

# “Schism” or “Walling-Off”?\*

## THE CALENDAR QUESTION AND THE HERESY OF ECUMENISM

by Metropolitan Cyprian  
of Oropos and Fili

*“For the name ‘Church’ signifies not  
separation, but unity and concord.”*

*St. John Chrysostomos,  
Patrologia Græca, Vol. Lxi, col. 13*

To the Pious and Christ-Loving Children of the  
Most Holy Orthodox Church Who Belong to  
the Holy (Old Calendar) Synod in Resistance

Beloved children in the Lord:

**A. “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance”<sup>1</sup>**

By the Grace of our Lord, I am addressing this Epistle to you, in order to remind you, in a simple way, of some basic truths concerning our ecclesiological identity, that is, the place within the Body of the Orthodox Church of those of us who follow the traditional Calendar of the Church Fathers.

I am taking this action, because an uproar has recently been raised in the [Greek] press, and an attempt has been made to present us as supposed schismatics, who ought to return to the innovation of the New Calendar, indeed to submit to the New Calendarist and ecumen-

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<sup>1</sup> II St. Peter 1:12-13.

ist administration of the Church of Greece, and, if we wish—they make this allowance for us!—retain the Old Calendar.

Our times are difficult and the confusion great, and we Shepherds of the Church must remind you, from time to time, of all that we have set forth in writing and orally, for a constant reminder of the Truth renews and maintains vigilance and eagerness, and at the same time protects one from the “cunningly devised fables”<sup>2</sup> of innovators and heretics.

In so doing, we humbly follow the Holy Apostle Peter: “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet...to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, with this opportunity, I urge you to study, to listen to, and to watch with attention and diligence the various texts and tapes that we have published and circulated, so that—with the corresponding advice and guidance of your spiritual Shepherds—you may understand all the more profoundly the issue of the traditional Calendar and of ecumenism, and that you might thus be made steadfast in the Truth.

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<sup>2</sup> 11 St. Peter 1:16.

## B. The Unity of the Church

During these days we chant the marvellous *Kontakion* of Pentecost, which reminds us that the unity of the Church is a result of the visitation of the Holy Spirit: “Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; *and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity*; and with one accord we glorify the All-Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

This God-given unity, unanimity, and the peace of the Church are preserved when there exists a unity of Faith and adherence to the Traditions of the Church; for only then does the Holy Spirit unite the Faithful in the wondrous unity that was experienced by the Church of the first Christians: “*The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.*”<sup>4</sup>

If we are to preserve the unity of the Church, we must, as children of obedience, *unwaveringly obey*, as the Fathers of the Seventh Holy Œcumenical Synod said, “*the teachings of the Apostles and the Fathers and the Traditions of the Church.*”<sup>5</sup>

The Holy Apostle Paul exhorts Christians: “*Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*”<sup>6</sup>

He who violates these Traditions is anathematized by the Church: “*If anyone violates any Tradition of the Church, written or unwritten, let him be anathema.*”<sup>7</sup>

We can fully understand this strictness when we take into account that the Holy Fathers regarded the fragmentation of ecclesiastical unity as a great sacrilege.

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<sup>3</sup> *Kontakion* of Pentecost.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 4:32.

<sup>5</sup> Seventh Œcumenical Synod, Mansi, Vol. XIII, col. 208c; *Proceedings of the Holy Œcumenical Synods* [in Greek], ed. Spyridon Melia, Vol. II (Holy Mountain: Kalyve of the Venerable Forerunner Publications, 1981), p. 826b (Sixth Session).

<sup>6</sup> II Thessalonians 2:15.

<sup>7</sup> Seventh Œcumenical Synod, Mansi, Vol. XIII, col. 400c; *Proceedings*, Vol. II, p. 879a (*Horos*).

Here are some typical views of Saint John Chrysostomos that will help us to realize the gravity of the matter:

- “*Nothing so provokes God to anger as the division of the Church.*”<sup>8</sup>
- “*The most pernicious of all things is to split the Church.*”<sup>9</sup>
- “*To cause a schism in the Church is not a lesser evil than to fall into heresy.*”<sup>10</sup>
- “*Not even the blood of martyrdom avails to wipe out this sin.*”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> St. John Chrysostomos, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 85 (*On Ephesians, Homily II, §4*).

<sup>9</sup> *Idem*, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXI, col. II (*Argument of I Corinthians*).

