

The Ever-Memorable Confessor Metropolitan
Philaret, First Hierarch of the Russian
Orthodox Church Abroad
(†1985)



Text IV

SORROWFUL EPISTLE

To Their Holinesses and Their Beatitudes,
the Primates of the Orthodox Churches,
the Most Reverend Metropolitan,
Archbishops, and Bishops.

From the humble Philaret,
Metropolitan of the Russian
Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

*I. Let us keep the Truth of Orthodoxy as the apple of our eye**

The Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church have taught us to keep the Truth of Orthodoxy as the apple of our eye. And Our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching His Disciples to maintain every jot and tittle of the Divine Law intact said: “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven” (St. Matthew 5:19). He sent His disciples to impart to all nations the teaching that He had given them in a pure and unadulterated form, and that duty then devolved upon each of us Bishops, as successors of the Holy Apostles. We are also taught to do this by the dogmatic decree of the

Seventh Œcumenical Synod, which says: “We maintain all of the ecclesiastical traditions ordained for us, whether in writing or orally, without any innovations.” And the Holy Fathers of that Synod added to this, in their First Canon: “For those who have received the priestly dignity, the formulations of Canonical decrees serve as testimonies and statutes, which we gladly receive, as we sing, with the God-revealer David, to the Lord God, saying: ‘I have delighted in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches’ (Psalm 118:14, *Septuaginta*). As well: ‘The testimonies that Thou hast ordained are righteousness for ever; give me understanding, and I shall live’ (Psalm 118:138, 144, *Septuaginta*). Now if the word of prophecy enjoins us to keep the testimonies of God forever and to live by them, it is evident that they are to remain unchangeable and unshaken.”

Each one of us solemnly promises at his Consecration steadfastly to keep the Faith and Canons of the Holy Fathers, vowing before God to preserve Orthodoxy inviolate from the temptations and errors that creep into our life.

If a temptation appears in the fold of only one Orthodox Church, the remedy for it may be found in the same fold. But if a particular evil penetrates into nearly all of our Churches, it becomes a matter of concern for every single Bishop. Can any one of us be inactive if he sees that many of his brethren simultaneously are walking along a path that leads them and their flock to a ruinous precipice through their unwitting loss of Orthodoxy?

Should we say in this case that humility commands us to keep silent? Should we regard it as indiscreet to lend advice to other successors of the Holy Apostles, some of whom are occupying the most ancient and eminent sees?

But Orthodoxy acknowledges the equality of all Bishops with regard to Grace, and distinguishes only between them with regard to honor.

Should we content ourselves with the fact that every Church is responsible for itself? But what if statements which disturb the faithful are made in the name of the whole Church, and therefore also in our name, even though we have not authorized anybody to use it?

II. “*Truth is betrayed through silence*”

St. Gregory the Theologian once said that there are occasions when “*truth is betrayed through silence.*” Should we not also be betraying the truth if, on noticing a deviation from pure Orthodoxy, we merely kept silence—always an easier and safer thing to do than speaking out?

We observe, however, that none of our elders is raising his voice; and this fact constrains us to speak out, lest at the Dread Judgment *we hear the reproach that we saw the danger of ecumenism threatening the Church, and yet did not warn her Prelates.*

To be sure, we have already addressed His All-Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras and His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America, expressing our grief and concern over their ecumenical activities, in which *the birthright of the Church has been sold for a mess of pottage in the form of the world’s applause. But the position taken by the Orthodox delegates at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala makes the concern of the zealots of Orthodoxy even more acute,* and makes it necessary for us to communicate our sorrow and confusion to all our Brother Orthodox Bishops.

We may be asked why we write about that Assembly only now, nearly a year after the closing of its sessions. Our answer is that on this occasion we had no observers present, and obtained information about the Assembly only from the press, the accuracy of which is not always to be relied upon.

Therefore, we were awaiting the official reports; and having studied them, we find it imperative to address this letter to all Orthodox Bishops, whom the Lord has appointed to watch over His Holy Church on earth.

