

SYNAXIS OF ORTHODOX  
CLERGY AND MONASTICS

Thessaloniki, November 19, 2014

Beloved Brethren,

Attached you will find a text prepared by the Synaxis of Orthodox Clergy and Monastics and signed by all its members which presents and examines the novel ecclesiological views recently expressed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. You will note that six of the Church of Greece's hierarchs - Andrew of Dryinoupolis, Seraphim of Piraeus, Paul of Glyfada, Seraphim of Kythira, Kosmas of Aetolia and Akarnanias, and Jeremiah of Gortynos - have already added their signatures to this document and it will certainly be signed by a broader segment of the clergy and laity in the coming days.

The effect of this text will be greatly increased if you, and any other clergyman, monastic or layman whom you may know, add your signatures to the following document and then return it to us electronically at the following e-mail address: [synaxisorthkm@gmail.com](mailto:synaxisorthkm@gmail.com)

With all due respect and honor,

On behalf of the Synaxis of Orthodox Clergy and Monastics

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## The New Ecclesiology of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

It was with great sorrow that we all witnessed the events which unfolded in the Holy Land, now a few months ago. Within the context of his meeting with Pope Francis in Jerusalem on 25 May of the present year, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew expressed, amongst other things, a novel ecclesiology, entirely foreign to Orthodoxy. The culmination of years of deviation within the sphere of ecclesiology, and indeed its worst manifestation, this new ecclesiology denies the indissolubility and incorruptibility of the Church, despite the fact that it is, according to the Fathers, "...the Theanthropos (the God-Man) Christ, extended through that ages and unto all eternity. It is for this reason that the Church is without, "...spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."<sup>1</sup> Conversely, according to the Patriarch, the Church has been divided, contrary to the will of the Almighty Christ:

### 1. Various formulations of 'Divided Church' ecclesiology.

**"The One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by the "Word who was in the beginning," who was "truly with God," and who "truly was God", according to the Evangelist of Love, sadly, on account of the dominance of human weakness and of impermanence of the will of the human intellect, was divided in time in the course of her earthly campaign. This brought about a variety of conditions and groups, each of which claiming "authenticity" and "truth" for itself. The Truth is One, however; Christ, and the One Church founded by Him".**

**"Unfortunately, the human element prevailed, as a result of a build up of "theological," "practical," and "social" additions, the Local Churches were led into a division of the unity of the Faith, into isolation, which at times gave rise to hostile polemics"<sup>2</sup>.**

This position is not entirely new: much earlier, the Ecumenical Patriarch expressed his view in favour of the equality of the Orthodox Church and the Papal heresy:

**"A common sacramental conception of the Church has emerged, sustained and passed on in time by the apostolic succession...the Joint Commission has been able to declare that **our Churches recognize one another as Sister Churches, jointly responsible for safeguarding the one Church of God**, in faithfulness to the divine plan, and in an altogether special way with regard to unity... In this perspective we urge our faithful, Catholics and Orthodox, to reinforce the spirit of brotherhood **which stems from the one Baptism and from participation in the sacramental life.**"<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> St. Justin Popovich, *Man and God-Man; Studies of Orthodox Theology* (Greek), Athens 1987, pg. 182. See also Ephesians 5, 27.

<sup>2</sup> «Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης προς Πατριάρχη Ιεροσολύμων: Αμφότεροι φυλάσσομεν πνευματικός και κυριαρχικός Θερμοπύλας» [Ecumenical Patriarch towards the Patriarch of Jerusalem: Together we guard spiritual and sovereign Thermopylae], Amen.gr (May 24, 2014), <http://www.amen.gr/article18151> (paragraph 4)

<sup>3</sup> «Common Declaration Signed in the Vatican by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I, June 29, 1995», EWTN Global Catholic Network, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/BARTHDEC.HTM>. See also *Episkepsis* magazine, 520 (31-7-1995), pg. 20.

