

The Papal Visit to Greece*

A Colossal Ecclesiastical and Historical Blunder

† *Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance*

I. What is going on?

1. The “Synodal Communiqué” of 7 March 2001, in which the innovatorist New Calendar Church, after a positive recommendation by Archbishop Christodoulos, gave its consent to Pope John Paul II’s visit to Greece and expressed its readiness to take an active part in the official welcoming ceremony for the Pontiff, sparked intense discussions, grave dilemmas, and heated arguments.

2. Now, what is going on? What are the true dimensions of the problem? Why is the presence of the Pope in an Orthodox country provoking such an uproar? What is the primary focus of anxiety for the Orthodox who are reacting against it? What justification is there for this effusive outburst of anti-papal zeal?

II. Concerning good zeal

1. To begin with, we think it necessary to remind our readers of the distinguishing characteristics of good zeal. This is because a genuine ecclesiastical ethos does not exist outside the bounds of good zeal. And where there is no charismatic ethos, our Holy Faith turns into an ideology and a quasi-religious theocracy, that is, into something antithetical to the Gospel.

2. On this subject, St. Nectarios, the Wonderworker of Ægina is our genuine and authentic guide. Let us listen to him:

- “There is no opposition between dogma and love.”
- “Love should never be sacrificed for the sake of some dogmatic difference.”
- Our differences with someone who is not Orthodox, that is, on “matters of faith,” must in no way diminish “the feeling of love.”
- Only the “zealot according to knowledge is a model for the true Christian.”

- The “distinguishing characteristics” of the zealot according to knowledge are the following: “fervent love for God and neighbor, gentleness, religious tolerance, forbearance, and graciousness of manner.”

- This good zeal has always inspired our Holy Church to offer up liturgical petitions such as: “...gather the dispersed; bring back those who have gone astray, and unite them to Thy Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.”

4. This good zeal expands the hearts of Orthodox Christians to pray unceasingly for the repentance and the return of those who belong to other denominations and other religions and for the return of the whole world (including, of course, both Roman Catholics and the Pope) to the light of our Holy Faith.

- All the more should this be happening now, when there is a discernible and lively interest on the part of the heterodox, particularly those of the West, in the Orthodox Church.

5. But this gracious love which characterizes good zeal according to knowledge never forgets or overlooks the falsehood of heresy or who the heretics are, or, in this case, who the Pope of Rome is:

- Between Orthodoxy and Papism “there exists a great gulf.”

III. The Pope and Papism

1. The Pope, as leader of the Vatican State and head of the so-called Roman Catholic Church, that is, the branch of Western Christianity which, in 1054 A.D., fell away from the Church and Her Truth, has always been, for the Orthodox, a symbol of heresy, absolutism, and secularization.

2. The twofold character of the Pope as a religious and a political leader, who embodies the anti-evangelical, anti-Christian, and spurious institution of the Papacy (with its primacy and infallibility), has deeply scarred the collective subconsciousness of history, and especially of Orthodox peoples, with very negative experiences (the Crusades, the Unia, the Holy Inquisition, Jesuit propaganda, anti-Hellenism, etc.).

3. The very deep adulteration of Christian teaching by the many-sided heresy of Papism is extremely dangerous, since it can easily be promoted by the Vatican in its capacity as a state and be used to boost the Pope’s alleged universal hegemony in every conceivable way.

4. The Vatican’s powerful diplomacy puts forth a constant stream of propaganda, in order to present the Pope persistently and unflinchingly as the central figure of divided Christendom and its sole principle of unity, which constitutes the very essence of Papocentric ecumenism.

IV. The Orthodox ecumenists

1. Overlooking the identity of Papism, not only as a simple heresy, but also as a true panheresy, has, unfortunately, led the innovating New Calendarist Orthodox ecumenists and, more generally, the compliant leadership of the local Orthodox Churches, to inaugurate, beginning in the 1960s, an intimate relationship of “communion” with Papism.

• Roman Catholics and Orthodox, having lifted the anathemas on both sides, recognize each other, pray together, concelebrate, hobnob together, collaborate, sign joint statements of faith, and participate in inter-Christian and interfaith movements on the basis of the Vatican’s agenda, etc.

2. The diplomacy of Roman ecumenism has, unfortunately, lured the Orthodox belonging to the innovationist New Calendar Church into a *de facto* recognition of papal hegemony, despite the fact that two essential issues are still at stake:

(a) The Vatican does not simply remain unrepentant in its adherence to the institution of the Papacy, which is the primary “rock of offence,” but also maintains in their full force the fearful anathemas of the First Vatican Council (1870) against all who question the primacy and infallibility of the Pope.

(b) Our Holy Church has always regarded Papism as a heresy, and the unwavering and age-old anti-Papist tradition of Orthodoxy attests that, over the course of a millennium, there were some two hundred authors who wrote against the Latins; as well, as five anti-Papist Synods were convened.

