



## THE HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

Dear Fathers John, Neil, and Elias,

I received your “statement” on August 29th, 2003, in which you have finally outlined in writing your reasons for leaving the Metropolis of Boston. I did not respond earlier because one of your accusations required verification on my part, and that verification required some time.

You speak in the first paragraph of your “statement” of “the growing number of contradictions between the practices of the HOCNA and the Dogmas and the Tradition of the Church.” “*Growing* number?” “*Growing*?” A curious accusation—especially since everything you cite in your list of complaints (except one, which was an error on your part) are beliefs and practices that have been usages and traditions that we find in the Lives of the Saints, the writings of holy men and women, conciliar decisions, which also we have been teaching and fostering for some 40 years — long before any one of you was even Orthodox. Yet, during all those years that you were nurtured and instructed by us, not *once* was a complaint uttered, not a *peep* was heard from any of you to myself about what you now allege to be “*growing* contradictions” between our teachings and the teachings of the Church. And surely, if they are “contradictions” now, they were “contradictions” long ago, and also not so long ago, when you were baptized and ordained by us.

Why, indeed, would you consent to be baptized and ordained by us if we were guilty of all these so-called “*growing*” contradictions? Did the alleged changes come in some stealthy and unnoticed way — for example, in the 30 hours between the evening of Tuesday August 5/18, when Father Neil could still serve together with all his fellow clergy at the Great Vespers for the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord at the Monastery in Brookline, and early next Thursday, August 7/20, at 3 o’clock in the morning(!), when you sent your surprise e-mail notice of departure from the Metropolis of Boston? What could have happened during those roughly 30 hours that triggered what appeared to many to be a panic-stricken bolt out of the Church, as though you were frightened rabbits? Your brisk exit was so hasty, in fact, even many of your own children, or brothers and sisters, didn’t know what happened, or what it was all about! Nor did you bother to inform your own Metropolitan! Your initial message made vague references to alleged violations of the Orthodox Faith, without making any specific reference to any violation whatsoever or to any canon that supposedly had been violated.

The Holy Scriptures command, “A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject” (Titus 3:10). I don’t know if you consider me a heretic, but as your bishop, apparently, in your eyes, I was not found worthy of even *one* admonition from you. If you want to forget the Holy Scriptures and the holy canons that deal with these matters, what about common courtesy? Only recently, two weeks after your swift departure, have you seen fit to address your concerns to me in writing—something which, by the standards

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you claim to uphold (which you have canonically and thoroughly violated) should have been done *many years ago*. What you could have done by addressing your concerns to me in an atmosphere of deliberation, openness and canonical propriety, was instead carried out in actions that betray some sort of paranoia, cloak and dagger plans, and a complete disregard for the canonical procedures of the Church in dealing with such issues.

But now that you have done what you have done, and, as the saying goes, “the damage has been done,” let us see if your allegations hold water. In addressing your concerns, I intend, as always, to base my position not on my own opinions, but on the Lives of the Saints, conciliar decrees, the writings of holy men and the very facts of Church history. If these sources are not acceptable to you, then you should never have accepted to be baptized, married and ordained by us. You should have long ago found some other group that best suited your own preferences and interpretations. After all, we were still canonical and Orthodox enough for you in June of this year, when Father Elias Fagan accepted to be ordained to the priesthood by me. Your “statement” did not clarify what happened between that day of his ordination and the early morning of Aug. 7/20 that sparked the pell-mell exodus.

But now, let us come to the stated grievances.

1) You write, “The giving of antidoron to those outside the Church clearly violates the faith.” Fathers, where have you been for forty years? Is this one of the “growing” contradictions you speak of? If you had taken the trouble to ask me, you would have learned that some of our priests use strictness in this matter (and therefore do not give antidoron to new calendarists) and some use *economia* in this matter (and therefore *do* give antidoron to new calendarists). The reason we have allowed *both* usages for years is because we see this very same approach in the writings of eminent Churchmen—Churchmen far more eminent and knowledgeable than you or I. In the 15th century, for example, shortly after the fall of Constantinople, the monks of St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai wrote to Ecumenical Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios (the first Patriarch of Constantinople after the city’s fall to the Turks in 1453). The monks explained to the Patriarch that, oftentimes, Monophysite Copts and Ethiopians made the long trek through the Sinai wilderness (a journey of many days in that era), in order to make the pilgrimage to the monastery for the purpose of venerating the holy sites there. The monks knew, of course, that they couldn’t give these pilgrims Holy Communion, but was there anything they *could* do for them, seeing they had endured so long a trek through the desert? Although they were not Orthodox in faith, they had demonstrated at least some devotion and piety towards the holy shrines in the monastery church, the holy relics, and the chapel of the Burning Bush, which is situated in the chapel directly behind the main altar of the monastery’s church. The Patriarch’s answer: it is permitted to give them antidoron and holy water, as a consolation for their labour in coming so far and with such hardship through the desert for a holy purpose. Might this simple kindness prompt them to abandon their resistance to the Orthodox Faith and, hopefully, to espouse it in time?

