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The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism

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Dogmatic and Canonical Issues

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June 2014

A text drawn up by the
True Orthodox Churches of Greece and Romania
and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

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The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism

Dogmatic and Canonical Issues

I. Basic Ecclesiological Principles

The **True Orthodox Church** has, since the preceding twentieth century, been struggling steadfastly in confession against the ecclesiological heresy of **ecumenism**[1] and, as well, not only against the **calendar innovation** that derived from it, but also more generally against **dogmatic syncretism**,[2] which, inexorably and methodically cultivating **at an inter-Christian**[3] **and inter-religious**[4] **level**, in sundry ways and in contradiction to the Gospel, the concurrency, commingling, and joint action of Truth and error, Light and darkness, and the Church and heresy, aims at the establishment of a **new entity**, that is, a community without identity of faith, the so-called *body of believers*.

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1 **"Ecumenism":** the terms "ecumenism" and "ecumenical movement" are derived from the Greek word Οἰκουμένη, which is based on the words οἶκος (house) and οἰκῶ (I inhabit). • The word οἰκουμενικός, -ή, -όν was introduced into ecclesiastical parlance in the era of the Fathers with an Orthodox meaning (Œcumenical Synod, Œcumenical Father, the Œcumenical Symbol of Faith, etc.). • In the twentieth century, there appeared the technical terms "ecumenism" and "ecumenical movement," which lack any Orthodox meaning, since they are connected with the endeavor to unify divided Christians throughout the world (the Οἰκουμένη), on the basis of an erroneous and heretical ecclesiology.

2 **"Syncretism" (συγκρητισμός):** from the verb συνκρητίζω (συν-κρητίζω, Κρὴς-Κρητικός). Although they had differences among themselves, the ancient Cretans would join forces against a common enemy in times of war. • The term "syncretism" denotes a commingling of elements of differing provenance (religions, forms of worship, ideologies, doctrines, confessions, etc.) for the purpose of bringing forth something new without any real or essential union.

3 **"Inter-Christian":** that which pertains to two or more Christian Confessions, which are engaged in syncretistic dialogue for the purpose of union.

4 **"Inter-religious":** that which pertains to two or more religions, which are engaged in syncretistic dialogue for the purpose of union.

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• In Her struggle to confess the Faith, the **True Orthodox Church** has applied, and continues to embrace and apply, the following **basic principles** of Orthodox ecclesiology:[5]

1. The primary criterion for the status of membership in the Church of Christ is the **"correct and saving confession of the Faith,"**[6] that is, the **true, exact and anti-innovationist Orthodox Faith,** and it is "on this rock" (of **correct confession**) that the Lord has built His Holy Church.[7]

2. This criterion is valid both for individual persons or believers and for entire local Churches.

3. The **Catholicity** of the Church of Christ, always with respect to Her **Uniqueness**, **Holiness**, and **Apostolicity**,[8] is Her *qualitative and internal,*[9] *and* not *quantitative and external,* hallmark;[10] it is Her fundamental attribute, which expresses, on the one hand, the *integrity* and the *fullness* of the Truth that She preaches, independently of Her demographic and geographical dimensions, and, on the other hand, the *authenticity* and *completeness* of the means provided for the healing and deification of fallen human nature.

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5 **"Ecclesiology":** that branch of dogmatic theology which inquires into matters pertaining to the nature and essence of the Church, as the Body of Christ.

6 *On the Life and Contest of Our Holy Father Maximos the Confessor*, §24, *Patrologia Græca,* Vol. XC, col. 93D.

7 *Cf.* St. Matthew 16:18.

8 This reference to the Catholicity, Uniqueness, Holiness, and Apostolicity of the Church is based upon the relevant article of the Symbol of Faith: "In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." These are the principal attributes of the Orthodox Church.

9 **"Internal":** a hallmark which pertains to the inner nature or essence of the Church, Her relationship with Christ, through the Father, in the Holy Spirit.

10 **"A qualitative and internal, and not a quantitative and external, hallmark":** the point of the antitheses "qualitative-quantitative" and "internal-external" is to emphasize the qualitative dimension of Catholicity, since it is confessed in the Symbol of Faith that the True and Unique Church is ***Catholic***, primarily because She contains the revealed Truth and the means of salvation (the *qualitative* and *internal* dimension) ***in their entirety***, and consequently in this case the concept of the ***Catholicity*** of the Church is completely identical to the concept of **Orthodoxy** (right belief, right outlook [φρόνημα], right Faith).

4. It is on the basis of this **correct confession** that the **Mysteriological** ("Sacramental") **communion**[11] of the faithful with Christ, and between one another, is founded, as a **consummation** of existing **unity** in faith**, as a goal and an end,** and not as a means **to the attainment** of this **unity**; that is to say, **unity in correct confession is prior and communion in the Mysteries subsequent**.

5. All pious Christians who hold to an **Orthodox confession,** if they are to be living members of the Church, ought without fail to be in **Mysteriological communion** with each other, since **communion in Faith** and **communion in the Mysteries ("Sacraments"),** indissolubly bound together in the life of the faithful, reify and establish the **one and unique Body of Christ.**

6. Unshakable **abidance** in **correct confession**, as well as the **defense** thereof at all costs, is a matter of the **utmost soteriological**[12] **importance**, and it is for this reason that our Holy Fathers valiantly confessed and defended our Holy Orthodox Faith in word and deed and with their blood, doing so on behalf of the Orthodox Catholic Church and in the name of Her very existence.

