

THE CRITERIA OF ECCLESIASTICAL STRUGGLE

Bishop Auxentios of Photiki

I would, at the very outset, like to thank all of you present for your kindness in attending this seminar today. I would also like to thank our clergy here in Toronto, Protopresbyter Father Andreja Dimitrijević, Hegumen Father Sofronije, and, from our parish in Winnipeg, the much-loved and revered Father Demetrios Sarlakes, for their presence. I am similarly delighted by the attendance of one our Exarchate clergy from the parish of the Holy Ascension in Rochester, New York, across the border, Deacon Father Dr. Peter Bushunow, a physician and faculty member at the School of Medicine at the University of Rochester. I thank him and his wife, Diakonissa Melitsa, and others with him for making the trip to be here with us.

From the U.S., we also have with us the Reverend Mother Agapia, Superior of the Convent of St. Nicholas in Cleveland, New York, in the beautiful lake district of that state. She is the sister of the former White House aide and presidential advisor, George Stephanopoulos, a well-known figure in the Greek community in the U.S. and Canada and a noted ABC television commentator. Many of you will no doubt remember Mother Agapia from her courageous defiance, during her years as a nun in the Holy Land, against the confiscation of one of the monastic communities of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (then our Sister Church) by the Moscow Patriarchate. Her stand against this illegal act was televised worldwide. She is a close friend of our monastery and under the jurisdiction of our Sister Church under Metropolitan Agafangel, about which we will say more subsequently.

I must above all sincerely thank the organizers of this seminar—the clergy, parish officers, Church council members, and parishioners of the Holy Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church and of the Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene Greek Orthodox Church—as well as the gracious hosts who have put us up at their beautiful home, for their tireless work in making preparations for this visit and for the gracious reception offered to His Eminence, Archbishop Dr. Chrysostomos and me and, from our monastery in California, Archimandrite Dr. Akakios, the monastery Abbot, and Hierodeacon Father Photii, who will serve in Slavonic during worship here at the Holy Archangel Michael community this weekend, thus laying stress on the pan-Orthodox spirit of our Synod in Resistance.

The Very Reverend Dr. Auxentios of Photike is Assistant Exarch in America for the Holy Synod in Resistance of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece and Director of the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies at the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, CA. His Grace graduated from Princeton University, where he studied with the late Professor Father George Florovsky, and from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, where he received his doctoral degree in Liturgics. He has authored or co-authored a score of articles for scholarly journals and more than a dozen books and Patristic translations. His doctoral dissertation, a study of the Rite of the Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, has been published widely in several languages and is considered by many scholars to be the most important work to date on the subject.

This talk was given by His Grace on March 17, 2012, at the Holy Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, a parish of the American Exarchate of the Holy Synod in Resistance.

Now, if you will allow me, I would like to turn to my humble presentation of thoughts about ecclesiastical struggle and resistance, the central focus of our brief seminar today.

It is a simple historical fact that frequently, and often for long episodes, the Church has been steeped in controversy. From our struggles with these controversies, we have ample lists of heresies, such as Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Iconoclasm, and so on. Undoubtedly, one reason for the sad reality of these regularly recurring controversies is man's sinful nature. Distant from God, man is contentious, divisive, and wavering in his allegiances. These personal evils spill over into Church life and cause disturbance and divisions.

But even when he is distant from God, man cannot operate outside of Providence. And so when, on account of personal evil, someone introduces a disturbance into Church life, we say that God has "allowed" this so that the consequent reproofs and tribulations will bring about the repentance, purification, and restoration of the disputant. In all circumstances, God and the Church work for the salvation of the sinner. This is one of His reasons for permitting controversy and strife to arise in the Church.

Just as God watches over our personal path and, even from afar, anticipates our return, like that of the Prodigal Son, so we might also say that God "allows" for various disturbances to arise within the Church for the perfection and glorification of the healthier members of the Church, who, like the Prodigal Son's elder brother, who remain more faithful to the Father. "I hear that there be divisions among you," the Apostle Paul writes the Corinthians, "and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Corinthians 11:18-19). So, we may say that a second reason for controversy is the revelation and proving (or testing) of those who are faithful.

Needless to say, controversy was anticipated by the Lord when he referred to the "gates of Hell," to the persecutions that His Disciples would endure as they preached from land to land, and to the advent of false teachers—and even false "Christs" and Antichrists—who would, like wolves in sheep's clothing, infiltrate, attack, and scatter the flock. As we shall subsequently see, the Apostles offered similar warnings. Thus, we should not lose heart with these stressful and troublesome episodes.

The process of dealing with dogmatic controversy is what the Holy Fathers call "resistance." It is a strategy for dealing with both the unhealthy, divisive innovators in the Church *and* the healthy, steadfast believers. Ideally, it accomplishes the cure and restoration of the former, that is, the ailing members of the Church, and also the protection, perfecting, and glorification, *through an increase in faith*, of the latter, healthy members of the Church.

Today we will look at this issue of contention within the Church in some detail and, in particular, dogmatic controversy and the resistance it prompts. We will approach our subject through an invocation both of sacred texts, that is, Holy Scripture and the writings of the Holy Fathers, and of historical anecdotes.

I begin with the name of our Holy Synod; that is, "The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece, Holy Synod in Resistance" (or literally, "*He Sýnodos ton enistaménon*," or "Synod of Resisters"). Our Synod conscientiously adopted the moniker, "Holy Synod in Resistance," fully aware of our responsibility to confront present dogmatic controversies in conformity with traditional Church practice: in keeping with *our responsibility to follow the example of the Holy Fa-*

thers.

The root of the Greek for “resistance” as found in the name of our Synod— the Synod "*tonenistamenon* (τῶν ἐνισταμένων)," or literally, “of those who resist”—is both Scriptural and Patristic in its source. Saint Peter, in his First Catholic Epistle, uses it to refer to our spiritual warfare: "Be sober, be vigilant," writes the Saint, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith" (I Peter 5:8). Resistance, thus, presumes adherence to the faith.

In the writings of St. Theodore the Studite, who lived in the eighth and ninth centuries, the term is used frequently to characterize the seemingly interminable *struggle against iconoclasm*, a heresy that ravaged the Church and Empire for more than a century and a half. As the Saint uses it, the term has been broadened to encompass all facets of the struggle against dogmatic innovation and heresy; but, just as for the Apostle Peter, the basic presupposition is that the faithful abide "steadfast in the faith."

As I noted earlier, both the Lord and His Apostles forewarned us of controversies that would ravage the Church. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," we read in Saint Matthew's Gospel (St. Matthew 7:15). St. Paul was so distressed about the impending warfare of controversy, that he labored for three years (!) to alert and prepare the faithful of Ephesus for the eventuality: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves.... For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

Let us now make note of some meaningful clarifications and distinctions that apply to ecclesiastical controversy.

1) There is a significant distinction between internal and external provocations; that is, between controversies arising from within the Church, spawned by Her own members, and attacks that come from those outside the Church, from people who make no claim to Christian faith or membership in the Church.