Aside from what Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios writes, I know for a fact that in Greece, at least in the islands where my parents came from, the practice of the priests there is to dispose of the leftover antidoron by casting it into the sea. Since, evidently, the people, or at least most of them, do not have the custom of taking it to their homes, there is

no other way to dispose of the excess. Mind you, this was the practice my parents also knew of *before* they left Greece as young people, which was before the calendar change. After all, antidoron is *not* the Holy Eucharist; it is bread that, like holy water, has been blessed. We sprinkle holy water on people, plants, livestock — everywhere, do we not?

So, evidently it is permitted to give the antidoron to the fish of the Aegean Sea, but not to others?

In landlocked areas, the antidoron is spread or buried in out of the way places. Perhaps you are misunderstanding something here? Were you even aware of these time-honored local practices in the local Orthodox Churches? Did you even ask to learn?

But in your recent statement you have ratcheted up the “strictness” even further. No antidoron even to old calendarists who don’t belong to HOCNA! Fathers, if you have ever spent any time in Greece (which you may or may not have done), or if you had bothered to ask me (which you most definitely have not done), you would have learned that old calendar priests in Greece give antidoron to the new calendarists, and they certainly give it to old calendarists of other groups. Are all, therefore, fallen into heterodoxy and gracelessness because of this? What an interesting and unique type of Orthodoxy you have!

Since you admit that there is no canon that pertains to antidoron, how then can our practice be anti-canonical?

If what Ecumenical Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios permitted, and what the practices and traditions of our forefathers in the Orthodox countries did in regard to dealing with excess antidoron, and what the other old calendar clergy of Greece allow, is not Orthodox enough for you, then perhaps Orthodoxy never was Orthodox enough for you, and you should reconsider your desire to be part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Or you could admit, perhaps, that your present opinions are not in line with the age-long understanding and practices of the Church, and then abandon your faulty thinking.

If you would only re-consider your rigid black and white delineations and humble yourselves to learn from others, you might find it in your hearts to reunite yourselves to those who genuinely love you and the Faith.

2) Next, you affirm, “The addition of a Schismatic New Calendarist (Papa Nicholas Planas, for example) to the list of Saints cannot be justified by the Holy Fathers or apostolic teachings.”

Once again, where have you been all these decades, Fathers? In 1966, the same man who later ordained you to the diaconate and priesthood also translated into English Papa-Nicholas’ life *and the dismissal hymn, kontakion and megalynarion dedicated to him*. In 1981, our monastery in Brookline was finally able to publish the book by Papa-Nicholas’ disciple, Mother Martha Papadopoulos. And now suddenly, after all these decades, this too is added to your list of “the *growing* number of contradictions between the practices of HOCNA and the dogma and tradition of the Church”??

For one thing, we have no evidence that Papa-Nicholas ever served with the new calendar. Secondly, there *was* no old calendar hierarchy in Greece at that time. Thirdly, it is well known that the “Association of the Orthodox” (see pp. 41- 46 of *The Struggle*

*Against Ecumenism*) addressed constant appeals to the hierarchy of Greece, pleading with them and addressing them as Orthodox bishops to review their unilateral decision about the change of the calendar. Although some bishops persecuted the old calendarists, *many other bishops, both openly and secretly, assisted and supported them*. Finally, as we know, in 1935 (three full years after the repose of Papa-Nicholas), three of these bishops found the moral strength to break away from the others and to take up the leadership of the old calendarists—who received them as true bishops—even though for eleven years they had been what you now describe as “graceless schismatics.” Who received these “graceless” bishops back into the Church (if you insist on only the *strict* interpretation of the holy canons, as you now understand them)? Who laid his hands upon them and read the prayers of *cheirothesia* over them in order to restore them to a canonical, Orthodox priesthood, as strictness would demand? The fact is that these bishops were accepted and began to act as Orthodox bishops, *despite the lack of a proper and due process in receiving them, as specified by the strictness of the holy canons*.