7. All those who preach or act contrary to **correct confession** are separated, as heretics, from the **Truth of the Faith** and are excluded from **communion** with the Orthodox Catholic Church, be they individual persons or communities, even if they continue to function *formally and institutionally* as putative Churches and are addressed as such.

• "***Those who do not belong to the Truth do not belong to the Church of Christ either;*** *and all the more so, if they speak falsely of themselves by calling themselves, or calling each other, holy pastors and hierarchs; [for it has been instilled in us that]* ***Christianity is characterized*** *not by persons, but* ***by the truth and exactitude of Faith***" (St. Gregory Palamas).[13]

8. The unity of the Church in the Truth of the Faith and in communion of the Mysteries, bestowed from on high from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy

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11 **"Mysteriological** ('Sacramental') **communion":** the communion of the faithful with Christ and between one another through the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist.

12 **"Soteriology":** that branch of dogmatic theology which deals with the salvation of mankind by our Savior Jesus Christ. • "Soteriological": that which pertains to soteriology, the salvation of mankind.

13 "Refutation of the Letter of Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch," §3, in Panagiotes K. Chrestou (ed.), *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγράμματα* [The works of Gregory Palamas], Vol. II (Thessalonike: 1966), p. 627—TRANS.

Spirit, is assuredly Christocentric and Eucharistic, and is experienced *as a perennial assemblage and concelebration in space and time "with all the Saints,"*[14] since it has as its **guarantor** the **Orthodox (right-believing) Bishop,** the **bearer**—by Divine Grace—of the "tradition of the Truth" (St. Irenæus of Lugdunum [Lyon]).[15]

9. Each **Orthodox Bishop,** as a "sharer in the ways and successor to the thrones" of the Holy Apostles, as **Father** of the Eucharistic *Synaxis*, as a **Teacher** of the Gospel of Truth, as a **Servant** (**Minister**) of love in truth, *in the image and place of Christ*, thus **expresses**, **embodies**, and **safeguards** the **perennial Catholicity** of the Church, that is, Her **unity** with Christ and, at the same time, Her **unity** in Christ with all of the local Churches which have existed, exist, and will exist as the One Body of Christ.

• "What is the 'one body'? The faithful everywhere in the world who **are**, **were**, and **will be**" (St. John Chrysostomos).[16]

10. Every Bishop who proclaims "heresy publicly" and "barefacedly in Church"[17] and who teaches "another Gospel than that which we have received"[18] or is in **syncretistic communion with those of other beliefs or religions,** doing so persistently and continually, becomes a "**false bishop and a false teacher**" (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod), while those Bishops who commune with him, indifferent towards, tolerating, or accepting his mentality and these actual declarations of his, "**are destroyed together with him**" (St. Theodore the Studite), thereby ceasing to be **canon-**

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14 ***"A perennial assemblage and concelebration in space and time 'with all the Saints'":*** it has been very aptly observed that "the Divine Liturgy is the presence of our Lord Christ with all the Saints; at every Divine Liturgy Christ comes into our midst, and with Him 'the company of the Saints is present inseparably'"; "the presence of the Triune God endows the Eucharistic *Synaxis* of the Church with Her true dimensions: She is a **Eucharistic Œcumenical Synod,** which is solemnized within the Church; the whole of creation, the visible and the invisible world, concelebrates the Eucharistic Offering and together glorifies the Triune God"; "the Divine Liturgy is a **Eucharistic Œcumenical Synod"**; "at the Divine Liturgy Christ is present in the midst of His Church; together with Christ are our Lady, the *Theotokos*, the Holy Angels, all the Saints, and our reposed and living brethren, those afar off and those near" (Hieromonk Gregorios, *Ἡ Θεία Εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ Θεία Κοινωνία* [The Divine Eucharist and Divine Communion] [Athens: Ekdoseis "Domos," 2001], pp. 133 ff.).

15 *Against Heresies*, III.4.1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. VII, col. 855B—TRANS.

16 "Homily X on Ephesians," §1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXII, col. 75—TRANS.

17 Canon XV of the First-Second Synod—TRANS.

18 *Cf.* Galatians 1:8 —TRANS.

ical[19] **or in communion**[20] **with the Church**, since the **Catholicity** of the Church, Her **unity**, and Her genuine **Apostolic Succession,** which unfailingly guarantee the Bishop's status as **canonical** and **in communion with the Church**, are founded on, flow from, and are safeguarded by the "**correct and salvific confession of the Faith.**"

II. Ecumenism: A Syncretistic Panheresy

1. Ecumenism, as a theological concept, as an organized social movement, and as a religious enterprise, is and constitutes the greatest heresy of all time and a **comprehensive**[21] **panheresy**;[22] the heresy of heresies and the **pan-heresy of pan-heresies**; an amnesty for all heresies, **truly and veritably a pan-heresy**; the most insidious adversary of the local Orthodox Churches, as well as the most dangerous enemy of man's salvation in Christ, since it is impossible for **Truth and Life in Christ** to exist **in unbreakable soteriological unity** within its syncretistic boundaries.

