

## PREFACE

The following is a reply made to Bishop Kallinikos of Kalymnos and the Dodecanese, a former member of the Kiouisis jurisdiction (old calendar) in Greece. (He has since left the Kiouisis Synod, accusing it of heresy.) In a correspondence initiated by himself and completely unsolicited by us, Bishop Kallinikos wanted to know why we had not joined his jurisdiction, but instead had united ourselves to Archbishop Auxentios [reposed in 1994] who, Bishop Kallinikos maintained, had been defrocked by Kiouisis and the bishops with him because of an uncanonical episcopal ordination allegedly permitted by the Archbishop. Archbishop Auxentios denies that he gave a blessing for this ordination. It was on the basis of this alleged ordination that the renegade bishops separated themselves from their canonical head and proceeded without finishing the investigation provided by the canons to defrock Archbishop Auxentios. A few years before this, the same group of rebellious bishops had defrocked the Archbishop on the pretext that he had opened a personal office of the Archbishop separate from that of the Synod. Perceiving that their action was ludicrous, they returned in repentance, only to separate themselves again. The following reply, written by Fr. Basil of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, refutes what Bishop Kallinikos writes and also explains why we did not join his jurisdiction.

**Excerpts from a Response  
by Fr. Basil of Holy Transfiguration Monastery  
to a Former Bishop of the Kiousis group, Kallinikos of the Dodecanese,  
Concerning the "Consecration" of Dorotheos Tsakos**

From the very start we must emphasize that, according to the teaching of the Fathers and Orthodox ecclesiology, it is completely unacceptable for one to separate oneself from one's bishop before a synodal decision and condemnation has been made as regards canonical transgressions, alleged or real. Thus, even if an illegal ordination has taken place, no clergyman or layman can be forgiven for creating a schism, using the ordination as a pretext (Canon 13 & 14 of the First - Second Council of Constantinople).

Every Orthodox Christian knows this basic tenet: separation from one's bishop is permitted only if he is teaching heresy. The Church's teaching is explicit and clear, and one cannot plead ignorance of the law.

The priest must not err in the doctrines that pertain to God. As for the rest, you are not the judge, that is, if you are not beside yourself, but know your own measure and rank.

St. Anastasius of Sinai (PG 89, 848 A)

Is the shepherd a heretic? . . . flee from communion with him and from his teaching as you would flee from a serpent's venom. . . Is the shepherd Orthodox? . . . submit to him as to a type of Christ Who sits in the first place; do not meddle in other matters.

St. Photius the Great (Hom. 15:10)

The above alone would be sufficient to close the Tsakos case. (Tsakos has since reposed.) However, because simple truths oftentimes do not satisfy us, let us examine several aspects of this case.

You write that there exist "signed depositions of witnesses" who confirm that the consecration took place.

The committee that was delegated by the "Synod of Chrysostom Kiousis" to examine the Tsakos case (Bishops Kalliopios and Kallinikos of Achaia) came to the conclusion that the consecration took place "probably during the period of Pascha, 1985". The "ordination certificate" that Tsakos himself presents, however, is dated "3 December, 1983". (In its first edition, the same "ordination certificate" was presented without a date, which was added later by hand). How could the investigative committee overlook such an important document, especially a document that formed the very basis for all the slander? Further, it should be noted that one of the "consecrating" bishops, Gerasimos of Boeotia, twice confirmed that he performed the consecration and twice denied it. In his written deposition submitted to the court authorities in January, 1986, he mentions vaguely that he performed the consecration ". . . at 12:30 p.m. one night in 1985"! In his written statement of 6/19 July, 1985, he maintains that the consecration took place ". . . during the past year, 1984." What is the value of such depositions, made by false witnesses who contradict and refute themselves? Nonetheless, shortly before his repose in October of 1986, Bishop Gerasimos repented and asked forgiveness from Archbishop Auxentius,

from whom also he received the Immaculate Mysteries. Another significant element in one of Gerasimos' depositions (3 August, 1985) is that he confirms in writing that his former deposition was composed as a result of "threats, pressure and intimidation on the part of a group of hierarchs." Also, in another deposition (1 Sept., 1985), Gerasimos, the so-called "witness" for the Kiouisis group, writes:

. . . I was astonished at all the things that are said [in reference to the "consecration" of Tsakos], which I condemn and consider unmitigated and slanderous lies, which have as their purpose the removal of our Archbishop, which is something the well-known trouble-making bishops have desired and pursued for a long time.

On his part, in his first deposition, Dorotheos Tsakos did not specify any date at all in regard to his consecration. Later, however, in his deposition before a Greek court of justice in January, 1986, he confirmed under oath before the judicial authorities that his consecration took place on 5 July, 1985.

Which one of all these written depositions says the truth? When did the consecration take place? In 1983? In 1984? In 1985? We admit that we see no possibility of finding any clue. In any case, it seems that the investigative committee "probably" had the same difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. Note: Certain facts regarding Tsakos' "ordination certificate" should be mentioned here:

In November of 1983 Archbishop Auxentios tonsured (the Greek term is "ordained") Pericles Tsakiris and Haralambos Papanikitas as readers. In Greece, it is customary to give even members of the lower clergy, including readers, an ordination certificate. Because it was late in the day and there was no typewriter at the parish where the tonsure took place, Archbishop Auxentios affixed his signature and seal to two blank pieces of the Archdiocese's stationary and gave them to the two newly-tonsured, instructing them to fill in the appropriate information and to file the documents with the Archdiocese the next morning, so that the papers might be given a protocol number, etc. At the same time, Pericles Tsakiris, one of the newly-tonsured, signed a statement affirming that the newly-tonsured had received two blank pieces of stationary, signed by the Archbishop, to be filled in as documents attesting to their tonsure as readers. Trusting that the matter was taken care of, the Archbishop did not concern himself any further with this matter.

