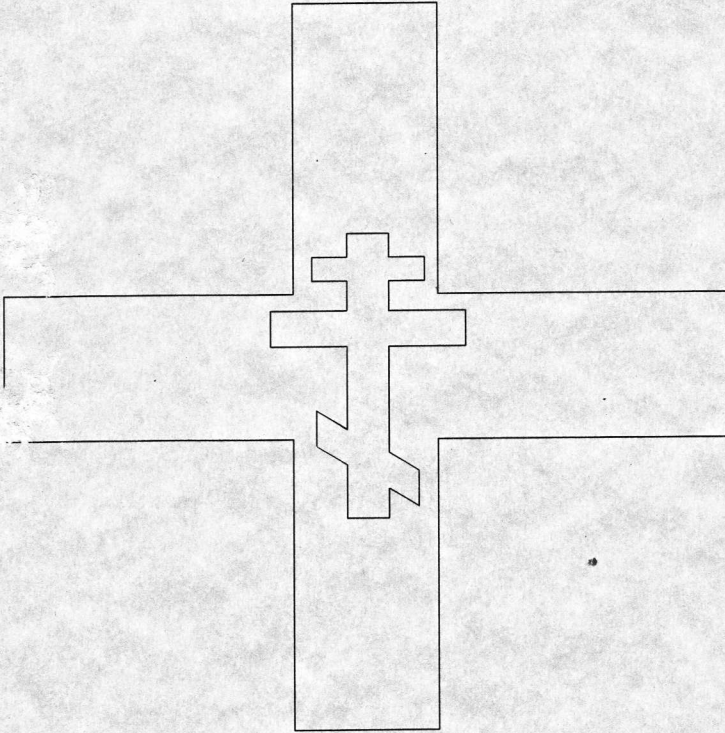


GENUINE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GREECE (GOC)

A BRIEF HISTORY AND COMMENTARY



**COMPILED AND EDITED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES
WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL**

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INTRODUCTION

It is not my intention, in presenting this brief history and commentary, to offend any Church or person. The sole purpose is to gather and write about, as objectively as possible, historical facts concerning the Holy Synod of Greece, (Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, GOC)- sometimes pejoratively referred to as the “Matthewite” Church or Synod.

A great deal has been said, and written, about the Holy Synod that is mere folktale, guesswork, and plain slander. Inquirers, the curious, the sincere seekers of truth, have been subjected to fractured logic and facts colored and slanted in favor of a personal agenda on the part of those who seem to hate, or at least seem not to understand, the position and place of the Holy Synod in the world, and, in particular, in Orthodoxy.

While I am definitely not a non-biased observer of history, as it pertains to the Holy Synod, I believe I have made my point relying on the facts as they have become known to me. Furthermore, this booklet is not the last word. I have merely edited and expanded upon some Internet articles originally contributed by Stavros Markou, a very talented person, with his permission; added other articles and email which were also found on the Internet; and contributed something of my own understanding and observation.

This history and commentary is not being written to defend the Holy Synod against her detractors or against those who would continue to slander her, for no amount of apology for such people could ever be sufficient. For those who are sincere inquirers, however, who would like to know the “other side of the story,” here is something you can ponder, use as a comparison, and then, you can make up your own mind.

The reader should be able to answer the following questions:

- 1) Did Bishop (later Archbishop) Matthew consecrate bishops alone?
- 2) Was Bishop Matthew a Vicar Bishop? Did the Holy Synod “repudiate” the blessing received from the ROCA (ROCOR)? Did the ROCOR consecrate two GOC Bishops to Episcopal rank? Did Archbishop Matthew consider himself, and the GOC, to be the only True Orthodox in the world at that time?
- 3) Was it the intent of the Councils of 1583, 1587, and 1593, which anathematized the new calendar, to represent themselves as Pan-Orthodox?
- 4) Have these Councils had an effect on the way world orthodoxy accommodates the new calendar, even to this day?

- 5) Did a rupture occur from the oneness of the Church as a result of the unilateral acceptance of the new Menologion by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the State Church of Greece?
- 6) Did Bishop Matthew act rightly in opposing the acceptance of the new calendar by the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria, and the State Church of Greece?
- 7) Did Bishop Matthew act rightly in calling to repentance Metropolitan Chrysostom, (retired of Florina) after he repudiated his original statement, in writing, that the new calendar Church was schismatic and devoid of grace?
- 8) Did Metropolitan Chrysostom later repent of his repudiation and then, again, return to his error?

I have endeavored to answer these questions, and a few more, in this booklet.

Much more could have been written, and many more sources could have been cited in defense of the stand and canonical position of Bishop Matthew, and the present Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece. And, since this is a work in progress, every effort will be made to correct mistakes as they are brought to my attention. God willing, a more definitive work will be forthcoming in the near future.

This booklet is being made available, at this time, to help offset the lack of any cohesive information in English. I have prepared this booklet on my own initiative. The mistakes are mine. I am not an official spokesman for the Holy Synod. Unless otherwise indicated, all emphasis is mine.

All correspondence, whether corrections or possible additions, may be sent to: TNW (at) ispwest (dot) com.

Glory to God for all things. May God bless you, dear reader.
May God lead us all to that which is true and give us peace.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

I should now like to present a brief chronological history of the events leading up to the new calendar schism from the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the State Church of Greece, and the schism from the Holy Synod of the GOC perpetrated by Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina.

* **1583, 1587, 1593** These Pan-Orthodox Councils anathematize anyone who celebrates according to the New Paschalion and the New Menologion. More about these Councils later.

* **1821**: On March 25, the feast day of the Annunciation of the Most-Holy Theotokos, the Greek revolution against the Turks is officially proclaimed by Metropolitan Germanos of Old Patras.

* **1833**: On June 15, a Synod of Bishops representing the liberated areas of Greece meets at Nauplion and declares the Church independent. The Greek Church is to be governed by a Holy Synod composed of five members, presided over by the Metropolitan of Athens.

* **1850**: The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople issues a decree recognizing the Church of Greece as autonomous. Each of the five bishops of the Church of Greece is given the title of Metropolitan, and is commemorated as such in his respective Metropolis. All the Metropolitans are to commemorate "The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece."

At this time, the Church of Greece consists of only the regions known as Roumeli (Continental Greece), Moreas (Peloponnesian region), and the Cyclades (south-western Aegean Islands).

* **1852**: The parliament of Greece passes acts relating to Bishoprics, Bishops, and the Clergy, and enacts statutes pertaining to the Church.

* **1864**: The diocese of the Ionian Islands is added to the Church of Greece.

* **1881**: The dioceses of Thessaly, and a part of Epirus, are added to the Church of Greece.

* **1903**: The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, presided over by Metropolitan Procopius of Athens, **condemns the new calendar**.

* **1918**: With the end of the First World War, the membership of the Church of Greece soars as a result of an influx of Greek refugees from Turkey. In the years between 1910

and 1920, Church membership increases from 2,000,000 to 6,000,000 people. The revolutionary politician Eleftherios Venizelos usurps the government of Greece from the monarchy without an election. The new dictatorship government uncanonically deposes Archbishop Procopius of Athens.

* **1919:** The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, presided over by Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, locum tenens of the Archdiocese of Athens, **again condemns the new calendar.** This Synod also declares its support for the monarchy and its refusal to recognize the revolutionary government of Eleftherios Venizelos.

Under intense pressure from the Greek revolutionary dictatorship of Eleftherios Venizelos, Meletios Metaxakis usurps the throne of the Metropolis of Athens. Meletios Metaxakis causes a schism within the Church of Greece by accepting Eleftherios Venizelos as the ruler of Greece and by inserting his name into the litanies instead of commemorating the monarchy. Many Hierarchs resist this action. Hence a schism develops in the Church of Greece: the “Venizelists,” on the one hand, led by Meletios Metaxakis and like-minded Hierarchs, and the “Royalists” on the other, led by Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, which included many other notable Hierarchs such as St Nectarios, Metropolitan of Pentapolis.

* **1921:** On December 29, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, presided over by Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, deposes Meletios Metaxakis for a series of infractions against canon law and for causing a schism. Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias resumes his position as locum tenens of the Archdiocesan throne.

* **1923:** In January, Archimandrite Chrysostom Papadopoulos (the future Metropolitan of Athens) writes in a report to the Committee of the Department of Religion in Greece: ***“No Orthodox Autocephalous Church can separate itself from the rest and accept the new calendar without becoming schismatic in the eyes of the others.”*** Archimandrite Chrysostom Papadopoulos is consecrated and enthroned as the Metropolitan of Athens and all Greece.

* **1924:** Pressured by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the State Church of Greece **adopt the new calendar on March 10/23, 1924.** The Church of Greece is given Autocephalous status, and the Metropolitan of Athens is elevated to the status of “Archbishop of Athens and all Greece.”

The Holy Community of Mt. Athos expresses its opposition to the change of the calendar by breaking communion with the New Calendarist innovators. Many such zealot communities are also established throughout Greece. These resisters call themselves the “True Orthodox Christians” (TOC). However, they are collectively known as the “Traditionalists” or “Old Calendarists.”

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina retires from his position in the Ecumenical Patriarchate in protest of the introduction of the new calendar. Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias continues to serve according to the patristic Orthodox calendar until he is forced to adopt the new calendar on February 15, 1928.

* 1925: On September 14 (O.C.) during the Feast of the Exultation of the Precious Cross, the Cross appears in the heavens over the Church of Saint John the Theologian on Mount Hymettos, outside of Athens, where two thousand faithful had gathered to celebrate the Vigil. The police, who were sent by Archbishop Chrysostom of Athens to break up the service and arrest the priest, were converted.

For the first time, the invented theory that the New Calendarists were only “potentially” but not “actually” schismatic makes its appearance in the writings of Athanasios Danielidou, an Athonite monk. The community of True Orthodox Christians publishes many booklets and articles condemning this theory. Among the books published are: “Distomos Romphaia” (i.e., “Two-Edged Sword”) and “Apostasias Elegchos” (i.e., “Apostasy’s Censure”).

* 1925-1935: Some 800 communities of those who follow the traditional Orthodox calendar are established throughout Greece.

* 1926: On Holy and Great Thursday, 450 Hieromonks and monks on Mount Athos led by Fr. Arsenios Kotteas, sign “The Sacred League of Athonite Zealot Monks,” a declaration for the defense of Orthodoxy against the new calendar.

In the same year, the Sacred League publishes its Constitutional Charter under the heading, “The Anchor of Orthodoxy.” This group which openly declares that the New Calendarists are fully schismatic in both “potentiality” and “actuality” also condemns the new theory of Athanasios Danielidou.

The Holy Greek Orthodox Community of True Orthodox Christians assembles at a clergy-laity council in Athens at which they support the teachings defined by the Athonite Fathers, that the New Calendarists of Greece are fully schismatic.

* 1927: On November 21, the local authorities move to arrest the priest of the True Orthodox Church at Mandra of Megaris, in Attica. However, the parishioners form a human wall around their pastor, and in the ensuing scuffle a young married woman, Catherine Routis, is fatally wounded. She dies on November 28, the first martyr of the True Orthodox Struggle in Greece.

* 1927-1932: Many Zealot Athonite Hieromonks travel to Greece and abroad to help the Traditionalists with their sacred struggle. Of these Zealot Athonites, the most prominent figures are: **Archimandrite Matthew** (Karpathakis), Hieromonk Arsenios (Kotteas),

Hieromonk Eugene (Lemonis), Hieromonk Gerasimos (Agiodionysiotis), Hieromonk Parthenios (Skourlis), Hieromonk Artemios (Ouzounopoulos), Hieromonk Anthony (Koutsonikolas), Hieromonk Gideon (Papanikolaou), Hieromonk Nectarios (Katsaros), Hieromonk Artemios (Xenophontinos), and Hieromonk Akakios (Papas).

* **1928:** The Metropolises and Dioceses of Southern Macedonia, Western Thrace, and various Greek islands are released from the jurisdiction of the New Calendarist Ecumenical Patriarchate, and are handed over to the jurisdiction of the New Calendarist State Church of Greece, by order of the Greek dictatorship government.

* **1929:** On July 2, Archbishop Chrysostom Papadopoulos of the New Calendarist State Church of Greece convokes a meeting of his Synod in an effort to legitimize the adoption of the new calendar and to condemn all those who remain faithful to the traditional Church calendar. Of the forty-four bishops present, thirteen depart from the Synod meeting, twenty-seven refuse to endorse the decree, and **only four sign** (not a majority).

* **1935:** On May 12/25, the True Orthodox Christians of Greece invite Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias (second in seniority in the State Church of Greece), Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina (a retired bishop of the Ecumenical Patriarchate) and Metropolitan Chrysostom of Zakynthos, to lead their communities in their struggle against the calendar change. It is now realized the New Calendarist schism is permanent.

On May 13/26, the three Metropolitans formally accept the Old Calendarists' invitation at the Church of the Dormition at Kolonos, Athens, in the presence of 25,000 faithful. They proceed to issue a Confession of Faith, and, at the same time, solemnly declare the State Church of Greece to be schismatic in relation to those Local Churches that have preserved the traditional calendar. A majority of Hierarchs has accepted the new calendar innovation. (Please see Appendix B, paragraphs three and four.)

On May 23/June 5, the three Metropolitans consecrate Bishop Germanos (Varykopoulos) of the Cyclades. On May 24/June 6, Bishop Christopher (Hatzis) of Megara is consecrated. On May 25/June 7, Bishop Polycarp (Liosis) of Diavlia is consecrated. On May 26/June 8, **Bishop Matthew** (Karpathakis) of Bresthena, a former Athonite confessor, is consecrated. All of these consecrations take place at the chapel of St Marina, within the Holy Convent of the Entry of the Theotokos at Keratea, in Attica, Greece.

The schismatic New Calendarist State Church set forth a trial and condemnation against the three Metropolitans who returned to the Orthodox calendar and the four bishops they consecrated. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Zacynthos, and Bishops Christopher of Megaris and Polycarp of Diavlia joined the schismatic New Calendarist State Church. The remaining four hierarchs (namely, Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostom of Florina, Germanos of the Cyclades and **Matthew of Bresthena**) who had maintained their adherence to the Orthodox Calendar were either imprisoned, exiled, or confined to

monasteries by the order of the government, which acted at the behest of the State Church.

On June 8/21, in an Encyclical to the faithful, the remaining True Orthodox Hierarchs affirm that the New Calendarists are fully schismatic in both “potentiality” and “actuality,” and are under the condemnation of the Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1583, 1587 and 1593. The Synodal encyclical is signed by: Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostom of Florina, Germanos of the Cyclades.

In October, the True Orthodox Hierarchs are freed from their exile. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina leaves Greece and travels to the old calendar Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch to help garner support. In December, by orders from the Greek government, the Greek consul in Jerusalem refuses to stamp Metropolitan Chrysostom's passport, thus forcing him to remain in the Holy Land for several months.

In Thessalonica, Fr. Stergios Liouras, the married priest of the True Orthodox Church of the Three Hierarchs, is arrested after the Liturgy on the orders of the New Calendarist Metropolitan. He is beaten by the police and dies a few days later.

* 1936: The Holy Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece declares Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias as the Synodal President and Locum Tenens of the archdiocesan throne of Athens and all Greece.

The New Calendarist Bishop of Boston, Joachim, returns to Greece and is appointed by the State Church as the Metropolitan of Fokis. While visiting the village of Desfini in Fokis, he enters the Old Calendarist church during the time of the Divine Liturgy while Hieromonk Theonas is celebrating. Metropolitan Joachim grabs the holy chalice out of the hands of Father Theonas, throws it to the ground, and tramples it with his feet until it is completely flattened. Then, he seizes Father Theonas, tears out his beard with his bare hands, pushes him to the ground and begins kicking him mercilessly. A short time later, Father Theonas dies from his wounds. Despite this homicidal act, Metropolitan Joachim of Fokis is later rewarded with advancement to a larger diocese, the Metropolis of Demetrias, to replace Metropolitan Germanos who had left the New Calendarist State Church in 1935 to lead the True Orthodox Christians.

* 1937: In June, a letter to Monk Mark (Chaniotis) is composed by Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina, in which they claim the calendar innovation is a curable error. And since it does not directly affect any dogma, the State Church is not actually schismatic, but rather only “potentially schismatic” until a Pan-Orthodox Synod decides her fate. And until she is judged by such a Synod, her mysteries retain sanctifying grace. This belief goes counter to their encyclical of 1935. To be consistent, they both should have immediately returned to the new calendar Church.

On June 17/30, Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena (see letter, second paragraph, page 25) issues an encyclical demanding an official statement from Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias affirming the New Calendar Church is schismatic and without sacramental grace, in accordance with the 1935 declaration and Confession of Faith.

On September 5/18, Metropolitan Matthew writes a second encyclical, in which he severs communion with Metropolitan Germanos due to the latter's unorthodox theories and denial of the 1935 Synodal Confession. Hence, the Old Calendarists of Greece are divided into two groups, namely, the GOC ("Matthewites," The Holy Synod) which affirms the original Synodal Confession of Faith, and the "Florinites," who begin to observe the false ecclesiology of the monk Athanasios Danielidou, which states that the New Calendarists are only potentially, but not actually, schismatic, and, therefore, possess grace in their Mysteries.

On September 14 (O.C.), the Feast of the Exultation of the Precious Cross, the Cross appears in the heavens over the Church of the Exultation of the Precious Cross, on Mt. Kophinas, Crete, where more than a hundred people have gathered for an all-night vigil. The Church, in which the miracle occurs, is the GOC under the Omophorion of Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena.

On November 9, Metropolitan Chrysostom writes a letter to Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades, in which he again expresses his unorthodox views that the New Calendarists are only potentially schismatic and possess sacramental grace until they are condemned by a Pan-Orthodox Synod. Bishop Germanos reacts to this by separating from Metropolitans Germanos and Chrysostom, and by joining the Synod of Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena.

* 1938: In March, Metropolitans Matthew of Bresthena and Germanos of the Cyclades are tried at the State Court in Chalkis. behavior at the Court gives the impulse to many protests of the faithful people While Metropolitan Matthew steadfastly confesses the Faith, Germanos of the Cyclades, to the scandal of many witnesses, renounces his faith, by saying: *"I am not an Archpastor, since I have ceased to be that after I had been deposed"* (He was referring to his uncanonical and ineffective condemnation and deposition by the State Church in 1935). Bishop Germanos' behavior at the court gives impulse to many protests of the faithful throughout Greece.

* 1943: Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, president of the Florinite Synod, petitions to rejoin the New Calendar State Church, but his request is denied. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina breaks communion with him. Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias continues to serve as an Old Calendarist bishop until his death in 1944. Metropolitan Chrysostom remains apart from his president, and heads his own Synod, not recognizing Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias.

A dispute breaks out between the two Hierarchs of the Holy Synod. Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades is accused of many anti-traditional beliefs, such as his rejection of the icon "Not Made With Hands," and his insistence that many traditions of the Orthodox Church are simple fables and should not be believed.

Instead of explaining his actions and sayings, Bishop Germanus of the Cyclades begins to slander Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena, and declares that he, "cannot have any communion with him." Hence, the two bishops cease concelebrating with one another, but the faithful people of the Holy Synod of the GOC remain united.

* 1944: Metropolitan Chrysostom issues an encyclical affirming his belief in the presence of grace among the new calendarists, and their "potentially" schismatic nature.

Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias dies and is buried by the New Calendarists.

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina is joined by two new calendar bishops, Christopher (Hatzis) and Polycarp (Liosis). These are the same bishops who had left the Holy Synod and joined the New Calendarists in 1935.

During the German occupation, communist guerillas rise up throughout Greece and, as a result, several True Orthodox Christians are martyred. One such case is that of the priest of the GOC, Hieromonk Joseph of Xylocastron, who is arrested and imprisoned on July 20, and is executed, together with another young man, on July 22, by three young communist guerillas.

* 1945: Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina issues another official encyclical reaffirming his view of the New Calendarists as "potentially" schismatic and in possession of grace-filled Holy Mysteries.

On November 14, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina states in an article in the newspaper "Eleutheria," that he will, "*never, and under no circumstances, consecrate bishops.*" In his opinion, the Old Calendarists do not constitute a Church but rather only a "guard" against the heterodoxies of the State Church. Metropolitan Chrysostom's unaccepted theories and his refusal to ordain more bishops, cause a widening of the schism between the Holy Synod of Greece (GOC) and the Old Calendar Synod of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina.

