconstruction and hope, as indeed occurred, primarily with the further improvement in the functioning of the Holy Synod.

In 2000, Christodoulos of Theoupolis was also consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop of Metropolitan Pavlos of America.

In 2001, the Holy Synod consecrated the Holy *Myron*. In that year, the Catechetical School of our Church was founded and has been operating successfully ever since.

In 2003, the 4th Pan-Hellenic Clergy Conference of our Church was convened. In the same year, Metropolitan Akakios of Attica and Diavleia, the most senior hierarch of Genuine Orthodoxy still alive today (consecrated in 1962), was incorporated into the Holy Synod.¹⁶

The Holy Metropolis of America was also granted semi-autonomy. Additionally, the former “Youth Union” was reconstituted and is now actively functioning as an “Orthodox Youth Association.” In 2006, Metropolitan Pavlos of America suddenly fell ill and remained in semi-

¹⁶ Metropolitan Akakios of Attica and Diavleia reposed in the Lord August 22/ September 4th, 2019 (Editors’ Footnote).

paralysis due to a stroke. In the same year, Bishop Spyridon (Ermogenous) of Australia was included in the Holy Synod, and from 2007, he was considered bishop *emeritus* due to his age. Additionally, Metropolitan Stephanos of Chios passed away.

In 2008, Metropolitan Athanasios of Larissa and Platamon joined the Holy Synod with his clergy and laity. In that year, an informal dialogue was conducted with the Orthodox Community in Resistance,¹⁷ in which, after the serious illness of Metropolitan Kyprianos of Phyli in 2007, Bishop Kyprianos the Younger [of Oreoi] was appointed as the acting head of the group. That dialogue did not have a successful outcome, but it helped in acquainting people with each other and in better clarifying positions and perspectives, as well as in dispelling prejudices based on erroneous impressions of the past.

In September 2010, His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kioussis) passed away in the Lord, and after a canonical vote by the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Kallinikos (Sarantopoulos) of Achaia was elected his successor.

In 2011, the Holy Synod was joined by Metropolitan Moses of Portland and Bishop Sergius of Loch Lomond with clergy, monasteries and parishes, coming from the so-called “Holy Orthodox Church of North America” surrounding the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston — which was irregularly formed as a separate entity after the death of former Archbishop Auxentios, breaking with his successors in 1995. In recent years Holy Transfiguration Monastery has proclaimed peculiar anti-Orthodox teachings through their leaders, which strongly motivated the aforementioned members to distance themselves from this unhealthy environment.

In 2012, the former Bishop Spyridon of Australia passed away. That same year, Bishop Demetrius of Boston, along with a large number of clergy, monks, and parishes, also joined the Holy Synod from the community around the Monastery of the Transfiguration in America. This occurred because, among other issues, there arose the problem of the revival within it of a heresy condemned for over a century, known as “Name-worshipping,” which further aggravated the already problematic situation of the “Holy Orthodox Church of North America.”

17 *Orthodox Community in Resistance*: More commonly known as the Holy Syond in Resistance (SiR) (Editors’ Footnote).

Following the resignation for serious health reasons of Metropolitan Pavlos of America in 2013, Bishop Demetrius of Boston was elected by the Holy Synod as the new Metropolitan of America in February 2014. It is, however, noteworthy that the small remaining faction around the monastery in Boston, already burdened with unorthodox teachings among other issues, united with the so-called Archbishop Makarios in Greece and his associates in a desperate attempt for mutual support and consolation!

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In 2013, an official dialogue was conducted between our Church and the Orthodox Community in Resistance, which, by the grace of God, had a positive outcome, leading to a declaration of our unity, based on the Joint Ecclesiological Text: “The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism: Dogmatic and Canonical Issues,” which was co-signed by both sides in March 2014, as well as by the Genuine Orthodox Church of Romania under Metropolitan Vlasie, and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia under Metropolitan Agafangel (Pashkovsky). It was also recently co-signed by the Genuine Orthodox Church of Bulgaria under Bishop Photiy of Triaditsa.

The unifying concelebration took place on Sunday, March 10/23, 2014, a significant day, exactly ninety years since the accursed calendar innovation was implemented in the Church of Greece. The concelebration also included Bishop Ambrosios of Philippi from Drama, who had just then joined from the Makarios-Euthymios Schism to the joy of the *pleroma* of the Church.

Having been further weakened by other defections from the anti-synod of Makarios-Euthymios, they responded by proceeding with the “consecrations” of nine new supposed bishops! The use and reintroduction of the “tested” method from the past, which only brought great harm, of mass episcopal consecrations of a multitude of candidates, unjustifiable from every perspective, clearly demonstrates the extent of the anti-ecclesiastical nature of these individuals.

Since then, the now united Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church, with twenty active hierarchs, over three-hundred clergy, hundreds of churches, communities, and monasteries in Greece and abroad, along with its Sister Churches in other countries and regions, works diligently for the good of its flock, bearing witness to the truth in the Holy Struggle against apostasy, as the pan-heresy of Ecumenism has advanced to an unimaginable degree. It is richly blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church, despite the difficulties and obstacles that arise.