The report on the Uppsala Assembly truly shocked us, because from it we saw more clearly than ever how *the error of ecumenism is winning the official approval of a number of our Churches.*

When the first steps were taken in the organization of this movement, many of the Orthodox Churches, following the initiative of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, began to participate in its con-

ferences. At the time, such participation did not cause any worry even among the ardent zealots of Orthodoxy. They thought that the Church would suffer no injury if her representatives appeared among various truth-seeking Protestants with the aim of marshaling the truth of Orthodoxy against their various errors. *Such a participation in interconfessional assemblies could be thought of as having a missionary character.*

This position was still maintained to a certain extent, though not always consistently, at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, in 1954. There, the Orthodox delegates unanimously and openly stated that the decisions of this Assembly diverged so sharply from our doctrine of the Church that they were unable in any way to join with all the others in accepting them. Instead, they expressed the teaching of the Orthodox Church in separate statements.

III. The Orthodox cannot remain members of the World Council of Churches

Those statements were so plain that, in fact, they should have led to the logical conclusion that the Orthodox cannot remain members of the World Council of Churches on the same basis as the others.

The Protestants might well have asked them: “If you disagree with our basic principles, why are you with us?” We know that in private conversations some Protestants did say this, but the question was not raised in the plenary sessions. That is, the Orthodox remained members of an organization, when they had so clearly illustrated just how foreign it was to them.

But what do we see now?

The Pan-Orthodox Consultation in Geneva in June 1968 took a different course. It expressed “the general desire of the Orthodox Church to be an *organic member* of the World Council of Churches.” His All-Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras informed the World Council of Churches of this in his special letter dated 30 June 1968. There

were no reservations; no mention was made of any missionary aims, in either case.

We must be clear as to what sort of religious union it is of which the Orthodox Church has been declared “*an organic member*,” and what the dogmatic implications of such a decision are.

In 1950, in Toronto, certain basic statements were accepted by the World Council of Churches which, while more cautious than the present statements, were already not in conformity with the Orthodox doctrine of the Church. Back then, in paragraph 4 [of section IV] it was stated that: “*The member churches of the World Council consider the relationship of other churches to the Holy Catholic Church which the Creeds profess as a subject for mutual consideration.*” This formulation is already unacceptable for us because the Holy Catholic Church is spoken of, here, not as in reality existing in the world, but as some kind of abstract entity, mentioned in various Creeds. However, even then, in paragraph 3 [of section IV] we read: “*The member Churches recognize that the membership of the Church of Christ is more inclusive than the membership of their own church body*”

But since in the previous paragraph (¶2) it was stated that “The member Churches of the World Council believe on the basis of the New Testament that the Church of Christ is one,” there is either an implicit contradiction or the profession of a new doctrine—that one can belong to the One Church, without confessing her doctrines and without having liturgical communion with her. This is a Protestant teaching, and not an Orthodox one.

IV. Orthodox ecclesiology differs in essence from Protestant ecclesiology

The separate statements made in Evanston [four years later—*Trans.*] on behalf of all the Orthodox delegates rectified the situation somewhat, because they clearly showed that Orthodox ecclesiology differs so much in essence from Protestant ecclesiology that it is impossible to compose a joint statement. Now, however, the Orthodox participants in the World Council of Churches act differently. In an effort to unite truth with error, they have departed

from the principle stated at Evanston. *If all the Orthodox Churches are organic members of the World Council of Churches, then all the decisions of that Council are made in their name as well as in the name of the Protestants.*

If, initially, the Orthodox participated in ecumenical meetings in order to witness to the truth, performing, so to speak, a missionary service among confessions foreign to Orthodoxy, then now they have combined with them, and *each of us, therefore, can affirm that what was said at Uppsala was also said by the Orthodox Churches participating therein in the person of their delegates. Alas, this was said in the name of the whole Orthodox Church.*

We regard it as our duty to protest in the strongest possible terms against this state of affairs. We know that in this protest all the Holy Fathers of the Church stand by us. With us, as well, are not only the Hierarchy, clergy, and the laity of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, but also many members of other Orthodox Churches who agree with us.

We venture to say that evidently, up until now, our brother Bishops have not treated this matter with sufficient attention, not realizing *how far our Church is being drawn into the sphere of anti-canonical and even of dogmatic agreements with the heterodox.* This fact is especially clear if one turns to the initial statements of the representatives of the Orthodox Churches as compared with what is taking place at present. At the Conference in Lausanne in 1927, the representative of the Œcumenical Patriarchate, *Metropolitan Germanos, clearly stated that restoring unity with the Church means that Protestants must return to the doctrines of the ancient Church of the Seven Œcumenical Synods.* “And what are the elements of Christian teaching,” he said, “which should be regarded as necessary and essential? According to the understanding of the Orthodox Church, there is no need now to make definitions of those necessary elements of faith, because they already exist in the ancient Symbols of Faith and in the decisions of the Seven Œcumenical Synods. Therefore, this teaching of the ancient undivided Church of the first [eight] centuries should be the basis of the reunion of the Church.”