* 1945-1948: Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena attempts, by means of epistles, to persuade Metropolitan Germanos of the Cyclades to concelebrate with him in order to consecrate more bishops to ensure the continuation of Apostolic Succession in the True Orthodox Church of Greece. Metropolitan Germanos refuses to reply to any of Metropolitan Matthew's epistles. Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena also sends many epistles to Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, asking him to renounce his false theories

and return to the **original** Synodal Ecclesiology that the New Calendarists are fully schismatic and devoid of grace in their Holy Mysteries. Unfortunately, all of Metropolitan Matthew's efforts are without success. Metropolitan Chrysostom continues to observe his unacceptable theories and does not agree to ordain more bishops. He believes the Old Calendarists do not constitute a Church, but rather only a “guard” or “resistance” group within the new calendar State Church of Greece. Metropolitan Chrysostom's unacceptable theories, and both his and Metropolitan Germanos' unwillingness to consecrate more bishops, threatens the long-term future of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece.

Metropolitan Matthew also turned to bishops of other nationalities and jurisdictions (p. 88, “Struggle Against Ecumenism,” HOCNA, Boston, Massachusetts, 1998.) but without success. Not something a man who thought he was the leader of the only Orthodox Church on earth would do.

* 1948: Metropolitan Germanos of the Cyclades is arrested by the State Police and is imprisoned for violating laws against ordaining Old Calendarist priests.

In September, Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena, seeing his strength dissipating due to old age, and seeing that every attempt to contact a true Orthodox bishop outside Greece proves to be unsuccessful, proceeds with the consecration of a bishop on his own. This was done so that the suffering Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece might not be once again orphaned. The consecration of one bishop by another bishop acting alone, albeit a rare occurrence, is permitted by *economia* in the Apostolic Injunctions. This is permitted at such times that many bishops cannot be gathered together, whether it is due to persecution, the scarcity of true Hierarchs at that particular time, or any other impediment that prevents the gathering of Hierarchs. (The Rudder, 1957, Page 4)

On September 6/19, Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena consecrates Bishop Spyridon of Trimythos. On September 13/26, Bishops Matthew and Spyridon consecrate Bishop Andreas of Patras (+2005). On September 20/October 3, Bishop Demetrios of Thessalonica is consecrated. On September 27/October 10, Bishop Kallistos of Corinth is consecrated. Metropolitan Matthew did not consecrate **bishops** alone. After he consecrated Bishop Spyridon, they, together, along with each new bishop, consecrated other bishops.

* 1949: On September 15/28, the Holy Synod elects and enthrones Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena, as the True Orthodox Archbishop of Athens and all Greece. All the bishops are then elevated to the status of Metropolitans.

In November, the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, under the presidency of Archbishop Matthew, declares an Anathema against Freemasonry in a Synodal Encyclical. It was signed by the following Hierarchs: Matthew of Athens and all

Greece, Spyridon of Trimythus, Andreas of Patras (the former Archbishop, +2005) Demetrios of Thessalonica and Kallistos of Corinth.

* 1950-1955: The New Calendarist “Archbishop” Spyridon of Athens initiates and maintains a period of fierce persecution against the Traditional Old Calendarist Orthodox Christians, accusing them of being pro-Slavic, pro-Communist, and traitors to Greece.

* 1950: In January, Metropolitan Germanos of the Cyclades, now out of prison, joins the Florinite Synod under Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina.

On May 14/27, the Blessed Confessor-Hierarch, Archbishop Matthew of Athens and all Greece reposes in the Lord. He is given a Hierarchical burial on May 18/31, and his reposed body is laid to rest in the Holy Convent at Keratea, which Blessed Archbishop Matthew had founded himself in 1927, hardly something a man who feared women would do. (Archbishop Matthew is slandered by a rumor that he was so frightened of women that he, on seeing them, would run and hide from them.)

Immediately after the repose of Blessed Archbishop Matthew, Metropolitan Demetrios of Thessalonica is installed as the locum tenens of the Archdiocesan throne of Athens and all Greece of the GOC.

On May 26/June 8, (exactly twelve days after the repose of Blessed Archbishop Matthew of Athens), the Florinite Synod under Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina issues an encyclical re-affirming the 1935 Confession of Faith and retracting all previous contradictory statements, including the theory of “potentiality.” Hence, the Florinite Synod finally admits that the position of Blessed Archbishop Matthew is correct, and that they themselves (the Florinites) have erred in repudiating the Confession of Faith and were therefore in need of repentance. However, as we shall soon learn, this encyclical by the Florinite Synod was not a genuine repentance.

On November 1/14, Metropolitan Andreas of Patras, spiritual father of the Monastery of Kouvara and the Convent of Keratea, is arrested and imprisoned by the State authorities. The abbot of Kouvara, Archimandrite Gerasimus (Skourtaniotis), and the abbess of Keratea, Mother Mariam, are also arrested and imprisoned together with other senior monastics of the two holy communities. Metropolitans Demetrios of Thessalonica and Kallistos of Corinth are also arrested and exiled, as well as many priests and monastics throughout Greece. Many are also martyred for the faith during this time. For example, an aged Priest, Father Plato, is beaten to death by the police in Patras, and then hastily buried in a field to cover up the crime. Many monks and nuns were also tortured and died in prison. This period beginning in 1950 is the fiercest persecution against the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in the twentieth century.

In the meantime, Metropolitan Spyridon of Trimythus travels to Cyprus to serve as the resident Hierarch of the True Orthodox Christians of Cyprus. However, after residing on Cyprus for only nine months, he is arrested, imprisoned, and forcefully sent back to Greece, at the instigation of the New Calendarists, by the British authorities that governed Cyprus at the time.

* 1951: In February, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina is arrested and exiled to the Monastery of St. John at Hypsilos on the island of Lesbos.

On March 24, Metropolitan Germanos of the Cyclades dies while under house arrest.

* 1952: The Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece proceeds to consecrate four new bishops, namely: Bessarion of Tricca and Stagae, John of Thebes and Lebadia, Chrysostom of Messenia, and Meletios of Attica and Megaris, thus forming a Synod of Bishops consisting of eight Hierarchs.

On November 6, out of frustration, the three Florinite Hierarchs, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, and Bishops Polycarp and Christopher, **resign** from their Archpastoral duties, “until a final resolution of the calendar question by a Pan-Orthodox Synod.” Protests force Metropolitan Chrysostom to immediately retract his resignation, but Polycarp and Christopher remain as simple laymen within the Florinite Synod.

* 1954: In February, the simple laymen who were once Florinite bishops, i.e., the former Bishops Polycarp and Christopher, return to, and are received as bishops by, the new calendar State Church of Greece.

* 1955: On September 8/21, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, the last remaining Florinite Bishop, dies, leaving no successor-bishops for his Synod. This marks the end of the Florinite Hierarchy, as the Florinites lose their Apostolic Succession. The widowed Florinites seek, by every means possible, to re-establish their Hierarchy. This led to the uncanonical consecration of Akakios Papas, and the establishment of the Akakian Hierarchy. The Holy Synod of today, therefore, remains the only Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, tracing Apostolic Succession to the original GOC, which in turn traces Apostolic Succession to the Orthodox Church of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The “Florinite” bishops are not a continuation of the Hierarchy of the Traditional, Old Calendar Greek Orthodox Church as represented by the pre-new calendar Ecumenical Patriarchate and the State Church of Greece.

SUMMARY

So, briefly, in **1924**, the new Menologion was imposed upon the Greek Church. In **1935**, an encyclical was issued by a synod of living bishops of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, officially declaring the new calendar Church schismatic, according to the

anathemas against the papal new calendar promulgated by the Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1583, 1587, and 1593. In 1937, a split from the GOC occurred when one of her bishops, Metropolitan Chrysostom, changed his mind, and expressed a belief opposite to that very confession which he had previously signed, in 1935, and the belief on account of which he left the new calendar Greek Church. In 1948, Metropolitan Matthew, due to the prevailing persecutions in Greece, and not finding other bishops who would help him, was forced to consecrate Bishop Spyridon, alone. Under such circumstances the consecration was canonical, declared so by the Apostolic Injunctions. In 1955, the opposing Synod of Metropolitan Chrysostom ceased to exist when he, the last of the Hierarchy, reposed.

The followers of Metropolitan Chrysostom should have recognized the resolution to the schism. There was, in their midst, a Hierarchy which preserved Apostolic Succession and the presence of the Grace of the Holy Priesthood now absent in the Churches of Constantinople and the State Church of Greece. Both of these “marks” of the True Church of Christ were removed when the new calendar was accepted by the bishops and the faithful of the Greek Church. The Hierarchy of the GOC had never, and has not to this day, backed down in its confession of faith that the new calendar Churches were the cause of a terrible rupture that exists to this day.

Unfortunately, the schism has now been compounded by the heresy of all heresies, Ecumenism. The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Greece believes and teaches that the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the State Church of Greece are, now, not only schismatic but also heretical (unilateral lifting of the anathema against the Roman Catholic Church by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenegoras; prayer with the heterodox and pagans in Canberra; prayer with the heterodox in Assisi; prayerful participation in the Jubilee Year 2000 celebration in Rome; common liturgical prayer by the EP with the Roman Catholic Church during the joint celebration of the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul; etc.). Lately, the acceptance of the baptisms of Protestants and Roman Catholics, (and common prayer with them) as grace-filled, by the Greek, Antiochian, and Romanian Churches in Australia, is only another step down the path of apostasy. (For a further discussion of ecumenism, please see Appendix D.)

THE SCHISM OF 1937

The following is a brief history of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina's break with the Holy Synod of the GOC.

In 1937, a schism occurred from the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece. This schism was caused by the development of a false ecclesiastical theory among two of the Synod's Hierarchs: the Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina. These bishops, and their followers, departed into schism and became known as the "Florinites."

This false ecclesiastical theory is the belief that schism and/or heresy can exist, side by side, in the Orthodox Church, giving rise to the mistaken notion that one can fight heresy and schism from within heresy and schism. It made its first appearance in 1925 in the writings of the Athonite monk, Athanasius Danielidou. The monk Athanasius claimed that, though the New Calendarists had indeed fallen under several anathemas, they were supposedly only "potentially" but not actually schismatic, and therefore their Mysteries possessed sanctifying grace. The League of Athonite Zealot Fathers reacted sharply against this theory, and officially condemned it. In a series of publications between the years 1926 and 1935, the Athonite Zealot Fathers, and the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, published many books and articles denouncing this theory as an ecclesiastical heresy in contradiction to the teachings of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Among the many books published between 1926 and 1935, were the ones published by the Athonite Zealot Fathers regarding this issue, include the following: "Distomos Romphaia" ("Two-Edged Sword") and "Apostasias Elegchos" ("Apostasy's Censure").

Unfortunately, by the end of the same year (1937) immediately after his return from exile, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina preached from the amvon, at several churches (in Thebes, Chalkis, Piraeus and Athens) that children baptized in the schismatic New Calendarist State Church should not be chrismated. He taught the New Calendarists are, *"only potentially, but not actually (effectively) schismatics, since the innovation of the calendar has not been officially condemned."*

In other words, this was simply a re-manifestation of the ecclesiastical heresy that had been previously condemned by the Holy Synod. Upon this at least controversial teaching, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina added a controversy in practice. He insisted that all those baptized in the New Calendarist Church must not be received by chrismation. (Up to that time, from the formation of the New Calendarist schism, the children baptized by New Calendarists were received into the Genuine Orthodox Church by chrismation.)

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina also introduced into the Church another false opinion that, *"the New Calendarists have not been officially condemned"* as if the decisions of the many Pan-Orthodox and Local Councils of the past were not applicable.

This belief leads to another great error, namely, that schism and heresy cause a division **in** the Church, when, in actuality, heresy and schism cause a division **from** the Church. If the division is in the Church, there is no incentive to leave a Local Church that is involved in ecumenism or which is in communion with a Local Church in heresy. The attitude becomes one of “fighting from within” the Church. The simple fact is schism and heresy, or any other form of cacodoxy, separates one from the Church and from the Grace of the Holy Priesthood.

By all these new teachings, Metropolitan Chrysostom was in contradiction with himself (he had preached the opposite belief several months earlier). He was also in contradiction with the Holy Fathers (they had never proclaimed any such theory regarding schismatics: that a schism remains potential until judged by an official council or that there can be division (dogmatically) in the Church). Most of all, he was in contradiction with the truth of the Church. By stating that the new calendar innovation was never officially condemned, he rejected the applicability of the Pan-Orthodox, the Local, and the 1st Ecumenical Councils that had previously condemned and anathematized any change in the Church’s calendar.

To bring this chapter to a close, here is a list of some of the councils that anathematized the new calendar, as well as the councils that simply condemned the new calendar as a cause of schism and discord, or simply mentioned the new calendar and declared it incompatible with Orthodoxy. All of the councils prior to 1924 issued anathemas. After 1924 the councils condemned and applied the historical anathemas to the contemporary new calendarists.

BEFORE THE CALENDAR CHANGE

1. Pan-Orthodox Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Jeremias (1583)
2. Pan-Orthodox Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Jeremias (1587)
3. Pan-Orthodox Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Jeremias (1593)
4. Regional Council of Jerusalem presided over by Pat. Dositheus (1670)
5. Regional Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Agathangelus (1827)
6. Regional Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Anthimus (1895)
7. Regional Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Joachim (1902)
8. Regional Council of Jerusalem presided over by Pat. Damianus (1903)
9. Regional Council of Petrograd presided over by Met. Makarius? (1903)
10. Regional Council of Bucharest presided over by Metropolitan...? (1903)
11. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Met. Procopius (1903)
12. Regional Council of Constantinople presided over by Pat. Joachim (1904)
13. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Germanus of Demetrias (1921)

AFTER THE CALENDAR CHANGE

14. Regional Council of Alexandria presided over by Pat. Photius (1924)
15. Regional Council of Antioch presided over by Pat. Gregory (1924)
16. Regional Council of Jerusalem presided over by Pat. Damianus (1924)
17. Regional Council of Cyprus presided over by over Abp. Cyril (1924)
18. Regional Council of Karlovitsy presided over by Met. Anthony Khrapovitsky (1926?)
19. Regional Council of Serbia, presided over by the Patriarch
20. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Germanus of Demetrias (1935)
21. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Germanus of the Cyclades (1938)
22. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Abp. Matthew of Athens (1949)
23. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Met. Chrysostom of Florina (1950)
24. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Abp. Agathangelus (1957)
25. Regional Council of New York presided over by Met. Philaret (1974)
26. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Auxentios Pastras (1974)
27. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Abp. Andreas of Athens (1985)
28. Regional Council of Athens presided over by Auxentios Pastras (1985)

Also, the following common declaration signed by both the GOC (under Archbishop Andreas) and the Florinite Synod (under Metropolitan Chrysostom):

29. Common declaration against the new calendar and the New Calendarists. (1991)

Furthermore, there is the declaration of Bishop Cozma of Slatioara in which he anathematized the new calendar and Freemasonry including the belief that heresy and schism can exist in the Orthodox Church until officially condemned by a Pan-Orthodox or Ecumenical Council. (The letter can be found on the Internet in the archives of the "paradosis" List.)

30. Declaration of the True Orthodox Church of Romania.

THE PAN-ORTHODOX COUNCILS

I should like, at this point, to review and comment on the Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1583, 1587, and 1593, which anathematized those who use the new calendar. An attempt is being made, among the Churches of world orthodoxy, to downplay these extremely important councils (along with the many others to which I referred earlier) and the implication of the anathemas they promulgated. Those who follow the new calendar, and those bishops who allow certain parishes of their diocese to worship according to the new calendar reckoning, have caused a schism. They can no longer claim oneness with the Church of the Local and Ecumenical Councils. The division in liturgical practices destroys the concept of oneness. A relativistic attitude toward oneness has given birth to an "Orthodox 'Uniatism.'" The thought seems to be: *"Alright, if your conscience bothers you, and you can't reconcile your understanding of oneness of the Church with the division in liturgical practice, here, we have a place for you, a parish that is still on the old calendar."* All the while, these Churches are not only divided liturgically from the Body of Christ, they are also ecumenical/heretical, or in communion with ecumenists/heretics.

A closer look at these councils is in order. First, the Council of Jerusalem held in 1583.

"According to the Codex manuscript (#772) of the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos, we learn of the Sigillum issued by this council:"

*"The Sigillum of the Patriarchal Encyclical to the Orthodox in every land commands them under the penalty of punishment and anathema not to accept the new Paschalion, **or the new calendar** but to remain with that which was well defined once and for all by the 318 Holy and God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council."* ("The Calendar Question" by Reverend Basil Sakkas. Translated from the French by Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, and published by Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 1973, p. 23.)

A Sigillum is, *"An official synodical decree, bearing the Patriarchal seals."* (From the footnote, p. 23) It was signed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremiah II, the Patriarch of Alexandria, Sylvester, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronios, *"and the other hierarchs of the Council who were present."*

The second Pan-Orthodox Council held in 1587, issued another condemnation:

"In the 'Ecclesiastical History' (Constantinople 1912, Vol. III, p. 125) written by Philaret Baphides, Metropolitan of of Didymotichon, we read a confirmation of the condemnation of 1583 and moreover: Likewise in 1587, a council at Constantinople was convoked where, in the presence of Jeremy II, Meletius Pegas and Sophronius of

Jerusalem, the correction of the calendar was condemned as being perilous and unnecessary and as being, rather, the cause of many dangers.” (ibid. p. 23)

The third condemnation of the new calendar which took place in 1593 reads:

“7) That whoever does not follow the customs of the Church as the Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils decreed, and Holy Pascha, and the Menologion with which they did well in making it a law that we should follow it, and wishes to follow the newly-invented Paschalion and the New Menologion of the atheist astronomers of the Pope, and opposes all those things and wishes to overthrow and destroy the dogmas and customs of the Church which have been handed down by our fathers, let him suffer anathema and be put out of the Church of Christ and out of the Congregation of the Faithful. (“The Rudder,” The Orthodox Christian Education Society, 1957. pp. 14-15)”

It seems the **intent** of the councils, adequately defined in the above passages, is to forbid anyone from using the *“newly-invented Paschalion and the New Menologion of the atheist astronomers of the Pope.”* Also, even though an anathema might not be self-effectuating, it is the expression of the Church of Christ condemning an error or someone in error. Once it has been promulgated, all the Church has to do is use it. The anathema itself is an expression of the truth and condemns anyone delving into that which has been anathematized. It, as it were, defines a boundary the Church says one must not cross. In other words, he who knowingly defies an anathema knows already that he is out of the Truth and falls under censure. Now, whether a particular Synod, or bishop, honors the censure is another story. Those bishops, or Synods, who do not, are not of the mind of the Church and are, themselves, in grave danger and liable to the anathema.

The words, “the calendar,” includes the Paschalion and the Menologion. It does not matter if the Paschalion is unchanged. Once the Menologion is changed the anathema applies. “The (one) calendar” is still changed. It is not unreasonable to conclude that the anathema would apply in this case. Neither a change in the Paschalion nor the Menologion could be tolerated. It is not that the calendar cannot be changed, it is the unilateral method of change that caused the problem. The Church (ecumene) did not change the calendar, it was an imposition by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the State Church of Greece.

Since the Gregorian Paschalion **and** the New Menologion have been anathematized, to change one is to effect the other. That is, even if the true Menologion is observed, and only the Paschalion is changed, the anathema applies. The opposite is also true.

The Paschalion and the Menologion are designed to constitute an integral whole, the foundation, or basis, of the oneness of liturgical worship. The imposition of the New Menologion caused a devastating separation from the Church.

The Council of 1583 included the Patriarchs: Jeremias of Constantinople, Sylvester of Alexandria, and Sophronius of Jerusalem, *"And the rest of the prelates present at the council."* Its intention was to be Pan-Orthodox, and to place under anathema **any Orthodox Christian** who used the Gregorian Paschalion or Menologion. The Council of 1593, held in Constantinople, was attended by The Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremy II; The Patriarch of Antioch, Joachim; The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius; The Patriarch of Alexandria, Meletius; *"the Plenipotentiary of the Russian Church, and many other Orthodox hierarchs representing the Orthodox Churches..."* ("The Calendar Question," p. 24)

Even if the Orthodox councils included only the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, the Greek Church was represented. The anathema could also be looked upon as local. Therefore, if any one of these local Patriarchates changed the Menologion, that Church would fall under the anathema. The councils were, after all, looked upon by the Greek Churches as being definitive (and by all the other Churches as well, as we have discovered).

On June 8/21, 1935, the synod of living bishops of the GOC, the inheritors of the True Greek Orthodox Church: Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostom of Florina, and Chrysostom of Zakynthos, affirmed the schismatic nature of the new calendar Greek Church and that it fell under the anathemas of the Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1583, 1587, and 1593.

Today, all the Greek Old Calendar Churches agree with the declaration of the synod of living bishops. All accept the encyclical of 1935. And even though a group led by Metropolitan Chrysostom at one time denied the unilateral change to the new calendar caused an actual schism (he later changed this belief) the Holy Archbishop Matthew never wavered. Now, all agree, he, and the GOC, was (and is) correct. This is why any dialogue of union with the Holy Synod must include an open and honest discussion of the pre-1971 historical events. This is also why, in my opinion, such a dialogue with the Holy Synod has been resisted.