2. Ecumenism came forth from the Protestant world (in the nineteenth century and onwards) and **fosters the relativization**[23] **of truth, life, and salvation in Christ,** *in essence denying the Catholicity and uniqueness of the Church,* since at its base there lie both the erroneous theory of an "invisible Church" with vague boundaries, members of which can supposedly belong to different "Confessions," and a variant of this, that is, the so-called "branch theory," according to which the different Christian "Confessions" are allegedly branches of the same tree of the Church, each branch

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19 **"Canonical":** a Bishop is, and is called, "canonical" when his Consecration, his pastoral and synodal activity, and also his mentality (φρόνημα), are consonant with the Dogmas and the Sacred Canons of the Orthodox Church. It is [only] in these terms that we can speak about a Bishop's "canonicity."

20 **"In communion with the Church":** a Bishop who is "canonical" is also "in communion with the Church"; that is, he is in communion in the Faith and in the Mysteries with the Orthodox clergy and people. It is [only] in these terms that we can speak about a Bishop being "in communion with the Church."

21 **"Most comprehensive":** a heresy is called "comprehensive" or "most comprehensive" when it encompasses or includes a multitude of other heresies. • Anglicanism is characterized by its "comprehensiveness," since within its fold there converges and coexists a variety of confessional and dogmatic tendencies.

22 **"Panheresy":** a heresy which encompasses all heresies.

23 "**Relativization" (σχετικοποίησις):** from the verb σχετικοποιῶ: to regard something as relative, uncertain, non-absolute, changeable, transitory. • "Relativization of the truth": a denial of the absolute Truth in Christ.

possessing part of the Truth and thus putatively together constituting *the whole of the Church.*

3. In spite of the variety of theories that ecumenism has produced, **its basic aim is the cultivation of syncretistic coexistence (concurrency) and coöperation (joint action)**—but also, beyond that, of a **fusion**—initially of all Christian creeds and "Confessions" (**inter-Christian ecumenism**), and subsequently of all religions (**interfaith ecumenism**), that is, [the cultivation] of an approach contrary to the Gospel, leading inevitably to the establishment of a body *of believers,* a kind of **pan-religion,** which would pave the way for the advent of the *tribulation of the last times,* namely, the *era of the "lawless one,"*[24] *the Antichrist.*

4. By reason of its syncretistic character, **ecumenism is closely akin to Freemasonry,** which promotes itself as *religiously tolerant, convivial, and open-minded towards heresies and religions*, having proved to be, in practice, a religion—indeed, a super-religion—**contributing directly and indirectly to the advancement of the ecumenist vision**; that is, to the creation of an ***all-inclusive platform*** **for every creed and religion**, wherein revealed Truth will have been completely relativized and put on the same level as every human and demonic delusion and belief.

5. Ecumenism began to assail the Orthodox Catholic Church[25] with the sunset of the nineteenth century, through a Synodal Proclamation, **in 1920,** from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, *"To the Churches of Christ Everywhere."* It constitutes, by common consent, the *"founding charter of ecumenism,"* **which it preaches "barefacedly,"** since it characterizes the heresies of the West and everywhere else as, supposedly, *"**venerable Christian Churches,**"* **no longer as *"strangers and foreigners,"* but as *"kith and kin in Christ and 'as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, [and partakers of] the promise of God in Christ,'"***[26] proposing, indeed, as the ***first step towards its implementation the use of a common calendar*** *for the simultaneous concelebration of feasts by the Orthodox and the heterodox.*

6. By way of implementing this ecumenist proclamation, following the uncanonical decisions of the anti-Orthodox Congress of Constantinople in 1923, what was es-

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24 II Thessalonians 2:8—TRANS.

25 **"Orthodox Catholic Church":** the *Catholic Church* is absolutely identical with the One and Unique Church, to wit, the Orthodox Church, which assuredly has no relation whatsoever with Papism, which today is commonly called the "Catholic" or "Roman Catholic Church." • See also note 9, "A qualitative and internal, and not a quantitative and external, hallmark."

26 *Cf.* Ephesians 3:6—TRANS.

sentially the so-called **Gregorian [Papal] Calendar was adopted,** ***as a soi-disant*** **"*Corrected (Revised) Julian Calendar*,"** even though, as soon as it originally appeared in the West (in 1582), the former was **censured** and **condemned** as a calamitous Papal innovation by three Pan-Orthodox Synods in the East (in 1583, 1587, and 1593), the decisions of which **remain in force** and weigh heavily upon **those innovators who are in schism.**

7. The calendar innovation, introduced in 1924 into the Church of Greece, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Church of Romania, and later, gradually, into the other local Churches, **conflicts with the Catholicity of the Orthodox Church**, both in the manner of its implementation (unilaterally and uncanonically) and in terms of its **purpose** (ecumenistic and syncretistic), **thereby assailing with a mortal blow the external manifestation and expression of the One Body of the Church throughout the world**, which is **also** reified by way of a uniform **Festal Calendar.**

8. The Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, **by means of Her supreme Synodal authority,** expressed Her abiding and unchangeable will that Her unity be **likewise** manifested through the **common celebration by all Christians of the greatest of the Feasts, namely, Holy Pascha** [improperly called "Easter" in the West—TRANS.], decisively setting forth at the First Œcumenical Synod in 325 the eternal *rule for determining Pascha, the Paschal Canon* (i.e., the *Paschalion*).

9. This Synodal act, in essence profoundly **ecclesiological and dogmatic,** presupposed as the basis of what is called the *determination* of Holy Pascha the vernal equinox, which, as a date firmly fixed **by the Church**, would thenceforth **be set by convention** as the **21st of March** by the Julian Calendar then in use, which was thereby consecrated as the **Church Calendar** and as the axis of the annual cycle of the **Orthodox Festal Calendar.** On this foundation, the harmonization of the calendars of the local Orthodox Churches, which were on different *calendar systems*, was gradually accomplished by the sixth century.

