

**“PATRISTIC THEOLOGY
AND POST-PATRISTIC HERESY”**

SYMPOSIUM OF THE HOLY METROPOLIS OF PIRAEUS

PIRAEUS 2012

OPENING ADDRESS

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

by His Eminence Serafeim, Metropolitan of Piraeus

Your Grace, Bishop Meliton of Marathon, representative of His Beatitude Ieronymos II, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece,

Your Eminence Damianos, Archbishop of Sinai, Faran and Raïtho,

Your Eminence Pavlos, Metropolitan of Glyfada,

Your Eminence Serafeim, Metropolitan of Kythira,

Archimandrite Damianos, Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Greece and representative of His Beatitude Theofilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem,

Honourable Minister, representative of the Prime Minister and the Government,

Very Reverend and Reverend Gentlemen,

Monastic Brothers and Sisters,

Honourable members of the Body of Christ,

Blessed Nikodimos, the Athonite, that fragrant blossom of the grace of God and of the tradition of the Kollyvades, wrote the astonishing work “Invisible Warfare” in which he repeatedly refers to the debilitating labours of the vengeful and murderous devil, of whom Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, so eloquently spoke: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realms...” (*Eph. 6, 12*). The attack and battle against the truth is being intensified in our own apocalyptic days, when darkness has appeared as light and light as darkness. It is being promoted within the walls of the Church, with the cultivation and projection of ideas supposedly of theological perspicacity and the contextual “updating” of the truth, the aim of which is revision, negative transformation, banishment of true theological dialogue, reinforcement of error and the conversion of the Church’s

work of salvation into a secular system of social principles which will embrace all the tendentious contradictions of the postlapsarian reality: a new and extremely dangerous process of structuring a supposedly new theological discourse.

Those aspiring “reformers” of the Patristic theology of the two-thousand-year old, undivided Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ claim that the main problem of the world is not that of rejecting deification (glorification) and sanctification but a supposedly urgent demand for a new incarnation of the word and a contextual reading of the Fathers, as well as the existence of a post-Patristic Orthodox theology, the product of an intellectual approach.

The subjects they raise, however, such as: the notion and content of authenticity and agreement among the Fathers and of the recourse to the invocation of their authority; the exclusivity of the relationship between Patristic theology and the Greek categories of thought, between the Fathers and Hellenicity; the enduring nature and prescriptive nature of the use of the ontology and Greek philosophical categories in theology; the authoritarian Patriarchal pre-modern model and its relationship with Patristic theology; the tolerance and persecution of heretics in the Patristic texts and in today’s cultural pact; the interweaving of the Church and theology with imperial ideology; the anthropological heights of the theology of the Fathers and the supposedly imperfect anthropology of the Fathers; the new challenges to humanity of bioethics and biotechnology. All these supposedly make for an imperative demand for a contemporary “Orthodox Post-Patristic theology”, a reinterpretation of our fidelity to the Patristic tradition and for us to transcend it “when and where necessary”.

They also propose the outrageous position concerning a “new Orthodox theology of religions”, with even hierarchs in high positions in the Church claiming that the saving grace of God is not restricted to the canonical bounds of

the Orthodox Catholic Church but extends, to a different degree and model, to other Christian “Churches”, i.e. communities, to communities of “other living believers” such as the anti-Trinitarian Islam of the pseudo-prophet Mohammed, or the anti-Trinitarian Judaism of the Luciferian rabbis of the Kabala and the Talmud, to agnostics and even to atheists. They propose the really tragic position- and attempt to graft it onto people’s consciousness- that “the possibility of salvation that exists for those who are outside the Church must bring Christians to the unshakeable hope that God, in His boundless love and mercy, communicates His saving grace through other unknown and hidden paths to those who have natural knowledge of God and faith, as well as a moral conscience, which is characterized by a life of love, though lived beyond the clear bounds of the Church”. But this is to traduce the Gospel entirely and to make a mockery of the incarnate dispensation of the Word of God and, in particular, His Crucifixion and Resurrection.

They refer to non-existent concepts, such as “neo-Patristic synthesis or post-Patristic theology”; to supposed “Patristic fundamentalism”; to supposed “Church triumphalism” which they analyze as a position of spiritual superiority against the “Alter” of the West and which they present as a spiritual isolation and Hellenicity which approaches idolatry.

Of course, no-one ought to be surprised by this new attack against our spotless faith, since those responsible for the above shamelessly write articles in favour of the tragic retreat from human ontology, which breeds the ontological and ecclesiastical abomination of homosexuality, or the more secular expression of homo-eroticism. Everywhere present is the well-known Fordham University of the Jesuits of America, which openly “expresses” its intention to “modernize” and “correct” the theological positions of the Fathers of the Church. It has already organized two conferences on the themes of “Orthodox Readings of

Augustine" (2007) and "Orthodox Structures of the West" (2010). The effort behind all of the above is to reintroduce into theological thought the institutional alienation which springs from Augustine's transformation of theology and the Church into legalism and the reversal of the terms of ecclesiastical ontology by Thomas Aquinas. They also aim at consolidating the view that the negative approach by the Fathers of the Church to Western theology was unfair and misconceived; they accuse them of anti-Westernism and an inability to understand the issues.

Finally, these particular circles who preach the transcendence of Patristic theology or the re-formulation of it for the sake of some supposed harmonization with the modern world, oppose participation in the enduring unity of ecclesiastical experience, and do so in an exceptionally skillful manner which is entirely devoid of content. Patristic teaching and the Orthodox study, and application in practice, of the experience of the holy Fathers have been declared under persecution because a "post-Patristic heresy" is being hatched which insults the Holy Spirit Who glorified the Fathers, as if He were not aware of the future and especially the fact that the eternal Word would be found wanting in terms of contextual updating by people who are besmirched by worldly passions. This is a crime which is already being carried out by the false beliefs and heresies of so-called "baptismal theology", the theory of the "unseen Church", the theory of "branches or climbing vines" and the theory of "perverted eucharistic ecclesiology" which form the basis for the total and very real impairment of the word of the Gospel and for the success of the misconceived union of the Church with the heretical para-synagogues of the Roman Catholics, the Monophysites and the Protestant communities of every ilk of the self-styled World Council of "Churches", and not of the union in the Holy

Spirit, concerning which the Church continually prays on the basis of the dogmas of its Synodal constitution and the Canon Law of the first millennium.

They impiously, insolently and shamelessly mangle the Lord's words of the Hieratic prayer in the 17th chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John (21-25) "that they all may be one", passing over, deceitfully and impiously, the whole sentence of the Lord as well the following passages with the same content, where the Saviour addresses His Father of Lights saying: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world". They sweep away and hide these words of the Lord, isolating from them a few words to support their wrong-headed ideas, and in this way undermine the true faith, because the Lord of the Church is praying for the unity of His children, but with the Triune mode of existence of the eternal God as His model, that is in truth, interpenetration and faithfulness- and certainly not in heresy, misrepresentation of the divine revelation in deceit and impairment of the dogmas formulated by the Holy Spirit through the 9 Ecumenical Synods.

And with these humble words, I declare the opening of this conference and ask of you to pray to the Lord of the Church to bless it.

I pray that the years of all of you may be blessed, peaceful and joyful.