Though external attacks can cause great disturbance among the faithful, they generally do not promote division. In fact, they sometimes offer opportunities for the testing and strengthening of faith, for confession, and for a good witness to the world. As such, the Church tells us that we should indeed rejoice at the onslaught of such attacks, seeing them as disguised blessings: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (St. Matthew 5:11).

Unquestionably, of far greater concern to the Church are the "wolves in sheep's clothing," hearkening to the Lord's words about the "grievous wolves" which, according to the Apostle Peter, arise "of your own selves." That is, these things arise from within the Christian fold and mislead the innocent sheep, "not sparing the flock." They fulfill the will of their father, the devil, who is the father of lies, and who, like a "roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Like the "hireling" who "careth not for the sheep," they defy their apparent pastoral duty and open the fold to the wolf, who enters and "scattereth the sheep" (St John 10:13).

2) We must also make a necessary distinction between the responses expected from the Church's stewards and instructors (the Hierarchy, clergy, and apologists) and her faithful. This is the distinction between teaching and confessing. (For a discussion of this and the following distinction, see the exceptional presentation by Bishop Klemes of Gardikion, Secretary of the Holy Synod in Resistance, "The Censure of Error and the Confession of Orthodox Truth in Relation to Contemporary Ecumenism," <http://hsir.org/p/n4b>).

With respect to the confession of one's faith, there is no doubt that this is a duty for all. The Lord is unequivocal in His expectation of our ready confession in a time of trial. Indeed, if, in the face of threats or worldly enticements, we fail to give our expected confession and, with silence or betrayal, demonstrate that we love companions or even our own life more than Him, the Lord assures us that we are unworthy of Him: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (St. Matthew 10:33). In comparison to our love for Christ, our affection for things of this world should be like unto hate (not, indeed, hate as we understand it and as a violation of love, but something akin to indifference or disdain; i.e., making nothing greater than our love of God): "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (St. Luke 14:26).

In contrast to confession, teaching is a duty appointed for men with experience, who have been authorized by the Church. As the Apostle Paul instructs St. Timothy, "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II St. Timothy 2:2). In this vein, St. Gregory the Theologian cautioned the faithful to beware of assuming duties not appointed them, lest they be tempted by pride and harm others with their ignorance and audacity:

It is better for one who is wise to give way out of forbearance than for one who is ignorant to stretch himself beyond his limits out of audacity. Let your haste extend to confession, should this ever be demanded of you; but be hesitant about going beyond this. For while sluggishness is dangerous for confession, haste is hazardous for teaching (St. Gregory the Theologian, "Oration 32: On Good Order in Controversies, and That Discourse About God is Not Appropriate for Every Man or Every Occasion," *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. xxxv, cols. 197d–200a).

3) A third and necessary distinction that must be addressed with regard to ecclesiastical controversy is the precise subject matter of contention itself. Historically, the Church has recognized two basic divisions: issues that are pastoral and those that are dogmatic. Issues of a pastoral nature encompass moral, ethical, practical and administrative matters, while dogmatic issues relate to the Church's teaching on such critical issues as the Holy Trinity (and, in particular, the Second Person thereof, the God-Man Jesus Christ), the Church, man, creation, and salvation.

With specific respect to what I have collectively called pastoral concerns, the general counsel of the Church follows the admonition of St. Paul, "Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9). In the same spirit, the Apostle chastised the Corinthians for the contentions borne of their partisan spirit: "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of

Christ" (I Corinthians 1:12). In short, we should avoid contentions over such issues as harmful to our souls and unjustifiably disruptive to the peace of the Church.

With respect to dogmatic issues, the same Apostle's directive could not be more divergent from the aforementioned advice. In the very same sentence that he offers Titus his counsel regarding "foolish questions...and contentions," the Apostle continues with the following stern admonition: "A man that is an heretic(k) after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (St. Titus 3:10-11).

Heresy

It behooves us, at this point, to make a parenthetical observation and to offer our listeners a concise definition of the term "heretic." The word derives from the Greek, *hairéo*, which means to choose, and signifies the heretic's willful embracing of a certain teaching in defiance of the Church's established belief. According to the ever-memorable and universally-esteemed canonist, Bishop Nikodim (Milaš), "[h]eresy is the deliberate and obstinate rejection of a dogma established by the Church or the acceptance of an erroneous doctrinal teaching which has already been condemned by the Church" (Bishop Nikodim Milaš, *Τὸ Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν Δίκαιον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ανατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* [The ecclesiastical law of the Orthodox Eastern Church], trans. [Father] Meletios Apostolopoulos [Athens: Typois P.D. Sakellariou, 1906], p. 698). Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna further develops Bishop Nikodim's thought about the psychological components of the disease in an illuminating article, "The True Nature of Heresy":

[The Fathers] teach that...[heresy] has its roots, not in incorrect belief and teaching alone, but in a mean spirit and in persistence in one's error, even after repeated entreaties that he repent. ... These individuals become heretics when they succumb to stubborn self-opinion, contentiousness, and absolute tenacity... (Archbishop Chrysostomos, "The True Nature of Heresy," *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XIII, Nos. 3 & 4, pp. 75-76).

His Eminence's insightful comments will serve us well later when we discuss the Church's precise strategy for grappling with each new heresy and, in particular, the obstinacy of the heretic himself.

Let us now return to the teachings of Saint Paul, noting that in the epistle to the Galatians he once again shows his uncompromising stance regarding those who would preach what he reluctantly calls "another Gospel":

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).

The Apostle repeats himself with the obvious intention of underscoring his point. There can be no disputing the gravity of his concern.

Saint John Chrysostomos invokes the Apostle's imagery and gravity in his commentary on Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves":

What then (you say), when he is wicked should we obey? Wicked? In what sense? If indeed in regard to Faith, flee and avoid him; not only if he be a man, but even if he be an angel come down from Heaven; but if in regard to life, be not over-curious ("Homily 34 on Hebrews," *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, vol. XIV [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989], p. 519).

Following the example of the Apostle, the Saint clearly advises us to hold firmly to the Faith and to expect nothing less from our superiors. Should they fail in this duty and preach a corrupted Gospel, we should flee from them. Conversely, Saint John cautions us to beware of being overly curious about the details of their lives, even should there be hints of personal failings. As a corroboration of this advice, he recalls the Lord's words about the Scribes and Pharisees, "They sit on Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they tell you observe, do; but do not ye after their works" (St. Matthew 23:2-3).

Let me remind our audience that the Divine Chrysostomos was arguably the greatest homilist of the first millennium. By the sanctity of his life, the Faithful never doubted that he was not only a witness to, but an exemplar of, the truths he preached. Remember, too, that it was during his service as Patriarch in Constantinople, where the Saint would labor late into the night in prayer and writing, that St. Proklos, the tireless Hierarch's disciple and biographer, saw the Apostle Paul leaning over St. John and whispering into his ear as he wrote. By this vision, St. Proklos, and later the whole Church, understood that St. John had been directly inspired by the Apostle and faithfully served as his authentic interpreter. Ever since, Saint John has been lauded as the "lips" of the Apostle.

