

Can Heretics Have The Grace Of Sacraments?

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No question divides contemporary True Orthodox Christians more than the question whether or not the ecumenist Orthodox, i.e. those Orthodox who are members of Churches belonging to the World Council of Churches, possess the grace of sacraments. Some have argued that “the question of grace”, as we shall call it, is a secondary issue. The important thing, they say, is to agree that Ecumenism is a heresy and flee from communion with the heretics. However, a moment’s thought will demonstrate that there can hardly be a more important question than that whether some millions of people calling themselves Orthodox Christians have the grace of sacraments and are therefore members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church having a good hope of salvation, or, on the contrary, do not have the grace of sacraments and are therefore outside the Church and on the path to destruction. Hard as one may try, it is impossible to escape this question; for the answer one gives to it affects in a significant way one’s attitude to the ecumenist Orthodox. Are they like the people of whom the Apostle Jude says: “On some have compassion, making a difference” (v. 22), since their sin is not a sin unto death, a sin that estranges them completely from the Church? Or are they like those of whom he says: “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (v. 23), because their sin is not only a sin unto death, estranging them completely from the Church, but also contagious, liable to contaminate us if we are not extremely careful in our relations with, and attitude towards them?

For many years, this question was hotly debated in the Russian Church Abroad, but no official statement was issued that decided the matter once and for all. In 1983, however, in the wake of the horrific apostasy of the ecumenist Orthodox at the Vancouver General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the Synod of the ROCA formally anathematized the ecumenist Orthodox, declaring: “To those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ’s Church is divided into so-called ‘branches’ which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all ‘branches’ or sects or denominations, and even religions will be united in one body; and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics or advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians, **Anathema.**”^[1]

It should be noted that this anathema condemns not only Ecumenism and the ecumenists in a general sense, but also all those “who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation”. In other words, if it is accepted that the ecumenists are heretics, it is no longer permissible to say that their priesthood and mysteries are the priesthood and mysteries of the One, True Church.

In 1984, the year after this anathema was delivered, the Greek Old Calendarist hierarch, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, issued a challenge to its validity and teaching without directly naming it. In his “Ecclesiological Position Paper”^[2], he argued that while the new calendarists are ecumenists, they nevertheless have the grace of sacraments because they have not yet been condemned by a “Unifying Council” of the Orthodox Church, and that it is sufficient for the True Orthodox simply to “wall themselves off” from the ecumenists’ errors by refraining from communion with them. Ten years later, in 1994, the ROCA entered into official communion with Metropolitan Cyprian, declaring that her ecclesiology was identical with that of Metropolitan Cyprian. The contradiction between this ecclesiology and that contained in

the anathema of 1983 is manifest – but only one ROCA hierarchy, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), seemed to notice or care about it. In his article “The Dubious Orthodoxy of Metropolitan Cyprian’s Group”, Bishop Gregory wrote: “By not investigating the matter seriously and by forgetting about this previously confirmed anathematizing of the New Calendarists/Ecumenists [in 1983] (or perhaps not venturing to abrogate this resolution) our Sobor, frightful as it may be to admit it, has fallen under its own anathema.”^[3]

The present article presents a critique of Metropolitan Cyprian’s position as presented in his position paper. Since much heat and emotion has been generated by this dispute, I should make it clear at the beginning that I do not consider Metropolitan Cyprian and his followers to be heretics themselves^[4], nor do I (as some have accused me) hate the ecumenist Orthodox or wish their damnation, but rather pray, together with all truly Orthodox Christians, that they come to a knowledge of the truth and be converted to the One True Church.

In order to clarify the argument, I shall consider only those ecumenist Orthodox Churches whose participation in the ecumenist heresy cannot be doubted, such as the Moscow Patriarchate and the new calendarist Greek Patriarchates, leaving aside the doubtful or borderline cases, such as the Jerusalem Patriarchate.

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“The Orthodox Church as a whole is unerring and invincible,” writes Metropolitan Cyprian. “It is possible, however, for Christians and for local Churches to fall in faith; that is to say, it is possible for them to suffer spiritually and for one to see a certain ‘siege of illness within the body of the Church’, as St. John Chrysostom says. It is possible for Christians to separate and for ‘divisions’ to appear within the Church, as the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians. It is possible for local Churches into fall into heresy, as occurred in the ancient Orthodox Church of the West, which fell into the heresies of Papism and Protestantism and finally into the panheresy of ecumenism.

“Spiritual maladies within the Church are cured either by repentance or by judgement. Until the judgement or expulsion of a heretic, schismatic, or sinner – either by the Church or, in a more direct manner, by the Lord -, the opinion of a believer cannot be a substitute for the sentence of the Church and of her Lord, Jesus Christ, even if the resolution of a situation be prolonged until the Second Coming. As is well known, in the Scriptures, the Church is likened to a field replete with ‘wheat’ and ‘tares’, in accordance with Divine and ecclesiastical economy. Sinners and those who err in correctly understanding the Faith, yet who have not been sentenced by ecclesiastical action, are simply considered ailing members of the Church. The Mysteries [sacraments] of these unsentenced members are valid as such, according to the Seventh Ecumenical Council, as, for example, the President of the Synod, St. Tarasios, remarks: ‘[their] Ordination’ ‘is from God’. By contrast, should expositors of heresy punish the Orthodox opposed to them, these punishments are ecclesiastically invalid and groundless ‘from the time their preaching began’ (i.e., from the moment they began preaching heresy), as St. Celestine of Rome wrote and as the Third Ecumenical Synod agreed.”^[5]

When a bishop preaches heresy “publicly” “and bareheaded in the Church”, continues the metropolitan, the Orthodox Christians should immediately separate themselves from him, in accordance with the 31st Apostolic Canon and the 15th Canon of the First-and-Second Synod of Constantinople. Such action by the Orthodox does not introduce schism, but rather serves to protect the Church from schisms and divisions. “He who preaches heresy or he who brings innovation into the Church divides her and abrogates her oneness or unity. He who opposes the preaching of heresy, or who separates himself from it, is eager to save the oneness or unity of the Church. The aim of opposition and separation is the combatting of heresy, the defense of the Orthodox Faith, and the preservation of the unity of the Orthodox Church, indeed of Orthodoxy itself.”^[6]