It is evident and certain that a new bright period has begun, a new chapter in our Holy Struggle has opened, and a blessed reversal has started, in contrast to what occurred during the last two decades of the previous 20th century. In addition to the other blessings, an important part is played by the Synodal Proclamations of new Saints that were collectively agreed to, namely Saint Ieronymos of Aegina (3 October 1966), the New Martyr Catherine Routis of Mandra (15 Nov 1927), the Hieromartyr Joseph of Desfina (22 July 1944), as well as the holy saints of Chios, Pachomios (14 Oct 1905) and Parthenios (8 Dec 1883).

Efforts are also being made to obtain legal status as an Ecclesiastical Legal Entity by the Holy Synod, based on a new bill (2014), in order to address an existing legal gap in its organization and activities concerning its relations with the State and, generally, to ensure its unobstructed and equitable course within modern society.

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Our Church was tested externally and internally, persecuted, disrupted, battled, but emerged unscathed and triumphant. It has the blessing of God, the power and light of the Holy Cross, the protection of the *Theotokos*, and the intercession of the Saints, especially Her Confessor children. It has been watered and nourished by sweat and blood, by struggles of faith, repentance, and virtue. It does not hide its dark spots but strives to correct them and, above all, not to repeat them. For this reason, it calls those who have separated to rejoin its fold and generally works towards the expansion of its God-pleasing unifying course. It does not jealously guard the Treasure of Truth solely for itself but transmits it sacrificially to those near and far.

The role it will play in the near future is expected to be historic and decisive. The fall of the formerly Orthodox Ecumenists, the growing apocalyptic apostasy, the anticipation of a Great Synod of Genuine Orthodoxy, the call to repentance and integration into the Body of Christ for every well-intentioned person — these and other similar factors clearly define its high and demanding mission, so that complacency and triumphalism are not justified, but rather a continuous call for vigilance, struggle, and sacrifice should prevail.

In conclusion, we find it necessary to emphasize that the glory and beauty of our Genuine Orthodox Church lie in its worthy members, who now rejoice in the heavens. They are its sanctified and purified champions in the Struggle, its hierarchs, its worthy and martyr-like clergy, who cannot

possibly be mentioned even by name in this brief work, its venerable monks and nuns, and its respected lay members of every age and class, known and unknown, famous and obscure. They are the ones who endured the heat of the day and the cold of the night so that we might reap today the good fruits of their labors and works. We thank them and are grateful to them, and we promise that we will strive at all costs to prove worthy of their expectations for the glory of God and the holy Orthodox Church, for the help of the flock, and for the salvation of our immortal souls. Amen!



Appendix I

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 was 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 Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, which constitutes the continuation of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in Greece, and to the canonical Bishops and Presbyters under Her, and which is in communion of Faith and of the Mysteries with the local Genuine Orthodox Churches everywhere.

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 Ecumenical 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, and also the Synodal Encyclical Epistle of 1895, which constitutes the final Genuine Orthodox Ecclesiological Proclamation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople prior to its entrance into Ecumenist Apostasy.

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 any heresy whatsoever is lapsed in the Truth of the Faith and the Unity of the Church, and is, as a result, out of communion with Genuine Orthodoxy, since “those who do not belong to the Truth do not belong to the Church of Christ either” (St. Gregory Palamas), as being deprived of Her sanctifying and deifying Grace.

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 ground that it contains a complete plan for implementing the heresy of ecumenism 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. 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, which, moreover, introduced also the lifting in practice of non-communion in prayer and the mysteries between Ecumenists of many different stripes, 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.

5. Finally, I accept the Synodal Decisions of the local Genuine Orthodox Churches, which condemned syncretistic ecumenism: that is, those of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (1983), of the [Genuine Orthodox] Church of Greece (1998), and of [the Genuine Orthodox Church of] Romania, at the same time deeming those who have co-signed ecumenist declarations, and also those who in any way commune with them—clergy and laity—or who accept, or tolerate, or are indifferent to, the outlook of their Ecumenist Shepherds, as being fallen, with them, from the Genuine Orthodox Church.

(Approved by the Inter-Orthodox Consultation of May 13/26, 2016)



Appendix II

The True Orthodox Church in Opposition to the Heresy of Ecumenism: Dogmatic and Canonical Issues

- I. Basic Ecclesiological Principles
- II. Ecumenism: Ecumenism: A Syncretistic Pan-Heresy
- III. Sergianism: An Adulteration of Canonicity
- IV. So-Called Official Orthodoxy
- V. The True Orthodox Church
- VI. The Return to True Orthodoxy
- VII. Towards the Convocation of a Major Synod of the True Orthodox Church