*Dimitrios Tselengidis, Professor of the Theological School of the Aristotle University of
Thessaloniki.*

**“POST-PATRISTIC”
OR “NEO-BARLAAMIC” THEOLOGY?
IGNORANCE OR DENIAL OF SANCTITY?
THE CRITERIA FOR THEOLOGIZING IN AN ORTHORODOX MANNER,
WITHOUT ERROR
The presumption and theological aberration of “post-Patristic” theologians**

In order to avoid any possible confusion of terminology, perhaps we might begin with a necessary definition of the newly-minted term “post-Patristic”. This new academic term is susceptible to a variety of interpretations, but the ones most prevalent in the academic community are, in our opinion, the following two: a) when the first part of the compound word- “post”- is given chronological significance, which, in this case, would mean the end of the Patristic era; and b) when the first part of the word is given a critical meaning, in which case the compound “post-Patristic” has the sense of relativism, partial or total questioning, re-evaluation, a new reading, or even the transcendence of the thought of the Fathers of the Church.

The most destructive work in the consciousness of the Christian theological community was accomplished, in our opinion, by the Protestants. This is because they cast doubt, directly, on the prestige of the Ecumenical Synods of the Church, and, indeed, on the whole of its Apostolic and Patristic Tradition. At the same time, they have officially, substantially and formally, nullified the sanctity of all known saints, casting doubt, in this way, on the experience of the Holy Spirit in the Church Militant on earth.

By the same token, the most destructive work in the dogmatic conscience of the membership of the Orthodox Church has been, and continues to be performed by Ecumenism. Ecumenism today is the agent of inter-Christian and inter-religious syncretism and, consequently, is the official agent of the most dangerous multi-heresy of all times, since, through its syncretism, it contributes in a decisive manner to the weakening of the Orthodox criterion and Orthodox self-awareness. In particular, through its representatives at the local and international level, it continually and gradually makes increasingly greater “discounts” from the ecclesiological/dogmatic awareness of the spiritually-unsuspecting Orthodox faithful. Above all, it achieves this through the relativization, or abolition in practice, of the status of the teachings of the Holy Fathers and, moreover, of their collective decisions made in the context of the Ecumenical Synods. See, for example, the blatant and repeated breach of Canon 2 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Synod, a breach which has been going on for years now. This canon explicitly forbids praying together with those outside communion and with the heterodox, with the clear threat that clerics should be defrocked and the laity excommunicated for the transgression.

The movement of putative “post-Patristic” theologians which has appeared in recent years, is organically embedded in the broader, secularized, theological climate mentioned above, and particularly in the spirit of Ecumenism itself as we have described it. Certainly, this movement also has Protestant influences, which are particularly clear in the scientific nature of the attitude of the “post-Patristic” theologians to the theological teaching of the Holy Fathers, which had, until today, been accorded enduring status.

In our brief theological statement, we shall focus primarily on the outlook rather than the persons of the “post-Patristic” theologians, as well as the criteria of their implied theology.

Alas, our beloved brethren in Christ, the “post-Patristic” theologians- with their bold, or rather, perhaps unwittingly, brazen statements- appear to be entirely ignorant, in practice, of what sanctity itself is and, by extension, what the life of the saints in the Holy Spirit really is, though, in the experience of the Church, this is the prime requirement for theologizing in an Orthodox and error-free manner. Even more specifically, it appears from their texts that they do not know that Orthodox and error-free theology can be produced primarily only by those who have been purified of the detritus of their passions and, in particular, those who have been enlightened and glorified by the uncreated radiance of deifying Grace. The insolent efforts to transcend the teaching of the holy Fathers on the part of the “post-Patristic” theologians shake the confidence that the faithful need to have in the enduring validity of the theology of the holy Fathers while, at the same time, undesirably and deviously introducing the Protestant type of theological speculation. But in this way, we are, in practice, “moving the boundaries set by our Fathers”. And this is a blatant violation of the utterances of the holy Fathers¹ and of the Bible².

On the basis of the above (and nothing else) we might claim scientifically that the putative “post-Patristic” theologians clearly have not mastered the basic requirements of the theology of the holy Fathers. Because how can they really claim that they do, in fact, have these when it happens that they are brazenly proposing the transcendence of the Fathers of the Church or when they attempt to import into theological thought a Western type of theological and cognitive speculation which has as its prerequisite nothing more than scientific/academic justification and theological reflection? This very conceit is, in any case, what

¹ See Saint John Chrysostom, *PG*, 59, 63: “let us not move eternal boundaries set by our Fathers”.

² See *Prov.* 22, 28. “Do not move the boundary set by your Fathers”.

leads to the negation of the charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit, Who guarantees the validity of Orthodox theology.

The scientific/academic criteria introduced by the “post-Patristic” theologians as evidence of their objectivity do not necessarily coincide with the ecclesiastical criteria of theologizing in an Orthodox and error-free manner, especially when these criteria are used unconditionally. The Orthodox Church has, clearly and principally, criteria of the Holy Spirit. The outstanding and chief criterion of the error-free nature of ecclesiastical theology is the sanctity of the God-bearing Fathers who formulated it.

The gross ignorance, and the conceit based thereon, of the “post-Patristic” theologians, who are attempting, entirely benightedly, to replace the Patristic theology of the Orthodox Church, which no doubt bothers them, with their own updated, scientific/ academic theology is a matter of deepest sadness. By this attitude they clearly reveal that they do not know, in fact, that the Fathers are actively God-bearing saints of the Church. But they are unaware, in particular, of the fact that the sanctity of the saints and that of God Himself is one and the same, according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa³. In other words, the sanctity of the saints has an ontological character and is an uncreated attribute of God, in which the faithful can share directly and personally and under clear ecclesiastical conditions, becoming “in all discernment” partakers of the sanctity of God Himself. It is therefore obvious that the sanctity of the saints is itself uncreated.

The great Fathers of the Church expressed the Apostolic Tradition in an error-free manner, in their era, having first, however, experienced it in their hesychastic/ ascetic and, primarily, sacramental life. Saints Gregory the

³ *On Perfection*. PG 46, 280D. The only difference lies in the fact that the sanctity of God is spontaneous and natural (it is the essential energy of the divine nature), whereas that of the saints is bestowed by grace from God.

Theologian, Basil the Great, Maximos the Confessor, Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas, to mention but a few, brought the Apostolic and Patristic Tradition up to date, expressing in highly-educated theological language precisely what other, less learned, holy Fathers had experienced uncreatedly and “in all discernment”, as had the barely literate but charismatically-gifted, and as the ordinary God-bearing faithful of our own time do.

It is the charismatic experience of God which creates the original theology of the Church, no matter whether the manner in which it is verbalized is simplistic, fluent or literary. This theology is a created expression and interpretation of the living and uncreated revelation of God through a specific historical set of circumstances in the life of its Godly enunciators. “People spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”⁴, as we are assured by the chief among the custodians of divine majesty.

But to return to the criteria for theologizing. The scientific/academic criteria are created. This is why, apart from the most guaranteed criterion of uncreated sanctity, the only assurance for error-free, Orthodox, scientific theology can be sought- even by those academic theologians who are wanting in terms of sanctity- in the humble mind-set contained and expressed in the ecclesiastical method which has been applied for centuries and which is characterized by the Patristic statement: “following the holy Fathers”. In any case, this outlook, which was also what ensured their sanctity, was something enjoyed by all the God-bearing holy Fathers who took part in the Ecumenical Synods, which defined, in an error-free manner, the theology of the Church. Theological reflection, to which the “post-Patristic” theologians like to refer, and

⁴ *II Peter*, 1, 21.

their concomitant theological speculation do not suit Orthodox ecclesiastical theology but rather that of the heterodox and heretics, which Saint Basil the Great aptly calls “technology” rather than theology⁵. It is also worth noting in this case the apposite observation of Saint John the Sinaite (of the Ladder) that “he who does not know God [meaning empirically and experientially], predicates by reflection”⁶. And Saint Gregory Palamas charged the Latin-thinking supporters of Barlaam with base and human theological reflection when he noted that we, on the contrary, “do not follow reflections but have been enriched in the confession of the faith by God-chosen sages”⁷.

