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memory of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

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To:
His Eminence Metropolitan (G.O.C.)
Kyr kyr Kirykos.

Your Eminence,

It is to my great sorrow to note that until now You have not answered my letter from 28 Feb. (O.C.)/ 13 Mar. (N.C.), which shows Your Eminence's indifference and contempt towards my humbleness.

For which reasons You display such indifference, the Lord knows.

Since, however, the themes and problems, which I set forth in my above-mentioned letter to You, arise in Your letter to my humbleness and touch upon issues concerning the Faith of the Orthodox Church handed down and sealed by the Holy Fathers and because Your teachings, positions, views and actions deviate from this, for this reason, I am obligated to not silence myself, but to mention and clarify the below:

1. In reference to the fast of Saturday.

You wrote that in order to receive Communion on Sunday, entirely by exception and only by economy, strictly fasting on Saturday is an imperative rule, otherwise Your Holiness does not allow participation in Holy Communion, even referring to Bishop Matthew of Bresthena.

The reference, however, to the above bishop shows to be inaccurate and very deceptive, because this bishop never left behind such a tradition, but on the contrary, as an Athonite ascetic he unswervingly implemented

the Orthodox Tradition concerning Saturday and Sunday and the refrainment of fasting on these days.

In order to reinforce Your assertion, You gave me, through Fr. Panteleimon of Croatia, a book entitled *Concerning Holy Communion*, by Archbishop Andrew of the G.O.C. of Athens and all Greece (Athens 1992), which is inaccurate and presents an arbitrary throng of excerpts of official texts of the Church, where it is quoted that *"he who wishes to receive Communion on Sunday, is obliged to fast on Saturday identically as on Friday,"* (footnote p. 40).

The above, however, are absolutely contrary to the Holy Tradition of the Church, namely the 64th Apostolic Canon and the 55th Canon of the First-Second Council, which states that *"If any Clergyman is found fasting on Sunday, or on Saturday with the exception of one only, let him be deposed from office. If, however, he is a layman, let him be excommunicated."*

According to Your Eminence's view, are the faithful able to receive Communion on Feasts of the Lord or the Mother of God or in remembrance of Saints if these fall on a Monday or Tuesday? Should they then fast also on Sunday?

Does Your ordered fast on Saturday only concern laymen?

2. In reference to the preeminence of Sunday.

You write that the only day on which the faithful are able to receive Communion is Saturday, strictly urging them not to receive Communion on Sunday, thus denying the ancient Apostolic tradition as well as the Paschal character of Sunday and the age-old practice of the Church, thus introducing a multitude of innovations.

The Holy Tradition of the Church, however, honors Sunday, the first day after the Sabbaths, as the preeminent day of the week and invites the faithful to receive Holy Communion on this Resurrectional and Paschal day.

By Your Eminence attributing a great importance to Saturday as the preeminent day to receive Communion and nearly forbidding this on

Sunday, as unsuitable for receiving the Immaculate Mysteries, You are professing a return to Jewish morals and customs and spreading Judaized opinions in violation of the anathema of the Holy Canons.

3. In reference to the Mystery of Holy Communion

The Orthodox Church, guarding the ancient Apostolic tradition, does not only urge the participation in the preeminent Mystery, but requires, by the 8th and 9th Apostolic Canons, the 66th and the 80th canons of the 6th Ecumenical Council and the 2nd canon of the Council in Antioch, all of the faithful in church, laypeople and clergymen to partake of the common Chalice, under the penalty of excommunication and deposition.

Only the prohibited, those who have fallen into mortal sins, are excluded from this Eucharistic participation, by the suggestion of their spiritual father and confessor, as the 102nd canon of the 6th Ecumenical Council dictates.

The philokalic fathers, who were mockingly called Kollyvades by everyone, from their adversaries to their mortal enemies, were attempting to revive and teach this ancient, revered Apostolic Tradition on the Holy Mountain and were criticized and slandered and sent away from Athos and some of them were killed.

So it is a valid apprehension as to why Your Eminence remains completely silent and openly ignores the now known book of the philokalic fathers, which is the book of Saints Makarios Notaras, formerly of Corinth, and Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, *Concerning the Continuous Communion of the Immaculate Mysteries of Christ*, which constitutes a summary and recapitulation of the teachings of the Holy and God-bearing Fathers about the Mystery of Holy Communion, and as such proclaims both the synodal decision of Patriarch Neophytos of Constantinople from Maroneia, and the synodal decision of the Church of Greece in 1886.

It is strange that this very well known book is absent from the sources and references about Holy Communion in the above mentioned book by Archbishop Andrew of the G.O.C., *Concerning Holy Communion*.

The Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V also invokes this ancient Apostolic Tradition by his synodal decision in the year 1819 which says that *"the pious have the duty to approach and receive the life-giving Body, for this reason they are called by the priest."*

But also the Church of Greece, by its synodal decision in the year 1878, condemns the different teachings of Makrakis, among which are the abolition of the Mystery of Confession, and appeals to this ancient Apostolic Tradition by saying that *"but not only does the Church by no means forbid the truly worthy to present themselves more frequently to Holy Communion, but indeed in every liturgy, by the sounding of 'with the fear of God, faith and love draw near' She calls them to present themselves to Holy Communion."*

The previously mentioned bishop Matthew of Bresthena also invokes this Apostolic Tradition concerning frequent Communion in his book *"The Mystery of Confession,"* (Concerning Holy Communion, pp. 107-111, Hieromonk Matthew, Spiritual Father, Pilgrim to the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, Athonite, Cretan, Lavriotan, Athens 1933).

All Holy Tradition speaks about the necessary preparation before Holy Communion, which concerns clergymen and laypeople, and consists of the continual cleansing of the heart and mind, by Repentance and Confession, by the obligatory complete fast from midnight and after and by the Pre-Communion fast according to one's strength, in accordance with the opinion of one's spiritual father and confessor.

Your Eminence, however, writes that the only necessary preparation and obligatory prerequisite for Holy Communion is fasting and nothing else.

But the question easily arises of why the clergymen do not fast before Holy Communion, maybe because, according to Your view they have some privilege over laypeople?

Why does Your Eminence completely silence the basic criterion of Holy Communion, which is the clean conscience, as the Church has believed from the beginning, and impose objective criteria for those who will receive Communion in the future? Who will inspect these, forbidding and allowing Holy Communion? Will someone give us a reference?

Did the God-bearing Holy Fathers, who did not establish a canon of obligatory fasting before Holy Communion, do this by oversight or mistake?

By Your Eminence setting and imposing new canons and morals, under the pretext of devoutness and ascetic piety, do You consider that it is necessary to cover the void of what was unforeseen and omitted by the God-bearing Holy Fathers?

Does Your Eminence believe that the Holy God-bearing Fathers have erred and that You are able to make an examination and correction of them?

In Your Eminence's reference to the unworthiness of the faithful, do You consider that we the clergymen and shepherds are worthy and holy and above any censure and criticism?

Truly, if as You write, due to their unworthiness none of the faithful should remain in the church, then this means two things, either the congregation is not baptized Orthodox or we the clergymen and shepherds are unworthy of the Master's calling and have no concern for the salvation of the logical sheep, which the Master Christ has entrusted to us, because we have not made them worthy of the grace of the All-Holy Spirit so that they may continuously receive the life-giving body and blood of the Lord, and rather the absence of our spiritual guidance will end up in our sure condemnation on the day of the just judgment.

Therefore the faithful have every right not to call us shepherds and spiritual fathers, but oppressive wolves and stepfathers, because the total absence of love, indifference and contempt for the flock is what characterizes us. We, whose chief characteristics are lack of feeling and the strict observance of the letter of the law, as we exclusively understand it, present ourselves as managers of the power of Christ. We are only concerned with our personal interests and we offer the logical sheep of Christ as prey to the noetic wolf who is the ruler of this world, that is, the devil.

Truly, which of us clergymen and shepherds, moved by pure love, and without ulterior motives and expedience, as our Lord, literally ran

behind the deluded logical sheep and saved them with our fatherly love and personal self-sacrifice?

Maybe, for Your Eminence, the things concerning love put into practice, as written above, constitute boring sophistry?

Maybe this love, which reaches the point of self-sacrifice on the Cross, is not a part of Your professed teachings?

Maybe the contempt of this love which reaches the point of self-sacrifice on the Cross has something to do with the fact that Your Eminence considers Saturday as the center of the week and because of this reason urges the faithful to receive Communion only on Saturday and not Sunday?

Which tradition, which teaching, and which morals and customs does Your Eminence invoke and follow, when You not only justify those who hate the faithful – those who in agreement with the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church frequently receive the Immaculate Mysteries - but You also label these faithful cacodox without reason and without proper dialogue?

Does not Christ and the continuous unity with Him through Holy Communion constitute, for Your Eminence, the center of life of the faithful members of the Orthodox Church, as He our Lord Jesus Christ commands?

4. In reference to the acceptance and interpretation of the Divine and Holy Canons.

Your Eminence, using devoutness and ascetic piety concerning Holy Communion as an excuse, interprets the Divine and Holy Canons and especially the Apostolic Canons in such a way which essentially entails their overthrowing and rejection, as much in their letter as in their spirit.

