



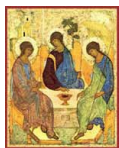
Concelebration of Union
at the Holy Monastery of St. Nicholas in Paiania, Athens
March 10/23, 2014

**A Sermon of Thanksgiving
on the Occasion of the Union and the Coming of Spring**

*“Unity is the Church’s very
mode of existence.”*

by *Metropolitan Cyprian
of Oropos and Phyle*

*Your Beatitude,
Most Reverend and Right Reverend Holy Hierarchs;
Reverend Fathers and Brethren;
Venerable Monks and Nuns, Elders, and Eldresses;
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*



At this moment; at this truly historic moment; in this holy place and at this holy time; **today**, when the longed-for **Union** of the Orthodox Community in Resistance with the Holy Synod under His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinkos, has been brought to complete fruition; **now**, when we have already entered into the gladsome season of **Spring** and the all-joyous Feast of **Pascha** draws nigh; now, at this moment, I feel the need to exclaim with a great voice:

“This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad therein”! “Today spring shows forth fragrant, and the new creation dan-
ceth for joy”! “Shine, shine,” O Chorus of the Orthodox, on the occasion

of the Union of Thy children and the Springtime of a truly new period in the history of the struggle of True Orthodoxy!

“Lift up thine eyes,” O Mother Orthodoxy, “and see; for behold” there have come “Divinely bright as luminaries, thy children from the East and the West, from the North and the South,” to give glory in **unity** and on the occasion of their **Union**, to Christ, the Divine Founder of the Church!



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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:



We are intoxicated with a Divine and sacred inebriation on this great Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross.

It is springtime, and the Cross has blossomed forth with flowers redolent of love, peace, and unity.

The Cross of the Beloved Bridegroom of the Church is fragrant and has united what was formerly divided.

It is springtime, and the maternal embrace of True Orthodoxy renews the vision of its united children.

The Cross is again exalted, in triumph, contrition, and jubilation, to remind us that True Orthodoxy demands **an attitude of self-sacrifice and self-denial; it demands a lofty sense of responsibility** before God, the Church, and History.

The renewal of springtime impels us dynamically towards the future. The havens of the past are without meaning when they immobilize us in a merely passive view of history.

The past should be regarded solely as a guiding light: a beacon that illuminates and guides one on venturesome voyages, decisive actions, and self-sacrificing steps.

And this, especially at a time when the question of history resounds: **“Is Christ divided?”** and when the sweetest voice of our Savior addresses the Shepherds, in particular: **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”**

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today, the Cross of our Lord, adorned with flowers, reminds us that the “division of Christ” constitutes a **great scandal**; for the Name of Christ is a Name of Communion and Unity, of reciprocity and a mutual recognition of the charisms of every side, mutual enrichment, and spiritual festivity.



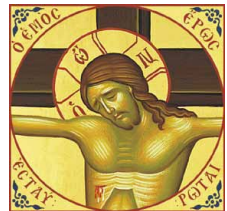
Today, the fragrant Cross of the Lord inspires us prophetically, such that, with a penetrating gaze, we might delve into the past, be quickened in the present, and envisage the future.

It is not possible to put into practice **our responsibility in Christ** in the present, while clinging morbidly to the past and avoiding the **duty** and **self-sacrifice** to which we are called by the future.

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today, in the shadow of the flowering and fragrant Cross, we, the clergy and laity of the erstwhile Synod in Resistance, express our gratitude to our Lord, the Mother of God, and all the Saints, for granting us the **charism of unitive love**, and also a sense of **responsibility, duty, and self-sacrifice**, such that we are now experiencing the **miracle of Unity in True Faith and Orthodoxy**.



Likewise, we thank His Beatitude, our Archbishop and all of the Hierarchy, who received us with great love and joy, such that today we constitute one unified Synod and one united family of True Orthodoxy in Greece.

We feel especial gratitude to all of the members of the two committees of the **Official Dialogue**, who, with admirable self-denial, wisdom, and discretion, coöperated for fourteen months to find solutions and to prepare the ground for **Union**.

I am touched as I mention His Grace, Bishop Photios of Marathon,

the two lay theologians Messrs. Zeses Tsiotras and Konstantinos Panos, and also Their Graces, Bishops Ambrose of Methone and Klemes of Gardikion, as well as our Priests, Father Glykerios, Father Angelos, and Father Jiří.

Of course, we also thank all of our spiritual children—monks, nuns, and laity—who with love, prayer, and trust were our **unsleeping fellow-travelers** during the lengthy and exacting process of unification.

In the midst of this awe-inspiring celebration, I cannot allow myself to overlook our ailing and feeble brothers and sisters.

We embrace with affection, tenderness, and forgiveness these “little sheep,” who chose the woeful path of conflict with their Shepherds: the path of criticism, calumny, *extremism*, unhealthy introversion, and isolation. All of these things epitomize an anti-eclesiastical ethos and evince the lack of a responsible, courageous, honorable, and sincere attitude to the Church and the challenges of history.



Nonetheless, we wait for them to renew their bonds of love with their Shepherds, that we might continue together on this truly **enthraling journey—a journey with a vision: the vision of unity among divided True Orthodox Christians.**

We await them in order to explain to them that our Union is not an historical compromise; **our Union** did not close a “wound,” as some have inaptly written.

Our Union was the natural result of the preëminently responsible ministry of a Shepherd: the **ministry of Union, unity, and the reunion of the Orthodox.**

A Bishop is called upon to enact the **Mystery of the Unity of the Church**, insofar as **Unity is the Church’s very mode of existence.**

A Bishop must minister to this Mystery, devote himself to it, and suffer, on his knees and on the Cross, for its sake.

And this, with an eschatological vision: the vision that the world be united in the **Will** of God, in the **Love** of God, and in the **Truth** of God.



Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I conclude these humble thoughts, calling upon your prayers, that **our Union**, under the all-radiant Protection of the *Theotokos*, may be ever more consolidated and strengthened; that it may ever increase in depth and quality; and, finally, that it may expand to embrace ever more True Orthodox Christians, that the Truth might prevail and the innovation and cacodoxy of ecumenism be put to shame.

*May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the Love of God the Father,
and the Communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you always, now and ever,
and unto the ages of ages. Amen!*

Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle

March 10/23, 2014

Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross

