



On the fifty-fifth Anniversary of the  
Repose of The Confessor-Hierarch  
Metropolitan Chrysostomos  
(Kabourides), of Phlorina  
(†1955)

## Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina: An Heroic Confessor of the Faith and Restorer of Hallowed Traditions

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Secretary of the Holy Synod in Resistance

**E**VEN as ecumenism charges forth in all of its forms, pronouncements, and manifestations—indeed, precisely at the outset of a potentially decisive meeting of the concessionary theological dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics<sup>1</sup> in Vienna, Austria<sup>2</sup>—we commemorate at the Liturgy three anniversaries of a leading figure in contemporary Orthodoxy: the 55th anniversary of the repose in the Lord of Metropolitan Chrysostomos (Kabourides) of Phlorina, the 75th anniversary of the initiation of his struggle as a Confessor for the

<sup>1</sup> His Grace has in mind, here, the numerous compromises made by the Orthodox participants in this ongoing dialogue. For example, having originally insisted on the exclusion of Uniates from any of the deliberations of the dialogue, the Orthodox have now acquiesced to the presence of Uniate clergy. Thus, at the Seventh Meeting of the Dialogue in 1993, in Balamand, Lebanon, almost one third of the Roman Catholic participants in the dialogue were Uniates—*Trans*.

<sup>2</sup> The Twelfth Meeting of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church—*Trans*.

Traditions of the Holy Fathers, and the 140th anniversary of his birth in Madytos, Eastern Thrace.

Our celebration is not untimely, and his multifarious messages are not unrelated to the tragic realities of the Church today.

From history, we are aware that, even as far back as Apostolic times, the “mystery of iniquity”<sup>3</sup> has been active and at work, be it openly or in hidden manner. Its ulterior purpose is to impede and, if possible, to thwart the mystery of salvation within the mystery of the one and unique Church of Christ, and in particular by adulterating the Truth of the Faith through heresies. The aim of the “mystery of iniquity” is to bring about the spread and domination of “apostasy,”<sup>4</sup> which, at its apogee, will beget and disclose “the man of sin..., the son of perdition,”<sup>5</sup> to wit, the Antichrist, for the final tribulation of the Church prior to the Second and glorious Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.



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**The great heresy** of Papism, which was cut away from the Church in the eleventh century, has unleashed, as is well known, an uncontrollable torrent of innovations and false teachings. One of these was the concoction, in the sixteenth century, of the so-called Gregorian Calendar, which was condemned by three Pan-Orthodox Synods in Constantinople, in 1583, 1587, and 1593. Since then, the persistence of the Latins in foisting their calendar innovation on the Orthodox Church has been looked upon as Papal intrigue and was categorically rejected by Orthodoxy up until the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> II Thessalonians 2:7.

<sup>4</sup> II Thessalonians 2:3.

<sup>5</sup> II Thessalonians 2:3.

<sup>6</sup> It is striking that Metropolitan Chrysostomos, in his essay “Πρὸς τοὺς Διανοούμενους Ὁρθοδόξους Ἑλληνας” [To the Greek Orthodox Intellectuals], which he wrote in the wake of his return to the Old Calendar in 1935, summarizing the attitude

In 1920, the Encyclical of the Œcumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople “To the Churches of Christ Everywhere” proclaimed the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism in the midst of the Orthodox Church, proposing as a first practical measure for rapprochement with the heterodox a common calendar for the joint celebration of the Christian Feasts.

The ecumenist Congress of 1923 in Constantinople, under Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakes), a Freemason, decided on the calendar innovation, with the intention of also changing the *Paschalion*, along with a series of ecclesiastical reforms, so as to abrogate and trample upon the Sacred Canons and the Tradition of the Church.

In 1924, the Œcumenical Patriarchate unilaterally resolved, after exerting suitable pressure on Archbishop Chrysostomos of Athens, to impose the calendar innovation on just a few of the local Orthodox Churches. The Church was divided and sundered into innovationists and anti-innovationists, with regard to the issue of the Calendar. A “small flock” in our country [Greece—*Trans.*], which increased daily, initially without Hierarchs, resisted in a self-sacrificial manner this pro-heretical imposition, which lacked any ecclesiastical, canonical, or pastoral foundation, being based solely on worldly and pseudo-scientific arguments.

