

*“Thou Hast
Crushed the Heads
of the Dragons
in the Water” **



Holy Hierarchs, Venerable Presbyters, Reverend Fathers and Mothers, Feast-loving assembly of the Orthodox, radiant children of the Church:

TODAY the Holy Church, resplendently dressed in white, once again rejoices with great joy and celebrates together with the Heavenly beings; for our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, the enhypostatic Wisdom and Power of God, the *“effulgence of the glory”* of the Father, *“and the express image of His hypostasis”* is Baptized in the Jordan and, in being cleansed, purifies us. He, being *“the source of sanctification”*¹ and purity, illumines and sanctifies our nature through His sacred Baptism.

The God-Man *“had no need of purification”*;² for *“there is none holy as the Lord, and there is none righteous as our God”*;³ but, mystically working our justification, freedom, and deification, He enters into the Jordan River, where, *“having slain the enmity”*⁴ and multifarious sin, he crushes and breaks asunder the heads of the noetic dragons, frees man from the bondage of evil spirits, and raises him up to the unfathomable heights *“of the glory of the children of God.”*⁵

This is why the Feast-loving company of the Faithful leaps and cries out in a great voice with the Prophet-King David: *“Thou hast crushed the heads of the dragons in the water; Thou didst break to pieces the head of the dragon,”*⁶ and worships, glorifies, and praises *“Him, Whom the peoples bless and exalt above all for ever.”*⁷

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Today, our Savior, Who loves Mankind, reconciles us, by His Baptism, as also, of course, by all of the God-befitting and man-befitting wondrous works of His All-Holy Sojourn in the flesh

(viz. His Conception, Nativity, Passion, Cross, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension), with His All-Good Father, such that we “*who once were afar off*” will henceforth be “*nigh*” “*in Christ Jesus*”; for “*He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition.*”⁸

Hence, let all of us who have been vouchsafed to become partakers of His Theanthropic Mysteries, through Holy Baptism, unceasingly offer up hymns and doxologies with the Heavenly Hosts to the consubstantial and undivided All-Holy Trinity: to the Father, Who was “well-pleased,” to the Son, Who was Baptized, and to the co-working Holy Spirit.

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While, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ and children in the Lord, this splendid Feast initiates us, today, into such pious feelings and saving thoughts, we cannot disregard the very sad fact of the division among the Orthodox with regard to the festal calendar.

In 1924, on account of the anti-Orthodox efforts for “pan-Christian unity”⁹ and the rapprochement of the Orthodox and wrong believers “*in the common celebration of the great Christian Feast Days,*”¹⁰ the unity of the Faithful was violently sundered. Thenceforth, the innovationist New Calendarists have been steadily deviating from the piety of the Fathers, concelebrating and hobnobbing in worship and liturgical services with the heterodox and, beyond this, even with non-Christians!

In so doing, the ecumenists “*have dared to make vanish, in the way that they desired, the ancient customs handed down by the Church*”¹¹ and have proved themselves to be “*not only maligners of Christians,*” “*but also maligners of the Saints and defilers of the Fathers, slandering the Divine Fathers in lies.*”¹²

But “hope maketh not ashamed”¹³: let us hope with the good hope in Christ Jesus for the repentance and return of the innovationists and befrienders of heretics; the good hope for the enlightenment of all of mankind and the unity of all in the truth of the Holy Orthodox Church, a God-pleasing vision, for the fulfillment of which our Holy Synod in Resistance, following the Calendar of the Fathers, exists and labors, with God’s help.

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Beloved in Christ Feast-loving assembly of the Orthodox:

“The word” of the truth *“of God is not bound”*¹⁴: Let us take care to be in a state of spiritual watchfulness, to keep the Tradition of the Fathers as the evangelic *“pearl of great price,”*¹⁵ and to preserve the holy and precious things of our Faith through repentance and humility, for the *“signs of the times”*¹⁶ indicate that the end is approaching. For *“blessed is the servant whom”* the Lord *“shall find watching,”* *“but unworthy is he whom He shall find in slothfulness.”*¹⁷

Our Holy Synod, following the Calendar of the Fathers, prays to the Most Compassionate God, Who loves mankind, to prolong His mercy; to grant the Grace of repentance *“to those afar off and to those nigh”*;¹⁸ to bring peace to the Church and State; and to unite the Orthodox according to His *“good and well-pleasing and perfect”* *“Will,”*¹⁹ to the glory of His All-Holy Name, *“of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*²⁰ Amen. So be it!



(*) **Source:** Άγιος Κυπριανός, No. 240 (January-February 1991), pp. 256-266, 268.

Delivered on 6 January (Old Style) by His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, at the radiant celebration of Holy Theophany in Skala Oropos, Attika.

1. See the prayer of the Anaphora in the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.
2. St. Gregory the Theologian, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXVI, col. 329BC.
3. I Kings 2:2.
4. Ephesians 2:16.
5. Romans 8:21.
6. Psalm 73:13, 14.
7. Ode 8 of the first canon for Holy Theophany, by St. Cosmas, Bishop of Maiouma.
8. Ephesians 2:13, 14.
9. See D. M. Batistatos, *Proceedings and Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Congress in Constantinople (10 May – 8 June 1923)* (Athens:1982), pp. 6, 57.

10. *Ibid.*

11. See ΣΜΠΣ, St. Tarasios of Constantinople, “Apologetic to the People,” p. 724a.

12. See ΣΜΠΣ, Holy Eighth Oecumenical Synod, Act IV, p. 779b.

13. Romans 5:5.

14. II St. Timothy 2:9.

15. Cf. St. Matthew 13:46.

16. Cf. St. Matthew 16:3.

17. *Apolytikion* for Great Monday. Cf. St. Luke 12:17.

18. Ephesians 2:17.

19. Romans 12:2.

20. St. Matthew 28:19.