Is it possible that those on the Gregorian Calendar (or the **new** Julian calendar) do not fall under the Anathemas, since they keep the Paschalion? The answer, of course, is no! The new calendar is some 13 days ahead of the old calendar. If the New Calendarists were to really keep "the calendar," they would celebrate Pascha according to that calendar reckoning. They, however, change their Paschalion **and** Menologion so that they will, they think, be faithful to the First Ecumenical Council. In doing so (interrupt the cycle of the Menologion and change the Paschalion by interrupting its proper place) they indeed fall under the anathemas of the Pan-Orthodox Councils and the First Ecumenical Council.

The discussion of whether the councils of 1583, 1587, and 1593 are definitive in their insistence on uniform liturgical practices, or whether the resulting anathemas, which were

the crowning glory of these councils, are applicable, is a moot discussion and of no value. Every single Church that considers herself Orthodox, that exists in the world today, accepts these councils as speaking the truth, for she is careful not to transgress the essence of these councils. They **artificially insert** into the new Menologion the Paschalion based on the Orthodox Church's Julian Calendar. The essence of the Councils is: *"If you, you who considers himself an Orthodox Christian, have taken away the Julian (Old) Calendar and put in its place the Gregorian (New) Calendar, or are in communion with a Church that did, then you are, in reality, no longer of the Body of Christ, no longer Orthodox. You are under anathema!"* As we have shown, all Churches adhering to the new calendar, or who are communing New Calendarists, are, in fact, under anathema.

On June 17/30, 1937, Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena addressed an epistle to the Holy Synod (prompted by the repudiation of the 1935 encyclical signed by, in addition to the other Bishops of the GOC, Metropolitan Chrysostom) demanding an official statement from Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias, the Synodal president, that the New Calendarist Church is schismatic and devoid of sacramental grace, in accordance with the 1935 Confession of Faith. Metropolitan Matthew wrote:

"A Bishop is obliged to teach people and clerics the correct faith and the virtuous way of life and not to be negligent, according to the 58th Apostolic Canon, as well as to guard piety and to condemn by anathema every heresy and cacodoxy and generally every teaching which is opposite to the Ecclesiastical Tradition, according to the 1st canon of the Second Ecumenical Council, the 30th of the Sixth, and the 30th of the Seventh.

"SINCE:

"Due to different circumstances, the hearts of the faithful have shaken in many places; the confidence and obedience to the Holy Synod has been shaken; and the consciences of many have been scandalized; (and) in order not to be found guilty and subject to the punishment of the above mentioned canons, and not to be found guilty in the voice of our All-mighty Lord, Who exclaims: 'The Priests have trespassed the Law, they have not announced to the people My commandments that I have spread among the sacred and the holy;' and for the sake of the building in Christ, of the pious pleroma of the Church, and for the sake of the consciences of those who, in simplicity, believe in the Lord and for the cause for which Christ died,

"WE SUBMIT:

"In writing to the Holy Synod our humble proposal, obeying the voice of our Archpastoral conscience and looking in fear at the event of our standing before the High Place of Christ, for the Lord will ask the blood of every soul He entrusted to us.

"THEREFORE:

"With much fear in God, we propose and warmly ask:

"1. (a) That a Synodal encyclical be edited to the whole faithful flock in Greece that fights for the patristic faith and in which we are obliged (taking the Word of Orthodoxy in our mouth) to announce clearly that all the mysteries of the schismatic church under

Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens and all Greece are void of the divine Grace according to the 1st canon of St. Basil the Great;

“(b) To state that upon approaching the true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, children baptized in the schism are to be chrismated, according to the above mentioned canon of God-speaking Basil, and by libel, (to wit, open renunciation of heresy and confession of true Orthodoxy), if it be a case of adult Christians;

“(c) We should teach the faithful in the encyclical that they are obliged to avoid common prayer and participation in any sacramental act of the schismato-heretical inovationist priests, according to the 33rd canon of the Holy Council of Laodicia, which commands not to have joint prayers with heretics or schismatics;

”2. To condemn, in that encyclical, the godless teaching of the anti-Christian Freemasonry, which supersedes every other heresy(...)

”Date: June 17/30, 1937

Signed:

+ Matthew of Bresthena”

However, Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias did not reply to this epistle. He, together with Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, continued to preach an ecclesiastical heresy that was against the Synodal Confession of 1935.

On July 5/18, 1937, Metropolitan Matthew addressed the following epistle to Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, the Synodal president:

“... Since during the discussion on the terms of my proposal two of the members of the Holy Synod, the holy former Metropolitan of Florina and the holy Metropolitan of Demetrias, had lost their temper and had become angry at me, and since the threats and offenses cannot diminish the seriousness of my proposal, I take the honor to ask you to kindly convoke a council as soon as possible and to give an answer to my above mentioned proposal.

“In case that, in spite of every hope, the Holy Synod does not accept the terms of my proposal according to the decrees of the divine and holy canons, but insists on regretting what was published in the encyclical on the 8/21 June of this year concerning the very serious issue of re-chrismation, being impotent to bear the burden of such a decision, I consider myself obliged, as an Orthodox Hierarch, to break off any spiritual relation with you, in order not to be found guilty in the frightful Judgment Day, as the one who despised the divine and holy canons.

"However, hoping that the Holy and Sacred Synod will wish to revise its decision and to offer a solution for the issues mentioned in my proposal as the Holy Canons command, and that it will wish to restore, with a Synodical encyclical, the Orthodox pleroma's shaken confidence in our Holy Synod, I shall be awaiting until next Monday, the 13th of the current month, your written answer to my proposal.

"In case that the Holy and Sacred Synod refuses to accept the terms of my proposal after the above mentioned date, I will consider the silence as a refusal of accepting the terms of my proposal and I will consequently break any relation with you, and I will further define my position.

"Date: July 5/18, 1937

Signed:

+ Matthew of Bresthena"

However, this epistle also remained unanswered.

When the Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina were properly asked to clarify their new teaching by a letter from the monk Mark (Chaniotis), the two Metropolitans stated: *"The Holy Chrism, which is sanctified by the Church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, retains all its grace and sanctifying energy, even if it was blessed by the Patriarchate after the calendar innovation."*

On September 5/18, due to the fact that Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, the Synodal president, had continued to preach the ecclesiastical heresy denying the patristic Confession of 1935, Metropolitan Matthew wrote a second encyclical, in which he severed communion with Metropolitan Germanos. Metropolitan Matthew wrote:

*"... And since until today I have not been given any answer to anything of the above mentioned, and keeping in mind the 15th canon of the First-and-Second Council: '... those who on account of some heresy condemned by Holy Councils or Fathers sever themselves from communion with their president, that is, because he publicly preaches heresy and with bared head teaches it in the church, such persons as these not only are not subject to canonical penalty for walling themselves off from communion with the so-called bishop **before synodical clarification**, but they shall be deemed worthy of due honor among the Orthodox. For not bishops, but false bishops and false teachers have they condemned, and they have not fragmented the Church's unity with schism, but from schisms and divisions have they earnestly sought to deliver the Church.'*

"And since in the last answer you gave to the reverend Hieromonk Mark Chaniotis you have quite clearly announced that the mysteries performed by the New Calendarists are valid and that they possess divine Grace, and that you would continue exercising

spiritual communion with the innovative, schismatic, (New Calendarist) Church of Greece...

“WE DECIDE:

“1) To express our deepest sorrow to you and to everyone who follows you because of your sudden and unexpected apostasy from your original confessions and announcements;

“2) To break off any kind of spiritual communication with you and with everyone who follows you, until our Lord God wishes to enlighten you to return to your original Confession of Faith and to fulfill all of your pastoral duties; and to keep the correctness of the Holy Canons and Traditions of the Church not by following so-called mildness, economy and condescension, and as the one that cannot bear the burden of such a decision of yours and in order not to be found guilty in the frightful Judgement Day as the one who had despised the divine and sacred canons, having called upon myself the condemnations and anathemas of our Holy and God-bearing Fathers;

“3) I recall all the signatures that I have placed until this day in the acts and other documents of the Synodal sessions with you, and I ask you to cancel my participation in the newspaper “Voice of Orthodoxy”.

“Date: September 5/18, 1937

Signed:

+ Matthew of Bresthena”

Due to the fact that Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina had abandoned the true confession, they fragmented the internal unity of the Church, and thus fell into schism. Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena saved the Church from internal division by confronting and condemning the ecclesiastical heresy, and by walling himself off from those who preached it bare-headed. This completely canonical and Orthodox action of Metropolitan Matthew is supported in the very canon he quoted in his above encyclical.

On September 9/22, 1937, Metropolitan Chrysostom wrote a letter to Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades in which, among other things, he claimed that the condemnation of the Gregorian Calendar by the Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1583, 1587 and 1593 supposedly applies *“only to Latins, while (Chrysostom Papadopoulos) took over only half of it, keeping the old calendar for Pascha, deliberately so as to avoid the condemnation.”* By this statement, Metropolitan Chrysostom affirmed his belief that the previous Pan-Orthodox Councils did not condemn the current New Calendarists of Greece.

However, if this theory were true, then Metropolitan Chrysostom should have returned to the New Calendarist State Church. According to the canons, one is only justified in breaking communion with his Synodal president *“on account of some heresy condemned*

by *Holy Councils or Fathers*" (15th Canon of the First-and-Second Council). Metropolitan Chrysostom was obligated to return to the New Calendar Church from which he went into schism. If, according to Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, the Greek New Calendarists supposedly never fell under the condemnation of the Pan-Orthodox Councils, then there was no canonical justification for him to break communion with the New Calendarist Archbishop.

Upon breaking communion with the New Calendarist State Church of Greece, Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostom of Florina and Chrysostom of Zacynth made the following statement to justify their separation from the innovations of Archbishop Chrysostom Papadopoulos and his Synod:

"...Whereas the governing hierarchy of Greece, regardless of how much it insists that it left the canon concerning Pascha untouched and that it celebrates Pascha according to the old calendar, (nevertheless) by implementing the Gregorian calendar unilaterally, could not avoid indirectly violating this (canon) also when it changed the festal calendar of the annual cycle of the lections of the Sunday Gospels, the fasts, and the other Church services, which are inextricably bound with the canon that was instituted by the First Ecumenical Council..."

Therefore, by later stating that the decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Councils supposedly referred *"only to Latins, while (Chrysostom Papadopoulos) took over only half of it, keeping the old calendar for Pascha, deliberately so as to avoid the condemnation,"* Metropolitan Chrysostom denied the very reason for his justification in separating from the New Calendarist State Church of Greece in 1935.

On September 14/27, 1937, as a reaction to the non-Orthodox teachings found in the letter of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades issued the following encyclical addressed to the faithful Genuine Orthodox Christians: *"... Hence, we are forced to renounce the two Hierarchs, Germanos, hitherto of Demetrias, and Chrysostom, formerly of Florina, and to cut off every (sacramental) association with them, because they have trampled and cast away all that they had previously preached in the presence of thousands of people at Kolonos. They (Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina) have fallen into the same category as the New Calendarists themselves; for, on the one hand, they accept the mysteries of the latter as valid, and, on the other hand, they forbid us to characterize the so-called Church under Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens as schismatic, (even though the State Church) has clearly violated the Canons of the Holy Apostles, the decisions of the Holy Seven Ecumenical Councils, the teachings of the Holy and God-bearing Fathers, and the Sacred Tradition*

of the Church. They have accepted intercommunion with the New Calendarists in order to serve their own interests...

"Date: September 14/27, 1937

Signed:

+ Germanos of the Cyclades"

On September 19/October 2, 1937, Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades wrote the following letter to Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina:

"... Hence, in my (previous) letter to you, I declared that due to your skillfully introduced innovations and canonical infractions, I am unable to continue cooperating with you. Consequently, by the Apostolic Commands (Canons 45, 46, 65 of the Holy Apostles, etc) and with great sorrow, I declared your separation from the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians. But infractions of the said commands of the holy Ecumenical Councils and of the holy and God-bearing Fathers by no means ever occur ("without subsequent attachments"). For example: Your recognition of the schismatic and heretical Church under Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens, consequently leads to the recognition of (that Church's) decisions regarding your depositions, by which power you are demoted to the rank of simple monks. And, as it was declared, your acceptance of your restoration to your old Metropolises, as you desired to join the party of the schismatic church, your recognition of the mysteries (holy baptism, holy chrism, etc) performed by the heretical New Calendarist priests...

"... After your departure from the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, in which we (Matthew of Bresthena and Germanus of the Cyclades) continue to be the only two remaining Metropolitans, you (Germanus of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina) by no means resemble a synod, and you definitely do not resemble the (original) Synod consisting of seven Metropolitans...

"Therefore, due to these (reasons), denying every aspect of your jurisdiction (since you have become of like mind with the schismatics...) I declare that I do not wish to be present among you... because you do not return from your cacodoxy to the Orthodox Faith...

"Date: September 19/October 2, 1937

Signed:

+ Germanos of the Cyclades"

On October 5/18, 1937, Metropolitans Germanos of the Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthena issued an encyclical addressed to all the clergy and faithful Genuine Orthodox Christians:

“Beloved children in the Lord, Most righteous Hieromonks, Priests,

“We, the undersigned Hierarchs, entreat you, in the name of the Only True God in Trinity, to go over our present Archpastoral Encyclical with great care and patience, that you may well understand the reasons for which we renounced and disapproved of the two so-called Old Calendarist Hierarchs, Germanos, hitherto of Demetrias, and Chrysostom, formerly of Florina...

*“In 1935, we and two other Hierarchs **proclaimed** in the presence of the correctly and genuinely believing people, that the church under Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens became schismatic because it fell away from the Sacred Canons of the Holy Apostles; the decisions of the seven Holy Ecumenical Councils; the teachings of the holy and God-bearing Fathers; and the Holy Tradition; and due to this, it lost the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the mysteries performed by its schismatic and modernist priests do not have sanctifying grace according to St. Basil the Great and all the God-bearing Fathers...*

“Unfortunately, however, two Hierarchs and their chancellor, Mr. A. Gregoropoulos, in their churches here, and at Chalkis, and at Thebes and elsewhere, have preached the very opposite, in that the (church) under (Chrysostom Papadopoulos) of Athens is supposedly the ‘Official’ (Church); that the mysteries of this schismatic Church have illuminating and sanctifying grace; that it is possible for the infants of New Calendarists to commune in our churches, without first receiving (true) chrismation; and that it is permissible for us (and our faithful) to enter the churches of New Calendarists for the purpose of joint attendance at church and joint prayer (with the New Calendarists).

“But for what reason, then, do we travel a distance of one or two days in order to attend church services, and we do not prefer the many ‘churches’ in our own nearby areas? And what, then, is the connection between purity and profanity? What, then, is the connection between deception and truth? And, worst of all, for what cause should we trample the Sacred Canons and Holy Tradition? Since we were unlawfully deposed and unlawfully exiled, how can we accept that church, which has become schismatic, as ‘Official?’ Would we not, then, be compelled to also accept our deposition and exile, and remain as simple monks? (...)Is it permissible for (Chrysostom), the former (Metropolitan) of Florina, to name the causer of soul-destroying evil, the schismatic ‘Patriarch’ Meletius (Metaxakis), as ‘ever-memorable’ in an official document? He, (Meletius Metaxakis), who, like Beliar, disturbed all of Orthodoxy and the Church of Christ, (Chrysostom of Florina) names him as ‘ever-memorable???... (...)By both words and deeds, the two Hierarchs (Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina) have harmed our sacred struggle, and have left us the responsibility to firmly abide by all that we had preached from the very beginning, for until this very day we continue to accept (what we had preached), and we confirm (it) by both our words and deeds... (...)Due to all these (reasons), and especially due to the fact that through their speeches and written documents, the two Hierarchs (Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina) have

accepted the mysteries of the cacodoxical and schismatical Modernists as valid, and they do not recognize the Church of the blasphemous and apostate Chrysostom Papadopoulos as schismatical, thus denying the original confession of Orthodoxy; we were compelled, together with all the clergy with us, and especially the Hagiorites (monks from Mt Athos), to renounce (Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina); not for self-centered or materialistic reasons, like they slanderously proclaim, but rather with terrible pain in our hearts, and with great grief and sorrow, for the sake of this most sacred struggle for Orthodoxy... Hence, the question is not about personal passions or materialistic benefits, but rather about matters of the Patristic Faith, which is in danger, and about the Holy Traditions, which have been honored throughout the past centuries...

"Date: October 5/18, 1937

Signed:

+ Metropolitan Germanus of the Cyclades

+ Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena"

On November 9/22, 1937, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina made the following "prophesy" regarding the events surrounding the restoration of the Orthodox Calendar, in a letter to the Metropolitans Germanus of the Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthena:

"Be certain, the triumph of Orthodoxy shall, in the nearest future, be celebrated by all in the Metropolis of the Church of Greece, by the might of Christ and according to the truly Orthodox and patriotic desire of our God-preserved King and the president of the Greek Government, who has accomplished great deeds, and all true Orthodox Greeks shall justly receive the crown of joy and glory, except you (Bishops Germanus of the Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthena) and your few followers who will stay outside the marriage feast like foolish virgins and vainly weep over your deprivation of that spiritual joy and delight."

In 1942, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina expressed his desire to heal the schism between his Synod and the Holy Synod of the GOC. Hence, in the same year, Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena wrote the following letter to Metropolitan Chrysostom:

"Since we are informed that you desire unity (with us), all our talks and discussions become needless when you accept the following issues of faith which caused our division, and from that moment on we are already united and we can meet:

"1. That the Church of Greece, by introducing the papist calendar, became schismatic;

"2. That the mysteries of the New Calendarists are worthless;

"3. That their chrism is deprived of sanctifying grace;

“4. That children of New Calendarists, on their approaching the Genuine Orthodox Church, are to be chrismated.

“And if you declare this to the cacodox Church of Greece, through the court agent, and issue an encyclical to the Greek people, then our unity automatically follows...”

However, Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina continued to preach their ecclesiastical heresy with further extremism, and again denounced and condemned the right-believing bishops.

The Florinite bishops fell deeper into their ecclesiastical heresy and widened the schism when they issued an official Synodal Encyclical in 1944, in which they confirmed their belief in the validity of New Calendarist mysteries, and they wrote the following regarding the true adherents of Holy Tradition who had upheld the original Synodal Confession of 1935:

“The parasynagogue bishops (Matthew of Bresthena and Germanos of the Cyclades) who have a different opinion from us (on the New Calendarists) fall into the heresy of Protestantism and perform mysteries from a non-existent Church, and are deprived from grace...”

On November 14, 1945, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina made the following statement in an article in the newspaper “Eleutheria:” *“We assure all the Church and State authorities that, having full awareness that we are only simple keepers of an institution of Pan-Orthodox importance as the old calendar is, and not representatives of a rebellious church, we shall never, and in no case whatsoever, carry out ecclesiastical acts such as the consecrations of bishops.”*

Metropolitan Chrysostom's unacceptable theories caused the schism with the Holy Synod of the GOC. His refusal to consecrate more bishops could have placed the long-term future of the Greek Old Calendarists in jeopardy as Apostolic Succession would not be passed on to the next generation, and eventually the priesthood would be destroyed. It seems this was the exact plan of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina. He regarded the Old Calendarists as simply a “movement” within the State Church, and therefore considered that it was unnecessary for the Greek Old Calendarists to have their own hierarchs in the future.

Although Archbishop Matthew of Bresthena, for thirteen entire years, had begged Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina to return to the patristic Orthodox Synodal Confession of 1935, the latter refused and responded with personal attacks and condemnations against those who faithfully adhered to the true Orthodox ecclesiology. However, on May 26, 1950, (exactly twelve days after the blessed repose of Archbishop

Matthew of Athens and all Greece), Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina “coincidentally” had a sudden change of mind. In what seemed to be an act of repentance, the Hierarchs of the Florinite Synod issued a new encyclical that contained the following:

*“In the year of our Savior, 1935, we **proclaimed** the Church of the innovating New Calendarists to be schismatic. We reiterate this proclamation and in consequence ordain the enforcement of the First Canon of Saint Basil the Great that the sacraments celebrated by the New Calendarists, in that the latter are schismatics, are deprived of sanctifying grace.*

“Therefore no New Calendarist must be received into the bosom of our Most Holy Church or be served without a prior confession by which he condemns the innovation of the New Calendarists and proclaims their Church schismatic. As regards those who have been baptized by the innovators, they should be chrismated with Holy Chrism of Orthodox origin, such as is found in abundance with us.”

Note, that after thirteen years of criticizing the adherents of the patristic ecclesiology, accusing them of “Protestantism,” “heresy,” and “schism,” and deeming them as “graceless,” “impious,” and “ungodly,” Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina finally admitted that he, himself, was at fault. The Holy Synod, under the Presidency of Archbishop Matthew of Athens and all Greece, had upheld the true patristic Orthodox ecclesiology all along.