Especially worthy of attention is the fact that Your Eminence both overthrows the Divine and Holy Canons and averts the faithful from Holy Communion "*creating harmful devoutness*", as the great teacher of the

Church, the champion of the 3rd Ecumenical Council and defender of the Theotokos, Saint Cyril of Alexandria, says, referring to Holy Communion in his interpretation of the Gospel of John.

Because, as the philokalic fathers say, *“How can the frequent Communion of the Mysteries, which of old was possible, become impossible for us? Where is this impossibility considered? Is it said concerning the Mysteries or those receiving them? But for whichever one it is supposed, it is likewise a blasphemous reason.”* (Summary of the Holy Canons, Neophytos Kavsokalyvitis)

The conditional acceptance or even rejection of the Divine and Holy Canons by Your Eminence breaks the unity and unbrokenness of them, imitating the ecumenists exactly, by considering the possibility of changing them, and modifying and making them dependent upon historical situations, circumstances and eras.

Maybe Your Eminence feels, together with the ecumenists as the current Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew Archontonis, the need for a revision or even abolishment of the Divine and Holy Canons, since this is dictated by today’s demands, as Bartholomew Archontonis expressed in 1970 in his doctoral thesis *Concerning the Codification of the Holy Canons and the Canonical Stipulations in the Orthodox Church?*

Maybe Your Eminence believes that *“the holy canons of the ecumenical councils and those of the local councils and of the fathers ratified by them are not unalterable”* (p. 30, Concerning the Codification of the Holy Canons, B. Archontonis), under the pretext of devoutness and ascetic piety?

Maybe Your Eminence believes that the Divine and Holy Canons are *“some contradictory to one another and others inapplicable under today’s circumstances.”* (p. 15, Concerning the Codification of the Holy Canons, B. Archontonis), and, under the pretext of devoutness and ascetic piety, that they should be abolished?

How else can one describe Your Eminence’s written opinion about today’s inapplicability of the Apostolic Canons, which are the original and primary nucleus of the Divine and Holy Canons?

Do the Apostolic Traditions and Canons have a place in Your Eminence's professed contemporary *Genuine Church*?

Is the saying of the Apostle of the nations, Paul, "*but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema,*" which the 7th Ecumenical Council also reiterates, valid for Your Eminence?

5. In reference to the myth about the ideal proto-apostolic age.

Only Your Eminence's reference to the proto-apostolic age and Your imperative request for the return of the faithful to this way of life directly refers on the one hand to Protestant opinions and theories such as the known branch theory, namely, about an ideal Church in the beginning and its subsequent fall, and on the other hand to the Gnostic Encratites and the Manicheans, since Your Eminence confesses in Your letters that during "*the proto-apostolic age the Christians were all temperate and fasters,*" a phenomenon which is contradictory to the Tradition of the Church and to historical facts.

Your Eminence, by Your writings and consequent pastorship, is turning directly against all of the Traditions of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, "*creating harmful devoutness,*" as Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, leading to the departure of the faithful from the Divine and Saving Communion of the life-giving body and blood of Christ the Savior, with the ulterior motive of turning the naive faithful with time to Gnosticism and Manichaeism without their noticing.

6. In reference to the assumption that the bishop can impose his authority by intervening in the catechetical and didactic task of the parish priest.

The bishop is obliged to intervene in the catechetical and didactic task of the parish priest when he is either teaching heresy or neglecting this task, as the 19th canon of the 6th Ecumenical Council requires.

But worthy of concern is the fact that Your Eminence literally vomited because leaflets with writings of the Fathers of the Church were distributed with my blessing in my parish.

Do You not agree with the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church?

Who was bothered that the Holy Canons require frequent Holy Communion?

Who was bothered that the Holy Canons explicitly and categorically forbid the entrance of women into the holy altar?

7. In reference to when and under which circumstances the bishop is able to intervene in the duty of the spiritual father and confessor.

The bishop is not able to intervene in the duty of the spiritual father and confessor, as the 102nd canon of the 6th Ecumenical Council dictates, as long as he is canonical and Orthodox.

Your Eminence's intervention in the duty of the spiritual father and confessor, as You have done, not only consists of high-handedness, but, unfortunately, indicates indiscretion and the absence of basic sensitiveness.

For the above reasons and since You are shown to be lacking in the Orthodox Faith which has been handed over by the Holy Fathers, by adding Your own canons, beliefs, formalities and customs, in full consciousness of my act, I invoke the 15th canon of the First-Second Council concerning walling oneself off and I break all spiritual communion with You, trusting that the head of the Orthodox Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, by the All-Holy Spirit will enlighten Your Eminence.

I also break all spiritual communion with the Romanians of Your Synod and am unable to appeal to them, since the evidence brought forward by You until now proving their Orthodox origin and ordination is and remains insufficient.

In Christ's love,
the least among presbyters,
Fr. Pedro