

## **FEW TRUE BISHOPS REMAIN IN THIS WORLD: CAN WE MAINTAIN OUR ORTHODOXY WITHOUT BEING JURISDICTIONALLY TIED TO PSEUDO- BISHOPS?**

by +Photios (W)

In true Orthodoxy, not only do we need true bishops but also true elders. We have few of either. Our times are perilous. Perhaps we are near or in the last times. We can't be sure. It is true that there will be true bishops in each century because the Lord is always with us as He promised (St. Matthew 28:20). But there aren't and won't be many. The spiritual supply of elders is desperately low, although there exist many who claim such status. As we know, this is a "no-no," none can be an elder/staretz who puffs himself up and advertises his "eldership". Such a claim spiritually disqualifies the same from any such consideration.

Even on Mt. Athos, the young Turks so-to-speak (i.e., even if they are nearing 80), the ones encouraged by the chief ecumenist of "world orthodoxy," the neo-pope Bartholomew, in the main, have taken over and abandoned the Fathers of His Church. Many now opt for relative comfort and reject the requisite suffering of all Christians for Christ.

Small "o" is used above appropriately. The patriarchates are the mouthpieces for *this* world, that run by the prince of darkness, the Evil One. The leaders of this fantasyland are running interference for the forerunners of and the Antichrist. They are openly heretical and deserve to be disobeyed. They hardly register as pseudo-bishops. They love their perceived power and the accoutrements of authority. They stress obedience whilst they trample on Christ's teachings and the Fathers' collective interpretations. With effete fingers and much affectation, they light a cigar, raise their glasses as they shout "salud" to True Orthodoxy's destruction and the perpetuation of humanism dressed up and made to look Orthodox by the "love" they display to this world! Of course, such abstract love is all they are capable of, not the Christian love of their individual neighbour. And certainly they despise Old Calendarists who they treat like vermin:

Ecumenism is the voice of strangers Ecumenistic shepherds, as much as they wish to appear to be Orthodox in order to deceive, are in reality 'wolves in sheep's clothing, working the destruction of the sheep' (cf. Matt. 7:15, Acts 20:29). The sheep of Christ recognised with whom they were dealing and removed themselves far from the false shepherds in obedience to the ordinance of Christ, the Apostles, and the Fathers. And the camp of the wolf-like shepherds derisively called them 'old calendarists,' as the Christians derisively were called 'Nazarenes' in another age. 'This people who knoweth not the law!' But they forgot that the 'weak things of the world, and the despised hath God *chosen* (emphasis supplied) to confound the wise' (cf. I Cor. 1:27). The Orthodox, the true Orthodox were always the *small* (emphasis supplied) flock, always derided, always persecuted. But the Lord said, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to

give you the Kingdom' (Luke 12:32). What were the first Christians *in the eyes of* (emphasis supplied) the Hebrews who did not believe, that is, for the vast majority? What were they in the eyes of the heathen who boasted of their worldly wisdom? Ask your conscience and it will respond: 'They were like the old-calendarists of today'.

Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros, *THE TOUCHSTONE, The Small Flock*, p. 13.]

Let us remember to continue to love them; admittedly, a most difficult but necessary task, whilst we deplore their blasphemy in denying that the Church is one and promoting the deconstruction of His True Church.

Now, what can the ordinary priest and laity do about the current mess? How can we spiritually fight those men who have fallen to the Devil's machinations? Easy. The smallest and most insignificant of us can spiritually defeat these errant souls as long as we keep the True Orthodox Faith that they have abandoned! St. Maximos the Confessor did. Holy Orthodoxy demonstrated that this simple unordained monk was the Orthodox one, not the heretical hierarchy:

When the Sixth Ecumenical Council was finally convened, among those condemned for heresy were four Patriarchs of Constantinople, one Pope of Rome, one Patriarch of Alexandria, two Patriarchs of Antioch and a multitude of other Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops. During all those years, that one simple monk was right, and all those notable bishops were wrong.

[see Father Christopher Birchall (tr.), *THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY FATHER MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR*, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, Massachusetts, 1982, p.62.]