But when the sanctity or even the Orthodox theological methodology of “following the holy Fathers” is ignored and set aside, adoption of “free” theological reflection and of theological speculation is inevitable. But this, in essence, leads to a “neo-Barlaamist” theology, which is anthropocentric and has as its criterion self-validating reason. Just as Barlaam and his followers doubted the uncreated nature of the divine light and divine grace, so the “post- Patristic” theologians today effectively ignore the uncreated and, therefore, enduring character of the sanctity and the teaching of the God-bearing Fathers, whom they attempt to replace, as regards teaching, by producing their own original theology. This is not a battle against the Fathers, of an external nature, but in essence a battle against God, because what makes the Fathers of the Church really Fathers is their uncreated sanctity, which, indirectly but to all intents and purposes, these theologians set aside and cancel out with what they propose with their “post-Patristic” theology.

⁵ Epistle 90, PG 31-32, 473.

⁶ See *Discourse XXX*, 13.

⁷ *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit, Discourse II*, 18.

“Post-Patristic” theology, according to the criteria of the Church which we mentioned above, is the result of conceited intellect. This is why it cannot be legitimized by the Church. Ecclesiastical theology is humble, it is always “following the Fathers”. This is not to say that there is no original dynamism in Church theology, no spirit of renewal and modernity. On the contrary, it has all the above features, because it is the expression of the living presence of the Holy Spirit in the person who theologizes in this way. The Fathers of the Church expressed what they experienced from the activation of their own personal Pentecost, but always, practically, “following” and in agreement with the earlier, God-bearing Fathers.

Orthodox scientific/academic theology is not required to replace the charismatic theology of the Holy Fathers, but nor is it justified in presenting anything other than the authentic theology of the Church. Its task is to approach, investigate and present scientifically the content of the original, charismatic theology of the Church, and also to discern and disseminate the criteria for true theology. In this way, the conjunction of the charismatic theology of the Fathers with an academic approach is achieved and strengthened, the latter being duty bound to follow the former in a humble manner. But all this is promoted only when the academic theologians are not personally bereft of the requirements of the Fathers and unacquainted with the ecclesiological experiential stipulations.

When scientific and academic theology does not meet the above specifications, when it lacks experiential ecclesiological expression, it is cogitative theology and spiritually poor. It approaches the reality of the world and of life merely in a created manner and, at best, expresses things inadequately, while in certain cases, unfortunately, wrongly and even heretically.

In our view, if the “post-Patristic” theologians met the requirements of the Fathers, they would attempt, humbly and quietly, to interpret properly the truth

for their own time, without dismissive or at least dubious references to the holy Fathers. And, of course, if, in the end, they were justified, then they would be the voice of the living Holy Tradition of the Church. But this would inevitably mean that what they said would not be at odds with what the holy Fathers said over the years and, in particular, it would not clash with their decisions at the Ecumenical Councils. And all this kerfuffle over “post-Patristic” theology would be redundant. But these putative “post-Patristic” theologians know very well that the teaching of the holy Fathers sets clear boundaries, which either do not suit them personally or which impede their strategic goals, which serve their beloved Ecumenism. That is the truth. All the rest is merely careful packaging!

Finally, in conclusion, we might claim without hesitation that “post-Patristic” theology is a clear and overt deviation both from the method and the outlook of the holy Fathers. That is, a deviation from traditional theology, both as regards the way, the requirements and the criteria of theologizing in an Orthodox manner, as well as the content of the ecclesiastical theology of the holy Fathers.

Protopresbyter Georgios D. Metallinos, Professor Emeritus of Athens University.

From Patricity to Post-Patricity

the Self-Destruction of the Orthodox Leadership

A) The Continuation of the Patristic Tradition during Turkish Rule

The theology and pastoral practice of the Orthodox Church up until the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans, had as its main goal the preservation of Orthodoxy as “the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints” (*Jude* 3), continuing the confession and tradition of the ancient holy Fathers. But this demanded the refutation of heresies, in word and deed, for the protection of the flock and the preservation of the possibility of salvation, that is deification (glorification). The responsibility of the Church leadership, then, which in every age bears the burden of this task, is enormous. Because the continuation or otherwise of our theological tradition depends on its attitude towards heretical delusion and therefore on the enduring and contemporary unity of Orthodoxy.

On the basis of the dogmatic/symbolic texts of the Church, the path taken in this direction in post-Byzantine times will also be traced, in order to discern the relationship of today’s Orthodox leadership with that of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. These texts, Confessions of the Faith and Confessional Encyclicals, embody the Pan-Orthodox conscience, within the climate and in the theological language of their times, and reveal their adherence to Apostolic and Patristic faith and practice.

The Church leaders of the period under investigation maintain the attitude of Fotios the Great (+891)⁸ and Mihail Kiroularios (Michael Cerularius)⁹,

⁸ Of fundamental importance is his encyclical “To the Archiepiscopal Thrones of the East” (866) (Io. N. Karmiris, *Τὰ Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα τῆς Ορθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. I, Athens 1960 [2], p. 316 ff.) in which he condemns the arbitrary and uncanonical actions of Old Rome “to the detriment of the Orthodox faith and tradition. The addition of the “filioque” to

who were the first to point out the counterfeiting of the true faith in the Frankish West, which had broken away from the Orthodox East. The addition of the filioque and the Papal primacy, as the fundamental causes of all the differences, would, from then on, be the basic heterodox and anti-canonical teachings and would permanently be the main points of anti-Western criticism.

1. At the watershed of the new period is Saint Mark Evygenikos (+1444) who laid the foundations of the attitude of the Eastern Churches after the Uniate Synod of Ferrara-Florence (1438/9), which revealed not only the objectives of the Pope, but also the anti-Orthodox and anti-Patristic behaviour of the eastern Uniates and their fellow-travellers, who, as a fifth column, threaten Orthodoxy from within and promote its subjection to heresy and consequently its alienation. Saint Mark noted the significance of this pseudo-synod for Papism, which today is working to impose its decisions on the Orthodox through the Dialogue. At the same time, the saint defines the differences from the Papal west: "We broke off from them first, or rather we broke them off and cut them off from the common Church body... considering them extraneous and impious... so we turned away from them as **heretics** and this is why we separated"¹⁰. However, our genuine Leader, through his own experience, defined the stance of Orthodoxy towards the "Greco-Latins". Uniates and their fellow-travellers, who with a light conscience work for the admixture of Orthodoxy and heretical delusion: "... are to be avoided as one would flee from a serpent... as hawkers and purveyors of

the Creed is condemned as is the evolution of the primacy of the Pope. The "filioque" is described as the "pinnacle of evils".

⁹ "Two letters to Peter of Antioch and the decision of the Synod under him in 1054". Karmiris, op. cit., p. 331, ff.

¹⁰ Mark Evygenikos of Ephesus, *Ἐγκύκλιος τοῦ Εὐγενικοῦ «τοῖς ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς καὶ τῶν νήσων εὐρισκομένοις ὀρθοδόξοις Χριστιανοῖς»* (1440/1). Karmiris, op. cit., p. 417 ff. (here: 425). As regards the Latins, he declares: "They are heretics, and as heretics we cut them off".