If you demand that everything in Church History be in stark black-and-white only, you are in for some astounding surprises. For example, please read p. 12 in *The Struggle Against Ecumenism* and pp. 1 & 2 of our STATEMENT issued in March of this year to learn about the “Meletian” Schism, and then explain to me who was in schism.

If everything is to be seen in these two stark colors only, then please avert your eyes from the “Bulgarian Schism” (when all the Greek-speaking Orthodox Churches broke communion with the Bulgarian Church, but all the Slavic-speaking Churches remained in communion with the Bulgarian Church, *while not breaking communion with the Greek-speaking Churches!*). If you want to see everything only in stark black-and-white, then avert your gazes also from the last half of the 19th century, when the Churches of Constantinople, Russia and Greece, *officially and synodically*, began allowing mixed marriages, *and no one broke communion with them over this*. The only ones who no longer permit this practice is the HOCNA hierarchy who ordained you. According to your new-found rigidity, was the Orthodox Church in heresy and schism from itself all those years? Or did the Orthodox Church simply disappear? This, of course, also includes the ROCOR, which also allowed mixed marriages (and many, *many* other *economias*), even under Saint Philaret of New York—whose antimimension you illicitly use to perform your services!

Another thing to consider: the Church of Constantinople anathematized and broke communion with Rome in 1054. But one hundred years later during the time of Prince Iziaslav II, the Russian Church, headquartered at that time in Kiev, was still in communion with Rome, while still remaining in communion with Constantinople! Likewise, in the 13th century, Saint Stephan II, the First Crowned King of Serbia, who was in communion with Constantinople, was also in communion with and was crowned by Pope Honorius III of Rome (see *The Third Rome*, by Matthew R. Johnson, pp. 17-18).\*

Now what?

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\* “The schism between Rome and the East has no specific date. It was a process rather than an incident. Incidents of intercommunion between Orthodox and Latin reach easily into the thirteenth century. One might say that from the eighth to the early thirteenth century, the process of estrangement deepened” (footnote by author Matthew Johnson).

Black and white? Are all — instantly and automatically — unbaptized, graceless heretics and schismatics? Epithets that roll easily off tongues that completely ignore or are ignorant of Church History. We must use great care in using those terms, and our STATEMENT of March, 2003 clearly outlines why such care is needed. Your “bull in a china shop” approach does not display any such care, or acceptance, or even knowledge of Church History. *Both* strictness and *economia* are needed, and must be used appropriately, at the right time. And, above all this, it is God alone Who knows “the hearts and reins” of man, and therefore has the authority to bestow or withhold His grace from His creature.

On one occasion, when we expressed our concerns to Bishop Gregory Grabbe of Manhattan about the way things were going in “World Orthodoxy” and in the ROCOR, he told us something that impressed me greatly and which I remember to this very day: “Fathers,” he said, “as time progresses and as the situation with ‘World Orthodoxy’ deteriorates, we are tightening the screws.” This is the right approach, and that is exactly what he and Saint Philaret were gradually doing, and we respected their truly pastoral guidance. Of course, right after St. Philaret’s repose, the screws began to be unloosened and thrown away (see pp. 130-142 of *The Struggle Against Ecumenism*), and now the ROCOR is officially back in communion with and concelebrating with clergy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (“the first time since 1968!” as someone in the ROCOR recently exclaimed ecstatically).

3) You write: “The supporting of people outside the Church with Supplicatory Canons and large sums of money is out of order.”