About one month later, one of these papers surfaced, purporting to be an "ordination certificate" of Dorotheos Tsakos who, this paper affirmed, had been made Metropolitan of Patras and the Peloponnesus.

Now, as Archbishop Auxentios pointed out, this "ordination certificate" is totally bogus on several counts:

- 1) The Archdiocese's ordination certificates for the higher clergy are in printed (not typewritten) form. This paper is typewritten.
- 2) It has no protocol number. All official documents must have this number.
- 3) It bears the names of Archbishop Auxentios (even though he did not participate in this "consecration" — if it ever took place — nor did Tsakos himself ever claim that the Archbishop took part) and also of Bishop Gerasimos (of the Auxentian Synod), who affirmed twice (and denied twice) that he performed this consecration together with Bishop Maximos (also of the Auxentian Synod). Yet, according to canonical procedure, an ordination certificate is signed only by the bishops who take part in a consecration. But Archbishop Auxentios (as both sides affirm) did not take part in this consecration (yet his name appears on this typewritten paper), and the signature of Bishop Maximos (who allegedly did take part) is missing from this document.
- 4) This "ordination certificate" — which many believe was written by Tsakos himself — states that "His Grace ("Theophilestatos") Dorotheos Tsakos has been canonically consecrated as Metropolitan of Patras and the Peloponessus." This is absurd, for, in fact, it is like saying that "His Grace, Bishop Dorotheos is consecrated bishop of. . . ." No document for an episcopal consecration would ever say such nonsense. What the form should have read is "The most righteous Archimandrite Dorotheos Tsakos is consecrated, etc. . . ." but, of course, since Tsakos had been consecrated bishop twice before already, he must have considered it beneath his dignity to refer to himself as a mere archimandrite in this paper!

In a "telephone conversation" with you, you write, Metropolitan Maximus of Cephallonia, one of the alleged "consecrators," "admitted indirectly" that the consecration took place.

Your telephone conversation cannot be considered a deposition of a witness; likewise the "order by telephone," which the Archbishop is accused of having given, allegedly in order to consent to the consecration, is also invalid testimony. Canon law (Canon 4 of the First Ecumenical Council, and Canon 19 of Antioch) specifies that if a bishop cannot be physically present, his vote for the candidate must be given in writing, or else the consecration is invalid ("the ordination is inoperative," *op. cit.* of Antioch). On his part, in contrast, Metropolitan Maximus has submitted an authoritative and signed deposition in the presence of the judicial authorities of Greece, in which he refutes every accusation made concerning his participation in the consecration. The fact that Metropolitan Maximus' signature is missing from the "certificate of consecration" that Tsakos presented speaks of itself. (It is superfluous to mention our personal communication with him during his trip here to America, during which, not "indirectly" or "by telephone," but directly and categorically and in the presence of many witnesses — both clergy and laypeople — His Reverence, Metropolitan Maximus refuted this unfounded information. It is not at all difficult to confirm this yourself should you wish to give him yet another telephone call.)

However, for the sake of argument, let us assume something that is incriminating for the Archbishop. Let us assume that the ordination actually took place, and even that Dorotheos Tsakos was enthroned, that he assumed pastoral duties, that he went to his diocese and was accepted by his flock, that he takes full canonical part in the proceedings of the Holy Synod, that he concelebrates with the Archbishop and the other synodal hierarchs, that his episcopal activities are reported in the Church's official periodical, etc., etc.

What is the significance of all this for us? What must we, who have heard what kind of man he is and how he was unworthy of ordination, and that the ordination was performed lawlessly, uncanonically and illicitly, and we are scandalized over this matter — what must we do? Are we to cut off communion with our ecclesiastical authority?

Let us examine Church History, so that we may guide our steps in accord with the Church's mind and not according to our personal opinions.

A certain unworthy man had been consecrated bishop of Aelia in Palestine in a manner that was uncanonical (and, it should be noted, this was not simply an alleged consecration, as was Tsakos', but one that actually took place). According to the Church's canons, his ordination was invalid ("The legislation of the Church does not recognize him as the leader of Palestine," as St. Cyril of Alexandria writes about this bishop). A certain Archimandrite Gennadios was scandalized because the man who had been ordained uncanonically was received into communion by Saint Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople, and the archimandrite became confused over what he should do. Should he remain in communion with Saint Proclus or should he break off communion with him? He wrote to St. Cyril of Alexandria for advice. In his answer, St. Cyril praised Gennadios' eagerness to observe exactness, but at the same time told him that he should not cut off communion with St. Proclus over this matter. At the conclusion of his letter, the Saint, in fact, writes, "Let not your godly reverence avoid communion with the most righteous and God-loving bishop Proclus" (Epistle 56/PG 77, 320).

There are countless such incidents in Church History, and even examining a few of them would turn this treatise into a book. However, let us mention at least a few of them for the sake of historical interest.

