

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Part Four

by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

Now that we have proven conclusively that "World Orthodoxy" is officially in communion with non-Orthodox Christian denominations, we should learn why this sort of thing is forbidden. What do the Saints of God, the Ecumenical Councils and other patristic sources have to say about this? Can we be Orthodox Christians in our faith if we accept the "sacraments" of those who do not believe or adhere to the same teachings as we do?

Here is what St. Justin the Martyr and Philosopher (+167) says in his *First Apology*:

Among us, this Food is called *Eucharist* (*The Giving of Thanks to God*), of which no one is allowed to partake, except the one who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration (*Holy Baptism*), and who is so living as Christ has commanded. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the Food which is blessed by the prayer of His word... is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who was made flesh.....and He gave it to the disciples **alone**.

(chap. 65)

Here are more citations from other Saints and confessors of the Orthodox Christian Faith:

All the teachers of the Church, all the Councils, and all the Divine Scriptures, exhort us to flee those who uphold other doctrines and to separate from communion with them.

Confession Faith, XII, 304
Saint Mark of Ephesus

With a great voice, Saint John Chrysostom declared that not only those in heresy, but also they who hold communion with them are enemies of God.

Letter to the Abbot Theophilus
Saint Theodore the Studite (PG 99, 1049)

Keep yourselves from soul-corrupting heresy, whose communion is alienation from Christ.

Saint Theodore the Studite (PG 99, 1216)

Concerning the Faith, the heretics were totally shipwrecked; but as for the others, even if in their thinking they did not founder, nonetheless, because of their communion with heresy, they too were destroyed with the others.

Letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem
Saint Theodore the Studite (PG 99, 1164)

You told me that you feared to tell your presbyter not to commemorate the heresiarch; . . . I will not presume to say anything about this to you for the present, except that the communion is defiled simply by commemorating him, even if he who is commemorating is Orthodox.

Ibid.

For if simply saying "Hail" (II John, 10-11) is the same as partaking of another's evil deeds, how much more so is the blatant commemoration in the very presence of the divine and dread Mysteries? For if He that is present before us is the Truth Himself, how is it reasonable to suppose that He will accept *this great lie*, that is, that this man should be esteemed as an Orthodox patriarch among the other Orthodox patriarchs? At the time when the dread Mysteries are being celebrated, shall we play the part of an actor on the stage? And how shall the soul of an Orthodox Christian endure these things and not straightway refrain from communion with the commemorators, and esteem them to be men that make sordid gain of divine things? For from the beginning, the

Orthodox Church of God has accepted that the mention of the hierarch's name within the sanctuary meant *complete communion with him*. For it is written in the exposition of the Divine Liturgy that the celebrant commemorates the name of the bishop, thereby demonstrating submission to a superior, and that he is a communicant with him, and his follower in the Faith and in the divine Mysteries.

. . . And God signified this very thing, saying, "the priests have violated My law and have profaned My holy things" (Ezekiel 22:26). How? Because "they have put no difference between the holy and the profane," but have esteemed all things as common. However, should we do this by way of *economia*? But how can such an *economia*, which profanes things divine and drives the Holy Spirit from them, be acceptable according to what God has said, since it causes the faithful to lose their adoption [as children of God] and cuts them off from the forgiveness of their sins? Can there, indeed, be any *economia* more harmful than this?..

From the Letter of the Athonite Fathers to Emperor Michael Paleologus, against John Beccos, who was Patriarch of Constantinople at that time, and who had not yet been defrocked by a Council.

Note: As is known, these Fathers of the Holy Mountain signed this *Letter* a little later with the blood of their martyrdom.

There are many more such quotations that we could cite, but we will let these suffice.

Perhaps our detractors will call us "fundamentalists" for citing these sources, but that will not do, because that is a *Protestant*, not an Orthodox Christian, response. If those who oppose us want to be esteemed Orthodox Christians, they should use *Orthodox*, not Protestant, arguments against us in order to show us that our thinking is not Orthodox.

We can guarantee you this: you will *not* convince us by using Protestant arguments, or by name-calling.

We are not in communion with the non-Orthodox because there are many things that we do not have in common. For example, they adhere to the doctrines of the "Filioque" and the infallibility of the Pope of Rome. These teachings are false, as are the Protestant doctrines of "the private interpretation of the Scriptures" and "Sola Scriptura."*

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to love *all* men — even those who hate us. At the same time, as Orthodox Christians, we are called to "follow in the footsteps of the Holy Fathers," who teach us to flee from communion with "soul-destroying heresy."

[To be continued]

* See my previous articles "Only the Bible — and Other False Doctrines" and "The Bible Class".