10. The Holy Fathers of the First Œcumenical Synod in Nicæa gave **expression by Divine inspiration, but also prophetically**, **to the *anti-syncretistic spirit* of the Church**: by *"not keeping feast with the Jews"* and, by extension, *not aspiring to concelebrate with heretics,* **the external and visible unity of the one Body of the Church was preserved and the boundaries between Truth and heresy established**, wholly **in contrast**, let it be said, to the reprehensible calendar reform of 1924, which **aimed** at ***concelebration with the heterodox of pan-heretical*** **Papism**

and Protestantism, for the purpose of making visible the putative invisible unity that existed between them and Orthodoxy.

11. The Orthodox ecumenists,[27] and especially the more extreme among them, having suffered the pernicious effects of corrosive syncretism, think that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ **has, supposedly, lost Her Catholicity,** by reason of theological and cultural conflicts and divisions; they propose and aim at its reconstitution by way of a **union by compromise** of the divided parties, Orthodox and heretics, which *would supposedly restore Eucharistic communion,* without, of course, a common confession of Faith, **evidently in line with the model of the Unia.** Other, more moderate ecumenists are content to number the heterodox among the Orthodox, speaking ***"on behalf of the whole Body of the Church,"*** the heterodox supposedly being within the boundaries of the Church, since these ecumenists, as advocates of the "broad Church" or the "Church in a broad or in the widest sense," **do not deem the *charismatic and canonical boundaries* of the Church[28] equivalent,** inasmuch as they *find* and *acknowledge* the existence of "Churches" and "Divine Grace" and "salvation" **even outside the *confines of the Truth and the True Orthodox Church (ecclesia extra ecclesiam, extra muros [a church outside the Church, outside the walls (of the Church)]).***

12. The participation of the Orthodox ecumenists in the **so-called World Council of Churches (1948 and on), and also in other ecumenist organizations, constitutes a denial in practice of the Orthodox Church as the fullness of Truth and salvation in Christ,** insofar as a basic precondition for **organizational** participation in such *inter-Confessional bodies* is, in essence, ***the denial,*** *albeit tacit,* ***of the existence of authentic ecclesiastical Catholicity today, as well as a recognition of the necessity of reconstituting a putatively genuine Catholicity,*** *that is,* ***of the necessity, supposedly, of re-founding the Church.***

13. At the core of these un-Orthodox and totally newfangled conceptions are so-called *"Baptismal theology," dogmatic syncretism, the abolition of the "boundaries" of the Church, the recognition of "ecumenical brotherhood," the theory of "Sister Churches"* [*that is, of non-Orthodox Churches as "Sister Churches"*—TRANS.], *the so-called "theology of the two lungs of the Church," the theory of the "one broad Church," the "transcending of ancient heresiology,"* in addition to sundry other mis-

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27 **"The Orthodox ecumenists":** ecumenists who come from the Orthodox Church and who participate, and are enrolled, in the heretical ecumenical movement.

28 **"The charismatic and canonical boundaries of the Church":** • See note 34.

beliefs that have gradually led the Orthodox ecumenists **to a denial of the ecclesiological and soteriological exclusivity of the Orthodox Church and even to a synodal recognition of heterodox communities and their mysteries;** to joint prayer with them and, indeed, at the very highest levels, to offering them the Mysteries; to the signing of joint statements and declarations towards a common witness with them; and, as well, to **an acknowledgement of the need for common service to the world,** as allegedly **jointly responsible** (Orthodoxy and heresy) for its salvation.

14. By means of all of these things, there has been a **complete distortion of the meaning of evangelical love**, exercised in the Truth and through the Truth; a profound and ever-deepening **syncretistic hobnobbing** has taken root; **in the name of a spurious form of œconomy, an attitude of inclusivity and reciprocity towards heterodoxy is maintained;** [and] there has come forth a **mixture of things unmixable;** there has emerged a **truly substantial union** between **ecumenists of every stripe, *a body of believers,*** not, of course, in the unique Truth of the Orthodox Catholic Church, but on the basis of a nebulous *humanistic vision,* **without any missionary dimension or any calling of those in error to a return in repentance to the House of the Father,** that is, to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

III. Sergianism: An Adulteration of Canonicity

1. Another phenomenon and movement akin to ecumenism, likewise possessing an ecclesiological dimension, is so-called ***Sergianism,*** which, in the unprecedented circumstances of the persecution of the Church in the former Soviet Union, through the agency of the fallen and compromised Sergius Stragorodsky (†1944), originally Metropolitan, and later Patriarch, of Moscow, **surrendered** to the atheistic Bolsheviks and their struggle against God **an outwardly proper *Church organization,* so that, in the hands of the revolutionaries, it could become an unwitting tool in their unrelenting warfare against the very Church Herself**, as the Bearer of the fullness of Truth in Christ.

2. *Sergianism* **is not simply a Soviet phenomenon**, for it caused severe damage to the local Orthodox Churches in the countries of Eastern Europe, where, after the Second World War, atheistic and anti-Christian Communist régimes were established.