“Dialogue is most beneficial, for by means of it we come to recognize the harmful elements of the old leaven, which is a presupposition of true and salvific repentance...**Inasmuch as one Church recognizes another Church to be a storehouse of holy grace and a guide leading to salvation**, efforts aimed at tearing faithful away from one church in order that they may join another are unacceptable, being inconsistent with the aforementioned recognition. Each local Church **is not a competitor of the other local Churches, but rather is one body with them** and desires the life of unity in Christ, the restoration of what was disturbed in the past, and not the absorption of the other.”<sup>4</sup>

This strange broadening of the Church did not leave the heretical Protestants outside of its bounds. Patriarch Bartholomew had the following to say in 2008 about the 9th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches which took place in Porto Alegre of Brazil in February of 2006:

**“And so, freed from the tensions of the past** and determined to stay together and act together, two years ago at the Ninth Assembly at Porto Alegre, Brazil, **we laid down markers for a new stage** in the life of the Council, taking account of the present situation in inter-church relations and the changes that are gradually taking place in ecumenical life”<sup>5</sup>.

To general astonishment, the final text of that Assembly proclaims about the “churches” of the W.C.C:

**“Each church** is the Church catholic, **but not the whole of it**. Each church fulfils its catholicity when it is in communion with the other churches...**apart from one another we are impoverished**”<sup>6</sup>.

The Patriarch’s theological advisor, Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, also considers any heretical or schismatic group that employs "baptism" of any kind to be within the church.

“Baptism creates a limit to the Church. Now, within this baptismal limit it is conceivable that there may be divisions, but **any division within those limits is not the same as the division between the Church and those outside the baptismal limit** ... within baptism, even if there is a division, one may still speak of the Church”<sup>7</sup>.

By arbitrarily widening the boundaries of the Church, Metropolitan John limits the field of heresy. According to him, every heresy that does not expressly contradict Symbol of Faith [the Creed], such as Monophysitism-Monothelism (the so-called Pre-Chalcedonians), Iconoclasm, anti-hesychasm, nationalism, etc. is part of the church

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<sup>4</sup> Address to the Papal delegation led by Cardinal William Keeler, during the Thronal Feast of the Patriarchate of Constantinople(1998), (Greek) in *Episkepsis*, 29<sup>th</sup> year, no. 563 (31-11-1998)

<sup>5</sup> HOMILY BY HIS ALL HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AT THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. Saint Pierre Cathedral, Geneva, 17 February 2008, in <http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=en&id=876&tla=en>

<sup>6</sup> Called to be the One Church §6 and 7 in God, in your Grace... Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Luis N. Rivera-Pagan, WCC Publications, Geneva 2007, pg.257.

<sup>7</sup> “Orthodox ecclesiology and the Ecumenical movement” *Sourozh Diocesan Magazine (England)* vol. 21 (August 1985), pg. 16 and on.

“Heresy, meaning the **divergence from that which is believed and confessed in the Creed by the Church**, automatically sets one outside of the Church. The problem arises, however, from the moment this point of view becomes absolute”<sup>8</sup>.

All the above seem to be the extension of an earlier suggestion of Patriarch Athenagoras, the mentor of the subsequent leaders of the pan-heresy of Ecumenism, who said:

“The movement toward unity it is not a matter of one Church moving toward the other, but rather let us all re-found the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church together, coexisting in the East and the West as we lived up to 1054 in spite of the theological differences that existed then”<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. Historical instances where this new ecclesiology has been applied.

The views of the Ecumenical Patriarch set forth above have been confirmed in practice over time at various ecumenical events. They are confirmed, for example, by the Ecumenical Patriarch's presence or prayer at Vespers for the patronal feast of Rome (June 1995), at the funeral of Pope John Paul II (April 2005), at a papal liturgy in the Vatican (June 2008), at a meeting of the Council of Catholic Bishops (October 2008), at the first formal liturgy of Pope Francis (March 2013), when he blessed the orthodox faithful together with Cardinal Cassidy (at the Phanar in 1992), when Pope Benedict XVI was permitted to participate in a Patriarchal Liturgy in Constantinople (November 2006), during which the Pope, wearing a pallium, recited the Lord's prayer and was honoured with the singing of "Many Years". These views were also confirmed more recently (May 2014) by means of joint prayer in front of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, as well, through the giving of a Holy Chalice to the newly elected Uniate bishop, Demetrios Salachas of Carcabia in Athens (May 2008), with the Papal bishop Louis Pelatre participation in the Vespers of Love in Constantinople (Pascha 2009), a custom that has continued in subsequent years, and with the allowing of heterodox to enter into the Altar through the Beautiful Gate. Patriarch Bartholomew's participation in the Anglican Synod at Lambeth Palace (November 1993) offers further confirmation of these views. All these instances - and many more besides these - were filled with joint prayer, addresses or even common ecclesiological statements. In the context of his ecumenist plans, Patriarch Bartholomew did not forget to encourage the new Bulgarian Patriarch, Neophyte to return the Patriarchate of Bulgaria to the ecumenical movement, from which it had withdrawn in 1998.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “The Church and the Eschaton”, Church and Eschatology, (Greek), Metropolis of Demetrias, Academy of Theological Studies, Athens, 2001, pg. 30.