<sup>10</sup> *Idem*, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 87 (*On Ephesians, Homily II, §5*).

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 85 (*On Ephesians, Homily II, §4*).

### C. The Old Calendar is a Tradition of the Church

Our Holy Church has used the Julian or Old Calendar from the beginning, and She has regulated Her *Paschalion* and Festal Calendar in accordance with it; that is, determining thereby when we will celebrate the movable and immovable Feasts of the entire year.

Thus, the Julian or Old Calendar is bound up with the life of our Orthodox Church: “*It is interwoven with it and has become sanctified,*”<sup>12</sup> and for this reason we call it today, not the Julian or Old Calendar, but the *Church Calendar*.<sup>13</sup>

Every change in the order of the Festal Calendar of our Church, which has been handed down from of old, inevitably causes confusion, disturbance, and an overturning of all that our Holy Fathers decreed on the basis of the Church Calendar,<sup>14</sup> and this is why whenever any attempt was made in the past to bring about a change in this regard, *it was rejected*.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, when in the sixteenth century the heretical Papists endeavored to persuade the Orthodox to accept their own New Gregorian, or Papal, Calendar, the most Holy Primates of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchates *rejected and synodally condemned* the Western Calendar *three times*: in 1583, 1587, and 1593.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Metropolitan Christopher of Leontopolis, *Calendar Issues* [in Greek] (Athens: 1925), pp. 19–20.

<sup>13</sup> See Metropolitan Irenæus of Cassandreia, *Memorandum to the Holy Synod of Greece, Convened on 14 June 1929* [in Greek] (Athens: 1929), p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> See Matthew Blastaris, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXLVIII, col. 104A; *Collection of the Divine and Sacred Canons* [in Greek], ed. G. Rallis and M. Potlis, Vol. VI (Athens: G. Chartophylax, 1852–1859), p. 424 (*Collection*, Part LXXX, Ch. 7, “On Holy Pascha,” § Concerning the Vernal Equinox).

<sup>15</sup> See C. N. Sathas, *A Biographical Sketch of Patriarch Jeremiah II* [in Greek] (Athens: 1872), pp. lxiii–lvi; Metropolitan Philaret Bapheides of Didymoteichos, *Church History* [in Greek], Vol. III (Constantinople: 1912), p. 124; Nicephoros Gregoras, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXLVIII, cols. 557C–560A.

<sup>16</sup> See Athanasios Comnenos Ypsilantis, *The Aftermath of the Capture of Constantinople* [in Greek] (Constantinople: 1870), pp. III, II3, and II4; Patriarch Dositheos of

It should not be forgotten that our Lord Himself made manifest miracles which confirmed that the adherence of the Orthodox to the traditional Church Calendar was right and God-pleasing.

In connection with this, Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite says:

That God is more pleased with the order of the *Paschalion* and, to put it simply, our own Calendar, than with the accuracy of the *Paschalion* and Calendar of the Latins, is evident from the miracles which He has revealed and continues to reveal through it to this day.<sup>17</sup>

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Jerusalem, *Dodekabiblos*, Book XI (Thessaloniki: B. Regopoulos, 1983), Ch. 8, §6, p. 57; Meletios of Athens, *Church History* [in Greek], Vol. III (Vienna: 1784), pp. 402, 408; Sathas, *A Biographical Sketch*, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–92.

<sup>17</sup> St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, *The Rudder*, p. 9, n., where three relevant miracles are cited.

## D. The Heresy of Ecumenism and the Change in the Calendar

At the beginning of our century, there appeared the so-called ecumenical movement, which aims at the *rapprochement* and forthcoming union of all Christians throughout the world, but without Orthodox foundations, since it regards all heretics as members of the Church and the heterodox communities as Churches of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Thus it was that a new heresy, that of ecumenism, began to be propagated, and the great misfortune is that this heresy was officially proclaimed for the first time in the domain of Orthodoxy, by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1920.<sup>18</sup>

An initial practical step towards accomplishing the goals of the ecumenical movement was the acceptance of a “*single calendar*,” so that all, Orthodox and heretics, could celebrate the great Feasts together and so that the feeling of division might be lessened.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in 1924, the first agendum of the heresy of ecumenism was adopted, and a change was made in the traditional Church Calendar that sundered the unity of us Orthodox in our common Festal Calendar, and this with truly tragic consequences.