3. The quintessence of *Sergianism* is the adoption of the delusion that ***deception*** *could be used as a means to preserve the Truth* and, likewise, that *collaboration with*

the enemies and persecutors of the Church was the way to ensure Her survival; in practice, however, the exact opposite occurred: the *Sergianist Bishops* **became tools of the atheistic Communists** for the purpose of exercising control over the Church, to the end of Her moral and spiritual enfeeblement and with a view to Her ultimate dismantlement and annihilation.

4. At the level of ecclesiology, *Sergianism* completely distorted the concept of Orthodox ecclesiastical canonicity, since in the *realm of Sergianism, canonicity* was essentially torn away from the spirit and the Truth of the authentic canonical tradition of the Church, assuming thereby a ***formal adherence to legitimacy,*** which could be used to justify any act of lawlessness committed by the ruling Hierarchy; in fact, ultimately, such a **veneer of *canonicity*** degenerated into an ***administrative technique*** for the subordination of the people of the Church to the *Sergianist Hierarchy*, regardless of the direction in which it led the faithful.

5. After the collapse of the anti-Christian régimes around the end of the preceding twentieth century, the **very grave ecclesiological deviation of *Sergianism,*** under the new conditions of political freedom, **was preserved** as a *legacy of the past* and, at the same time, **changed its form**.

6. Anti-Ecclesiastical *Sergianism,* having long ago incorporated within itself a **worldly spirit**, **unscrupulousness**, **deception**, and a **pathological servility** towards the powerful of this world, **continues to betray the Church,** now no longer for fear of reprisals from atheistic rulers, but for the sake of self-serving and secularist motives and under the cloak of supposed *canonicity,* **still peddling the freedom of the Church** in exchange for gaining the friendship of the powerful of this world, with all of the concomitant material benefits and, to be sure, prestigious social status.

7. Today, the virus of *Sergianism,* in this *modified* form, *as neo-Sergianism or post-Sergianism,* and also in other forms of state control over the Churches, **affects to some degree a large part of the Episcopate of the official local Orthodox Churches** around the world, **thereby contributing to the promotion of an equally secularist and syncretistic ecumenism,** under the cover of a false *canonicity*.

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8. The faithful, both clergy and laity, who possess a **healthy dogmatic and canonical conscience ought to maintain an authentic Patristic stand** in the face of phenomena and movements that have ***ecclesiological and soteriological significance***, such as ecumenism and *Sergianism*, and especially when these phenomena become

systematically entrenched and widely disseminated, even if they do not achieve a clear doctrinal expression, yet penetrate and spread into the Body of the Church in an insidious and corrosive manner; that is, when they are actively adopted or passively allowed by all of the Bishops of one or more local Churches.

9. In such cases, **the essence of the struggle** against these anti-Evangelical, anti-Orthodox, and degenerative phenomena **is not simply and solely an optional stand in the context of some putative œconomy**, **but there is, rather, an obligation to terminate forthwith ecclesiastical communion with a Bishop or a Hierarchy** that introduces heresy into the Church in a conciliar manner, either by preaching it or by contributing to its dissemination through silence, passivity, or indifference (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod).

10. *Walling off* from fallen Shepherds, who are henceforth characterized as **"false bishops"** and **"false teachers,"** is a **binding obligation** for true Orthodox in a time of heresy, for the safeguarding of the **uniqueness, unity, and Catholicity** of the Church, for a confessional **witness to the Faith,** and also for a saving **call to repentance,** missionary in nature, directed towards those who have deviated and those who commune with them.

IV. So-Called Official Orthodoxy

1. The meaning of the term "**official Orthodoxy**" is closely connected with the concepts of "**official Church**" and "**official local Churches.**"

2. "Official Orthodoxy" is that **peculiar ideology of the so-called official local Churches**, representative of an ever more *lukewarm* Orthodoxy,[29] which, through the implementation of the **ecclesiological and canonical innovations** envisaged by the aforementioned Patriarchal Proclamation of 1920, has been led into a **gradual estrangement from authentic Orthodoxy.**

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29 "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16). The word "lukewarm" does not refer, here, simply to lukewarmness of practice, but to lukewarmess in faith and dogma. Such lukewarmness in Orthodoxy assuredly constitutes heresy, since there is no middle way between Truth and falsehood, between Orthodoxy and heresy. A slight divergence from dogmatic truth is already false and heretical, and he who diverges even to the smallest extent from Orthodoxy places himself in the realm of heresy.

3. In 1924, the first major step towards the implementation of this **premeditated and methodical alienation from authentic Orthodoxy** was accomplished through the introduction of the Papal calendar into some of the local Churches, which in time was expanded to the point of acceptance, in certain cases, even of the Papal *Paschalion*, in open violation of the Decree of the First Œcumenical Synod.

4. "**Official Church**" is the name given by the faithful of the Russian Catacomb Church to ***the State Church,*** that is, the Church recognized by, and totally dependent on, the atheistic Soviet régime, which evolved into the notoriously *Sergianist and ecumenist Moscow Patriarchate*.

5. Today, the terms "official Church" and "official local Churches" denote the well-known historically formed local Churches, whose **Hierarchical leadership officially accepts and participates synodally in the ecumenical movement,** promotes, permits, or tolerates it as a theological concept and as a religious enterprise, hides under the cloak of supposed *canonicity,* as understood by *Sergianism*, and adopts—directly or indirectly—many other forms of apostasy from Orthodoxy (see such corrosive phenomena as the adulteration of the Mysteries, and especially of the rite of Baptism, liturgical reforms under the guise of "liturgical renewal," the newly minted "post-Patristic theology," which at an official level is effecting a profound infiltration of syncretistic ecumenism into university theological schools in particular, the loss of ecclesiastical criteria for the *Glorification of Saints,* various forms of secularization and alteration of the authentic ethos of the Church, the adoption of an anti-Patristic interpretation of ecclesiastical œconomy, etc.).