Hear, then, how the Saint expounded on the Apostle's words on those who "would pervert the Gospel of Christ":

They [the Galatians] had, in fact, only introduced one or two commandments, circumcision and the observance of days, but he says that the Gospel was subverted, in order to show that a slight adulteration vitiates the whole. For as he who but partially pares away the image on a royal coin renders the whole spurious, so he who swerves ever so little from the pure faith, soon proceeds from this to graver errors, and becomes entirely corrupted. Where then are those who charge us with being contentious in separating from heretics, and say that there is no real difference between us [and our opponents] except what arises from our ambition? Let them hear Paul's assertion, that those who had but slightly innovated, subverted the Gospel ("Homily 1 on Galatians," *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, vol. XIII [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988]), p. 7).

Note, first, how the Saint reaffirms the Apostle's two points: 1) even a "slight adulteration" of the Gospel vitiates the whole of Christian teaching; and 2) those who do so are liable to the charge of heresy (according to the Apostle, they are "accursed").

Continuing, Saint John reaffirms what was established practice in the great Church controversies, that is, the severance of communion with those recognized as heretics. This was the practical implementation of the Apostle's recognition of such men as "accursed," as well as the proper means for "rejecting" those who have, in their deviation, scorned both their first and second admonitions. It is also noteworthy that the Saint anticipates the counter-argument of those

who would fault him for "contentiousness" and attribute to him a certain exaggeration, borne of personal "ambition," of the significance of minor innovations. His reply to would-be critics is unequivocal: a slight innovation is a subversion of the Gospel.

Let us look at another instructive example, this time from the life of St. Gregory the Theologian, a predecessor of St. John on the Patriarchal throne by some twenty years. St. Gregory's father served as the Bishop of Nazianzos (a title often, though incorrectly, used for St. Gregory the Theologian). Besides being recognized as a Saint and a gifted personality in his own right, his father bequeathed to the Church four illustrious Saints: his wife, Nonna, and his three children, Gregory, Gorgonia, and Cæsarios. He struggled on behalf of the Church through the tumultuous controversies of the fourth century, showing great insight and inspiration in his prolonged endeavor to see Saint Basil appointed Archbishop of Cæsarea—a labor that in and of itself demands the Church's eternal gratitude.

The Elder Saint Gregory's prolonged ecclesiastical service, sanctity, and venerable age (of some ninety years) aside, in his simplicity and frailty, the venerable and much-esteemed Hierarch signed a semi-Arian creed published by Emperor Constantios. It seems that the subtle theological distinctions between the terms *homooúsios* and *homoioúsios*, which were convulsing the Church, escaped him. Regardless, it was a dogmatic fall.

What was the response of the local clergy and monks to the lapse of this venerable, patriarchal figure? They cut off communion with him, faithfully adhering to the Apostolic admonition and in keeping with established and sanctified Church practice. With time, of course, the younger Saint Gregory (the Theologian) was able to intervene, correcting and restoring his father. But the incident stands as a lesson for all: neither personal affection nor ecclesiastical stature takes precedence over issues of Faith.

Here is yet another illustration from the Imperial city of Constantinople, but a half-century later, during the reign of the Patriarch Nestorios (428-431). During the Divine Liturgy in one of the Imperial City's Churches, Bishop Dorotheos loudly proclaimed the Patriarch's new heretical doctrine, in the heretic's presence and before a multitude of faithful: "If anyone says that Mary is the *Theotokos*, [*Bogoroditsa*], let him be anathema!" What happened next?

A mighty cry arose from all of the people, and they rushed out; for they did not want to be in communion any longer with those who held such opinions; the result was that even now the people of Constantinople do not attend Church services, with the exception of a few rather simple-minded folk and those who flatter Nestorios; almost all the monasteries and their Archimandrites, and most of the Senate, do not attend Church, fearing lest they should be harmed in their faith, with him [Nestorios] and all his supporters 'speaking perverse things' (Acts 20:30) (St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. lxxvii, col. 81BC).

It behooves us to review the subsequent history of this heresy, as in many ways it offers a model for proper ecclesiastical struggle.

Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, was a man of unrivaled talents, experience, and spiritual gifts, so it is not surprising that this great Patriarch immediately understood Patriarch Nestorios' innovative teaching for what it was: a condemnable heresy that subverted the Gospel and threatened harm to the faith of the believers. The pious faithful had already understood the impi-

ety and evil of the innovative teaching; correspondingly, they had instinctively performed their first duty—to disassociate themselves from the perversion, lest they suffer harm. (As we shall see later, this separation from error and innovation, as a first step in resisting subversive innovations, came to be known as "walling-off.")

Patriarch Cyril now moved the controversy into its second phase, with a campaign to address the errors and evils of the teaching and to call Nestorios to repentance, both for the cure of the erring Hierarchy and for the protection of the Faithful. When the obstinate hierarchy rebuffed St. Cyril and defended his position, St. Cyril widened the scope of his protests, addressing Hierarchs and clergy in other Patriarchates, to notify them of the new teaching, and thus effectively setting in motion the process leading towards an Œcumenical Synod that would render judgment. Eventually, the Third Œcumenical Synod was, in fact, convened, the teachings of the heretical hierarchy were evaluated and condemned, Orthodox teaching reaffirmed, and the heretic, disdainful one last time of the opportunity to repent, was cut off from the Body of the Church.

It is important to understand that, complicated though it may seem, this path from the preaching of a "new" Gospel to its rejection is actually fully in keeping with the Lord's instructions:

If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (St. Matthew 18:15-17).

Applying the Lord's words to our outline of the Nestorian controversy, we see that the preaching of this heresy corresponds to the "trespass"; the first epistles of Saint Cyril to the subversive Patriarch Nestorios were the attempt to "tell him his fault...alone"; the appeal to other Hierarchs was to "establish" the accusation in the presence of "witnesses"; the summoning of the Œcumenical Synod was the appeal "unto the Church"; and the Synodal condemnation and cutting off from the body of the faithful, in the face of the heretic's final refusal "to hear," corresponds to likening him unto a "heathen man and a publican."

We have one last observation about this instructive model of ecclesiastical struggle. Note that the actual condemnation of Nestorios did not occur until the pronouncements of the Œcumenical Synod at the very end of the controversy, even though much earlier faithful had walled themselves off from his perverse innovation and the esteemed leaders of the Church had labelled him as a purveyor of heresy. Patriarch Nestorios' obstinate heretical views aside, both Saint Cyril and the Third Œcumenical Synod addressed him as "the Most Reverend Nestorios" and "Lord," in keeping with his office. Only with his condemnation did they cease with such honors.

Summarizing our analysis of the Nestorian controversy, we see a reiteration of the principles and protocols of ecclesiastical struggle laid out by the Lord and the Apostles, demonstrated in the Life of Saint Gregory of Nazianzos, and discussed in the exegetical works of the Divine Chrysostomos.