Christ”¹¹. And, moreover, he states the correct way of dealing with the matter of Papal primacy, which continues to exercise the Church today: “We, too,” he says, “consider the Pope as one of the Patriarchs”, and adds the basic condition for this, “provided he is Orthodox”¹². The stark question for us today, of course, is what Saint Mark would say if he were alive, as we are, after the declaration of the 1870 declaration of Papal infallibility, which accompanies the issue of the primacy. His exhortation to future generations of Orthodox on this is absolutely binding: “Stand up”, he says, “holding on to the traditions you received”¹³.

2. The same policy regarding Papism was followed by Mitrofanis Kritopoulos, Patriarch of Alexandria (+1639), who condemned Papal primacy of power, accepting “the equality of the four patriarchs” “as truly befitting Christian flocks”. And he further explains: “For no-one lords it over the others and no-one is worthy of being called the general head of the Universal Church. For it has never been heard of in the Universal Church that a mortal man, guilty of a myriad of sins, should be called head of the Church”, since that position is occupied only by Christ¹⁴.

But the position of the Orthodox Church is also clear as regards the Protestants, as is obvious from the Proceedings of the “Synod in Jerusalem” of 1672¹⁵. According to this, the Protestants “are heretics and the chief of heretics. New and absurd dogmas have been introduced through selfishness (that should be noted...), but also they take part not at all in the Church, since they have in no way any communion with the universal Church”¹⁶. This characterization of their

¹¹ Ibid, p. 427. Cf. *I Tim.* 6, 5: “who think that godliness is a means to financial gain”.

¹² Ibid, p. 428.

¹³ Ibid, p. 429.

¹⁴ Mitrofanis Kritopoulos, *Ὁμολογία τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (1625), Karmiris, op. cit., p. 489 ff; p. 498 ff.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 701 ff.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 703.

attitude is particularly true today in the WCC: "Persisting in stubbornness, which is typical of heretics, they are deaf and cannot be corrected"¹⁷.

3. Not without reason, the great patriarch Dositheos (+1707) was known as the "scourge of the Latins". In his "Confession"¹⁸, "a text of supreme dogmatic and creedal significance" according to Ioannis Karmiris¹⁹, he remains within the spirit of Kritopoulos as regards the primacy of the Pope: "It is impossible for a mortal man to be the universal and eternal head (of the Church), because Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is head and He, having charge of the rudder in the Church, steers His course through the holy Fathers. The Holy Spirit appointed the bishops to be the authorities and heads"²⁰.

4. The "Replies of the Orthodox Patriarchs of the East to the Unsworn Anglicans" (1716/1725²¹) express the Orthodox perception of the whole of Western Christendom: On Papal primacy: "Under the influence of the evil one, the Pope of Rome, erroneously and having fallen into weird and innovative dogmas, removed himself from the full membership of the body of the Godly Church and broke away"²². And this, of course, held good for the whole of the Latin Church. The text clearly displays objections to the newly-formed Anglicans, too, and "defines successfully and authoritatively the correct basis, from an Orthodox view, for any attempt by the distanced Churches towards unity", according to Ioannis Karmiris, who (in 1953) considered this text the most definitive for relations today with heterodoxy²³.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 704.

¹⁸ "Dositheos Patriarch of Jerusalem's Confession of Faith" (1672). Ibid, p 734 ff; 746 ff.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 737.

²⁰ Ibid, 752.

²¹ Ibid, p. 783 ff; 788 ff.

²² Ibid, p. 795.

²³ Ibid, p. 793.

The “Encyclical of the Synod in Constantinople in 1722 to the Orthodox Antiocheans”²⁴ and the “Confession of Faith of the Synod in Constantinople” of 1727²⁵, on the occasion of the widespread Papal propaganda in the East, are of an openly anti-Papal character. The first text cites Papal primacy as the main cause of Papal expansionist policy: “To support the monarchy of the Pope and to prove that only the Pope is the universal head of the universal Church and Vicar of Christ, and the only chief and overseer of the whole world and above the other Patriarchs and all Hierarchs”, and that “he can never sin or fall into any heresy and that he is above the Synods, ecumenical and local...”²⁶. It states clearly that: “all their novelties and innovations are founded on this weird and besotted principle of the Pope and they deceive those who are more simple...”²⁷.

The second text in the framework of the refutation of the Latin innovations notes their culmination in the Papal primacy issue: “The Pope of Rome does not serve as head of the universal Church, but, being a member, is subject to the Synods and being able to sin (not simply as a man, but also when teaching *ex cathedra*) against the correct and the true” - this is a rejection of Papal infallibility, which was directly linked to the primacy- “can be judged and examined and corrected and subjected to ecclesiastical punishment, by the Synods, should he transgress, being a part but not the head of the holy and universal Church”. The same requirement for the good standing of the Pope within the Church is repeated here: “And this always supposing he conforms to the rest of the most holy patriarchs in their statements on piety and the faith and

²⁴ Ibid, 820 ff; 822 ff.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 860 ff; 861 ff.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 823.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 824.

glorifies the dogmas of the whole of the Church of Christ, but not when he is schismatic"²⁸, because then he is outside the Church.

5. The 19th century is especially important for every development, spiritual and political. Not merely were the nation states formed and with them the concomitant replacement of Orthodox Ethnarchy with national autocephalous states, but the ravages of multifarious Protestantism, as missionary activity, engulfed the Orthodox East, paving a way towards the Ecumenism of the 20th century. With the opening of this new period, there also began the progressively uncertain stance of Orthodoxy, particularly the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which hovered between Patricity, which had continued under Turkish rule, and the new choices, which would lead to compromise and, today, to identification with that delusion which had for centuries been rebuffed.

In the 19th century equally important dogmatic and creedal texts appeared which again marked the boundaries between Orthodoxy and Western Christianity. Thus the Encyclical of the synod in Constantinople in 1836, "Against Protestant Missionaries"²⁹, calls the Protestants "heretics, who battle against, and corrupt, our sacred Orthodox Church with guile and cunning". Indeed, they are "disciples and supporters of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, the Socinianists and many other such heretics"³⁰. One observation of the text is of an enduring nature: "Let them leave us in peace to think and believe as did our holy forebears, and to worship God in the Orthodox Church, into which He had us born"³¹.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 867.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 870 ff; p. 873 ff.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 874.

³¹ Ibid, p. 883.

The same is true for the other three important texts from the years 1838, 1848, and 1895. In the first, the Synod in Constantinople, with an Encyclical³², rebuffs the Latin innovations afresh for “insisting on the primacy and infallibility of the Pope (it talks of the “blasphemies” of Papism) and the Unia”³³, and finally mentioning “various contrary Papist profanities”³⁴ and “the vain and Satanic heresy of the Papists”³⁵. The “Answer of the Orthodox Patriarchs of the East to Pope Pius IX”, in 1848³⁶, centres on Papism as a heresy: “Of these heresies which spread over a great part of the world... Arianism was then and today Papism is, too”³⁷. So Papism is linked to Arianism, something which the blessed Fr. Justin Popović stressed particularly. The *filioque*, Papal primacy and infallibility are also refuted, the latter having been afforded official recognition [in Rome] in 1870. Finally, the Synod in Constantinople in 1895 replied to Pope Leo XIII³⁸ who had invited the Orthodox to union, which on the side of the Vatican, could have been founded on the method of the Unia. And this is precisely what has been imposed nowadays with the recognition by the Easterners of Papism as a Church and of the Pope as a Bishop of the Church of Christ. In effect, this was the last Orthodox text to be drawn up in answer to Latin provocations.