So far so good. However, at this point, as he turns to apply these principles to the heresy of ecumenism and its forerunner, the innovation of the new calendar, the metropolitan makes some distinctly controversial statements. “With regard to the innovation in the festal calendar, Orthodox are divided into two parts: into those who are ailing in Faith and those who are healthy, into innovators and opposers – into followers of innovation, whether in knowledge or in ignorance, and those opposed, who have separated themselves from heresy, in favor of Orthodoxy. The latter are strugglers for oneness among the ‘divided’, as the Seventh Ecumenical Synod calls those who so separated for the Orthodox unity of the Church. The followers of the festal calendar innovation have not yet been specifically judged in a Pan-Orthodox fashion, as provided for by the Orthodox Church. As St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain writes, the violator of established precepts is considered sentenced, insofar as he is judged by ‘the second entity (which is the council or synod).’ Since 1924, the innovators have been awaiting judgement and shall be judged on the basis of the decisions of the holy Synods, both Oecumenical and local, and, to be sure, on the basis of the ecclesiastical pronouncements of the sixteenth century against what were then Papal proposals for changes in the festal calendar. In this respect, those who have walled themselves off from the innovators have actually broken communion ‘before [a] conciliar or synodal verdict,’ as is allowed in the Fifteenth Canon of the First-and-Second Synod. That is to say, the innovators are still unsentenced. Consequently, their Mysteries are valid...”^[7]

“Every innovationist member of the divided Greek Church is capable of changing over to opposition against the Ecumenist innovation. This can be accomplished through repentance... A return to Orthodoxy can also take place through a formal renunciation of heresy... Therefore, the Orthodox Tradition of the Holy Oecumenical Synods and of the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church prescribes that that part of the divided Greek Church that is ailing in Faith be received by one of the foregoing means of repentance and returned to the ranks of Orthodoxy. For they are not condemned schismatic or heretical Christians, but members of the Church who have not yet been brought to trial.”^[8]

That the innovators “are still unsentenced”, as Metropolitan Cyprian supposes, is a historical mistake. In May, 1935, all the truly Orthodox (i.e. Old Calendar) Metropolitans of the Church of Greece came together and synodically condemned the new calendarists as schismatics without the grace of sacraments: “Those who now administer the Church of Greece have divided the unity of Orthodoxy through the calendar innovation, and have split the Greek Orthodox People into two opposing calendar parts. They have not only violated an Ecclesiastical Tradition which was consecrated by the Seven Ecumenical Councils and sanctioned by the age-old practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but have also touched the Dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Therefore those who now administer the Greek Church have, by their unilateral, anticanonical and unthinking introduction of the Gregorian calendar, cut themselves off completely from the trunk of Orthodoxy, and have declared themselves to be in essence Schismatics in relation to the Orthodox Churches which stand on the foundation of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the Orthodox laws and Traditions.”^[9]

Concerning the implications of this declaration with regard to the question of grace, the metropolitans made themselves crystal clear in an encyclical issued on June 8/21, 1935: “We recommend to all those who follow the Orthodox Calendar that they have no spiritual communion with the schismatic church of the schismatic ministers, from whom the grace of the All-Holy Spirit has fled, because they have violated the decisions of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Pan-Orthodox Councils which condemned the Gregorian calendar. That the schismatic Church does not have Grace and the Holy Spirit is affirmed by St. Basil the Great, who says the following: ‘Even if the Schismatics have erred about things which are not Dogmas, since the head of the Church is Christ, according to the divine Apostle, from Whom all the members live and receive spiritual increase, they have torn themselves away from the harmony of the members of the Body and no longer are members [of that Body] or have the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore he who does not have it cannot transfer it to others.”^[10]

Now some have argued that this conciliar decision was later rejected by the leader of the Greek Old Calendarists, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, and that it therefore represents only an “extremist”, “Matthewite” position. However, the doctrine that schismatics have no grace is not a specifically “Matthewite” position, but is based on many canons and patristic sayings, notably the First Canonical Epistle of St. Basil the Great. In fact, as Bishop Ephraim of Boston points out, the new calendarists and the Moscow Patriarchate have adopted a distinctly “Matthewite” position in relation to the True Orthodox, declaring that they have no grace of sacraments – while at the same time declaring that the Western heretics do have grace!^[11] In any case, it is not true that Metropolitan Chrysostomos renounced the Council of 1935. From 1937 to 1950 he appeared to doubt it, introducing the notion (unknown in patristic literature, as Bishop Ephraim again correctly points out), of “potential schism”. But in 1950 he repented of these doubts and openly and unambiguously returned to the confession of 1935. Some have said that in private correspondence he claimed to have been pushed into making this confession by “extremists”, that he made it for the sake of unity and that it did not represent his true thinking. I do not believe that such a great confessor could have dissembled in his confession of faith. But in any case, even if he had private doubts, it is his public confession that we must judge him by – and that, from 1950 to the end of his life, was thoroughly Orthodox.

Now Metropolitan Cyprian does not mention the Council of 1935. Nor does he mention Metropolitan Chrysostomos’ encyclical of 1950, nor the Old Calendarist Council under the presidency of Archbishop Auxentius in 1974 (when Metropolitan Cyprian himself was under his omophorion), which explicitly declared that the new calendarist ecumenists had no grace of sacraments. The reason for these omissions cannot be that he does not know of their existence. The reason can only be – although he does not write this explicitly – that he rejects their validity, or at any rate the validity of their decisions in relation to the ecumenists. To understand why he does this, let us now turn to the metropolitan’s theory of the Councils and their relationship to heretics.

Of central importance in Metropolitan Cyprian’s argument is his concept of the “Unifying Synod”. A “Unifying Synod” is one that unites the heretics to Orthodoxy, such as the Seventh Ecumenical Council. By implication – although, again, he does not state this explicitly here – a Synod that simply condemns the heretics without uniting them to Orthodoxy (such as the decisions of the Greek Old Calendarist Councils of 1935 and 1974 against the new calendarists, or the 1983 anathema of the Russian Church Abroad against Ecumenism) is of less significance and is not in fact competent to expel heretics from the Church.

Indeed, it is difficult to see, according to Metropolitan Cyprian’s theory, how or when any heretic has been expelled from the Church. For if, before the convening of a Unifying Synod, the heretics or not outside the Church but simply an ailing faction *within* the Church, and if a Unifying Synod does not expel heretics from the Church but simply unites the ailing and the healthy parts of the same Church in a closer union, there seems to be no mechanism for the expulsion of heretics *from* the Church altogether – in other words, there are no *Separating* or *Expelling* Synods. It would not be inconsistent with his theory to suppose that those heretics who refuse to be unified by the Unifying Synod are thereby expelled from the Church altogether; but this is not stated explicitly (at any rate, in the position paper under review), so heavy is the emphasis on the supposed fact that these Synods unified rather than expelled the heretics.