However, the Florinite Synod concluded its encyclical with the following:

*“We take this opportunity to address a last appeal to all the True Orthodox Christians, calling on them in a paternal manner **to come into union with us**, which would further our sacred struggle for patristic piety and would satisfy our fervent desire.*

*“In calling on you, we remove **the scandals which have been created by us** through our fault, and to that end recall and retract everything written and said by us since 1937, whether in announcements, clarifications, publications or encyclicals, which was contrary and opposed to the principles of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ and the sacred struggle for Orthodoxy conducted by us, as proclaimed in the encyclical published by the Holy Synod in 1935, without any addition or subtraction, and including the technical definition ‘potentiality and actuality’...”*

“Date: May 26, 1950

Signed:

- + Chrysostom, formerly of Florina*
- + Germanus of the Cyclades*
- + Christopher of Christianopolis*
- + Polycarp of Diaulia”*

Although the Florinite Synod should be congratulated for finally admitting the truth and confirming the ecclesiastical correctness of the Holy Synod of the GOC, were the procedures outlined in the above encyclical canonically acceptable? And, if not, was the above encyclical a true act of repentance?

To undertake an evaluation of the encyclical one must critically analyze its contents:

1. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina admitted that he was the cause of the schism of 1937. In other words, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina admitted that he was a schismatic. The relevant text from the encyclical is: *"...we remove the scandals which have been created by us through our fault, and to that end recall and retract everything written and said by us since 1937..."*

2. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina admitted that he and his Synod, since 1937, had written *"announcements, clarifications, publications (and) encyclicals, which (were) contrary and opposed to the principles of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ and the sacred struggle for Orthodoxy..."* But what does it mean to be "contrary to the principles of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ?" What does it mean to be "opposed to the sacred struggle for Orthodoxy?" In Orthodox terminology, this above-quoted statement by Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina is the definition for a somewhat complicated, yet simply understood term, heresy. Whether one believes it or not, Metropolitan Chrysostom did admit that his actions and sayings from 1937 onwards were *"contrary and opposed to the Principles of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ and the sacred struggle for Orthodoxy..."* and this phrase is the Orthodox definition for the term "heresy."

3. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina agreed that the position of the Synod of Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena was correct in regard to four points, 1) new Calendarists are schismatics, 2) New Calendarist mysteries are not grace-filled, 3) New Calendarist chrism is devoid of grace, and 4) those baptized by New Calendarists should be admitted into the Church by the administration of Holy Chrism. The relevant text from the encyclical is: *"... We reiterate this proclamation and in consequence ordain the enforcement of the First Canon of Saint Basil the Great that the sacraments celebrated by the New Calendarists, in that the latter are schismatics, are deprived of sanctifying grace."*

"Therefore no New Calendarist must be received into the bosom of our Most Holy Church or be served without a prior confession by which he condemns the innovation of the New Calendarists and proclaims their Church schismatic. As regards those who have been baptized by the innovators, they should be chrismated with Holy Chrism of Orthodox origin, such as is found in abundance with us"

This was an especially encouraging step for the Florinites. Unfortunately, however, the Synod under the former Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina never put these procedures

into practice. This is confirmed by the renowned Florinite author of that time, Fr. Theodoret Mavros (cf. “Apokrisis eis tin Apantisin,” pp. 18-19). In other words, the Florinite Synod accepted the terms and conditions of the 1950 Encyclical only “theoretically,” but not “practically.” Therefore, the statements made therein were almost completely meaningless, and practically worthless.

4. Although Metropolitan Chrysostom admitted that he himself was at fault for the schism of 1937, and although he admitted that he had fallen into teachings that were contrary and opposed to the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ, and although he theoretically (while not practically) returned to what had always been preached by the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Chrysostom paradoxically made, *“a last appeal to all the True Orthodox Christians, calling on them in a paternal manner to come into union with us.”* A self-confessed schismatic, and one who admitted that he had erred from the teachings and principles of Orthodoxy, asks the True Orthodox to join with **him**!

But since when do self-confessed schismatics, those who admitted that they have erred from the teachings of the Orthodox Church, ever have the authority to call upon the True Orthodox in a “paternal” manner? And, for what reason are the True Orthodox compelled to “return” from whence they never departed?

Furthermore, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina could not claim to be the canonical president of the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece. The canonical president was Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias since his election in 1935. The latter fell into schism in 1937, and hence only continued to be the president of the Florinite faction. Germanos of Demetrias then died in 1944 and was buried by New Calendarists.

Metropolitan Chrysostom, however, had declared himself “President” of his Synod in 1943, even though Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias (the canonical president of the Florinite faction) was still alive and still serving according to the old calendar at that time. Although it is rumored that Germanos of Demetrias had submitted a petition to be received into the State Church, his petition was never accepted for as long as he was alive.

Metropolitan Chrysostom had no right to separate from his Synodal President in 1943, not according to his own ecclesiology, at any rate. And with what authority did he proclaim himself “President of the Holy Synod” in 1943?

How, then, can the True Orthodox Christians be advised to unite under Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, who had uncanonically declared himself “Synodal President” of the Florinite Synod in 1943, even though the real Synodal President of the Florinite Synod was still alive and serving according to the old calendar at that time?

But, even if Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina was ever the canonical president of the Florinite Synod, he was a self-confessed schismatic, and he admitted that he had erred from the teachings of the Orthodox Church. Hence, what authority did Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina have in “calling upon” the True Orthodox Christians in a “paternal” manner to enter into union with him? Where is it written in the teachings of the Orthodox Church that those who uphold the true faith must somehow “return” to those who fell from it? In the Lord’s parable, was it the father who “returned” to the prodigal son? If so, would they, then, not both find themselves in the sty of swine? It was the prodigal son who returned to the bosom and household of his father. This is what is expected from all those who fall from the faith and then repent: they must return from whence they departed.

For example, when the three Hierarchs (Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostom of Florina and Chrysostom of Zacynth) repented and returned to the observance of the Orthodox Calendar in 1935, did they “paternally” request for all of the True Orthodox Christians to unite under them? No, for this would be highly irregular and completely illogical. On the contrary, the three Hierarchs were requested to return to the True Orthodox Church by entering the Old Calendarist parish at Kolonos, in which they made an open confession before thousands of True Orthodox Christians, and only after this confession were the three Hierarchs received by the faithful.

The events that occurred after 1950 also, unfortunately, prove that Metropolitan Chrysostom's 1950 Encyclical was not a genuine confession. Not only did he not believe in his own Confession of 1950, on the contrary, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina worked on the side of the New Calendarists for the purpose of trying to destroy the Holy Synod of the GOC.

On page 175 of his book, “Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane,” the famous Old Calendarist historian, Mr. Stavros Karamitsos, (whose writings are used by both the Holy Synod and Florinites alike) gives the following account regarding the events of 1951 involving the New Calendarist “Archbishop” Spyridon Vlachos (the most fierce persecutor of the Genuine Orthodox Christians) and Chrysostom, the former Metropolitan of Florina:

“At the time that Spyridon Vlachos was elevated to the Archdiocesan throne (of the State Church), ... many issues that needed quick solutions (including the calendar issue) were discussed. For this reason, (Spyridon Vlachos) visited the former (Metropolitan) of Florina, with whom he shared a brotherly friendship, and told him the following:

‘Chrysostom, our Church has made a prince. We must take care to dissolve the Monastery of Keratea. And afterwards, we ourselves shall find a solution to the Old Calendarist issue, in accordance with the Divine and Sacred Canons of the Church...’

Mr. S. Karamitsos then continues:

“The holy former (Metropolitan) of Florina, and the Synod under him, believed in Archbishop Spyridon's words, in that the latter was really interested in the unity of the faith and the observance of the Sacred Canons, and that he desires to dissolve the faction of the (“Matthewite”) Bishops, urged by godly zeal for the Divine and Sacred Canons...”

Therefore, as Mr. S. Karamitsos reveals, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, and his Synod, worked on behalf of the New Calendarists for the purpose of dissolving the Holy Synod of the GOC. Unfortunately, Metropolitan Chrysostom managed to confuse many people, especially in the region of Attica, to believe that he had returned to the Orthodox Confession. Hence, the GOC Monastery of Kouvara fell into the hands of the Florinite jurisdiction, and the protesting monks were thrown out of their monastery, and were forced to go elsewhere. Along with the Monastery of Kouvara, the printing room of the official GOC journal “Herald of the Genuine Orthodox,” was also taken away from the Holy Synod. But since the great Monastery of Keratea, which was the envy of all the New Calendarists as well as the Florinites, would not abandon the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina used his friendship with the New Calendarist “Archbishop” Spyridon Vlachos, to take the Monastery by force. Hence, in 1950, Bishop Andrew of Patras (retired GOC Archbishop of Athens, +2005) the Spiritual Father of the Keratea Monastery, together with the Abbess, Mother Mariam (who died a martyric death), were cast into prison. The Monastery of Keratea was then handed over to the Florinite Synod, by order of the Greek Government.

After he had accomplished his goal of usurping the Holy Monasteries of Kouvara and Keratea (both of which were built by Metropolitan Matthew of Bresthena), Metropolitan Chrysostom again returned to his ecclesiastical heresy. Hence, on July 2, 1950, in the “Bradyni” (“Evening”) newspaper, Metropolitan Chrysostom stated that *“The Synodical Decision of 1935 (regarding the schismatic and graceless status of the New Calendarists) does not finally apply until the (calendar issue) is discussed at the future Pan-Orthodox Council.”*

Therefore, it is clear that Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, since 1937, did not believe in the Synodal Confession of 1935; and neither was his supposed “return” in 1950, a genuine confession. If this is so, one might ask, for what purpose did Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina sign the 1950 Encyclical? The answer is given to us by Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina himself. In his “Reply” to the New Calendarist Church, which was published both in the “Bradyni” (“Evening”) newspaper on December 11, 1950, as well as in the official Florinite journal, “Phoni tis Orthodoxias” (“The Voice of Orthodoxy”) in December, 1950, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina writes:

“It is intentionally extended to the notification of the Synodal Commission (of the State Church) that we, the formerly conservative and moderate ones, later passed over to the

fanaticism of the faction of Matthew, preaching that the State Hierarchy is schismatic, and that its mysteries are deprived of grace, only and only so that we could achieve... the enormous property... (i.e., the Monastery of Keratea)... It is true that we avoided preaching that (the State Church) is schismatic, for respect towards the care of the (State) Church... We, finding ourselves in a state of defense, circulated the respective encyclical in order to silence the uprising conscience of our flock..."

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, by his own writings and sayings, proved that his 1950 Encyclical was, unfortunately, not a genuine confession. But, alas, this is not the only example of Metropolitan Chrysostom's unfaithfulness to the Orthodox Confession of Faith. On December 11, 1950, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina made the following statement (cf. "Bradyni," Dec. 11, 1950; and "Phoni tis Orthodoxias," Dec., 1950, p. 6):

"...The (State) Hierarchy, for the sake of the authority and prestige of the Church, should suggest for one Metropolitan (of the State Church) to pretend to be an Old Calendarist, and to become the head of the Old Calendarists, while controlling the struggle from within the canonical boundaries (of the State Church)... Only now have these ideologies emerged, which direct the (sacred struggle) and control it within the frames of the Sacred Canons..."

In the above quote, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina clearly shows that he believes that the schismatic State Church is grace-filled. Yet, he takes it a step further. He believes that the Sacred Struggle for Holy Tradition should exist within the "canonical boundaries" of the New Calendarist State Church, and that it should be controlled by a Hierarchy of the State Church, who will only be "acting" as an Old Calendarist, for the purpose of serving those of the Sacred Struggle! What, then, would be the difference between those who are struggling to preserve the Holy Traditions and those who are trampling them? What, then, would be the difference between those who belong to the Sacred Struggle and those who belong to a Modernist Schism? What, then, would be the difference between those who follow the Festal Calendar of the Holy Fathers and those who follow the heretical calendar of the Pope of Rome?

According to Metropolitan Chrysostom, the entire problem boils down to a simple difference of thirteen days, as if it is the days themselves that are of any importance. The reason why the calendar problem is such an important issue is because those who accept and follow the new calendar are cursed by countless anathemas, hurled by the Holy Pan-Orthodox Councils and God-bearing Fathers of the Universal and Historical Orthodox Church. The new calendar is heretical. It was labeled as such by the Pan-Orthodox Councils and Holy Fathers. Those who follow the new calendar are under countless anathemas, and are cast out of the Body of Christ, His Holy Orthodox Church.

THE GOC AND THE ROCOR

It is not possible to write a history of the Holy Synod in which one tries to inform and explain, without including the Russian Orthodox Church abroad. The two Churches were, at one time, very closely associated.

For over 25 years, I had no idea of the **official** ecclesiology of the ROCOR. This, I agree, is a testament to my own lack of knowledge. My entrance into the ROCOR was through Holy Transfiguration Monastery, in Boston, and I had no in-depth knowledge of old calendar/new calendar issues or the history of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (not the fault of HTM) until just recently.

The point is, if this is true for me, and also with some Russians I know who lived most of their Orthodox lives in the ROCOR, can you imagine the difficulties the Greeks must have had? When the Holy Synod approached Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Averky, and other ROCOR Hierarchs, in 1971, they read to them their "Exposition of the Faith." It was translated into Russian and read aloud by the then Archpriest George Grabbe to the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR. The "Exposition of the Faith" was unanimously accepted, along with the Holy Synod's statements of ecclesiology. A report was then sent to the Holy Synod in Athens. For all intents and purposes, the ROCOR and the Holy Synod were in complete agreement, or so the Holy Synod thought.

The ROCOR also agreed to state their ecclesiology in writing. However, they did not send the letter, even after several letters were sent asking the ROCOR to do so. When later, the Holy Synod discovered that the ROCOR as a **whole**, i.e., **officially**, did not agree with the correct ecclesiology set forth by the hierarchs with whom they first met, they broke off communion with the ROCOR, in 1976. It is not unreasonable to believe the ROCOR presented to the Holy Synod in 1971, was not the same ROCOR the Holy Synod became aware of in 1976. The fact they broke communion with the ROCOR shows they were misled. The fact the Holy Synod broke communion with the ROCOR shows a consistency and a resolve not to enter into communion with any Local Church which did not accept the anathemas of 1583, 1587, and 1593. The Holy Synod did not make up the anathemas promulgated by councils whose intent was to be **Pan-Orthodox**. She merely accepts the Councils as Pan-Orthodox, and remains true to their teachings. Of course, some Russians and others do not accept the Councils as such. That is to their detriment. It has led them into ecumenism and schism. The Holy Synod had no idea that the ROCOR (Archbishop Anthony, of Geneva, and others) was concelebrating with New Calendarists and giving their people communion.

By the way, the Holy Synod had never said she was the only Church with grace, and all others were schismatic. It can be proven that Archbishop Matthew searched the world for a co-consecrator. (so stated in the petition to the Hierarchy of the ROCOR. See "Struggle Against Ecumenism," Holy Orthodox Church in America, 1998. p. 88.)

Only after his efforts failed did he use *economia* and consecrated Bishop Spyridon alone. If he did not do so, the Church of Greece, the Old Calendar Church, would have disappeared. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina was quite content to declare the new calendar Church in “potential” schism. He would never have opposed the new calendar in the manner called for by the anathema of the Pan-Orthodox Councils. At first he did. Later, he changed his mind and caused a schism within the GOC. Archbishop Matthew remained true to his conscience and Holy Orthodoxy. Now, the new calendar Churches are not only schismatic, but they are also in heresy. They are ecumenists, as are all those in communion with them.

His Beatitude, Nicholas, the present (2005) Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, is the only true successor to the Holy Throne of Athens. He maintains the **unbroken**, Apostolic, grace-filled line from the Church of Greece, and from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in that Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias (second in seniority in the State Church of Greece), and Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina (a retired bishop of the Ecumenical Patriarchate), represented both of these Churches, receiving their Apostolic Succession from them.

Now, while it may be true that the ROCOR regarded the consecration by Metropolitan Matthew as “irregular,” that is, not according to the canons, this does not in any way mean that the grace of the episcopacy was not conferred upon Bishop Spyridon and in turn upon all the others consecrated by Archbishop Matthew and those with him. The deciding factor is in how the Holy Synod viewed herself, as opposed to how others viewed her, from the standpoint of appearance. Remember, 1948 was a time of persecution of the GOC.

The Holy Synod approached the ROCOR from the standpoint of a grace-filled Church, lacking nothing. The Holy Synod admitted they wanted union, but from their point of view she was a Sister Church of equal standing and status. The letter from the Holy Synod to the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR was not a petition for regularization, but for union “*concerning the sacred struggle for Orthodoxy*.” They did not seek regularization, neither did they later refute it (more about this later).

Knowing that some may have difficulty with the single-bishop consecration of Bishop Spyridon, the committee comprised of Metropolitans Kallistos, and Epiphanius, and the Protopresbyter Eugene Tombros, said, in effect, we are petitioning your Synod (ROCOR) for union in a common cause, Orthodoxy. They said, in essence, we lack nothing, however, if you need to do **something**, on your part, to satisfy any doubts **you** or **others** may have, we are willing, if it is in accordance with Canon Law, to submit to it. “Something” did not mean *cheirothesia* or regularization.

The ROCOR, fearing that a scandal **could** be the result of just a “simple recognition of their orders,” (P. 95, “Struggle. . .”) decided to perform the “laying-on of hands” over

them. These prayers, read by the ROCOR bishops, were not prayers of consecration. This much was stated by Metropolitan Philaret, in a letter to Archbishop Andreas (see below). Remember, the bishops had to read the prayer over their **priests** as well, proving the prayer was **not** one of consecration to the episcopacy.

It was said by one of the priests of the Holy Synod, that the union with the ROCOR was one of the greatest mistakes the Holy Synod ever made. It gave the appearance that we were seeking regularization, when in fact we were merely seeking union in a common cause. And, for the sake of that common cause, we were willing to humble ourselves and accept a condition. To the Holy Synod, the blessing **was** just a formality. How could it be otherwise to a Church that believed it required nothing, no fulfillment, no regularization, no supplementation, in order to have (or preserve) the grace of the priesthood? The Holy Synod inferred just that in their petition to the ROCOR.

The “lack(ing)” was touted on the part of others, not on the part of the Holy Synod. Also, from the way the ROCOR letter reads, one could reasonably interpret the reason for the blessing as something done to avoid a possible scandal, which **could** result if the “Matthewite” hierarchy were simply recognized. In other words, the ROCOR would have been content with just a “simple recognition of their (GOC) orders.” As an interesting aside, on page 91, (The Struggle...) the Resolution of the ROCOR states:

“It is pointed out that in the history of the Church there were some – truly very few – precedents for such consecrations (by a bishop alone). However, in these cases either they were usually preceded by canonical elections or else they were recognized as valid after a subsequent decision of a council. Such cases were known also in Greece during the war for liberation, when communication with Constantinople broke down. In 1825, Bishop Gabriel of Zarna consecrated three bishops. Later those consecrations were recognized as valid by a Council in 1834.” (Note: Nine years later!)

The questions arise: since the consecration by a single bishop could easily have been simply recognized by the Council of Bishops of the ROCOR, why was it not? Why would a simple recognition bring scandal to anyone since there is precedent for such recognition? Who would be scandalized? The answer is: Archbishop Auxentios. Who, by the way, according to a letter by him, was upset because the ROCOR saw the “Matthewite” Hierarchy **as canonical**. (Encyclical #534, 18-9-1971 (O.C.))

The laying-on of hands accompanied by the reading of the prayers was said over the already vested GOC hierarchs on the 17th and 18th of September, 1971 (O.C.), in accordance with the ROCA Synod's Resolution. At the very same time, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad also informed Archbishop Auxentios (Pastras) (the leader of the Florinite-Akakian faction) that they had entered into communion with the Synod of the “Matthewites,” and had accepted them as already vested bishops, with only the prayer of blessing read upon them (see letter from

Archpriest George Grabbe, below). Unfortunately, Archbishop Auxentios' reaction was extremely hostile. Upon receiving the news from the ROCOR Synod, Archbishop Auxentios wrote the following in an official encyclical (see: "Encyclical of Archbishop Auxentios," # 534, dated 18/9/1971.(O.C.)).

*"(...)Although we were certain that they would not make any resolutions with them without our knowledge or consent, completely paradoxically and in spite of every expectation, we were informed that the Synod of the Most Reverend Philaret has decided to recognize **as canonical** the pseudo-bishops of the deceased Bishop Matthew... This aforesaid information greatly afflicted us, but having already regained our composure, we have decided to confront the current situation from its very origin, in a calm and serious manner. We do not know which excuses the Holy Synod of the Russian Church in America shall give for this perfidious act. We shall not occupy ourselves any further with them, and neither shall we recognize the uncanonical acts of anyone regarding this matter."*

Archbishop Auxentios' hostility towards the Holy Synod, his refusal to accept the ROCOR Synod's resolution, and his unwillingness to enter into theological dialogue for the purpose of union with the Holy Synod, proved that Archbishop Auxentios did not truly care for the unity of the True Orthodox Christians, as he so claimed. On the contrary, Archbishop Auxentios' hostility and uncanonical acts brought further division. For instance, although Archbishop Auxentios was in communion with the ROCOR Synod, which, in turn, was in communion with the Holy Synod, Archbishop Auxentios proceeded with the hasty consecration of Chrysostom Kioussis of Thessalonica, and Akakios Mouskos of Montreal, even though there were already longstanding Hierarchs of the GOC and ROCOR Synods (Demetrios of Thessalonica and Vitaly of Montreal respectively) that held those very titles. Furthermore, Archbishop Auxentios' uncanonical acts caused at least four of his Hierarchs to individually break communion from him by 1974, and Auxentios' uncanonical consecration of Gabriel of Lisbon eventually caused the ROCOR Synod to break communion from him within the same decade.

Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth, Metropolitan Nicholas of Piraeus, and Archimandrite Kallinikos (the latter became a bishop of the Kallistite Synod, and is currently within the Kiousite Synod) confirm in their official epistle to the Greek parishes in America (dated February 8, 1975) that the Greek Orthodox monasteries, parishes, and communities that found themselves within the ROCOR, would only recognize the "Matthewite" Synod as the original True Orthodox Church of Greece. Furthermore, it is also well known that these same Greek ROCOR priests and their faithful, while visiting Greece, would only attend services and receive the Sacred Mysteries in churches belonging to the GOC.

After the Holy Synod of the GOC had fulfilled the ROCOR Synod's requirement regarding the prayers of blessing, Metropolitan Philaret, on behalf of his Holy Synod,

sent an official Encyclical (dated October 21 / November 3, 1972) to Archbishop Andreas, President of the "Matthewite" Synod, which stated the following:

"We make it known to all, that, after the laying-on of hands, which has been fulfilled as a blessing to Your Beatitude's Sacred Hierarchy, our Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia enters into full Ecclesiastical and Sacramental Communion with the Orthodox Church of True Orthodox Christians of Greece, of which Your Beatitude is a Bishop.

"I cordially pray that our Lord will bless and guide the Hierarchy, Clergy and Laity of Your Beatitude's God-protected Church forever.

*"Your Beatitude's devoted brother in Christ,
+ Metropolitan Philaret
President of the Synod of Bishops
+ Bishop Laurus
Secretary to the Synod of Bishops"*

In this letter, Metropolitan Philaret acknowledged the carrying out of the blessing to "Your Beatitude's Sacred Hierarchy," and enters into full communion with Archbishop Andreas. (This "full Ecclesiastical and Sacramental Communion" lasted 5 years.)

However, Archbishop Auxentios, noticing the failure of his initial tactic of not recognizing the ROCOR Synod's decision regarding the GOC Synod, began his second campaign of spreading false allegations that the "Matthewite" bishops were supposedly "re-consecrated" by the ROCOR Synod in 1971. Although this led to much confusion, Archbishop Auxentios failed to provide any evidence for his claims. In fact, most of the evidence proved quite the contrary. For example, the following document was sent to an inquirer by Archpriest George Grabbe, the director of the Public and Foreign Relations Department of the ROCA Synod (dated October 25 / November 7, 1973):

"Dear Mr. Shallcross,

"Your letter of October 11, 1973 has been received.

"The Bishops Kallistos and Epiphaneios were not ordained by our Synod. They were accepted into communion as Bishops with only laying-on of hands on them, already in bishops' vestments, according to the 8th Canon of the First Ecumenical Council. That was to rectify beyond doubts the irregularity caused by the founding of their hierarchy through the consecration originally performed by one bishop.

*"Sincerely yours,
+ Archpriest George Grabbe"*

The above statement clearly shows that the GOC hierarchs were accepted into communion as bishops in full rank, and already vested in their hierarchical vestments, including Omophorion, before the prayer of blessing was read upon them, notwithstanding the fact each received his blessing, under protest, on two separate days.

In 1974, in order to clarify the facts and dispel Archbishop Auxentios' false allegations, the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, Andreas (+2005), then President of the GOC Synod, wrote that the spiritual communion and union between the GOC and ROCOR Synods in the year 1971 occurred:

"a) After the "Exposition of the Faith" of our Church was read so as to be heard by the Synod of the Russian Bishops, and only after the Russians unanimously and loudly confessed and accepted the confession of our Orthodox Faith;

"b) Since they promised that they would also send a written statement (containing the same confession) and since they united with us in this very sense and this very opinion... and with that also they recognized the Orthodox and valid Episcopacy of our Hierarchs; it would have been perhaps important if our Hierarchs also showed the obligatory Christian and brother-loving humility to accept the fulfillment of the external form of the laying-on of hands, (which was) entirely in form alone, and not in essence.

"Our Hierarchs had their Episcopacy complete and perfect from the very moment of their consecration and nothing at all was missing from them, neither charismatically nor dogmatically, that is, they possessed the entire fullness of the Episcopacy. They had, and they continue to have, their Episcopacy full and operative. The Russians, on the other hand, did not supplement their Episcopacy, nor did they add anything, but (rather), they recognized the already existent Episcopacy (of the "Matthewite" Synod) and not the nonexistence thereof.

*"The laying-on of hands that occurred was, and is, nothing other than the performance of an external form, and this (took place), not for any reason other than to shut the unobstructable mouths of the those (who) were long ago proscribed for this offence and always contradict and oppose the truth, (to wit,) the "Florino-Auxentians." This was so that one of their arguments (i.e., their only worthy argument - that of the single-handed consecrations) would be completely deducted; and so that those who are the true and real Genuine Orthodox Christians and Shepherds would indicate **the proper humility, conciliatory mood and brother-loving opinion towards union.**"*

There is nothing in this letter but a re-affirmation of the position originally sent to the ROCOR Hierarchs when Holy Synod was seeking unity "concerning the sacred struggle for Orthodoxy." There is no repudiation of the prayers of blessing. There is no statement that the ROCOR received the Faith from the Holy Synod by uniting with the Holy Synod. The blessing was just that, a blessing. This letter from Archbishop Andreas, deals with

the **addition** of something and **supplementation**, not a **removal**. If a priest is suspended by his bishop (or if bishop is suspended by the Synod of Bishops) and then later receives the prayers of absolution removing the suspension, nothing is added to his priesthood. As a matter of fact, even during the priest's suspension, the grace of the priesthood is still intact. From the very beginning, the Holy Synod regarded the laying on of hands as merely an external form. She came to the ROCOR as a **Sister Church**, possessing the fullness of Episcopal Grace. The two bishops received only a blessing with the laying on of hands, according to the 8th Canon of the First Ecumenical Council. (For further discussion, see Appendix C.

So, from the above letter, it has been proven that there was no repudiation of anything.

Let us say for the sake of argument, however, that the prayer was one of consecration; that the Metropolitans Kallistos of Corinth, and Epiphanius of Kition received consecration to the Episcopacy. Since the Church has always taught that Baptism and Holy Orders cannot be repeated, and since someone in Holy Orders is once and for all set apart into the ranks of the Priesthood, the grace of Holy Orders cannot be repudiated and thereby be excised or deleted from the soul which has once received it. A person cannot say, "I don't want to be baptized any longer." A priest or a bishop cannot say, "I'm no longer a priest. I don't recognize my ordination," or, in the case of a bishop, "...my consecration to the Episcopacy." So even if they did try to repudiate their consecrations, they would still be bishops. This, so called, loss of the bishopric because of repudiation is a straw man. Such repudiation is neither allowed nor recognized in the Orthodox Church. Can you imagine the chaos that would ensue if a bishop could repudiate the grace of his consecration? How would the faithful know that the man celebrating the Holy Mysteries, was in fact a priest or a bishop? How would a man know that his bishop actually ordained him to the priesthood? Certainly, a priest or a bishop can be deposed by rightful authority proceeding according to due process. He just cannot depose himself. Even in the case of deposition, a deposition that was justified, a man can be restored to the priesthood in full rank, and without re-ordination. A man can be forbidden to exercise his priesthood, yet, the ordination, that which makes a man a priest, is never lost and only needs the consent of the Church to be "stirred up." This occurred in the ROCOR when a deposed priest was reinstated to his parish in the same rank from which he was deposed. The same thing has occurred in other Local Churches as well. Of course, the suspended or deposed priest or bishop cannot serve in any way. The priesthood is the "property" of the Church, not the individual.

A man can be forbidden to function as a priest (relegated to the Lay state, i.e., not able to exercise the privileges of the Holy Priesthood) by the Church. The Church can, however, (and has) restore the priest to his sacerdotal "rights" at any time. The bishops of the Holy Synod had received the grace of the Episcopacy from Metropolitan Matthew, even though he acted alone in consecrating Bishop Spyridon. The ROCOR bishops, recognizing this fact, did not dare to perform consecrations, but simply laid hands on

them, as one would on penitents (8th Canon, First Ecumenical Council). (See letter above by Archbishop George (Grabbe.))

Throughout the time-period, 1971-74, the Holy Synod constantly sent epistles and encyclicals asking the Auxentian Synod to enter into dialogue with the GOC, for the purpose of communion and union for the sake of the True Orthodox Struggle, in accordance with the desire of the ROCOR Synod as expressed in its Resolution. However, Archbishop Auxentios refused to enter into dialogue with the Holy Synod, but rather continued to spread false allegations against the “Matthewite” Hierarchs. Archbishop Auxentios' false allegations were even contradictory. At first, Archbishop Auxentios refused to recognize the resolution of the ROCOR Synod of Bishops because the latter had “uncanonically” recognized the GOC Synod as canonical. However, when this initial position was no longer suitable, Archbishop Auxentios then began stating that the ROCOR Synod had “re-consecrated” the “Matthewite” hierarchy. When Hierarchs of both the ROCOR and GOC Synods proved that this latter allegation was false, Archbishop Auxentios then stated that the “Matthewites” had received a “regularization” but that they had supposedly later “reverted it” by denying that it was ever a “regularization” at all. We now know the “regularization” was not “reverted.” Archbishop Andreas merely believed that nothing had been **added** to the Sacred Hierarchy; nothing had been **taken away**. “Regularization” was **not** necessary. The laying-on of hands was, in reference to this belief, nothing but an external form.

In any case, regardless of whether Auxentios believed that the “Matthewite” orders were recognized by the ROCOR as canonical, or whether he believed that the ROCOR had re-consecrated the “Matthewite” Hierarchs, Auxentios refused to recognize the Holy Synod all together! The result was that it did not matter what Auxentios believed. His stubbornness and hostility rendered fruitless any hope for union between the two old calendar Synods of Greece. However, when Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth was persuaded by his close assistants to abandon the Holy Synod and join the Auxentian Synod in 1977, he was received therein as a canonical bishop in full rank! This proves that Archbishop Auxentios truly did recognize the GOC orders, but only admitted this when it was to his own advantage, even though he considered the ROCOR blessing as uncanonical (see above letter by Archbishop Auxentios) calling it a “perfidious act.” If he truly believed the blessing was uncanonical, and “perfidious,” he should have either consecrated Metropolitan Kallistos, or, at least, regularized him. He performed neither of these acts!

In an interesting turn of events, less than two years after Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth joined the Akakian Synod of Archbishop Auxentios, he separated from him. In 1983, he abandoned his own synod and went into seclusion. On his deathbed, in 1985, he confessed before a priest of the Holy Synod of the GOC, and repented of his schism and his other uncanonical acts.

The above discussion in reference to consecration and ordination is also true for those who receive a simple blessing. The laying on of hands, with the ensuing blessing, was performed over the two bishops. No one can deny this event took place. The blessing was given and the blessing was received. It is not possible to repudiate it. One cannot say, "I don't want the blessing!" "I don't accept the blessing!"

Now, let us say, again, that what occurred in 1971 between the GOC and the ROCOR was, in fact, a real act of cheirothesia, and not just a simple blessing bestowed on penitents. What happens to the claim of the GOC that nothing was added? Did the act mean the GOC received her Hierarchy at that time, and before that there was no Apostolic Succession? Did the cheirothesia "wipe out" the original Apostolic Succession? Is the GOC of today, after the cheirothesia of 1971, the same GOC that existed before 1971? If the Holy Synod accepts the cheirothesia, does she nullify the consecration of Bishop Spyridon by Metropolitan Matthew?

To answer these questions we first have to refer to the following article that appeared in the "Orthodox Christian Witness," a publication of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America (HOCNA). It is a comment on the prayers read over the two bishops of the Holy Synod of the GOC. It was published in June, 2003, in volume xxxvii, number 6, (1525)

ON THE CHEIROTHESIA OF THE MATTHEWITE BISHOPS

In September of 1971

*Some people have asked for a description of exactly what happened at the cheirothesia of the two Matthewite bishops at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, Massachusetts on September 17 and 18, 1971. In the presence of the entire brotherhood and many laypeople as well as the Matthewite negotiator and spokesman, Chancellor Father Eugene Tombros Archbishop Philotheus of Hamburg, Germany and Bishop Constantine of Brisbane, Australia (both of the ROCOR) concelebrated with the monastery's clergy on September 17, 1971, and immediately after the Thrice-holy Hymn in the Divine Liturgy (that is, precisely at the point where the ordination of a bishop is normally performed), (Note: Archpriest. Anthony Gavalas, who was an eyewitness to the reading of the prayers, remembers the prayers being read **before** the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.) the Matthewite Bishop Kallistos of Corinth, who was only partially vested, (Note: This is in contradiction to the letter sent to Mr. Shallcross, by Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) cited above) was presented before the two above-mentioned hierarchs. The prayers that were read over him were the two secret prayers normally read at the ordination (consecration) of a bishop. These prayers (or, in the case of the cheirothesia of a priest, their equivalents in a priest's ordination service) are normally read at a cheirothesia. After these prayers were read, Bishop Kallistos was given the remaining articles of his*

vestments the omophorion, the panagia, the mitre and the bishop's staff (Note: This is disputed by Archpriest. Anthony Gavalas who was present during the reading of the prayers over the two Bishops. He concurs with the letter of Bishop Gregory.) to indicate that the prayers read over him had completed that which was lacking in his former, uncanonical "ordination", and that he now legitimately received these signs of his office. At this point, everyone in the church cried "Axios."

On September 18, 1971, Archbishop Philotheus and Bishop Constantine, together with Bishop Kallistos, performed exactly the same ceremony over the Matthewite Bishop Epiphanius of Kition, Cyprus. At the end of the Divine Liturgy on September 18, the Matthewite Chancellor, Protopresbyter Eugene Tombros, gave a small speech thanking the two ROCOR hierarchs for "undertaking the sacred labor of love" to fulfill the ROCOR's Resolution of September 15/28, 1971 for the benefit of the Matthewite clergy and faithful in Greece, and affirming, that in the cheirothesia and validation of the two Matthewite hierarchs, "there was the descent of the Holy Spirit." Archimandrite Kalliopios of Greece tape-recorded this homily.

The concelebrants and witnesses of these two cheirothesiae (laying-on of hands) then signed the following document:

ACT

In fulfillment of the Sobor's decree dated 15/28 September, 1971, we read the prayers with the laying-on of our hands upon His Grace Kallistos, Metropolitan of Corinth, on September 17/30, 1971, and on September 18/October 1 of the same year upon His Grace Epiphanius, Metropolitan of Kition, in the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Brookline, Mass. After this we celebrated the Divine Liturgy with them.

Brookline, Mass. Date: Sept. 18, 1971

SIGNATURES

+Archbishop Philotheus

+Bishop Constantine

WITNESSES:

Archimandrite Kalliopios

Archimandrite Panteleimon

Hieromonk Haralambos

If, as some maintain, the two Matthewite bishops had had only a prayer of forgiveness read over them, this would:

1) Not have required the presence of the two ROCOR bishops. One bishop would have sufficed for this.

2) Not have required that this be done during a Divine Liturgy. A simple prayer in church, at any time of the day, with no divine service at all, would have sufficed.

3) Not have required that each of the Matthewite bishops be corrected separately and individually, on two different days (since two candidates cannot be raised to the same rank in the same Divine Liturgy). They both could have been forgiven together at the same time, on the same day.

4) Not have required a Synodal resolution.

Some Matthewites claim that they have letters from St. Philaret of New York and Bishop Gregory Grabbe stating that a blessing was given and/or read over the Matthewite bishops. This, too, could very easily be understood in the proper and exact sense of the word: the two Matthewite bishops individually received something that they did not legitimately have before this: the blessing of the cheirothesia, the full blessing of a valid priesthood.

At this point, it should be noted that Bishop Epiphaneios protested to Father Eugene Tombros over why the two bishops were to be regularized separately, in two Divine Liturgies. He was told that that was the decision of the Sobor of ROCOR bishops, and the decision could not be changed. (Note: This very important disclosure will be discussed later.)

Bishop Epiphaneios pointed out also that, upon returning to Greece, they had nothing in writing from the ROCOR bishops which could be presented to the other Matthewite bishops and clergy, as well as their faithful, affirming that the ROCOR was of one mind with them concerning the absence of sacramental grace among the innovating jurisdictions. He said that they would not be accepted without such a document. Archimandrite Panteleimon answered that all this should have been addressed while they were still meeting with the Sobor in New York City. When this request was conveyed by telephone to the ROCOR Synod in New York City, the Matthewite delegation received a letter from Metropolitan Philaret, stating that the ROCOR did not accept the calendar innovation of 1924 and never would accept it. No mention was made concerning the question of grace. (Note: To the Holy Synod, "calendar innovation" was tantamount to saying no grace. It was because of the calendar innovation the GOC declared the Greek Churches schismatic.)

In a petition addressed to the ROCOR bishops, Bishops Kallistos and Epiphaniios, and Protopresbyter Eugene Tombros, wrote "We submit our present petition unto Your Holy and Sacred Synod, and we are ready to accept its every decision based always, upon the divine and sacred Canons" (See The Struggle Against Ecumenism, p.88). It is necessary to point out that for more than a year before this written petition was submitted, communications had been initiated by the Matthewites with the ROCOR bishops with the hope of validating their irregular episcopal ordinations by one bishop. (Note: The letter to the ROCA, sent from the Synodical Committee, insists that there were no "irregular episcopal ordinations." See below.) Acknowledging the ROCOR to be fully Orthodox, they presented the above-mentioned formal petition to the Russian Sobor, submitting themselves to be judged by a "Greater Synod." (Note: Nowhere in the petition to the ROCOR, reproduced in "The Struggle Against Ecumenism," are the words "Greater Synod" to be found.)

The following is a comment on the above article by the HOCNA.

**COMMENT ON THE CHEIROTHESIA ARTICLE:
"ON THE CHEIROTHESIA OF THE MATTHEWITE BISHOPS
in September of 1971,"**

The article seems to insist that the two bishops of the Holy Synod, Kallistos and Epiphaniios, asked the ROCOR for the rite of cheirothesia *"with the hope of validating their irregular Episcopal ordinations by one bishop."* It is ludicrous to believe that these two bishops would have consented to cheirothesia, especially given the letter the Synodical Committee sent to the ROCA in 1971, a Synodical Committee comprised of Bishops Kallistos and Epiphaniios, and Protopresbyter Eugene Tombros.

Furthermore, as stated in the HOCNA letter *"...Bishop Epiphaniios protested to Father Eugene Tombros over why the two bishops were to be regularized separately, in two Divine Liturgies."* Obviously, something was about to take place that was not foreseen, and, in my opinion, it was only because it was too late to protest and back out that the Synodical Committee allowed the Liturgies to be celebrated and the separate blessings to be performed.

When one reads the letter to the ROCA by the Synodical Committee, it is very apparent that the Committee was merely seeking unity with a Church the Holy Synod believed to be a true confessing Church, a Sister Church.

The HOCNA claims that the letter to the ROCA was a *"petition to the Russian Church Abroad to regularize their consecrations..."* Yet, when the letter is read, it is discovered the HOCNA took liberty in describing the letter as more than it

was intended to be. Nowhere is the word "regularize" used. The letter was a petition, yes, but only a petition for unity in the "sacred struggle for Orthodoxy."

The letter, and the resolution by the ROCOR, may be read in their entirety in a book published by the HOCNA titled, "The Struggle Against Ecumenism," 1998, pages 87 and 88. The letter is, in fact, a **defense** of the one-bishop consecration. The letter describes how the Holy Synod had continually sought to unite the old calendar Churches and for the consecration of bishops to perpetuate the True Church of Greece. However, Metropolitan Chrysostom, former Bishop of Florina, and Metropolitan Germanos of the Cyclades refused, "...granting neither union (*sic*) nor ordinations." The letter then mentions the fact that the Holy Synod turned "to bishops of other nationalities and jurisdictions." The letter continues: "The response was in the negative." There was not much sympathy for the GOC.

