



Enthronement Address

“Take heed to the service which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it”

(Colossians 4:17)

† Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle,
First Hierarch of the Holy Synod in Resistance

Most Reverend and Right Reverend Holy Hierarchs;
Reverend Fathers and Brethren;
Venerable Monks and Nuns, Elders, and Eldresses;
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ;
Right honorable local secular officials:

At this historic moment, seated on the *Cathedra* of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, to which I have been elevated by the love and trust of the venerable members of our Holy Synod, I feel the need to begin my new and lofty ministry by glorifying our Lord and God, the Holy Trinity:



“Glory to God for all things!” “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit!” “My Hope is the Father, my Refuge the Son, and my Protection the Holy Spirit. O Holy Trinity, glory to Thee”!

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I would next like to thank my Lord and my God for looking upon the humility of His servant and entrusting me, by way of our venerable Hierarchy, with the lofty responsibility of a threefold ministry.

As is well known, every Hierarch, but preëminently the Primate of a Synod, as Head and Hegumen, in a manner of speaking, sustains his min-



istry on the words of Christ: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (St. John 14:6).

These words refer to the threefold office of our Lord, Who acted as King, Prophet, and High Priest: as Prophet, He taught the Gospel; as Priest, He offered up His preternatural and life-giving sacrifice; as King, He vanquished and crushed the dominion of death.

Within the Church, and by means of Her, the Bishop embodies this Royal, Prophetic, and Priestly power and authority—always, to be sure, within the liturgical and charismatic context of the Body of Christ, and solely in a spirit of servitude.

The Hierarchy, as a King, is the leader of the ecclesiastical body (the Way); as a Prophet, he is an exponent of dogmatic truth (the Truth); and as Priest, he is a minister of the Mysteries of the Church, the center of which is the Divine Eucharist: the Sacrifice, the very culmination of worship (the Life).

The Hierarchy—and especially the Metropolitan and First Hierarchy—as the Way, Truth, and Life by Grace, undertakes his ministry with self-sacrifice, for the sake of the salvation of his reason-endowed flock; he is on the Cross, crucified together with Christ our Savior; he descends with love into the Hades in which his neighbor finds himself, in hope of the Resurrection and eternal life.

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Why, though, should I give thanks to Christ now, when I am being shouldered with such a weighty service?

The truth is that, at first, the mere thought of such an eventuality caused me tremendous distress, and so much the more so when this eventuality became a decision of our Hierarchy.

A sense of my many weaknesses produced fear in me, and it seemed impossible to accept and to undertake such a ministry requiring so much strength and responsibility.

At some point, however, a “light” entered my heart: the teaching of our ever-memorable Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian, on obedience.

Obedience to his Elder and Abbot, as is well known, and as our humble experience has taught us, is a source of joy for the monk under obedience:

first, because by means of this our being is healed, as it is freed from the sickness of self-love and egotism;

second, because it puts us in God's "hands," with which He, our Lord, accomplishes His work; and

third, because this grants us the joy to serve others, our brethren, and the world, in our journey towards the Kingdom of God.

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

With these humble thoughts; with this feeling towards my God-given service as Metropolitan and President of our Holy Synod; with feelings of self-reproach; with contrition and thanksgiving; and with hope in the Divine Founder of our Church, I now attentively hearken—with much greater attention than in the past, and also with awe—to His exhortation: "Take heed to the service which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Colossians 4:17).

Take care for the ministry that you have received by the Will of the Lord, that you might perfectly fulfill it! This service is eminently honorable, though eminently burdensome and fraught with responsibility. Its fulfillment demands vigilant attention, tireless effort, unceasing prayer, and power and wisdom from on high.

This ministry gradually leads me to the Upper Room of the Mystical Supper, to the effectuation of the Mystery of the washing of the feet of the People of God.



It is, at first glance, a very weighty service, which gives rise to justifiable fear; ultimately, however, the Grace of the Holy Spirit prevails, for in washing the feet of the disciples—the feet of the people of God—the Episcopal rôle is actualized.

It is precisely then that the Bishop becomes an imitator of Him Who, on Great Thursday, during the Mystical Supper, knelt down and washed the feet of His Disciples, starting, in fact, with Judas!

At that moment there were revealed in their fullness the extreme love and the extreme nobility of our Lord, Who, in this action towards His ungrateful disciple, gave us an eternal example of forgiveness of wrongs, humility, and genuine nobility.

Only in this way is there hope that the People of God, the reason-endowed sheep of God, might come to know the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that the Light of the Holy Trinity might be revealed to them.

If a person is not moved and shaken to the core during the washing of his feet by a Shepherd and Bishop, then such a person is worthy of a different journey, which does not, of course, lead to the Light, and does not lead to the Upper Room of Pentecost.

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In conclusion, I beseech the solidarity of all of you: solidarity as we journey together in loving prayer and a spirit of reciprocity; and all the more so in this preëminently responsible ministry of union, unity, and unification of the Orthodox, since the division among them constitutes a veritable tragedy.

At this critical historical juncture, our Holy Synod—expressing itself primarily through its Primate and President—has shouldered a great weight of responsibility, which is perhaps the greatest burden: to serve the Mystery of the unity of the Church, given that this unity is the Church’s very mode of existence.



The Bishop is called upon to perform this Mystery and to expend himself for its sake: to suffer, to bend his knees, to be crucified....

These actions of his, actions of profound and constant humility, are bound up with an eschatological vision: not merely and in general that the world be united—and this, of course, in the Will of God, in the Love of God, and in the Truth of God—but, moreover, that any inclinations towards discord in the Church might be prevented and that schisms and divisions, which smite the Immaculate Body of our Lord through the envy of the Evil One, might be healed.

The Bishop acts in this way and has this vision because, to reiterate, unity is the Church's very mode of existence.

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Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:



With these humble thoughts, I set off this morning from the monastery cloister to descend to this holy and blessed Church, in order to ascend to the Cathedra of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, calling upon the prayers of our much-revered Elder, the ever-memorable Metropolitan Cyprian; and this descent—do not think it strange—I made with joy!

This joy was not, and is not, worldly joy, the joy of fulfilling self-serving ambitions. God forbid! My joy is a charism and blessing of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, because I am giving myself over to obedience to the Church and am undertaking an ecclesiastical ministry; because, as a Bishop, I have the sense that in descending, I am already ascending, so as to enter the Upper Room of the Mystical Supper and to kneel and devote myself to the washing of the feet of the People of God, through the intercessions of the *Theotokos* and all of the Saints, by the power of the Precious Cross.

Pray, I beseech you, that this vision never be lost from my noetic eyes; for the moment that this vision is forgotten, the Bishop has already abolished himself; his existence in the Church has no meaning.

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“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”!

† Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle

Phyle, Athens, October 6, 2013 (Old Style)

† Holy Apostle Thomas, Synaxis of the Icon of the Mother of God: “O All-Hymned Mother”