Metropolitan Cyprian develops his concept of a “Unifying Council” as follows: “During the reign of the iconoclastic innovation, for example, it was impossible for an Orthodox Synod of the entire Church to be convened. For this reason, such a Synod was convened when the iconoclastic heresy was no longer in power, that is, in 787, as the Seventh Oecumenical Synod of union. The same Seventh Oecumenical Synod writes through its Fathers that the Synod took place ‘so that we might change the discord of controversy into concord, that the dividing wall of enmity might be removed and that the original rulings of the Catholic

[Orthodox] Church might be validated.’ That is, it was convened so that the differing factions of the Church, divided up to the time of the Synod – the Iconoclasts disagreeing with the Orthodox belief and the Orthodox opposed to the iconoclastic heresy -, might be united by means of an agreement within Orthodoxy.”

This is inaccurate both as regards the Ecumenical Councils in general and as regards the Seventh Council in particular.

First, there were some Ecumenical Councils which took place without the participation of heretics – the Second and the Fifth. According to the reasoning of Metropolitan Cyprian, these must be considered not to be “Unifying Councils” and therefore lacking in full validity! And yet there is no higher, “more valid” Council in the Orthodox understanding than the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

Moreover, after several of the Ecumenical Councils many of the heretics were not only not “united”, but remained in bitter enmity to the Orthodox Church. Thus there were many Arians after the First Council, many Nestorians after the Third and many Monophysites after the Fourth – in fact, all three heresies are very numerous to the present day. Even the Seventh Council was only temporarily “unifying”, since the iconoclastic heresy broke out again some years later. Thus according to the reasoning of Metropolitan Cyprian, we must eliminate the First, Third and Fourth Ecumenical Councils from the category of “Unifying Council”.

Secondly, even those Councils which took place with the participation of heretics did not receive them into communion until they had renounced their heresies. They made it quite clear that the heretics were *outside* the Church until such a renunciation. However, if, as Metropolitan Cyprian asserts, heretics cannot be considered to be outside the Church until they have been condemned at a “Unifying Council” in which they themselves participated, then not only were the Arians, Nestorians, Monophysites and others still “members of the Church weak in faith” until the Unifying Councils that condemned them, but, as Hieromonk Nectarius (Yashunsky) points out, “we shall have to recognize the Roman Catholics and Protestants as ‘as yet uncondemned members of the Church’, because since the time of their separation there has not been (and until ‘their union in Orthodoxy’ there cannot be) a Council of the united (undivided Universal Church) in common with them!”^[12]

“As far as the Seventh Council is concerned,” continues Hieromonk Nectarius, “not only did it not consider the iconoclasts to be a part of the Church, but they themselves did not pretend to be such.” In support of this statement, Fr. Nectarius quotes from the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. “These are the words of the uniting iconoclasts. Thus Basil, bishop of Ancyra, said: ‘As far as I was able, I investigated the question of the icons and converted to the Holy Catholic Church with complete conviction.’ Theodore, bishop of Myra, said: ‘... I beseech God and your holiness to unite me, the sinful one, to the Holy Catholic Church.’” (pp. 41, 43 in the edition of the Kazan Theological Academy). And here are the witnesses of the holy Fathers of the Council: “His Holiness Patriarch Tarasius said: ‘What is now to be our relationship to this heresy that has again arisen in our time?’ John, the most beloved of God, locum tenens of the apostolic throne in the east, said: ‘Heresy divides every man from the Church.’ The Holy Council said: ‘That is evident.’ The Holy Council said: ‘Let the bishops who are standing before us read their renunciations, insofar *as they are now converting to the Catholic Church.*’” (p. 48).

Thirdly, the exceptional importance of Ecumenical or “Unifying” Councils should not lead us to cast doubt on *local* Councils’ authority to expel heretics from the Church. Many of the heretics of the early centuries were first cast out of the Church by local Councils. For example, Arius was cast out by a local Council presided over by St. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, in 321 and again in 323 (the First Ecumenical Council did not take place until 325). Again, local Councils convened at Rome condemned the Nestorians (under Pope St. Celestine), the Monothelites (under Pope St. Martin) and the Iconoclasts (under Pope Gregory

III) – in each case *before* the convening of the Third, Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils, which never disputed the validity of these local Councils, but rather *confirmed their decisions*.

Thus when the heretical bishop Theodosius in conversation with St. Maximus the Confessor disputed the validity of the local Council under St. Martin that condemned the Monothelites on the grounds that it was not convened by an emperor, St. Maximus replied that the validity of a Council depended on its recognising “the true and immutable dogmas”, not on who convened it or how general it was. Again, when the same saint was asked in the Emperor’s palace why he was not in communion with the Throne of Constantinople, he replied: “... They have been deposed and deprived of the priesthood at the local council which took place recently in Rome. What Mysteries, then, can they perform? Or what spirit will descend upon those who are ordained by them?”^[13]

Again, Bishop Theophan the Recluse points out that before the start of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, its president-to-be, St. Tarasius, bewailed the fact that “we (the iconoclastic Church of Constantinople) are being anathematised by them (the other Local Churches in Local Councils) every day”.^[14]

If local Councils did not have the authority to expel heretics from the Church, we should have to condemn many local Councils for exceeding their competency and assuming an authority that did not belong to them. These would include many of the Councils of the Early Church, which expelled such heretics as Marcion and Sabellius; the local Councils of the Great Church of Constantinople between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries that expelled the Roman Catholics; and the Councils of the Russian Church presided over by Patriarch Tikhon that anathematized the communists and their co-workers in 1918 and the renovationist heretics in 1923. However, the Church, which has the mind of Christ, has accepted all of these acts as lawful and valid. To think otherwise is to suppose that for the last several hundred years the Church has – God forbid! – lost her God-given power to bind and to loose since the convening of the last Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council!

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Let us now turn from the detailed consideration of Metropolitan Cyprian’s position to the question: when are we entitled to consider that a heretic is outside the Church and, consequently, deprived of the grace of sacraments? In particular, are we entitled to consider the “Orthodox” heretics belonging to the World Council of Churches as still belonging to the Church and having the grace of sacraments? We shall not discuss here the question why these “Orthodox” should be considered to be heretics, since Metropolitan Cyprian himself accepts that they are.

Now the Sacred Canons of the Church, notably Apostolic Canons 46, 47 and 68, and the First Canon of St. Basil the Great, all teach that heretics and schismatics are outside the Church and have no sacraments. These heretics and schismatics are to be received in various ways – some by baptism, some by chrismation, some by simple confession – but, as Bishop Gregory Grabbe insisted in various of his writings, this does not alter the basic principle. Moreover, Apostolic Canon 46 declares not only that heretics and schismatics are outside the Church, but also that those who recognise the sacraments of heretics or schismatics should be deposed: “We order that a bishop or priest who accepts the baptism or sacrifice of heretics be deposed. For what agreement has Christ with Beliar? Or what part has the faithful with an infidel?”

