

SIT AT THE FEET OF THE SAINTS!

Fr. John Whiteford

The Holy Scriptures are perhaps the summit of the Holy Tradition of the Church, but the greatness of the heights to which the Scriptures ascend is due to the great mountain upon which it rests. Taken from its context, within the Holy Tradition, the solid rock of Scripture becomes a mere ball of clay, to be molded into whatever shape its handlers wish to mold it. It is no honour to the Scriptures to misuse and twist them, even if this is done in the name of exalting their authority. We must read the Bible; it is God's Holy Word. But to understand its message let us humbly sit at the feet of the saints who have shown themselves *doers of the Word and not hearers only* (James 1:22), and have been proven by their lives worthy interpreters of the Scriptures. Let us go to those who knew the Apostles, such as Saints Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp, if we have a question about the writings of the Apostles. Let us inquire of the Church and not fall into selfdeluded arrogance.

ST. JAMES, NOT ST. PETER, PRESIDED OVER THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM;ST. PETER DID NOT CLAIM OR POSSESS UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION

Fr. Alexey Young (convert from Roman Catholicism)

This priest [note: Roman Catholic] urged his flock to shut their ears to those who criticise the pope and others in authority, because the pope's power is 'derived from St. Peter, who presided over the first Church Council of Jerusalem'. Of course, the average Catholic, accustomed to believe everything he hears from the pulpit, does not know that the pope could not derive his position from St. Peter because St. Peter did not possess or claim universal jurisdiction, primacy, infallibility, or any of the things popes claim for themselves. As I said at the outset, Catholics don't know this because they have, from youth, been told otherwise. But if they have read the Book of Acts, they would at least know that the Council of Jerusalem was presided over NOT BY ST. PETER, BUT BY ST. JAMES, the first Bishop of Jerusalem!

NOT JUST HIS OPINION

Fr. Alexey Young

Many of you will think that my confession of Orthodoxy is just my opinion (in which case it would be worth nothing). It is not my opinion; it is the experience of the apostles and saints from the earliest times until our own: the Orthodox Church is not nourished by opinion or by what is 'fashionable', but by the living experience of the saints. The saints and fathers actually LIVED the experience of God; this enabled them fully to express the spiritual beauty of Christ's Church and witness to it. As St. John of Kronstadt writes: 'The holy men of God would not betray the Faith by even as much as a word.'

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THE TRUE CHURCH'S ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES

Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky (of blessed memory)

The ninth article of the Symbol of Faith indicates the four signs of the Church: 'We believe...in One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic Church.' These attributes are called essential, that is, those without which the Church would not be the Church.

THE UNITY OF GOD'S GRACE

Alexei Khomiakov, a Lay Theologian of the true Church

The unity of the Church follows of necessity from the unity of God; for the Church is not a multitude of persons in their separate individuality, but a unity of the grace of God, living in a multitude of rational creatures, submitting themselves *willingly* (emphasis supplied) to grace.

TRUMPETERS, AWAKEN US, ARISE TO FIGHT FOR OUR SALVATION

St. Nikolai (Velimirovich)

...If someone says: The danger to our Church was in the past, and today the danger is gone, he is terribly wrong. He is a trumpeter who plays to put us to sleep. And in this age we need as many trumpeters as possible who will play to awaken us, to arouse us, to prepare us, to defend ourselves. For the unmentionable, whom our sacred people and their clergy prevented from becoming 'embodied in the form of law' [referring to the Concordat of 1937] nevertheless still walks upon this earth like a ghost, like a specter - agitating, agitating, agitating.

CHURCH UNITY ALREADY EXISTS

Hierodeacon Andrew

Thus, the Holy Church, in the petition 'for the union of all the holy Churches of God,' prays not for something which does not exist and is necessary to attain, but for that unity of the Church which *already exists* (emphasis supplied), that it might always exist and not be destroyed by some heresy or schism.

INDIVISIBLE HARMONY

St. Cyprian of Carthage

The tunic of Christ, completely woven together, indicates the indivisible harmony of all of us who have been clothed in Christ. With the mystical sign of His clothing the Lord prefigured the unity of the Church.