Thereafter, the lackeys of ecumenism, the pioneers of which were, unfortunately, the Patriarchs of Constantinople, by way of various ecumenist congresses and subsequently by their personal participation in the so-called World Council of Churches (1948 and following), have been entering into ever closer relations and communion with different kinds of heretics: they have been cooperating with them on all levels, praying with them, Liturgizing with them, co-signing heretical texts, and preaching heretical ideas.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Great Protosphyter George Tsetsis, *The Ecumenical Throne and the Oikoumene: Official Patriarchal Texts* [in Greek] (Katerine: Tertios Publications, 1988), pp. 59–63 (*The Synodal Encyclical of 1920*).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. In this anti-Orthodox Encyclical *eleven means of rapprochement* in all were proposed.

<sup>20</sup> See Archimandrite Cyprian Agiokyprianites, *Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1997).

Indeed, the ecumenists have advanced so far in this venture of theirs, that they have also entered into coöperative relations and joint prayer even with people of non-Christian religions, with the result that, after the first stage, when the dividing line between Orthodoxy and heresy was lost, there is now a danger, at the second stage, that the dividing line between Christians and those of other religions will be lost.<sup>21</sup>

A statement by the Patriarch of the ecumenists, Athenagoras (†1972), is indicative of this terrible fall:

We are deceived and we sin, if we think that the Orthodox Faith came down from Heaven and that all [other] creeds are unworthy. Three hundred million people have chosen Islam in order to reach their god, and other hundreds of millions are Protestants, Catholics, and Buddhists. The goal of every religion is to improve mankind[!]<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, *The World Council of Churches and the Interfaith Movement* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1997); Bishop Angelos of Avlona, *Ecumenism: A Movement for Union or A Syncretistic Heresy?* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> *Orthodoxos Typos*, No. 24 (December 1968).

## E. Innovators and Modernists

Those who change, reform, and modernize the Traditions of the Church are called innovators and modernists; these people, motivated by pride, not only do not accept with faith and reverence all that our Holy Fathers have decreed, but also attempt to impose their innovations on all Orthodox, heedless of the consequences (upheavals, schisms, the banishment of love, separations among families, the break-ups of monastic brotherhoods, fanaticism, and antagonism...).

The wretched innovators and modernists do not prefer the “safeguard” of sacred Traditions, and for this reason they are unable to repeat the Divinely-inspired words of the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Holy Œcumenical Synod: “*Providing ourselves with a single safeguard: that there be no innovation by us in anything that pertains to right belief.*”<sup>22a</sup>

Our Holy Fathers regard innovations as a *directive of the Devil*, and this is why they are very strict in dealing with innovators, advising us to turn aside and distance ourselves from them, even if they be Angels from Heaven, since it is better for us to gather for prayer without them, than to go with them to the Gehenna of fire, to Hell.<sup>23</sup>

The response of the Orthodox Patriarchs to Pope Pius IX in 1848 is very typical:

*Therefore, all innovators, either by heresy or by schism, have willfully clothed themselves in a ‘curse like a garment,’ as the Psalmist says, whether they be Popes, Patriarchs, clergy, or laity; ‘if anyone, even an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be anathema.’*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22a</sup> Seventh Œcumenical Synod, Mansi, Vol. XIII, col. 208C; *Proceedings*, Vol. II, p. 826b (Sixth Session).

<sup>23</sup> See Galatians 1:8–9; St. John Chrysostomos, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXIII, col. 231 (*On Hebrews, Homily 34, §1*); St. Athanasios the Great, *Library of Greek Fathers and Ecclesiastical Writers*, [in Greek], Vol. XXXIII, p. 199 (*Other Fragments*).

<sup>24</sup> J. Karmiris, *Dogmatic and Credal Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church* [in Greek], Vol. II (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), §20, p. 923 [1003].

## F. Anti-Innovationists and Walling-Off

The pious Orthodox Christians who have rejected the heresy of ecumenism and the innovation of the New Calendar and who have reverently maintained the Old Calendar are called anti-ecumenists and anti-innovationists; they do not follow the ecumenist and New Calendarist Shepherds in their catastrophic course and do not have any ecclesiastical relations with them; that is, they have *walled themselves off* from the modernists.<sup>25</sup>

The anti-ecumenists have not provoked a schism in the Church by this stance of theirs, but have obeyed the Holy Fathers and the Sacred Canons, which praise and bless all those who are walled off, that is, separated from innovating Shepherds *for dogmatic reasons*, when the latter publicly preach false beliefs and heresies.<sup>26</sup>