<sup>9</sup> From the Patriarch's 1967 Christmas message, in Archimandrite Athanasios J. Vassilopoulos, From the Journey of Love... [in Greek] (Athens: 1968), p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Greeting of the his All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the reception of the Patriarch of Bulgaria, Neophyte, in the hall of the throne” (Constantinople, September 20, 2013), in <http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=gr&id=1757&tla=gr>; “We are hopeful, your Beatitude, that under your wise guidance, the Holy Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, will participate, according to the tradition and decision of pan orthodox meetings, in the intra-Orthodox and inter-Christian dialogues.”

### 3. Denial of the Creed, faith “in One Church”

The above mentioned statements and events make manifest the Ecumenical Patriarch's consistent ecclesiological mindset. His recent statement in Jerusalem clearly shows the obvious contradictory or double-minded character of this ecclesiology, a common characteristic of Ecumenism, as it projects the One Church, but as “divided in time”. In this case, the patriarchal text creates confusion and is clearly not inspired by the Holy Spirit, which is a “right” [straightforward] Spirit.<sup>11</sup> It should be understood that this view constitutes a conscious denial, at the very least, of the unity of the “One Church” as an attribute and ontological certainty of the Church. The inclusion of this attribute in the ecclesiological article of the Creed is the expression of the Church’s self-consciousness [αὐτοσυνειδησία] and of its experience in the Holy Spirit. Consequently, whoever consciously doubts or rejects the faith of the Church as it has been set down with exactness by the Decrees of the Ecumenical Synods, especially in the unambiguous articles of the Symbol of Faith, whether he is clergy or laity, self-evidently falls away from the Body of the Church, and according to the Ecumenical Councils is subject to deposition or excommunication.<sup>12</sup>

### 4. The Church is eternally indissoluble, the unity of Christ with the faithful is unbreakable.

The Lord's clear promise that “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against”<sup>13</sup> the Church, and even more, the assertion that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men”<sup>14</sup>, trump the Patriarch's assertion that “the human factor prevailed” in the second millennium of the Church’s history. In this case, the findings of the Fathers are clear: for Basil the Great, Christ “was begotten in the midst” of the Church, “and gave Her the gift of being unshakeable”<sup>15</sup>; St. Gregory the Theologian calls the Church “the great heritage of Christ which will never cease, but which will advance ever further”, whereas St. John Chrysostom proclaims that Scripture calls the Church “a mountain, because of It being immovable, and a rock, because It is incorruptible.”<sup>16</sup> St. Nektarios of Aegina, in agreement with the confession of all the Holy Fathers, verifies that the Church alone is “the pillar and the ground of the truth”<sup>17</sup>, because the comforting Spirit stays in her until the end of ages”<sup>18</sup>. The continuous presence of the Spirit safeguards the Church, and that is why the work of Christ is complete and whole, for He “has accomplished His work, He has gladdened his friends”<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Psalm 50, 12. See also, James, 5, 12: “let your Yes be Yes, and your No, No, lest you fall into judgement”.

<sup>12</sup> See 7<sup>th</sup> holy Canon of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ecumenical Council (ACO 1,1,7,105)

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 16, 18.

<sup>14</sup> I Corinthians 1, 25.

<sup>15</sup> St. Basil the Great, Commentary on the 45<sup>th</sup> Psalm 5, PG (Patrologia Graeca by Migne) 29B, 424B,C.

