The Orthodox Informer

"For it is a commandment of the Lord not to be silent at a time when the Faith is in jeopardy. Speak, Scripture says, and hold not thy peace.... For this reason, I, the wretched one, fearing the Tribunal, also speak."

(St. Theodore the Studite, Patrologia Græca, Vol. XCIX, col. 1321)

■ The advancing course of the syncretistic axis of the Vatican, Athens, and the Phanar

Dossier

A. Vatican-Phanar

B. Vatican-Athens

"The foundations of the Faith have been undermined for decades by the panheresy of ecumenism."

(Protopresbyter Theodoros Zeses, Orthodoxos Typos, *No. 1665 [17 Nov. 2006], p. 1)*

"Who is able to suffer these things without sighing? What is incontrovertible has become a matter of doubt."

(St. Basil the Great, "On the Holy Spirit," § 70)

THE RECENT occurrences at the Phanar (29-30 November 2006) and the Vatican (14-16 December 2006), involving *ecumenists* from the East and the West, have demonstrated, in the clearest and most forceful possible way, that the panheresy of *ecumenism* has deeply corroded the Orthodox self-awareness of those Shepherds who have embraced the *syncretistic vision* of the anti-Patristic *Encyclical of 1920,* the very foundation and basis of the contemporary *inter-Christian and interfaith movement.*

This corrosion has long been leading these Shepherds **"far from the way of the Holy Fathers"** (Father Theodoros Zeses, *O.T.,* No. 1670 [22 December 2006], p. 1), since their thoughts, words, and actions run entirely contrary to the **Patristic bequeathal,** which is most lucid in its exhortation to us:

Phanar, 30 November 2006

Vatican, 14 December 2006

"And may you have no communion with the schismatics, and by no means with the heretics"; "for you know how I, too, have turned away from them"; "rather, you should take care to unite yourselves firstly with the Lord and then with the Saints, so that they, also, might receive you as friends and acquaintances in the eternal abodes.""

(St. Anthony the Great, *PG*, Vol. XXVI, col. 969C-972A)

The recent advancement and reinforcement of the *syncretistic axis* of the Vatican, Athens, and the Phanar are finally awakening the volcano of *anti-ecumenism,* and hopeful developments are soon to be expected from the standpoint of *Orthodox resistance* and *walling-off,* especially on the part of the *New Calendarist anti-ecumenists,* for the rallying, at long last, of the truly Orthodox.

In conclusion, all of these things fully justify the stance of the Orthodox *anti-ecumenists, following the Calendar of the Fathers,* who have, since 1924, walled themselves off from the ecumenists, resisting the panheresy of syncretism in a God-pleasing manner.

◆ **A series** of texts on the subject, which we will be publishing, demonstrates this *awakening,* the truly Patristic character of which may it preserve to the end,

"for the union and harmony of the Church"; "that the divisions among the Churches might be banished and the bond of peace might join us all together"; "and that we might drive the inventors of vain discourses of innovation far from the precinct of the Church."

(Seventh Œcumenical Synod, Mansi, Vol. XII, col. 1118E, 1003D; Vol. XIII, col. 404C)

Text A4-a

The Holy Mountain: Is Division in Sight? *

"The Patriarch's entanglement in the panheresy of ecumenism and concessions to wrong believers negate the uniqueness of Orthodoxy"

by John Kornarakes
Professor Emeritus
University of Athens

PATRIARCH Bartholomew's embrace of the Papal heresy at the Phanar—an unexpected event—, in proceedings which manifested the **fall of the head of Orthodoxy into the hands of the Roman Pontiff,** provoked certain reactions, as is only natural, from the Holy Mountain of the renowned Orthodox monastic Republic, but which were **divided** as to their view of what is to be done!

Two Athonite documents [the *Open Letter* and the *Statement*], which have, by now, seen the light of publication, illustrate, in diametrically opposite ways, the monastic dynamic of this Republic, with regard to the attitude of the monks to the Patriarch!

* * *

THE DOCUMENT that was published first [the *Open Letter*] reflects the monastic spirit of struggle, which reigns in a large portion of the Mountain, of Hieromonks and monks in whose veins there appears to flow the dynamism of Witness, inspired by the Holy Spirit!

Hieromonks and monks, who characterize themselves, with sincere humility, as *"unlettered and wretched sinners,"* address the twenty Abbots of the monasteries of the Holy Mountain as *"wiser and more learned"* than they, and ask them—or, rather,

implore them—to take vigorous action in the face of the events that took place at the Patriarchate during the Pope's visit; and, in an Orthodox manner, to assume their responsibilities for the defense of the truth of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church!

> ***"It is no longer time for words, but for action,"*** stress the Athonites: *"Undertake the good fight for the faith,"* they exhort the leaders of the Mountain, and add: *We recognize, with much greater sorrow, that the spiritual leadership of the Holy Mountain, in recent years,* ***has not confronted these instances of apostasy with a vigorous and brave confession,*** *as Athonite Fathers did in the past. The Patriarch has gauged our opposition, and since it is lukewarm, and oftentimes non-existent, he is advancing, without obstacles, towards union with the unrepentant Pope, who remains in his heresies. He also gauged us and rejoiced exceedingly during his last visit to the Holy Mountain, to which he came as if in order to receive the consent and blessing of the Athonites for all the things he had planned on doing with the Pope a few days later"!*
>
> And then:
>
> *We humble Hieromonks and Monks reveal to you, by way of confession, that we have been scandalized by the silence and inaction of our spiritual leaders on the Holy Mountain, and with us the Orthodox and pro-monastic people throughout Greece and the world. Everyone is waiting to hear the voice of the Holy Mountain.... We believe...that the only thing that will gladden the Orthodox and shame those of wrong belief is a* ***cessation of the commemoration of the Patriarch and of all of those Bishops who are in agreement with him or are keeping silent"!***

On the whole, this first document is lengthy and filled with bold truths of the Faith and of the Traditions of the Church! It is signed by over fifty Hieromonks and monks, but to these will be added many more, since the collection of signature on the Holy Mountain is, as is noted, continuing!

* * *

THE SECOND document [the *Statement*], which is signed by *"all of the Representatives and Superiors of the twenty monasteries of the Holy Mountain of Athos, in the common* Synaxis," is written with a different way of thinking from the first.

It refers to well-known events, without any kind of forceful reaction corresponding to the height of the **crime of Patriarch Bartholomew's surrender into the arms and protection of the Pope!**

It seems more like a document meant to **reassure** the Patriarch in his possible alarm over the vigorous opposition from the Holy Mountain! It shows, even after the shocking events at the Phanar, obedience and reverence to the person of Patriarch Bartholomew!

The contents, in other words, of the document in question justify the position of the Hieromonks and monks in the first document, with regard to the scandalous silence and inaction and the display of tepidity on the part of the leadership of the Holy Mountain, in matters of transgression and violation of the Sacred Canons of the Church!

The text at issue—that is, its authors—of course maintains that

> *"We guard, as the apple of our eye, our dogmatic conscience, which is edified by our readings of pious struggles and the achievements of the Holy Father Confessors in the face of various heresies.*

But how does the dogmatic conscience of the Abbots of the twenty monasteries of the Holy Mountain feel at ease—i.e., lukewarm—, and how **does it not revolt** like the consciences of their *"unlettered and wretched and sinful"* brothers and authors of the first document?

Is the event of the Patriarch's surrender to the Papal

heresy perhaps just a simple matter of ecclesiastical good order, in circumstances insignificant to the life of the Church?

Was the dogmatic conscience of the spiritual leadership of the Holy Mountain **not shocked** by everything **destructive to the Orthodox Faith and Teaching that took place at the core of Orthodoxy** for the sake of the Patriarch's ecumenical prestige?

The Abbots of the twenty monasteries of the Holy Mountain, at any rate, **console and reassure the Patriarch:**

> *"We Athonite monks respect the Œcumenical Patriarch, under whose canonical jurisdiction we have submitted ourselves. We honor and revere our All-Holy Œcumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and rejoice at all the ways in which he piously, and with great toil, is working on behalf of the Church."*

In contrast, however, the monastic assembly of the *"unlettered"* and the *"unwise"* are aware of those things of which the wise Abbots are also aware, but which they pass over in silence: i.e., **the Patriarch's entanglement in the panheresy of ecumenism and the concessions to those of wrong belief, which things negate the uniqueness of Orthodoxy.**

They write, then, to the Abbots:

> *"You know, Venerable Fathers, better than we do the anti-Orthodox and blasphemous actions, manifestations, and decisions of the Œcumenical Patriarch…which constitute a blatant and manifest (bare-headed) acceptance and preaching of the panheresy of ecumenism, of the greatest ecclesiastical heresy of all ages, which violates the uniqueness of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church and equates it with heresies, the Mysteries of which it accepts as possessing and transmitting sanctifying and saving Grace. Apart from recognizing the Baptism of Papists and Lutherans, we also participate in the common cup with the Monophysites and, on many occasions, with the Papists in the Cyclades and in the Diaspora"!*

* * *

FINALLY, the Athonite Abbots **foresee the potential creation of a schism in the Church:**

> *"...the expressions of courtesy, such as the visits of the Pope to the Phanar and of the Archbishop of Athens to the Vatican, without the presupposition of unity in the Faith, result, on the one hand [...] and on the other hand, in the dulling of the dogmatic sense of many Orthodox Christians. In addition, the [visits] impel certain of the faithful and pious Orthodox—who are disquieted by all the untimely things that are happening, which go against the Sacred Canons—**to cut themselves off from the body of the Church,** thereby creating new schisms"!*

The questions, however, raised by the final section of the document by the Abbots are:

• By what *illumination* are they informed that it is the *"certain faithful and pious Orthodox"*—these defenders of the Sacred Canons and of the Patristic Tradition—who **should be the ones cut off from the body of the Church,** in the even that—God forbid!—a schism is created?

• Why do they speak of certain ones that are **both pious and Orthodox, but outside of the body of the Church?** If the local Church **persists in heresies** condemned by the Fathers and the Sacred Canons, thereby **no longer constituting a Church, but a "church," should not the heresy be cut off from the Church**?

