



ENCYCLICAL

At the Outset of the New Ecclesiastical Year

The Merciful Way of Life “No” to the “Bread of Egotism”!

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ:

May we once again be vouchsafed, throughout this new Ecclesiastical Year, to find ourselves continuously under the luminous Protection of the Theotokos, through the prayers of our much-revered Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian.

The multifaceted crisis facing us today, at a national and international level, continues to worsen, in the midst of clashing viewpoints and alarming phenomena that demonstrate with exceeding urgency the utter gravity of the situation.

What is truly encouraging in this ordeal is that we are gradually “discovering” solidarity and volunteerism—these evangelic treasures—which had been forgotten in the inebriation of materialism and egocentrism, the wellsprings of all personal and social evils.

As members of the Body of Christ, we are called upon, at this crucial turning-point, to become conscious of our oneness and of the immediate social corollaries thereof, such that the Mystery of the Eucharist may be indissolubly bound up with the Mystery of our Brother.

The Eucharist is inconceivable without ministry: participation in the Eucharist without sacrificial service to our brethren; in the Eucharistic Supper, Christ ministers to us, and in sacrificial service, we minister to others, as ministers of the ministering Christ. The latter (ministry) constitutes a prerequisite for the former (the Eucharist), and confirms it.

The ever-increasing sense of Orthodox ecclesiastical collectivism reminds us that we are “God’s husbandry, God’s building,” and a “holy temple of God” (cf. I Corinthians 3:9, 16-17). This helps us to acquire a lucid vision on our journey towards the Last Times:

- **Our** supreme criterion: the Mystery of our Brother (ministering with sacrificial love);
- **Our** anguished struggle: the acquisition of poverty in Christ (instead of the transformation of man into a profiteer, consumer, and financier);
- **Our** freedom: eschewing every worldly safeguard (instead of fleeing “insecurity”).

When a Christian prays to the Bread of Life, Who descended from Heaven, he or she says: “Give us this day our daily bread.” O Lord, “I do not pray to Thee for *my own bread*, but for *our bread*. Why should I alone have bread, when my brothers and sisters suffer from hunger? It would be better and more just were I to ask that such *bread of egotism* be taken from me. Hunger becomes sweeter, milder, when it is shared with beloved brethren” (St. Nikolai [Velimirović]).

Yes, let us share “our bread” with our brother, especially at this critical historic juncture; for this merciful way of life constitutes the *heart* of an ecclesiastical existence, since only through our brother and together with our brother will we meet Christ and participate in the Marriage of the Lamb, through the intercessions of the Theotokos and all of the Saints. Amen!

September 1, 2011 (Old Style)
Beginning of the Indiction

† *Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi*,
Acting President of the Holy Synod