I. Basic Ecclesiological Principles

The True Orthodox Church has, since the preceding twentieth century, been struggling steadfastly in confession against the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism and, as well, not only against the calendar innovation that derived from it, but also more generally against dogmatic syncretism, which, inexorably and methodically cultivating at an inter-Christian and inter-religious level, in sundry ways and in contradiction to the Gospel, the concurrency, commingling, and joint action of Truth and error, Light and darkness, and the Church and heresy, aims at the establishment of a new entity, that is, a community without identity of faith, the so-called

body of believers. In Her struggle to confess the Faith, the True Orthodox Church has applied, and continues to embrace and apply, the following basic principles of Orthodox ecclesiology:

1. The primary criterion for the status of membership in the Church of Christ is the “correct and saving confession of the Faith” (St. Maximos the Confessor, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XC, col. 93D), that is, the true, exact and anti-innovationist Orthodox Faith, and it is “on this rock” (of correct confession) that the Lord has built His Holy Church.
2. This criterion is valid both for individual persons or believers and for entire local Churches.
3. The Catholicity of the Church of Christ, always with respect to Her Uniqueness, Holiness, and Apostolicity, is Her *qualitative and internal*, and not *quantitative and external*, hallmark; it is Her fundamental attribute, which expresses, on the one hand, the *integrity* and the *fullness* of the Truth that She preaches, independently of Her demographic and geographical dimensions, and, on the other hand, the *authenticity* and *completeness* of the means provided for the healing and deification of fallen human nature.
4. It is on the basis of this correct confession that the Mysteriological (“Sacramental”) communion of the faithful with Christ, and between one another, is founded, as a consummation of existing unity in faith, as a goal and an end, and not as a means to the attainment of this unity; that is to say, unity in correct confession is prior and communion in the Mysteries subsequent.
5. All pious Christians who hold to an Orthodox confession, if they are to be living members of the Church, ought without fail to be in Mysteriological communion with each other, since communion in Faith and communion in the Mysteries (“Sacraments”) mutually interpenetrated among the faithful, reify and establish the one and unique Body of Christ.
6. Unshakable abidance in correct confession, as well as the defense thereof at all costs, is a matter of the utmost soteriological importance, and it is for this reason that our Holy Fathers valiantly confessed and defended our Holy Orthodox Faith in word and deed and with their blood, doing so on behalf of the Orthodox Catholic Church and in the name of Her very existence.
7. All those who preach or act contrary to correct confession are separated, as heretics, from the Truth of the Faith and are excluded from communion with the Orthodox Catholic Church, be they individual persons or

communities, even if they continue to function *formally and institutionally* as putative Churches and are addressed as such.

• “Those who do not belong to the Truth do not belong to the Church of Christ either; and all the more so if they speak falsely of themselves by calling themselves, or are called by each other, holy pastors and hierarchs; [for it has been instilled in us that] Christianity is characterized not by persons, but by the truth and exactitude of Faith” (St. Gregory Palamas, “Refutation of the Letter of Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch,” Codex Coislianus 99, f. 144A, cited by George Mantzarides, “Περὶ θεώσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: Μυστηριακὸς καὶ ἐκκλησιολογικὸς χαρακτήρ τῆς θεώσεως,” in *Παλαμικά* [Thessalonike: Ekdoseis P. Pournara, 1998], pp. 197-198).

8. The unity of the Church in the Truth of the Faith and in communion of the Mysteries, bestowed from on high from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, is assuredly Christocentric and Eucharistic, and is *experienced as a perennial assemblage and concelebration in space and time “with all the Saints,”* since it has as its guarantor the Orthodox (right-believing) Bishop, the bearer—by Divine Grace—of the “tradition of the Truth” (St. Irenæus of Lugdunum [Lyon], *Against Heresies*, III.4.1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, col. 855B).

9. Each Orthodox Bishop, as a “sharer in the ways and successor to the thrones” of the Holy Apostles, as Father of the Eucharistic *Synaxis*, as a Teacher of the Gospel of Truth, as a Servant (Minister) of love in truth, in the image and place of Christ, thus expresses, embodies, and safeguards the perennial Catholicity of the Church, that is, Her unity with Christ and, at the same time, Her unity in Christ with all of the local Churches which have existed, exist, and will exist as the One Body of Christ.

• “What is the ‘one body’? The faithful who are, were, and will be everywhere in the world” (St. John Chrysostomos, “Homily X on Ephesians,” §1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 75).

10. Every Bishop who proclaims “heresy publicly” and “bareheaded in Church” (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod) and who teaches “another Gospel than that which we have received” (*cf.* Galatians 1:8) or is in syncretistic communion with those of other beliefs or religions, doing so persistently and continually, becomes a “false bishop and a false teacher” (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod), while those Bishops who commune with him, indifferent towards, tolerating, or accepting his mentality and these actual declarations of his, “are destroyed together with him” (St. Theodore the Studite), thereby ceasing to be canonical or in

communion with the Church, since the Catholicity of the Church, Her unity, and Her genuine Apostolic Succession, which unfailingly guarantee the Bishop's status as canonical and in communion with the Church, are founded on, flow from, and are safeguarded by the "correct and salvific confession of the Faith."