The Synod of 1895 boldly answers that the Orthodox Church is “the Church of the Seven Ecumenical Synods and of the first nine centuries of Christianity, and is therefore the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, the

³² Ibid, p. 893 ff.

³³ Ibid, p. 896.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 898.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 900.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 902, ff.; p. 905 ff.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 906.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 930 ff; p. 932 ff.

pillar and buttress of the truth”³⁹. It also lays down the non-negotiable principle for Orthodoxy, that union must be: “in the one canon of faith and on the foundations of the Apostolic and traditional teaching...”⁴⁰. In particular, Papism is called “A Church of innovations, of contamination of the writings of the Church Fathers and of Scripture and the terms of the holy Synods”⁴¹. It resolutely maintains its position on Papal primacy and infallibility: “The Pope of Rome was never considered the supreme authority and infallible head of the Church, and each bishop is the head and president of his own individual Church, subject only to the synodal ordinances and decisions of the whole Church, they alone being infallible”⁴² (an allusion to the infallibility which had just been voted upon). From the above it may be concluded that:

1. From the 15th to the end of the 19th century, the Orthodox Church did not change its stance at all towards Western Christianity, Papism and Protestantism (Lutheranism, Calvinism and so on), nor to Anglicanism, which are all clearly called heretical departures from the One Church.

2. In the Orthodox dogmatic and creedal texts of this period, the Orthodox ecclesiastical faith is expressed clearly and the delusions of the Western Christian Groups (which have been deprived of the character of the Church) are rebuffed, in an undisturbed continuum and in agreement with the Byzantine forensic tradition of the Church.

3. Orthodox self-awareness therefore remained robust, and in accordance with it “anyone who even slightly oversteps the mark is condemned as schismatic and heretic, is anathematized and is considered outside communion

³⁹ Ibid, p. 931.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 933.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 931.

⁴² Ibid, p. 938.

with everyone”⁴³. It also reaffirms, moreover, that “our Orthodox Eastern and Apostolic Church not only does not accept any heretical dogma, but rejects even suspicions of these”⁴⁴.

4. It is also confessed resolutely that “this sole faith of the Eastern Orthodox (formerly called Hellenes, now Greeks and New Romans, from New Rome)⁴⁵ is the only one that is true and absolutely *bona fide*”⁴⁶.

5. With absolute confirmation of the Orthodox identity, it is stated that: “the Lutheran/Calvinistic and Papist dogmas do not accord with our Orthodox faith, and are actually opposed to it and are cut off from divine truth”⁴⁷.

6. Therefore the only acceptable basis for Church unity is the absolute “unity of faith and unanimity in dogmas, through the unreserved acceptance by the heterodox of the Orthodox dogmas”. On the basis of Saint Mark’s declaration, it was once again stated that “in dogmatic positions there is no room ever for dispensation or acquiescence”⁴⁸. And all of this was said at a time of debilitating subjection and humiliation for the Orthodox family of peoples.

B) The Post-Patristic Dimension of the Continuum

1. The robust stance on the part of the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Leadership towards the heterodox West changed officially at the beginning of the 20th century, at the time of Patriarch Ioakeim III (+1912). This discontinuation is patently obvious merely from a comparison of the dogmatic and creedal texts from 1902 onwards with those of the 19th century, which we looked at above.

⁴³ *Replies to the Unsworn Anglicans*, *ibid*, p. 787.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 791.

⁴⁵ The full identity of the Orthodox. The names Hellenes-Greeks (according to the Franks) and New Romans, as citizens of New Rome have been linked over all the years to an undisturbed unity of culture and tradition!

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 789.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 793.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 787.

The prelude to this change had already appeared in 1865, when the headship of the Theological School in Halki was transferred from the traditional and Patristic Konstantinos Typaldos, titular Metropolitan of Stavroupolis⁴⁹, to Filotheos Vryennios (+1918) who had studied in Germany and was later to become Metropolitan of Didymoteikhos. With Vryennios, a new stage was inaugurated as regards Western Christendom, which also reveals the change of heart within the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with which the School was always in step. “The voice of the School was its voice”, according to the statement of our Ecumenical Patriarch, Vartholomaios⁵⁰. But in what did the change lie? The spirit of admiration for the West and Europeanization intensified, as did the cultivation of ecumenical relations⁵¹.

The re-evaluation of the attitude of the Ecumenical Patriarchate towards the West was a consequence of the change in the political relations of the Ottoman Empire with Western Governments⁵². This change of tack, however, was not confined to the level of political and social relations, but also, unfortunately, affected theology⁵³. The re-adjustment of theology is clear in the path followed by the School, which reflected the policy of the Phanar. And here is the proof: according to the school archives⁵⁴, from 1855, when the institution of

⁴⁹ Lived from 1795-1867. He was head of the school from 1844-64.

⁵⁰ As Metropolitan of Philadelphia (*“Τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖον καὶ ἡ Θεολογικὴ Σχολὴ Χάλκης*, in *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑστίας Θεολόγων Χάλκης*, Athens 1980, p. 168. The same view was expressed by the teacher at the school Ar. Pasadaios, *Τερὰ Θεολογικὴ Σχολὴ τῆς Χάλκης, Ἱστορία-Ἀρχιτεκτονική*, History-Architecture, Athens 1987, p. 46 (note 82).

⁵¹ The issue is dealt with extensively in the study by Fr. Georgios Tsetsis, *“Ἡ συμβολὴ τῆς Τερᾶς Σχολῆς Χάλκης εἰς τὴν Οἰκουμενικὴν Κρίσιν”*, in *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑστίας...*, op. cit., pp. 259-63.

⁵² See Dimitrios K. Kitsikis, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οθωμανικῆς Αὐτοκρατορίας 1280-1924*, Athens 1996[3], p. 235 ff.

⁵³ Samuel Huntingdon has declared that religions are a very powerful tool for politics!

⁵⁴ See Fr. G. D. Metallinos-Varvara Kaloyeropoulou-Metallinou, *ΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ τῆς Ἱερᾶς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς Χάλκης*, vol. V, Athens 2009. Cf. Fr. G. D. Metallinos, *Κριτικὴ θεώρηση τοῦ παπικοῦ θεσμοῦ στὴν Χάλκη τὸν ΙΘ' αἰῶνα- Ἐνα ἀνέκδοτο κείμενο τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου*

“Theses” and “Dissertations” began to function, and until 1862, thirteen of the studies by students were related to the Latin Church and, in particular, to the institution of the Papacy, in a spirit clearly of disputation and censure. In other words, some 1/5 of the student’s academic essays were critical of Papal primacy. This was the spirit of the School and of the Ethnarchy at the time. After Typaldos, the studies on the subject from 1869 to 1907 amount to a total of 21. From 1907, however, until 1922, there are no other texts of this nature, while from 1923 until 1971, when, “on the Lord knows what grounds”, the School closed, only three texts appeared. The complete change in spirit is confirmed by the dissertation by Kyriakos Koutsoumalis in 1968: “The Theological Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church in the Three Pan-Orthodox Conferences”.

