



HOLY METROPOLIS OF
OROPOS AND PHYLE
HOLY SYNOD IN RESISTANCE



Extraordinary Clergy-Laity Gathering

October 28, 2011 (Old Style)

Acharnai, Attica

Opening Remarks

Our Local Church is Present:
Joint Deliberation and Ministry

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

Your Grace;

Reverend Fathers, Fellow Priests and Deacons;

Venerable Monks and Nuns;

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ;

Beloved Children in the Lord:

We cordially welcome you to this gathering of ours with sacred emotion and profound gratitude.

We convey to you, on behalf of our much-revered Elder and Metropolitan, and also on behalf of the members of our Holy Synod, a kiss of peace, light, gladness, and unity in Christ!

Glory to God for all things! Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Who on this day has gathered His People—His Inheritance, the plenitude of His Church, the members of the Body of Christ—that they might renew their hope and vision.

A short while ago, during the Divine Liturgy, we derived light, peace, and life from the Holy Altar and relived the Eucharistic vision of the world: its renewed blending and leavening with the Blood and the new Leaven of the Flesh of Christ, its Christification, its reunion with God the Father, and the realization of the Kingdom of God.

Journeying towards the Glory of the Last Times, we already experience this new reality of the unity of all in Christ within the Divine Liturgy, this Mystery of the Kingdom, and we instill in every aspect of our lives the life-giving and restorative Grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This is also the theological and ecclesiological basis of today's gathering of clergy and laity: The Bishop, as the visible head of the Local Church, together with the venerable Presbytery (all of the Diocesan Priests), the Diaconate in Christ (all of the Deacons and those who minister in the Diocese), and all of the lower clergy and people in the Diocese, take counsel together—with Christ the Master and His Altar as our center—govern together, administer together, and serve together the Local Church in a communion of love and reciprocity, nevertheless remaining “each in his own order” (I Corinthians 15:23).

The polity, that is, the system of government of our Church is democratic, or synodal, to be precise: “Be zealous to do all things in godly unanimity,” St. Ignatios the God-bearer exhorts, “with the Bishop presiding in the place of God and the Presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles, along with the Deacons” (*Epistle to the Magnesians*, 6.1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. V, col. 668A). “Let the Deacon be the ear, eye, and mouth of the Bishop, both his heart and his soul,” “and let the Deacon refer all matters to the Bishop, as Christ does to the Father”: thus are we instructed by the *Constitutions of the Apostles* (Bk. II, ch. 44, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. I, col. 704BC). “Without you [the laity] I shall accomplish nothing,” the Divine Chrysostomos proclaims, and he pleads: “Do not cast the whole matter onto us [the clergy], supposing that you yourselves bear no responsibility” (“Homily on His Return from His First Exile,” §5, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LII, col. 447; “Homily XI on Ephesians,” §6, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 88).

This essential and comprehensive conciliarity in Christ, which includes all of the members of the Church working harmoniously and with mutual respect, leads to a self-sacrificial exodus from the “I,” so as to achieve the “we” and to offer a witness to life and truth.

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Hence, our assembly today is a feast and celebration, since we

are gathered in the Name of Christ our Savior, Who is in our midst; it is a feast and celebration, because we feel that we will jointly decide on, and commit ourselves to, a renewal, a new beginning—a common journey with deeper mutual understanding and solidarity.

We are putting forth this effort in view of the approaching twenty-fifth anniversary of the formation of the Holy Synod in Resistance (1985), and the consciousness of the weight of our responsibility impels us towards two tangible goals: first, improving the organization, from every standpoint, of our ecclesiastical community; and, second, promoting the vision of a reunion of the Orthodox, who, since 1924, have been divided on account of the heresy of ecumenism and the calendar innovation that followed in its wake.

By God’s mercy, we are bearers of a momentous heritage, which is not a mere “monument for conservation,” but which rather contains spiritual dynamism and constantly rouses us to vigilance.

Within this perspective, since today’s gathering is, in a certain way, experimental in nature, it has not been prepared as methodically and thematically as will be our future clergy-laity gatherings, which will be convened, God willing, every six months (on the Thursday of Mid-Pentecost and then again after the Feast Day of the headquarters of our Metropolis, on the last Thursday of October). We will, nevertheless, set forth even now certain serious issues, which may constitute the basis for further elaboration in the future.

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Our local Church, by means of its representatives—clergy, monastics, and laity—is present today in the hope that, God willing, it will not maintain a passive stand in the face of prevailing conditions, but will be able, with the help of the Theotokos and all of the Saints, to perceive the “signs of the times,” to meet the future perspicaciously, to undertake initiatives, and to offer solutions, with trust in the loving Providence of our God Who loves mankind.

However, before I discuss in greater detail the agendum that I have prepared, and thanking and welcoming you yet again, I call upon His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion to put forward his own observations and suggestions.

There will be freedom of speech and adequate time, so that our gathering will truly be democratic and synodal. I would ask, though,

that we work in an atmosphere of prayer and mutual respect, because our clergy-laity gathering is an extension of our foregoing liturgical gathering (the Divine Liturgy).

Thank you! I call upon Bishop Klemes.

*† Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi
October 28, 2011*