As long as we keep the Orthodox Faith, we are as infallible as Christ's Church. The Holy Spirit protects the little people:

The Holy Spirit is the authority in the Church and *not* the hierarchy. Whoever has the Holy Spirit has the authority even if he be the *lowliest garbage man*. He can put a thousand hierarchs in their place. No one can question him but he can question everyone. If the hierarchs excommunicate that man, their excommunication descends on their own heads because whosoever cuts off the Holy Spirit cuts himself off from Life. In Orthodoxy, the significance lies not in agreeing with the hierarchs *but in agreeing or disagreeing with the organs of the Holy Spirit, the holy Fathers* (all emphases supplied).

[Kalomiros, *THE TOUCHSTONE, The Authority, op.cit.*, pp. 18-19.]

To agree that the Church is hierarchical is different from tolerating it being authoritarian or totalitarian or heretical. Yes, we need the bishopric. In Orthodoxy, without the bishop there is no Church. But this means a True Bishop. Yes, we must sprout from an Apostolic seed, but, again, a True One. [see Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, *ORTHODOX DOGMATIC THEOLOGY*, p. 254.]

Assume though, a quite logical assumption, that we are surrounded by the world orthodox heretics who preach and/or otherwise tolerate or support ecumenism. Should we just attend one of these dens of the Antichrist? No, we have a spiritual obligation not to do so. Apostolic Succession is not a mechanical listing of successive bishops through time. True Orthodox spirituality drives it. A pseudo-bishop does not have Apostolic Succession. He has lost it by his failure to follow Christ and the Fathers:

... But as for those persons, on the other hand, who, on account of some heresy condemned by holy Synods, or Fathers, withdrawing themselves from communion with their president, who, that is to say, is preaching the heresy publicly, and teaching it bareheaded in church, such persons 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 synodical verdict has been rendered, but, on the contrary, they shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honor 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* (emphasis supplied).

[Canon XV of the First-Second Synod]

The unity of the Church requires inward and outward agreement. It (Church unity) is based on “oneness of mind, and not upon differences of mind. The Church is *the pillar and ground of the Truth* (I Tim. 3:15)”. [Pomazansky,*op.cit.*, p. 246.] The Church is one, including “a unity that is both heavenly and earthly; it is holy with a heavenly-earthly holiness; it is catholic and apostolic by its unbroken tie with the Apostles and all the saints”. [*id.*, p. 243.]

What keeps us then from following the true Church outside the heretical confines of the orthodox ecumenist heretics of *this* world? Nothing.

Who should we be spiritually aligned with today? Obviously, the Apostles because whilst on earth they were in the Church and still are as the Heavenly Church. They remain in communion with true believers here on earth. “Being the historical nucleus of the Church, they continue to be the spiritually living, although invisible, nucleus of the Church, both now and forever, in its

constant existence.” [*id.*, p. 242.] Holy Scripture charges us “to be in *communion* with the ranks of Apostles, for the nearness of the Apostles to the Holy Trinity is greater than ours”. [*id.*, pp. 242-243 and see I John 1:3.]

The Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the Church with Our Lord, of course, as its chief cornerstone. The Church Militant on earth is inextricably and forever linked “with the Heavenly Church in the one Body of Christ: the Church is one, with a unity that is both heavenly and earthly; it is holy with a heavenly-earthly holiness; it is catholic and apostolic by its unbroken tie with the Apostles and all the saints”. [*id.*, p. 243.] Be true to Christ and follow the teachings of His Apostles and successors throughout your spiritual lives here on earth.

If you can find no true Church in your region on earth, retreat to your own catacombs, develop your virtual catacombs within your heart and home.

Insofar as the Church Militant here on earth, a good place to start is with the Catacomb Church which arose out of spiritual necessity and legitimate Church order in the Bolshevik persecutions. These were the 20<sup>th</sup> century Polycarps! Emulate them and affirm your communion with these gallant spiritual soldiers of Christ. Some have come out of the Catacombs, many still remain there, which may be a wise choice; others who have come out are returning there. Declare yourselves in communion with them through their ties with the Church of Christ and His Apostles! Trust in the Lord to guide you toward those True Orthodox who are spiritually legitimate. The wait will be worth it!

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.