St. Peter of Alexandria deposed Arius, who was then a deacon. After St. Peter's repose, his successor, Achillas, not only received Arius back into communion, but even ordained him presbyter. Peter, the bishop of Miletus, was deposed by St. Methodius of Constantinople; yet, St. Photius the Great exonerated him and even promoted him to Metropolitan of Sardea. Again, on other occasions, St. Photius accepted as canonical many whom St. Ignatius of Constantinople had deposed. Likewise, St. Ignatius accepted those whom St. Photius had deposed. Heraclas of Alexandria deposed Bishop Ammonius of Thmuis, yet Ammonius was accepted as a canonical bishop, and after his repose he was succeeded by Philip, who had also been deposed by Heraclas.

The examples of the Saints show the faithful clearly the path they must follow in every difficulty they encounter and in every ecclesiastical problem that arises. Hence, one is at a loss to explain the ignorance that prevails among us today. Just think what would happen if the faithful cut off communion over every transgression of ecclesiastical principles. The structure of the Church would fragment into countless pieces. Yet, which of the Fathers teaches such an ecclesiology?

Let us return again to our own case.

We have Archbishop Auxentius who assures us that he never recognized Tsakos' ordination and that it probably never took place, and if it did, it was without his approval and consent. In addition, the Archbishop has stated categorically that Tsakos has never served with him, that he has never assigned Tsakos any duties, that there is nowhere any document that says that he was accepted by the Archbishop or by our Church, that his name was never listed among the clergy in the annual calendar or in the Church's official periodical, that he never attended the meetings of the Holy Synod, that he has no flock, that he is not recognized by those who are allegedly his fellow bishops, that he was never even a parish priest or any kind of clergyman in our Church, nor even a layman, and that he is a bishop on paper only — false papers at that. Why should we give credence to the self-contradictory depositions of false witnesses, and not to our chief shepherd, who by his official announcements in the press, long before the so-called "consecration" (in 1975, in the newspaper "Acropolis" in which he stated that Tsakos was not a clergyman of our church) and also after (on July 30, 1985, in the newspaper "Bema," in which he publicly affirms that he did not give approval for this consecration). We have also the definitive act of Archbishop Auxentius' Synod (5 March, 1986), in which the irrevocable defrockment of Dorotheos Tsakos is decreed (just in case Gerasimos of Boeotia actually did perform the consecration — his signature, in fact, is the only one that appears on the "ordination certificate"). The same act decrees that Gerasimos is suspended from his episcopal duties in the Metropolis of Thebes and Boeotia.

What else could the Archbishop have done in order to show that this whole matter was a slanderous plot?

Should he have formed an episcopal spiritual court in order to judge the matter? As a matter of fact, he did this also, as will be demonstrated below.

You write that, "I was the only one who proposed to our Synod that the canons should be observed, and that [Archbishop Auxentius] should be summoned on three different occasions in order to make his defense; my proposal was accepted and he was summoned three times. In fact, I visited him personally three times, together with my disciple on the last occasion. But he was unrelenting, because he knew he could not answer the accusations."

At the Synod meeting on 6/19 July, 1985, at which all the bishops who later formed a schism were present, Archbishop Auxentius proposed in the presence of all that an investigation be initiated in regard to the Tsakos affair. All the bishops present accepted this proposal and appointed a committee of three bishops to undertake the investigation and to follow the canonical procedure for the resolution of the matter. However, a few weeks later, and before the work of the investigative committee was completed, the aforementioned bishops broke away, formed their own synod and began their own "investigation" and consequently "deposed" the Archbishop who, as might be expected, did not accept to be judged by these schismatics. Therefore, we cannot understand which "Synod" you are referring to. The "Synod" of the schismatics? And what "observance of the canons" are you speaking about? The number of times one is called to defend himself?! Such bishops not only do not form a synod, but rather "must be disciplined, since they have disdained the court of justice of their fellow bishops;" because "even though a bishop may be under accusation, he is not cast out from his position, neither is he defrocked until his trial is completed" (Commen. on Canon 96 of Carthage). The canons say that "those that have separated from our canonical bishops and set up assemblies in opposition to them" have no right to set up "investigations" and to issue "decrees" (Canon 6 of the 2nd Ecumenical Council). Furthermore, "those who cease the commemoration of their chief hierarch and separate themselves" before a synodal investigation and examination, supposedly because of some infraction on the part of their bishop, are considered schismatic, deposed and deprived of "every priestly honor" (Canons 13 and 14 of the 1st - 2nd Council of Constantinople). The Archbishop requested an investigation and, if necessary, the formation of a synodal court, in accordance with the holy canons and Church order. Who hindered the schismatics from waiting until the completion of the investigation and (if need be) of the formation of an episcopal court? ("until his trial be completed," Canon 96 of Carthage; "before the final vote is given and condemns him," [Syntagma, of Rallis and Potlis 2, 690]; "before his final synodal condemnation" op. cit. p. 691). Who obliged these bishops to flee, with no one pursuing them?

You write in your letter, "The consecrated bishop Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, though defrocked by our synod, did not seek refuge with kyr Auxentius, even though Auxentius long tolerated his ecclesiology."<sup>2</sup>

At the time, His Beatitude, kyr Auxentius, had other synodal bishops around him. Therefore, whatever he did — whether he "tolerated" or did not tolerate — he did with the agreement and approval of the whole Synod. But let us allow your own "Archbishop" to speak in order to refute you, so that you may receive a reply coming from one of your own. In one of his documents (17/30 Oct., 1986) directed against Cyprian, kyr Chrysostom [Kiouisis] writes: "For an entire fifteen years, you deceived your Chief Hierarch and the faithful and pious People of our Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece, and presented yourself as a confessor of our

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\*Trans. Note: Cyprian of Oropos gives the Mysteries to members of the modernist, new calendarist State Church of Greece, and claims that he and his jurisdiction are "protesting" members of that Church.