II. Ecumenism: A Syncretistic Pan-Heresy

1. Ecumenism, as a theological concept, as an organized social movement, and as a religious enterprise, is and constitutes the greatest heresy of all time and a most wide-ranging pan-heresy; the heresy of heresies and the pan-heresy of pan-heresies; an amnesty for all heresies, truly and veritably a pan-heresy; the most insidious adversary of the local Orthodox Churches, as well as the most dangerous enemy of man's salvation in Christ, since it is impossible for Truth and Life in Christ to exist in unbreakable soteriological unity within its syncretistic boundaries.

2. Ecumenism came forth from the Protestant world (in the nineteenth century and onwards) and fosters the relativization of truth, life, and salvation in Christ, *in essence denying the Catholicity and uniqueness of the Church*, since at its base there lie both the erroneous theory of an "invisible Church" with vague boundaries, members of which can supposedly belong to different "Confessions," and a variant of this, that is, the so-called "branch theory," according to which the different Christian "Confessions" are allegedly branches of the same tree of the Church, each branch possessing part of the Truth and thus putatively together constituting *the whole of the Church*.

3. In spite of the variety of theories that ecumenism has produced, its basic aim is the cultivation of syncretistic coexistence (concurrency) and coöperation (joint action)—but also, beyond that, of a fusion—initially of all Christian creeds and "Confessions" (inter-Christian ecumenism), and subsequently of all religions (interfaith ecumenism), that is, [the cultivation)] of an approach contrary to the Gospel, leading inevitably to the establishment of a body of *believers*, a kind of pan-religion, which would pave the way for the advent of the *tribulation of the last times*, namely, *the era of the "lawless one"* (II Thessalonians 2:8), *the Antichrist*.

4. By reason of its syncretistic character, ecumenism is closely akin to Freemasonry, which promotes itself as religiously tolerant, convivial, and open-minded towards heresies and religions, having proved to be, in practice, a religion—indeed, a super-religion—contributing directly and indirectly to the advancement of the ecumenist vision; that is, to the

creation of *an all-inclusive base* for every creed and religion, wherein revealed Truth will have been completely relativized and put on the same level as every human and demonic delusion and belief.

5. Ecumenism began to assail the Orthodox Catholic Church with the sunset of the nineteenth century, through a Synodal Proclamation, in 1920, from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, *"To the Churches of Christ Everywhere."* It constitutes, by common consent, the "founding charter of ecumenism," which it preaches "bareheaded," since it characterizes the heresies of the West and everywhere else as, supposedly, "venerable Christian Churches," no longer as "strangers and foreigners," but as "kith and kin in Christ and 'as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, [and partakers of] the promise of God in Christ'" (cf. Ephesians 3:6), proposing, indeed, as the first step towards its implementation the use of a common calendar for the simultaneous concelebration of feasts by the Orthodox and the heterodox.

6. By way of implementing this ecumenist proclamation, following the uncanonical decisions of the anti-Orthodox Congress of Constantinople in 1923, what was essentially the so-called Gregorian [Papal] Calendar was adopted, as a *soi-disant* "Corrected (Revised) Julian Calendar," even though, as soon as it originally appeared in the West (in 1582), the former was censured and condemned as a calamitous Papal innovation by three Pan-Orthodox Synods in the East (in 1583, 1587, and 1593), the decisions of which remain in force and weigh heavily upon those innovators who are in schism.

7. The calendar innovation, introduced in 1924 into the Church of Greece, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Church of Romania, and later, gradually, into the other local Churches, conflicts with the Catholicity of the Orthodox Church, both in the manner of its implementation (unilaterally and uncanonically) and in terms of its purpose (ecumenistic and syncretistic), thereby assailing with a mortal blow the external manifestation and expression of the One Body of the Church throughout the world, which is also reified by way of a uniform Festal Calendar.

8. The Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, by means of Her supreme Synodal authority, expressed Her abiding and unchangeable will that Her unity be likewise manifested through the common celebration by all Christians of the greatest of the Feasts, namely, Holy Pascha, decisively setting forth at the First Ecumenical Synod in 325 the eternal rule for determining Pascha, the Paschal Canon (i.e., the Paschalion).

9. This Synodal act, in essence profoundly ecclesiological and dogmatic, presupposed as the basis of what is called the determination of Holy Pascha the vernal equinox, which, as a date firmly fixed by the Church, would thenceforth be set by convention as the 21st of March by the Julian Calendar then in use, which was thereby consecrated as the Church Calendar and as the axis of the annual cycle of the Orthodox Festal Calendar. On this foundation, the harmonization of the calendars of the local Orthodox Churches, which were on different calendar systems, was gradually accomplished by the sixth century.

10. The Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod in Nicæa gave expression by Divine inspiration, but also prophetically, to the anti-syncretistic spirit of the Church: by “not keeping feast with the Jews” and, by extension, not aspiring to concelebrate with heretics, the external and visible unity of the one Body of the Church was preserved and the boundaries between Truth and heresy established, wholly in contrast, let it be said, to the reprehensible calendar reform of 1924, which aimed at concelebration with the heterodox of pan-heretical Papism and Protestantism, for the purpose of making visible the putative invisible unity that existed between them and Orthodoxy.

