

St. Makarios of Corinth: The Author of the Philokalic Revival* (1731 – †17 April 1805)

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Professor Stylianos G. Papadopoulos for his very mature and edifying book, *St. Makarios of Corinth: The Author of the Philokalic Revival* (1st ed: Ekdoseis “Akritis,” March 2000, pp. 176).

A **methodical** and reverent examination of the life and activities of St. Makarios, Metropolitan of Corinth, reveals a great personality, since *“this holy man, the offspring of a very powerful family, who was in possession of a vast learning and many natural and spiritual gifts, became an ascetic, teacher in Corinth, resourceful Bishop, rebel against the Turks, student and implementer of theoretical and practical neptic texts, compiler of the Philokalia, author of the entire Philokalic revival, editor, redactor, and publisher of philokalic and theological works, trainer of New Martyrs, collector and author of accounts of the lives of the New Martyrs, and a great ascetic with experiences of Divine vision and the gift of working miracles”* (p. 157).



The especially inestimable contribution of St. Makarios to the Orthodox Church is that, by the Grace of God, he proved to be the **author of the Philokalic revival**, as the compiler, author, and editor of the celebrated works, *The Philokalia* (1782) and *Concerning Frequent Communion* (1783), the critical review of which he entrusted to St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite.

St. Makarios correctly perceived that *“asceticism, and consequently monasticism, can not prosper or bear fruit without a theological foundation and practical guidance. But neither can ecclesiastical life acquire a genuinely Orthodox spirit and ethos without moral theology and orthopraxia”* (p. 51).

These perspectives are fully encompassed, in particular, by the two aforementioned works of his, which offer solid spiritual food to the Faithful, because a *“true, authentic, and broad Philokalic spirit is engendered when a Philokalic spirit and frequent communion co-exist. The one nourishes and promotes the other. This is a matter of two poles that are absolutely indispensable for progress in the spiritual life. St. Makarios of Corinth was preëminently the one who correctly perceived not only the need for the two poles, but also the fact that when combined they function together in tandem. And it was the good will of the Holy Spirit for him to become the author and promoter, par excellence, of the Philokalic spirit, the neptic and ascetic revival, of Philokalism”* (pp. 155-156).

St. Makarios contributed to this rekindling of the spiritual life at the close of the

eighteenth century by the publication of other Patristic texts as well (the *Evergetinos* and the works of St. Symeon the New Theologian, among others), but the *Philokalia* and *Concerning Frequent Communion* constituted the firm foundation of the mighty edifice of the **Hesychastic and Eucharistic Ethos of Orthodoxy**.

“Philokalism,” that is, neptic spiritual struggle, is ineffectual without regular partaking of the Mysteries. But one must not approach the Mysteries without a prior spiritual struggle. Neither Philokalism without the Mysteries, nor the Mysteries without Philokalism. The combination of the two constitutes a tradition of the Orthodox Church. The absence of this combination leads to many kinds of deviations, in view of which St. Makarios compiled the Philokalia and wrote Concerning Frequent Communion, thereby becoming the author of this entire movement for renewal, of which St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, that holy and great theologian, was chosen by St. Makarios himself as a radiant messenger” (p. 79).

• **In our days**, when “theology” abounds without any ethos, and an “ethos” is set forth without any theology, the value of such books as the one by Stylianos Papadopoulos is self-evident, since it is exceptionally helpful to us in rediscovering our **Patristic identity**, in our perusal of “the sources....”



(*) Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 301 (March-April 2001), pp. 30-31.