6. All of these so-called official Churches have now joined decisively, unwaveringly, and unrepentantly in the process of syncretistic apostasy of a *Sergianist and ecumenist kind,* an anti-ecclesiastical and uncanonical process **synodally** promoted or permitted by their Hierarchies, **with which the True Orthodox Church,** consistent with its ecclesiological principles regarding **"false bishops"** and **"false teachers," cannot have any prayerful, Mysteriological, or administrative communion whatsoever.**

V. The True Orthodox Church

1. The **True Orthodox Church** includes within Her bosom and unites in the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit that major portion of the pious clergy and

laity of the local Orthodox Churches who have **reacted resolutely to the proclamation of the "ecclesiocidal" heresy of ecumenism** and to its immediate practical applications, as well as to **anti-ecclesiastical *Sergianism,* severing all communion** with the innovating ecumenists and the Sergianists.

2. The faithful upholders in Russia of the legacy of the most holy Patriarch Tikhon (†1925) did not recognize the established Church or *Sergianism* (1927 and on), preferring to undergo persecutions and to take refuge in the **catacombs**, thereby showing forth Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith, while another part, which departed from Russia and formed an ecclesiastical administration in the **diaspora**, produced equally resplendent Confessors and Saintly figures, of worldwide reputation and distinction.

3. In Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and elsewhere, close-knit groups of people rejected the **calendar innovation of 1924** and the heresy of ecumenism, likewise preferring persecutions and producing **Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith**, thereby showing themselves faithful to the sacred Traditions of the Holy Fathers of the Church. In addition, through impressive and wondrous miracles, such as the appearance of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross in Athens (September 14, 1925 [Old Style]), our Lord encouraged and rewarded the Godly zeal of these, His genuine children.

4. After the introduction of the calendar innovation in Greece in 1924, those who abided by the **Traditions of the Fathers** began using the title "True Orthodox Christians," and the Catacomb Orthodox Christians in Russia, the so-called *Tikhonites,* did the same.[30]

5. However, from place to place and from time to time various **other appellations** were used for those who **rejected** the calendar innovation of 1924 and the heresy of ecumenism, but who have also always **situated themselves** within the boundaries of the **authentic mind and Evangelical ethos of the Church** and, in addition, of **lawful and canonical order,**[31] **possessing** genuine and uninterrupted Apostolic Succession, and who **assuredly in their totality make up the True Orthodox Church,** which **constitutes**, in the wake of the constantly increasing departure of the ecumenists from

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30 The Tikhonites too began to use the term "True Orthodox Christians," without having any communication with their True Orthodox brethren in Greece.

31 **"Lawful and canonical order":** that order which is in conformity with the laws of the Orthodox ecclesiastical Tradition and the Sacred Canons of the Orthodox Synods. • See also note 18, "Canonical."

the path of Truth, the **authentic continuator** of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in our contemporary era.

6. The **Episcopal structure** that is dogmatically necessary for the constitution and continuation of the local **True Orthodox Churches** was ensured, by the Grace of God, either by Hierarchs from among the innovators (New Calendarists) joining them, following a confession of Orthodoxy, of course, or by the Consecration of Bishops by a **True Orthodox** ecclesiastical authority in the diaspora, having indisputable Apostolic Succession, and thus **the Apostolic Succession and canonicity of the True Orthodox Church is proven and assured, unquestionable and incontrovertible, and confirmed by signs from God.**

VI. The Return to True Orthodoxy

1. In the acceptance[32] of repentant heretics and schismatics, the Œcumenical and local Synods of the Church have, from time to time, in addition to the **principle of exactitude**, applied the so-called **principle of œconomy,** to wit, a canonical and pastoral[33] practice, according to which it is possible for there to be a **temporary divergence** from the letter of the Sacred Canons, without violating their spirit.

2. Nevertheless, **œconomy** assuredly can **never** and **in no circumstance whatever** permit the pardoning of any sin or any compromise concerning the "**correct and saving confession of the Faith,**"[34] since **œconomy** aims clearly and solely, in a spirit of charitable accommodation, at facilitating the salvation of souls, *for whom Christ died.*

3. The application of **œconomy in the reception** of heretics and schismatics into communion with the Church **in no way** betokens that the Church **acknowledges the validity and the reality of their mysteries,** which are celebrated **outside Her canonical and charismatic boundaries.**[35]

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32 **"Acceptance":** the *acceptance of heretics* means that the Church accepts within Her bosom heretics who assuredly return to Her with an acknowledgment and a spirit of repentance.

33 **"Pastoral practice":** a practice on the part of Shepherds, who care, in Christ and in the fear of God, for the salvation of the reason-endowed flock of the Church.

34 **"The correct and saving confession of the Faith":** that is, œconomy is not permitted—"there is no room for accommodation"—in what pertains to matters of Faith.

35 **"The charismatic and canonical boundaries of the Church":** the "canonical boundaries" are defined by the Dogmas and the Sacred Canons of the Orthodox Church (see note 18, "Canoni-

4. The Holy Orthodox Church has never recognized—in an absolute sense and, as it were, from a distance—either by exactitude or by œconomy, mysteries performed outside Her,[36] since those who celebrate or who partake of these mysteries remain within the bosom of their heretical or schismatic community.