Is a conciliar verdict necessary in order to expel a heretic? At first sight it would seem that the answer to this question is: yes. However, there are grounds for thinking that Arius was invisibly expelled from the Church not only before the First Ecumenical Council of 325, but even before the local Councils of 321 and 323. For when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, in the form of a twelve year old child in torn clothing, and was asked by St. Peter: “O Creator, who has torn Your tunic?”,

the Lord replied: “The mindless Arius; *he has separated from Me people whom I had obtained with My Blood.*”^[15] And this took place before St. Peter’s martyrdom, which was in 311.

The question arises, then: What is the purpose of the Councils? Is it they, and they alone, which bind heretics and cast them out of the Church? Or do they simply *discern* that binding has *already* taken place^[16], “knowing,” as the apostle says, “that he that is such [a heretic] is subverted, and sinneth, *being condemned of himself*” (Titus 3.11)?

Of particular importance in this context is the 15th Canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople (861), which declares that those who withdraw from a bishop for public preaching of heresy “condemned by the holy Councils or Fathers..not only are not subject to any canonical penalty on account of their having walled themselves off from any and all communion with the one called a Bishop before any conciliar or synodal verdict has been rendered, but, on the contrary, they shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honour which befits them among Orthodox Christians; for they have defied, not Bishops, but pseudo-bishops and pseudo-teachers, and they have not sundered the union of the Church with any schism, but, on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions.”

It should be noted, first, that the canon is here speaking about heresies that have been condemned “by the holy Councils or Fathers”. This would imply that a conciliar judgement – or, at any rate, a patristic judgement – is indeed necessary before one can leave a heretic (not necessarily, however, the judgement of an *Ecumenical* Council). Secondly, however, such a conciliar or patristic judgement need not be a contemporary one, for the canon explicitly states that it is praiseworthy to leave such a heretic “before any conciliar or synodal verdict has been rendered”. In other words, no additional, contemporary Council has to be convened to confirm the decision of the earlier “Councils or Fathers” in relation to the contemporary heretic. And thirdly, a man who preaches such a heresy publicly is *already* a “pseudo-bishop” on the basis of the early “Councils or Fathers” alone.

Now this attitude towards heretics was disputed in the fourteenth century by the famous opponent of St. Gregory Palamas, Acindynus. Writing to Barlaam, another opponent of St. Gregory, he gently chides him for calling Gregory a heretic; “for it was against canon law to treat a man as a heretic before he had been formally condemned. ‘Therefore, be more moderate towards Palamas,’ he repeated.”^[17]

The ROCA theologian Vasily Lurye has supplied a fitting riposte to this^[18]: “It is characteristic that the latter remark was expressed by Acindynus – that is, by one who was himself a heretic. The church canons distinguish two cases. 1. If the heretic is not a bishop (in which case it is no longer important who he is: a layman, a monk, a deacon, a priest, a superior, etc.). Here the words of the Apostle Paul retain their full force: ‘A heretic after the first and second admonition reject’ (Titus 3.10). No church canons have been added to them. This means – and it is precisely such an understanding that is confirmed by the practice of the holy fathers, – that one should not wait for any church condemnations of, for example, a heretical priest. One must immediately cease to pray and concelebrate with him, and to receive confession and communion from him. One must *first* break communion in prayer with him, and only then, if possible, appeal to a church court (juridical power over a priest is given to a bishop). 2. If the heretic is a bishop. Here the Church has at various times introduced various elaborations of the apostolic formula. In force at the present time is Canon 15, which was introduced at the so-called First-and-Second Council of Constantinople in 861. After discussing those who, on the pretext of various accusations, separate from their bishop, [the canon] says that it is quite another matter if the separation takes place as a result of heresy...”

This enables us to answer the question whether the contemporary new calendarists and ecumenists, including the Moscow Patriarchate, are in the Church and have the grace of sacraments. The answer is that they are not in the Church, and do not have the grace of sacraments, because according to the 15th Canon

their bishops are “pseudo-bishops” as having been condemned “by the holy Councils or Fathers” – specifically, in the case of the new calendarists, by the Pan-Orthodox Councils that anathematized the new calendar in 1583, 1587 and 1593. No contemporary Council is needed to apply those earlier decisions to the contemporary heretics, although in fact there have been such contemporary Councils – specifically, the Greek Old Calendarist Councils of 1935 and 1974, together with the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1983, which did not condemn new-calendarism as such, but rather Ecumenism, of which, as Metropolitan Cyprian agrees, new-calendarism is a definite manifestation – the first stage, as it were.

Already in the nineteenth century, Bishop Theophan the Recluse was saying that there was no need for further conciliar anathemas to condemn the heretics of his day since they had all already been condemned by earlier decisions. Commenting on St. Paul’s words, “If anyone preaches any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema” (Gal. 1.8), he writes: “The apostle laid only the beginning to anathematization. Since then all the opinions worthy of this punishment have already been marked out by the Church. At the present time there is no point waiting for a special ecclesiastical act to strike the evildoers with this judgement. They themselves are placing their own heads under this sword immediately they acquire opinions contrary to the truth and stubbornly begin to insist on them.”^[19]

And yet, of course, new Councils and new anathemas have been found to be necessary in this century. What, then, has been the purpose of these new Councils? First of all, to point out to the faithful that the old heresies have reappeared in a new form – idol-worship, for example, in the form of Sergianism, and *all* the old heresies in the form of Ecumenism, “the heresy of heresies”. And secondly, in order to make a clear separation between light and darkness, between the Church of the faithful and the “Church of the evildoers”, lest the latter swallow up the former entirely. And thirdly, to reverse the act that the Church carried out when she made the heresiarchs pastors and bishops.

It is for this last reason that contemporary Councils *are* necessary to depose contemporary heretics, even if they already fall under earlier anathemas. For, as St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite explains in his commentary on the 30th Apostolic Canon: “The Canons ordain that a synod of living bishops should defrock priests, or excommunicate or anathematize laymen, when they transgress the Canons. However, if the synod does not put into practical effect the defrocking of the priests, or the excommunication or anathematization of the laymen, these priests and laymen are neither defrocked nor excommunicated nor anathematized in actuality [*energeia*]. However, they are subject to defrocking and excommunication here, and to the wrath of God there.”^[20]

Here, and here only, is there some ground for speaking in a very restricted sense about heretics having grace. For between the first appearance of a heresy in modern times and its first condemnation by a local Council, there is a period in which the heretic, although already self-condemned and subject to the condemnation of *God* if he dies now, has the possibility of repenting and returning to the truth before being subject to the condemnation of *the Church*. Nestorius, for example, was given a short time to repent by St. Celestine before he was condemned at a local Council in Rome. This is that period of which the Lord says in relation to Jezebel in the Thyateiran Church: “I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not” (Rev. 2.21).