The letter goes on to say that due to the pleadings of *"the flock both in Greece and abroad, (...)and under these circumstances of necessity, we decided to perform the consecrations."* The letter to the ROCOR from the Synodical Committee, goes on to remind the ROCOR bishops that, *"...these acts (...)bring us to a sure conclusion that a consecration of a bishop by one bishop is a canonical necessity under these circumstances."*

"Furthermore," the letter continues, *"by condescension and economia, any doubt that may exist concerning the canonicity of such consecrations is dispelled, especially when it is shown that they were performed in a time of persecution when no other bishop was to be found."*

"Consequently, it can be clearly understood that a consecration of a bishop by one bishop is - because of the situation that existed - permitted and therefor lawful, because it does not go beyond the limits foreseen by the Church's usage of economia."

The last paragraph reads: *"Wherefore, in view of this, we submit our present petition (for unity) unto Your Holy and Sacred Synod, and we are ready to accept its every decision based, as always, upon divine and sacred canons."* Since the Synodical Committee believed the efficacy of their consecrations were based *"upon divine and sacred canons,"* they would not have submitted to any attempt at cheirothesia had the ROCOR made it known before hand that this is what they intended to do, (if that is what they did).

The Synodical Committee believed the sacred canons verified and legitimized the one-bishop consecration. They were not about to submit to a cheirothesia performed by ROCOR bishops. When it became apparent that more than one

simple blessing was scheduled, "...Bishop Epiphanius protested to Father Eugene Tombros over why the two bishops were to be regularized separately, in two Divine Liturgies. He was told that that was the decision of the Sobor of ROCOR bishops, and the decision could not be changed." ('On The Cheirothesia of the Matthewite Bishops', In September of 1971, HOCNA). It is unfortunate this protest was not included in "The Struggle Against Ecumenism." It proves the two bishops were not informed as to what was to be done, neither were they expecting any rite of cheirothesia or regularization.

The capitulation on the part of the bishops to continue with union with the ROCOR despite their apprehension, has been considered by the Holy Synod as the worse mistake she ever made. The decision of the ROCOR should have been made known to the Synodical Committee well in advance of the "laying-on of hands." Had that been done, there would have been no union, at least not in this manner. The petition dealt with the unity of two sister Churches, not of cheirothesia. What was expected was a simple blessing, i.e., recognition of the GOC Hierarchy.

The above paragraph explains how the Synodical Committee could accept the conditions put forth by the ROCOR and still protest what was about to happen. The first sentence of the first paragraph of the "conditions" reads:

"1. To acknowledge the possibility of fulfilling the petition of Metropolitan Kallistos and Epiphanius."

The Synodical Committee understood "petition" to mean petition for union, not for regularization. There is a Letter that was sent by Archpriest George Grabbe to a Mr. Shallcross. I should like to quote it, again, at this time:

*Synod of Bishops Of the Russian Orthodox Church
Outside of Russia
75 East 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 1002?
Tel: LEhigh 4-1201*

*Very Reverend Archpriest George Grabbe, Director
Public and Foreign Relations department
October 25/ November 7, 1973*

*Mr. V. M. Shallcross (sic)
507 - 3rd Avenue, Box 15
Seattle, Wash. 98104*

Dear Mr. Shallcross.

Your letter of October 11, 1973 has been received.

The Bishops Kallistos and Epiphaneios were not ordained by our Synod. They were accepted in communion as Bishops with only laying on of hands on them, already in bishops' vestments, according to the 8th canon of the First ecumenical Council. That was to rectify beyond doubts the irregularity caused by the founding of their hierarchy through the consecration originally performed by one Bishop.

Sincerely Yours

(Signed) Archpriest George Grabbe

It is plain from this letter they did not receive ordination, and therefore the rank of bishop, as is implied by the HOCNA article. They were accepted as men already possessing the rank of bishop. Much of the misinformation about the Holy Synod, and even the reason why we humbly accepted the laying-on of hands from the ROCOR, can be laid at the feet of Archbishop Auxentios. It can be reasonably explained that the purpose was to placate him. He is the reason why the laying-on of hands took place.

The Letter signed by Archpriest George Grabbe, indicates that a blessing was imparted to the GOC bishops according to canon 8 of the First Ecumenical Council. It was not a cheirothesia, but a blessing that is imparted to penitents. In his commentary on the 8th Canon, St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, wrote:

"For when this same Canon was read in the first act of the same Council (here he is referring to the 7th Ecumenical Council) and it was asked how the expression 'laying on of hands' was to be understood, most saintly Tarasius said that the phrase 'laying-on of hands' was to be understood in the sense of blessing, and not with reference to any ordination. Hence spiritual fathers ought to learn from this Canon to lay their hands on the heads of penitents when they read to them their prayers of pardon, as c. XXXV of Carthage expressly says this. For such a laying on of hands is necessary to the mystery of repentance."
(*"The Rudder,"* 1957, p. 177).

Here is how Archbishop Andreas understood the blessing: *"The laying-on of hands that occurred was, and is, nothing other than the performance of an external form, (Note: i.e., no cheirothesia or consecration was performed) and this (took place), not for any reason other than to shut the unobstructable mouths of those (who) were long ago proscribed for this offense and always contradict and oppose the truth, (to wit,) the "Florino-Auxentians." This was so that one of their arguments (i.e., their only worthy argument - that of the single-*

handed consecrations) would be completely deducted; and so that those who are the true and real Genuine Orthodox Christians and Shepherds would indicate the proper humility, conciliatory mood and brother-loving opinion toward union." (Letter of 1974)

I will not go into it too deeply at this time, it has already been discussed, but Archbishop Auxentios was definitely not a happy person when he became aware of the union between the Holy Synod and the ROCOR. Upon receiving the news from the ROCOR Synod, Archbishop Auxentios wrote the following in an official encyclical (see: "Encyclical of Archbishop Auxentios," # 534, dated 18/9/1971 (O.C.)):

"(...)Although we were certain that they (ROCOR) would not make any resolutions with them without our knowledge or consent, completely paradoxically and in spite of every expectation, we were informed that the Synod of the Most Reverend Philaret has decided to recognize as canonical the pseudo-bishops of the deceased Bishop Matthew... This aforesaid information greatly afflicted us, but having already regained our composure, we have decided to confront the current situation from its very origin, in a calm and serious manner. We do not know which excuses the Holy Synod of the Russian Church in America shall give for this perfidious act... We shall not occupy ourselves any further with them, and neither shall we recognize the uncanonical acts of anyone regarding this matter."

Archbishop Auxentios' hostility toward the Holy Synod and the ROCOR, his refusal to accept the ROCOR Synod's resolution, and his unwillingness to enter into theological dialog for the purpose of union with the Holy Synod, proves that Archbishop Auxentios did not truly care for the unity of the True Orthodox Christians, as he so claimed.

Again, for the sake of discussion, let us say that a cheirothesia actually took place. What would be its implication for the GOC?

The perception of our bishops, as to what really was going to take place, was, evidently and unfortunately, wrong. The fact they accepted the ROCOR decision to "regularize," in order to facilitate the union of Old Calendarists, testifies to their *"...proper humility, conciliatory mood and brother-loving opinion toward union."* Since the one bishop consecration was allowed and canonical, given the circumstances and the persecutions of that day, a cheirothesia was not needed. The ROCOR may have performed a cheirothesia, however, the Holy Synod received it as a mere simple blessing, an "external act."

The petition submitted to the ROCOR by the "Matthewite" Synodical Committee, and as published in "The Struggle Against Ecumenism," was not an asking for cheirothesia, or regularization, but for unity with a Sister Church. The fact that a cheirothesia may have been performed, and humbly submitted to by the "Matthewite" bishops, does not, in any way, suggest that the bishops believed their consecrations at the hand of Metropolitan Matthew were irregular or uncanonical. Neither does it mean the Holy Synod of the GOC placed any more importance upon the reading of the prayers than just a mere blessing signifying unity, acceptance by a Sister Church (ROCOR), and the silencing of the slanders of Archbishop Auxentios.

The cheirothesia was not performed as upon those who were coming from heresy or schism. In the resolution of the ROCOR we read: *"...it is evident that the old calendarists headed by the hierarchy proceeding from Matthew's consecration can hardly be compared with such schismatics as the Donatists or the Novatians. They have not sinned against Orthodoxy in their doctrines; but in their efforts to protect it, they violated the hierarchical order when an Episcopal consecration was performed by Bishop Matthew alone."*

The cheirothesia was performed not to add anything missing such as the grace of the priesthood, but only as a way to **recognize** the fact that a hierarchy existed among the faithful of the GOC of Greece. Since schism and heresy was not the question, Apostolic Succession was not interrupted. Since Apostolic Succession was not interrupted, nothing was missing from the consecration by Archbishop Matthew. Since schism and heresy was not the question, the cheirothesia did not "wipe out" Apostolic Succession. It would not, anyway. The purpose of a cheirothesia, for those coming from schism or heresy, is to **add** something (grace of the priesthood) not to take something away. Since schism and heresy was not the question, the GOC did not receive their hierarchy from the ROCOR. In other words, the Holy Synod, post-1971, is the same Holy Synod that existed pre-1971. The cheirothesia, since it did not restore or add anything, was a mere blessing.

Either way, cheirothesia or simple blessing, the GOC of Greece was, and is, absolutely grace-filled. Nothing was added, and nothing was taken away. Since the rite of cheirothesia is performed upon those coming from schism or heresy, if there is no schism or heresy, the rite becomes, in my opinion, a mere blessing.

Finally, here is a an interesting quote from the resolution of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, 15/28 September 1971, Protocol Number 16-II ("Struggle..." p. 89): *"It is to be noted that Christopher, the late Patriarch of Alexandria, accepted in their orders clergymen ordained by bishops of the Matthewite succession."*

BISHOP MATTHEW A VICAR BISHOP?

Archbishop Matthew was born the son of a priest. He was educated at the Holy Cross Ecclesiastical School in Jerusalem.

He was a well-respected Elder and spiritual Father to hundreds, including Athonite monks and many of the faithful in Greece. Due to his great spirituality he was appointed spiritual confessor to three Athonite communities: Simonos Petras, Grigoriou, and Dionysiou. He was the spiritual son of St. Nectarios and was later promoted to Archimandrite by St. Nectarios and given his Epigonation by him. (Bishop. Matthew continued to wear this in liturgy even after he was made a bishop.) St. Nectarios promoted him as head of the Athonite Mentochian as well. Later, he returned to Athos and helped form the Sacred League of Athonite Zealot Monks, and eventually in 1927, the head of the "Greek Orthodox community of the Genuine Orthodox Christians" personally requested that he return to Athens to be the spiritual leader of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Athens!

In 1935, Archimandrite Matthew was consecrated to the Episcopacy.

I should now like to address those who refer to Archbishop Matthew as a "v-bishop," meaning a vicar bishop. A term such as this is an attempt at denigrating and belittling Archbishop Matthew. They use such tactics when they refer to any one with whom they disagree, or fear. For example, "c2k" for Archbishop Chrysostom Kioussis II. By using these epithets, they hope to cause an adverse emotional reaction in the person with whom they are debating, when referring to the person they do not like.

These people have never cited texts, ordination records, or any other type of proofs that Archbishop Matthew was consecrated a "v-bishop." Yet, we must take it as gospel, on their word only. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina refers to him, once, as such, however, his reference is highly suspect and cannot be substantiated (more about this later). He would have been the first to furnish proof in his opposition to Archbishop Matthew. We had to wait until these people set the whole world straight. Archbishop Matthew was never proven to be a vicar bishop. Not even by his most hard-core enemies.

For the sake of argument, however, let us say he was consecrated a vicar bishop. One thing we should never forget is that a vicar bishop is still a bishop, albeit not a ruling bishop. A vicar bishop can perform any Episcopal function with the permission of his superior or Synod. There was never a letter reminding Bishop Matthew that he did not have permission to do what he was doing. Neither did Metropolitan Chrysostom remind him that, as vicar bishop, he did not have the faculties of a ruling bishop, or have permission to write any letters or speak on behalf of True Orthodoxy.

temple of Saint Marina of the Holy Convent of the Presentaion in the Temple in Keratea, by invocation of the grace of the All-Holy and rite performing(1) Spirit, consecrated the elected most reverend Matthaïos Karpathakis, the hegumen of the Keratean Holy Convent of the Presentation in the Temple, for a bishop of the in ancient times famous(2) diocese of Bresthena, which we hearby confirm by our signatures.

“In Athens, June 9, 1935

+ Germanos of Demetrias, the President,

+ Chrysostom Former of Florina

+ Chrysostom of Zakynthos”

From the “Herald of the Orthodox”, No. 225/5-8-1936, in a lengthy statement on their reasons for condemning the schismatic New Calendarist hierarchy and consecrating four new Bishops, the three Bishops wrote:

“5. (...) Having thus established a Synod of the living Church of the Orthodox Greeks, which follow the patristic and Orthodox calendar... in accordance with the holy canons we proceeded to election and consecration of four bishops, namely the Holy of Cyclades, having appointed as such the Archimandrite Germanos Barikopulos, the Holy of Megaris, having appointed as such the Archimandrite Chrystophoros Chatzis, the military priest, the Holy of Diauleia, having appointed as such the Archimandrite Polycarpus, the parish priest of the Meeting of the Lord temple in Tambouria of Peireus and the Holy of Bresthena, having appointed as such the Archimandrite and Hegumen of the Holy Convent of Keratea, (Matthios) which belongs to the Church of those who follow the patristic calendar.

6. All of them, who were canonically appointed to the bishopric rank, are clerics with theological education(...)”

Signed:

+ Germanos of Demetrias

+ Chrysostom, the former of Florina

+ Chrysostom of Zakynthos

This was taken from the epistle of Metr. Chrysostom, October 17, 1937, addressed to the President of the Synod (“K.G.O.” for 1981, p. 252).

(1) It is “teletarches” in Greek. It is actually not “Rite-performing,”but “Rite-beginning” – in the sense that he is the **principle** of any rite. In Slavonic it is “Chinonachalnyj”

(2) “Palai dialampsanta” – it literally means “the one that had shined in ancient time, or once.”

It has been suggested that Bishop Matthew must have been a vicar bishop because he did not have a “double title” i.e., Bishop Matthew of Bresthena and “_____.” It seems Russian bishops who are not vicar bishops have double titles. One can tell the ruling bishop from the vicar bishop by the fact that he has a double title.

None of the Greek bishops, however, the signers of the Consecration Certificate of Bishop Matthew, had a double title. For example, we read: +*German of Demetrias*, +*Chrysostom of Florina*, and +*Chrysostom of Zakinthos*. Furthermore, the Diocese of Bresthena, which is close to Sparta, did not belong to any dioceses of another bishop of the Holy Synod in 1935.

Remember paragraphs 5 and 6 from the lengthy statement quoted above?:

*"5. (...)Having thus established a Synod of the living Church of the Orthodox Greeks, which follow the patristic and Orthodox calendar...in accordance with the holy canons we proceeded to election and consecration of **four bishops**, namely the **Holy of Cyclades**, having appointed as such the Archimandrite Germanos Barikopulos, the **Holy of Megaris**, having appointed as such the Archimandrite Chrysophoros Chatzis, the military priest, the **Holy of Diauleia**, having appointed as such the Archimandrite Polycarpus, the parish priest of the Meeting of the Lord temple in Tambouria of Peireus and the **Holy of Bresthena**, having appointed as such the Archimandrite and Hegumen of the Holy Convent of Keratea, (Matthaios) which belongs to the Church of those who follow the patristic calendar.*

"6. All of them, who were canonically appointed to the bishopric rank, are clerics with theological education(...)"

If Bishop Matthew was a vicar bishop, so were all the others elected and consecrated with him given the “double title” theory. Not only is Germanos Barikopulos called a bishop, but so also is Matthew. To whom was Bishop Matthew subordinate? In whose diocese was he? Again, Bresthena did not belong to any diocese of any other bishop of the Holy Synod in 1935. Besides, by 1937, when Bishop Matthew was calling Metropolitan Chrysostom from error, he was a **Metropolitan**.

Even if it could be objectively proven that Archbishop Matthew was originally consecrated a vicar bishop, it did not stop the Russian bishops of the ROCOR from recognizing the GOC Hierarchy, which was preserved by him, as grace-filled. As we have shown, the laying on of hands added nothing and was only a **blessing**, called such in letters by Archpriest George Grabbe (Bishop Gregory) and by Metropolitan Philaret, on behalf of the Synod of Bishops of the ROC, for the benefit of Archbishop Auxentios. (For further discussion, please see Appendix A)

THE ONLY ORTHODOX CHURCH?

It has been inferred the Holy Synod believed, merely by adopting the New Menaion in 1924 (i.e., at that instant) the Church of Greece deprived herself of grace and all those who did not break communion with her. We must remember this was not affirmed until 11 years later (1935) by the GOC herself, comprised of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, and the others, a synod of living bishops.

In 1935, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece issued an official Synodal Encyclical affirming the patristic Orthodox ecclesiology. The Synodal Encyclical of 1935 included the following text. (For the entire Encyclical please see Appendix B.)

"On account of this, we counsel all who follow the Orthodox festal calendar to have no spiritual communion with the schismatic Church and its schismatic ministers, from whom the grace of the All-Holy Spirit has departed, since they have set at naught the resolutions of the Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and all the Pan-Orthodox Councils that condemned the Gregorian festal calendar. The fact that the Schismatic Church does not have grace and the Holy Spirit is confirmed by Saint Basil the Great, who says: 'Even though the schismatics have not erred in doctrines, yet because Christ is the Head of the Body of the Church according to the divine Apostle, and from Him are all the members quickened and receive spiritual increase, the (schismatics) have been torn from the consonance of the members of the Body and no longer have the grace of the Holy Spirit abiding with them. And how, indeed, can they impart to others that which they have not?' " (...)

"Date: June 21, 1935

Signed:

+ *Germanos of Demetrias*
+ *Chrysostom of Florina*
+ *Germanus of the Cyclades*

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina also reaffirmed this patristic Orthodox ecclesiology in an epistle written by him in the same year:

*"The (New Calendarist State) Church of Greece **has now been** torn from the Church of the Holy Fathers and the Seven Ecumenical Councils and has become schismatic. According to the First Canon of Saint Basil the Great, it has lost grace, and has died since it no longer partakes of grace, and it has been severed from the body of the Church..."*

This council of living bishops, the inheritors of the True Orthodox Faith, affirmed that the anathemas of 1583, 1587, and 1593 were now in effect. Again, this was proclaimed, solemnly, 11 years after the adoption of the new calendar. Unfortunately, shortly after the appearance of his epistle, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina was the cause of a schism in the GOC, brought about by his repudiations of the Synodal Encyclical, and his own epistle. The anathemas were upheld, at that time, only against the Greek Church. No other Local Church was mentioned. There was no decree that every Local Church in the world was without grace. It was up to them to see the rightness of the anathema, and voluntarily sever communion with the schismatics. (See Appendix B)

Now, we may not like the implications of the anathemas, or the canons that govern them, but all those who are in communion, or who merely pray, with schismatics, are themselves schismatics. The GOC had no choice but to obey canon law and sever communion with the new calendar Greek Church. Or, rather, for the New Calendarists and those in communion with them, to leave the Church. So it stands to this day, in the Holy Synod of Greece, since 1924, and rightly so.

Some in the GOC do believe the entire Ecumenical Patriarchate and the State Church of Greece became schismatic immediately upon the acceptance of the new calendar in 1924. This is based on the fact that for many years, before 1924, the Greek Churches were acutely aware of the anathemas promulgated by the Pan-Orthodox Councils, and their own local synods, which were imposed on all who dared to defy the canons of the First Ecumenical Council. Despite many Synodal warnings, the Greek Churches unilaterally adopted the new calendar. The acceptance of the new calendar, with the resulting loss of grace, in 1924, was the culmination of years of warnings and not simply the instantaneous loss of grace. This interpretation of the events of 1924 does not discount the role of a synod of living bishops as necessary to declare and affirm that an anathema has now, in actuality, been applied. Canon law allows (15th canon of the First-Second Council) the leaving of a schismatic/heretical bishop *“before Synodal clarification.”*

The “Traditionalists” or “Old Calendarists,” in 1924, were correct, in obedience to their Orthodox conscience, in walling themselves off from those who unilaterally imposed the new calendar and for considering them schismatic and without grace. (For further discussion, please see Appendix C)

MOTHER MARIAM

Finally, we should lay to rest the story of Mother Mariam's assisting Metropolitan Matthew's consecration of Bishop Spyridon, by holding his "paralyzed hand" on the head of Bishop Spyridon. It would seem that since Metropolitan Matthew had a good left hand, he could hold his own right hand if need be. Furthermore, with a sanctuary filled with male servers, and clergy, Mother Mariam would not be needed and, I would dare say, not be allowed in the sanctuary. In any event, even if Mother Mariam did hold Metropolitan Matthew's hand during the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit was imparted to episcopal candidate Spyridon, as attested to by the Russian Bishops who conferred only a **blessing** upon the bishops of the GOC. It was Metropolitan Matthew's hand after all, not Mother Mariam's, that rested on the head of Bishop Spyridon.