5. Through the application of **œconomy exclusively and solely in the reception** of individual persons or communities outside Her in repentance,[37] the Orthodox Church **accepts merely the external form of the mystery** of heretics or schismatics—provided, of course,[38] that this has been preserved unadulterated, especially as regards Baptism—**but endows this form with life** through the Grace of the Holy Spirit that exists in Her by means of the bearers of Her fullness in the Truth of Christ, namely, **Orthodox Bishops.**

6. More specifically, with regard to the Mysteries celebrated in the so-called official Orthodox Churches, **the True Orthodox Church does not provide assurance**[39] **concerning their validity or concerning their soteriological efficacy,** in particular for those who commune **"knowingly"** [wittingly][40] with syncretistic ecumenism and

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cal"), while the "charismatic boundaries" are defined chiefly by the Sacred Mysteries, through which the Grace of God acts upon the faithful. In the Orthodox Church, these two *boundaries* are not separated but deemed equivalent. These terms are mentioned here precisely in order to emphasize their equivalence, since the ecumenists consider the *charismatic boundaries* of the Church to be broader than Her *canonical boundaries;* that is, they recognize *Mysteriological Grace* also in various heretical communities (see §§II.2 and II.11 earlier on in this document).

36 **"In an absolute sense and, as it were, from a distance":** the Orthodox Church has never recognized the ontologically non-existent mysteries of heretics, either "in an absolute sense," that is, in and of themselves (self-sufficiently and independently), or "from a distance," that is, insofar as the heretics remain distant from Her. When, however, the purveyors of these heretical mysteries are going to enter and be united with Her Body, then the issue of their ***correct form*** arises, **exclusively and solely** for the sake of the Church giving content to those mysteries, which were thitherto empty and devoid of substance or Grace (see the following section VI.5 in this document).

37 **"In repentance":** reception into the Church in repentance certainly does not signify, here, the mode of reception, that is, only *through the Mystery of Repentance and Confession,* but refers to *the spirit and disposition* of a schismatic or heretic who is conscious of his error, repents, and is incorporated into the True Church.

38 **"Accepts":** the issue of the *acceptance or non-acceptance of the external form* of a so-called mystery of heretics or schismatics rests with the *pastoral discretion* of the Bishop; that is to say, such acceptance is not obligatory, but optional.

39 **"Provide assurance":** that is, assert as sure and indisputable, assert emphatically and absolutely, certify, guarantee. • The meaning of this paragraph should be sought in conjunction with that of the preceding five paragraphs, and not in isolation.

40 **"Knowingly":** the Seventh Œcumenical Synod anathematizes those who commune with here-

Sergianism, even though She does not in every instance repeat their external form for those entering into communion with Her in repentance, in anticipation of the convocation of a Major Synod of True Orthodoxy, in order to place a seal on what has already occurred at a local level.[41]

7. It is in any event certain that when the purity of the dogma of the Church is assailed and the irrefragable bond between **confession, Catholicity, and communion** is thereby weakened or even completely broken, **the Mysteriological and soteriological consequences,** clearly foreseen by the Apostolic, Patristic, and Synodal Tradition, **are very serious and very grave.**[42]

8. Taking into account that St. Basil the Great, although he declares himself in favor of exactitude, nonetheless accepts the use of œconomy with regard to certain heretics and schismatics (First Canon), it is important to note that the Holy Orthodox Church has **synodally sanctioned the use of œconomy** for "those who are joining Orthodoxy and the portion of the saved," as is evident in the famous Canon XCV of the Holy and Œcumenical Quinisext Synod (the Synod *in Trullo*), whereby different heretics and schismatics are accepted in a variety of ways, whether **solely through repentance, a certificate of faith (*λίβελλος*), and Confession,** as are the Nestorians and Monophysites who were already condemned centuries before, **through Chrismation,** or **through Baptism.**

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9. In awareness of all the foregoing, and of the particular conditions in each local Church, the **True Orthodox Church deals with especial care** with any clergy or laity from the so-called official Orthodox Churches who desire to enter into communion with Her, being concerned—in the exercise by Her of pastoral solicitude for them—about what is absolutely essential, namely, that they proceed in their choice **freely, conscientiously, and responsibly.**

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tics "knowingly," that is, even though they realize that they are heretics.

41 **"At a local level":** by this is meant whatever has been properly and correctly done by local Synods of True Orthodox Churches. This paragraph is to be interpreted and elucidated as follows: When it so happens that the True Orthodox Church, in the case of those returning and entering into Her, does not repeat the external form of the Mysteries of the so-called official Orthodox Churches, She does not indicate thereby that She affirms their Mysteriological, internal, or soteriological validity.

42 With regard to the innovating ecumenists, the rupture of the "bond between confession, Catholicity, and communion" mentioned here is already a fact and a reality, with all that follows therefrom.

10. As a general rule, **monastics and laity** from these Churches, who have definitely been baptized according to the Orthodox rite,[43] are received into communion **through anointing** (Χρῖσμα) by means of **a special order,** in conjunction, to be sure, with the Mystery of sacred Confession, **while clergy** submit a written petition and, as long as this is approved, are received into communion in the same way, and also through **a special Order of the Imposition of Hands** (Χειροθεσία), specifically compiled for such cases.

