



THE HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON
His Grace, Bishop Demetrius

May 20/June 2, 2011
Ascension of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

During the last year or so, certain clergy and laypeople have been asking me to write something, because, they say, I am a member of the Holy Synod and need to publicly voice my opinion.

This is the purpose of this message.

One concern which I have been hearing from many people is that they are tired of "fighting", so I will be brief with the hopes that this will help calm people down.

We are Orthodox Christians. It is nothing new for the Orthodox Church to go through difficult periods. We have an enemy, and where else will that enemy go if not to the Church? This, in no way, is an excuse but a reality of our contemporary and historical Church. It is nothing new to see suspicion, envy, malice and "zeal not according to knowledge" in the Church, and, to top it all off the idea that things have to be that way, since it's the end of the world (which some Christians have believed for some 2000 years now). This leads to sectarianism.

Although we are Orthodox Christians trying to preserve our faith, we need to travel the way of the Holy Fathers who had the mind of Christ. Some people, unfortunately, interpret this "mind of Christ" as dissension, anger, jealousy and passion and suspicion. Although they would never admit to this (much like people who say that they are not perfect, but act like they are), you see from them temper tantrums and a very self-righteous spirit.

This, my beloved, is delusion and we need to stay far away from it. We need to look at ourselves and our salvation.

Our Church (HOCNA) has as a spiritual center: the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston. Although the monastery is not a Diocesan Center,

nevertheless it is a spiritual center, since monasticism is "the glory of the Church of Christ" as St Isaac the Syrian teaches us.

The monastery was established with the blessing of three holy elders.

1) Elder Joseph the cave dweller of Mount Athos.

This holy elder was so tired of the dissension and self-righteous spirit of some of the traditionalist Orthodox; that is why he avoided it at all costs.

We must be cautious not to develop a self-righteous spirit, and we must look to avoid dissension and malice.

2) Elder Hieronymos of Aegina.

My personal favorite of the elders. He was a man of God who taught us to run away from dissension and malice and a self-righteous spirit. By the Grace of God, we were deemed worthy to print his life recently.

When asked "who are you with", he replied "with all of them". When people responded "but they're all divided", he would say "I'm not with the divided ones!".

3) Holy Vladika Andrei of Novo Diveyevo.

Although a bishop, he was more monastic than any of our monastics and he avoided a self-righteous, contentious and malicious spirit, even in ecclesiastical matters!

We wish not to be judged by these holy men who have left for us an example of peace and love.

Beloved children of the Spirit, please avoid contention. Be peaceful, preserve the faith in love and humility.

We are suffering the results of the heresy of Ecumenism. Let us not fall into a shallow chasm of evil by falling into pride. If we observe Church history, we will find that oftentimes "zeal not according to knowledge", which "puffeth up", leads people outside the saving ark of the Church. And the danger is that this is all done in the name of "Orthodoxy".

St John Chrysostom says in his eleventh Homily on the Epistle to the Ephesians that even the blood of martyrdom cannot wipe out the sin of separating the Church and dividing it. St Dionysios of Alexandria the Confessor wrote in his epistle to Bishop Novatus that one ought to suffer any evil whatever rather than to split the Church; and that the martyrdom is more glorious which one would have to undergo in order to avoid splitting the Church than the martyrdom which one would have to undergo in order to avoid becoming an idolater, since in the case of martyrdom to avoid becoming an idolater, one becomes a martyr for the benefit of his own soul, whereas in martyrdom to avoid splitting the Church one becomes a martyr for the benefit and union of the whole Church.

These are not the words of a sinful bishop, but of the holy fathers. We do, after all, pray for the "union of all the faithful".

With this in mind, both Metropolitan Ephraim and I have resolved to continue to work for the benefit of the whole Church since we believe "in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church", rather than just one regional Church alone. We allow laymen to have intercommunion with other Traditionalist Orthodox following the policy of St Philaret of New York, with the purpose of trying to avoid factionalism and schism.

Metropolitan Ephraim has also pointed out that, although we have tried to act in good faith, even if the good faith has not been returned to us by others, we believe that in time, God will clear up even this issue with the arising, we hope, of good pastors in the Catholic Church.

We know that God wills this so long as we overlook human failings, even as our Saviour overlooks our failings.

My message is: please, let us now stop our fighting. Let us put our hope and faith in God and God will look upon our lowliness and forgive all our sins.

Let us not fall under the judgment of our holy elders by not having the same spirit as they did. We do not wish to be judged by them in that awesome day! We have all fallen short of the glory of God. All of us have sinned since there is no righteous man upon earth, no, not one.

By every means, we need to avoid a sectarian spirit which will do nothing more than cause more division.

Since Saint Ephraim the Syrian says that silence is golden while good speech is silver, I don't wish to say anything more.

But unto our God be Glory unto the endless ages of ages. Amen.

Forgive me.

In Christ,

✠ Bishop Demetrius

Note the words of St Photios the Great:

"Let God consign previous events to oblivion. As for us, let us find strength in forgiveness and not call wrongs to mind. It will be best to remain silent about these affairs, or at least to speak about them only briefly and with restraint. Since we are sinful and insignificant people, it will be best to stay quiet about the enmity we caused; only in the case of great need should we speak about it at all".

Amen.