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of the Orthodox Church to the Papal calendar innovation, addressed the innovationist Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) with the following series of questions:

“(i) Why did the six remaining Œcumenical Synods, after the First Œcumenical Synod, which determined that the Feast of Pascha should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon of Spring, on the basis of the equinox of the Julian Calendar, not undertake to correct this supposed error in the Julian Calendar, given that the Fathers were aware of its inaccuracy?

“(ii) Why is it that thereafter, when the Pope attempted to impose the Gregorian Calendar on the Orthodox Church, the Fathers condemned it (at the Synods of 1585 [*sic*; 1583, 1587] and 1593), during the reign of Œcumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II, characterizing it as an innovation of the Elder Rome, as a universal scandal and as a high-handed violation of the Divine and Sacred Canons...?

“(iv) Why, under Œcumenical Patriarch Joachim III, did the Orthodox Churches, with the Œcumenical Patriarchate at the forefront, reject the Gregorian Calendar as un-Orthodox and uncanonical?” (Elias Angelopoulos and Dionysios Batistatos, *Μητροπολίτης πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσόστομος Καβουρίδης – Αγωνιστής τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας καὶ τοῦ Ἔθνους* [Metropolitan Chrysostomos Kabourides of Phlorina: Struggler for Orthodoxy and the Nation] [Athens: 1981], pp. 60-61).

The innovationist Church in Greece, which dubbed the New Calendar the “revised Julian Calendar,” even though it will not coincide with the Gregorian Calendar until 2800, had no inkling of the “grave confusion”<sup>7</sup> that this reform had introduced into the life of the Church or of the “reaction”<sup>8</sup> of the God-loving flock. Thus, the “intervention of the civil authorities”<sup>9</sup> proved necessary for the “implementation” of the calendar innovation, which is for this reason, too, contemptible and rejectable.

The “unfortunate repercussions”<sup>10</sup> of the innovation were palpable. A fair number of the faithful refused to accept it and formed the “Greek Religious Community of True Orthodox Christians.”

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**There was** a difference of opinion within the Hierarchy of the innovationist Church over the issue of the Calendar. Many traditionalist Hierarchs reacted against the innovation and strove for the restoration of the traditional Church Calendar. One Hierarch among them offered a very judicious observation, which touched on the heart of the matter. To be precise, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina<sup>11</sup> said at the Tenth Session of the Hierarchy, on June 27, 1929:

In submitting a memorandum on this subject, I implore you to take into consideration the fact that the Calendar ought to be examined primarily from the standpoint of the difference with the Catholics (Papists), against whom the Old Calendar constitutes a bulwark for Orthodox Christians. This has great significance for our nation and will have momentous consequences, the responsibility for which I am unable to bear.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Nikolaos Zacharopoulos [Professor *Emeritus* at the University of Thessalonica], “Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία στὴν Ἑλλάδα κατὰ τὸν 20ὸ αἰῶνα” [The Orthodox Church in Greece During the Twentieth Century], in *Ἱστορία τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας* [History of Orthodoxy], Vol. VII, *Οἱ Ὁρθόδοξες Ἐκκλησίες τὸν 20ὸ αἰῶνα* [The Orthodox Churches in the Twentieth Century] (Athens: Ekdoseis Road, 2009), p. 210.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Earlier of Imbros and Tenedos and subsequently of Pelagonia (now Bitola in the Republic of Macedonia)—*Trans.*

<sup>12</sup> Archimandrite Theokletos Strangas, *Ἐκκλησίας Ἑλλάδος Ἱστορία ἐκ πηγῶν ἀψευδῶν*

In truth, the Church Calendar is a “bulwark” against the machinations of heretics, and has from of old been regarded as such in the Orthodox world, until the Shepherds themselves decided to demolish it, thereby putting the Divine Vineyard in jeopardy.

Later on, the same Confessor-Hierarch, now as the former Metropolitan of Phlorina and leader of the anti-innovationist Old Calendarists, wrote elegantly that the Holy Fathers, in order to safeguard the Orthodox Church from the false teaching of the West,

raised in the form of ramparts and bastions the bulwarks of the Canons and Synodal decrees.... One of these ramparts of Orthodoxy is the Church Calendar, which separates the Orthodox Churches from the heretical ones in the celebration of the Feasts and the observance of the fasts, and thus provides the simpler among the faithful with a perceptible conception of the ecclesiastical difference between the Orthodox Christian and the heretic or heterodox Christian.<sup>13</sup>

However, since this “rampart” was demolished, the ecumenist divagation of the innovationists was thenceforth to be expected, as we see it unfolding today!