Let us review the steps in this process of struggle. With the bold proclamation of Nestorios' innovative and subversive doctrine:

1) The right-believing and healthy members of the Church recognize the heretical innovation as a "subversion" of the Gospel.

2) Keenly aware of their responsibilities, they flee the innovation and wall themselves off, "lest," as St. Cyril notes, "they should be harmed in their faith." Their separation, St. John Chrysostomos assures us, is not from some "contentious" or "ambitious" spirit, but is, rather, aimed at the preservation of Christian preaching (the "Gospel") and, accordingly, the unity of the faithful.

3) The leaders of the Church address the innovator, refuting his error for the sake of his correction and the protection of the faithful.

4) With the innovator's obstinacy and persistence in error, the walled-off, resisting, and right-believing members of the Church labor towards a hearing of the disputed issue before "the Church"; that is, a competent or Œcumenical Synod.

[We note that the collective labors involved in these first four steps are what the Holy Fathers call "resistance."]

5) At the assembly of a competent or Œcumenical Synod, the issues are again examined in full in light of the Church's established teaching, as expressed, for example, in Scripture, Patristic writings, and worship. Error is denounced, truth is proclaimed, and the innovative, ailing individual (or contingent) is given a last opportunity to correct his (its) views.

6) With continued obstinacy from the innovator, the Synod "rejects" the heretic, pronounces the final, authoritative, and effective condemnation of both the individual(s) involved and his (their) errant teaching.

7) The heretic, now condemned, becomes as a "heathen and publican," removed from the body of Faithful believers. His errant and divisive teaching is catalogued and takes its place among the other notorious subversions of the Christian Faith, i.e., among the condemned heresies.

These seven procedural steps, though extracted from the events of a single controversy in the fourth century, can be distinguished in virtually every great ecclesiastical contest. In fact, all of the core elements of my outline have been established as conventional protocol, either in the writings of the Saints, in the Church Canons, or in the pronouncements of the Ecumenical Synods themselves (most notably the Seventh Œcumenical Synod and the follow-up First-Second Synod, held in the eighth and ninth centuries, respectively). As a noteworthy illustration, we cite the relevant extract from the Fifteenth Canon of the First-Second Synod, held in 861 under the supervision of the illustrious Patriarch, St. Photios the Great. This Canon, according to Bishop Nikodim (Milaš), establishes not only the "right" but the "obligation" of right-believing Orthodox to "separate themselves forthwith" (in the language of the Canon, to "wall themselves off") from Hierarchs proclaiming heretical doctrine ("A Contribution to the Theology of Orthodox Resistance and Walling-Off," <http://hsir.org/p/uy> [p. 3]):

As for those who, on account of some heresy reprehended by Holy Synods or Fathers, separate themselves from communion with their First Hierarchy, who, that is to say, is preaching the heresy publicly and teaching it barefacedly in Church, such persons are not only not subject to any canonical penalty for walling themselves off, prior to a Synodal verdict, from communion with one who is called a Bishop, but will be deemed worthy of the honor

due to Orthodox Christians. For they have not reprehended Bishops, but false bishops and false teachers, and have not sundered the unity of the Church through any schism, but have been sedulous to deliver the Church from schisms and divisions.

We have, now, with our Scriptural and Patristic commentary, our review of several historical anecdotes, and our analysis of the Third Œcumenical Synod, all of the necessary tools to address, in the last segment of our talk, our contemporary ecclesiastical controversies. Even if my treatment has been necessarily cursory, I assure my listeners that behind these selected illustrations and brief analyses lies a wealth of corroborating evidence that is available in print—both in Greek and English—on our Synod's website. This material represents years of study, analysis, and collaboration with theological and spiritual authorities, as well as the approbation of the synodal conscience of the Church as established in history. What we have said is not the product of personal interpretation, ideology, or opinion.

Ecumenism

Undoubtedly the twentieth century was, at least among recent centuries, an amazingly turbulent one, marked by wars unparalleled in history, the use of atomic weapons, and virtual atom bombs of innovation in the Orthodox Church. One could hardly envy the historian who has to make sense of the violence, revolutions, and drastic changes that occurred on simply every front on the last century: in the political, sociological, demographical, theological, psychological, scientific, technological, and ecological realms, to name but a few.

The Orthodox Church did not come through the last century unscathed by unprecedented changes, as I have said. By any objective analysis, She shows all of the scars and illnesses of other Christian communities and, indeed, society in general. Her populations are dwindling, her societies and families are fractured, and her faithful are morally, psychologically, and spiritually ailing. Her local Churches are torn by contentions, factions, and divisions.

How do we account for this? Are we just destined to follow the lead of our surrounding societies, or do we not, as members of the Church, the Theanthropic Body of Christ, which has Christ Himself as Her head and the Holy Spirit as Her Divine Soul, have the Grace, inspiration, vision, courage, fortitude, and, in short, all of the "talents" to meet and overcome every possible challenge?

Furthermore, as scions of a Church that produced myriads of New Martyrs, both under the Turkish Yoke and, in the twentieth century itself, Communism, should we not be reaping the rewards of those contests? Does not an ancient maxim tell us that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"; and, indeed, on the heels of controversies, was not the Church always blessed with a resurgence of spiritual life after being tried and tested in the past? With so much fresh Christian blood in our soil, why are we not seeing vitality and growth in the Church?

How do we account for our present predicament and greater decline, rather than growth, after a time of travail? Abiding by the Patristic principle that it is only we who can truly harm ourselves, we must ask what serious and collective evils we have committed to bring on ourselves this harm. If one polls the holy theologians, pastors, teachers, Hierarchs, and ascetics of the last century, the answer is unvarying. With Her undiscerning and careless entry into the ecu-

menical movement, the Orthodox Church opened the floodgates to literally every ancient heresy. The influx of false teachings "subverted" the Gospel and brought illness into the Church.

Let us recall some of the more significant events and trends in this movement:

1) In 1920, the Patriarchate of Constantinople addressed an Encyclical "Unto the Churches of Christ Everywhere," which began as follows: "Our own church holds that rapprochement between the various Christian Churches and fellowship between them is not excluded by the doctrinal differences which exist between them." The text goes on to propose the foundation of a "League of Churches" and proposes more than a dozen steps for the advancement of "reconciliation," including the introduction of the New (Gregorian) Calendar among Orthodox Churches—surrendering our liturgical traditions to a western innovation in the name of "astronomical exactitude" and our ecclesiastical sense of mission to an ecumenical commitment to the cessation of all proselytism between Churches (i.e., between the Orthodox and heterodox).

This lamentable text was universally hailed by the burgeoning ecumenical movement and has been reaffirmed by every Ecumenical Patriarch since its publication. It has also been invoked and praised during various inter-Orthodox conferences and has helped to establish the tone and guidelines for continuing Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement. What is shocking is that, at its very outset, the encyclical embraces the principle that reconciliation between Orthodox and heterodox can proceed without careful, preliminary attention to doctrinal differences.