But this means that, at the centre of the Ethnarchy, a new attitude was inaugurated, in a positive spirit, towards the West, which had until then been repulsed. This spirit was Western-friendly and in favour of “ecumenical relations”. The main point of reference would henceforth not be the East, but the West, with whatever that meant. The boundaries of this change were laid out by three important Texts of the Ecumenical Throne: the Encyclical of Patriarch Ioakeim III in 1902⁵⁵; the Declaration of 1920⁵⁶; and the Encyclical of 1952⁵⁷. The first put into effect the ecumenical overture towards Western Christendom, while the others are of a purely programmatic nature, inaugurating and promoting the path towards Ecumenism with the “Ecumenical Movement”⁵⁸. The participation

Τυπάλδου-Ίακωβάτου, in Τόμος: Δώρημα στον Καθηγητή Βασίλειο Ν. Αναγνωστόπουλο, Athens 2007, p. 239 ff.

⁵⁵ Vlasios I. Feidas, *Αἱ Ἐγκύκλιοι τοῦ 1902 καὶ τοῦ 1904 ὡς πρόδρομοι τῆς Ἐγκύκλιον τοῦ 1920 ἐν τῇ εὐρύτερᾳ οἰκουμενικῇ προοπτικῇ τῆς Μητρὸς Ἐκκλησίας, Ὁρθοδοξία*, 2003, pp. 129-39.

⁵⁶ *Διάγγελμα τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου «Πρὸς τὰς ἀπανταχοῦ Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, Karmiris, op. cit., p. 950 ff; p. 957 ff.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 960 ff.

⁵⁸ See Fr. G. D. Metallinos, *Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο καὶ Οἰκουμενισμός*, in his *Στὰ Μονοπάτια τῆς Ρωμησοσύνης*, Athens, 2008, p. 121 ff.

of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in this led to today's relations, which the Orthodox conscience censures. The change which followed is revealed by the language used. The "tendrils", as the Western Christian groupings were called in 1902⁵⁹, became "Churches" by 1920, which, of course, is a matter of praise for Ecumenists, both Greek and foreign. But this has meant, however, a gradual equation of Western confessions with the One Church, the Orthodox. At this point, the last Pope was more sincere when, in 2008, he refused to recognize the Protestants as a Church, while he called Orthodoxy "wanting" since it did not accept his primacy.

2. With the Declaration of 1920, the Ecumenical Patriarchate presented the rule-book for the attitude to be taken by the Orthodox party within the Ecumenical Movement⁶⁰. If the Encyclical of 1902 opened the way for our participation in the Ecumenical Movement, the Declaration of 1920 prepared our entry into the WCC⁶¹, while the Encyclical of 1952, under the tenure of Patriarch Athenagoras, operated as a completion and ratification of this planned course of action⁶². For this reason, great Orthodox theologians, such as Ioannis Karmiris and Fr. George Florovsky, despite their attachment to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, felt obliged to express their reservations towards these overtures and the developments set in train by them⁶³.

⁵⁹ According to Prof. Feidas, "the term "tendrils" has a closer significational relationship to "offshoots", since they are nourished by the roots of the tree, but bear no fruit"! Would that it were so! But see *Matth.* 3, 10.

⁶⁰ Metallinos op. cit, p. 128.

⁶¹ According to Professor Christos Yannaras, the Encyclical "replaces or suppresses the truth of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and the very real mystery of salvation, for the sake of the social and pietistic perception of an ideological Christianity, since in this 'there is not even a hint of truth'" (*Αλήθεια και ενότητα της Εκκλησίας*, Athens 1997[2] p. 196 ff.).

⁶² It is an important document for the machinations of the Ecumenical Throne in support of Ecumenism. The Encyclical is addressed "to the autocephalous Orthodox Churches".

⁶³ Florovsky left the WWC in 1961, while Ioannis Karmiris (in 1953) declared that he was very worried by developments: "It is clear that unreserved participation (of Orthodoxy) without terms

For a short time, a brake was applied to this process by the “Resolution of the Conference in Moscow against Papism”⁶⁴ in 1948. There, Papism was denounced for all the newly-appeared Roman dogmas⁶⁵. As the Declaration says, the Popes “corrupted the purity of the teaching of ancient ecumenical Orthodoxy through their newly-introduced dogmas”⁶⁶. Papism is explicitly called “anti-Christian”⁶⁷. This marks a return to the pre-1900 spirit, though there was to be no continuation, as events proved. This was also contributed to by the language used to avoid scandalizing Church-goers. In the Encyclical of 1952, the Ecumenical Patriarchate says that “through its participation so far in the Pan-Christian Movement, the Orthodox Church has sought to bring to the attention of the heterodox and to transmit to them the wealth of its faith, worship and organization, as well as its religious and ascetic experience, and also to become informed itself of their new methods and concepts of ecclesiastical life and action”. Fearing, however, the relativization of the faith, Ioannis Kasimiris felt the need to stress that: “The participation of the Orthodox... and co-operation... has the meaning of communion of love and **not communion in dogmatic teaching and the mysteries**”⁶⁸, as if a “communion of love” could be possible without unity of faith (“faith working through love”, *Gal.* 5, 6). The true aims of inter-Christian Ecumenism are freely revealed by hierarchs of the Ecumenical

in dogmatic conferences and the organic linkage of this with numerous, variously named Churches and Confessions and heresies on a dogmatic and ecclesiological basis in the World Council of Churches would mean a departure from the policy drawn up in the Patriarchal Declaration of 1920 concerning co-operation of [Orthodoxy] only on issues of Practical Christianity and that, in general, [any other] would not be in accordance with the theoretical principles of Orthodoxy and its centuries-old tradition, as well as with the teaching and practice of the seven Ecumenical Synods and its great Fathers”. *Op. cit.*, p. 953 ff.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 946 ff; 948 ff.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 947.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 948.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 949.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 956.

Throne such as Yermanos, Archbishop of Thyateira (Strinopoulos), who, referring at length to the Declaration of 1920, which he himself wrote, together with other professors of Halki⁶⁹, said: “There is a need for the Churches to realize that, apart from unity, in the strict sense of the term... there is also another, more inclusive concept of unity, according to which **anybody who accepts the fundamental teaching of the revelation of God in Christ and receives Him as the Saviour and the Lord, should be considered a member of the same body and not a stranger**”. “Without going into an examination of the dogmatic differences that separate the Churches”, the Archbishop of Thyateira added, “we should cultivate precisely this idea of broader unity...”⁷⁰. What is clear here is the theory of the broad Church, which demands the marginalization of the faith and of the saving nature of dogma, in contradistinction to the Apostolic and Patristic tradition of all the centuries.

3. But another equally prominent Hierarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and one of its leading members, the former Archbishop of America, Iakovos, made this aim even clearer in an interview he gave in 1999: “What really made me cross was all the battles and then the relative failure of the Ecumenical Dialogue, which aimed at the union or rapprochement of the Churches and then, more generally, of all religions”⁷¹. This is a genuine confession of the aspirations of the Ecumenical Movement and its connection with the inter-religious dialogue, as well as the New Age objectives for the achievement of a Universal Religion. But the Blessed Justin (Popović) expressed a responsible and objective critique, calling Ecumenism: “... a common name for the pseudo-Christianities and for the pseudo-Churches of Western Europe. Within it you will find all the

⁶⁹ These were Yermanos (Strinopolos) of Seleucia, I. Efstratiou, Vasilios Stefanidis, Vasilios Antoniadis and P. Komninos.

⁷⁰ Fr. Georgios Tsetsis, op. cit., 101.