We have schism only in that case where a faction of the clergy and the laity break off relations and communion with the canonical Shepherds of the Church “*without due cause*,” “*without good reason*,” on the pretext of “*issues that are capable of being resolved*,” or on the pretext of the personal sins of the Hierarchs.<sup>27</sup>

The heresy of ecumenism, from which the calendar innovation of 1924 derived, cannot be considered an insignificant matter and an “*issue that is capable of being resolved*,” since it has been very aptly characterized as “*something much worse than a panheresy*” and as a “*sickness unto death*,” as “*the most hideous syncretism*” and “*worse than every [other] heresy*,” as well as “*an unprecedented betrayal*.”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, *The Heresy of Ecumenism and the Patristic Stand of the Orthodox* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> Fifteenth Canon of the First–Second Synod.

<sup>27</sup> See Thirty-first Apostolic Canon, Fifteenth Canon of the First–Second Synod, First Canon of St. Basil the Great, and the commentaries thereon.

<sup>28</sup> Andreas Theodorou, *Orthodoxy Yesterday and Today* [in Greek] (Athens: *Orthodoxos Typos* Publications, 1973), p. 21; Archimandrite Epiphanius Theodoropoulos, *Articles, Studies, and Letters* [in Greek], Vol. 1 (Athens: 1981), pp. 163–164; Archiman-

Consequently, all who follow the traditional Church Calendar and who are anti-ecumenists, not only are not schismatics, but constitute the anti-innovationist plenitude of the Orthodox Church, which has *walled itself off* from the modernists and *is in resistance*,<sup>25</sup> that is, struggling for the peace and unity of the Church, regardless of the persecutions and slanders directed against it.

It should be fully understood that *schism*, which is not forgiven even by the blood of martyrdom, and *walling-off*, which is salvific and worthy of “*the honor due to those of right belief*,”<sup>26</sup> are *completely different things*.

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drite Justin Popovich, “An Orthodox Opinion and Witness” [in Greek], *Koinonia* (March–April 1975), pp. 95–101.

## G. New Confessors of the Faith

All those who have kept the traditional Church Calendar have been pejoratively called “Old Calendarists” by the innovators, and since 1924 have undergone persecutions and torments, imprisonments and exiles, depositions and excommunications, defrockings and degradation, threats and intimidation, and even death!<sup>29</sup>

Thus it was that our blessed Fatherland of Greece saw its streets and squares oozing with the blood of the faithful children of Orthodoxy; its prisons were filled with Old Calendarist clergy, and new Confessors of the Faith were sent into exile.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, the innovating New Calendarist ecumenists, in their attempt to unite with the heretics of the West, not only divided the unity of the most Holy Orthodox Church in the common celebration of Her Feasts, but also became persecutors of Her pious children, striving to impose the Western innovation on them *by force*, acting in opposition to Christ, Who does not compel anyone to follow Him, but proclaims: “*Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*”; “*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*”<sup>30</sup>

These ecumenists and innovators, the enemies of the Traditions of the Fathers and the Church Calendar, while they accept that heretics have Grace and Mysteries and pray with heretics and the followers of other religions, to whom they are tolerant and courteous, do not cease, on the contrary, to slander us anti-ecumenist Old Calendarists as supposed schismatics, deposed and deprived of valid Mysteries.

Nonetheless, our Lord calls blessed those who are slandered for His Name’s sake, and the Saints call blessed all who endure torments, persecutions, and false depositions for their adherence to our Holy Faith:

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<sup>29</sup> See “His Beatitude Was Led to Dye His Throne in the Blood of the Innocent and Truly Religious Flock, Which Was Martyred for Orthodoxy” [in Greek], *Orthodoxos Enstasis kai Martyria*, Nos. 22–23 (January–June 1991), pp. 218–225.

<sup>30</sup> St. Mark 8:34; St. John 7:37.

‘Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake’; ‘Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, . . . and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake’; ‘Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.’<sup>31</sup>

The various depositions imposed by the innovating New Calendarist ecumenists are not true depositions, but false depositions, and our Old Calendarist clergy condemned by them *have never really been deposed, but persecuted*,<sup>32</sup> and for this reason, not only have we not lost Divine Grace and the Sacred Mysteries, but we have received the blessing of God in greater abundance.<sup>33</sup>

When the Faithful are persecuted for the Truth and their Faith, they become Confessors and Martyrs, receive much more Grace from the Holy Spirit, and are blessed, as Saint John Chrysostomos says, who, although he was twice unjustly deposed and exiled by his enemies, continued to perform his Episcopal duties: “And he taught and Ordained many Bishops, and even more Presbyters and Deacons. He wrought many miracles in exile, both when alive and after death.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> St. Matthew 5:11–12, St. Luke 6:22. • See also St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 125B (*Epistle* 18: “To the Clergy and Laity of Constantinople”).