As for the “Supplicatory Canons for people ‘outside the Church,’” I personally am not prepared to use that guillotine type of appellation (‘outside the Church’) towards the old calendarists in Greece. We certainly have our problems with them, and they have plenty of problems among themselves, but there are old calendarists and then there are old calendarists. They differ widely among themselves, and we try to deal with them accordingly. For example, Father Methodius, the Abbot of Esphigmenou Monastery on the Holy Mountain, knows that, for a fact, the only reason most of the old calendar jurisdictions in Greece exist in the first place is because many anxious and ambitious young archimandrites are in the sidelines, with high hopes and throbbing hearts, waiting for the chance to be raised to the episcopacy; and the best way to do that is to form a new jurisdiction and start another round of episcopal consecrations! He also knows us and respects us, and so he tells people from North America who visit his monastery, “You have a good monastery in Boston, you should go there,” and “You have a fine parish, St. Nektarios, in Toronto; that’s where you should be going to church.” Here is a person with whom one could work, quite possibly, in order to try to heal some of the rifts among the old calendarists — and you respond to his gesture with a battle axe?

Actually, Esphigmenou Monastery does not want to take part in the religious politics of the old calendarists of Greece, and thus, no specific bishop is commemorated in the services of the monastery’s *Katholicon* (main church).

If the condemned heresiarch Theodore of Mopsuestia could be commemorated in the diptychs under certain conditions, with the approval of the Saints of our Church, and if reposed Old Believers could, under certain conditions, be commemorated in the *Proskomidi*, with Saint Seraphim’s blessing (see below), then commemorating non-

HOCNA Orthodox laypeople in a Supplicatory Canon does not, in my estimation, come anywhere near what the above-mentioned Saints allowed. You are becoming (please forgive the expression) “more papal than the Pope,” more “saintly” than the Saints. I repeat: both strictness and economia—as we see from the teachings of the Saints—are needed, and both are employed in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in order to bring about healing and restoration to spiritual wholeness.

As for the “large sums of money” given as alms to non-HOCNA individuals, have you ever heard of “The Parable of the Good Heretic”? You probably haven’t, because this narration is usually known as, “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in the Gospel of Saint Luke. The Samaritans, of course, were heretics, and our Saviour used precisely this particular image of a heretic, a Samaritan, to contrast his behavior with the lack of compassion and the absence of almsgiving so evident in the supposedly righteous priest and levite, both of whom “passed by on the other side” of the road and avoided helping their fellow man, who may or may not have been a pious Orthodox Jew. Although he was a heretic, the Samaritan did the right thing; whereas the others, who should have known better, didn’t. Obviously, our Saviour was not supporting “Samaritanism” by this parable, but He certainly was advocating compassion and almsgiving to whoever needs it.

Also, you are in direct disagreement with St. John Chrysostom as far as giving alms to non-Orthodox. In his commentary on Galatians 6:9-10, the Saint says the following:

Lest anyone should suppose that their Teachers were to be cared for and supported, but that others might be neglected, he [Saint Paul] makes his discourse general, and opens the door of this charitable zeal to all; nay, he carries it to such a height, as to command us to show mercy both to Jews and Greeks [i.e., pagans], in the proper gradation indeed, but still to show mercy. . . . Therefore he says, “as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men,” hereby especially also setting them free from the narrow-mindedness of the Jews. For the whole of their benevolence was confined to their own race, but the rule of life which Grace gives invites both land and sea to the board of charity, only it shows a greater care for its own household.

Does this make St. John Chrysostom also guilty of an infraction against the Orthodox Faith? Is he, too, “out of order”?

You may have to strike St. David of Euboia also off your list of Saints. He was always giving generous alms to the poor Muslim farmers of that Greek island. When someone asks you for alms, do you first ask him if he’s a member of HOCNA?

Fathers, you should be ashamed of yourselves.

4) Your next concern is “Spiritual instruction (by heretical clergy) of the faithful visiting the Holy Land is compounded with recognition of their altars as holy and commemoration lists entrusting our spiritual welfare to the supplications of the heretics and the Holy Land are an accepted, but obviously erroneous practice [not considered out of order].”

When you say, “Spiritual instruction (by heretical clergy) of the faithful visiting the Holy Land,” am I correct in assuming that you mean the talks that the custodians of the various holy sites give to each visiting group? That is to say, when a group of pilgrims stops at, say, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the local custodian/clergyman there will give the pilgrims a little lecture about the significance of the shrine, a history of the church structure itself, a description of the various significant archeological or religious items within the church. Is this the sort of thing you mean by “spiritual instruction by heretical clergy”?