That was the position taken by all of the Orthodox delegates at the Lausanne and Oxford Conferences.

V. The One...Church has never been divided. The question is only who belongs to her and who does not.

As for our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, her views were expressed with particular clarity upon the appointment of a representative to the Committee for Continuation of the Conference on Faith and Order, December 18/31, 1931. That decision was as follows:

“Maintaining the belief in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, the Synod of Bishops professes that the Church has never been divided. The question is only who belongs to her and who does not. At the same time, the Synod warmly greets all efforts of heterodox confessions to study Christ’s teaching on the Church with the hope that by such study, especially with the participation of the representatives of the Holy Orthodox Church, they may at last come to the conviction that the Orthodox Church, the pillar and the ground of the truth (I St. Timothy 3:15), fully and with no errors has preserved the doctrine given by Christ the Savior to His disciples. With that Faith and with such hope, the Synod of Bishops accepts with gratitude the invitation of the Committee for Continuation of the World Conference on Faith and Order.”

Here everything is clear and nothing is left unsaid. This statement is in essence in agreement with what also used to be said at one time by official representatives of other Orthodox Churches.

What, then, has changed? Have the Protestants abandoned their errors? No. They have remained the same, and the Church has not changed; only the people who represent her in our day have changed.

Had the representatives of the Orthodox Churches only continued firmly to maintain the basic principles of our belief in the Church, they would not have placed the Orthodox Church in this ambiguous position, which was created for her by last year’s decision at the Geneva consultation.

Since the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, the Orthodox delegates no longer make separate statements, but have merged into one mass with the Protestant confessions.

Thus, all the decisions of the Uppsala Assembly are made in the name of “the Church,” which is always spoken of in the singular number.

Who is speaking? Who gave these people the right to make ecclesiastical statements not merely on their own behalf, but also on behalf of the Orthodox Church?

VI. Check the list of the Churches in the World Council of Churches

We ask you, Most Reverend Brothers, to check the list of the Churches participating in the ecumenical movement and in the World Council of Churches. Take, for instance, at least the first lines of the list on p. 444 of *The Uppsala 68 Report*.

There you will find the following names:

Evangelical Church of the Río de la Plata, Methodist Church of Australia, Church of Christ in Australia, Anglican Church of Australia, Congregational Union of Australia, Presbyterian Church of Australia....

Is it necessary to continue the list? Is it not clear already from the first lines that confessions are included which differ greatly from Orthodoxy, which deny the Mysteries, the Priesthood, Church tradition, the sacred Canons, which do not venerate the Mother of God and the Saints, etc.? We should have to enumerate nearly all of our dogmas in order to point out everything in Orthodox doctrine which is not accepted by the majority of the members of the World Council of Churches—of which the Orthodox Church is, nevertheless, now declared to be an *organic member*.

Meanwhile, in the name of this varied gathering of representatives of all possible heresies, the Uppsala Assembly constantly states: “The Church professes, the Church teaches, the Church does this and that....”

Out of this mixture of errors, which have strayed so far from Tradition, the published decision “On the Holy Spirit and the Cath-

olicity of the Church” makes the statement: “The Holy Spirit has not only preserved the Church in continuity with her past: It is also continually present in the Church, renewing and recreating her inwardly” (p. 16).

The question is: Where is the “continuity with the past” among the Presbyterians? Where is the presence of the Holy Spirit among those who do not recognize any Mysteries? How can one speak of catholicity among those who do not accept the decisions of the Ecumenical Synods?

If these doctrinal decisions were prefaced with words indicating that one part of the Churches observes one doctrine, and the other a different doctrine, and if the true teaching of the Orthodox Church were stated separately—then it would correspond to reality. But such is not the case, and in the name of various confessions, they say: “*The Church teaches.*”

This, in and of itself, is a profession of the Protestant doctrine of the Church as *comprising all those who call themselves Christians*, even if they have no intercommunion.

But it is impossible to be an *organic member* of the World Council of Churches without accepting this doctrine, since it is the basis for the whole ideology of this organization.

True, the resolution “On the Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church” is followed by a note in fine print, which says that in view of the preceding debates, the document is not definitive, but rather material for consideration by the Churches.

VII. An Assembly of the World Council of Churches cannot speak in the name of the Church

However, there are no such remarks with regard to other similar resolutions. The minutes contain no evidence that the Orthodox delegates stated that the Assembly might not speak in the name of the Church in the singular number. The Assembly does this everywhere, in all its resolutions, which never have such qualifying remarks attached.

On the contrary, His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos, replying in the name of the General Assembly to the greeting of the Swedish Archbishop, said: "As you well know, the universal Church is called by the demands of the world to give full proof of and witness to its faith" (*The Uppsala 68 Report*, p. 103).

Of what "universal Church" is Archbishop Iakovos here speaking? Of the Orthodox Church? No. He is speaking here of the "Church" that unites all confessions, of the Church of the World Council of Churches.

The tendency to speak in this fashion is especially apparent in the report of the Commission on Faith and Order. In the resolution concerning its report, following statements about the success of ecumenism, it says: "We are in agreement with the decision of the Faith and Order Commission at its Bristol meeting to pursue its study program of the unity of the Church in the wider context of the study of the unity of mankind and of creation. We welcome, at the same time, the statement of the Faith and Order Commission that its task remains 'to declare the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ' and to place before the Council and the Churches 'the obligation to manifest this unity for the sake of their Lord and for the better realization of His mission in the world'" (*ibid.*, p. 223).

The clear implication of all of these resolutions is that, notwithstanding the outward separation of the Churches, their internal unity still exists. The task of ecumenism in this world is to make this inner unity at the same time an outward one through various manifestations of such aspirations.

In order to evaluate all this from the viewpoint of the Orthodox Church, it is sufficient to imagine the reaction from amongst the Holy Fathers of the Œcumenical Church. *Can anybody imagine the Orthodox Church of that period declaring itself an organic member of a society uniting Eunomians, Anomœans, Arians, Semi-Arians, Sabellians, and Apollinarians?*

Certainly not! On the contrary, the First Canon of the Second Œcumenical Synod does not call for union with such groups, but anathematizes them. Subsequent Œcumenical Synods did the same in regard to other heresies.

VIII. *Orthodox Christians, members of a union of contemporary heretics!*

The organic membership of Orthodox Christians in a union with contemporary heretics will not sanctify the latter, but does alienate from catholic Orthodox unity those Orthodox who enter into such a union. That unity is not limited to the modern age. Catholicity embraces all the generations of the Holy Fathers. St. Vincent of Lérins, in his immortal work, writes that “for Catholic Christians to preach any doctrine other than what they have received has never been permitted, is never permitted, and never will be permitted; and to anathematize those who preach anything other than what has once been received, always has been a duty, is always a duty, and always will be a duty.”

Perhaps someone will say that times have changed, and heresies now are not so malicious and destructive as in the days of the Œcumenical Synods. *But are Protestants*, who renounce the veneration of the *Theotokos* and the Saints, who do not recognize the Grace of the Hierarchy—or *the Roman Catholics*, who have invented new errors—nearer to the Orthodox Church than the Arians or Semi-Arians?

Let us grant that modern preachers of heresy are not so belligerent towards the Orthodox Church as the ancient ones were. However, that is not because their views are nearer to Orthodoxy, but because Protestantism and ecumenism have cultivated in them the conviction that there is *no One True Church on earth, no one true Faith, but only communities of men who are in varying degrees of error*. This doctrine abolishes any zeal for the profession of what is acknowledged as truth, and for this reason modern heretics appear to be less obdurate than the ancient ones. But such indifference to truth is in many respects worse than the capacity zealously to defend error mistaken for truth. Pilate, who said “What is truth?” could not be converted; but Saul, the persecutor of Christianity, became the Apostle Paul. That is why we read in the Book of Revelation the menacing words to the Angel of the Church of the Church of Laodicæa: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm,

and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16).