In this period, the heretic, although already deprived of grace in a *personal* sense (for all sin deprives the sinner of grace), may continue to preserve the *priestly* grace which the Church gave him at his ordination and which she deprives him of only through another public, conciliar act.^[21] In the period before the conciliar deposition of the heretic, not only is he given time to repent, but his flock are enabled to continue receiving the true sacraments – although, as Hieromartyr Cyril of Kazan writes, they will receive them to their condemnation if they are conscious of their hierarch’s heresy. After his conciliar deposition, however, the hierarch is no longer a hierarch, and the flock that remains with him no longer receives true sacraments from

him; for “if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt. 15.14).

However, this very restricted sense in which heretics retain the grace of the priesthood until they have been formally deposed does not help Metropolitan Cyprian’s case, because, as noted above, several local Councils composed of undoubtedly canonical and Orthodox bishops have *already* expelled the ecumenist Orthodox from the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. And in particular, they have been expelled by the 1983 anathema hurled at them by the ROCA, a Church with which Metropolitan Cyprian is in communion and whose conciliar acts concerning heresy he and his Synod (and still more, of course, the hierarchs of the ROCA) are consequently bound to accept. Therefore the “space to repent” has run out, the door has been closed, the spiritual sword has fallen; and it remains only for every faithful Orthodox Christian to echo the verdict of the Church: **Anathema**.

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Let us now turn to some arguments that have been made against the position defended in this article:-

The Ecclesiology of Hieromartyr Cyril of Kazan. In the early years after the Sergianist schism of 1927, until about 1934, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan took the position that, while he could not concelebrate with Metropolitan Sergius because of his usurpation of Church power, he did not consider him to be a schismatic deprived of the grace of sacraments. As he wrote to Sergius: “I refrain from liturgizing with you not because the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ would not be actualized at our joint celebration, but because the communion of the Chalice of the Lord would be to both of us for judgement and condemnation, since our inward attitude, disturbed by a different understanding of our church relation to each other, would take away from us the possibility of offering, in complete calm of spirit, the mercy of peace, the sacrifice of praise.”^[22]

Again he wrote to an unknown hierarch: “It seems to me that both you yourself and your correspondent do not distinguish those actions of Metropolitan Sergius and his partisans, which are performed by them in proper order by power of those grace-given rights received through the mystery of the priesthood, from those other activities which are performed with an exceeding of their sacramental rights and according to human cunning, as a means of protecting and supporting their self-invented rights in the Church. Such are the actions of Bishop Zacharius and Priest Patapov of which you speak. These are sacramental acts only in form, while in essence they are a usurpation of sacramental activity, and therefore are blasphemous, without grace, non-ecclesiastical. But the Mysteries performed by Sergianists who are correctly ordained and not prohibited to serve as priests, are undoubtedly saving Mysteries for those who receive them with faith, in simplicity, without deliberations and doubts concerning their efficacy, and who do not even suspect anything incorrect in the Sergianist order of the Church. But at the same time, they serve for judgement and condemnation for the very performers of them and for those who approach them well understanding the untruth that exists in Sergianism, and by their lack of opposition to it reveal a criminal indifference towards the mocking of the Church. This is why it is essential for an Orthodox Bishop or priest to refrain from communion with Sergianists in prayer. The same thing is essential for laymen who have a conscious attitude to all the details of church life.”^[23]

These letters make clear that while Metropolitan Cyril was quite prepared to say of certain hierarchs (the renovationists, Bishop Zacharius) that they were deprived of the grace of sacraments, he was not prepared to say this – yet – of Metropolitan Sergius, “until a lawful Council by its sentence shall utter the judgement of the Holy Spirit concerning him”.^[24] He gave as one reason for his hesitation – or “excessive caution”, as his correspondent put it – “an incomplete clarification of the conditions which surround me and all of us”.^[25] We may suppose that another reason was the fact that both Sergianists and True Orthodox were still linked, albeit tenuously, by their common commemoration of Metropolitan Peter, who, because of his

imprisonment beyond the Arctic Circle, had not been able officially to remove Metropolitan Sergius from his post as his deputy – although he had urged the other bishops to remove him.

In fact, according to Hieromartyr Maximus of Serpukhov and other sources, there had been a secret Council in 1928 that anathematized the Sergianists.^[26] But the inability of the first-hierarchy of the Church to make his own position publicly and officially known – which inability was, of course, engineered by the Bolsheviks – prevented the Catacomb hierarchs from deposing Sergius in a manner that would have been accepted as canonical by all. As Metropolitan Cyril wrote: “For me personally, it is impossible at the present time to step forth, since I am entirely unsure of the character of the attitudes of Metropolitan Peter, in order to be convinced of his actual views and to decide how to act...”^[27]

The situation changed, however, in August, 1936, when the Bolsheviks issued the false information that Metropolitan Peter had died, and Metropolitan Sergius promptly – and completely unlawfully – arrogated to himself Peter’s title of Metropolitan of Krutitsa and patriarchal *locum tenens*. Almost immediately we see a significant hardening in Metropolitan Cyril’s position. Thus in March, 1937 he wrote: “With regard to your perplexities concerning Sergianism, I can say that the very same questions in almost the same form were addressed to me from Kazan ten years ago, and then I replied affirmatively to them, because I considered everything that Metropolitan Sergius had done as a mistake which he himself was conscious of and wished to correct. Moreover, among our ordinary flock there were many people who had not investigated what had happened, and it was impossible to demand from them a decisive and active condemnation of the events. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge. The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius would correct himself have not been justified, *but there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incentive and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened*; and very many have both investigated and understood that Metropolitan Sergius is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox. The recent events have finally made clear *the renovationist nature of Sergianism*. We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgiveable craftiness to close one’s eyes to this unrighteousness and seek there for the satisfaction of one’s spiritual needs when one’s conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin...”^[28]

So from 1937 Metropolitan Cyril considered that the faithful had had enough time to work out the “renovationist” nature of Sergianism. Moreover, by calling Sergianism “renovationist” Metropolitan Cyril was placing it under the category of *an already condemned heresy*, whose adherents had already been declared by Patriarch Tikhon to be deprived of the grace of sacraments in 1923. Strictly speaking, therefore, no new conciliar sentence was necessary, just as no new conciliar sentence is required to condemn each new Pope of Rome.