<sup>16</sup> St. Gregory Theologian, Homily 4 (Against Julian the Emperor I), PG 35, 588C-589A. The text of St. John Chrysostom is found in St. John of Damascus work, Sacred Parallels, (Greek), PG 95, 1436A.

<sup>17</sup> I Timothy 3, 15.

<sup>18</sup> St. Nektarios, 2 Treatises: I: About the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. II: About Holy Tradition, (Greek), Athens 1987, pg. 32.

<sup>19</sup> Pentecostarion, Matins of the Sunday of the Pentecost, Iambic Canon, Ode 1.

We believe in the Church as in an eternal theanthropic establishment that “will not only be extended everywhere in the universe, but throughout all time, as well”<sup>20</sup> and consequently cannot be defeated or pass away. It is clear that this space-time extension is not speaking of some noetic Church “outside of time”, but of the militant Church “in time”, which is historically visible as a unity-communion of faithful<sup>21</sup>, because it is “a city that is set on a hill” and “a house of God that is admired by all”<sup>22</sup>.

The extraordinary unity of the Church as the Body of Christ is a fact, absolutely and irrevocably secured by Christ, the Head of the Church<sup>23</sup>, through the continuous presence of the Holy Spirit within it<sup>24</sup>, from the day of Pentecost until the end of time. The faithful, as the body of the Head, which is Christ, are a necessary complement of the Church, “the fullness of Him who fills all in all”<sup>25</sup> and the reason why a Church “outside of time”, without faithful on earth, is inconceivable. Saint John Chrysostom writes: “for where the Head is, there is the body also. There is no interval to separate between the Head and the body; for were there a separation, then were it no longer a body, then were it no longer a head... and he introduces Him as having need of each single one and not only of all in common and together...then is the head filled up, then is the body rendered perfect, when we are all knit together and united”<sup>26</sup>. That is why God is glorified both in Christ and in the Body of Christ, the Church, whose only saviour is the God-man<sup>27</sup>, He who “nourishes and cherishes the church”<sup>28</sup>. Whoever does not believe in the continuation of the Incarnation, the Church, does not believe in Christ. “The Church is the continuation of the Incarnation in time. And just as our Lord was seen and touched and venerated in the flesh, in time, so too does His Body, the Church, continue—united and holy—in time. If we were to accept the division of the Church, we would be accepting the nullification of the Incarnation and the salvation of the world”<sup>29</sup>.

## 5. Since Christ “cannot be divided” it is self-evident that unity is a mark of the Church

The Church does not chase after unity, but rather, possessing it as an ontological attribute, simply maintains it, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”<sup>30</sup>. It is an essential characteristic of the Church, since “the Church’s name is not a name of separation, but of unity and

<sup>20</sup> St. John Chrysostom, Psalm 44, PG 55, 203.

<sup>21</sup> That it is visible is obvious in the Scriptures; see Acts 2, 41 and 2, 47: “and the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved”.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 5, 14 and St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 1, 2 PG70, 69 A.B. See also, Eusebius Caesarea, *Preparation for the Gospel* 6, 18 PG 22, 457D.

<sup>23</sup> Ephesians 1, 22-23.

<sup>24</sup> John 14, 16 and Luke 24, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Ephesians 1, 22-23.; “and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”

<sup>26</sup> Homily on the Epistle to the Ephesians, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.iii.iv.iv.html>

<sup>27</sup> Ephesians 3, 21; “to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen”; Ephesians 5, 23 “as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body”.

<sup>28</sup> Ephesians 5, 29.

<sup>29</sup> A Greek Orthodox Priest, *On the Recent Events in Jerusalem and their Ecclesiological Underpinnings*, [orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/on-the-recent-events-in-jerusalem-and-their-ecclesiological-underpinnings.aspx](http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/on-the-recent-events-in-jerusalem-and-their-ecclesiological-underpinnings.aspx).