Ecumenism makes the World Council of Churches a society in which each member, with Laodicæan indifference to the truth, recognizes himself and others as being in error, and is concerned only about finding formulæ acceptable to all. Is there any room here, in the capacity of an “*organic member*,” for the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which has always professed herself to be holy and without blemish because her Head is Christ Himself (Ephesians 5:27)?

The Fifty-seventh (Sixty-sixth) Canon of the Synod of Carthage says of the Church that she “is a dove [Song of Songs 2:10], the sole mother of Christians, in which all of the eternal and life-giving mysteries are received unto salvation, whereas they inflict on those abiding in heresy the great punishment of condemnation.”

IX. The Russian Church was not represented lawfully or canonically

We also consider it our duty to declare that it is impossible to recognize the Russian Orthodox Church as lawfully and canonically represented at the Pan-Orthodox consultations convened by His All-Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras. Those Bishops who participate in these consultations in the name of the Russian Church, with Metropolitan Nikodim at their head, do not represent the authentic Russian Church. They represent only those Hierarchs who, by the good will of the atheist authorities, bear the titles of certain Dioceses of the Church of Russia. We have already had occasion to write about this matter in much greater detail to His All-Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras. These persons participate in meetings abroad only in so far as it is profitable to the civil authorities, the cruelest in the history of the world. Nero’s ferocity and Julian the Apostate’s hatred of Christianity pale before them.

Is it not to the influence of that Government that we must largely ascribe the political resolutions of the Uppsala Assembly, which repeat many slogans well known from Communist propaganda in the West?

In his concluding speech the Chairman, Dr. Payne, said that “the Church of Jesus Christ must actively show the compassion of Christ in a needy world.” But neither he nor anybody else said a word about the millions of Christians martyred in the U.S.S.R.; nobody spoke a word of compassion about their plight.

X. The silence of the members of the World Council of Churches regarding the persecutions of the Russian Church by the atheistic Communists is culpable

It is good to express compassion for the hungry in Biafra, for those who suffer from constant armed conflicts in the Middle East or in Vietnam; but does that cover all the human afflictions of the present time? Can it be that the members of the World Council of Churches know nothing about the persecution of religion in the U.S.S.R.? Do they not know what iniquity is reigning there? Do they not know that martyrs for the Faith there are counted in the millions, that the Holy Scriptures are not published there and that people are sentenced to banishment with hard labor for distributing them? Do they not know that it is forbidden to teach children the basic principles of religion, and even to bring them to Divine services? Do they not know of the thousands who have been banished for their Faith, about the children wrested from their parents to prevent them from receiving a religious upbringing?

All this is certainly well known to anybody who reads the newspapers, but it is never mentioned in any resolution of the World Council of Churches. The ecumenical priests and Levites are passing by in silence and without interest, without so much as casting a glance in the direction of the Christians persecuted in the U.S.S.R. They are silent because the official representatives of the Church of Russia, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, deny the existence of these persecutions in order to please their civil authorities.

These people are not free. Whether they wish to or not, they are forced to say that which Communist Moscow orders them to say. The burden of persecution makes them more deserving of compassion than of blame. But, being moral prisoners of the godless, they

cannot be true representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, that is suffering, deprived of rights, forced to be silent, driven into prisons and catacombs.

XI. "Let a Bishop who makes use of the secular powers...be deposed and excommunicated..."

The late Patriarch Sergius and the present Patriarch Alexey [Alexey I, †1970—*Ed.*] were elected in violation of the rules decided upon by the All-Russian Church Council of 1917 at the restoration of the Patriarchate. Both were chosen on orders from Stalin, the fiercest persecutor of the Church in history.

Can you imagine a Bishop of Rome chosen according to the instructions of Nero? But Stalin was many times worse.

The Hierarchs selected by Stalin had to promise their obedience to an atheistic government whose aim, according to the Communist program, is the annihilation of religion. The present Patriarch Alexey wrote to Stalin immediately after the death of his predecessor that he would observe fidelity to his government: "Acting fully in concert with the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and also with the Holy Synod instituted by the late Patriarch, I will be secure from mistakes and wrong actions."

Everybody knows that "mistakes and wrong actions" in the language of the Moscow masters means any deviation from the instructions of the Communist authorities.

