

■ A Momentous and Surprising Anti-Ecumenist Book

By Protopresbyter Theodore Zissis
Professor at the University of Thessaloniki

**The Limits of the Church:
Ecumenism and Papism**

“**BRYENNIOS**” Publications has released a voluminous book by the celebrated university professor, Protopresbyter Theodore Zissis: *Τὰ Ὁρία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας—Οἰκουμενισμός και Παπισμός* [*The Limits of the Church: Ecumenism and Papism*] (Thessaloniki: 2004, Pp. 442, 14 x 20 cm.).

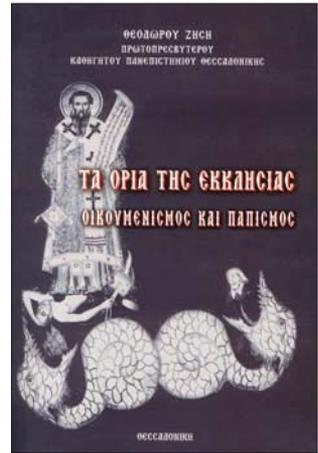
■ **This truly** momentous, anti-ecumenist work by Father Theodore is a collection of fifteen of his articles, studies, and homilies, divided into two sections: Part I – Ecumenism (chapters 1-4)–, and Part II – Papism (chapters 1-11). Unfortunately, there is no indication of the date or source of the original publication of the articles (except for chapters 1 and 2 of Part I); such information is both necessary and useful.

◆ **In the first** place, we should make it clear that these texts by Father Theodore are not purely theological (in the narrow sense of the word, of course), as one would expect from a practiced university professor. They are, for the most part, kerygmatic and polemical in nature; only the texts in chapters 1 and 2 of Part I approach the standard for which one would hope.

● **To be sure**, we do not point out this weakness (which is more noticeable in some of the markedly un-theological and historically inaccurate points put forward in these texts) in order to belittle the valuable service that it offers to anti-ecumenism, but rather in order to emphasize the urgent need for a genuinely Patristic anti-ecumenist discourse—something that is long overdue.

◆ **It is well** known that whenever the Truth of the Orthodox Faith was disputed in the past, up to and including at least the fourteenth century, its genuine exponents and representatives, the theologians of the Patristic ecclesiastical Tradition—who were immersed in the Mystery of Pentecost—would each time re-interpret and articulate the earlier Tradition, in order to confront new historical and theological challenges.

● **Consequently**, what is required today, in response to the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism (which, as Father Theodore rightly points out, “has succeeded in altering the ecclesiological self-consciousness of the Orthodox” by means of the WCC [p. 24]), is the further development of Patristic anti-ecumenism.



→ **If the generally** anti-ecumenist position of Father Theodore Zisis over the last few years can be regarded as a pleasant surprise—as, indeed, it is (and especially when one considers the effusive references that he made years ago, in 1977, to those banes of Orthodoxy and veteran ecumenists: Athenagoras, Demetrios, Bartholomew, Meliton, and Damaskenos)—, our well-founded wish and hope is that the fresh surprise generated by his present book will be succeeded by even more surprises, in—let us repeat—a genuine and consistently Patristic Orthodox anti-ecumenism.