Church's Faith, so that you might succeed in becoming bishop." So, as you see, your own archbishop describes that it was a matter of deceit and hypocrisy on Cyprian's part and not of "tolerance" on the part of Archbishop Auxentius. The aforementioned document was sent by kyr Chrysostom Kiousis "by order of the Holy Synod" — hence, it was by your order and with your consent also that it was sent. How is it that you have now forgotten your own position in this matter? And in order to demonstrate that the accusation turns against you and not against Archbishop Auxentius, we would like to remind you of the case of Peter of Astoria, (who has since reposed), who also has a "cyprianic" ecclesiology. How, then, does your synod "tolerate" Peter even now? Why does kyr Kalliopios (also reposed) concelebrate with him when he comes here to America? Kyr Kalliopios used to rend his garments over Cyprian's ecclesiology, and, in fact, is still rending them (even though he was consecrated bishop by Cyprian). How is it, then, that he now tolerates Peter of Astoria, who certainly does not conceal his ecclesiology under a bushel? How is it that your bishops concelebrate and meet in synod with Peter when he comes to Greece, and how is it that they consider him a canonical member of your synod? Do they agree with his ecclesiology? Or should we perhaps conclude that they are making the truth the footstool of their politics? (And, in the final analysis, if anyone tolerated Cyprian's ecclesiology, was it not mainly and especially you? Was he not your elder? Hence, did you not know better than anyone else — especially by deed and practice, and not merely by rumor — what his ecclesiology was?)

Also, we should say something about your statement that, "Though Cyprian, the consecrated bishop of Oropos and Fili, was defrocked by our Synod, he did not seek refuge with kyr Auxentius." In fact, Cyprian was defrocked by Archbishop Auxentius' Synod immediately after he separated himself and was "consecrated" by night in 1979. He could seek refuge with His Beatitude, Archbishop Auxentius, only if he had felt remorse over this step he had taken. Has he repented over the schism he caused in the Church? Unfortunately for him, no. Hence, he had no cause or reason to return to His Beatitude.

(Also, we would like to ask, why do you use a double standard? Since both are considered "deposed" by your synod, why is it that you refer to His Beatitude as "kyr Auxentius," while Cyprian is referred to as "the consecrated bishop of Oropos and Fili"?)

Allow us to refer to something you yourself wrote. Immediately after the schism of 1979, you wrote in your diocese's periodical (vol. 1) that, "the irreverence and the trampling of the sacred canons would lead quickly to false teaching, as the sacred Chrysostom says." Indeed, it is very likely that trampling underfoot the law of God could very well lead to false teaching. However, none of the Fathers counsels us to separate ourselves from our bishop because he "would" become a heretic; not one Father imposes on us that we should leave our bishop before he preaches heresy "with bared head," or only because there is a possibility that he might fall into heresy.

Nonetheless, the encyclical of February 14/27, 1979, written by those who initiated the schism, takes some steps that are even more revolutionary in scope: "Today we have destroyed the dominion of impiety, of the mockery of God, of lewdness . . . and we have brought back virtue, piety, order, faith, Orthodoxy . . . Orthodoxy shall triumph"! However, as to when or how Orthodoxy died out, so that its restoration would be required, the encyclical is silent. You see, the "sinful environment," the "immoral, unworthy and foul ones," the "accused and reprobate ones" (to use the schismatics' own words) had wiped out the Faith and there was need of "clerics of a life above reproach," "choice individuals" "Patristic and Apostolic men" (as they themselves,

with considerable modesty, refer to themselves and thus decorate themselves with these medals of distinction) to raise Orthodoxy from the grave. If St. John Chrysostom had heard them, he would have said to them, "Are you better? Be silent, so that you may remain better; but if you speak, you have lost all. . . . You think that you are better than someone, and you do not imitate the publican? Therefore, you have lost even yourself, though you are better" (PG 62, 611). And elsewhere, with more austerity, he writes, "Let us not call such men pure. They are the ones that are impure " (PG 62, 680). And although all these "Patristic and Apostolic men" should have taken "the road leading to the Holy Mountain, where they would cloister themselves for life and forget the world," as they themselves announced in the beginning, nonetheless, they preferred not to go, even though all the roads were open and no one was preventing them from keeping their promise. To the contrary, they returned right back to the same (that is, to the "immoral and foul ones", to the "Augean Stables) when they perceived very quickly that the people did not follow them and their campaign suffered shipwreck, together with all their pious visions. They returned even though "the cleansing" did not take place, and they returned (unfortunately) not with remorse, but with mitres. . . (Certainly, "Every cloud has a silver lining"!!)

