

# THE SYNODICON OF ORTHODOXY

Or

No Need to Navigate with Potatoes

by

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## *Introduction*

*Up at our hermitage Maine, we often have thick fogs, especially near the shore. This poses a real problem for the lobster fishermen who have to ply their trade in these cold, dangerous currents near the rocky coasts of the North Atlantic Ocean.*

*In typical Maine Fashion, however, our resourceful lobstermen have devised a simple method for navigating these treacherous areas. When it gets really foggy and visibility is down to zero, the lobstermen bring along their wives, so that the women can perform what is referred to as "potato-navigation."*

*These tough little ladies station themselves at the prow of the ship as it plies ahead blindly in the fog. At their side is a hundred-pound bag of Maine potatoes. Every thirty seconds or so, the lobsterman's wife takes a potato from the bag and heaves it with all her might straight ahead. If she hears the "kerplunk" of the potato hitting the water, all is well, and the ship continues on its course. However, if there is no "kerplunk", it means there is land — or rocks — ahead. Whereupon, the navigator-wife turns to her hubbie who is piloting the craft, and yells, "Turn 'er hard!!"*

*It ain't high-tech, but it works.*

*It also demonstrates how many uses there are for Maine potatoes.*

*Fortunately, we Orthodox Christians don't have to depend on potatoes to get us through the dangerous shoals in the sea of our society. We have a tried and true navigation system: it is called "The Synodicon of Orthodoxy", and every Orthodox Christian should have this spiritual G. P. S., in his home so he can see where he is going.*

*We have all heard the expression, "Real men don't ask for directions."*

*Well, real Orthodox Christian men and women don't have to ask for directions, because they are guided infallibly on their way by the stars — the spiritual luminaries in the Heavenly firmament — i.e., the Saints of God. They can show us the right path to Paradise, because they already got there!*

*Father Haralampos of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, Massachusetts gives us more information about this flawless map:*

### **From The Introduction of Issue 27 and 28 of *The True Vine***

Ostensibly, the "Orthodox" ecumenists accept and acknowledge all the decisions of the Ecumenical and Local Councils concerning doctrine, but in practice they are often heard saying that this or that denomination or such-and-such a belief has never been condemned by a Church council, or that a Council must first be summoned in order to decide whether one can call a new group or teaching heretical. They imply by such statements that one may believe what one likes or come to a compromise on various doctrines, or that some denominations can be accepted as being part of the Church of Christ. In short, they have accepted the Branch Theory.

Is it necessary for a council to be called to discuss each new instance of heresy? The answer has been given definitively by the First and Second Council of Constantinople in its fifteenth canon which ordains that the Orthodox should separate themselves from any patriarch, archbishop, metropolitan, bishop, or presbyter teaching heresy and not wait until he has been condemned by a council. The Orthodox Church had of old considered this question and arrived at her God-inspired decision. For the faithful Orthodox Christian, there is no problem or question in this matter.

If no council need be summoned, have all the present-day heresies been diagnosed and condemned? Although not by the name of the denomination, every present-day heresy certainly has one or more of its beliefs condemned in the two *Synodicons* published herein. First of all, almost every Protestant group can be included among those who do not venerate the holy icons (see the anathemas on pp. 44-46)\*, or who do not accept the miracles of the Saviour and the Saints (see the anathema on p. 48), or who do not believe in the reality of the Holy Mysteries (see anathemas on pp. 52 and 54). The

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\*The page numbers given here refer to the text of the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy* published in Issue # 27 & 28 of *The True Vine*.

Monophysites are condemned in doctrine (see anathema, p. 56) and by name (in the anathemas on pp. 70-71). The Papists are condemned in the chapters against Barlaam and Acindynus concerning created grace (see p. 63 *et. seq.*) and the chapters concerning the introduction of pagan philosophy into theology (see pp. 47-50). Finally, there is the general anathema on page 42 which condemns all innovation and anything enacted outside of the Church tradition and institution of the Holy Fathers, under which anathema come all the modernists and ecumenist "Orthodox"; moreover, in the *Synodicon on the Holy Spirit*, the Papists, together with the Protestants who sprang from them, are condemned because they hold to the *filioque*. At times, some Protestants, notably the Anglicans, are willing to delete the *filioque* addition from the Creed, but they are not willing to abandon its theology.

Hearing the "Orthodox" ecumenists make irresponsible statements about these matters, one can only surmise that these statements spring either from a vast ignorance, an ignorance surpassed only by the arrogance that would make theological pronouncements when there is not even a superficial knowledge of the matter, or from an abyss of falsehood, since we have seen that only a bare-faced lie could explain the statement that the *filioque* and other modern heresies were never condemned. The first position ignores the Scriptures, Fathers, Councils, and Canons, while the second knows but does not honour them. Undoubtedly, both positions consider them to be irrelevant, unimportant, or erroneous; both thus commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, for they do not discern the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Saints and in the Church.

Whenever the modernists and the "Orthodox" ecumenists say such things as, "The Fathers spoke only for their times, and they have little relevance for today", "The Fathers were only men, and since we are also men, we have every right to change their canons and definitions, which, after all, are only human opinion"; they spurn their Fathers and forebears in the Spirit and attack the Church of those who have won their crowns and gained glory from God and stand with boldness in His presence. Such pronouncements, with many variations, are often heard from these latter-day enemies of Orthodoxy. But when they call the inspiration and workings of the Holy Spirit the actions of men, is it not the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit described by our Lord in the Scriptures? Is it not also blasphemy against the Spirit to close our eyes and to refuse to acknowledge what is so plainly stated by our Fathers? Voluntary spiritual blindness is truly the unforgivable sin, for our Lord said, "They seeing, see not; and hearing, they

hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them'" (Matt. 13:13-15; Esaias 6:9). The pinnacle of their sin and that which seals their condemnation is that they also presume to teach and to lead others to perdition. "And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, 'Are we blind also?' Jesus said unto them, 'If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, "We see"; therefore your sin remaineth'" (John 9:40-41).

"The *Synodicon of Orthodoxy* and the *Synodicon on the Holy Spirit* are a great heritage to the Church from our holy Fathers. Their true-born children receive it and treasure it, since it is their guide in the confusion of the wisdom of this world, a light in the darkness of heresy, and a discerning counselor in the wordy debates over the Faith. They who treasure and heed the *Synodicons* in every particular are truly sons of faith and light; sons of the one Church of Christ.