• How, one wonders, do the Abbots understand the nature of the Church? As being **both heretical and a Church?** Who should be cut off? And from whom?

Text A4-b

Notes on the "Statement"**

"...the two Primates, as also their supporters, will effectively be relegated by the ecclesiastical pleroma *to the periphery of the Church"*

My Esteemed Editor,

The Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain of Athos has, of late, released two *Statements* (dated 17/30 December 2006), with regard to the recent visits of the Pope of Rome to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and of the Archbishop of Athens to the Vatican.

One was written for the ecclesiastical press, while the other for the daily press. The latter was published in your journal in the issue dated 5 January 2007.

The former, which is also the more lengthy, contains certain points, of which I would like to make note, here, because I believe that they require special attention, and which, in my humble opinion, should have been corrected as follows:

1. On the third page, the following matters are set forth:

> *"The Roman Catholics are obviously unable to liberate themselves from the decisions of their subsequent (according to them, Œcumenical) Synods, which instituted the* Filioque, *the supremacy, infallibility, and the worldly power of the Roman Pontiff, created Grace, the immaculate conception of the* Theotokos, *and the Unia. Despite these things, the Orthodox are continuing their so-called formal visits, showing honors to the Pope that are due to an Orthodox Bishop, and violating a whole series of Sacred Canons prohibiting joint prayer. At the same time, the theological dialogue is repeatedly being shipwrecked and, having been pulled up from the depths, once again founders. Everything leads one to the conclusion that the Vatican is not directing itself towards the eradication of heretical teachings, but rather towards their misinterpretation; that is, towards their cover-up...*

(Page 4:) *"By this understanding, the expressions of courtesy, such as the visits of the Pope to the Phanar and of the Archbishop of Athens to the Vatican, without the presupposition of unity in the Faith, succeed, on the one hand, in creating a false impression of unity and in keeping the heterodox from looking towards Orthodoxy as to the true Church, and, on the other hand, in dulling the dogmatic sense of many Orthodox Christians.* ***In addition, [the visits] impel certain of the faithful and pious Orthodox—who are alarmed by all the untimely things that are happening, which go against the Sacred Canons—to cut themselves off from the body of the Church, thereby creating new schisms"*** *(emphasis ours).*

The sentence emphasized above ought, in my humble opinion, to have been replaced by the following:

"In addition, [the visits] succeed in impelling those faithful and pious Orthodox clergy of all ranks—prompted by the heightened sensitivity of their Orthodox dogmatic and ecclesiological consciences, and who are seriously alarmed by all the things that are happening that are ecclesiologically at variance with, and contrary to, the Sacred Canons, with Patriarch Bartholomew and the Archbishop of Athens taking the lead, because of their conspicuous deviations from the teaching of the Church—to cease commemorating the Primates, precisely as the Athonite Fathers did for some time, in the past, as also did certain Bishops, when Patriarch Athenagoras was on the Œcumenical Throne. And the visits likewise succeed in impelling faithful and pious Orthodox laypeople, who are also seriously alarmed by the same events, for the same reasons, to go along with the aforementioned clergy. If this happens, then the two Primates, as also their supporters, will effectively be relegated by the ecclesiastical* pleroma *to the periphery of the Church."

2. On the fifth page, a section from an older document by the Sacred Community is brought out and set forth, as having age-old validity. One paragraph of this section reads as follows:

> *"The Holy Mountain, by the Grace of God, remains faithful, along with the Orthodox people of God, to the Faith of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers, out of love, also, for the heterodox, who are substantially aided when Orthodox Christians, through their consistent Orthodox stance, indicate to them the enormity of their spiritual ailment and the manner of their cure."*

Though this paragraph was composed some time ago and thus can not now be reformulated, I would like, here, to make the following clarification:

The Holy Mountain does not remain faithful to the Faith *"out of love,* ***also,*** *for the heterodox,"* but instead remains faithful to the Faith out of love for Christ and His Church. Love for one's neighbor, and consequently for the heterodox as well, is the **natural corollary** of love for Christ and the Church.

A person does not struggle to become well and to remain well *"out of love,* ***also,*** *for the ill,"* but solely because he desires a healthy life for its benefits. Everyone who is ill wants to become well, whether there are sick people around him or not. Nor would he want to become well *"also to point out to them the enormity of their spiritual illness and the method for their cure,"* being himself healthy. This automatically occurs when a person who is healthy begins to mingle with the ill. And love for those who are suffering is a natural corollary of love for God.

Thus, in this section of the Sacred Community's document, the addition of *"out of love,* ***also,*** *for the heterodox"* is, I think, inappropriate [to say the least].

Respectfully yours,
Monk **Damaskenos**
of the Holy Mountain

(*) '***Ορθόδοξος Τύπος,*** No. 1674 (26 January 2007), pp. 1 and 5. Leading article. Publication lay-out ours.

(**) '***Ορθόδοξος Τύπος,*** No. 1674 (26 January 2007), p. 5, Letters from readers. Publication lay-out ours.