Truth without unity in doctrine and Christianity without catholic belief: this is a total reversal of ancient Orthodox precepts, and it dealt a serious blow to the Orthodox Church's self-understanding; to wit, that she alone constitutes the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church," that She holds as a sacred deposit the revelation of Faith, the "faith...once delivered unto the saints" (St. Jude 3), and that without unity of confession, Christian unity is impossible. Needless to say, the Roman Catholic Church, which vies with Orthodoxy for historical and spiritual primacy, entirely rejected (at least at this time) such a notion of unity. Yet, the Orthodox world swallowed this hook together with the line and sinker.

2) In 1923, as Saint Justin tells us, "...that hapless Patriarch of Constantinople, Meletios Metaxakis—the celebrated and presumptuous modernist, reformer, and author of schisms within Orthodoxy—at his Pan-Orthodox Conference held in Constantinople in 1923—advocated the adoption of the Western, Gregorian Calendar" (Archimandrite Justin [Popovich], "On The Summoning of the 'Great Council' of the Orthodox Church" [Moundsville, WV: n.p., n.d.], p. 2).

3) In 1924, the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria and the Churches of Greece, Cyprus, and Romania adopted the New Calendar. The Patriarchates of Alexandria (1926) and Antioch (1948) and the Church of Bulgaria (1968) were to follow suit. With Jerusalem, Russia, Georgia, Serbia, and Mount Athos retaining the Traditional Festal ("Old") Calendar, the liturgical unity of the Orthodox World—which had been unbroken since the First Ecumenical Synod—was fractured. The Great Feast of Nativity is now celebrated in Greece (except among the minority of Old Calendarists) with the non-Orthodox, while the faithful in Russia and Serbia continue their fast for another thirteen days.

4) In 1948 the World Council of Churches was established, in fulfillment of the 1920 proposal. Founding members included the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (with, of

course, its dioceses in the New World), the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, and the Churches of Greece and Cyprus. By the 1960's, with the admission of the Soviet Bloc Churches, all of the local Orthodox Churches were full-fledged members, with the exception of the Old Calendarists, who were ostracized, persecuted, and then reckoned "outside" of what the ecumenical movement slowly began to label the "official" (i.e., ecumenical) jurisdictions of "world Orthodoxy"—contrived, foreign terms that are now accepted as somehow definitive.

5) Within a few more decades, the Orthodox contingents in the WCC, working from these first basic ecumenical compromises, had developed a completely new language and new and ecclesiological teachings—previously unknown to the Orthodox world. These teachings were all based on the premises of the 1920 Encyclical and were the fruit of countless meetings and unrestrained "hobnobbing" with the various heterodox representatives in what came to be known as the so-called "dialogues of love." These innovative teachings can be summarized as follows (see Archimandrite [now Bishop] Cyprian Agiokyprianites, *Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement* [Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1997], pp. 17-22):

a) "Baptismal theology." This particular teaching maintains that baptism—Orthodox or heterodox—supposedly delimits the Church, establishing the so-called "baptismal boundaries" of the Church, and that, in this way, She includes Orthodox and heterodox, who are held together by the "baptismal unity" of the Church....

b) The theology of "Sister Churches," according to which Orthodox and Roman Catholics are supposedly "Sister Churches" in the full sense of that term, despite existing dogmatic differences; in fact, the Orthodox ecumenists have extended the term "Sister Churches" to other heterodox communions, too....

c) The theology of the "Broad Church," which talks about "the Church in the broadest sense"; about "the Church of Christ in her totality," and "no longer about Orthodoxy alone"; about a "Church outside the Church," "outside the walls," and "outside the canonical limits" and "ecclesiastical boundaries" of Orthodoxy.... (Once more, even the more liberal of the Roman Catholic ecumenists have never sacrificed their claims to primacy in the stark terms accepted and promulgated by the Orthodox ecumenists.)

d) The theology of "cultural pluralism," which regards the unity of Orthodox and heterodox as a "given" and existing dogmatic differences as a simple divergency in theological nomenclature about the same faith, corresponding to our individual cultures and complementing one another in a legitimate variety of theological traditions....

e) The theology of "common service," which acknowledges that there are dead-ends in the "dialogues," that is, an impossibility of union in the same faith, and that, in order to overcome these, proposes a confederal and moral union of the Orthodox and heterodox by way of organization, action, and solidarity for "common service" to the world.

A careful analysis of the multitudes of proceedings, consultations, reports, joint statements, proclamations, messages, and agreements issued by Orthodox ecumenists clearly reveals infection by some or all of these new, un-Orthodox, and, in fact, heretical theologies.

6) As the decades of the twentieth century rolled by, commitment and rededication to the Orthodox Church's ecumenical activity were enthusiastically and regularly expressed in proposals and decrees by various inter-Orthodox committees and consultations. Membership in these

hand-picked committees was almost always predetermined by an individual's ecumenical leanings, and the declarations were accordingly scripted. The pronouncements were never submitted to entire Synods or Church bodies for review, comment, or approval. Yet, with their frequent repetition, the Ecumenical Patriarch began to refer to a supposed "Synodal Authorization" that drove his innovative and uncanonical ventures (cf. Bishop Klemes of Gardikion, "The Censure of Error and the Confession of Orthodox Truth in Relation to Contemporary Ecumenism," pp. 39ff). What marked the twentieth century has continued into the present century.

I cite a short passage that betrays the unorthodox and innovative mind-set that inspires these meetings, taken from the final Decree and communiqué of the First "Pre-Synodal Pan-Orthodox Conference," held in Chambesy, Switzerland (near Geneva), in 1976. This was one of the many meetings supposedly preparing the way for the "Eighth Ecumenical Synod," another offspring of the ecumenical movement and, in particular, the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. The Decree calls for expanded participation of Orthodoxy in the ecumenical movement and the WCC, thereby "continuing its traditional avant-gardism [as already expressed] in the establishment and development of the ecumenical movement" ("Towards the 'Eighth' Ecumenical Council," *The Orthodox Word*, Nov.-Dec. 1976 [71], p. 187). Without any concern for the logic or Patristic basis for their statements, these ecumenists are now invoking a "tradition" of "avant-gardism" that supposedly validates their innovation. This from the Church of Holy Tradition!

Referring back to the five expressions of these various innovative and un-Orthodox theologies, time does not allow us to cite all of the relevant expressions of such. But let us look at just one example, a statement by Patriarch Bartholomew in 1992, speaking from his patriarchal throne in the presence of Orthodox faithful and visiting Catholic clergy:

It is not possible for the Church in the West and the Church in the East to exist in isolation, self-satisfaction, and self-sufficiency; they constitute, rather, the 'two lungs' with which the entire body of Christ breathes ("Χαιρετισμὸς τῆς Α.Θ. Παναγιότητος τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου κυρίου κυρίου Βαρθολομαίου τοῦ Α' πρὸς τὴν Ἀντιπροσωπείαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ρώμης εἰς τὴν θρονικὴν ἑορτὴν τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου [30 Νοεμβρίου 1992]" [Greetings from his most divine all-holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I to the delegation from the Church of Rome at the patronal feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (30 November 1992)], *Ὁρθοδοξία*, [July-September 2002], p. 520, n. 4).