Metropolitan Cyril was shot on the eve of St. Michael’s day, 1937 together with Metropolitan Joseph, whose followers, as is well-known, declared that the Sergianists had no grace. According to Catacomb nuns who were able to communicate by secret signs with the two hierarchs as they walked through the prison yard shortly before their execution, Metropolitan Cyril indicated that he was not only in full agreement with Metropolitan Joseph, but that *he recognized Joseph’s leadership of the Russian Church* as blessed by Metropolitan Peter in the event of his death.^[29] There is therefore every reason to believe that at the time of their joint martyric deaths Metropolitan Cyril differed in no way in his confession from the “extremist” Metropolitan Joseph...

But in any case, can there be any doubt about what Metropolitan Cyril would have said if he had been alive *now*, more than sixty years later? In 1934, he said that he viewed the disorder in the Russian Orthodox

Church “not as concerning the teaching which She holds, but as concerning administration”^[30]. Now, however, Sergianism has metamorphosed into something infinitely worse than administrative disorder, worse even than the heresy of renovationism. It has evolved into “the heresy of heresies”: first, through the filling up of its hierarchy with renovationists in 1943-45 (so that most of the post-war sergianists have not satisfied Metropolitan Cyril’s criterion of correct ordination); then through its idolatrous glorification of Stalin, and persecution of the Catacomb Church and Russian Church Abroad, in the years after the war; then through its entry into the World Council of Churches in 1961; then through its adoption of the gospel of Communist Christianity; and finally through its inter-religious “super-ecumenism” in the 1980s and 1990s, which in 1983 received a definitive conciliar anathematization to which Metropolitan Cyril has no doubt added his authoritative voice in the heavens...

The Validity of the 1983 Anathema. It is sometimes argued that the ROCA’s 1983 anathema against Ecumenism lacks force, if not validity, because no specific names are mentioned in it. If so, it is surprising that such a formidable canonist as Bishop Gregory Grabbe should have continued to consider it valid. Moreover, there is strong evidence to suggest that both Metropolitan Philaret, the first-hierarchy of the ROCA at the time, and Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, the second hierarchy, considered not only that it was valid, but that the Moscow Patriarchate fell directly under it.

Is it absolutely necessary for names to be mentioned for an anathema to be valid? A brief look at the Order for the Triumph of Orthodoxy will establish that *most* of the anathemas there are not specific as to name. Patriarch Tikhon’s anathema against the communists and their co-workers in 1918, which was solemnly confirmed by the Local Council of the Russian Church then in session, mentioned neither Lenin nor anyone else by name. The same applies to the anathematization of the renovationists. What are we to say about all these anathemas? That they are invalid because the names of the heretics are not mentioned? But is it possible for there to be a heresy without a heretic, or an anathema against a heresy without any individual heretic falling under it?

Of course, in borderline cases, where it is not quite clear whether a particular Church or hierarchy falls under the anathema, it would be desirable to have a list of names – although, of course, no list of names could be exhaustive. However, to say that a heretical hierarchy does not fall under an anathema unless his name is specified in black and white is legalistic at best, casuistical at worst. And before we could accept such an idea we would need to see patristic support for it... But let us suppose that those who would reject the 1983 Council on those grounds are right, that the correct procedure for the valid anathematization of heretics was not carried out in this case. What, then, must we do?

Two things are obligatory. First, the anathema against Ecumenism must be removed from the Order for the Triumph of Orthodoxy so that the faithful should not be misled into believing that it actually has any *weight* or *power* in God’s eyes. And secondly, a fresh Council must be immediately convened – it could now be considerably larger than the 1983 Council, having hierarchs from Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece as well as from the ROCA – to anathematize the ecumenists *by name*. Such a Pan-Orthodox Council would then settle the issue once and for all.

But there seems no sign of either of these things taking place. Therefore the suspicion remains that those who contest the validity of the 1983 Council – or, more often, simply ignore it, trying to suppress all discussion of it – are not doing so out of a laudable concern for correct procedure, but because *they do not want to obey its decisions*. We must exempt Metropolitan Cyprian from such a suspicion because he has given a quite clear – although, as we have argued, invalid – reason for waiting: only a “Unifying Council”, in his view, – a Council embracing both Orthodox and heretics – could decide such a matter, and such a “Unifying Council” cannot be convened in present circumstances. But some of the hierarchs in the ROCA quite clearly have a different motivation, and are not at all concerned about the theory of Unifying Councils.

They reject the Council of 1983 because *they believe that the ecumenist heretics are in fact Orthodox and want to unite with them...*

Bishop Ephraim and the Excuse of Ignorance. We have seen that by 1937 Metropolitan Cyril considered that time enough had passed for the faithful to come to a clear appreciation of the renovationist nature of Sergianism and flee from it. Now the “argument from ignorance” which Metropolitan Cyril implicitly employed in the early years of the Sergianist schism has been developed further by Bishop Ephraim of Boston. Let us examine it more closely.

Bishop Ephraim rejects as unpatristic Metropolitan Chrysostomos’ concept of “potential schism”. “Schism is schism and heresy is heresy from the very start”.^[31] And he accepts that the Matthewites’ view that schismatics and heretics have no grace has patristic backing – and is not confined, even in our day, to the Matthewites. However, he is unhappy with the Matthewites’ idea that grace is simply “switched off” like electricity at the beginning of a schism. The problem is that the people in a heretical or schismatical communion are not all at the same level of knowledge. Some do not know what it is all about; and the point at which these (shall we call them: “potential”?) heretics “become confirmed heretics, knowingly and stubbornly and unrepentantly, may take some time”.^[32]

It is evident that Bishop Ephraim, while rejecting the concept of “potential schism” and “potential heresy”, is nevertheless reintroducing some such concept “by the backdoor”. He does not say explicitly that “potential” or “unconfirmed” heretics receive true sacraments, but the implication is there. Let us see how he develops this idea.

Instead of the metaphor of electricity, Bishop Ephraim quotes from St. Athanasios of Constantinople’s use of the metaphor of the severed branch (which in turn, of course, derives from the Lord’s use of it in John 15): “The Church of Christ is the tree of life. Therefore, just as a branch which has been cut off from a healthy tree withers away little by little, and becomes dry and fuel for the fire, so is it in this case as well. The proof is this: many people, after the economy of Christ my God’s incarnation in the flesh, cut themselves off from the life-giving tree, from the Church, I mean, either through heresy or schism. And the tree of life, the Church, given water and light by Christ my Saviour, continues to flourish; but they who have apostasized from Her have perished, since of their own will they removed themselves far from God” (Letter 34).

