



**Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece
Holy Synod in Resistance**

**Second Synodal Exhortation
to the Christian Flock
of our Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction**

Phyle, Attica
October 26, 2011 (Old Style)
Commemoration of St. Demetrios

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded,
having the same love, being of one accord,
of one mind.”
(Philippians 2:2)

Of One Accord and of One Mind in Christ

*Light-Wrought children of the Church;
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

We embrace you with a holy kiss of love, peace, and unity in Christ and greet you with the Apostolic liturgical salutation: “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!”

The recent gift of the love of our Savior, that is, the blessing of the Thirty-Eighth regular Convocation of our Synod of Bishops (October 4, 2011 [Old Style]), floods our hearts with feelings of gratitude towards the Divine Founder of the Church.

However, we also feel gratitude to all of you, since your prayers contributed in an essential way to a still deeper awareness on our part, during the proceedings of the Synod, of the salvific truth that “we, being many, are one body” (I Corinthians 10:17) and consequently that all of us—clergy and laity alike—are bound together in a God-given kinship and familial affinity.

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Let us recall, here, the marvellous and insightful observation of St. Basil the Great: “Since the Lord has deigned to call the entire Church His Body and has made

each of us members one of another, He has granted us the possibility of having a familial intimacy with each other, in accordance with the harmonious mutual bond that exists between the members of the Body” (“Epistle CCXLIII,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 904A).

It is precisely on this basis that we ought to engage, at this critical turning point in history, in a sincere dialogue with ourselves; that is, to engage in self-criticism, which leads to self-knowledge, repentance, and knowledge of God.

Have we really taken account of our responsibility for today’s crisis? Who is it that has created a culture of wasteful extravagance? The decadence of luxury? The anguish of consumerism? The frenzy of self-justification? The idolization of individual interests?

Unfortunately, as the Divine Chrysostomos confirms, “None [of us Christians] reasons with himself, but all have become harsh inquisitors into the affairs of others,” whereas it behooves us, in a spirit of self-reproach and repentance, “not even to speak, until we can tame the wild beast that nestles within us” (“Homily IX on Philipians,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 253; “Homily XXIX on Acts,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LX, col. 220).

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This lack of sincere dialogue with ourselves has led to a loss of awareness that “we are members one of another” (Ephesians 4:25); it has led to a mentality of complacency and alienation, such that our parishes do not strive to be communal, but tend to turn into impersonal centers of liturgical ritualism, in which the Mystery of the love and presence of God is not made manifest, in which people are not made ecclesiocentric, in which our lives are not rendered Christlike, and in which we do not minister to the salvation of the world.

The loss or decline of this awareness—namely, that we are the family of God, that we are the “Body of Christ” (I Corinthians 12:27), that we are bound together in a preternatural affinity—results in the secularization and alteration of the Orthodox ecclesiastical outlook and ethos, an improper familiarity with the clergy (and in particular, disrespect towards Hierarchs) that at times borders on impiety, and consequently to a rupture of spiritual unity between ecclesiastical fathers and their ecclesiastical children.

If we are to have any prospect for remedying this perilous phenomenon, a grave sickness which abrogates the unity of the Body of the Church and bars any exodus from the perennial crisis of history, it is absolutely vital that we not forget the following basic Orthodox principles:

- The Priesthood in the Church is the Priesthood of Christ.
- The Priest and the Hierarch are ministers of the Priesthood of Christ.
- Christ is the celebrant of the Mysteries, while it is the Holy Spirit Who perfects them.
- The Priesthood is the sign of God’s presence in the world and an expression of His love.
- Our salvation does not depend on the holiness of a Priest or the Hierarch, but on the Priesthood of Christ, which functions within the Church.
- Within Orthodoxy, the Truth is not lost, since the Holy Spirit exists in the Church through the Priesthood.
- The clergy are the neck that connects the Head of the Church, Christ, with the Body of the Church, which is the faithful.

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The special position of the Bishop in the Church is emphasized in the Tradition of our Church, since “The Bishop in his diocese is, after God and the *Theotokos*, the source of sanctification for all the Christians of his flock, and this is why they should all have great esteem and love for him as the most perfect celebrant of the Holy Mysteries” (St. John of Kronstadt).

Orthodox Tradition has always assigned to the Bishop such a central place in the Church, that it proclaims through the Holy Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem (†1707) the following great truth: “What God is in the heavenly Church of the firstborn, and the sun is in the world, such is each Bishop in the local Church.”

St. John Chrysostomos forbids one who makes accusations against clergy to enter the Church: “When you accuse your spiritual Father, how do you consider yourself worthy to step over the sacred threshold [of the Church]? ... And does not such a one [an accuser of Priests] fear, lest the earth open up and cause him to disappear completely, or a thunderbolt fall from on high and burn up his accusing tongue?” (“On Aquila and Priscilla, Discourse II,” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LI, col. 201).

To be sure, this point should not be emphasized to such a degree that we forget that the laity, on account of our common Baptism and Chrismation (the general, spiritual Priesthood), are equal in honor to the clergy and share responsibility with them as members of the Body of Christ, and are called to participate in the ministries of the Church, albeit always in a spirit of harmonious coöperation and mutual respect, especially with the Bishops, and each, of course, at a different level, in a different way, and in a different ministry.

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Our Holy Synod, resolutely eschewing the temptations of clericalism (Papism) and laicism (Protestantism), encourages its lay members to occupy a place in the Church’s ministry, though not a passive place, but a lively and active one, always within the parameters of Apostolic and Synodal Tradition, of one accord and of one mind in Christ, in a Christocentric reciprocity with the clergy, and in a communion of love centered on the Holy Trinity.

Approximately ninety years after the formal inauguration of the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism (1920) and the introduction of the calendar innovation (1924), the vision of a reunion of divided Orthodox Christians appears to have become obscured and marginalized amid the fog of divided anti-ecumenist Old Calendarists, amid the secularization of the parish, and amid the mentality of complacency, compromise, rigidity, and indifference, which have all led to profound spiritual decline.

If peace is to be restored among the Orthodox, the vision of reunion must be renewed; we must rekindle a visionary understanding—a strategic vision—with prayer and a high level of collective action, undertaking effective initiatives on the basis primarily of the concord and unanimity in Christ of those of us who are in resistance to divisive heresy.

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With these humble thoughts, we address this Synodal Exhortation to the love of all of you, in the conviction that if we are stirred to action on the basis of an experiential awareness in Christ that “we are members one of another,” with all that this entails, we will then come closer to realizing the vision of the reunion of the Orthodox through the intercessions of our Lady, the *Theotokos*, unto the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

For the Holy Synod in Resistance

† Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi
Acting President

† Bishop Klemes of Gardikion
Secretary