The metaphor of "two lungs" was not a casual expression. It has been enthusiastically adopted throughout the ecumenical community. Notice how, without caution or equivocation, the Patriarch puts Roman Catholicism on equal footing with Orthodoxy, addressing it as the Church of the West and a vital component (a "lung") of the larger ("wider") Body of Christ, as though differences have not separated the two bodies for almost a millennium.

This should be no less shocking than if, Nestorios having left behind an organizational structure that survived into modern times, the Patriarch were to have welcomed a delegation from this group with the same words. (For the record, we note that Orthodox theologians have pointed out that many Western confessions are, in fact, infected with Nestorianism. Father Georges Florovsky, one of the founders of the WCC and, until his older years, an avid participant in the ecumenical movement, made this observation quite forcefully, in fact. For that matter, there have,

of course, been attempts by Western theologians to vindicate Nestorios and his partisans!)

Finally, let us note that, in addition to their meetings, dialogues, and consultations, Orthodox ecumenists have been engaged in joint worship and prayer services, not only with heterodox, but even with non-Christians (that is, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and so on). These kinds of actions were unthinkable to Orthodox of previous generations, who would never imagine inviting an unrepentant Arios or Nestorios to join Orthodox in worship, let alone a Jew or Moslem (who themselves would not have accepted such an invitation, since to do so would have violated their own religions).

As an indication of the mind-set of our Orthodox ancestors with regard to joint prayer with heterodox, or the recognition of their Mysteries (e.g., Baptism, Holy Communion, etc.), we cite the venerable Apostolic Canons 45 & 46 (*Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν Κανόνων* [Collection of the divine and sacred canons], ed. G. Ralles and M. Potles [Athens: G. Chartophylax, 1852-1859], Vol. II, pp. 60-61).

[Canon 45] Let any Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon who has merely prayed with heretics be suspended [literally, excommunicated]; but if he has permitted them to function as clergy, let him be deposed.

[Canon 46] We order any Bishop, or Presbyter who has accepted the baptism or sacrifice of heretics to be deposed. For "what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever" [II Corinthians 6:15]?

Unable to refute these ancient and revered proscriptions, many Orthodox ecumenists have now taken to arguing that canons are irrelevant to a "post-Patristic Orthodoxy"(!), inapplicable to the modern era, or even simply "man-made" conventions. In any case, by and large the Canons are ignored and are only invoked if they can serve the distorted interests of the ecumenists.

Resistance

Even though the actions of the Orthodox ecumenists introduced a serious illness into the Church, God has not abandoned the faithful. As has always been the case, there was a healthy contingent that spontaneously understood the dangers of ecumenical innovations and began the process of walling-off and resistance to these subversive new teachings. Thus, with the introduction of the New Calendar in Greece and Romania in the mid-1920s, there were faithful and clergy who immediately separated themselves from their innovating Hierarchs.

Others joined later. Such was the case with the Blessed Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina and our ailing Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili (then an Archimandrite), who left the State Church to join the Greek Old Calendarists in 1935 and 1969, respectively. Resistance began in Bulgaria in the 1960s, with that Church's adoption of the New Calendar and membership in the WCC. And in the late 1960s, with the publication of his "Woeful Epistles," Saint Philaret of New York led the entire Russian Orthodox Church Abroad into resistance against the heresy of ecumenism. Official concelebration was cut between the Church Abroad and all of the "official" Orthodox Churches participating in the WCC.

By the latter quarter of the twentieth century, we can rightly say that there were faithful in every national Church who had walled themselves off to protect themselves against the heresy

of ecumenism and who opposed ecumenical teachings.

Time does not allow us to mention the names of all of the illustrious strugglers, but any list would certainly include Saint Nikolai (Velimirović) of Ohrid and Žiča, Saint Philaret of New York, Saint Seraphim of Sofia, Saint Glicherie of Romania, and Saint Justin (Popović) of Čelije, men who were all glorified ("canonized") by their Local Churches for the sake of their holy lives and courageous leadership. (Parenthetically, we should note that not a single ecumenist has been glorified by a local Church, though even such a blasphemy may one day appear.)

Again, we remind our faithful that we have published, in print or on our website, many of the writings and chronicles of these particular Saints, as well as the writings of a myriad of other holy strugglers who labor in resistance. We encourage the faithful to avail themselves of these resources for the sake of their enlightenment, edification, and encouragement.

To help our listeners understand the gravity of the issues involved in our struggle, I invoke a relevant quote from one of the aforementioned heroes, a compatriot of many of the faithful here today, Saint Nikolai:

Truth be told, there are some theologians in the Orthodox Church who are following in the footsteps of heretical theologians, thinking that the Gospel in itself is not strong enough to defend and support itself in the storms of the world. They find heretical thoughts and methods alluring. With their whole soul they have joined the heretics but they outwardly hold on to the Orthodox Church just nominally—for the sake of support. ...The Orthodox Church as a whole renounces such theologians and does not recognize them as her own but suffers them for two reasons. One, she is awaiting their repentance and change. Two, she does not want to make an even greater evil out of this which is to say, push them downhill into the army of heretics while destroying their souls. Those theologians are not bearers of Orthodox conscience or consciousness but are sick organs of the body of the Church. The bearers of the Orthodox conscience or consciousness are the people, monastics and clergy (*Missionary Letters of Saint Nikolai Velimirovich* [Grayslake, IL: Diocese of New Gracanica and Midwestern America, 2011], p. 164.)

I underscore, in Saint Nikolai's thoughtful analysis, his stress on the weak and ailing nature of those engaged in ecumenism, as well as the Church's charitable forbearance as it awaits their repentance and restoration. Of equal interest is his emphasis on the fact that the genuine bearers of Orthodox conscience are not the "avant-garde" of theologians and innovators, but the devout "people, monastics and clergy."

By your patience and with God's help, we have now reached the last portion of our talk. Let us recapitulate our points and make some summary observations.

First, we have pointed out that, for many reasons, God allows contentions within the Church. When the divisive issues are minor, we are advised forbearance, forgiveness, and conciliation. When, however, the controversy is over some deviation from received, established teaching, that is, a matter of heresy, the Church advises a dramatically different strategy: that of resistance. We have seen that heresy is not simply a matter of wrong opinion. It also involves an ailing disposition that is marked by self-reliance and a stubborn opposition to correction.

We have seen that resistance, the process whereby the Church addresses and corrects heresy, encompasses some seven steps, as we labor to preserve the healthy faithful, restore the

Church's ailing members, and promote unity in the Church. These steps are:

- a) an identification of the un-Orthodox teaching;
- b) a walling off, that is, separation from the new subversive teaching, lest our own faith be harmed;
- c) instruction, admonishments, and reproofs are issued by the Church's teachers, for the protection of the faithful and the correction of the innovators;
- d) (assuming that the innovators do not repent) we labor for the convocation of a competent or Œcumenical Synod for the adjudication of the contentious issue;
- e) the convening of a Synod and a judgement, Orthodoxy is delineated, the controversial heresy is identified and condemned;
- f) the innovator is given a final opportunity to repent and makes his decision;
- g) should he remain obstinate, the heretic is excised from the body of the Church, becoming "as a heathen and publican."