The slander that Mother Mariam held the "paralyzed" hand of Archbishop Matthew while he consecrated Bishop Spyridon, is too ludicrous beyond imagination.

Abbess Miriam suffered torture in the Averov prison in Athens before dying, a martyr, on November 8, 1954.

APPENDIX A

The following letter was written by Stavros Markou, who, as of the date of this booklet, was living in Australia. It discusses, further, the matter concerning whether Archbishop Matthew was consecrated a vicar bishop. It has been copied from the “paradosis” list on the Internet. All emphasis is in the original document.

Dear Helen and George,

Regarding whether the new bishops consecrated in 1935 (Christopher of Megaris, Polycarp of Diaulia, Germanus of Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthena) were ruling bishops, or whether they were titulars or vicars...

*So far, we have the following evidence proving that Bishop Matthew was **not** a titular or a vicar:*

- 1. He is not called either of these terms on his consecration certificate, but rather simply Bishop (i.e., ruling bishop).*
- 2. Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias in his letter to Metropolitan Chrysostom speaks of there being "seven Metropolitans" in 1935, thereby indicating that the four bishops ordained were in fact given ruling dioceses.*
- 3. Metropolitans Germanus and Matthew always refer to one another as "Sevasmiotatos" (the title given to ruling bishops).*
- 4. All Encyclicals signed by either of the four bishops (Christopher, Polycarp, Germanus, Matthew) are signed as "Metropolitan."*
- 5. All the old calendar parishes in Peloponnysus (where the diocese of Bresthena is located) and Crete **without exception** were "Matthewite" from 1935 until 1979 when Callistus of Corinth joined the Florinites (Akakians) and took some monasteries and parishes with him. Why would all the parishes in Peloponnysus and Crete stand behind Bishop Matthew from the very beginning, unless he was indeed their ruling bishop and had his name commemorated in those parishes even prior to 1935? (In fact, even to this day, Callinicus, the Florino-Akakian Metropolitan of "Achaia and all Peloponnysus" only has one monastery under his omophorion. Yes, in "all Peloponnysus" just **one** monastery! And he would not even have that had he not used the secular authorities to expel Metropolitan Callistus from the monastery during the 1980s. Meanwhile the "Matthewites" have several monasteries and parishes throughout Peloponnysus, and thanks to the memories of a modern-day Saint, Haralambis the Fool for Christ (+1974), the Old Calendarists of Peloponnysus have remained very much "Matthewite" in their ecclesiology and Synodal preference.)*

6. Even the Florinites now have a Bishop Gregory of Bresthena, and he is a **ruling** Bishop, not a titular. This dispels the claim that the Diocese of Bresthena can only be a titular or vicar diocese, and not a ruling one.

In favor of the opinion that the four bishops ordained in 1935 were "vicars" all we have is a letter of Bishop Chrysostom of Florina in which he simply states this, even though there is no other evidence proving it. The only primary evidence in existence is Bishop Matthew's consecration certificate, and that says nothing of "titular" or "vicar."

*Now, what about (Metropolitan) Chrysostom of Florina, was he a ruling bishop? Well he certainly was not installed as one by the Synod of 1935. (Metropolitan) Chrysostom forever remained the **former** Metropolitan of Florina. He was not given a new diocese to rule over, and neither was there anyone in Florina commemorating him. (Florina is located on the Greek border with Albania and with what is now called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - FYROM).*

So then, if Metropolitan Chrysostom was not the ruling Metropolitan of Florina due to the fact that he was retired and had no parishes under his Omophorion in that province, and since he was not allocated a new ruling diocese by the Holy Synod in 1935, where does that leave him? Indeed, Bishop Chrysostom of Florina was a retired bishop of the Holy Synod, not a ruling bishop. In 1935 the Holy Synod placed him in charge of Apostolic Ministry and Foreign Affairs, and sent him to the Middle East to garner the support of the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem. Nowhere is it said that he was ever allocated a new Metropolis, or that there were any provinces in Greece that actually commemorated his name. So, when the Synod consisted of 4 bishops, the parishes in Central and Northern Greece commemorated Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias. The parishes on all the Islands commemorated Germanus of the Cyclades. And the parishes of Attica, Peloponysus and Crete commemorated Matthew of Bresthena. But Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina was not commemorated by any parishes in any province, except perhaps for any particular parish he may have been visiting, and with the permission of the ruling bishop.

*It was not until 1943, when Metropolitan Chrysostom severed communion with his president, Germanus of Demetrias, that (Metropolitan) Chrysostom finally remained alone, and those who followed him had no other choice but to commemorate him, even though he was still the **former** Metropolitan of Florina, and did not have any ruling diocese.*

Finally, even if Bishop Matthew were a "vicar," hypothetically speaking, does it really matter? Bishop Galaction (Cordun) (the founder of the True Orthodox Church of Romania) was a vicar bishop. Yet he single-handedly consecrated an entire Synod. It is interesting to note that the Florinites, Callinikites, Cyprianites, ROCOR, etc, all accept

him as well as the bishops he consecrated, regardless of the fact that he was a vicar bishop, and regardless of the fact that he did so single-handedly. Why the double standard in Bishop Matthew's case?

*Yours in Christ,
Stavros, a sinner*

APPENDIX B

PASTORAL ENCYCLICAL TO THE ORTHODOX GREEK PEOPLE

Unjustly condemned by the schismatic Synod to deposition and a five-year imprisonment in monasteries, and seized by force by the government (which has become the executor arm of the Archdiocese, which by a mere word has placed itself above the divine canons, the Charter, and the Constitution of Greece) because we had the courage and the spiritual strength to raise the glorious and venerable banner of Orthodoxy, we consider it our pastoral duty before we depart to direct the following admonitions to you that adhere to the Orthodox festal calendar of our fathers:

While faithfully following the Apostle's admonition, "Stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or by our letter," do not cease from struggling by every lawful and Christian means for the strengthening and triumph of our sacred struggle, which looks to the restoration of the patristic and Orthodox festal calendar within the Church; only this can re-establish the diminished Orthodox authority of the Greek Church and bring back the peace and unity of the Orthodox Greek people.

*By the judgments which the Lord knows, **the majority of the hierarchy of the Greek Church**, under the influence and initiative of its president, has placed the blot of schism upon what up until now had been its pure and truly Orthodox countenance, when it rejected the orthodox festal calendar—which has been consecrated by the Seven Ecumenical Councils and ratified by the age-long practice of the Orthodox Eastern Church—and replaced it with the papal calendar.*

*Of course, this schism of the Orthodox Greek people was created by a majority of the **hierarchy**, which forgot its sacred and national mission and the old Greek slogan: "Fight for Orthodoxy and for Greek liberty," and which, without the agreement of all the Orthodox Churches, introduced the papal festal calendar into our divine worship, thereby dividing not only the Orthodox Churches, but also the Orthodox Christians into two opposing camps.*

*In assuming the pastorship of the Orthodox Greek populace that follows the Orthodox festal calendar of our fathers, and being conscious of the oath of faith that we took that we would keep all that we have received from the Seven Ecumenical Councils, we abjure every innovation and cannot but **proclaim as schismatic** the State Church, which has accepted the papal festal calendar which has been described by Pan-Orthodox Councils as an innovation of the heretics and as an arbitrary trampling underfoot of the divine and sacred canons of the ecclesiastical traditions.*

On account of this, we counsel all who follow the Orthodox festal calendar to have no spiritual communion with the schismatic Church and its schismatic ministers, from whom the grace of the All-holy Spirit has departed, since they have set at nought the resolution of the Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and all the Pan-Orthodox Councils that

condemned the Gregorian festal calendar. The fact that the Schismatic Church does not have grace and the Holy Spirit is confirmed by Saint Basil the Great, who says: "Even though the schismatics have not erred in doctrines, yet because Christ is the Head of the Body of the Church according to the divine Apostle, and from Him are all the members quickened and receive spiritual increase, the [schismatics] have been torn from the consonance of the members of the Body and no longer have the grace of the Holy Spirit abiding with them. And how, indeed, can they impart to others that which they have not?"

While the Schismatic Church imposes oppressive and intolerable measures in order to violate our Orthodox conscience, we exhort you to endure all things and to preserve the Orthodox heritage intact and unstained, even as we received it from our pious Fathers, having us a luminous and fortifying examples, seeing we were not afraid—even in the waning years of our lives—to withstand with boldness and dignity the bigoted and medieval measures of our exile and imprisonment in monasteries, as it were in prisons.

Esteeming this as honor and glory and joy, according to the Apostle, who enjoins us to rejoice and boast in our sufferings in behalf of Christ, we counsel you also to have endurance and persistence in these griefs, and afflictions, and evils, and outrages to which you will be subjected by a Church that is schismatic; and ever hope in God, Who will not permit that you be tried above what you are able to endure, and Who, in His infinite and unfathomable long-suffering, will be well-pleased to enlighten those who, out of innocence, have been led astray and follow the papal festal calendar; and in the end may He grant you the triumph of Orthodoxy and the unity of those who bear the name of Christ, the Orthodox Greek people, for whom we struggle to the glory of Christ, Whose grace and infinite mercy be with you all.

June 8/21, 1935

+Germanos of Demetrias

+Chrysostom of Florina

+Germanos of Zakynthos

APPENDIX C

I should like to present further material in explanation of the encyclical of 1935 by the three Metropolitans: Germanos of Demetrias, Chrysostom of Florina, and Germanus of the of Zakynthos, and why it was necessary to formally, by an act of a synod of living bishops, to proclaim that the EP and the State Church of Greece were now under the anathemas of the Pan-Orthodox Councils, and the canonical decisions of the First Ecumenical Council.

In the Holy Synod's official publication, *The Herald of the Genuine Orthodox*, vol. 127, July, 1988, pp. 214-215, we read the following:

"The leaders of that headless and dead body, cruelly abandoned by Chrysostom, former Metropolitan of Florina, adduce many unfounded and ridiculous arguments to support the headlessness of their jurisdiction. They are supposedly trying to prove that there are occasions when a body may be headless, that is to say, without a head, brain, and mind. . .

"As one such occasion, they presented injudiciously that confused and turbulent period immediately after the imposition of the New Calendar when the Genuine Orthodox Christian Old Calendarists apparently had no bishops.

"But that occasion cannot be compared with the real reasons why the wretched jurisdiction of Chrysostom remained headless so many years. The reason is that the [New Calendar] schism did not happen automatically; it took years for it to become official.

"After the explosion of the imposition of the New Calendar, a great confusion and disorder came upon the faithful. In this confused and hazy condition, Orthodox Hierarchs are considered not only those who did not accept the innovation, but also as many of the bishops who protested against the innovation and who strove to form a Synod to return to the Old Calendar, even if opportunely they had not separated themselves.... Moreover, when grievous wolves rush upon a flock of many sheep in the night at deepest dark, some of the sheep and shepherds are torn apart by the beast, others are scattered hither and yon! No one can condemn any remaining sheep who are left without a shepherd for a season. On account of the confusion and the darkness of the night it was not possible for sheep and shepherds even to gather together, let alone for shepherds to recognize the sheep, and for them to know their shepherd!"

The Encyclical of 1935, to which the GOC and all Old Calendarist Churches appeal, was the official statement that the Grace of the Priesthood had departed from the new calendar Churches. This statement, in my opinion, was necessary because as the article above states: "...the (new calendar) schism did not happen automatically; it took years for it to become official." It could only become official when a synod of living bishops

proclaimed it so. This is why the Traditionalist Old Calendar group which left the EP and the State Church of Greece, at that time, could not issue an Encyclical on their own, or they would have done so. Even if they did, it would not have the same canonical force that a synod of living bishops have. Priests and laymen are not the head of the Church. The Hierarchs gathered in Council are. Bishops Matthew and Germanos, in an Encyclical dated October 5/18, 1937, addressed to all the clergy and faithful of the GOC, wrote: *"In 1935, we and two other Hierarchs proclaimed in the presence of the correctly and genuinely believing people, that the Church under Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens became schismatic because it fell away from the sacred canons of the Holy Apostles; ..."*

The article of our Holy Synod in the publication, "The Herald of the Genuine Orthodox," vol. 127, July, 1988, pp. 214-215, implies, very clearly, that the entire EP and State Church of Greece did not become instantly devoid of the Grace of the priesthood. It states: *"Orthodox Hierarchs are considered not only those who did not accept the innovation, but also as many of the bishops who protested against the innovation and who strove to form a Synod to return to the Old Calendar, even if opportunely they had not separated themselves...."* In other words, there were still Orthodox Hierarchs present in the EP and the State Church of Greece between 1924 and 1935. Why? No synod of living bishops officially proclaimed the whole Greek Church schismatic, and because an entire Local Church does not automatically, in an instant, become schismatic, i.e., *"It took years for it to become official."* Furthermore, the majority of the bishops had not embraced the new calendar ("Pastoral Encyclical to the Greek Orthodox People").

The question is: Were there schismatics in the EP and the State Church of Greece between 1924 and 1935? The answer of course is, yes. However, the **entire** Local Church was not **canonically** schismatic until a synod of living bishops proclaimed it as such. As pointed out earlier, it was not necessary for the faithful of the True Faith to remain with any of those who were in schism or with those who were in communion with schismatics, until the anathemas were affirmed. Then, in 1935 a synod of living bishops proclaimed the anathemas of the Pan-Orthodox Councils, and the decision of the First Ecumenical Council.

The "light switch" theory of the loss of grace, by which an entire Local Church instantly becomes graceless because a bishop, or even a group of bishops, goes into schism or heresy is neither patristic nor canonical. We have to be very careful when we say so, otherwise, the three bishops who joined the Traditionalist Movement were graceless. Ideally, when a bishop, or priest, becomes a heretic or schismatic, he is censured by his Holy Synod, and cast out of the Church. When this does not occur, those who remain in communion with such a bishop partake of the same penalties imposed by canon law. The Local Churches of world orthodoxy are in great danger precisely because they tolerate, and remain in communion with, ecumenists and the new calendar schismatics among them. Also, we have to remember, our Holy Synod has officially stated the grace of the

priesthood is lacking only in the new calendar Greek Churches, she has not proclaimed such about any other Local Church. Now, we may have opinions, and good, logical ones, as to what a Local Church's status is, but they remain just that, opinions, regardless of who holds them, until the Holy Synod speaks. When our Holy Synod ceased communion with the ROCOR in 1976, we did so because the Archbishop of Geneva, Anthony, was celebrating with New Calendarists. The Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR would not censure him. Yet, when we left them, we did not proclaim them graceless. We left and said we would stay out of communion with them until such time they got their house in order.

An indication the Encyclical of 1935 was intended to be a promulgation by a synod of living bishops in fulfillment of the requirements of canon law concerning the penalty of anathema, is the following letter:

"The Holy Synod of The Orthodox Greek Church of the followers of the paternal calendar. In Athens, May 31 1935

"To the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece

"By the document of May 26, 1935 we renounced the ruling Church as schismatic and undertook the governing and pastorship of the followers of the paternal calendar. The same we announced to the Ministry of Faith by the document of May 26, 1935. We refuse to acknowledge the right that we be judged; we who form the Holy Synod of the Church of the Orthodox Christians who follow the paternal church calendar, recognized by the state, and who for that reason proceeded to consecrations of four Hierarchs in order to complete the Holy Synod. The Holy Synod, (of the new calendar Church) being already under trial, has no right to condemn our clerics.

"On behalf of the Synod of seven members

*"The President
+ German of Demetrias"*

Published in "K.G.O.," 1981, p. 123

Finally, here is a quotation from St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain. He is teaching on how anathemas work ("The Rudder," footnote 1, p. 5). He wrote:

"We must know that the penalties provided by the canons, such as deposition, excommunication, and anathematization, are imposed in the third person according to grammatical usage, there being no imperative available. In such cases in order to express a command, the second person would be necessary. I will explain the matter better. The canons command the council of living bishops to depose the priests, or to

excommunicate them, or to anathematize laymen who violate the canons. Yet, if the council does not actually effect the deposition of the priests, or the excommunication, or the anathematization of the laymen, they are neither actually deposed, nor excommunicated, nor anathematized. They are, however, liable to stand judicial trial -- here, with regard to deposition, excommunication, and anathematization, but there with regard to divine vengeance. Just as when a king commands his slave to whip another who did something that offended him, if the slave in question fails to execute the king's command, he will nevertheless be liable to trial for the whipping.

"So, those silly men make a great mistake who say that at the present time all those in holy orders who have been ordained contrary to the canons are actually deposed from office. It is an inquisitorial tongue that foolishly twaddles thus without understanding that the command of the canons, without the practical activity of the second person, or, more plainly speaking, of the council, remains unexecuted, since it does not act of itself and by itself immediately and before judgment.

"The Apostles themselves explain themselves in their c. XLVI unmistakably, since they do not say that any bishop or presbyter who accepts a baptism performed by heretics is already and at once deposed, but rather they command that he be deposed, or, at any rate, that he stand trial, and if it be proven that he did so, then 'we command that he be stripped of holy orders,. they say, ' by your decision. '"

APPENDIX D

ON ECUMENISM

A heresy, any heresy, excludes one from the Church. Ecumenism, called the heresy of all heresies, is the umbrella under which all the heresies are being promoted. The justification, or legitimacy, of calling ecumenism the heresy of heresies must come from its title. Without such a descriptive title, one may be led to believe that ecumenism is only one heresy among a plethora of heresies, and no worse than any one of them. Calling ecumenism a heresy is one thing, to recognize it as the greatest of all heresies is another.

It is the heresy of heresies because it blatantly disregards heresy in order to promote the heresies that 1) all religions are the same, 2) there is only one God, therefore all, regardless of belief, pray to Him, 3) there is no absolute truth, heresy and Orthodoxy can be tolerated within the Orthodox church, 4) being in communion with a diseased, heretical Church does not impart the same infection to all those in communion with her, 5) it is preferable to be part of an ecumenist Church out of brotherly love, than it is to offend by separating from her, 6) by remaining in a world orthodox Church, one can impart a nobility, an understanding, and a level of brotherhood that would not be possible if one did not remain.

The list could go on and on even including all the heresies that plagued the Church down through the centuries. All the heresies that militate against the Great Church of Christ are found in the modern definition of ecumenical. We have to refer to ecumenism as the heresy of heresies because the word, by itself, is not enough to cause an Orthodox soul to be wary. Ecumenism has, long ago, exceeded its original definition of describing the branch theory where all "Christian" Churches were thought to be part of the true vine which is Jesus Christ. That definition has now been extended to include, along with the heresies enumerated in the second paragraph, above, "all men of Liberty, Fraternity, and Brotherhood," regardless of their religious faith. It has even taken on the task of housing the Liberation Gospel and the Social Gospel. Ecumenism is also the stomping (on Christianity) ground of Freemasonry and secularism.

The goal of ecumenism is to destroy the uniqueness of the "faith once delivered to the Saints." The goal of ecumenism is to level the playing field so that Orthodoxy cannot claim to be the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ. The main goal of ecumenism is to pave the path for the Antichrist.

It should be stated, in defining Ecumenism, that one must take into consideration the fact that, in canon law, a Local Church cannot be in communion with a heretical or schismatic Church without falling under the same censures. This can be easily understood. What is difficult for some to understand is the realization that to be in communion with a Local

Church which, in turn, is in communion with a schismatic or heretical Church, causes both Churches to fall under the same canonical censure.

It is easy when you think of it this way: If the Orthodox Church in America were to announce tomorrow that she is in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, that would mean that the OCA accepts the teachings and dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, and is in heresy. Now, if the ROCOR remains in unity with the OCA, that would mean that the ROCOR approves of the union between the Roman Catholic Church and The Orthodox Church in America. Consequently, the ROCOR would be as heretical as the Roman Catholic Church and the OCA. *"However,"* you say, *"what if the ROCOR does not approve of the unity between the Roman Catholic Church and the OCA?"* *"Then,"* the canons and the Fathers answer, *"the ROCOR must cease all levels of communion with the OCA or fall under the censures of Canon Law for heresy."* The difficulty arises when an heretical or schismatic Church retains all the externals of Orthodoxy. (The OCA and the ROCOR were used for illustration purposes only.)