Not one of them protested while they were still with the Synod of Archbishop Auxentius. It was only after their schism that they spoke about "cleansing". Would it be unjust on our part to conclude that the "cleansing" was simply a pretext to justify their desire to receive the episcopacy? His Beatitude Archbishop Auxentius asked them publicly to make legal statements regarding these accusations. If you saw them, so did we. It seems they forgot that the Church does not permit those outside of her, the schismatics, to accomplish a "cleansing", but only those of her own offspring who are in communion with her, and only according to the order prescribed by canon law (e.g. Canon 6 of the Second Ecumenical Council). The sacred canons — which the schismatics completely ignored in order to enact their "salvific [to use their own term] transgression" — not only do not recognize as bishops those who rend the Church (Canon 19 of Antioch, Canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council), but not even as worthy to bear the rank or even the appellation proper to a simple priest (Canon 13 of the 1st - 2nd Council). Let it be known to them that "in every sense, they have fallen from their rank" (Canon 18 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council). According to the canons, these clerics are deposed and anathematized, even as the clergy, monastics and laypeople who follow them are defrocked and excommunicated (Canon 13 of the First and Second Ecumenical Council, Canon 11 of Carthage). Therefore, according to what the holy canons tell us, the schismatic bishops cannot form a synod of bishops, but only a synod of unordained monks.

Concurrently, so long as kyr Chrysostomos Kiouis was on the sidelines, he unleashed "grievous accusations of immorality" against various bishops and "filthy clerics" (to use his own words). He made accusations concerning uncanonical acts, ordinations, blatant transgressions, etc. In March of 1985, in fact, he wrote the following description of his fellow bishops: "Ridiculous bishops who [perpetrate] a mockery of God and are a source of disgrace to themselves."

This is what he was shouting while he had been pushed aside. But, O wonder!, after a few months, everything was transformed into "a beautiful world fashioned in an angelic manner"; and all this took place by means of a magic (episcopal) wand, of course. As soon as he received the invitation, he hastened eagerly to become the chief hierarch over "the Augean Stables at Kaningos Street" (Forgive me; the remark — as all know — is his very own). His struggles for



cleansing and for the Church's tradition were replaced by "the rewards of the 'first places at banquets' and by ambition. . .for the sake of his own profit and vainglory" (as his erstwhile colleague, Akakios of Diavlia, wrote in a document in reference to this change of heart on the part of Kiousis).

The heads of the "Augean Stables"\*, that is, the very ones who previously had placed him under indefinite suspension and had declared him fallen from the throne of Thessalonica, had the honor of being the ones to vote him in. Thus, Annas met Caiaphas, and the very voice which of old had showered them with unnameable adjectives — written and in public, in the ears of the simple people and of the enemies of the Faith — was by this means muzzled. Everything was locked up in a file, and on the outside they wrote (to use their own words) "Remarks Past and Forgotten". Kiousis' "pre-election" accusations and his public demands for cleansing were all filed away after the results of the "election" were in.

In a letter to Bishop Gabriel of the Cyclades Islands in October of 1985, kyr Gerontios called all the bishops to unity and, in a manner entirely characteristic of him, said: "[We should] set aside every justifiable sense of bitterness [we have experienced] because of mistakes that, perhaps, took place in the past, which were due to human weakness . . . especially in view of the critical circumstances surrounding our Church and Nation," etc. Nevertheless, although Gerontios was willing to swallow the camels of the past, he strained the gnat when it came to His Beatitude Archbishop Auxentius; for example, there was the case of the "grievous crime" perpetrated by the Archbishop, that is, his decision to rent office space for his diocese — the Archdiocese of Athens — a right that even the least of bishops has!

But as you correctly observed in your publication, the trampling underfoot of the canons and of the law of God will sooner or later lead one to false doctrines also.

Only a few months have passed since we learned from your synod's official publication that: "The Patriarchates hold fast to the Orthodox path . . . and abide in that which they received, neither adding 'one jot or one tittle' to the things that pertain to our worship, and, in general, to all that pertains to the traditional Orthodox manner of life throughout the ages" ("Voice of Orthodoxy," Dec. 1989).

As a result of this statement, one is forced to ask: What is the reason for continuing to have synodal meetings at Kiousis' headquarters if the Patriarchates of today "hold fast to the Orthodox path"? If the Patriarchates have not added "one jot or one tittle" to the Orthodox Faith, then what "sacred struggle" are your bishops boasting about, and what "genuineness" are they talking about? Why don't they hasten to submit themselves to the "Orthodox Patriarchates," but instead continue to establish their own altars and places of worship?

As far as the accusations against His Beatitude, kyr Auxentius, are concerned, and about whether or not he co-operated in an uncanonical consecration — all these matters have to do with his person and ecclesiastical juridical procedure. But the accusations that are directed against Kiousis and his bishops concern matters of the Faith, and they affect all — clergy and laypeople — who are in communion with them. His Beatitude, Archbishop Auxentius, is not in communion with the Jerusalem Patriarchate, as the Kiousis bishops are. Unlike Kiousis himself

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\* Trans. Note: A reference to the classic legend of King Augeas' stables, which had been neglected for thirty years and which were finally cleansed by Hercules.

(who as an archimandrite served the Presanctified Liturgy in Jerusalem with a new calendar priest, while the new calendar bishop of Larissa presided), the Archbishop has never served such "ecumenistic" liturgies; neither did the Archbishop take part in the Service of the Washing of the Feet while fully vested, as Kiouisis did; nor was the Archbishop ever subjected to a 20-day suspension for this incident, as Kiouisis was, but refused to observe the epitimion given to him, as Kiouisis did.

Therefore, over which canons and over which ecclesiastical traditions are Kiouisis and those with him now demonstrating so much concern? They cut the umbilical cord to tradition long ago. The sundering of unity means a violation of the Faith. "Does he who does not preserve unity think that he is keeping the Faith? . . . He that does not preserve unity does not observe the Law of God, he does not maintain the Faith, he does not possess life and salvation" (St. Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Unity of the Church*, 4; 6).