The custodians of the holy sites— like custodians of any historical or archeological site anywhere —indeed relate memorized accounts of the religious significance of the sites, usually with a reference to the Gospel or the traditions surrounding the sites from the early centuries. The rest of their talks are mostly of archeological significance. Now, if the custodians were using this occasion to preach the heresy of Ecumenism or the error of New Calendarism to our people, I would say that you are justified. But they have never done that, except on two occasions — when Fr. Panteleimon stopped them on the spot and rebuked them sharply. That was many years ago, and none of them has ever tried that again.

If you object to our listening to these custodians *just because they belong to the Jerusalem Patriarchate*, then you will find that the implications of your objections are very far-reaching. Any book, documentary, videotape, audiotape, periodical or article authored and/or edited by someone who is not a member of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America will, according to your bizarre understanding, have to be shunned and condemned. Of course, this would necessarily include *The Nicene Series* translations of the Church Fathers (translated and edited by Anglicans), the vast majority of anything written on Byzantium or Russia (heterodox scholars), *The Rudder* (the English edition is replete with notes by Makrakis, a man condemned for heresy by the Church of Greece; further, it was edited and published by new calendarists in Chicago), Greek and Slavonic service books (published and edited by new calendarists and the Moscow Patriarchate) — shall I continue? Your outlook reflects not an understanding of Orthodox Christianity, as you suppose, but a profound paranoia. This, perhaps, is the most worrisome aspect of your mindset. Certainly, when reading texts authored or edited by non-Orthodox people a certain caution is needed. But for years we have been encouraging our faithful to read these texts with care and discretion. If, for example, we were to tell our people to reject the *Nicene Series* translations outright, just because they were translated and edited by Anglicans, there would be very little patristic literature available to the Orthodox who know only English. If such texts, on the other hand, are read with the guidance of a spiritual father, they edify and strengthen the faith of the Christians. How could one object to this?

The second part of your fourth concern reminds me of an incident that happened when I was still a student at Holy Cross. I was visiting a classmate’s home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania during one Christmas vacation. One of the young daughters at this home (she was about 11 or 12 years old) noticed that I was fasting (whereas the family was somewhat lukewarm in this matter). So, one day, while her folks were at work and I was at their home and doing some reading, she came up to me and asked why I wasn’t eating some of the foods. I told her that I personally was trying to keep the fast before the feast of our

Saviour's Nativity. I could have said, "You're supposed to fast too," but I didn't want to do that. I wanted her to understand that I personally *wanted* to fast and that I felt it was out of place for me, a youngster and visitor and guest, to issue such commands to my older hosts.

Well, that subtle point was lost on her, I suppose, because a few minutes later I heard her calling her mother on the telephone and telling her, "Ma, George (my name in the world) says we're supposed to be fasting." Of course, I never said that. I was very much misquoted (and embarrassed).

Which points to a very common trait among people: When they ask for your opinion about this or that, they *very often* hear what they would *like* or would *expect* to hear, and subconsciously they filter out everything else.

I've known Father Panteleimon for almost fifty years. He will tell you once or twice what should or should not be done, and then he will assume that your sense of duty, of honor, of decency, of obligation, of common courtesy, of good sense (the Greek word for all these sentiments is *filótimo*) will kick in and nothing else will need to be said to get the job done.

When the pilgrims in the Holy Land ask Father Panteleimon if they can give a list of names to the shrines in the Holy Places for commemoration, he explains why he cannot give such a blessing. Very often, especially for the Greek-speaking people, this admonition does not register on their radar. They will proceed to give their names and their lists anyway, and some of them will even say that Father Panteleimon said it was okay, whereas *he did not*. Like the 12 year-old girl in Lancaster, these people hear whatever they are determined to hear.

Sometimes I hear people quoting me and repeating things that I, allegedly, had said, whereas I know very well that I did *not* say them. Some of these words ascribed to me are oftentimes quite witty and clever, and I wish I *had* said them, but, unfortunately, I did not.

During a pilgrimage, typically, there is a group of 40-50 pilgrims, a lot of hustle and bustle, much going and coming, a lot of making sure that people get up on time, don't wander off, don't get into arguments with Moslems; there is a constant arranging of rides, cabs, buses, meals, drivers, passports, transport of luggage. It is like trying to herd cats. All of this and more falls on the shoulders of Father Panteleimon, sometimes simultaneously, everything at once, and so he issues his instructions on this or that one or two times, and that's it. He assumes that you have the *filótimo* (see definitions above) to do what you're supposed to do. He is trying to get from Holy Site A to Holy Site B, usually in a rush, and behind schedule, with everyone complaining that he is speaking only in Greek, or only in English, and they can't hear him anyway.