The following is offered to those who prefer a more logical, rational view of schism and heresy. To be rational and objective is preferable to feeling and emotion. True, it is a "black and white" approach, and there is a lot of gray in most things in life, however, discernment can be made easier when it is not overly hampered by the passions. In a society in which symbolism over substance is the norm, and the emotions and the passions prevail, logic is shunned because it shines the light of reason on that which hides in the darkness of double talk, clever words, dichotomy, feelings, and emotions.

Consider the following: If a Local Church, Church A, declares itself to be in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, Church B, which, according to Orthodoxy is heretical, then, if another Church, Church C, establishes communion with Church A, would Churches A and C be heretical?

Church A, in communion with a heretical Church such as the Roman Catholic Church makes Church A, heretical. It is heretical on several levels, 1) it accepts doctrine contrary to scripture, Tradition, and the Ecumenical Councils, and 2) Canon Law of the Orthodox Church of Christ declares it to be so. The canon states:

"Let any Bishop, or Presbyter, or deacon that merely joins in prayer with heretics be suspended, but if he had permitted them to perform any service as Clergymen, let him be deposed." (Canon XLV, p. 597, "The Seven Ecumenical Councils," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14.) (Shades of Canberra, Rome, and Assisi; unity among the Churches of Antioch, Alexandria and the Monophysites; liturgical prayer between the EP and Rome; the Church of Finland; etc.)

Now, what about Church C, which is in communion with Church A, which, in turn, is in Communion with Rome? Here is an excerpt from the web page of St. John the

Forerunner Parish, Canberra, Australia, concerning the final letter of St. Mark of Ephesus):

*"(...)Concerning the Patriarch I shall say this, lest it should perhaps occur to him to show me a certain respect at the burial of this my humble body, or to send to my grave any of his Hierarchs or clergy **or in general any of those in communion with him** in order to take part in prayer or to join the priests invited to it from amongst us, thinking that at some time, or perhaps secretly, I had allowed communion with him. (...)I turn away from intercourse and communion with them and vow and command that none (of them) shall approach either my burial or my grave, and likewise anyone else from our side, with the aim of attempting to join and concelebrate in our Divine services; for this would be **to mix what cannot be mixed.**(...)"*

St. Mark is emphatic: All in communion with the Patriarch partake of his heresy. Heresy and Orthodoxy "cannot be mixed." Heresy and Orthodoxy cannot exist in the Church of Christ. A Church cannot be potentially schismatic or heretical while it is in communion with schism or heresy. In other words, heresy is like leaven. If Church A is heretical as the result of being in communion with heretical Church B, then Church C must also be heretical if Church C is in Communion with heretical Church A. The speed or tardiness of a Local Church in breaking communion with an heretical Church, not withstanding.

I believe we can agree that there are times in the history of the Church (due to a lack of information, the speed at which information is disseminated, a lack of complete understanding of what has occurred, or just plain error on the part of a local Church) when it seems as though heresy and Orthodoxy are part of the Orthodox Church. However, such a union is impossible. The Church is the Body of Christ. There can be no doctrinal or moral error in the Church.

Someone might protest: *"Of course, we shouldn't be in communion with heretics, but merely being in communion with them doesn't make someone a heretic. It makes him someone who is in communion with heretics; no more, no less. Such carelessness ought to be avoided, of course."*

How is it possible to agree with a heretic and, yet, not partake of his heresy? This is ecumenism in its highest thought. This understanding of communion with heresy fosters the teaching that within all the (heretical and schismatic) Churches there is this "shadow existence" of the true Orthodox who constitute the Church. This is, in fact, the underlying teaching of those who say they belong to the "middle way." A Church can be heretical or schismatic, but they will remain a part of such a Church so that they can make her Orthodox "from within." They, of course, are the real Orthodox surrounded by those who are "sick." If these middle-of-the-roaders really believed what they say, they would immediately join the heterodox Churches and begin to save them from their errors by working from within. What was once taught as sobriety in the ascetical life (the Royal

Path) now becomes an excuse to remain in, and tolerate, error. The so-called “middle way.”

Let us take a reasoned look at the following possible scenarios of heresy:

1) Church A teaches a heresy condemned by the Ecumenical Councils.

Church A is obviously heretical according to Canon Law (bishops, priests, and laymen).

2) Church B rejects Church A's heresy, but allows its clergy to concelebrate with Church A's clergy, and frequently speaks of the two Churches' essential unity.

Church B is obviously heretical (bishops, priests, and laymen).

3) Church C rejects Church A's heresy, and does not allow its clergy to concelebrate with Church A's clergy, but allows them to commune Church A's laymen, and allows them to concelebrate with Church B's clergy.

Church C is heretical also. Concelebration “mixes what cannot be mixed.” Church B is in heresy, and so is its clergy and people. Furthermore, Church B's clergy do not possess the grace of the Priesthood. How can Church C concelebrate with them and at the same time profess true Orthodoxy?

4) Church D rejects Church A's heresy **and** the heresies of Churches B and C, but when Churches B and C visit Church D's diocese, it concelebrates with them.

Church D is heretical. Churches B and C do not possess the grace of the Priesthood. Concelebration is not possible. Also, to partake of the Holy Mysteries, presupposes unity in **Faith** and **doctrine**.

5) Church E strenuously objects to all the above, but communes laymen coming to it from Churches B, C, and D.

Church E is heretical. Communing heretical laymen is to enter into prayer with them, which is forbidden by the Church (Canon XLV, Apostolic Canons). This is precisely why we Orthodox do not commune laymen of the Roman Catholic Church. How is it possible to reject a heresy and, at the same time, give the Body and Blood of Christ to those who espouse it? If one's Father Confessor were to give communion to a heretic, clergy or layman, would any **Orthodox Christian** sit idly by and not protest such an abomination? Communion presupposes unity. It is not the means of attaining it.

6) Church F severs communion with all of the above, and refuses to commune their laymen, until the abuses are corrected.

This is the only acceptable remedy in combating schism and heresy. It is in keeping with Canon Law, and the Holy Scriptures. It also protects the faithful. The Churches of world orthodoxy are woefully lacking in discernment in these matters. They prefer to be seen as "peace loving," "tolerant of diversity," "non-condemning," "fraternal," and "conciliatory," by those who secretly wish for their destruction. Of course, Church F will be branded fanatical and hateful.

Some may say if only Church F is Orthodox, then only the Holy Synod of the GOC is Orthodox. However, since the ROCOR covers most of the spectrum, from B to E, and since the GOC was in full communion with ROCOR for five years, from 1971 to 1976, you have to move the GOC up a notch, to Church E's level. So nobody is Orthodox.

Why did the GOC break communion with the ROCOR? Obviously, they did not understand, or realize, the ecumenical activity going on in the ROCOR by such Archbishops as Anthony of Geneva. Remember, discussions toward unity between the two Churches were between the GOC Bishops and such men as Metropolitan Philaret, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), and Archbishop Averky, those who had a true understanding of the dangers of the new calendar and the ecumenical activities of world orthodoxy. Unfortunately, they were either not able to persuade their fellow bishops, or deemed it not worth the effort to effect change. When the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR refused to put an end to the ecumenistic activities, the Holy Synod promptly separated herself from the error.

Many think it is wise the Holy Synod of the GOC has not sat down and mapped out exactly where grace is found and where it is not. The Mystery of our Faith is not so legalistic, they say, or so easily reduced to **merely** logical propositions. It is foolish and irresponsible to be in communion with heretics, but it is not, they say, in and of itself, heretical. If it is, we are all heretics.

Whether the Holy Synod declares no sacerdotal grace in world orthodoxy is really a moot point. The GOC is not in communion with any of those Churches. The reason is, they are discerned to be either heretical, or in schism, or in communion with such (which causes them to partake of the heresy or schism). Our Savior promised His followers that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church. The Church of Christ never disappeared. She has existed throughout all the ages, and will continue to exist, on the earth, until the end of the world. Old Israel was always a remnant, as are those who walk the narrow way of Holy Orthodoxy. The faithful of the GOC do not have to concern themselves about grace or lack of grace in the Churches of world orthodoxy.

We do know that the grace of the priesthood does not immediately disappear (the "light switch" theory) and so the Holy Synod does not pronounce all those not in communion with her as being without grace. (except for the EP and the State Church of Greece).

Also, the Holy Synod does not baptize those who come to her from world orthodoxy unless, of course, they had never been properly baptized. The problem of grace-no-grace arises when a Local Church refuses administrative unity with another Local Church due to its ecumenical (heretical) activities, and yet is in communion with other Local Churches whose ecumenism is legendary (the EP, the SP, etc.). Actually, to be in communion with a Local Church in the Holy Mysteries, and, at the same time, refuse to be united with the same Church on the administrative level, because it is ecumenistic, demonstrates either a gross lack of discernment on the part of the leadership, or an attempt to hoodwink those who lack discernment and/or the courage to follow Christ rather than men. Some in the GOC believe there is no grace outside of her, and some say we cannot know. Both can be brothers in the GOC because the Holy Synod has not officially spoken on the matter of grace in other Churches. However, we are also not in communion with them in anyway.

The faithful of the GOC should be content in knowing that the Holy Synod, under the Omophorion of His Beatitude Nicholas, has wisely and rightfully decided that the apostasy is underway and that we will not be a part of it.

"For our faith, brethren, is not of men nor by man, but by revelation of Jesus Christ, which the divine Apostles preached, the holy Ecumenical Councils confirmed, the greatest and wisest teachers of the world handed down in succession, and the shed blood of the holy martyrs ratified. Let us hold fast to the confession which we have received unadulterated from such men, turning away from every novelty as a suggestion of the devil." (Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs, 1848.)

A simple syllogism can be used to explain what happens when a Church is in communion with an heretical Church. The syllogism is as follows:

A is the sister of B
B is the sister of C
Therefore, C and A are sisters

(P is M
M is S
Therefore, S is P)

This syllogism is simple and reflects a logical conclusion. Where the difficulty enters, it seems, on the part of some, is when the syllogism reflects a conclusion they don't like.

At the time this syllogism was presented, the ROCOR, at the insistence of her senior clergy, was claiming that communion had **never** been broken with the Churches of world orthodoxy. I believed then, and I still believe, that a Sister Church to one is a Sister to all who are in communion with that one. For example: the Serbian Patriarchate, the EP, and

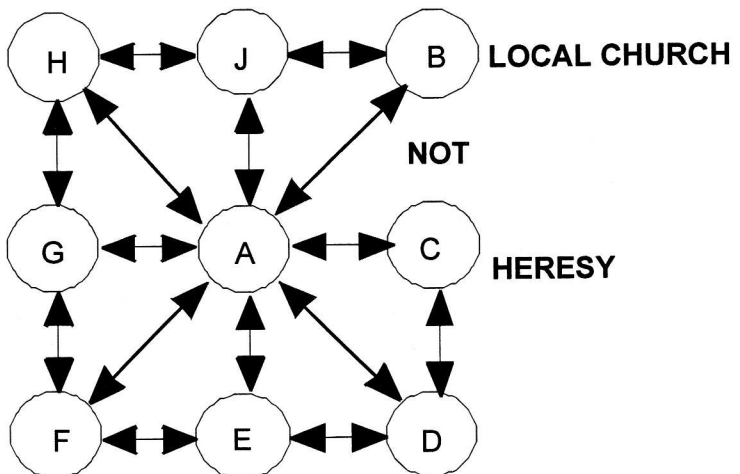
others, consider the heretical Roman Catholic Church a “Sister Church.” Using the above syllogism, it is easy to see that all in **communion** with the EP or the SP would be tainted with the same heresies that stain the Roman Catholic Church:

The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is a Sister Church of the EP
The EP is a Sister Church of the Serbian Patriarchate (SP)
Therefore, the SP and the RCC are sister Churches

Unity is not serial, $A = B = C = D = E$, but parallel, $A = B$; $A = C$; $A = D$; $A = E$; and so on. Even if communion is broken between C and B, C and B are still in communion with their other Sister Churches through A, and with each other, actually. For, in order for Church B to really break communion with Church C, she would have to break communion with all those Churches who are in communion with Church A. Now, it may be true that a certain local Church may not consider the RCC a Sister Church, in that case, she should refuse to commune, and cease unity, with all Churches who consider the RCC a Sister Church. Unity is a doctrinal “event.” All Churches in union agree, of necessity, in matters of essential doctrine. All Churches in communion with Church A, are within the first (or second) degree of unity. Therefore, Church B has the same relationship with other Churches that it has with Church A, regardless of whether Church B is in communion with any one of those other Churches.

In this example, compare with the diagram below. (The Single Church concept)

Local Church = A; Local Church = D; Local Church not C; (heretical or schismatic); Local Church = E; Local Church = F; Local Church = G, etc. However, $C = A$; $C \text{ not } B$; $C = D$; $C = E$; $C = F$, etc. As one can see, Local Church is still in communion with C through A, D, E, F, G, etc. This is why the position of the GOC is the only Orthodox position: no communion with the Churches of world orthodoxy. The One Church Concept is explained more fully below.



As can be seen from the diagram, even though Church B (Local Church) is not in direct communion with Church C, which is in heresy, she is, nevertheless, in communion with Church C through Church A, and in communion with every other Church in communion with Church A. Each Church in the diagram is like Church A, and it can be placed in the center of the diagram with Church A taking its place. For "Local Church" to remain out of communion with Church C, she must break communion with all Churches in communion with Church C.

The following canons are from the "Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers," Volume 14, "The Seven Ecumenical Councils:"

- 1) *"The members of the Church shall not indiscriminately marry their Children to heretics."* (p. 129)
- 2) *"If anyone shall pray, even in a private house, with an excommunicated person, let him also be excommunicated."* (p. 594)
- 3) *"If any clergyman shall join in prayer with a deposed clergyman, as if he were a clergyman, let him also be deposed."* (p. 594)
- 4) *"Let a bishop, presbyter or deacon, who has only prayed with heretics, be excommunicated: but if he has permitted them to perform any clerical office, let him be deposed."* (p. 587) (All the Churches of world orthodoxy fall under the condemnation of this canon. And according to the canons, one does not have to wait for Synodal clarification before leaving a heretical/schismatic Church, or a Church in communion with such.)
- 5) *"We ordain that a bishop, or presbyter, who has admitted the baptism of heretics be deposed. For what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath a believer with an infidel?"* (p. 597) (The Greek Orthodox Church, the Antiochian Orthodox Church, and the Romanian Orthodox Church, all of Australia, have defied this canon. (http://www.ncca.org.au/departments/faith_&_unity_commission)
- 6) *"No one shall join in prayers with heretics and schismatics."* (p. 149)

All the quoting of the above canons is to make a point: the Orthodox and the heretics cannot exist together in the same Church. Neither can we be united with them (obviously).

A few quotes from "The Mind of the Orthodox Church," by the Metropolitan of Nafpakos, Hierotheos, Translated by Esther Williams, and published by, "Birth of the Theotokos Monastery:"

- 1) *"Thus the heretics are incurably rotten limbs of the Church and are therefore cut off from the body of the Church. The heretics must be examined in this light. In this way one can see the Church's love for mankind."* (p. 224)
- 2) *"And again I must point out that heresy reverses the true way of man's cure for reaching deification."* (p. 226)
- 3) *"Thus in the teaching of St. Ireneos it is seen that there is unity between Church, Orthodoxy and Eucharist, ..." (p. 81)*
- 4) *"First we must say that the Church is **single** in spite of the large number of its members. Christ expressed this fact by the picture of the flock and the shepherd. Since the shepherd who guides the sheep is one, and all the sheep make one flock, it means that the unity of the Church is not abolished by the large number of the faithful, and of local Churches, which, however, are united and bound together in their faith and life. Each local Church is not one of many so-called Churches, but the Church of Christ. Nor do the parishes break the unity of the Church, because each parish is the Church in miniature."* (pp. 52-53)

The preceding paragraph expresses: If A = B, and B = C, then C = A, perfectly. In other words: Local Church A, Local church B, Local Church C, Local Church D, Local Church..., are the **single** Church. Since the Church is single, doctrine held by one is considered held by all in communion with that one.

Finally, from the life of St. Maximas the Confessor:

"(...)Then Troilus and Sergius began to point out to Saint Maximus that already the whole Christian world recognized the Monothelite Patriarch of Constantinople as legitimate, that all the Eastern Patriarchs and their locum tenens were in communion with him, and that the plenipotentiary representatives of the Roman Pope will serve with the Patriarch and commune with him. Thus, he is the only one remaining in the whole world who does not recognize the Patriarch."

The Saint answered: *"If even the whole universe should begin to commune with the Patriarch, I will not commune with him. For I know from the writings of the holy Apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit will give over to anathema even the angels, if they should begin to preach any other gospel, introducing **anything new**."* (emphasis original)

Some say, the Orthodox mind looks at individual souls, and the Church, through the eyes of a doctor and not through the eyes of a mathematician or corporate CEO. It is the example of the Saints themselves and how they applied the canons that matter and not our own black and white neo-opinions.

These people have failed to realize that the mind, even the Orthodox mind, is the: *“discursive, conceptualizing and logical faculty in man, the function of which is to draw conclusions or formulate concepts deriving from data provided either by revelation or spiritual knowledge or by sense observation.”* (“The Philokalia,” Volumn Two, p. 386) in other words, by deductive reasoning. The mind could be said to be the mathematician or CEO of the soul. It is the “filter” that screens that which enters the heart and that which leaves the heart. St. Paul admonishes us to renew our mind daily precisely because the mind is the reasoning power that discerns good from evil. God after all, gives the mind to a man and a woman. Do you think he expects us to use it? It seems some would have us rely solely on our emotions and feelings when deciding what is Orthodox and what is not. This is very dangerous indeed and can lead to prelest.

Even though the reason is *“of a lower order than spiritual knowledge,”* (ibid) nevertheless, use of the reasoning power of the mind is a way of arriving at truth using as one of the criteria, spiritual knowledge. Besides, the intellect must be in a purified state before it can function as was meant by its creator.

By the way, no Saint ever interpreted the canons in such a way as to allow union (communion) between heresy and Orthodoxy.

Obviously, the heretical view of a bishop, or a priest, does not immediately cause a Local Church to fall into heresy. However, the offending Hierarchy or priest should immediately be suspended, if he does not retract his heretical belief(s), and then summoned to a spiritual court where he would be judged and, if he still adhered to his non-Orthodox belief(s), removed from the position he holds in the Church. The key here is immediate canonical judgement of the offending bishop or priest (even layman).

If the Synod of Bishops does not, or refuses to, censure the priest, bishop, or layman, unity on the part of the faithful, and on the part of all other local Churches, with this Synod of Bishops must cease until the matter is resolved. They have, in effect, by either remaining silent or in their refusal to judge the offending priest or Hierarchy, given their assent to the schism or doctrinal error. Again, Orthodoxy and heresy (and schism) cannot exist side by side in the (single) Church.

As we know, Canon Law even allows the faithful to leave an heretical bishop (or a Local Church if it tolerates the heresy within it) even before he is judged by his Synod of Bishops, or by the entire Church in Ecumenical Council. The key here, I believe, rests on the conscience of the person(s) offended by the heretical teachings of the bishop. As someone in the new calendar Greek Church once said to a clergyman of the GOC: *“Father, once you know, you have to do something about it.”* (“It” referring to the state of world orthodoxy.) Unfortunately, this lady went on to say: *“But, all my family and friends are in the Greek Church.”* How many surely know, yet, do nothing?

As to a Local Church in heresy, once a local Church is perceived to be either in heresy or schism, (begins to teach heresy or has joined itself to an heretical or schismatic Local Church) all other Local Churches must immediately cease ecclesiastical unity so that the faithful may be protected from error.

Today, world orthodoxy is notorious for its lack of true Orthodox witness. Prayer with heretics and schismatics, ecumenistic dialog, and common prayer **services**, are completely tolerated. World orthodoxy and its defenders say and write a lot in defense of what is going on, insisting that what we hear and see is really not as it seems, not official, of no consequence. Confusion and dichotomy are sown in the conscience of the faithful who find it increasingly more difficult to distinguish error from truth.

Some are very reluctant to talk about where grace is not. Surely, the Holy Spirit is everywhere and bestows His grace, in some measure, on all creatures. However, we must distinguish between the grace common to all men and all women by just being born into the world, and the grace of the Holy Priesthood, which assures the presence of the Holy Mysteries. All who live (even the reposed) partake of the uncreated graces of God. Christ said that without Him we can do nothing. To be able to do anything presupposes the grace of God. Yet, the “common” graces given to all men as a gift of God, from birth, do not include the grace of the Ministerial Priesthood. That is reserved to the Church, the Body of Christ

When the Church talks about grace or no grace, she is referring to the grace of the Holy Priesthood as given by the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands by a true Orthodox Bishop. This grace is preserved, protected, and kept alive by the Canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Holy Scriptures, the lives and the teachings of the Holy Fathers, and the Traditions handed down from generation to generation in the Body of Christ which is the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Orthodox Church.

God bless you.

GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS THAT ARE TRUE