

† Commemoration of the Holy Three New Hierarchs,  
Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark of Ephesus  
First Sunday of November, November 4, 2013 (Old Style)

## Fathers and Teachers of the Church

“Remember them which have the rule over you”

(Hebrews 13:7)

† *Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle,  
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance*

*Your Graces;*

*Reverend Fathers and Brethren;*

*Venerable Monastics, Elders and Eldresses;*

*Holy Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

Today, the first Sunday in the month of November, it has become customary in our Holy Orthodox Church to honor the common memory of the Three New Hierarchs: Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Evgenikos. In 2005, our Holy Synod proclaimed these three Holy Fathers and Teachers of our Faith its special Patrons in its struggle and resistance against the contemporary heresy of ecumenism.

This Synodal decision was based on the following pious thought:

- The New Three Hierarchs strove steadfastly in their times—the ninth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries—against the false teaching and innovations of the papist West. Consequently, they will strengthen, guide, and protect the Orthodox of our day, who are struggling, with self-sacrifice, against the same false doctrine, namely, papalism, and also against nearly all of the heterodox offshoots of Protestantism that have joined together in the so-called ecumenical movement, belonging to the so-called World Council of Churches.

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Recourse to the Holy Fathers is especially necessary for us today, since they constitute the infallible criterion of authenticity, both in

matters of Faith and dogma and in matters of the Church's life and ethos.

Our Holy Orthodox Church has never forgotten the exhortation of the Holy Apostle Paul: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith imitate, considering the outcome of their way of life" (Hebrews 13:7). That is, call to mind your spiritual leaders, who have preached the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their life, which is worthy of imitation, and emulate their faith.

This "word of God" and the "way of life" of our leaders and Fathers forms the precious "legacy" that the Holy Apostle elsewhere exhorts us to guard and preserve: "O Timothy, guard that which is committed to thy trust"; "[t]hat good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit Which dwelleth in us" (i St. Timothy 6:20; ii St. Timothy 1:14): guard with the help of the Holy Spirit the precious treasure of the Truth, which the Lord entrusted to you, avoiding "profane and vain babblings," blasphemous pratings and heresies.

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A Father and Teacher of the Church is one who transmits the Tradition and ethos of the Church, one who, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, expresses theologically the experience of the Truth and who contributes decisively to the overcoming of whatever theological crisis rocks the Church in a particular era.

These Fathers and Teachers of the Church are the "eminent" men of the Church, who have become "luminaries in the world." It has been decreed that their "writings and doctrines handed down by God" are to be upheld and adopted, and they have been acknowledged as "authoritative Fathers."

The Holy Three Hierarchs whom our Church honors today belong to this choir of "authoritative Fathers." They had, and continue to have, the charism of being Fathers and Teachers of the Church, who contended for the Truth—that is, for salvation, since Truth and salvation are regarded as identical in our Orthodox Tradition.

For this reason, the faithful chant their *Apolytikion* with gladness and compunction:

As servants of the Trinity, wise expounders of correct dogma, and sacred mystagogues were ye shown forth to the world, O Hierarch Photios, Father Gregory, and Mark, Shepherd of Ephesus, Protectors of the Orthodox and unbreakable foundations of the whole Church.

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The Holy Fathers and Teachers whom we honor today are the “authoritative Fathers” who, amid the confusion of heretical ecumenism, which has been assaulting the unity of the Orthodox since 1920, assure us of the great and saving truth that Orthodoxy is the unique Ark of man’s salvation; that it is the pristine Church of Christ and the Apostles; that it is that Church which is to be identified ontologically with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of the Symbol of Faith.

Any other view, which equates Orthodoxy with the multitudinous errors of the heretical West, in the context of the ecumenical movement, is cacodoxy and blasphemy, “profane and vain babbling,” antithetical to the “Legacy” of the Holy Fathers and Teachers of all ages, and especially the Holy Three New Hierarchs. By their intercessions, may the Grace of the Holy Trinity preserve us unshaken in the Truth and salvation of Holy Orthodoxy.