<sup>30</sup> Ephesians 4, 3.

concord”<sup>31</sup>. A divided and broken apart Church is a monstrosity and mere imagination. St. Nektarios of Aegina, while targeting the Protestant theory of an “invisible Church”, seems to be asking the Patriarch: “Why the name *Ecclesia*, when the members are isolated and unknown to each other, and do not constitute an organic system or an unbreakable unity in the true sense of the word?”<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, the unity of dogmatic faith is also the given reality of the Church; because, just as Christ, the Head of the Church cannot be broken apart - Christ is not divided<sup>33</sup> - so too in the Church there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism”<sup>34</sup> and not dogmatic polyphony. The Church forms a single faith in the Christ-believing flock, so that “for all the faithful, the grace and calling of faith joins each one to the other in a single form”<sup>35</sup>.

## 6. The cutting off of the heretics does not harm the Church

Whoever falls away from the unanimous theological confession, becoming like a dried vine that has been cut off from the Vineyard<sup>36</sup>, is himself responsible, as St. John Chrysostom clearly warns: *“the Church did not abandon him but he abandoned the Church [...] Abide in the Church and you will not be betrayed by the Church. If you flee from the Church, the Church is not the cause of your capture [...] if you go outside, you are liable to be the wild beast's prey: yet this is not the fault of the fold, but of your own faintheartedness [...] the Church is not walls and roofs, but faith and life”*<sup>37</sup>.

In agreement with the above, the cutting off of the heretical Latins and the absence of the Protestants from the One and Catholic Church did not harm Her (“*you will not be betrayed by the Church*”) nor would they be able to harm Her. At an 18<sup>th</sup> century synod, the Orthodox Patriarchs clearly profess the incorruptible theanthropic nature of the Church and that the Latins fell away from this on account of the Pope’s pride: *“After many years of being under the evil one’s influence, the Pope of Rome, having been led astray into innovations and strange teachings, was separated from among the members of the Body of the pious Church and fell away [...] If the four parts of the sail have been maintained in place, attached and woven together, we do now sail with ease through the waves of this life’s sea without suffering*

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<sup>31</sup> St. John Chrysostom, Homily on the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to the Corinthians, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf112.iv.ii.html>

<sup>32</sup> St. Nektarios, *ibid* (Greek), pg. 27.

<sup>33</sup> See: I Corinthians 1, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Ephesians 4, 5.

<sup>35</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy* 24, PG 91, 705B. See also [http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts/0650\\_max-con/02\\_max-txt1.htm](http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts/0650_max-con/02_max-txt1.htm).

<sup>36</sup> John 15:4-6

<sup>37</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Ὅτε τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἔξω εὐρεθεὶς ἐν τρόπῳ* 1, PG 52, 397.



*shipwreck [...]. Thus it is, for us, that Christ's pious Church stands upon four pillars, that is, the four Patriarchs, and remains unassailable and unshaken"*<sup>38</sup>.

Heresy is certainly not only the damage done in relation to the fundamental faith of the Church, but also that done in the lesser matters of the faith, which invariably worsens over time. Together with many other Saints, the Patriarch of Constantinople St. Tarasios, observes: *"As far as dogmas are concerned it is all the same to err to a small degree or to a great degree, because in one case and the other the law of God is broken"*<sup>39</sup>. The great Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios II agrees with this, stating: *"Whether one sins in great matters or lesser matters against the truth of the Faith, he is a heretic"*<sup>40</sup>.

## 7. Has the Priesthood of the Bishops been abolished?

A consistent/honest interpretation of this new ecclesiology renders the Patriarch and all the Bishops as "deficient" in regards to the true Priesthood of Christ and consequently deputies or locum tenens, but not successors of their Throne, supervisors and not perfecters (or finishers) of the Divine Mysteries of the Church. If Patriarch Bartholomew is right, the Bishops do not partake in the fullness of the Priesthood of the Church. If over time, the One Church, the Body of Christ, was broken up, then the ecclesiastical Hierarchy (Priesthood) which is in communion in Spirit with the heavenly Hierarchy according to St. Maximos,<sup>41</sup> retains the enlightenment of the Priesthood only in a "fragmented" state, since, "...through divine vision the hierarch is illumined first, and afterwards he imparts to those under him and guides to perfection those whom he brought to illumination."<sup>42</sup>

From the above dogmatic findings, brief yet comprehensive (as far as space permits), the distance of the Patriarchal declarations from Orthodoxy has become as clear as day. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew believes in a "broadened and divided" Church; broadened because he thinks that the heretics belong to the Church by the power of any "baptism", regardless of their heretical dogmas and their being in schism and not in communion with the Church; divided because there does not exist "inter-communion" between the Orthodox and heretics. According to the Patriarch, even though divided "in history" the One Church continues to exist "somehow – someway".

