

“A Painful Remembrance”

1924-2004: The Eightieth Anniversary of the Calendar Reform

## “The Hierarchy Would Do Well to Restore the Traditional Calendar to the Church”\*

*In 1935, the anti-innovationist flock of the Church of Greece following the traditional Church Calendar acquired Episcopal leadership in the persons of Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostomos of Florina, and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, who left the New Calendar Church in order to join this movement. At the time, an extremely illuminating, informative, and noteworthy twenty-four-page pamphlet was published by these three Hierarchs under the title Διασάφησις περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τοῦ Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Ἡμερολογίου [A Clarification Regarding the Question of the Church Calendar] (Athens: 1935). In what follows, we have published a section of this pamphlet, in which the reasons that make it imperative to restore the Old Calendar to the Orthodox Church as a whole are very cogently set forth.*

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**H**ence, to summarize what we have said, we set forth below the reasons why we think that the Hierarchy ought to restore the traditional calendar to the Church.

1. The New Calendar was not introduced canonically into the Œcumenical Patriarchate (or into the Church of Greece), by all the Hierarchy of the Œcumenical Throne assembling in a synod and reaching

a decision with the aid of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the traditions of Orthodoxy.

2. The Œcumenical Patriarchate was misled by His Beatitude, the Archbishop of Athens, who gave it the impression that the adjustment of the Church Calendar to the civil calendar had been demanded by the Greek people and that the entire Hierarchy of the Church of Greece had acceded thereto.

3. The Hierarchy of the Church of Greece, in accepting by a majority to follow the opinion and decision of the Patriarchate in this matter, assumed that this opinion and decision of the Patriarchate was canonical and in conformity with the opinions of the other Orthodox Churches.

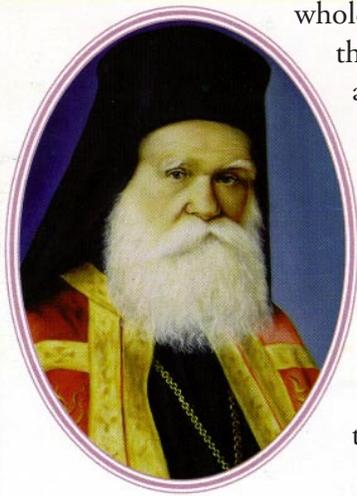
4. With regard to this decision, His Beatitude, as President of the Holy Synod, deliberately kept the Hierarchy in ignorance of the opposing responses and synodal resolutions of the other Sister Orthodox Churches, and the Hierarchy made this decision on condition that the other Churches—the Œcumenical Patriarchate being a *sine qua non*—would agree to it.

5. Prior to any implementation of the New Calendar, His Beatitude was under obligation to convene the Hierarchy again, and, after submitting the resolutions of the other Churches on this matter for its adjudication, to seek a categorical and decisive verdict from the Hierarchy concerning implementation of the New Calendar; he ought not to have presented it as a *fait accompli*.

6. The other Orthodox Churches not only did not accept the calendar innovation, but even protested against it, as did the ever-memorable Patriarch Photios of Alexandria, who was prepared to denounce it at an Œcumenical Synod.

7. This innovation, notwithstanding the contention of the innovators that the *Paschalion* remain intact, by introducing confusion into Divine worship and the annual cycle of feasts and fasts, also affected the method for computing Pascha ordained by the First Œcumenical Synod.

8. This innovation, by introducing confusion into Divine worship and the practice of traditional piety and fasting, conflicts with the ecclesiastical Canons pertaining to Church order and to Divine worship in general, according to which “it seems good, therefore, that the



whole Church of God which exists throughout the inhabited earth should follow one rule and keep the Fast perfectly” (Fifty-sixth Canon of the Synod *in Trullo*), and not act contrary to the words of the Apostle Paul, who enjoins: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Corinthians 1:10).

9. This innovation tears asunder the unity of Orthodoxy, as a whole, and of the individual Orthodox Churches by causing divisions among Christians, something which jeopardizes the authority of the Orthodox Faith and the prestige and strength of the Orthodox Church.

10. This innovation, in consequence of the rupture between the Churches and the division among Christians that it has caused, is at odds both with the dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church and with the Christian ethic, in its violation of the prayer of our Lord to His Heavenly Father: “Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are”; “that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us” (St. John 17:11, 21).

11. The New Calendar was condemned at the pan-Orthodox Synods of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs that convened in Constantinople during the Patriarchate of Jeremiah II (Tranos) in 1583, 1587, and 1593, at which not only the Hierarchs of the Œcumenical Throne were present, but also Meletios (Pegas) [of Alexandria—*Trans.*], Sylvester of Antioch, and Sophronios of Jerusalem.

12. The unilateral and uncanonical introduction of the New Calendar by certain Orthodox Churches cuts them off from the Catholic edifice of Orthodoxy and makes them schismatic in relation to the other Orthodox Churches, according to the opinion of a commission comprised of the best jurists and theology professors from the University of Athens, of which His Beatitude, the Archbishop of Athens—at

that time an Archimandrite and professor at the university—was a member.

13. This innovation in the calendar is regarded by the Orthodox Fathers of the Church as one of the many innovations of the elder Rome, as a “universal scandal and an arbitrary violation of the traditions of the Church.” Thus did His Beatitude characterize it in a treatise of his on the calendar which was published in Athens, in 1918, in *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Κήρυξ*, and in which, commenting on a letter from Jeremiah II to da Ponte, the Doge of Venice, concerning the Church Calendar, he says the following:

This letter of the Patriarch superbly delineates the position taken by the Orthodox Church from the very outset towards the Gregorian alteration of the calendar, which is viewed by her (the Orthodox Church) as one of the many innovations of the elder Rome, as a ‘universal scandal,’ and as an arbitrary violation of the traditions of the Church.

(see Archimandrite Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, “Τὸ Γρηγοριανὸν ἡμερολόγιον ἐν τῇ Ἀνατολῇ” [“The Gregorian Calendar in the East”], *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Κήρυξ*, No. 145 [31 March 1918], p. 135).

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- What further need have we of other witnesses to prove that the New Calendar is anti-Orthodox and Papist?

\* **Source:** *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνοστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία*, No. 15 (April-June 1989), pp. 27-29.