

❖ METROPOLIS OF OROPOS AND FILI

✠ Italian Exarchate

■ Confession of Faith of the Holy Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Pistoia, Italy

A Statement Concerning the Ecclesiological Identity of the Orthodox in Resistance*

The Holy Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov, under Archimandrite Silvano (Livi), carries out low-key, but significant and sustained missionary work in Italy. Among its many important activities, it maintains a website on the Internet (address: <http://www.cristianiortodossi.it>), where it presents interesting and informative articles about the Orthodox Faith, primarily in Italian. Among other texts, the monastery recently published the following document concerning the ecclesiological identity of the Orthodox in resistance.

Who We Are

The Orthodox Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov has been in existence for a decade. It is a small Orthodox Brotherhood belonging to the “Orthodox Christian Association of Sts. Agapitus the Martyr and St. Seraphim of Sarov,”



The Holy Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Pistoia, Italy.

the President of which is Archimandrite Silvano (Livi), Abbot of the monastery. The monastery and the parish affiliated with it, as well as the small communities which are springing up in Italy—thanks to the unremitting activity of the St. Agapitus Community, the Open Faculty of Orthodox Theology (the Association’s research institute), and the St. Agapitus Community—, all belong to the canonical jurisdiction of the Holy Synod in Resistance of the Old Calendar Greek Orthodox Church of Greece, headed by His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili. Our decision to join the jurisdiction of the traditionalist Greek Orthodox Church was not precipitous; it developed during the many years in which we belonged to other jurisdictions, as well as from our spiritual experience within Orthodoxy. It signals our full agreement with the ecclesiological views that we found in this jurisdiction’s confession of Faith.

In fact, our Orthodox Association has been in existence since 1988:

first under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate and later under the Serbian Patriarchate. In both instances, we noticed with profound distress that the interest of the Patriarchates in the very desirable goal of establishing an Orthodox missionary outreach in Italy was more minimum than any Christian could imagine. At best, our existence was tolerated, and we were subjected to many restrictions. As time passed, we recognized that there were, in reality, other motivations behind such ineffectual policies. All of the so-called “official” Churches, to a greater or lesser extent, have arrived at an open compromise with what is called “ecumenism,” and this has inevitably led them into a diplomatic course, characterized by an eagerness to balance out the opposing sides, if possible. If the existence of true Orthodoxy in the “home of the Pope” (Italy) seems to compromise those with far greater concern about ignoring the issue of Roman Catholic proselytism in traditionally Orthodox regions (an enterprise which they [the Catholics] find very easy, given all the of financial and organizational means at their disposal), it nonetheless remains an urgent necessity to bring about the return of the heterodox faithful of the West to the Orthodoxy of their forefathers.

Thus, at this same crucial juncture, when a second millennium of Western heterodoxy has begun, the traditionalist Greek Orthodox Church—as well as the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, which was established after the Communist Revolution in Russia, with the blessing of Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow, and which is in full communion with the Synod headed by Metropolitan Cyprian—has condemned any kind of compromise with the ecumenical movement. This movement, “the panheresy of the century,” according to the Blessed Father Justin (Popovich), is the first step in an ineluctable process leading to a syncretistic religion, “the religion of the future,” as Father Seraphim (Rose) called it. This religion will consist of a admixture of all the world’s religions, and every religion will relinquish its claim to possess the Truth. But for true Orthodox Christians, the Truth resides in Christ and is Christ Himself, Who said: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Therefore, true Christians cannot allow themselves to fall prey to such a religious hodgepodge, which has already begun to take shape. Let us only mention, here, the interfaith meeting in Assisi (Italy) or the meeting that took place in December of 1999 at St. Peter’s Square in Rome. True Orthodox Christians are cognizant that the Orthodox Church is simply the “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church” and that, on this basis, she preserves the Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ inviolate. At the same time, with profound sorrow, they are conscious of the fact that the Orthodox Church is ailing, now that the heresies of ecumenism and modernism, as well as a secularist mentality, have surfaced among her Hierarchs.

For this reason, true Orthodox Christians have resolved to resist to this movement, severing any kind of communion with the ecumenists. This rup-

ture has two main goals:

1. to preserve Orthodoxy unaltered and to keep Her Truth immune to any compromise;
2. to give the ecumenists a strong incentive to acknowledge their error and to return to the authentic Orthodox Tradition.

This rupture of communion is not a schism of any kind, but a right of every Christian who bases his Christian life on the foundation of a correct ecclesiology and obedience to the sacred Canons. Even though the official Churches have branded those in resistance as non-canonical, true Orthodox Christians know that, in this case, it is the “official” Churches which are, in actuality non-canonical, since they have violated the sacred Canons of the Orthodox Church, which emphatically prohibits any sort of link with heterodoxy.

And this is not the first time that the official Orthodox Churches have found themselves in such an heretical situation. Let us cite, for example, the acceptance by Orthodox Hierarchs of the heretical *Henotikon* of the Emperor Zeno, or the period of the Monothelite heresy, when all of the Orthodox Patriarchs subscribed to the heretical *Ekthesis* of the Emperor Herakleios; or the heretical *Typos* of Constans II. This period concluded with the Sixth Œcumenical Synod in Constantinople, at which the heretical Hierarchs were anathematized and St. Maximus the Confessor, the “resister,” was recognized as a champion of the Faith. We can see the same situation during the age of Iconoclasm: heretical Hierarchs were installed on all of the Episcopal thrones of the Orthodox Churches. Last, but not least in importance, is the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445), when every Bishop of the Orthodox delegation signed their acceptance of the heresy of Papism, with the exception of St. Mark of Ephesus, the second true Confessor.

In all of these instances, there were some resisters who preserved the Faith and Holy Tradition, as we read in the Fifteenth Canon of the First-Second Synod: “They have not sundered the unity of the Church through schism, but, on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions.” The heresies that ensnared Orthodox Hierarchs centuries ago were called Monothelism, or Iconoclasm, or Uniatism; today’s heresy is called ecumenism. The traditionalist Greek Orthodox Church emerged in Greece when the New Calendar was introduced, under the impetus of the movement for innovation, the main representative of which was Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis (a Freemason).

*** This article concludes with a reference to other publications, also available on this website, for those wishing to gain a broader and fuller understanding of the topics dealt with here.**