⁷¹ Interview with Mairi Pini for the magazine *Νέμεσις*, November 1999.

European Humanisms, with Papism in the forefront. All these pseudo-Christians, all these pseudo-Churches are nothing more than heresy upon heresy. Their common evangelical name is All-Embracing Heresy”⁷². And he wonders: “Was it therefore necessary for the Orthodox Church, this most undefiled Theanthropic body and organization of the Theanthropic Christ to be humiliated so monstrously that its theologian representatives, even hierarchs, should seek organic participation and inclusion in the WCC? Alas, unheard of betrayal”⁷³.

Fr. Justin was able to foresee the outcome of ecumenical relations, which culminated in the decisions of Balamand (1993) (= confirmation of the Papist heresy as a sister Church and of the Unia, which took part officially in the Dialogue) and of Porto Allegre (2006) (=acceptance of Protestant ecclesiology), as well as the *de facto* recognition of “baptismal theology”, “common service”, without unity of the faith, of “the expanded Church” and of “cultural pluralism”.

Ecumenism in all its dimensions and versions has proved to be a real Babylonian captivity for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and all the local leaders of the Orthodox Church. The boasting and self-congratulation of our Ecumenists about a supposed “new era” which the Ecumenical Patriarchate opened with the Patriarchal Encyclicals of 1902 and 1920 are not justified because “what has been achieved is to legitimize the heresies and schisms of Papism and Protestantism”. This is the carefully-weighed conclusion of Fr. Theodoros Zisis⁷⁴ to which I fully subscribe.

4. It is therefore clear that Ecumenism has now been proved to be an ecclesiological heresy, a “demonic syncretism”, which seeks to bring Orthodoxy

⁷² Fr. Justin Popović, *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ In an article in Orthodox Press, 16/ 7/ 2004.

into a federal union with the Western heretical panspermia. But in this way Orthodoxy does not influence the non-Orthodox world soteriologically, because it has itself been trapped in the pitfalls of Ecumenism, in the persons of the local leaderships who are working towards wearing it down and alienating it.

So, instead of following the example of our Holy Fathers in the preservation of Orthodoxy as the **sole** chance of salvation for mankind and society, our Church leadership is doing exactly the opposite: by confusing Orthodoxy with heresy within the sphere of Ecumenism and, to all intents and purposes, recognizing the heretical delusion, it has brought about the dilution of the criteria of the Orthodox faithful and is depriving them and the world of the chance of salvation.

It is precisely in this direction that the intervention of so-called "Post-Patristic Theology" proves to be demonic, in that it offers theological cover and support to our ecumenist hysteria and to the demolition of our Patristic and traditional foundations. This, of course, is not happening with a direct polemic against the faith of the Synods and the Fathers- on the contrary, this is often praised hypocritically and extolled- but, rather, by casting doubt on its nuptial requirements, avoiding any condemnation of heresies, and thus the *de facto* recognition of them as Churches, i.e. of an equal soteriological weight as Orthodoxy. In this way, the Holy Fathers and their teaching are rejected, supposedly because they have overturned the faith and practice of the ancient Church. Post-Patristicity, in other words, is in its essence anti-patristicity, because this Protestantizing movement weakens the Patristic tradition, without which Orthodoxy is unable to withstand the maelstrom of Ecumenism and compliance with the plans of the New Age. And, to paraphrase Dostoevsky: "Without the Fathers, everything is permitted"! Whereas according to Saint Gregory Palamas: "In this lies piety: not doubting the God-bearing Fathers".

Ioannis Kourembeles

Associate Professor of the Theological School

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Unorthodox Orthodoxy?

Moments in Contemporary Greek Theological Expression and Marks of Post-Theological Moments

[to the sacred memory of my parents

Fr. Georgios and Presvytera Christina...]

A. Characteristics of modern theological thought

Discolorations in the modern inter-Christian dialogues.

Introductory

The 20th century was, admittedly, characterized by the institutional dialogical relationship of the Orthodox Church with the WCC. Unfortunately, there are no specialist monographs in Greece by institutional representatives and researchers of the Orthodox side which, in a theological/dogmatic context, would help us see in depth what really happened on this path⁷⁵, during which great volumes of texts were produced⁷⁶. There are more historical and sociological references in specialist books on the above dialogue and anyone interested in the theological/dogmatic problematics should, for a fuller picture, probably seek the theological correlations in combination with monitoring the path taken by the leading representatives of the Orthodox Church in modern and contemporary dialogical practice.

⁷⁵ See also G. Laimopoulos, *Δομή και Λειτουργία του Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν*, Thessaloniki 2012, p. 17.

⁷⁶ Two studies by contemporary scholars which are interesting from the point of view of the theology of inter-Christian dialogues are: I.O. Nikolopoulos, *Οἱ Θέσεις τῶν Ορθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν* in Λίμα, Thessaloniki 2006; A. Baïraktaris, *Βάπτισμα καὶ ὁ οἰκουμενικὸς διάλογος: Μία ορθόδοξη προσέγγιση*, Thessaloniki 2010.

In the present study, I shall not, of course, expand into specialist analyses but, rather, describe the main motions of a post-theological appraisal of our times, which seems to be systematized and to offer Greece corresponding educational practices- though it is based, to a great extent, on generalities and jargon- which are expected, by their supporters, to lend meaning to the proposed pedagogical practices. What makes an impression is that the prime users of this neo-terminology behave dismissively towards the contribution of modern Greek theology (academic and charismatic) and disparagingly towards the critical discourse which distinguishes and notes the differences between West and East as regards the understanding of theological truth⁷⁷. In a most generalizing fashion, they identify modern and contemporary Orthodoxy with the attitude of the past, with nationalism and with a lack of contact with the present, in a contradictory manner since they show- certainly deliberately- that they believe simultaneously in the contribution of the avant-garde representation of Orthodox

⁷⁷ I have the feeling that much of the treatment of the distinction between East and West in the work of Ch. Yannaras has been aimed at compressing the criticism into a narrow framework. Naturally this stark contrast ignores the fact that Yannaras' thought is not sterile, but open to an internal dialogue with Western thinking, from which he takes elements and subjects them to criticism on his own terms. This may be why there is an interpretational dissonance regarding his work. Thus we have Metropolitan Ioannis (Zizioulas) of Pergamum considering that Yannaras introduces views from Heidegger (see Yannaras, *Ἐξί φιλοσοφικῆς ζωγραφιᾶς*, Athens 2011, p. 135 ff. where there is a reaction to this view), which is also attributed in Western bibliography to his Eminence himself! [See D. H. Knight, *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, Ashgate e-book 2007, p. 6] P. Kalaitzidis, *Ἀπὸ τὴν «ἐπιστροφή» στοὺς πατέρες» στὸ αἷτημα γιὰ μιὰ σύγχρονη ὁρθόδοξη θεολογία* in *Σύνταξη*, vol. 113 (2010) pp. 25-39, here p. 32, note 6. This work- with minor alterations- also appeared as *From the "Return to the Fathers" to the Need for a Modern Orthodox Theology*, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 54 (2010) pp. 5-36. Also, his doctoral thesis, *Ἑλληνικότητα καὶ ἀντιδυτικισμὸς στὴ θεολογία τοῦ '60*, Department of Theology, A.U.Th., Thessaloniki, 2008, pp. 530-535, presents Yannaras as anti-Western! It is, I feel, probable that Yannaras is considered anti-Western because he does not take part in systematized dialogues, preferring to formulate his own response regarding the relationship between Orthodoxy and the Western tradition and spirituality.

theology at inter-Christian dialogues in the 20th century⁷⁸. Others who espouse the above representation take a positive stance towards the eschatological influences of Protestant theology⁷⁹.