We can pity an unfortunate old man, but we cannot recognize him as the canonical Head of the Russian Church, of which we regard ourselves an inseparable part. Both to Patriarch Alexey and his collaborators the sanction of the Thirtieth Apostolic Canon and the Third Canon of the Seventh Œcumenical Synod especially applies: "*If any bishop, making use of the secular powers, obtains possession of a Church, let him be deposed and excommunicated, together with all who remain in communion with him.*"

Bishop Nikodim of Dalmatia, in his commentary on the Thirtieth Apostolic Canon, says: "If the Church condemned the unlawful influence of civil authorities on the appointment of a Bishop at a

time when the rulers were Christians, all the more, consequently, must she have condemned it, when the latter were heathens.” What is there to say then, when a Patriarch and Bishops are appointed by the open and militant enemies of all religion?

XII. The contemporary Catacomb Church

When one part of the Russian Episcopate, with the late Patriarch (at that time Metropolitan) Sergius at its head, took this course of agreeing with the godless enemies of the Church in 1927, a significant (and the most respected) part of that Episcopate, headed by Metropolitan Joseph of Leningrad and the first candidate of Patriarch Tikhon for the office of locum tenens, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, did not agree to go that route, preferring banishment and martyrdom. Metropolitan Joseph by that time had already come to the conclusion that, in the face of a Government which openly had as its goal the destruction of religion by the use of all available means, the legal existence of a Church Administration becomes practically impossible without entailing compromises which are too great and too sinful. He therefore started secretly Consecrating Bishops and Ordaining Priests, thereby organizing the *Catacomb Church*, which still exists in hiding.

The atheists seldom mention the Catacomb Church, being afraid of giving her too much publicity. Only very rarely in the Soviet Press is the news of some trial of her members mentioned. Information about her, however, is given in manuals for those working for the propagation of atheism in the Soviet Union. For instance, the basic information about this Church, under the name of “The True Orthodox Church,” is given in a manual with the title of *Slovar Ateista* [The Atheist’s Dictionary], published in Moscow in 1964.

With no open Churches, in secret meetings similar to the catacomb meetings of the early Christians, these confessors of the Faith perform their services unseen by the outside world. They are the true representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, whose greatness will become known to the world only after the downfall of the Communist power.

For this reason, although representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate participated in the decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Geneva last year, we look upon all decisions of this conference, and in particular, the decision about making the Orthodox Church an organic member of the World Council of Churches, as having been accepted without the participation of the Russian Orthodox Church. That Church is forced to stay silent, and we, as her free representatives, are grieved by the fact that such a decision was accepted. We categorically protest that decision as being contrary to the very nature itself of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

XIII. The poison of heresy

The poison of heresy is not so dangerous when it is preached only from outside the Church. Many times more perilous is that poison which is gradually introduced into the organism in larger and larger doses by those who, by virtue of their position, should not be poisoners but spiritual physicians.

Can it be that the Orthodox Episcopate will remain indifferent to this danger? Will it not be too late to protect our spiritual flock when the wolves are devouring the sheep before their pastors' eyes, inside the very sheepfold itself?

Do we not see the Divine sword already raised (St. Matthew 10:34), separating those who are true to the traditional Faith of the Holy Church from those who, in the words of His All-Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras in his greeting to the Uppsala Assembly, are working to shape the "new course in the ecumenical movement" for the realization of "a general Christian renewal and unity" on the paths of reformation and indifference to the truth?

XIV. We protest and implore

It seems that we have shown clearly enough above that this apparent unity is not unity in the purity of the truth of Orthodoxy,

but a unity that mixes white with black, good with evil, truth with error.

We have already protested earlier against the unorthodox ecumenical actions of His All-Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop Iakovos in letters which were widely circulated among Bishops in various countries. We have received from different parts of the world expressions of agreement with us.

But now the time has come to make our protest heard more loudly and more extensively still, so as to stop the action of this poison before it has become as potent as the ancient heresies of Arianism, Nestorianism, or Eutychianism, which in their time so shook the whole body of the Church as to make it seem that heresy was capable of overcoming Orthodoxy.

We direct our appeal to all the Bishops of the Orthodox Church, imploring them to study the subject of this letter and to rise up in defense of the purity of the Orthodox Faith. We also fervently entreat them to pray for the Russian Orthodox Church, so greatly suffering from the atheists, that the Lord might shorten the days of her trial and send down to her freedom and peace.

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of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

In New York, 14/27 July 1969
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