<sup>32</sup> See St. Maximos the Confessor, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. xc, col. 128D (*Account of the Proceedings*, §14).

<sup>33</sup> See *The Rudder*, p. 30 (opinion of St. John Chrysostomos).

<sup>34</sup> St. Photios the Great, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. cIII, col. 357C (*Myriobiblos*, ch. 96).

## H. The “Old Calendarist Unia”

Another method which the innovating ecumenists have devised in order to neutralize those who remain faithful to the traditional Church Calendar and who struggle against ecumenism is that of the “Old Calendarist Unia.”

The underhanded and corrupt system of the Unia is an invention of the Vatican: in order to absorb the Orthodox of the East, the Pope permitted them to retain their Byzantine traditions (administration, *Typikon*, vestments, Icons, *etc.*), as long as they were in communion with the heretical Pontiff of Rome and recognized his alleged supreme power and the supposed universal prerogatives of his authority.<sup>35</sup>

The innovators of the ecumenist heresy are now, in their turn, proposing to the opponents of innovation that they retain the Old Calendar, but submit to them in ecclesiastical matters and commemorate the New Calendar Bishops as their authority, as is the case—for example—on the Holy Mountain: there the monasteries and sketes follow the order of the Calendar handed down by the Fathers, but unfortunately—except for the Zealot Fathers—commemorate the Patriarch of Constantinople, who follows the New Calendar and is a pioneering and veteran ecumenist.<sup>36</sup>

The Orthodox anti-ecumenists categorically reject the solution of the “Old Calendarist Unia,” and it is impossible for them to accept similar proposals, for two main reasons.

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<sup>35</sup> See Archimandrite Spyridon Bilalis, *Orthodoxy and Papism* [in Greek], Vol. II (Athens: *Orthodoxos Typos* Publications, 1969), pp. 265–329.

<sup>36</sup> Two former Old Calendarist Hierarchs in America, Metropolitan Paisios (Loulourgas) and Bishop Vikentios (Malamatenios), have already submitted to ecumenism, unfortunately, as the first “Old Calendarist Uniates,” and the New Calendarists are putting them forward as a “model” for union, whereas in reality they are a “replica” of the lamentable Uniates, who abandoned Orthodoxy, submitted to the Vatican, and are now masquerading as a “Trojan horse” within the domain of the Orthodox Churches (see the “Second Announcement [April 17, 1998] of the Holy Synod in Resistance” [in Greek], *Hagios Kyprianos*, No. 283 [March–April 1998], pp. 46ff.).

a) Our adherence to the traditional Church Calendar is first and foremost bound up with the struggle against the heresy of ecumenism, which means that our walling-off from the ecumenists is essentially the result of the dogmatic deviations of the ecumenical movement; now, since these deviations continue, it would be for us truly an act of *proverbial ritualism* to overlook dogmatic exactitude and be united with the innovators, while maintaining the traditional Calendar. What would be the point?

Would our persistence not in fact be deprived of sobriety, if we kept the wall and the fortifications of our city intact, after we had allowed our enemies to enter it officially through the gates?

b) Saint Mark Evgenikos exhorts us: “Avoid communing with those with whom you should not commune and commemorating those who should not be commemorated”;<sup>37</sup> applying a further development of the Saint’s thinking to the contemporary situation, we add:

- He who commemorates the ecumenists as Orthodox Hierarchs is obligated, henceforth, to carry out whatever they think and whatever course they follow, that is, *to take part* in the ecumenical movement and *to belong* to the World Council of Churches (albeit indirectly), *to pray with* heretics and people of other religions, *to regard* heretical communities as “Sister Churches,” *to accept* the baptism of heretics, *to believe* that the One Church also includes heretics, and *to think* that it is imperative for Orthodoxy to serve the world jointly with heretics and people of other religions, *etc.*

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<sup>37</sup> St. Mark Evgenikos, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. CLX, col. 1097D (“Epistle to Hieromonk Theophanes in Evripos”).