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**The calendar** innovation did not come about for the sake of astronomical and chronometrical accuracy, as its defenders maintained and continue to maintain, even though they are well aware that the Church never posited such a criterion. Rather, it came about, as Meletios Metaxakes admitted, for the sake of rapprochement with the

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(1817-1967) [History of the Church of Greece From Reliable Sources (1817-1967)] (Athens: 1971), Vol. III, p. 1648.

<sup>13</sup> “Υπόμνημα ἀπολογητικὸν ὑπὲρ ἀναστηλώσεως τοῦ Πατρῖου Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Ἡμερολογίου” [Memorandum in defense of the restoration of the Traditional Church Calendar] [1945], in Angelopoulos and Batistatos, *Μητροπολίτης πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσόστομος Καβουρίδης*, p. 157. Further on in this document, the Confessor-Hierarch emphasizes the following essential aspects of the issue: “The question of the Church Calendar is not one of times and dates for our Church, but a matter of unity and a concerted line of defense of Orthodoxy against heresy and false belief, as represented by the Western Church, which is aiming by all means and at all costs to demolish one after another the ramparts of the Eastern Church, in order ultimately to profane the precious pearl of Orthodoxy” (*ibid.*, p. 158).

heterodox and to make an “impression on the civilized world through this” rapprochement!<sup>14</sup>

These anti-Orthodox motivations—again, according to the great innovator, Patriarch Meletios—aim also at the inevitable adjustment of the *Paschalion* to the New Calendar.<sup>15</sup>

The issue of the common celebration of Pascha according to the New Calendar as it *already* occurs in the Church of Finland, or according to some other putative calendrical reckoning of more recent provenance, frequently recurs in ecumenical circles. It is, moreover, no secret that the Orthodox ecumenists have a deep desire and longing for this, since it is here that their calendar innovation of necessity ends up.

Just a few days ago, the ecumenist Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, during his visit to Austria, stated (September 14, 2010 [New Style]), *inter alia*, at an ecumenical get-together with the Roman Catholics, that the common celebration of Pascha with the Catholics “is a matter of great necessity.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126. On the issue of rapprochement between East and West, the Confessor-Hierarch writes elsewhere: “To be sure, rapprochement between the two Christian worlds of the East and the West in the celebration of Christian Feasts is desired by all and is a matter of great moral value and significance. However, it must be pursued and attained in the service of Christian truth and for the glory of the God-Man Jesus Christ. Were such to be the case, the moral interests of the entire Christian world would truly be served in the right Faith. But when this rapprochement springs from materialistic and worldly interests and motives and is undertaken at the expense of Orthodoxy and to the diminution of the glory of Christ, then personal interests, and especially ecclesiastical ambitions and desires, are served, to the detriment of the idea of the Church and of the prestige of Orthodoxy in general. Her soul consists of the traditions and the God-inspired and unerring documents of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the decisions of the Seven Holy and Ecumenical Synods, the distortion of which diminishes the Divinely wrought and inviolable authority of the Divine essence of the Church of Christ. Thus, all harm done to Orthodoxy and every diminution thereof becomes the harm and diminution of the Divinity of Christ, from Whom there shines the sublime and Divine character and the deeper and Divine meaning of the Christian religion” (“Αναίρεσις τοῦ «Ἐλέγχου» τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσσοστόμου Παπαδοπούλου” [Refutation of the “Censure” of Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos], in *Ἄπαντα πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσσοστόμου* [The Complete Works of (Metropolitan) Chrysostomos of Phlorina] [n.p.: Ekdosis Hieras Mones Hagiou Nikodemou Hellenikou Gortynias, 1997], Vol. 1, pp. 260-261).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> “Ο Πατριάρχης Σερβίας Ειρηναῖος ζήτησε τὴν συμφιλίωση τῶν δύο Ἐκκλησιῶν” [Pa-

As may easily be inferred from the examples cited above, we cannot separate the calendar issue from the panheresy of ecumenism or, by implication, from the apostasy which is paving the way for the pan-religion of the Antichrist and is sorely putting the members of the Church to the test.



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**Metropolitan Chrysostomos**, who retired from the See of Phlorina in 1932, knew well that we Orthodox “are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”<sup>17</sup> For this reason, with “faith,” “confidence,”<sup>18</sup> and “patience”<sup>19</sup> as his sole provisions, he unyieldingly did the Will of God in order to reap the good fruits of his vocational vows, and also in order to check the incursion of pro-heretical forces into the Church, hence providing solid ground for an Orthodox witness of resistance and a refuge for the children of the persecuted Church at a time when apostasy was in the ascendant.