The fathers of the Holy Mountain also reproach the Kiouisis bishops for their "True Orthodox Christian Branch Theory" and for the fact that "they gather at Kaningos Street [Kiouisis' headquarters] and pretend that they are great strugglers [for the Faith]" and "they supposedly anathematize Kazantzakis and Masonry" (see *Ecclesiastical Tradition*, Jan.-Feb. 1989). They tell the Kiouisis bishops that "months have passed and we have yet to see an explanation" concerning the fact that their bishops Paisius and Vikentios\* received communion at Jerusalem; indeed, they are still waiting. And what is even more significant is that these actions are not even considered transgressions on the part of the Kiouisis group! This is why the perpetrators of this deed did not even receive a rebuke, though two years have passed already. Instead, rather, in an announcement in their official publication (*Voice of Orthodoxy*, No. 825), Kiouisis described the uproar over this matter as "a contrived commotion" — that is, it is as if he were saying, "everyone here is fine, and nothing new has happened"!

Indeed, rather than an explanation or an epitimion, other tidings reach us in addition to the first. At the feast of Theophany in 1990, Kiouisis said the following in his sermon: "I feel obliged to address heartfelt greetings to all the 'resplendent children of the Church' who throughout the world celebrate with us, especially the Leader of Church of Sion, who also celebrates with us" (*Ecclesiastical Tradition*, Jan.-Feb. 1990). So that is how it is! The members of the World Council of Churches and Ecumenism's fellow-travelers have now become "the resplendent children of the Church"!

And, as usual, the slogans continue to pour forth freely in their publications: "the invincible zeal and the militant mind of the True children of Orthodoxy. . ." (*Ecclesiastical Tradition*, op.cit.)

Under such circumstances, the things that are said against them (and even republished in publications that belong to them!) are not unjust: "The apostasy of the chief shepherds is coming to a head. It only remains to be seen if the flock that follows these wolf-like shepherds is a rational or irrational flock" (*Epignosis*, no. 10; re-printed in *Ecclesiastical Tradition*, Jan.-Feb. 1989, p. 25 — The above quotation refers to the incident where Paisios and Vikentios received communion at Jerusalem, and the term "wolf-like shepherd" is a direct reference to kyr Chrysostom Kiouisis).

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\* Both have since joined the new calendar schism.

Fortunately, after we left the Russian Church Abroad we did not turn to Kiouisis. Months before we left the Church Abroad, we bombarded its bishops with written documents, petitions and protests, aside from personal visits on the part of our representatives with Vitaly and other bishops of the Russian Church Abroad. But all this fell on deaf ears.

In what way would Kiouisis have been any better, if we were to suppose that we had addressed to him our protests about the concelebrations and joint prayers of the Russian bishops and clergy with clergy and members of the WCC, the giving of communion to Monophysites, their flirtations with the Moscow Patriarchate, the statement made by one of their bishops in the name of all the others, that is, that the Russian Synod Abroad does not consider the "Orthodox Churches" in the WCC to be in heresy, and others such matters of Faith — since, for Kiouisis, the patriarchates are adhering to pure Orthodoxy? He was already predisposed; and when we publicly called upon him (see *Orthodox Typos*, Oct. 21, 1988; *Beacon of Orthodoxy*, Nov. 1988) to explain to us what "defrockment" he was talking about and to show us the decree of defrockment that he was referring to, we received no reply whatsoever.

For the record, it should be noted that not one of our clergy was defrocked for moral transgressions. There was no trial to examine the accusations regarding matters of morality and no court was formed — neither before, nor after our departure from the Russian Church Abroad. Not only was there no trial, there was not even an investigation. For almost one year, despite our repeated petitions, both written and oral, the Russian Synod did not fulfill our request that they come visit us, to investigate and get the matter underway. And this was to be expected, because there were no grounds for such an action. The Russian Synod knew us, and our accusers, and the unfounded nature of the accusations. In a manner both arbitrary and completely uncanonical, it announced its "decision" of defrockment (after the passage of a year), when we already belonged to the True Orthodox Christians of Greece — and this was not for reasons of morality, but rather because we "created a schism." And this decree was directed not only against our monastery, but against thirty-five or more of our clergy, who, together with their parishes, broke off communion with the Russian Church Abroad over the matters of faith which we mentioned above.

Furthermore, my father, if we also who are "weighed down" morally had turned to Kiouisis before he had cleaned out the old Augean Stables (i.e. the bishops who are now with him and whom Kiouisis himself had accused before), we would have become the cause of much misfortune there and would have added more duties and work for your leader, the new Hercules.

It is useless to add that these references to "cleansing" reek of Makrakis\* self-righteous spirit. The Church teaches that God's grace works even through unworthy clergy and that apostolic succession is not broken because of sins. In contrast, Makrakis' opinion was that the grace of the Holy Spirit is not imparted by means of sinful bishops, and that the holy things had been defiled, and that the Church had died because of alleged moral corruption. However, if one were to examine Church history, one would encounter thousands of incidents of canonical transgressions (illegal ordinations, etc.), which, nonetheless, did not become a cause for the Orthodox to separate from the Church. Whether it be Saint Paul or an ordinary priest who is serving the Liturgy, the sacred Mystery is the same, because it is not the priests who consecrate the gifts, but God, "through the hand" of ministers who may even be unworthy (PG 62, 612).