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<sup>38</sup> Response (1716/1725) of the Eastern-Orthodox Patriarch towards the Anglican Imperfections, (Response 5), of JOHN KARMIRIS, The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church, of Athens 1953, Tome II, pg. 794 and what follows.

<sup>39</sup> 6th Ecumenical Synod, Praxis I, Mansi 12, 1031-1034.

<sup>40</sup> To the King, sent to him March 6<sup>th</sup>, wherein Gennadios Scholarios Responds to the Situation, Tome 3, Published by Louis Petit – X. A. Siderides, Paris 1930, pg. 161.

<sup>41</sup> Comments in Regards to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 5, 2.4 PG 4, 161A.

<sup>42</sup> ST.MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR, Comments in Regards to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 5. Comments in Regards to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 5, 2.4 PG 4, 164A. ST. DIONYSIOS AEROPAGITE, Comments in Regards to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 3, 2, PG 3, 428A.

It is easy to see, however, in the Faith of the Church, that the Church's Oneness (Unity – state of being Undivided) is an ontological and inalienable characteristic, because She is the Body of the Indivisible and Almighty Christ our God. As the Body of Christ and the completion of His work, the Church cannot be divided because that would mean Her destruction and the “defeat” of [Christ's] Divinity. Nor can the Church cease to exist because the Church Herself is the fulfillment of the promises of eternal salvation on earth.

The unity of the Body of the Church is also expressed in her unique dogmatic faith. Calling this faith into doubt constitutes heresy, for it is the doubting of the presuppositions our salvation. Christ revealed that whoever is separated from the Vineyard, i.e. from Himself, is as a withered branch and is lost<sup>43</sup>. Patriarch Bartholomew believes that the Living and blessed Vineyard of our Lord's Body *is deficient* without these dried out branches, those who through their own responsibility cut themselves off, who are “broken up”, and we must therefore “graft” these branches, though they be dead, in Her anew, into the ecclesiastical Body of true Life, the Living Christ.

## **8. Past Resistance by ceasing the commemoration of Patriarch Athenagoras**

The innovative ecclesiology of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has seen Ecumenism advance from the devaluation of dogma, carried out by Patriarch Athenagoras, to the present, horrific distortion of orthodox faith; apparently the declaration of the “dissolution” of the One Church is necessary for Ecumenism, so that the “new church” can be “re-established” in harmony with ecumenistic specifications.

In the days of Patriarch Athenagoras, the entire Holy Mountain of Athos resisted the Patriarch's ecumenist overtures. Three Metropolitans of the Church in Greece, invoking the 31<sup>st</sup> Apostolic Canon and the 15<sup>th</sup> Canon of the First-Second Council, ceased commemoration [of the Patriarch], which is the lawful, ecclesiastical resistance foreseen by the Holy Fathers. The same response was issued by eight Monasteries on Mount Athos: “*from the decision of the extraordinary 52<sup>nd</sup> Double Holy Synaxis Meeting of November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1971, [...] each Holy Monastery, as self-governed, is free to practice according to its conscience regarding this issue*”<sup>44</sup>. The discontinuing of commemoration without further separation [“walling-off”] or full break in communion [with other Orthodox] always constituted a praiseworthy stance, because, as set down by the 15<sup>th</sup> Holy Canon of the First-Second Council<sup>45</sup> (861 A.D.), those who thus react “have not sundered the union of the Church with any schism, but, on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions.” Those who, with such good

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<sup>43</sup> John 15:4-6

<sup>44</sup> See the general Letter of the Holy Monastery of Saint Gregory in the periodical of *Theodromia* 11 ‘1, (Jan-March 2009) 77. All the relevant information on pages 75-81.