11. The Orthodox ecumenists, and especially the more extreme among them, having suffered the pernicious effects of corrosive syncretism, think that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ has, supposedly, lost Her Catholicity, by reason of theological and cultural conflicts and divisions; they propose and aim at its reconstitution by way of a union by compromise of the divided parties, Orthodox and heretics, which would supposedly restore Eucharistic communion, without, of course, a common confession of Faith, evidently in line with the model of the Unia. Other, more moderate ecumenists are content to number the heterodox among the Orthodox, speaking “on behalf of the whole Body of the Church,” the heterodox supposedly being within the boundaries of the Church, since these ecumenists, as advocates of the “broad Church” or the “Church in a broad or in the widest sense,” do not deem the charismatic and canonical boundaries of the Church equivalent, inasmuch as they find and acknowledge the existence of Churches and Divine Grace and salvation even outside the confines of the Truth and the True Orthodox Church (*ecclesia extra ecclesiam, extra muros* [a church outside the Church, outside the walls [of the Church]]).

12. The participation of the Orthodox ecumenists in the so-called World Council of Churches (1948 and on), and also in other ecumenist

organizations, constitutes a denial in practice of the Orthodox Church as the fullness of Truth and salvation in Christ, insofar as a basic precondition for organizational participation in such inter-Confessional bodies is, in essence, the denial, albeit tacit, of the existence of authentic ecclesiastical Catholicity today, as well as a recognition of the necessity of reconstituting a putatively genuine Catholicity, that is, of the necessity, supposedly, of re-founding the Church.

13. At the core of these un-Orthodox and totally newfangled conceptions are so-called “Baptismal theology,” dogmatic syncretism, the abolition of the “boundaries” of the Church, the recognition of “ecumenical brotherhood,” the theory of “Sister Churches” [that is, of non-Orthodox Churches as “Sister Churches”], the so-called “theology of the two lungs of the Church,” the theory of the “one broad Church,” the “transcending of ancient heresiology,” in addition to sundry other misbeliefs that have gradually led the Orthodox ecumenists to a denial of the ecclesiological and soteriological exclusivity of the Orthodox Church and even to a synodal recognition of heterodox communities and their mysteries; to joint prayer with them and, indeed, at the very highest levels, to offering them the Mysteries; to the signing of joint statements and declarations towards a common witness with them; and, as well, to an acknowledgement of the need for common service to the world, as allegedly jointly responsible (Orthodoxy and heresy) for its salvation.

14. By means of all of these things, there has been a complete distortion of the meaning of evangelical love, exercised in the Truth and through the Truth; a profound and ever-deepening syncretistic hobnobbing has taken root; in the name of a spurious form of *œconomy*, an attitude of inclusivity and reciprocity towards heterodoxy is maintained; [and] there has come forth a mixture of things unmixable; there has emerged a truly substantial union between ecumenists of every stripe, a body of believers, not, of course, in the unique Truth of the Orthodox Catholic Church, but on the basis of a nebulous humanistic vision, without any missionary dimension or any calling of those in error to a return in repentance to the House of the Father, that is, to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

III. Sergianism: An Adulteration of Canonicity

1. Another phenomenon and movement akin to ecumenism, likewise possessing an ecclesiological dimension, is so-called Sergianism, which, in the unprecedented circumstances of the persecution of the Church in the former Soviet Union, through the agency of the fallen and compromised

Sergius Stragorodsky (†1944), originally Metropolitan, and later Patriarch, of Moscow, surrendered to the atheistic Bolsheviks and their struggle against God an outwardly proper Church organization, so that, in the hands of the revolutionaries, it could become an unwitting tool in their unrelenting warfare against the very Church Herself, as the Bearer of the fullness of Truth in Christ.

2. Sergianism is not simply a Soviet phenomenon, for it caused severe damage to the local Orthodox Churches in the countries of Eastern Europe, where, after the Second World War, atheistic and anti-Christian Communist régimes were established.

3. The quintessence of Sergianism is the adoption of the delusion that deception could be used as a means to preserve the Truth and, likewise, that collaboration with the enemies and persecutors of the Church was the way to ensure Her survival; in practice, however, the exact opposite occurred: the Sergianist Bishops became tools of the atheistic Communists for the purpose of exercising control over the Church, to the end of Her moral and spiritual enfeeblement and with a view to Her ultimate dismantlement and annihilation.

4. At the level of ecclesiology, Sergianism completely distorted the concept of Orthodox ecclesiastical canonicity, since in the realm of Sergianism, canonicity was essentially torn away from the spirit and the Truth of the authentic canonical tradition of the Church, assuming thereby a formal adherence to legitimacy, which could be used to justify any act of lawlessness committed by the ruling Hierarchy; in fact, ultimately, such a veneer of canonicity degenerated into an administrative technique for the subordination of the people of the Church to the Sergianist Hierarchy, regardless of the direction in which it led the faithful.

5. After the collapse of the anti-Christian régimes around the end of the preceding twentieth century, the very grave ecclesiological deviation of Sergianism, under the new conditions of political freedom, was preserved as a legacy of the past and, at the same time, changed its form.

6. Anti-Ecclesiastical Sergianism, having long ago incorporated within itself a worldly spirit, unscrupulousness, deception, and a pathological servility towards the powerful of this world, continues to betray the Church, now no longer for fear of reprisals from atheistic rulers, but for the sake of self-serving and secularist motives and under the cloak of supposed canonicity, still peddling the freedom of the Church in exchange for gaining the friendship of the powerful of this world, with all of the

concomitant material benefits and, to be sure, prestigious social status.

7. Today, the virus of Sergianism, in this modified form, as neo-Sergianism or post-Sergianism, and also in other forms of state control over the Churches, affects to some degree a large part of the Episcopate of the official local Orthodox Churches around the world, thereby contributing to the promotion of an equally secularist and syncretistic ecumenism, under the cover of a false canonicity.

8. The faithful, both clergy and laity, who possess a healthy dogmatic and canonical conscience ought to maintain an authentic Patristic stand in the face of phenomena and movements that have ecclesiological significance, such as ecumenism and Sergianism, and especially when these phenomena become systematically entrenched and widely disseminated, even if they do not achieve a clear doctrinal expression, yet penetrate and spread into the Body of the Church in an insidious and corrosive manner; that is, when they are actively adopted or passively allowed by all of the Bishops of one or more local Churches.

9. In such cases, the essence of the struggle against these anti-Evangelical, anti-Orthodox, and degenerative phenomena is not simply and solely an optional stand in the context of some putative *oecumeny*, but there is, rather, an obligation to terminate forthwith ecclesiastical communion with a Bishop or a Hierarchy that introduces heresy into the Church in a conciliar manner, either by preaching it or by contributing to its dissemination through silence, passivity, or indifference (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod).

10. Walling off from fallen Shepherds, who are henceforth characterized as “false bishops” and “false teachers,” is a binding obligation for true Orthodox in a time of heresy, for the safeguarding of the uniqueness, unity, and Catholicity of the Church, for a confessional witness to the Faith, and also for a saving call to repentance, missionary in nature, directed towards those who have deviated and those who commune with them.

IV. So-Called Official Orthodoxy

1. The meaning of the term “official Orthodoxy” is closely connected with the meaning of the concepts of “official Church” and “official local Churches.”

2. “Official Orthodoxy” is that peculiar ideology of the so-called official local Churches, representative of an ever more lukewarm Orthodoxy (see Revelation 3:16), which, through the implementation of the ecclesiological

and canonical innovations envisaged by the aforementioned Patriarchal Proclamation of 1920, has been led into a gradual estrangement from authentic Orthodoxy.

3. In 1924, the first major step towards the implementation of this premeditated and methodical alienation from authentic Orthodoxy was accomplished through the introduction of the Papal calendar into some of the local Churches, which in time was expanded to the point of acceptance, in certain cases, even of the Papal Paschalion, in open violation of the Decree of the First Œcumenical Synod.

4. “Official Church” is the name given by the faithful of the Russian Catacomb Church to the State Church, that is, the Church recognized by, and totally dependent on, the atheistic Soviet régime, which evolved into the notoriously Sergianist and ecumenist Moscow Patriarchate.

5. Today, the terms “official Church” and “official local Churches” denote the well-known historically formed local Churches, whose Hierarchical leadership officially accepts and participates synodally in the ecumenical movement, promotes, permits, or tolerates it as a theological concept and as a religious enterprise, hides under the cloak of supposed canonicity, as understood by Sergianism, and adopts—directly or indirectly—many other forms of apostasy from Orthodoxy (see such corrosive phenomena as the adulteration of the Mysteries, and especially of the rite of Baptism, liturgical reforms under the guise of “liturgical renewal,” the newly minted “post-Patristic theology,” which at an official level is effecting a profound infiltration of syncretistic ecumenism into university theological schools in particular, the loss of ecclesiastical criteria for the Glorification of Saints, various forms of secularization and alteration of the authentic ethos of the Church, the adoption of an anti-Patristic interpretation of ecclesiastical œconomy, etc.).

6. All of these so-called official Churches have now joined decisively, unwaveringly, and unrepentantly in the process of syncretistic apostasy of a Sergianist and ecumenist kind, an anti-ecclesiastical and uncanonical process synodally promoted or permitted by their Hierarchies, with which the True Orthodox Church, consistent with its ecclesiological principles regarding “false bishops” and “false teachers,” cannot have any prayerful, Mysterialogical, or administrative communion whatsoever.

V. The True Orthodox Church

1. The True Orthodox Church includes within Her bosom and unites in the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit that major faction of the pious clergy and laity of the local Orthodox Churches who have reacted resolutely to the proclamation of the “ecclesiocidal” heresy of ecumenism and to its immediate practical applications, as well as to anti-ecclesiastical Sergianism, severing all communion with the innovating ecumenists and the Sergianists.

