

The Recent Tribulation of the Orthodox Eparchy of Gldani in Georgia*

At the beginning of the Great Fast, in the newly-built Church of the Panagia Portaïtissa, which is the headquarters of the Orthodox Eparchy of Gldani in Tbilisi, Georgia, an Icon of the Holy Mandelion of our Lord began to weep. This phenomenon became widely known and was regarded as a portent of new tribulations for the much-suffering anti-ecumenist flock of Georgia.



Indeed, on Friday morning of the third week of the Fast, 28 February/12 March 2004, special reinforced units of the security forces rushed on the Church and forcibly entered it, where they succeeded in arresting Protopresbyter Basili Mkalavishvili, the spiritual leader of the Eparchy, and eight others of the Faithful. In the course of the incident, a fair number of Faithful were injured, and some of them ended up in hospital.



This abhorrent assault, at which even the Patriarchate of Georgia has expressed its displeasure, was carried out on the pretext that Father Basili and his flock are alleged to be guilty of acts of violence against persons and property belonging to heretical sects (Millenarians, Baptists, and Pentecostals), which have had corrosive effects on Georgia in recent years.

Father Basili is already in prison, faced with a potentially heavy sentence. Regardless of the truth of the accusations, on which the court will have to pass unbiased judgment, the manner of his arrest was barbaric and objectionable from every viewpoint. One cannot so flagrantly trample on human rights in the name of protecting human rights!

- Apart from remonstrances made at an international level about the incident so as to ensure a restoration of justice, the Faithful are calling for prayerful readiness and support for a favorable outcome of the tribulation of our Georgian Orthodox brothers.

*Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 320 (May-June 2004), p. 43.