Bishop Ephraim clearly prefers this metaphor because it contains the idea of *gradualness*. Just as a severed branch only gradually withers away, he appears to be saying, so a schismatic or heretical Church only gradually loses grace. However, the metaphor need not – and should not – be interpreted in this way. For while the withering away of the branch may be gradual, *its cutting off is sudden* – and it is the cutting off that corresponds to the loss of grace. The withering away, on the other hand, corresponds to the *consequences* of the loss of grace in the gradual loss even of the *external appearance* of a true, grace-filled Church.

Bishop Ephraim ridicules the idea that grace could have been “switched on and off” each time St. Athanasius returned from exile and was then exiled again by the Arians. I don’t find the idea ridiculous at all. Something very similar must have happened in the period 1922-24 in Russia, when churches ruled by renovationists lost the grace of sacraments – as Patriarch Tikhon himself declared – and then received it again when their hierarchs repented or were replaced by Orthodox ones.

But what about the people who were confused or ignorant at that time? In order to answer this question, let us consider two kinds of ignorance: ignorance caused by a lack of zeal for the faith, and ignorance caused by genuine incapacity of some kind – extreme youth, mental deficiency, distance from sources of accurate information, etc.

If an Orthodox Christian is ignorant that his hierarch is a heretic because of his own lack of zeal for the faith, then he himself is largely to blame, as Bishop Ephraim appears to concede when discussing the indifference of present-day ecumenists. Very often the seemingly ignorant are actually simply indifferent. Let us remember that the main reason for the appearance of the Antichrist, according to St. Paul, will be *the lack of love for the truth* among contemporary Christians (II Thess. 2.10).

But let us suppose that the Christian really loves the truth, but is uneducated or unintelligent or a long way from good pastors or surrounded by misinformed or malicious people. Then we must believe that God will enlighten him in one way or another, or simply *move* him out of danger. There are many, many examples from the lives of the saints to show that God does not abandon His faithful sheep when they are in danger of going astray; for, as the Lord said, “*no man* is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10.29).

There is, of course, such a thing as genuine, unwitting ignorance, and it does serve as an excuse in God’s eyes. If ignorance did not serve as some kind of excuse, then the Lord would not have cried out on the Cross: “Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do*” (Luke 23.24). Nor would the Apostle Peter have said to the Jews: “I know that through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers” (Acts 3.17; cf. Acts 17.30). Again, St. Paul says that he was forgiven his persecution of the Church because he did it unwittingly, out of ignorance and unbelief (I Tim. 1.13).

But those who crucified Christ certainly sinned; and neither the Lord nor St. Peter said that they had *not* sinned. He pleaded for forgiveness for them, not because they had not sinned, but because there was some excuse for their sin (their ignorance of His Divinity).^[33] St. Paul also was guilty, but again there were “extenuating circumstances”: his lack of knowledge of the mystery. And when that knowledge was given him, he repented. And so sin remains sin, whether it is committed in knowledge or in ignorance; only sin committed in knowledge is more serious and is punished more severely than sin committed in genuine ignorance.

The Lord put it as follows: “That servant which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes” (Luke 12.47-48). On which Blessed Theophylact makes the following comment: “He too was punished because he was able to learn the will of the master, but did not want to do so. Because of his laziness, he was the cause of his own ignorance, and he deserves punishment for this very reason, that of his own will he did not learn. Brothers, let us tremble with fear. If even he who knows nothing deserves to be beaten, what excuse will deliver those who are brimming with knowledge, especially those who are teachers? Their condemnation will be even more severe...”^[34]

How does this all relate to the question of the grace of sacraments? Only obliquely, in my opinion. There is nothing in Holy Tradition to lead us to believe that when an Orthodox Christian goes up to receive communion in the church of a publicly condemned and deposed heretic, he receives the true sacrament out of condescension to his ignorance.

Or if this does sometimes happen, it is by a special oeconomia of God which we cannot know about except by special revelation, and which cannot therefore play a part in our public discussion. God is sovereign, and so may break His own rules. But we are His subjects and must follow the rules He has given us. We shall not be condemned if we follow the rules God has given us in the Holy Canons, even if He, in His sovereign mercy, sometimes practises oeconomia. But we shall be condemned if we cast doubt on the canons concerning heretics on the basis of private and quite possibly quite unfounded speculations.

However, it would not be inconsistent with the Holy Canons to suppose that, depending on the degree and nature of the ignorance of the Orthodox Christian – which is, of course, known to God alone, – he may be

protected to a greater or lesser extent from the effects of his partaking of “the devil’s food”, as the Fathers call the communion of heretics. I think it is perfectly possible, for example, that there are many people in the remoter parts of the Russian countryside who do not know much about the heresy of Ecumenism and therefore sin less gravely when they partake of the “sacraments” in the patriarchate than do the priests and, even more, the hierarchs. But this is really only speculation that has very little bearing on the dogmatic issue. Neither I nor anyone else knows how many such people there are, how ignorant they really are, how much they are sinning by staying in the false patriarchate, and to what extent they are protected by God. I do not know, and I do not have to know *that*: the only thing I *have* to know is what the Church teaches about heretics, the “sacraments” of heretics, and the necessity of keeping away from them.

Bishop Ephraim goes on to cite the example of the Western schism, its lack of clarity (from a human point of view), the fact that there was heresy in the West *before* 1054, and communion between parts of the East and West in parts *after* 1054. He makes some good points here, but again they are not directly relevant to the question at issue. The fact that it is sometimes difficult to determine precisely when a schismatic or heretical community falls from grace does not mean that there was not in fact a precise cut-off point – we mustn’t confuse the Divine judgements, which are always clear and precise, with human knowledge of His judgements, which are often weak and clouded because of sin.

I personally believe that the traditional cut-off point of 1054 is the correct one for the Pope of Rome himself – the lights went out in Rome the day the Local Council of the Great Church of Constantinople pulled the switch. Some local Churches in the West continued to keep the light for a few more years yet – England, for example, was only formally integrated into the papist church after a bitter war in which one-fifth of the population was exterminated, and the last pre-schism archbishop was defrocked, and his papist successor installed in his place, only on August 29, 1070. I think it is also possible that Ireland and Scandinavia, whose direct contact with Rome was minimal and whose Churches were therefore de facto autonomous, retained the grace of sacraments even into the early part of the twelfth century.