Thus, in May of 1935, together with Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, he took the step of walling himself off from the innovationists and assumed the pastoral care of the anti-innovationist community of the Church.

We scarcely need to emphasize that this act of Confession required heroism of soul.

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triarch Irinej of Serbia Seeks the Reconciliation of the Two Churches], [http://www.romfea.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5835:eirhnaios&catid=13](http://www.romfea.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5835:eirhnaios&catid=13).

<sup>17</sup> Hebrews 10:39.

<sup>18</sup> Hebrews 10:35.

<sup>19</sup> Hebrews 10:36.

In their “Statement of Abjuration” to the Hierarchy of the New Calendar Church, the three Confessor-Hierarchs invoked the following serious reasons for their action:

—the unilateral and uncanonical introduction of the Gregorian Calendar into the Church, contrary to the traditions of the seven Ecumenical Synods and the age-old practice of the Orthodox Church;

—the rupture of the unity of the Orthodox Church and the division of the Christians through the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar, without the consent of all the Orthodox Churches;

—the contravention of the Divine and Sacred Canons, which govern Divine worship, and in addition, the violation of the Fast of the Holy Apostles;

—the rupture of the unity of the Orthodox Church in the celebration of the Feasts and division among Christians, which pertains indirectly to the dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of the Symbol of Faith;

—the instigation of scandal, division, and recrimination among Christians and the rejection of concord, love, and solidarity.

For these reasons, they were of the opinion that the ruling Hierarchy of the Church of Greece had cut itself off, according to the Sacred Canons, from the wholeness of the Orthodox Church and had rendered itself in essence schismatic, with the proviso that they (the resisting Metropolitans) were struggling for the return of the Traditional Church Calendar and the restoration of Orthodoxy and the peace of the Church and the nation.<sup>20</sup>

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This persistence on the part of Metropolitan Chrysostomos in confessing the Faith—both then, at that critical juncture, and also later on, until his death—was characteristic of him and unshakable. He never lost the opportunity to proclaim that

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<sup>20</sup> “Τὸ Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον ὡς Κριτήριον τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας” [The Church Calendar as a Criterion of Orthodoxy], in *Ἄπαντα πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσοστόμου*, Vol. 1, pp. 130-131.



We have boldly and courageously unfurled not the banner of rebellion against Orthodoxy and of division among Christians as have they [the innovators Meletios Metaxakis and Chrysostomos Papadopoulos], but the glorious and honorable standard of the union of disunited Orthodoxy and of the pacification of the Church on the basis of hallowed Traditions and the Divine and Sacred Canons.<sup>21</sup>

He believed that we resisters have full canonical justification for temporarily severing ecclesiastical communion with the Hierarchy of the New Calendar Church, prior to a Synodal verdict, and for “forming our own religious community provisionally,”<sup>22</sup> until there is an authoritative and final resolution of the calendar question by a Pan-Orthodox Synod.

The purpose of his action, far removed from any personal motivation, was to reunite all of the Orthodox Churches, which had become separated through the unilateral alteration of the Festal Calendar, in the celebration of the Christian Feasts and the simultaneous observance of the fasts.<sup>23</sup>

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**Given these few** but wholly pithy points, how can there be any validity in the accusation of schism and disobedience against Metropolitan Chrysostomos as regards the Church of Greece, and how can the decision to depose him, based as it is on this erroneous line of thought, be considered valid?

Schism occurs when one refuses to obey a lawful and canonical ecclesiastical authority and displays insubordination towards it,<sup>24</sup> and certainly not when one withholds obedience and subordination from

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>22</sup> See note 30 in the article “Ο έμπνευσται και πρωτεργαται της Καινοτομιας: ‘Οι δυο ουτοι Λουθηροι της ‘Ορθοδοξου ‘Εκκλησιας” [The Inspirers and Ringleaders of the Calendar Innovation: “These Two Luthers of the Orthodox Church”], in ‘Ορθοδοξος ‘Ενοστασις και Μαρτυρια, Vol. II, No. 17 (October-December 1989), p. 77; <http://hsir.info/p/ib>.

<sup>23</sup> “Υπόμνημα άπολογητικόν,” p. 155.