<sup>45</sup> ST. NIKODEMOS THE HAGIORITE, *The Rudder*, Published by Astir, Athens, 1982, pg. 358

intentions, cease commemoration of heretical-minded Bishops “have defied, not Bishops, but pseudo-bishops and pseudo-teachers” and this is why “not only are [they] not subject to any canonical penalty, [...] *but shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honor which befits them among Orthodox Christians*”<sup>46</sup>.

We are saddened, for the way things are developing it does not seem that there is hope for a change of direction by Patriarch Bartholomew. With the imminent visit of Pope Francis to the Phanar for the Patronal Feast of St. Andrew, on November 30, 2014, once again there arises on the gloomy horizon increased liturgical participation of the Pope in the Orthodox Divine Liturgy: his wearing an *omoforion* [bishop’s vestment], his exchange of the liturgical kiss of peace with the Patriarch (which is reserved for only those who liturgize), his recital of the “*Lord’s Prayer*” [from the place of the one presiding (*προεστώς*)], a prayer with a clear Eucharistic reference (“*give us this day our daily [super-essential] bread*”) and which is to be recited by the one presiding [*ο προεστώς*] on behalf of the Orthodox people, even with the sensing of the Pope and his being granted the pulpit (*ἀμβωνος*), for him to preach.

All this is not just a form of simple prayer, because obviously the Divine Liturgy does not begin with “*with fear of God, faith and love draw ye near*”, but from “*Blessed be the Kingdom*”<sup>47</sup>. According to Fr. Alexander Schmemmann “*From the standpoint of Tradition the sacramental character of the Eucharist cannot be artificially narrowed to one act, to one moment of the whole rite. We have an “ordo” in which all parts and all elements are essential, are organically linked together in one sacramental structure. In other words, the Eucharist is a sacrament from the beginning to the end and its fulfillment or consummation is “made possible” by the entire liturgy*”<sup>48</sup>.

We pray that Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew will come to realize his great responsibility for those he is leading into deception and for stripping the Church of the “*robe of truth, the fabric of theology from above*”<sup>49</sup>. Nothing of Orthodox dogma shall ever be lost. Nothing will ever be altered. No new, additional decisions will ever be reached which will alter older judgements. It is not possible for dogmatic evolution to exist in any way, shape or form<sup>50</sup>.

***“The one who is throwing you into confusion, will bear his judgment, whosoever he may be”<sup>51</sup>.***

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<sup>46</sup> See the opinion of St. Nicodemus (ibid pg. 344) On the Canons of First-Second Council [Protodeuteras], “although necessary; however, once in the Church’s good conduct and according to each individual’s situation, this does not become a validated ‘blanket-rule’ according to the Canon-Law of Photios, according to the interpreters of the Canons and according to the whole Church”.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. PRESBYTER AN. GOTSPOULOS, Joint-Prayer with heretics approaching the canonical practice of the Church, published by Theodromia, Thessaloniki 2009, pg. 118 and in general pg. 113-118.

<sup>48</sup> “*Theology and Eucharist*” (§6), <http://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/theologyandeucharist.html>

<sup>49</sup> *Kontakion of Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod* (13-19 July)

<sup>50</sup> Cf. PROTOPRESBYTER GEORGES FLOROVSKY, “The House of God”, the *Anatomy of Problems of the Faith*, trans. Archimandrite Meletios Kalamara, published by Rigopoulou, Thessaloniki, 1977, pg. 133.

<sup>51</sup> Galatians 5:10

At the time of its initial publication, the preceding text had already been signed by some 2000 Orthodox Christians, including six Metropolitans of the Church of Greece, many abbots, clergy, monastics and laity. Those who wish to participate in this humble confession of the Orthodox faith may do so by signing the document which follows below under the heading, "I agree with this document against *The New Ecclesiology of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew* and endorse it," adding your signature, your name, your clerical, monastic, or professional status and your city of residence in the spaces provided. It is requested that you then send this document to us at the offices of the Orthodox Journal *Theodromia*, by mail (Timiski 128, 546 21, Thessaloniki, Greece), by fax (2310 276 590), **or by e-mail** ([synaxisorthkm@gmail.com](mailto:synaxisorthkm@gmail.com))

