



OLD CALENDAR
ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GREECE
HOLY SYNOD IN RESISTANCE

Protocol No. 626

To the Reverend Hieromonk Spyridon
Holy Hesychasterion of St. Spyridon
Holy Skete of St. Basil
Holy Mountain

Phyle, Attica
March 16, 2012 (Old Style)
Thursday of the Great Canon
Holy Martyr Sabinos

Reverend Elder Spyridon;
Reverend Elders and Fathers:

We greet you with an holy kiss of love, peace, and unity in the Holy Spirit, humbly praying that the Most Holy Theotokos may strengthen, guide, and protect you in your ascetical labors, both spiritual and bodily.

It is with gladness that we communicate with you in view of the truly hopeful message of unity contained in your estimable epistolary appeal of December 23, 2011 (Old Style), directed to “those opposed to the panheresy of ecumenism, who have, since 1924, resisted the calendar innovation in the manner handed down by the Holy Fathers.”

In the first place, we hasten sincerely to ask forgiveness for the tardiness of our reply, which is due, assuredly, not to negligence, but to the burden of our pastoral obligations, and also to the fact that it was necessary to submit your worthy epistolary appeal to the appraisal of our Holy Synod for discussion and resolution.

In the second place, we are bound to acknowledge that you are praiseworthy and blessed, Brethren and Fathers, since you are not only preoccupied by the union, desirable to all, of those opposed to the heresy of ecumenism, but are also acting as peacemakers. Thus are your venerable feet rendered still more beautiful, in that you proclaim the gospel of peace and reconciliation (Romans 10:15).

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On this we cannot remain silent: that your epistolary appeal caused us no small astonishment, since for the longest time, but especially during the final months of the past year of salvation 2011, a fitting unease over this very serious issue, namely, of the union of those in resistance to ecumenism in the spirit of the Fathers, has been constantly on the increase.

It has always been our conviction that “we should be concerned about the grave fragmentation within the Old Calendar movement and that we cannot easily disregard it,” and that “inertia is indeed the height of irresponsibility before God and men.”

When the issue of the much-desired unity in question is viewed through the prism of the multifaceted social crisis that our homeland is experiencing with intensity, this fitting unease regarding the reconciliation of those who are at variance increases all the more.

Indeed, we hope that you, Reverend Fathers, will agree that it is incomprehensible that groups or networks of people should confront the present and protracted social crisis mutually, coöperatively, and effectively through sound activities, interventions, and initiatives, while the Old Calendarist Orthodox persist, or are content, in being entrenched, rigid in prejudices, devoid of sensitivity and creativity, and, at times, of sobriety, and reckoning ignorance, irresponsibility, inconsistency, and intransigence to be assets!

Unfortunately, certain persons do not stop with such [entrenchment], but undermine the unselfish efforts to bring about union—indeed, in a manner not in the least in keeping with the Gospel—showing that they are not animated by the “wisdom that is from above,” which “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (St. James 3:17).

Furthermore, they set themselves at enmity with the Fathers by failing to take into account the exhortation of St. Basil the Great to Eustathios of Sebasteia (“Epistle cxix”):

“I beseech you by your compassion to do whatever you can...to endeavor to unite the divided parties more through your love and not to intensify the separation of those who are rushing headlong into disunion.”

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Finally, our painful experience over many years has demonstrated that the creation and reinforcement of an ethos of self-justification and isolationism, within a climate of unhealthy introversion and antagonism, is even more tragic than the grave fragmentation within the Old Calendar movement in Greece, such that any inclination to make the transition from “I” to “we” is constantly thwarted.

Hence, an initial idea and proposal on our part, which was in fact publicly expressed by our Holy Synod (October 2010), is for each of us to recognize the potential and the gifts of the other; to rouse ourselves to overcome our collective egotism; to heighten our sensitivity and concern for unity in Christ in the face of the challenges that the multi-faceted ecumenical movement continually places before us;

and, finally, to become eager for sacrifice, coöperation, and common action—notwithstanding our differences in ecclesiological self-understanding and, with God’s help and over time, for the surmounting of the same.

Such an endeavor, in prayer, repentance, and love, will aid us, *inter alia*, in identifying, with dispassion and equanimity, those points which exactly and really divide us and in determining what needs to be done for the full union and unanimity of the Old Calendarist Orthodox anti-ecumenists.

We are, of course, not unaware of the source of our disagreements and ruptures. It must be admitted, however, that hitherto concern for rapprochement has not been sedulous and that there has not been any unselfish interest in attaining to a deeper grasp of the ecclesiological position of others, nor indeed, any charitable patience and understanding towards this alterity, with the result that the chasm between us widens and that puerile, senseless, unfraternal, and at times demonic prejudices are perpetuated.

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But the times are not patient! Let us dedicate time, effort, interest, and prayer—all of this, regardless of the outcome. For the time of love for unity is the time of our Lord, and it is certain that this time will be richly blessed with unforeseen and wondrous results.

“And if in any thing [we] be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto [us]. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” (*cf.* Philippians 3:15-16).

If we have any difference of opinion, we are not ill at ease, since God will reveal this to us too. But let us not remain unconcerned, and let us all be heedful to follow the same rule of conduct and to have the same outlook on the truth.

In the hope that your proposals and your venerable prayers may bear fruit, so that we might be vouchsafed to worship the Holy Suffering and Resurrection of our Savior with contrite souls, and greeting you once again with an holy kiss, we remain,

† *Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi*

Acting President

† *Bishop Klemes of Gardikion*

Secretary