• “We have excised and cut them [the Papists] off from the common Body of the Church,” says St. Mark of Ephesus; “We have, therefore, rejected them as heretics, and for this reason we are separated from them”; “they are, therefore, heretics, and we have cut them off as heretics.”

3. The Orthodox ecumenists have made many very weighty concessions to the panheresy of Papism in the context of the so-called ecumenical movement, one of which is the “Joint Declaration” of the present Pope, John Paul II, and Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople that “Catholics and Orthodox are,” supposedly, “capable even now of giving a common witness of faith” (Vatican, 29 June 1995).

4. The following statement by the late Patriarch Athenagoras, who inaugurated “communion” with the Papists, is very revealing in its complaisance and its impious demotion of very serious matters of faith to the level of cheap comedy:

“Does your wife ever ask you how much salt to put in the food? Certainly not. She has her infallibility. Let the Pope have his, if he wants it.”

V. A colossal blunder and a very grave affront

1. The Papal visit to Greece would be devoid of ecclesiological significance and would perhaps not attract any attention, as long as it were a result of purely worldly expediency on the part of the local political leadership (the

Vatican, as a state, has established diplomatic relations [a concordat] with the Greek state), as long as it were strictly confined within the narrow limits of a state visit or “pilgrimage,” and as long as Church leaders were not to take part in it by according the necessary honors to the leader of the Vatican in his two personas [*i.e.*, as both a religious and a political figure—*Trans.*].

2. Consequently, the final consent by the innovationist New Calendar Church to the Papal visit and its active participation in the official welcome and any other aspects of the “pilgrimage” are of decisive importance and truly constitute

- a colossal ecclesiastical and historical blunder and
- yet another magnificent victory for Papal diplomacy.

3. At the same time, however, they constitute a very serious affront against the Synodal and Patristic Tradition of the Orthodox Church, an affront which, when added to the chain of innumerable grave affronts [against Orthodoxy—*Trans.*] in the context of the ecumenical movement, fully justifies the deepest anxieties of the Faithful who, since 1924, have been engaged in God-pleasing resistance to, and have been walling themselves off from, the innovating New Calendarists.

4. Primary responsibility for the latest of these grave affronts rests with innovationist Archbishop Christodoulos, who has adopted Vatican tactics and the ethos—alien to Orthodoxy—of sloganeering, populism, and demagoguery; he is steadily leading the New Calendar Church into an even more profound alteration of its spiritual identity, and, as a result, to the loss of those criteria which are necessary for dealing with the “challenges” and “temptations” of history.

• But there is, of course, also a collective responsibility that belongs both to the Permanent Synod and to the Holy Synod [of the New Calendar Church—*Trans.*], since, in spite of the praiseworthy—albeit feeble—reactions of a few Hierarchs, the innovationist Hierarchy has ultimately demonstrated that it is not guarding its “Thermopylae.”

VI. Who is bringing the Pope to Greece?

1. The impending Papal visit has fanned the flames of an unprecedented and highly-charged anti-Papal reaction, which leads the Old Calendarist anti-ecumenists to pose the following significant questions to those who are justifiably upset, so that they might reflect in a more fruitful way on the issues involved:

(a) Can it be that all those who are now protesting about the Papal visit are unaware that the leadership of their Church has been in “communion” with the Pope since 1965, when the anathemas on both sides were “lifted”?

(b) Are they really unaware that their Shepherds have been officially in “communion” with the heresy of ecumenism, at least since 1948, when they took part in the founding of the “World Council of Churches”?

(c) Why have they never protested so forcefully about the active collaboration of their leadership (at a pan-Orthodox level, to boot) in the long-drawn-out process of falling away from Orthodoxy through the ecumenical movement?

(d) Why have they been keeping a deadly silence in the face of the successive grave affronts against Orthodoxy on the part of their ecumenist Shepherds?

(e) Which is the greater evil? The Pope coming to an Orthodox country (as a “natural” and “necessary” consequence of Greek participation in ecumenical dialogue) or the offering of incense to the “idol” of the Pope—for example, during the high-level joint liturgical prayers at the Vatican and the Phanar?

2. Our New Calendarist brethren, by virtue of their justifiable protests, which certainly ought to escalate in such a way as to avert at least any reception of the panheretical Pope in Greece by the Church, are inevitably being led to confront an inexorable question, which also discloses the heart of the matter:

- Who is ultimately bringing the Pope to Greece? The political leadership or the Latin-minded and pro-Papal ecumenist Shepherds, who call the Pope “first Bishop of worldwide Christianity” and “first in rank and honor in the universal Body of the Lord”?

- Their response to this crucial question and their corresponding stand would clear the horizon and would show whether these frequent and strong protestations are the result of ignorance, a confusion of criteria, hypocrisy, or all of these together.

Let us stand aright!
Let us stand with fear!
The Lord is at hand!

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