If you want to find fault with him under these circumstances, of course, you are free to do so. You may feel that he depends too much on people's *filótimo*, and you are probably right. But he does not give anyone a blessing to give commemoration lists to clergy of the Jerusalem Patriarchate.

In any case, I have brought this matter to his attention.

What is obvious to everyone in the Jerusalem Patriarchate is that, despite the fact that so many hundreds of our people have gone on pilgrimage to the Holy Land for over

thirty years now, not one of our faithful has ever attended even *one* Divine Liturgy, or, much less, taken communion from clergy of the Jerusalem Patriarchate. Everyone in the Jerusalem Patriarchate (and the Church Abroad) knows this.

5) Your fifth concern is: “Nothing is perceived as awry in the practice of commemorating dead ecumenists and schismatics as though they were Orthodox.”

Again, I have to marvel at the retarded nature of your reaction (40 years late!) to these alleged abuses. To paraphrase Shakespeare, methinks ye protest too much, too slowly.

The “STATEMENT” signed by our Holy Synod in March, 2003, adequately describes (on pp. 2 & 3) how two great and very strict Church Fathers used precisely such an *economia* as you decry in pastorally dealing with the followers of Theodore of Mopsuestia, a man condemned for heresy, and who had died when the *economia* we speak of had been implemented. Please read that text again carefully.\*

One other instance of a similar type of *economia* exercised by a great saint of the Orthodox Church is found in the life of St. Seraphim of Sarov. As his Life reveals, St. Seraphim was very strict in his dealings with the sect of the Old Believers. The following account is also from his Life:

Another edifying case was that of a woman who had been adopted as a three-year-old orphan by Old Ritualists.

After their death she first joined their community, but then she started a life of pilgrimage and went from one Elder to another.

“My whole object was to find someone who could teach me, a sinner, how to save my soul. I also had a misgiving. I was in doubt whether I could have my benefactors prayed for in the Orthodox Church.”

At last she reached Sarov. Reports about Father Seraphim had already spread throughout Russia.

“I saw a crowd of people preparing to go somewhere. I inquired and was told that they were going to Father Seraphim’s hermitage. Though I was very tired from the journey, yet I forgot about rest and went with them. I wanted to see the Elder as soon as possible. Having passed the Monastery, we went along a forest path. We had walked about two versts; those who were stronger went ahead, but I was lagging behind and following slowly in the rear. Suddenly I looked to one side and saw an old wizened man, with whitish-looking hair and a bent back, in a white cassock, gathering sticks. I went up to him and asked him whether it was far to Father Seraphim’s hermitage.

“The Elder put down his sticks, gave me a serene look and asked softly:

““What do you want with poor Seraphim, my joy?”

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\* One individual who heard me give a description of this particular incident concerning Theodore of Mopsuestia, remarked: “I disagree.” We were perplexed. “Disagree” with what? Did he disagree with St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Theodore the Studite? Did he disagree with the fact that I mentioned this incident from Church History? Did he disagree with my pronunciation? Did he disagree with the fact that this incident should actually ever have happened in the first place? No explanation was given — he just disagreed! This may be described, perhaps, as the “Matthewite method” of dealing with Church History.

“Only then did I realize that I was talking to the Elder himself, and threw myself at his feet, and began to ask him to pray for me, unworthy as I was.

“‘Rise, daughter Irene!’ said the ascetic, and he bent down to help me up himself. ‘I was just waiting for you. I did not want you to have come here for nothing, when you are so tired.’

“I was astonished to be called by my name when he had never seen me before, and I trembled all over with fear; neither could I say a word, but just gazed at his angelic face.”

Father Seraphim folded her fingers in the Orthodox way and crossed her himself with her hand.

“Cross yourself like that,” he repeated twice; “that is how God commands us.”

*And after a short silence he went on: “As for your [Old Believer] benefactors, if you happen to have a copeck, give it without misgiving for them to be commemorated at the proskomidia. It is not a sin!”*

“Having blessed me, he held the copper cross which was hanging on his chest for me to kiss, and gave me some biscuits from his bag.

