



AN ENCYCLICAL ON THE MORAL LAW OF GOD

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Throughout her sojourn in this fallen world, the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ — Israel, Old and New — has had to confront false doctrine and to make clear, first for us, the Chosen People of God, and then for the rest of Mankind, the soul-saving truths concerning our True God and the ways He has appointed for us and our salvation.

Thus, for example, in the time of St. Elias, that mighty and zealous Prophet denounced and overturned the false worship of Jezebel's idols and reaffirmed Israel's adoration of our True and Living God. In later centuries, the Holy Fathers gathered together in Council to reject the blasphemy that Jesus Christ is no more than a created man and to proclaim that the Messiah is both Perfect God and Perfect Man. More recently, the Church has condemned the pernicious pan-heresy of Ecumenism and has plainly professed that ours, alone, is the one True Religion, one True God, one True Christ and Saviour, one True Church and Israel which is the only fount of saving grace through the Holy Mysteries and the other Sacred Rites of the one True Body of Christ.

Consequently, we are called upon yet again to point out to the world its doctrinal and moral errors and to confirm for all the one True Way of our God. For God and for us Orthodox Christians, theology and morality are integrally intertwined. Indeed, our morality — the way our Merciful Benefactor has appointed for us to live — is a direct expression of our doctrine concerning God. So it has always been for Israel.

The Ten Commandments begin with doctrinal statements — the first four Commandments about Who is the only True God and how He is to be worshipped and revered. Thereafter come the remaining six Commandments which are founded on the preceding four. That is, we honor our parents, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not murder, do not bear false witness, and do not covet our neighbor's goods precisely because of Who our God is. In order to be sure we understand what He means by these Commandments, our Lord explained each of them in greater detail to the Holy Prophet and God-seer Moses.

What the Orthodox Church of Christ proclaims to be the moral law for Man made in the Image of God does not emanate from the mind of man but is none other than the Word of God spoken by the Word of God Himself, before and after His coming in the flesh. Our Lord directed us to

live according to His ways not at all for His benefit, but entirely for our profit. God's moral law befits and reflects the Image of God in which we are made and guides us to and sanctifies within us a profound, grace-filled happiness for our life in this world. There is no other way. Therefore, we preach no other way.

Hence, for the Glory of the Lord, out of love, and because this is our sacred duty, we must declare aloud the moral law of God to counter the moral degeneracy of this present age.

Because theology and morality are intertwined, the legitimizing of immorality — that is, moral behavior contrary to the moral law of God — by civil powers and by the so-called "mainstream" Christian denominations in the West in general and in North America in particular — is the direct consequence and moral expression of the pan-heresy of Ecumenism.

Since — according to that lie — all religions are legitimate, all gods are legitimate, all religious rites and ways are legitimate, then it follows that all "moralities" and no morality are legitimate. The Ten Commandments of the True God are of no greater importance than the pronouncements of Vishnu or Mohammed or Zeus or the Buddha or the Dalai Lama or the Great Spirit in the sky.

If, therefore, one of those religions permits the destruction of deformed infants or suffering and infirm adults because of their purported "poor quality of life", which of those faiths that share in the ecumenist heresy can protest, since all religious ways and views and practices are equally legitimate?

Again, if one of those religions permits bigamy or polygamy or incestuous relationships or homosexuality or fornication, which of those faiths that share in the ecumenist heresy can protest since all the religions' ways are equally legitimate?

As teachers in the Church of Christ, we denounce the utter depravity of these days, and we proclaim that there is only one moral law for us and all of Mankind, the law of our God, the Creator and Fashioner of all. According to this law, abortion and so-called euthanasia, for any reason, are murder and are not permitted by the God Who made us in His Image. Similarly, homosexual sex and, for that matter, any sex outside of the lawful marriage of one man to one woman, are contrary to the Commandments of God and not permitted by Him Who made us all in His Image.

We find utterly repugnant that some would distort the Word of God to justify any of these sins on the basis of supposed Divine compassion or love. We find equally vile that others would pervert the Word of God to justify any of these sins by denouncing the Saints of God or even God Himself, as insecure or bigoted or ignorant of the true nature of man or hateful or inwardly disturbed and, using such as pretext, would reject the moral teachings of the Church.

To address specifically homosexual marriage, since it is the latest madness to be codified into

civil law and to be permitted by many of the ecumenist and other false religions, even those fraudulently calling themselves Christian, we assert that the Lord God, in Leviticus 18:22 ("And thou shalt not lie with a man as with a woman, for it is an abomination."), prohibited men from lying with other men as with women precisely because He is compassionate and loving and desires all that is good for Mankind, since He is fully aware of man's nature. It is a biological certainty, an irrefutable scientific fact, that successive generations of humanity are the result of a heterosexual union, the sperm of a man with the egg of a woman. This is the natural creation that God ordained for man out of Divine compassion and love, and the means for the survival of the human race in this fallen world.

Man was neither made sinful, nor corrupt, nor was he made for sin or corruption. Man was made incorrupt and for sharing in the incorrupt Life of the All-holy Trinity, now attainable through Christ Jesus.

Sin is not an offense against God; the Lord cannot be offended, insulted, or hurt. Sin is an offense against ourselves, a corruption of our human nature hurtful to us, not to God. The entire purpose of God's moral law is to help us lead the normal life of incorruption, as much as possible in the fallen world, so that our hearts and souls would be open to divine grace and we would rejoice forever abiding in the Glory of God. This is what is normal for human nature; everything that falls short of this, everything that is corrupt, regardless of its origin or composition, is abnormal.

When St. Paul, frequently and sordidly abused by those who are today supporting homosexuality, in his first epistle to the Corinthians (6:9-10), enumerates types of sinners who "shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" ("Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God."), the Apostle is referring to those who are not repentant, who refuse to see the sin in their life as corruption and abnormal. The unrepentant sinner has no place in the Kingdom of Heaven, but Heaven is full of repentant sinners of every kind. We do not vilify people either for their outward conduct or for their innate or other inner corruption and abnormalities. However, each of us is responsible for his behavior, regardless of his inner proclivities, and it is for our own behavior that each one of us is accountable.

Still, we do not condemn sinners; we ourselves, like all men, are sinners. On the contrary, the Church is open to all sinners, irrespective of their sins, who sorrowfully and compunctionately acknowledge that their sin is, indeed, corrupt and abnormal, and is not what God intended for them, and who desire and struggle to live according to God's law.

It is God Himself Who condemns the perverting of His eternal law, our distorting or denying of its precepts, to the end that we might pander to our own passions, proclivities, and sins. The Lord Himself, and not we, condemns them "that call evil good, good evil; who make darkness light, and light darkness; who make bitter sweet, and sweet bitter...that are wise in their own conceit, and knowing in their own sight" (Esaias 5:20, 21).

The Christ Jesus preached by St. Paul and Who redeemed St. Paul from his own sinfulness, the Christ Who saved thieves and murderers and sexual transgressors who, repenting, asked for forgiveness: this is the Christ we know, love, and adore, this is the Christ we also preach, the Christ Jesus Whose Kingdom has a place for every single sinner who repents of his sins and wholeheartedly confesses "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and unto the ages." Amen.

- ✠ Makarios, Metropolitan of Toronto
- ✠ Ephraim, Metropolitan of Boston
- ✠ Moses, Metropolitan of Seattle
- ✠ Sergius, Bishop of Loch Lomond

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