11. It is understood that, commensurate with idiosyncrasies in different places and in different cases, for the application of a more lenient or a stricter order, **a decision is to be made by the local Bishop on the basis of synodally determined criteria or by a competent Synod,** according to St. Cyprian of Carthage:

• *"In this matter we do not coerce or impose a law on anyone, since every Prelate has freedom of will in the administration of the Church and will have to account for his actions before the Lord."*[44]

12. A **Major General Synod,** of Pan-Orthodox authority, would be able to decree **the general criteria and the preconditions** for the exercise of the practice of receiving those who return to **the True Orthodox Church** from various newfangled schismatic and heretical communities.

VII. Towards the Convocation of a Major Synod of the True Orthodox Church

1. In the preceding twentieth century, True Orthodox Hierarchs, whenever this could be brought to fruition, issued **Synodal condemnations, at a local level,** both of ecumenism and of Sergianism, and also of Freemasonry.

2. By way of example, we cite the **condemnations of ecumenism** by the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1983, and also by the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in 1998; as well, the **condemnation of Sergianism** by

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43 **"According to the Orthodox rite":** Orthodox Baptism is performed through three immersions and emersions in a font, "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (St. Matthew 28:19).

44 "Letter to Pope Stephen," in *Concilia ad regiam exacta*, Vol. I (Lutetiæ Parisiorum: Impensis Societatis Typographicæ Librorum Ecclesiasticorum iussu Regis constitutæ, 1671), col. 741—TRANS.

the Catacomb Church in Russia, and also by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at different times; and finally, the **condemnation of Freemasonry** by the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in 1988.[45]

3. These Synodal censures, especially of the heresy of ecumenism, are assuredly **important steps in the right direction** towards the convocation of a General Synod of **True Orthodox**, which, with expanded authority, will arrive at decisions concerning the **calendar innovation** and syncretistic **ecumenism**, which contradicts the Gospel.

4. What is necessary today, **on the basis of a common and correct confession of the Faith**, is the union in a common Body of all the local Churches of the True Orthodox, for the purpose of creating the antecedent conditions for assembling and convoking a **Major General Synod of these Churches,** Pan-Orthodox in scope and authority, in order to deal effectively with the heresy of **ecumenism**, as well as **syncretism** in its divers forms, and also for the resolution of various problems and issues of a **practical and pastoral nature**, which flow therefrom and which concern the life of the Church in general, and of the faithful in particular, so that the bond of peace and love in Christ might be ensured.

5. This necessity becomes comprehensible from the fact that the True Church, as the actual Body of Christ, is by Her very nature **Catholic** in the fullness of Truth, Grace, and salvation, and that **through Her Bishops She puts forth Synodal declarations** in the face of heterodox teachings and the *global scandal* that derives therefrom; thus, She **ought to pursue,** on the one hand, the **articulation** of the Truths of the Faith, for the delineation of the Truth in contrast to falsehood, and on the other hand, the **denunciation** and **condemnation** of the error and corruption that stem from heresy and heretics, for the protection of the Flock, **confirming and proclaiming the already existing degradation of heretics[46].**

6. Thus, **in a Major General Synod of the True Orthodox Church** it is necessary that there be proclaimed to all of creation, on the one hand, the **Sole Hope** that exists among us in the True Church as the only way out of all impasses "for the sake

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[45] The Synodal condemnations referred to in this paragraph are, of course, already wholly worthy of honor and accepted by the True Orthodox, and form the basis for the decisions of the anticipated Major Synod.

[46] Synodal condemnations do not bring about the *degradation* of the heretic; rather, they first censure the heresy for the protection of the Flock and then confirm and proclaim the already existing *degradation* of the heretic.

of them that shall inherit salvation,"[47] and, on the other hand, the **complete and definitive antithesis between Orthodoxy and syncretism** *of an ecumenist and a Sergianist bent* **as mutually exclusive**, unto the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, by the intercessions of the Mother of God, the Apostles, and the Fathers.

7. May we be counted worthy, in the near future, following the Holy Fathers and the Holy Synods, preserving free from innovation the **Faith** once for all **delivered** to us,[48] to proclaim, with the Fathers of the Pan-Orthodox Synod of 1848:

"'Let us hold fast the Confession'[49] *which we have received unadulterated...,* ***abhorring every novelty as a suggestion of the Devil.*** *He who accepts a novelty reproaches with deficiency the Orthodox Faith that has been preached. But this Faith* ***has long since been sealed in completeness,*** *not admitting either diminution or increase, or any alteration whatsoever; and* ***he who dares to do, advise, or think of such a thing has already denied the faith of Christ."***[50]

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Unto the Bestower of the Beginning and the End,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
the one Godhead of All,
be glory, dominion, and honor,
now and ever,
and unto the infinite ages of ages.
Amen!

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47 Hebrews 1:14—TRANS.

48 *Cf.* St. Jude 1:3.

49 **"Let us hold fast the Confession" (**Hebrews 4:14): let us hold fast the Confession of the Faith, "let us lay hold of it, hold it securely" (Zigabenos).

50 "Reply of the Orthodox Patriarchs of the East to Pope Pius IX [1848]," §20, in Ioannes Karmires, *Τὰ Δογματικὰ καὶ Συμβολικὰ Μνημεῖα τῆς 'Ορθοδόξου Καθολικῆς 'Εκκλησίας* [The Dogmatic and Credal Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church], 2nd ed. (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), p. 922 [1002]—TRANS.