“‘Now,’ he said, ‘go in God’s name!’”\*

Now, if the Orthodoxy of Saint Cyril of Alexandria, St. Theodore the Studite and St. Seraphim of Sarov, as well as their pastoral use of *economia*, does not suffice for you, then you may feel constrained to denounce them also, as well as us, for “changing one iota” of the Orthodox faith. Should we strike these Saints also from the Church calendar? Where is this heading?

6) Finally, you write that you are “astounded and shocked” by our Holy Synod’s STATEMENT of March, 2003. Not “astounded and shocked” enough, apparently, as far as Father Elias Fagan was concerned. After all, did he not accept to be ordained to the priesthood without a murmur many months after that STATEMENT was issued? And he accepted to be ordained, at that, by a bishop who helped compose and signed that STATEMENT. Where was Father Elias, that unwavering proponent of “strict” Orthodoxy then? Should he not have stood up from where he was kneeling at the Holy Table, when he was about to be ordained, and should he not have shouted “*Anaxios!*” to this “iota-changing” bishop who was about to lay his hands upon him?

Also, your scrupulous and subtle analysis of the word “enmeshed” in the second paragraph of our STATEMENT was a waste of good time. If you had bothered to ask the author of those lines — your bishop — what he meant by “enmeshed”, he would have answered, “Well, now that you mention it, Fathers, that word could have been left out of that sentence entirely, and it would mean exactly the same thing.”

But, despite your astonishment and shock, you didn’t ask me about this, and so you never learned.

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\* *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, pp. 236-238.

However, now that we've reached this point, this is probably as good a place as any to bring up something very important that Saint Philaret of New York taught us (remember. . . this is the man whose antimimension you are now using illicitly). When we first entered the ROCOR in the '60s (without our being baptized or chrismated, although, according to your current thought, we were unbaptized schismatics), Metropolitan Philaret explained to us that, out of pastoral considerations, we had to make a distinction between the Soviet and Ecumenistic hierarchy and clergy, on the one hand, and the laypeople under them, on the other. In the vast majority of the cases of the laypeople, they either did not understand what was going on, or had purposely been kept in the dark, or were being deceived or misinformed by their leaders. They were like sheep being led astray, and so their responsibility was in no way comparable to that of their leaders, who were fully aware of what was going on. Thus, explained Saint Philaret, certain economies could be extended to those laypeople, which, however, *could not be extended to the clergy, who were fully responsible.*

To this very day, we have followed St. Philaret's counsel, because, as we see from the examples of Saints Cyril of Alexandria, Theodore the Studite, and Seraphim of Sarov, to mention only three, the spirit of Metropolitan Philaret's pastoral words of counsel is found also in the words and deeds of the Saints of our Holy Orthodox Church. Perhaps the day may arrive when these economies will become untenable, and they will have to stop, and we will have to "tighten the screws" a little more again, as we have done already (see the second paragraph of our STATEMENT on page 1; if you wish, you may delete the word "enmeshed"), since we no longer allow mixed marriages, or have joint prayers with Ecumenists, nor do we impart the Holy Mysteries to them, as the ROCOR sometimes did.

For now, however, some of our clergy commemorate new calendarists and other old calendarists in our services, by economia; and others, using greater strictness, do not. I respect both usages, and I respect the pastoral discretion of our clergy in this matter, because each of them is dealing with different circumstances. None of them commemorate Roman Catholics or Protestants in our services (so your references to the publication *The Elder Joseph of Optina* do not apply).

Some people are heard to say, "He is a good priest—he is very strict, he allows no economies!" I beg to differ. That's like saying, "He is a very good doctor. He uses one medication for *everyone!*" That's not a good doctor; that man is dangerous. He should be stripped of his stethoscope. A good physician is one who uses medicines appropriate for each of his patients. So too the spiritual physician. What is right for one patient may be dead wrong for another. That is why St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain teaches us that "the Church uses two hands—strictness and economia—to heal the ailing." If some spiritual fathers want to lop off one of their own hands, that's too bad for their spiritual children, because they have a handicapped physician, a maimed physician, a physician who is in need of healing himself.

The 102nd Canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council speaks eloquently about the pastoral need of both strictness and economia. These "two hands" are employed, both for those within the Body of the Church, and for the reconciliation of those that may be drawn to the Church. A few years ago, I passed out a copy of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Canon to all our clergy at our Annual Clergy Synaxis. Read that Canon and our STATEMENT again, I beg you. We

must be strict in opposing heresy, and at the same time we must show love and compassion towards those in heresy to the extent permitted to us (having the Saints as our guides), so that we may thereby draw to the Orthodox Faith those that are in error.