<sup>24</sup> See Protopresbyter Evangelos Mantzouneas, *‘Εκκλησιαστικόν Ποινικόν Δίκαιον*[Ecclesiastical Penal Law] (Athens: 1979), p. 168.

an ecclesiastical authority that has introduced innovations and which one has disavowed for reasons of faith and righteousness.<sup>25</sup>

Metropolitan Chrysostomos did not disavow the Hierarchy of the innovationist Church of Greece out of a desire for leadership or out of self-seeking, but for ecclesiastical and canonical reasons, which pertained not only to the Sacred Canons concerning Divine worship, but also to the very unity of the One Church.<sup>26</sup>

There had been no rebellion against the canonical ecclesiastical authority, the Confessor-Hierarch affirmed, nor against the Orthodox Church of Greece *per se*, but a rupture of ecclesiastical communion with the ruling Synod, since it had deviated, through the calendar reform—according to a strict Orthodox understanding of the matter—from the Canons and Traditions of the Church, and since he could not brook any complicity in this deviation and rupture in the unity of the Orthodox Church in the celebration of the Christian Feasts.<sup>27</sup>

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**In spite** of this, the innovationist Hierarchy proceeded hastily on June 1/14, 1935 to sentence the three Hierarchs to deposition and monastic house arrest.<sup>28</sup>

This false and unjust deposition falls flat, since it was based on the alleged insubordination and rebellion of the accused. But it is also invalid for the reason that the members of the Synodal tribunal were themselves subject to trial and in contest against the Hierarchs who had walled themselves off; since the innovationists had no right to sit in judgment on the anti-innovationists who had disavowed them; the decision included the unheard-of penalty of house arrest; and the proper order for summoning a Hierarch to stand trial was not observed.<sup>29</sup>

Though at least the vast majority of the anti-innovationist flock had accepted the Confessor-Hierarch, who had been persecuted in this

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<sup>25</sup> See Canon xxxi of the Holy Apostles and Canon xv of the First-Second Synod.

<sup>26</sup> “Υπόμνημα ἀπολογητικόν,” p. 149.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>28</sup> Strangas, *Ἐκκλησίας Ἑλλάδος Ἱστορία*, Vol. III, p. 2043.

<sup>29</sup> “Υπόμνημα ἀπολογητικόν,” pp. 151-152.

way as their Shepherd, he was twice exiled by the authorities, at the instigation of the innovationists, as a malefactor (1935, 1951), frequently hauled before law courts on charges of allegedly usurping authority, humiliated, despised, treated unjustly, and slandered,—though without losing his sense of purpose, his vision and hope, or his boldness as a Confessor.

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**Certain ill-disposed** persons, both then and now, have raised, and do raise, the question as to why the Confessor-Hierarch did not hasten to align himself with the Old Calendarist flock from the outset, but waited for eleven whole years (1924-1935), maintaining communion with those whom he later denounced as innovationists.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos himself declared, from the place of his first exile—the Holy Monastery of St. Dionysios of Olympos—in 1935, that although, along with other Hierarchs, he had not endorsed the calendar innovation, he bore with it out of ecclesiastical *oikonomia*<sup>30</sup> and out of concern lest he create a schism, in the hope that, after suitable enlightenment, the Hierarchy would reintroduce the Orthodox Festal Calendar. However, despite his efforts and the measures that he took, the majority of the Hierarchy, under the influence of the innovationist Archbishop, stubbornly and obstinately persisted in the innovation. Since peaceful means had been exhausted, he thenceforth disavowed the ruling Synod. Furthermore, he only gradually became aware of the gravity of the issue, having not originally been fully enlightened about it. In fact, he had confidence in assurances—primarily those of the innovationist Archbishop—that this issue had no bearing on the Faith or Divine worship, and that all of the local Orthodox Churches would adopt the New Calendar at the suggestion and urging of the Œcumenical Patriarchate.<sup>31</sup>

In the meantime, division among the Orthodox continued to exist and became wider. And the innovationist Hierarchy, like an “inhuman

<sup>30</sup> “Πρὸς Διαφώτισιν τῶν Ὀρθοδόξων Ἑλλήνων Προκήρυξις τοῦ πρώην Φλωρίνης Χρυσοστόμου” [Proclamation of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina for the Enlightenment of Orthodox Greeks], in Angelopoulos and Batistatos, *Μητροπολίτης πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσόστομος Καβουριδης*, p. 69.