## I. For Peace and Unity

The Old Calendarist anti-ecumenists regard as inconceivable any solution whatsoever that would lead them into communion and union with innovators and modernists, without first having removed the causes of our present ecclesiastical division.

The easy acceptance of a solution like the “Old Calendarist Unia” would be a *great betrayal* for us, as well as *unforgivable shallowness*, since it would demonstrate that we have no awareness of our ecclesiological identity; that is to say, of why we exist and what we are aiming at as the anti-innovationist plenitude of the Church in resistance.

In essence, the solution must come from the innovators: any prospect for the peace and unity of the Church demands *the following three timely and courageous steps from those who are gravely and singularly responsible for the tragic division among the Orthodox*:

a) The Orthodox ecumenists *should withdraw* from the World Council of Churches and should cease taking part in the ecumenical movement, since the endeavor to unite the Christian world by means of ecumenism has gone astray, insofar as it is not based on strictly Orthodox presuppositions.

b) The Orthodox ecumenists *should condemn* all the anti-Orthodox theological views which inter-Christian and interfaith ecumenism has generated, *should proclaim* quite categorically the uniqueness of the Orthodox Church, and *should make* it clear that Orthodoxy is sufficient of itself for the salvation of the world and does not need to be “allied” with heretics and those of other religions.

c) The Orthodox ecumenists *should return* to the calendar situation that prevailed prior to 1924, in order to restore the unity of all Orthodox in the Festal Calendar and to put an end to the truly “*universal scandal*” and Babel of Festal Calendars, on account of which *some* Orthodox fast and repent, while *others* break the Fast and celebrate; *some* celebrate Saint Spyridon, while *others* celebrate the Nativity; *some* celebrate together with the Holy Land of Jerusalem, while *others* celebrate with the

heretics of the West!

If the innovating ecumenists do not take these courageous steps, then let them not hope for any concession at all from us, or for any acceptance whatsoever of compromises, even if they threaten us with depositions, excommunications, and persecutions; for, with the help of our *Panagia*, the Mother of God, we are prepared to sacrifice everything, in order to preserve the priceless treasure of Orthodoxy and the sacred “legacy”<sup>38</sup> which Christ has entrusted to us through the Holy Apostles and the God-bearing Fathers.

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<sup>38</sup> See 1 St. Timothy 6:20.

**J. “Keep that which is committed to thy trust”<sup>38</sup>**

Beloved children in the Lord:

“Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear!”

To the “Little Flock”<sup>39</sup> of the Old Calendar our Lord has entrusted the precious treasure of Orthodox Truth, untainted by innovation.

Let us hold to this inheritance with humility and self-reproach, with obedience and trust in the Shepherds of our Holy Synod, with love and compassion, and with chaste disposition and purity of heart.

If we abide in the Orthodox dogmas, the Traditions of the Church, and the life of holiness, the Holy Spirit will rest in our hearts and His Grace will strengthen us, illumine us, and guide us to the path of saving Confession.

We are few in number—we are the “Little Flock”; but this should not alarm us, for it was our Lord’s good pleasure to entrust us with His Truth, with His “Kingdom.”<sup>39</sup>

Let us not disdain this great blessing and let us not neglect it, because “the days are evil.”<sup>40</sup>

Let us glory in the afflictions that we face for our Confession, remaining faithful to our calling, since in this way we are counted worthy of “rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,”<sup>41</sup> of hoping that we will enjoy God’s glory.

The fidelity of the “Little Flock” to its Orthodox Confession is already yielding unexpectedly wonderful fruits: *the flame of anti-ecumenism has spread to all the Local Churches*; clergy and people are reacting vigorously against ecumenism: two Patriarchates (Georgia and Bulgaria) have withdrawn from the World Council of Churches, and others will follow shortly; the ecumenists are in disarray and are asking themselves some difficult questions; all of the Orthodox are re-examining their atti-

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<sup>39</sup> St. Luke 12:32.

<sup>40</sup> Ephesians 5:16.

<sup>41</sup> Romans 5:2–3.

tude towards the ecumenical movement.

Let us persevere; let us be attentive; let us pray; let us hope!  
“And hope maketh not ashamed.”<sup>42</sup>

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*Fili, Attica*  
*May 25, 1998 (Old Style)*  
*Holy Pentecost*

\* Source: “*Schism*” or “*Walling-Off*”? : *A Pastoral Epistle*, supplement to *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XV, No. 4 (1998).

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<sup>42</sup> Romans 5:5.