2. The faithful upholders in Russia of the legacy of the most holy Patriarch Tikhon (†1925) did not recognize the established Church or Sergianism (1927 and on), preferring to undergo persecutions and to take refuge in the catacombs, thereby showing forth Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith, while another faction, which departed from Russia and formed an ecclesiastical administration in the diaspora, produced equally resplendent Confessors and Saintly figures, of worldwide reputation and distinction.

3. In Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and elsewhere, close-knit groups of people rejected the calendar innovation of 1924 and the heresy of ecumenism, likewise preferring persecutions and producing Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith, thereby showing themselves faithful to the sacred Traditions of the Holy Fathers of the Church. In addition, through impressive and wondrous miracles, such as the appearance of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross in Athens (September 14, 1925 [Old Style]), our Lord encouraged and rewarded the Godly zeal of these, His genuine children.

4. After the introduction of the calendar innovation in Greece in 1924, those who abided by the Traditions of the Fathers began using the title “True Orthodox Christians,” and the Catacomb Orthodox Christians in Russia, the so-called Tikhonites, did the same.

5. However, from place to place and from time to time various other appellations were used for those who rejected the calendar innovation of 1924 and the heresy of ecumenism, but who have also always situated themselves within the boundaries of the authentic mind and evangelical ethos of the Church and, in addition, of lawful and canonical order, possessing genuine and uninterrupted Apostolic Succession, and who assuredly in their totality make up the True Orthodox Church, which constitutes, in the wake of the constantly increasing departure of the ecumenists from the path of Truth, the authentic continuator of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in our contemporary era.

6. The Episcopal structure that is dogmatically necessary for the constitution and continuation of the local True Orthodox Churches was ensured, by the Grace of God, either by hierarchs from among the innovators (New Calendarists) joining them, following a confession of Orthodoxy, of course, or by the Consecration of Bishops by a True Orthodox ecclesiastical authority in the diaspora, having indisputable Apostolic Succession, and thus the Apostolic Succession and canonicity of the True Orthodox Church is proven and assured, unquestionable and incontrovertible, and confirmed by signs from God.

VI. The Return to True Orthodoxy

1. In the acceptance of repentant heretics and schismatics, the Œcumenical and local Synods of the Church have, from time to time, in addition to the principle of exactitude, applied the so-called principle of **œconomy**, to wit, a canonical and pastoral practice, according to which it is possible for there to be a temporary divergence from the letter of the Sacred Canons, without violating their spirit.

2. Nevertheless, **œconomy** assuredly can never and in no circumstance, whatever permit the pardoning of any sin or any compromise concerning the “correct and saving confession of the Faith,” since **œconomy** aims clearly and solely, in a spirit of charitable accommodation, at facilitating the salvation of souls, for whom Christ died.

3. The application of **œconomy** in the reception of heretics and schismatics into communion with the Church in no way betokens that the Church acknowledges the validity and the reality of their mysteries, which are celebrated outside Her canonical and charismatic boundaries.

4. The Holy Orthodox Church has never recognized, either by exactitude or by **œconomy**, mysteries performed completely outside Her and in apostasy, since those who celebrate or who partake of these mysteries remain within the bosom of their heretical or schismatic community.

5. Through the application of **œconomy** exclusively and solely in the reception of individual persons or communities outside Her in repentance, the Orthodox Church accepts merely the form of the mystery of heretics or schismatics—provided, of course, that this has been preserved unadulterated, especially as regards Baptism—but endows this form with life through the Grace of the Holy Spirit that exists in Her by means of the bearers of Her fullness in the Truth of Christ, namely, Orthodox Bishops.

6. More specifically, with regard to the Mysteries celebrated in the so-

called official Orthodox Churches, the True Orthodox Church, within the boundaries of Her pastoral solicitude, does not provide assurance concerning their validity or concerning their soteriological efficacy, in particular for those who commune “knowingly” [wittingly] with syncretistic ecumenism and Sergianism, even though She does not in any instance repeat their form for those entering into communion with Her in repentance, having in view the convocation of a Major Synod of True Orthodoxy, in order to place a seal on what has already occurred at a local level.

7. It is in any event certain that when the purity of the dogma of the Church is assailed and the irrefragable bond between confession, Catholicity, and communion is thereby weakened or even completely broken, the Mysteriological and soteriological consequences, clearly foreseen by the Apostolic, Patristic, and Synodal Tradition, are very serious and very grave.

8. Taking into account that St. Basil the Great, although he declares himself in favor of exactitude, nonetheless accepts and introduces the use of *oikonomia* with regard to certain heretics and schismatics (First Canon), it is important to note that the Holy Orthodox Church has synodally sanctioned the use of *oikonomia* for “those who are joining Orthodoxy and the portion of the saved,” as is evident in Canon XCV of the Holy and Ecumenical Quinisext Synod (the Synod in Trullo), whereby different heretics and schismatics are accepted in a variety of ways, whether solely through repentance, a certificate of faith (*λιβελλος*), and Confession, as are the Nestorians and Monophysites who were condemned centuries ago, through Chrismation, or through Baptism.