<sup>31</sup> “Υπόμνημα ἀπολογητικόν,” p. 146.

and hardhearted stepmother,” persecuted her Orthodox children for their adherence to Church Tradition, while the Old Calendarist community veered towards extremes because it lacked leaders with ecclesiastical authority.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Metropolitan Chrysostomos was led little by little, along with his original fellow-strugglers, to assume the pastoral care of the anti-innovationists, “moved by the hope that the Hierarchy, compelled by the invincible force of the truth and of Orthodoxy, and avoiding the creation of what would henceforth become a formal schism, would see fit to reintroduce the traditional Festal Calendar for the union of the Orthodox Greek people.”<sup>33</sup>

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The steadfast tenacity, the virtuous way of life, and the indefatigable activity of the Confessor-Hierarch Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina, in spite of the vicissitudes and difficulties of those times and circumstances, and in spite of reversals, persecutions, and machinations, imprinted his personality on the conscience of the Old Calendarist Orthodox community, and more widely, too, as its unquestioned leader.

Nevertheless, the tergiversations of his fellow Bishops were a grave disappointment for him and caused him great and unbearable distress. In the course of the struggle, he remained the sole Hierarch, whereas at the beginning (1935), the three Metropolitans had consecrated four other Bishops.<sup>34</sup> Some of them retreated to the New Calendar Church

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> A fact indicative of the sensitive and exceedingly meticulous ecclesiological and canonical conscience of the Confessor-Hierarch is that ten years later, in 1945, he characterized the Episcopal Consecrations as “hasty,” “fraught with peril,” and “precipitous,” while he called the original ecclesiastical organization of the Hierarchs who

out of fear and instability, while others split off and became marginalized owing to their lack of a healthy ecclesiology.

Already in 1937, Bishops Germanos of the Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthene had denounced Metropolitan Chrysostomos for not teaching aright the word of Truth, since he had begun to issue clarifications about what the characterization of the innovationists as “schismatics” and indeed, “deprived of the Grace of the All-Holy Spirit” might mean in ecclesiological terms.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos insisted that such issues were a matter of personal opinion and denoted something that applied “potentially” and not “in actuality.” The innovationists were declared to be such, but in order for this to hold good in truth and in actual fact, they would have to be judged and condemned by a lawful ecclesiastical authority; that is, by a recognized Autocephalous Orthodox Church, or more clearly and more fully by a Pan-Orthodox Synod of the entire Church.<sup>35</sup>

The faction of clergy and laity which had broken ecclesiastical communion with the ruling Hierarchy did not constitute a distinct Church, but “belong[s] canonically to the same one and undivided Church, as an unsullied and integral part of her.”<sup>36</sup>

The Confessor-Hierarch emphasized that the original resisters had set out on their struggle for the sake of restoring the traditional Calendar to the Church, and not in order to make permanent or perpetuate a division in the Church.<sup>37</sup>

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had assumed pastoral oversight of the anti-innovationists a “Hierarchical Council” and not a Holy Synod! (See “Υπόμνημα ἀπολογητικών,” p. 136.)

<sup>35</sup> See his “Ποιμαντορική Ἐγκύκλιος τῆς 1.6.1944” [“Pastoral Encyclical of June 1, 1944”], translated into English in *Resistance or Exclusion? The Alternative Ecclesiological Approaches of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina and Bishop Matthew of Bresthene*, tr. Hieromonk Patapios (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2000), pp. 63-82; see also <http://hsir.info/p/p>. The original Greek is found in *Ἄπαντα πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσοστόμου*, Vol. II, pp. 13-28; see also <http://hsir.info/p/w>.

<sup>36</sup> “Διασάφισις Ποιμαντορικῆς Ἐγκυκλίου (18.1.1945)” [A Clarification by Metropolitan Chrysostomos of His Pastoral Encyclical (January 18, 1945)], translated into English in *Resistance or Exclusion?*, p. 124; see also <http://hsir.info/p/bx>. The original Greek is found at <http://hsir.info/p/u6>.

<sup>37</sup> “Ἐπιστολή πρῶην Φλωρίνης [πρὸς Ἐπίσκοπον Κυκλάδων Γερμανόν]” [An Epistle of the Erstwhile (Metropolitan) of Phlorina (to Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades)], in

It is plain that he did not have any sense that the “Religious Community” under him or the provisional Holy Synod were the Church in Greece, to the exclusion of all others.