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\* A religious and political figure who was condemned for heresy in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This is why it is forbidden by the Church for one to blazon abroad and to publicize the sins of a priest. On one occasion, a certain presbyter wrote to Saint Isidore of Pelusium, complaining about an illegal ordination of a certain cleric and about this cleric's exceptionally dissolute and scandalous life. In reply, Saint Isidore wrote to him that he was rightly indignant and that all that he wrote was true. However, he counseled him to cease from defiling his mouth with condemnations ("you defile your own mouth while ridiculing his own dissolute deeds" PG 78, 616 C). "You befoul yourself by speaking about such things," wrote the Saint to another correspondent who had referred to the same matter (op.cit. 912 B). And to a third, again concerning the same matter of the illegal ordination and the immoral life of the individual in question, he wrote, "He that receives [the Mysteries from this priest] is harmed in nothing, even though he that gives seem to be unworthy; nor are the immaculate Mysteries defiled, though the priest surpasses all men in evil" (PG 78, 1000 C). When the Faith is upheld correctly, transgressions reflect nothing but the human element, which has never been absent, even from the earliest apostolic times. Behold how Saint John Chrysostom describes the condition of the Church in the "Golden Age":

And now all things are lost and corrupted, and the Church differs in no way from a stable for cattle or an enclosure for asses and camels; and I wander about, seeking for a sheep and am unable to find one. Thus, all kick like horses and wild asses, and they fill all things here with much dung. . . .

(PG 58, 780)

Nevertheless, none of the Orthodox followed the slippery path of separation from synodal unity and of isolation from the canonical (though wavering) ecclesiastical leadership. As a matter of fact, Saint John Chrysostom himself became sanctified within this "stable for cattle"! Indeed, he underwent unbelievable persecutions and exiles at the hands of the "muleteers" who moved heaven and earth in order to undo him. And yet, from the depths of far-off Armenia, he teaches the Orthodox of every age:

And if his doctrine is perverted, obey him not, though he be an angel; but if he teach correctly, attend not to his life, but to his words.

(PG 62, 610)

Again, we repeat that which is known to every Christian who seeks to be consistent with the Church's tradition: It is enough that the Archbishop's mind is Orthodox; his alleged deeds do not separate him from the body of the Church. St. Photius the Great writes:

It is not your task, nor your concern, to busy yourself and to examine the deeds of the priest . . . . Obey his teaching and do not busy yourself about his manner of life.

(Homily 15 : 10)

The Archbishop occupies the throne only symbolically. In fact, the One Who sits in the first place is Christ:

But, He that ever sits upon the hierarchical throne is not he that sits there; rather, is it He that says, "Where two or three are gathered" in His name is

the One Who is in the midst of them, even Christ, the Son of the living God, the God and Man Who is the Foundation of the Church and Who established it.

(Life of St. Pachomius, 1:94)

The honor or dishonor we offer to the Archbishop passes on to the "High Priest of the good things to come," because, as a bishop, he "sits in the first place as a figure of God" (St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians 6:1). The faithful do not separate from him "simply because something of an unlawful nature is rumored against him" (Syntagma, Rallis and Potlis, 2:690) — that is, that he is "a man that is a glutton and winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" — but only when the Church replaces him by a lawful decree. Otherwise, they that separate themselves cease to be members of the Catholic Church and "are torn away from grace."

It is nearly thirty years that His Beatitude, Archbishop Auxentius has been in the God-given position of leadership of the Orthodox Christians of Greece. So long as — with the help of God — he remains unshaken in the Faith that has been handed down to us, the slanders against him will remain the arrows of infants, and nothing will separate the Orthodox Christians from him. For innumerable years his enemies plot in vain. They jump from one alliance to another, from one schism to another, from one "salvific transgression" to another. They argue and break away from one another, they again patch things up, only to separate again. But, thanks be to God that He has given us a simple and God-fearing Archbishop, and not one of those shrewd and "pure" ones.

As for you, venerable father, who, we believe, do not have the same motives as the others, why do you follow them?

The consecration of Dorotheos Tsakos was only an excuse (like "the rental of offices for the Archdiocese"). What person who knows anything at all about Church tradition will not laugh at these bishops' childish games. What should the faithful in Constantinople have done when, around the year 400, there were heard gossip and rumors against the Archbishop, John Chrysostom, in regard to the unlawful "consecrations" he had done? Among the list of forty false accusations are the following also:

- 10) He consecrated to the episcopate a man who was a grave-robber and thief.
- 14) He ordained many without asking for character recommendations from the clergy.
- 18) He ordained to the priesthood his deacon, Serapion, who had been accused of crimes.
- 30) He consecrated Heraclides as Metropolitan of Ephesus, although he was an Origenist and had been accused of being a thief.
- 39) He consecrated to the episcopate men who were strangers and captives who had not been set free.

(Synaxarion, Nov. 13)

It goes without saying that there must have been "depositions of witnesses" that proved that the Saint had performed these ordinations. (And — we believe — those testimonies were much more credible and substantial than Tsakos' forged papers. And let us not forget "Arsenius'

severed hand" — that famous bit of "evidence" that Saint Athanasius' accusers brought to the court as a "tangible" proof of their accusations.)

We know, however, that Chrysostom himself counseled the faithful not to separate themselves from the ecclesiastical authorities by using these transgressions as a pretext.

For if He taught concerning the Jewish teachers that, since they sit in the seat of Moses, they should be hearkened unto by those under instruction as though they were righteous, although, indeed, their actions were evil . . . what forgiveness will they receive who spit and trample upon the leaders of the Church, who with the grace of God live in moderation.