As we wrote in our STATEMENT of March, 2003, we are in full agreement with the holy canons, the decrees of the holy Councils, and the teachings of the holy Fathers that, according to strictness, there is no sanctifying grace in the “sacraments” of those in heresy and schism; at the same time, we see from the many instances that we have mentioned from Church History that the moment when God chooses to withdraw His grace cannot always be pinpointed with precision, as some would prefer. That, too, is why the Saints themselves allow for a certain *economia* in many circumstances, as we have seen.

And since we are on the subject of *economia*, it is appropriate that we, as Orthodox Christians, should refer here, in conclusion, to the greatest and most “astounding” and most “shocking” *economia* in mankind’s history: the Only-begotten and eternal Son and Word of God the Father took upon Himself flesh (!) in the womb of a young virgin maiden(!) for our healing and salvation. What an incredible scandal for many! If that shocks and astounds you into understanding *economia* in the right way, Fathers, then we are on the way to reconciliation.

#### APPENDIX

*Here, the following “Clarification” is appended in response to your attachment of the “Toronto paper.”*

##### A Clarification Regarding a Recent Posting

A paper originating in Toronto, Canada, recently written in response to a 1974 paper written by Presbyter Panagiotes Carras (*On the Heresy of Ecumenism And Some Aspects of the Patristic Use of Economy*) at the request of then-Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal (ROCOR), dealing with the application of *economia* in the Church, has been posted to the “Paradosis List” (message #39669).

It is not clear how an internal document addressed to a specific audience fell into the hands of anyone other than its intended readership, since the Toronto paper clearly pointed to the possibility of there being a disciplinary matter needing the attention of the members of the episcopate, and of anyone those Bishops wanted to consult in the course of their investigation. The paper’s appearance on a public forum was unauthorized by the paper’s signators.

The matter prompting the paper was reviewed by the proper episcopal authorities. Among several matters not noted in the post to the “Paradosis List” is the actual character of the paper submitted by Father Panagiotes to the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad almost 30 years ago. That paper was never published by the ROCOR. It was never published by the HOCNA. It has never had any official standing as a “position paper” for either the ROCOR or for the HOCNA.

The investigation of this matter by the Holy Synod determined that none of the allegations contained in the recent Toronto paper quoted on the “Paradosis List” (#39669) were substantiated, and the matter was concluded.

There is an official statement from the Holy Synod of the HOCNA on the matter of

grace and economia. That statement was issued in March of 2003 and has been published for general reading and information.

- ✠ Metropolitan Makarios
- ✠ Metropolitan Ephraim
- ✠ Metropolitan Moses

August 17/30, 2003

### CONCLUSION

This, my written response to the issues you raised, represents what we have taught and practiced for decades. We have kept what we received. There *is* no “growing” number of contradictions. As has been demonstrated, our teaching represents the living tradition and history of the Church, and we intend, with the help of God, to continue walking in this path. All the points you raise could have been discussed and resolved openly before your hurried exit. You still have not offered any legitimate reasons for leaving. It is now for you to determine whether you wish to return, which you are welcome to do.

As I told you at our meeting of August 11/24, 2003, on Sunday evening, you have committed a very grievous sin against the Body of Christ. You acted irresponsibly and out of ignorance, but God certainly grants all the opportunity for repentance, and this opportunity is extended to you as well. If I have offended or failed you, I ask your forgiveness. There is, however, no point in drawing out this discussion for an indeterminate length of time, since it has been shown that your position is untenable. Do not continue this course of action any longer and thus bring further opprobrium and condemnation upon yourselves. I remember our ties to one another as concelebrants in the Divine Liturgy as members of the same family. Therefore, I hope for your return to the bosom of the Church and to the restoration of our fellowship with one another.

I am still ready to talk with any of you individually. If, however, I have not heard from you by Saturday, September 21/October 4, that you have decided to return to the Metropolis of Boston of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America, I will be obliged to initiate the proper canonical procedures and will consult with members of our clergy concerning what measures shall be taken. I beg you, Fathers, do not bring additional harm to yourselves and your families.

September 12/25, 2003

Holy Hieromartyr Autonomus

With love in Christ,