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**Even when**, on May 26, 1950, he signed an Encyclical<sup>38</sup> that stated that the innovationists were deprived of Mysteriological (Sacramental) Grace, that retracted the terms “potentially” and “in actuality,” and that said that those coming from the New Calendar Church should be rechrismated, he did not indicate to anyone, at a broader level, that he had truly changed his ecclesiology and, in general, his ecclesiology-

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Angelopoulos and Batistatos, *Μητροπολίτης πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσόστομος Καβουρίδης*, p. 83. [This text is translated into English in *Resistance or Exclusion?*, pp. 54-62—*Trans.*] In this wonderful epistle, which is ecclesiological in nature, Metropolitan Chrysostomos deals, *inter alia*, with the question of the meaning of the condemnations pronounced against the calendar innovation in the sixteenth century. There are some, even to this day, who, motivated by an extremely simplistic, and also naïve and limited, understanding of the matter, opine that on the basis of those resolutions the contemporary calendar innovation has been condemned in advance and that therefore a fresh condemnation of it is not required. The Confessor-Hierarch provides the following incontrovertible elucidation:

“Likewise, Your Grace, you dissemble and utter outright falsehoods when you assert that it is unnecessary and superfluous to convene a Pan-Orthodox Synod or a major local Synod for the authoritative and definitive condemnation of the calendar innovation by the Archbishop, since the Pan-Orthodox Synods of 1583, 1587, and 1593 condemned the Gregorian Calendar.

“And this is so, because you know fully well that the aforementioned Synods condemned the Gregorian Calendar, but that this condemnation concerns the Latins, who implemented this calendar in its entirety, whereas the Archbishop adopted half of it, applying it to the fixed Feasts and retaining the Old Calendar for Pascha and the moveable Feasts, precisely in order to bypass the obstacle of this condemnation.

“In view of this, the innovation of the Archbishop in applying the Gregorian Calendar only to the fixed Feasts and not to Pascha, *which was the main reason why the Gregorian Calendar was condemned* as conflicting with the Seventh Apostolic Canon, is an issue that appears for the first time in the history of the Orthodox Church.

“Consequently, the convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Synod is not only not superfluous, as Your Grace declares *ex cathedra*, like another Pope, but is actually required for the canonical and authoritative adjudication of this issue” (*Resistance or Exclusion?*, pp. 58-59).

<sup>38</sup> See *Φωνή τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας*, No. 86 (June 12, 1950).

ical thinking and beliefs.<sup>39</sup> That Encyclical, with the three discordant points mentioned above, was patently unionist, aimed at unifying the fragmented adherents of the Old Calendar, and displayed *oikonomia* and diplomacy in view of coming woes.<sup>40</sup> The Metropolitan himself did not enforce it and stated, in fact, that he signed it in self-defense.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, in this Encyclical he does not express the slightest remorse or regret as “culprit” for the schism of the Matthewites, who broke away precisely because Metropolitan Chrysostomos did not accept the ideas contained in this document!

It is also well known that Metropolitan Chrysostomos never explicitly declared, concerning the innovationists or the anti-innovationists who seceded from him at various times, that they had “fallen away from the Church,” nor did he ever judge anyone for his ecclesiastical outlook. Finally, if he had the sense that he alone was the authentic personification of the entire Church, how is it that he left her orphaned? He ought, as the saying goes, to have moved heaven and earth to ensure his succession. However, the audacious act of the Consecration of Bishops by a single Bishop was committed by his ideological adversary, Matthew of Bresthene, who was consistent in his extremist ecclesiology as, supposedly, the sole remaining Orthodox Bishop! Metropolitan Chrysostomos never had such a belief or sensibility, as can be demonstrated with perfect clarity by a simple comparison of the two men on this issue.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The same applies also to circular memoranda on this subject published from time to time by certain persons, and letters, instructions, etc. of the Confessor-Hierarch, chiefly to the clergy serving under him, in which one can find similar ideas and statements.

<sup>40</sup> For a clear summary of these “woes,” that is, the terrible persecution visited on the Old Calendarists under Archbishop Spyridon, see Archbishop Chrysostomos, Bishop Ambrose, and Bishop Auxentios, *The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece*, 5th ed. (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2009), pp. 22-24—*Trans.*

<sup>41</sup> A.D. Delembases, *Πάσχα Κυρίου* [The Lord’s Pascha] (Athens: 1985), pp. 807-808.