9. In awareness of all the foregoing, and of the particular conditions in each local Church, the True Orthodox Church deals with especial care with any clergy or laity from the so-called official Orthodox Churches who desire to enter into communion with Her, being concerned—in the exercise by Her of pastoral solicitude for them—about what is absolutely essential, namely, that they proceed in their choice freely, conscientiously, and responsibly.

10. As a general rule, monastics and laity from these Churches, who have definitely been baptized according to the Orthodox rite, are received into communion through anointing (*Χρῖσμα*) by means of a special order, in conjunction, to be sure, with the Mystery of sacred Confession, while clergy submit a written petition and, as long as this is approved, are received into communion in the same way, and also through a special brief Order of the Imposition of Hands (*Χειροθεσία*), specifically compiled for such cases.

11. It is understood that commensurate with idiosyncrasies in different places and in different cases, for the application of a more lenient or a stricter order, a decision is to be made by the local Bishop on the basis of synodally determined criteria or by a competent Synod, according to St. Cyprian of Carthage:

- “In this matter we do not coerce or impose a law on anyone, since every Prelate has freedom of will in the administration of the Church and will have to account for his actions before the Lord” (“Letter to Pope Stephen,” in *Concilia ad regiam exacta*, Vol. I [Lutetiæ Parisiorum: Impensis Societatis Typographicæ Librorum Ecclesiasticorum iussu Regis constitutæ, 1671], col. 741).

12. A Major General Synod, of Pan-Orthodox authority, would be able to decree the general criteria and the preconditions for the exercise of the practice of receiving those who return to the True Orthodox Church from various newfangled schismatic and heretical communities.

VII. Towards the Convocation of a Major Synod of the True Orthodox Church

1. In the preceding twentieth century, True Orthodox Hierarchs, whenever this could be brought to fruition, issued Synodal condemnations, at a local level, both of ecumenism and of Sergianism, and also of Freemasonry.

2. By way of example, we cite the condemnations of ecumenism by the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1983, and also by the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in 1998; as well, the condemnation of Sergianism by the Catacomb Church in Russia, and also by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at different times; and finally, the condemnation of Freemasonry by the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in 1988.

3. These Synodal censures, especially of the heresy of ecumenism, are assuredly important steps in the right direction towards the convocation of a General Synod of True Orthodox, which, with expanded authority, will arrive at decisions concerning the calendar innovation and syncretistic ecumenism, which contradicts the Gospel.

4. What is necessary today, on the basis of a common and correct confession of the Faith, is the union in a common Body of all the local Churches of the True Orthodox, for the purpose of creating the antecedent conditions for assembling and convoking a Major General Synod of these Churches, Pan-Orthodox in scope and authority, in order to deal effectively with the

heresy of ecumenism, as well as syncretism in its divers forms, and also for the resolution of various problems and issues of a practical and pastoral nature, which flow therefrom and which concern the life of the Church in general, and of the faithful in particular, so that the bond of peace and love in Christ might be ensured.

5. This necessity becomes comprehensible from the fact that the True Church, as the actual Body of Christ, is by Her very nature Catholic in the fullness of Truth, Grace, and salvation, and that through Her Bishops She puts forth Synodal declarations in the face of heterodox teachings and the global scandal that derives therefrom; thus, She ought to pursue, on the one hand, the articulation of the Truths of the Faith, for the delineation of the Truth in contrast to falsehood, and on the other hand, the denunciation and condemnation of the error and corruption that stem from heresy and heretics, for the protection of the Flock, confirming and proclaiming the already existing exclusion of heretics.

6. Thus, in a Major General Synod of the True Orthodox Church it is necessary that there be proclaimed to all of creation, on the one hand, the Sole Hope among us as the only way out of all impasses “for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14), and, on the other hand, the complete and definitive antithesis between Orthodoxy and syncretism of an ecumenist and a Sergianist bent as mutually exclusive, unto the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, by the intercessions of the Mother of God, the Apostles, and the Fathers.

7. May we be counted worthy, in the near future, following the Holy Fathers and the Holy Synods, preserving free from innovation the Faith once for all delivered to us (cf. St. Jude 1:3), to proclaim, with the Fathers of the Pan-Orthodox Synod of 1848:

“‘Let us hold fast the Confession’ which we have received unadulterated..., abhorring every novelty as a suggestion of the Devil. He who accepts a novelty reproaches with deficiency the Orthodox Faith that has been preached. But this Faith has long since been sealed in completeness, not admitting either diminution or increase, or any alteration whatsoever; and he who dares to do, advise, or think of such a thing has already denied the faith of Christ.”

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Unto the Bestower of the Beginning and the End,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
the one Godhead of All,
be glory, dominion, and honor,
now and ever, and unto the
infinite ages of ages.
Amen!



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GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS!