

■ At the Headquarters of the Holy Metropolis

Synodal Celebration of the *Synaxis* of the Three Holy New Hierarchs

“Rejoice, O honored trinity of Fathers,
Photios all-blessed, and thou, O sacred Gregory,
together with Divine Mark, the three-branched candelabrum,
that shineth as a beacon upon the whole Church.”

(*Megalynarion*)

The Holy Synod in Resistance, with deep awareness of the great significance of the struggles and theology of the Three Holy New Hierarchs in the face of heterodox Western Christianity, decided, during its thirty-first regular annual meeting (October 4, 2005 [Old Style]), to proclaim these Saints its special Patrons in its sacred resistance against the heresy of *ecumenism*—this new challenge from the West.

a. On the basis of this decision, the Synod honored, yet again this year, the common memory of Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark of Ephesus with the concelebration of a Hierarchical Liturgy at the Headquarters of the Metropolis, that is, at the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Attica, on November 5 (Old Style), the first Sunday of November.



b. The principal celebrant was His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi (Acting President), who also delivered the panegyric. His Grace, Bishop Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis and His Grace, Bishop

Klemes of Gardikion, members of the Standing Holy Synod, concelebrated. The fourth member of the Standing Holy Synod, His Grace,

Bishop Ambrose of Methone, was in Australia at the time. Hieromonks and Hierodeacons from the Monastery also took part.

c. The Fathers used the service dedicated in common to the Holy Hierarchs (published by the Holy Hesychasterion of St. Gregory Palamas,



Kouphalia, Thessalonike), and displayed the Holy Icon of the Saints (from the Icon Studio of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina) for veneration, to the joy of the great throng of faithful present.

■ In his brief, but comprehensive homily, His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi spoke about the *Divine Mystery of the Primacy of Truth*. The Three Holy New Hierarchs, as genuine bearers of this *primacy of truth*, have always been the true Œcumenical teachers, who initiate us into the *Mystery of Tradition* and lead us to the saving assurance that, within Orthodoxy, the most important thing is to be **“of one mind with the Church.”**

Today’s innovating *ecumenists* crudely assail the *Mystery of Tradition imparted through the Holy Fathers*, since they speak and act in opposition to **“the Divinely-inspired theological teachings of the Saints and the pious mind of the Church”** (*Synodikon* of Orthodoxy). Rightly, then, do the Orthodox anti-ecumenists, who follow the traditional Church Calendar, have no ecclesiastical communion with the innovating and Latin-minded ecumenists.

Our Holy Synod preserves the *sacred legacy* of the Three Holy New Hierarchs “with fear of God, faith, and love,” working towards the reunion of the Orthodox in the **Truth of the Faith** and the **Traditional Festal Calendar**.





Second Address

Panegyric on the Occasion of the *Synaxis* of the Three Holy New Hierarchs, Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Eugenikos

The Divine Mystery of the Primacy of Truth

Right Reverend Hierarchs and holy Brothers in Christ, beloved fellow Bishops and concelebrants; Brothers and Fathers; Honorable Presbyters in Christ; Reverend Monks and Nuns, Elders and Eldresses; Light-Formed Children of the Church:

May the illuminating and deifying Grace of the Divine Comforter be with all of you, through the intercessions of our Lady, the *Theotokos* and Ever-Virgin Mary, upon whose special aid, guidance, and protection I call at this sacred moment, preceded—as always—by the greatly esteemed blessing of our much-revered Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian.

* * *

TODAY, on this first Sunday of November, when we celebrate the sacred *Synaxis* of the Three New Holy Hierarchs—Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Eugenikos—we hear somewhat more clearly the exhortation of St. Gregory Palamas:



“Let us ascend to the school of the Fathers”!¹

Today, when the *Mystery of Tradition imparted through the Holy Fathers* is openly assailed by the syncretistic heresy of ecumenism, it is opportune for us to stress, indeed with singular emphasis, that

“the teaching of the Scriptures and of the Holy Fathers is truer than the teachings of men.”²

Today, the Three Holy New Pillars of Orthodoxy sustain us Orthodox *anti-ecumenists* in our non-communication with the innovating *ecumenists* who do not speak or act according to the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, that is,

“according to the Divinely-inspired theological teachings of the Saints and the pious mind of the Church.”³

* * *

Now, who were these Three Holy New Luminaries of the Truth and just why is their witness of exceptional importance today?

a. The **first** Luminary, St. Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, lived and worked during the ninth century (ca. 820-893). From the time of his Consecration (858), he proved to be an unshakable champion of the Faith, rebuking, in a decisive and effective way—and always within the boundaries of Orthodox conciliarity—canonical, ecclesiological, and dogmatic transgressions, and also the arrogant pretensions of the emerging impiety of Papism, in the person of the power-hungry Papal despot of Rome, Nicholas I (ca. 800-867).

If St. Photios, luminous in both name and speech (*Photonymos kai Photologos*), had not done his ecclesiastical duty during this crucial age, the Synodal Tradition would have been reduced to nothing, the Sacred Canons utterly violated, the Spirit-bearing Fathers ignored, the Holy Symbol of Faith adulterated, the Orthodox Church transformed into a lowly maidservant of the religious and political sovereign of the Vatican, and our nation led to the abyss of Franco-Latinism.

The most holy Photios, with his anti-Papal writings, which condemn the heretical *Filioque*, as well as other Latin innovations and the anti-ecclesiastical *Primacy* of Rome, has bequeathed to us **“an arsenal, with weapons ready for future use”**⁴ in our struggle against the ever-worsening panheresy of Papism.

b. The second person in the luminous trinity of the New Hierarchs, the great champion of Orthodoxy, St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonike (1296-1359), lived and struggled during the fourteenth century, a critical time for Roman Hellenism (*Romeosyne*). Beginning in 1334, he battled, with rare theological power, in special writings directed against both the Trinitarian heresy of the *Filioque* and the soteriological heresy of the supposed created energies of God, as set forth by the Latin-minded monk Barlaam, in his vehement opposition to Orthodox Hesychasm.

“Palamite theology,” which was repeatedly confirmed by Holy Synods (1341, 1347, 1351), **“constitutes an exposition of the Orthodox Faith and a synopsis of thirteen whole centuries of Patristic Tradition,”**⁵ and has proved to be a firm rock of Orthodoxy, against which the waves of the Latin panheresy, of Western rationalism, and of Franco-papal pietism are dashed.

c. The third Divinely-glorified New Hierarchy, justly and aptly named the *Atlas of Orthodoxy*, St. Mark Eugenikos, Archbishop of Ephesus, shone forth precisely on the eve of the tragic fall of Constantinople (ca. 1392-1444/5), participated in the pseudo-synod of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439), and defended the Orthodox viewpoint with unparalleled vigor against the so-called *Union of the Churches*.

In Florence, the indomitable St. Mark won a great and eternal victory for Orthodoxy and averted the Latinization and de-helleni-

zation of the Hellenic Orthodox. Moreover, his sacred struggle has continued in the Orthodox East, in order to

“show forth the Council of Florence and the formula of the false union of the Churches signed by all thereat, as unlawful, uncanonical, anti-Orthodox, and invalid.”⁶

St. Mark Eugenikos left us as a sacred legacy his writings, inspired by the Holy Spirit, through which he castigates the errors of the Latins: he denounces the unlawful addition of the *Filioque*, rejects the *primacy* of the Pope, and condemns the doctrine of *purgatorial fire* and the practice of using *unleavened bread*. He also continues and, with exceptional theological power, reformulates and expands on, St. Gregory Palamas’ teaching regarding the distinction between Divine Essence and Energy, which teaching

“indelibly seals the whole of Orthodox soteriology, ecclesiology, and anthropology,” since this **“distinction safeguards the true nature of the relationship between God and us, thereby guaranteeing the genuineness of our salvation.”⁷**

This great luminary of Ephesus continues, in our days, to illumine the martyric path of the Orthodox *anti-unionists*.

* * *

Holy Hierarchs, reverend Fathers, beloved brethren in Christ:

Ihope that this brief retrospection on the invaluable contributions of the Three Holy New Hierarchs—contributions in deed, word, and writing—helps us to address the *Divine Mystery of the Primacy of Truth*.⁸

One Bishop receives the charism—irrespective of jurisdictional and ruling structures (and, indeed, antithetically to them)—of expressing the truth of Orthodoxy with more authenticity, depth, and consistency than other Bishops.

Let us note that this charism is not granted unconditionally by the Holy Spirit; rather, this gift indispensably presupposes abundant life in the Holy Spirit, **Hesychastic and Eucharistic “experience,”** purification and illumination, and the Christocentric experience of deification.⁹

Such a charismatic Bishop, then, is a bearer of the *Primacy of*

Truth, which creates in him a sense of **responsibility** and an “inner assurance” to speak with **authority** and **weight**.

Since they bear the **Primacy of Truth**, the Holy Fathers are the real **Œcumenical Teachers**; they are, according to St. Gregory Palamas, the “**unfailing Patrons of theological instruction**”;¹⁰ it is they who securely initiate us into the **Mystery of Tradition** and lead us to the saving assurance that, within Orthodoxy, the most important thing is to be “**of one mind with the Church** “ (*sentire cum Ecclesia*).¹¹

We are deeply grateful to the new Luminaries, Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Eugenikos, not only because they were *anti-Papal*, and therefore guide us in our contemporary *anti-Papal struggle*, but also because they have proved to be **Œcumenical Teachers**, who have renewed and, in a way, consolidated the exceptionally important teaching regarding the **Primacy of Truth**.

Today’s innovating *ecumenists*, crudely assailing the **Mystery of Tradition imparted through the Holy Fathers**, strenuously and persistently emphasize the *primacy of jurisdiction, power, and administrative unity*. They do not follow the Holy Fathers, who bear the **Primacy of Truth**. They consider their own words and pro-union activities to be more valid, while at the same time they persecute, in every possible way, those Orthodox who wall themselves off from them in resistance.

According to St. Basil the Great, however, “**not to follow the Fathers**” is “**worthy of censure, as being full of arrogance**,”¹² and renders one alien to the “common mind of the Church,” the Patristic and Synodal Tradition of the Church, and, finally, to salvation itself.

Rightly, then, do the Orthodox *anti-ecumenists*, who follow the *traditional Church Calendar*, have no ecclesiastical communion with the innovating and Latin-minded ecumenists. By virtue of this stand, they *are of one mind with the Church* and *follow the Fathers*, who bear the **Primacy of Truth** and accordingly teach with **authority and weight** that

“**the more [we] distance [ourselves] from**” the Latin-minded, “**the closer [we] draw to God and all the faithful and Holy Fathers; and to the extent that [we] separate**

[ourselves] from them [the Latin-minded], even so [are we] united with the truth and the Holy Fathers and theologians of the Church.”¹³

* * *

This is the *sacred legacy* of the Three New Hierarchs, Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Eugenikos. Our Holy Synod in Resistance preserves this *legacy* “with fear of God, faith, and love,” and has thus proclaimed the three new Luminaries as its special Patrons in its struggle against the panheresy of ecumenism.¹⁴

May their intercessions strengthen, guide, and protect us, such that, consistently putting the Hesychastic and Eucharistic ethos of the Church into practice and working with zeal, persistence, discretion, and wisdom, we might humbly contribute towards the reunion of the Orthodox in the **Truth of the Faith** and the **Traditional Festival Calendar**,

unto the glory of the Three-Sunned Godhead, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

At the Headquarters of the Holy Synod in Resistance,
November 5, 2007, First Sunday of November
Synaxis of the Three Holy New Hierarchs

Least Among Bishops,
†*Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President*

-
1. **St. Gregory Palamas**, “Epistle I To Barlaam,” §32, in *Syngrammata* [Writings], ed. Panagiotes Chrestou (Thessalonike: 1962), Vol. I, pp. 243-244, l. 28.
 2. **St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite**, *Symbouleutikon Encheiridion* [Handbook of Spiritual Counsel], 3rd ed. (Bolos: Ekdoseis S. Schoina, 1969), p. 110.
 3. **Triodion**, Sunday of Orthodoxy, “Synodikon” (Athens: Ekdoseis “Phos,” 1987), p. 162b.
 4. **Joseph Gill**, *He Synodos tes Florentias* [The Council of Florence] (Athens: Ekdosis “Kalou Typou,” 1962), p. 4.

5. **Archimandrite Spyridon Bilales**, *Orthodoxia kai Papismos* [Orthodoxy and Papism] (Athens: Ekdoseis "Orthodoxou Typou," 1969), Vol. II, p. 620.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

• By his *post-Florentine* activity, St. Mark proved himself to be a genuine embodiment of the Pastor-Bishop of Patristic Tradition, especially in a time of heresy:

“When all of the other Bishops are betraying the sacred legacy of Orthodoxy, the one who is worthy of the Episcopal calling regards the whole world as his flock and stands vigilantly on the rampart of Orthodoxy, prepared to join battle on all sides; for he is then in no danger of becoming meddlesome in taking upon himself the care of all of the Churches. On the contrary, when Orthodoxy is in jeopardy, a Bishop who betrays the Orthodox Faith and Truth proves to be meddlesome even within his own Diocese, as one who speaks and acts in a manner alien to the Faith” (*ibid.*).

7. Cf. **Hieromonk Irinej Bulovic**, *To Mysterion tes en te Hagia Triadi Diakriseos tes Theias Ousias kai Energeias kata ton Hagion Markon Ephesou ton Eugenikon* [The Mystery of the Distinction between Divine Essence and Energy in the Holy Trinity, according to St. Mark Eugenikos of Ephesus] (*Analekta Blatadon*, Vol. XXXIX; Thessalonike: Patriarchikon Hidryma Paterikon Meleton, 1983), p. 473.

• “The reasons for which St. Gregory (Palamas) was obligated to proceed anew to an explanation and synthesis of the Patristic Tradition were not theoretical, but soteriological.” The subject of the [Essence-Energies] “distinction” was “a matter of life or death, the salvation or the perdition of man.” It was “a soteriological issue *par excellence*, and not a search for ontological definitions of the Godhead”

(**Markos A. Orphanos**, *He hypo ton Pateron Hermeneia tes Paradoxeos* [The Interpretation of Tradition by the Fathers] [Athens: 1984] p. 44).

8. Cf. **Stylianos G. Papadopoulos**, *Patrologia* [Patrology] (Athens: 1977), Vol. I, p. 269.

9. “If, therefore, only he who learns through experience,” writes St. Gregory Palamas, “knows the energies of the Spirit, and he [Barlaam] does not know them through experience and in no way accepts those who do know them through experience, who will any longer doubt that all of his babble concerning the deifying energy of the Spirit is false and, moreover, that he utters such babble against those who have acquired this knowledge through experience, while he does not know what he is saying nor what he is talking about?”; “for indeed, it is a dictum of [the

Saints] that ‘only he who learns by experience clearly knows’ the energies of the Spirit; yet he [Barlaam] maintains that those who say this are heretics” (St. Gregory Palamas, *In Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*, Book III, ch. 3, §3, in *Syngrammata*, ed. Panagiotes Chrestou (Thessalonike: 1962), Vol. I, p. 681, ll. 10-17, 27-29).

10. **St. Gregory Palamas**, “Epistle I to Barlaam,” §31, in *Syngrammata* [Writings], ed. Panagiotes Chrestou (Thessalonike: 1962), Vol. I, p. 243. ll. 10-11.
11. *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. XXII, col. 475.
12. **St. Basil the Great**, “Epistle LII, ‘To the Consecrated Virgins,’” §1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, cols. 392C-393A: “For not to follow the Fathers and not to regard their statements as more authoritative than one’s own opinion is worthy of censure, as being full of arrogance.”
13. Cf. **St. Mark of Ephesus**, “*Apologia Uttered Impromptu at the Time of His Death*,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CLX, col. 536CD.
14. **Holy Synod in Resistance**, *Thirty-First Meeting*, October 4, 2005, Resolution 1.