Is the idea of “gradually receding grace” being reintroduced here “by the back-door”? I don’t think so. As even the ecumenist “Metropolitan” Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh once admitted when discussing the sacraments of papists, we cannot talk about “half sacraments”; on any one altar at any one time there either is or is not the true sacrament of Christ, and the angel sent by God to guard that altar either is or is not present. Grace does not “gradually recede” from that altar; it goes suddenly and decisively. In some historical cases it is, I agree, difficult to determine with precision whether or when grace has left a particular church, or diocese, or even patriarchate. But by a careful study of the facts – the canonical facts and the historical facts – we can come closer to precision than some people allow. I think it was St. Macarius who once saw the grace of baptism leave his disciple when he had apostasized during conversation with a Jew. I believe that the same sudden, decisive loss of grace takes place in churches, too – although, because of our sins, we cannot see it as St. Macarius did.

The concept of “degrees of grace” does have application in certain contexts – but not to the Body and Blood of Christ. St. Seraphim said that the aim of the Christian life is to acquire the grace of the Holy Spirit. This “personal” or “pneumatological” grace is clearly a matter of degree – insofar, that is, as we can use such categories in talking about the uncreated and unquantifiable energies of God. Saints have more grace than ordinary Orthodox Christians; and some saints shine more brightly in the firmament of grace than others. We can grow in grace and decrease in grace. But the holiness and grace of the Eucharist depends neither on the celebrant’s nor on the communicant’s degree of grace. For It is Christ Himself, no less...

The important question is: is it *in principle* possible to determine, with God’s help, whether or not a community has the grace of sacraments? I believe that the whole body of the holy canons and patristic writings presupposes that it is indeed possible – and *must* be done to the extent of our ability. And I believe

that Bishop Ephraim is actually of the same view. Only he tends to cloud the issue by discussing all the practical difficulties involved in applying the canons in particular circumstances. These difficulties clearly exist, I do not deny it; but they should not divert us from the main dogmatic point without which we will never attain clarity or truth in this matter – the point, namely, that from the time of their canonical deposition heretics do not have the grace of sacraments.

There is one other important point in this connection, which has been made by Protopriest Lev Lebedev. It is, of course, a tragedy that an individual or community should be deprived of the grace of sacraments. But it is a still greater tragedy that a person should receive the True Body of Christ when he is, wittingly or unwittingly, not in a condition to receive it without condemnation. Therefore a community's being deprived of the grace of sacraments may actually be a mercy of God at the same time that it is clearly a judgement. Moreover, we may better bring people to partake once more of the True Body and Blood of Christ to their salvation by gently but firmly pointing out to them that they are *not* partaking of It in their heretical churches, which they must leave and renounce if they are to make themselves worthy of It again...

March 9/22, 1998.

The Sunday of the Holy Cross.

^[1] See “A Contemporary Patristic Document”, Orthodox Christian Witness, November 14/27, 1983, p. 3; “Encyclical Letter of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia”, Orthodox Life, vol. 33, no. 6, November-December, 1983, p. 13; Bishop Hilarion of Manhattan, “Answers to Questions Posed by the Faithful of the Orthodox Parish in Somerville, South Carolina”, Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, 1992.

^[2] Translated by Bishop Chrysostomos of Etna with an introductory commentary by Patrick G. Barker in Barker's A Study of the Ecclesiology of Resistance, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1994.

^[3] Translated from Tserkovniye Novosti, no. 5, September-October, 1994, p. 4 (in Russian).

^[4] The Orthodoxy of Metropolitan Cyprian's position in relation to the Catholics and Protestants, and to Ecumenism as such, is clear from the many publications of his monastery. See in particular his article, “The Baptismal Theology of the Ecumenists”, translated into Russian in Pravoslavnyaya Rus', no. 12 (1513), June 15/28, 1994, pp. 5-7, 15.

^[5] Barker, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

^[6] Ibid., p. 59.

^[7] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

^[8] Ibid., pp. 61, 62.

^[9] Metropolitan Calliopius (Giannakoulopoulos) of Pentapolis, Ta Patria, volume 7, Piraeus, 1987, p. 43 (in Greek).

^[10] Ibid., pp. 277-278.

^[11] Letter of Reader Polychronios, April 29 / May 12, 1987.

^[12] Hieromonk Nectarius Yashunsky, Ekklesiologicheskiye Antitezisy (MS) (in Russian).

^[13] The Life of our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor, Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1982, p. 38.

^[14] Bishop Theophan, “Shto takoye ‘anafema’?”; quoted by Vladislav Dmitriev, Nyeopravdannoye Yedinstvo (MS, 1996, p. 19) (in Russian).

^[15] St. Dmitri of Rostov, Lives of the Saints, November 25.

^[16] St. Bede the Venerable writes: “The keys of the Kingdom designate *the actual knowledge and power of*

discerning who are worthy to be received into the Kingdom, and who should be excluded from it as unworthy” (Sermon on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, P.L. 94, col. 219, sermo 16).

[17] Fr. John Meyendorff, A Study of Gregory Palamas, London: The Faith Press, 1964, p. 48.

[18] In his commentaries on the recent Russian translation of Meyendorff’s book, Zhizn’ i Trudy Svyatitelya Grigoriya Palamy, St. Petersburg: Byzantinorossica, 1997, p. 384.

[19] Commentary on the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians, Moscow, 1893, pp. 70, 71 (in Russian).

[20] Cited by Hieromonk Theodoretus, To Imerologiakon Skhisma, *op. cit.*, p. 3 (in Greek).

[21] I owe this distinction to Protopriest Lev Lebedev, who, however, expresses it in somewhat different terms, using Vladimir Lossky’s distinction between “christological” and “pneumatological” grace.

[22] Quoted in Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[26] Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, Noviye Mucheniki Rossijskiye, Jordanville, 1949-57, vol. II, p. 30 (in Russian).

[27] Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[28] Letter of Metropolitan Cyril to Hieromonk Leonid, February 23 / March 8, 1937, Pravoslavnaya Rus’, N 16, August 15/28, 1997, p. 7 (in Russian). Italics mine (V.M.).

[29] Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov), Tserkov’ Katakombnaya na Zemlye Rossijskoj (MS, Mayford, 1980); Dmitriev, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[30] Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[33] Cf. C. S. Lewis: “If you had a perfect excuse you would not need forgiveness: if the whole of your action needs forgiveness then there was no excuse for it” (“On Forgiveness”, in Fern-seed and Elephants, London: Fount Paperbacks, 1977, p. 40).

[34] The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel according to Luke, House Springs: Chrysostom Press, 1997, p. 159.