Secondly, we have applied the rubrics of resistance—that is, an outline of the Church's method for dealing with heretical innovations—to our contemporary Church situation. We have seen that, working like a pernicious bacterium, ecumenism has infected all of the local Churches, sapping them of strength, dulling their ecclesiastical consciousness, and depriving us all of blessings. Specifically, we can list five new teachings proclaimed by the Orthodox ecumenists that are condemnable:

- a) "Baptismal theology";
- b) the theology of "Sister Churches";
- c) the theology of the "Broad Church";
- d) the theology of "cultural pluralism"; and
- e) the theology of "common service."

We have argued that the heresy of ecumenism has prompted a God-pleasing resistance in nearly every local Church. Following the examples and admonitions of the Holy Fathers, right-believing Orthodox have walled themselves off for the protection of their faith. Responsible and authorized teachers in the Church—Hierarchs, Clergy, theologians, and capable laity—have raised their voices in protest, in proclamation of Orthodox teaching and in the denunciation of subversive innovations. These are the first three steps of resistance, which we have, by God's help, accomplished.

With prayer, with sincere efforts to follow God's commandments—specifically in the cultivation of love towards our neighbor and repentance in our life—and with hope in God, we labor along the fourth step, towards the convocation of a unifying, Œcumenical Synod that will adjudicate the contention, proclaim Orthodoxy, and condemn ecumenism.

And now, finally, we need to say some words of encouragement to those who follow us in our resistance. First, we need to be candid about the difficulties involved in our struggle, lest we be naive in our expectations and, like the seed that fell on rocky ground in the parable of the sower, "wither...away...when tribulation or persecution ariseth" (Saint Matthew 13:6, 21).

We are, to speak with understatement, painfully aware that we have lost all of the perquisites that "official" standing within world Orthodoxy would grant us, including: recognition by fellow Orthodox and secular authorities; economic resources; and comfort from fellow-

ship with a large body of co-believers. Instead, we suffer relative poverty (I note that the majority of our Church's clergy serve without a stipend, being self-supporting) and endure slander, harassment, litigation, and political persecution—even including, this last century, imprisonment and the shedding of blood at the hands of our fellow but ailing Orthodox.

Second, we must remember that these trials are not beyond our strength. God watches over the contest and does not allow the believer to be tempted above what he can endure and safely pass through (I Corinthians 10:13).

Third, we should call to mind that the Lord foretold these trials for His followers. We should endure them with "good cheer," aware that such persecutions are for the sake of the Gospel and are a part of our Cross. In the comforting words of St. Nikolai,

Every founder of a new organization recruits followers for himself with the promise of good fruits and many pleasures, but deliberately remains silent about the hardships and labors that lead to those fruits and pleasures. Our Lord Jesus is the only one Who spoke the whole truth to His followers—both the bitter and the sweet side of the truth. He did not promise fruits without service, glory without suffering, ultimate rest without the thorny path, victory without struggle, pleasure without bitterness, or the Kingdom without tears and self-denial. Although our Lord enumerated the many difficulties that would befall His followers, in the end He does not abandon them without consolation. He gives meaning to their sufferings and does not leave them in darkness. He says: He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Saint Nikolai Velimirović, *The Prologue of Ohrid* [Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2008], Vol. I, p. 243).

Fourth, despite the apparent fragmentation among us resisters, we must recall the testimony of the Holy Fathers that, with our preservation of right belief and confession, we are the ones that preserve the unity of the Church. According to the Divine Chrysostomos, we do not accept the charge of "being contentious in separating from heretics." In the words of the Fifteenth Canon of the First-Second Synod, those who "separate themselves from communion with their First Hierarch...[for] heresy...have not sundered the unity of the Church...but have been sedulous to deliver the Church from schisms and divisions." Our separation and walling-off protect right belief from the subversive infection of heresy and, thus, safeguard the unifying principle of Orthodoxy. The acceptance of heretical ecumenical teachings makes the "official" Churches, for all their supposed concern for the unity of the Church, liable for having themselves introduced schism and division.

The "faith once delivered unto the Saints" is a deposit that remains forever in the Church's bosom and that has sanctified countless Faithful. These faithful include the likes of Saint Symeon the Myrrh-Gusher, Saint Sava, Saint Stefan the First-Crowned, and other persons who are often dearer to us than our own families. It is with these holy persons that we want to preserve unity—a unity that will endure into eternity. Let us remember that they were all single-minded in their defense of Orthodoxy and uncompromising in their rejection of the innovators of their own day—for example, the newly-schismatic Latin Church which had separated from the ecclesiastical hegemony of the Orthodox. They certainly did not practice joint worship or intercommunion with Latins, though it would have been far more justifiable than today, when we face even more outrageous dogmatic aberrations among the Romans, such as the nineteenth-century teach-

ing of Papal infallibility.

Fifth, let us take comfort from fellowship with our Sister Churches. The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, despite the capitulation of the majority of its clergy and followers to the Moscow Patriarch in 2007, continues its witness under the Presidency of Metropolitan Agafangel, having Hierarchs, clergy, and parishes here in North America, too. The Old Calendar Churches of Romania and Bulgaria are also vibrant and strong in their own countries. They are governed by exceptional Hierarchs and clergy, and are all worthy of pilgrimages on our behalf, or at least our prayerful support.

Sixth, despite the ecumenists' never-ending words about love, let us remember that our faithful adherence to our Orthodox confession is true, "genuine" love. What the ecumenists are really pursuing is sentimentality, a love that does not "receive...the love of the truth" (II Thessalonians 2:10) or care that it "be genuine" (Romans 12:9). From the Christian standpoint, there is no separation of love and truth. Here let us invoke Saint Justin (Popovich):

The contemporary 'dialogue of love,' which takes the form of naked sentimentality, is in reality a denial of the...unique salutary 'love of the truth' (2 Thess. 2: 10). The essence of love is truth; love lives and thrives as truth. ...There can be no 'dialogue of love' without the dialogue of truth. Otherwise this dialogue is not true and is not natural. Accordingly the commandment of the Apostle asks that 'love be genuine' (Rom. 12: 9) (Father Justin Popovich, *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ* [Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1997], pp. 170-172).

As a contrast to these God-inspired words, we quote from a shameful resolution by the New Calendar Romanian Orthodox Church:

[The Holy Synod] considers that the imposition of anathemas against heretics by the Ecumenical Synods was due to a lack of love, whereas today, since there is love, unity is being accomplished. (“Υπόμνημα τῆς Ἱεραῆς Κοινότητος τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους περὶ τοῦ Διαλόγου Ὁρθοδόξων καὶ Ἀντιχαλκηδονίων, 14/27.5.1995” [Memorandum of the sacred community of the Holy Mountain concerning the dialogue between Orthodox and Non-Chalcedonians, 14/27 May 1995], in *Εἶναι οἱ Ἀντιχαλκηδόνιοι Ὁρθόδοξοι;* [Are the non-Chalcedonians Orthodox?]) [Holy Mountain: Hiera Mone Hagiou Gregorion, 1995], p. 51).

Lamentably, the blindness, presumption, and error of the ecumenists know no bounds. They believe that they have gone beyond the Fathers in their love. If they believe so, then the call for a post-Patristic Orthodoxy makes sense. Will the next call entail the desire for a post-Christian Orthodoxy? Perhaps such thinking will lead the Orthodox ecumenists to argue that our Lord, Who was strict in His genuine love, lacked their kind of love. The insanity could be endless. Instead of calling Christians in the Church of Rome, or who have separated from Rome (the Protestants), to the Undivided Church that we believe that we have preserved, perhaps we should just ignore the fact that we are called by love to reason with and correct those who are separated from us and just pretend that, though we believe them to be in error, they are correct. If this is called love, it can only truly be deceptive or hypocritical love.

Seventh, let us not be naive about the supposed satisfaction of ecumenists as they continue in their folly. In truth, many of those who have been involved in ecumenical dialogue have

confessed troubled consciences on account of their compromises and failures to witness to Orthodoxy. Hear what a member of the Orthodox delegation to the Eighth General Assembly of the WCC, meeting in Harare (1998), says about his delegation. His statement is in response to the question, "How did we go to Harare?"

Without the holiness that bears witness to Christ ineffably, without the personalities that rivet people's attention, without the unity that binds together (but, rather, with petty rivalries of a phyletistic or, more often, a personal kind), without theological arguments, without goals, strategy, or coordination. We went naked to Harare and our nakedness...was exposed (Archimandrite [Bishop] Cyprian Agiokyprianites, *The Dramatic Crisis in the Ecumenical Movement and the Awakening of Orthodox Anti-Ecumenism* [Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2000], p. 107).

Another sad admission, though not offered with the same spirit of self-reproach, is from an interview with Bishop (now Metropolitan) Hilarion of Vienna and Austria in 2006. Commenting on the issues discussed in the reunification dialogues between his Church (the Moscow Patriarchate) and the Russian Church Abroad, he notes that the matter of the Patriarch's involvement in the WCC had been an important matter from the standpoint of the Church Abroad, but that he did not believe that withdrawal from the WCC would benefit the Russian Church. (As is well known, the issue was tragically ultimately tabled in the negotiations.)

The Hierarch goes on to offer the conventional nonsense about the WCC providing an "important platform for bearing witness to the truth of Orthodoxy," and then concludes with a telling observation. The Moscow Patriarchate was obligated to stay in the WCC, he observes, in order to counteract the activity of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, "which already now uses the WCC as a platform [for]...expanding its influence." ("Russian Orthodox bishop against linking Moscow Patriarchate participation in WCC with reunification with Church Abroad" [May 15, 2006], <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news-&div=1416>). In other words, the WCC and the ecumenical movement in general are places not to accomplish Christian unity, as the ecumenists are so fond of saying, but to perpetuate disunity among Orthodox!

When one thinks that the Russian Church Abroad abandoned the struggles of its saintly hierarchs, clergy and laity, and its heroic witness against ecumenism on these kinds of terms, one can only weep.

Eighth, let us not be naive about the supposedly rosy prospects, within the ecumenical movement, for a "witness" to heterodox and for union among Christians. In the enlightened words of the late Schemamonk Constantine (Cavarnos), "Those Orthodox who know well the history of their Church...know that when the Church of Rome engages in dialogues with the representatives of the Orthodox Church, the aim of the Roman Church is the subjugation of the Orthodox Church to the Pope" (Constantine Cavarnos, *Ecumenism Examined* [Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1996], p. 45).

It was not even five years ago when, once again, the Vatican demonstrated this point, reaffirming the supposedly "defective" nature of the Orthodox Church for its failure to recognize that the "one Church of Christ...subsists in the [Roman] Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and the Bishops in communion with him" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,"

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/con-gregations/c-faith/-documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070629_responsa-quaestiones_en.html).

Would that the Orthodox ecumenists showed similar "spine" and told the Pope that any Christian communion which insists on the subjugation of one Local Church to another is itself defective! But such days and such a witness are fading. They might actually bring Christians into an honest and much-desired effort for unity in the truth.

With regard to ecumenical prospects with Protestants, Father Constantine is even more critical.

The chances of success of dialogues with the Protestant denominations were small in the past; today they appear to be nil. Conversion is a matter of individual spiritual maturation and choice, not a product of Ecumenical dialogues. ...[Such conversions occur] through reading the writings of the Eastern Church Fathers and other Orthodox writings, the study of the history of the Church, and the uplifting spiritual beauty of its icons, hymnody, and services as a whole (Cavarnos, *Ecumenism Examined*, p. 46).

As a convert to Orthodoxy, I can testify to the truth of this point.

Ninth, let us remember that our struggle has borne fruit among the New Calendar and innovationist communities, awakening consciences and giving others the courage to question the irresponsible actions of their Hierarchs and ecumenical representatives. Illustrations of this point could be the subject for another entire conference. Once again, I note that we have chronicled these encouraging developments and I urge our listeners to avail themselves of the relevant documents on our Synod website.

Tenth and last, let us take encouragement from the Apostle and "Fight the good fight of faith" (I Saint Timothy 6:12). In our pursuit of the sacred goal of resistance, we must remember, in the words of our Holy Synod's Acting President, Bishop Cyprian, that

we will attain to a unifying Synod of the divided...Church by imitating the holy and heroic strugglers for Orthodoxy who have gone before us. This demands, then: Orthodoxy; a Patristic footing; that our protest be modelled on that of the Saints; collaboration among those putting forth opposition, that is, those rooted in the Orthodox Faith and in the love 'of the truth,' as the Apostle Paul says; and a struggle against the change in the festal calendar and, more generally, ecumenism. The fight must be strong, lawful, and unto death. For, 'be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,' says the Lord of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, our Lord Jesus Christ (Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, "An Ecclesiological Position Paper For Orthodox Opposed to the Panheresy of Ecumenism," in Archbishop Chrysostomos, Bishop Ambrose, and Bishop Auxentios, *The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece* [Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2009], p. 69).

Gathered today as we are in the Church of the Holy Archangel, let us, in conclusion, invoke his blessings and support for our contest. As Saint Nikolai reminds us, the "Archangel Michael is especially considered to be the Guardian of the Orthodox Faith and a fighter against heresies" (The Prologue of Ohrid, Vol. II, p. 496). And let us neither sway to the right, in thinking that the eventual unity of all Christians in the ancient truths of our Church is not a deeply desired thing and a hope to be kept pure and vibrant in our hearts; nor let us err towards the left, seeking human

unity and peace without first uniting with Christ and attaining that everlasting peace that engenders the kind of love needed to bring divided Christians to Orthodoxy.

I thank you for your patience and ask forgiveness for my errors.