(PG 61, 623-4)

In a study written by an ancient historian and entitled, *A Collection of Diverse Books, [Showing] That, If the Hierarchs Are Orthodox, the People Should Not Be Separated from Them, Even Though Their Consecration Took Place Under Some Unlawful Circumstance*, there is a list of a multitude of canonical transgressions that took place in the history of the Church, including unlawful and uncanonical ordinations and consecrations performed by saints, and which were nonetheless accepted by the Church. At the end of this study, the following statement is made by way of conclusion:

He that — supposedly for sake of keeping the exactness of the canon — creates turmoil, foment rebellion, and rends the body of the Church, although it continues to be maintained in piety by Orthodoxy — such a one, without his realizing it, is (although it is grievous to say) a wolf in sheep's clothing, though he thinks that he is motivated by piety.

The case of Dorotheos Tsakos pales before all that has happened throughout the Church's history. Despite these incidents, the faithful did not cut themselves off from their bishops because of such matters.

In regard to those who wanted to carry out their "cleansing" and get the Saint out of the way, and also in regard to the general condition of the Church, Saint John Chrysostom wrote the following to Innocent of Rome:

The things done by them now are lacking in any consistency and are beyond any ecclesiastical law or canon. What say I "ecclesiastical canon"? No one has ever presumed to do such things even in secular courts, or rather, not even among the Scythians and Sauromatae. . . . And the sorry thing is that such evils of so many kinds have not ever, not even now, been resolved, nor is there any hope of a solution; but day by day the evil spreads and we have become a laughing-stock to many . . . and all grieve over the culmination of these ills — I mean this new act of lawlessness.

(PG 52, 534-5)

And yet, when he was leaving for exile, he counseled the flock and the bishops who had remained faithful to him not to form a schism:

Remain in communion with them, lest you become a cause of schism . . . for the things that they plot against us do not concern doctrine.

(PG 140, 788 A. Life VI, 23)

Let them commit deeds that are lawless and in defiance of all canonical order, he told them. They are guilty of the torments of hell if they do not repent. However, since they do not set at nought the true Faith, remain in communion with them, because all they who separate themselves from canonical authority are worse than heretics: "they that rend the Church are worse than those who believe heretical doctrines; and not only are they worse, but superlatively, immeasurably and eminently worse" (op.cit. 797 C).

This teaching of the Church is so clear, and there is such an abundance of testimonies concerned with our subject, we again fall into the temptation of adding yet something else.

Ordinations performed outside of a bishop's own diocese (without the consent of the local ruling bishop) are uncanonical and invalid. The Church specifies that both the ordainers and the ones so ordained be defrocked. Yet, until a lawful trial in a canonical ecclesiastical court takes place, these ordinations are considered valid, because, in the final analysis, the Church — if it so will — can recognize an unlawful act and give it validity. A case in point are the ordinations that Saint Athanasius the Great performed outside of his diocese. Yet, the flock of Alexandria did not break away from the Saint. The same thing happened with Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus, Saint Eusebius of Samosata, and Saint Eustathius of Antioch — all of whom performed ordinations outside of their dioceses. According to the ecclesiology of some of our contemporaries, however, their flocks should not have accepted these unlawful acts; they should have separated from these shepherds who performed these unlawful ordinations. But they who separate themselves from their ecclesiastical authority over matters that can be healed deprive themselves of God's promises. "They that rend and tear the Church," says Saint John Chrysostom, "are torn away from grace" (PG 59, 620). For, as we read in the Acts of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Act 5), "No man's transgression can hinder God's promises." They that separate themselves using such excuses are worse, says Saint John Chrysostom elsewhere, "than the soldiers who tore the body of Christ with the lance, or the Jews who pierced it with nails; because those members were again restored, whereas these men, if they do not become whole in this life, will remain forever outside of the membership of the Church" (PG 62, 322). And he adds, "It is a fearful thing to separate oneself from the assembly of the brethren" (PG 62, 497). And elsewhere, again, he will say:

Every day we examine our own lives, and leaving the hidden things of the lives of others to be judged by Him Who knows all things with exactness, we judge our own sins. . . . Though their life be exceedingly subject to condemnation, if you attend to yourself you will not suffer harm in regard to those things that have been entrusted to him by God.

(PG 59, 206; 472)

Your Reverence,

We ask your forgiveness that, despite our intention, this letter has become so long. In our eagerness to defend the Archbishop, it is possible that a certain boldness or sharpness of expression intruded, but we believe that your love will forgive even this. We call to our defense Saint John Chrysostom, whose commandment we had in mind: "For what cause do you endure others who speak evilly of him, and, for the sake of receiving much reward from God, you do not

stop their mouths, or become indignant, or vexed?" We nurture the hope that, perhaps, you will find something useful in what has been written above. We are ready to communicate with you extensively on this matter if we are persuaded that, indeed, some benefit may result from this. If, however, it happen that you do not agree with what we have set forth here, we ask you not to write to us. Simply, we considered it our duty to answer your letter, since you provided the occasion. We do not have any special proficiency in personal recriminations. We would rather apply the words of Abba Isaac the Syrian: "Do not provoke any man or vie zealously with him, either for the sake of the Faith, or on account of his evil deeds; but watch over yourself not to blame or accuse any man in any matter. For we have a Judge in the Heavens Who is impartial" (Homily Five).

With the love of Christ,  
on behalf of Fr. Panteleimon  
(signed)  
Basil, monk