<sup>42</sup> Let us remember what the Confessor-Hierarch wrote to Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades in the aforementioned Epistle of 1937 on the issue of the Matthewite view concerning the sole remaining Orthodox Hierarchs:

“If you take this step, Your Grace, you will put an end to the life and the age-old history of the Orthodox Church, since you are proclaiming all of the Orthodox Churches as a whole to be heretical, thereby falsifying the declaration of the Lord

**The correct** ecclesiological outlook of the Confessor-Hierarch and the steadfastness of his principles are worthy of admiration and emulation. He waged a truly theological struggle against both the innovationists and the erroneous ecclesiology of the anti-innovationists.<sup>43</sup> He constantly faced smear campaigns, polemics, and attacks from both sides, such that the saying of the Apostle applies to him: “[W]ithout were fightings, within were fears.”<sup>44</sup> Under pressure, he made concessions to the impetuosity of the anti-innovationists for the sake of agreement on more fundamental and less contentious issues,<sup>45</sup> something that arguably has a Patristic basis.<sup>46</sup>

His contribution, in our view, is incalculable, and the message that he sends to us from eternity, where he enjoys rest from his labors, is abundantly clear:

**That we should remain Orthodox in deed and word in all matters and that we should at all costs avoid communion with those who deviate: there are no small points in matters of Faith; the preservation of Tradition as a treasure involves the crown of incorruption; maintaining a judicious course between extremes is a laborious tightrope walk, in that it draws fire upon itself from both sides; it is worth enduring and dying, even if one is abandoned for the sake of the Truth!**

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to His Disciples when He said: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’

“You see, Your Grace, to what absurdities and to what an abysmal precipice this reckless and populist policy leads you; for you not only defile the sanctity of our struggle, to serve which we elevated you to the vantage point and honor of a Bishop, but you also annul the meaning and substance of the universal Orthodox Church” (*Resistance or Exclusion?*, p. 59).

<sup>43</sup> Delembases, *Πάσχα Κυρίου*, p. 807.

<sup>44</sup> II Corinthians 7:5.

<sup>45</sup> It should, of course, be emphasized that in the end this condescension remained ineffectual and failed in its purpose, save that it facilitated the return of just a small group of Matthewite clergy and monastics. Yet, in a certain way it darkened the radiant witness of the Confessor-Hierarch and provided a strong argument for the harsh persecution that ensued under the innovationist Archbishop Spyridon (Blachos).

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, “Epistle cxiii, “To the Presbyters in Tarsus” by St. Basil the Great, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. xxxii, cols. 525B-528A.



The Apostolic exhortation, “[S]tand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle,”<sup>47</sup> does not lead to a sclerosis and ossification in our spiritual life and journey, but to a spiritual rebaptism in the waters of piety. Only by living in the Holy Spirit can we resist the “mystery of iniquity”<sup>48</sup> and avoid falling into the “apostasy”<sup>49</sup> of the heresy of ecumenism. Let all who have censured, and do censure, the anti-innovationists in word and in writing understand that the maintenance of living Tradition entails obedience, humility, and love for God, the Church, and the truly spiritual Fathers and Saints. Only within this blessed state do we elicit the gift of God “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”<sup>50</sup> Only through this God-pleasing attitude do we receive “the love of the truth”<sup>51</sup> and are we not abandoned to the acceptance of “strong delusion, that [we] should believe a lie”<sup>52</sup> and the unrighteousness of heresy and iniquity.

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**Even though** ecumenism, especially since 1965, has advanced and developed rapidly, in our view the guiding ecclesiological principles of the Confessor-Hierarch Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina have not lost their force, validity, or value. His discrete stand, in general, his entire spirit, and his unitive vision express our outlook and move us.

The sacred legacy of this holy Confessor and Hierarch, as we have come to know it in the faith, confession, activity, and company of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, First Hierarch of the Holy

<sup>47</sup> II Thessalonians 2:15.

<sup>48</sup> II Thessalonians 2:7.

<sup>49</sup> II Thessalonians 2:3.

<sup>50</sup> II Thessalonians 2:13.

<sup>51</sup> II Thessalonians 2:10.

<sup>52</sup> II Thessalonians 2:11.

Synod in Resistance, and as we encounter it in the Holy Hierarchs who are our brethren, inspires us to maintain it with self-sacrifice to the end, so that we do not fall from “our own steadfastness,”<sup>53</sup> but rather preserve it intact and spread it, to the glory of God and salvation in the Church. Amen!

*Phyle, Attica  
September 7/20, 2010  
Holy Martyr Sozon  
Commemoration of the repose in the Lord  
of the Confessor-Hierarch  
Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Phlorina*



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<sup>53</sup> Cf. II St. Peter 3:17.