It appears, therefore, that a movement is growing in Greece which has recently delivered a final account of the theology of Greek theologians of the generation of the 1960s. The theologians of the 1990s, then, should we wish to call them that, have decided that the neo-Patristic synthesis, within which the generation of the 1960s operated, was a prescription obsolete for the ecumenical needs of today and favour the post-Patristic option as a way out of the earlier, neo-Patristic direction. It would appear to be no coincidence that Florovsky's expression "return to the Fathers"⁸⁰ has been demonized and disconnected from the ontological context of its comprehension. But in this way, what has been brushed aside is Florovsky's own understanding of the expression in question as accompanying the Fathers in the ecclesiastical developments of life⁸¹, and no precedence is given to the concern of the late Russian theologian that there might be

⁷⁸ In his article "Challenges of Renewal and Reformation Facing the Orthodox Church" (in *The Ecumenical Review*, 61 2009) Pandelis Kalaïtzidis claims that Orthodoxy is not forward-looking and he builds a split within Orthodoxy, ignoring the multi-nuanced expressions of Orthodoxy, which are truly ecumenical. He seeks the "very body of Christ" in the corrupt person rather than in the incorrupt God. He concludes with this Spirit-centred expression, which de-spiritualizes tradition: "... the word 'reformation' might also find its rightful place in a church which defines itself not simply as a church of tradition, but also as the church of the Holy Spirit".

⁷⁹ See Kourembeles, *Ἀναταράξεις ἐπὶ ἀναταράξεων* in *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 93, pp. 569-84, here mainly 579-81.

⁸⁰ See "Western Influences on Russian Theology" in G. Florovsky, *Collected Works*. Volume 4: *Aspects of Church History*. B. Gallaher ["Waiting for the Barbarians": Identity and polemism in the neo-patristic synthesis of Georges Florovsky, in *Modern Theology* 27:4 (2011) pp. 659-91, here p. 659] refers to him as the greatest Orthodox theologian of the 20th century who "has become the dominant paradigm for Orthodox theology and ecumenical activity".

⁸¹ Conversely, Kalaïtzidis (*Ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιστροφή*, p. 28), although he sees in Florovsky the combination "back to the Fathers" and "forward with the Fathers", believes that the absence of the perspective "beyond the Fathers" renders his theology of little value for the future.

an outbreak of theology from a Sophist point of view, which causes its descent into intellectualism.

But let us investigate briefly where it is that the tendencies for theological expression appear in the context of inter-Christian dialogue, which clearly accompany what we shall note is being expressed by contemporary Greek post-theology.

2. From the dialogue with the Roman Catholics...

(and Episcopocentric theology...)

As is well-known, Episcopocentric Eucharistology was used as a tool in the dialogue with Rome, so that the issue of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome could be discussed from this perspective. The principal expression of this theological proposal among Orthodox theologians was put forward positively within this scheme of things regarding the identification of the Church and the Eucharist, under the Episcopal presidency over the Eucharist. Within this context, it is possible that (deliberately or not) the theanthropic ontology of the Eucharist may be lessened and become subject to the above identification in a static eschatology, if the kingdom of God is also considered to be within the same framework of identification (of Church and Eucharist). There have been efforts to analyze this issue in specific references to it⁸², as also to evaluate the dialogue theologically with the tradition of the Church of Rome⁸³ and its “ecumenical outlook”⁸⁴. There is neither the time nor the space for me to return to these at length here.

⁸² See Kourembeles, *Λόγος Θεολογίας*, vol. I, Thessaloniki 2009, pp. 97 ff. See also idem, *Αναταράξεις ἐπὶ ἀναταράξεων*, op. cit., particularly p. 581.

⁸³ See idem, *Ἡ εὐχαριστία στὸν διάλογο μεταξὺ Ὁρθοδόξων καὶ Ρωμαιοκαθολικῶν*, in *Ὁ κόσμος τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας στὸ παρελθὸν καὶ στὸ παρὸν*, Thessaloniki 2006, pp. 741-777.

In this particular instance, I would like to make the following observation/ appraisal: it is not unlikely that, in the dialogue with the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox perspective will be projected as a static eschatology, founded upon the identification of the Church and the Eucharist under the bishop; and in the case of the dialogue with the Protestants we shall observe an increasingly intense movement towards a Pneumatic Trinitocentrism and a Pneumatic eschatology, which perhaps would not be the final goal, according to the expression of Eucharistic ecclesiology, but which is clearly manifest now in the context of its contemporary post-Patristic proposal and interpretation⁸⁵. In other words, even if Eucharistic ecclesiology might initially have constituted a creative proposal based on Orthodox life and theology, this does not mean that it can be transferred *mutatis mutandis*, and then applied on an inter-Christian level, particularly, of course, when its theological ontology has been eroded.

⁸⁴ On this, see idem, Estimates regarding the use of roman catholic ecclesiological terminology, in «Εἰς μαρτύριον τοῖς ἔθνεσιν»: Τόμος Χαριστήριος εἰς τὸν Οἶκ. Πατριάρχην κ. κ. Βαρθολομαῖον, Thessaloniki 2011, pp. 293-402.

⁸⁵ There is no room in this present study for an exhaustive discussion of this issue. But we ought to see the way the works of theologians of Eucharistic theology such as His Eminence Ioannis Zizioulas are being read, since his contemporary Western students seem to understand him within the context of the Neo-Patristic synthesis (see for example, Knight, op. cit., pp. 21-3, 26 and 32). Zizioulas does not see Christ as responsible for history and the Holy Spirit as responsible for the last times. Rather, the Eucharist is an entry of the Holy Trinity into the Church (the world), and cannot be simplified into the above areas of responsibilities. There is a tendency among post-Patristic theologians to “appropriate” those of the ’60s as being interested in a back-door entry into ecumenism. R. Turner (op. cit., p. 34), has this to say about Zizioulas’ views: “The eucharist is the most fruitful event in history to celebrate as ecclesiology. Zizioulas does not reduce ecclesial communion to the eucharist, for the object of theology remains the mystery of salvation, not the establishment of the theological system itself. Zizioulas goes beyond an apophatic approach because he rejects the primacy of epistemology in theology. He is able to do this, by speaking about the personal communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, because of the vision of the truth in the life of the historical Christ. The mystery of salvation is revealed in the person of Christ as a communion of the divine persons”.

Let us not forget that in this Trinitocentrism to which we referred, eschatology becomes the instrument of an understanding of the Church as a society, parallel to Trinitology, and it is also noticeable that the carnate divine subject of participation in the Eucharist is ignored to the benefit of a potential, proportionate implementation, on an inter-Christian level, of the above Eucharistology. That is, the vertical view of the mystery of the incarnation of God by condescension is marginalized, clearly because it is considered a historical encumbrance to a Christianity which has to show its inherent intercommunion in some unhistoric context. Let us not forget that, within this context, it is perfectly possible for the old view of N. Afanassieff, and the contemporary one of His Eminence Ilarion Alfayev, to flourish, as these are expressed in a study by Nicolas Ferencz, according to which, acceptance of the Ecumenical Synods is not a *sine qua non* requirement for Christian unity, since there is no “locus of highest authority” in the Church⁸⁶.

3. ... in the dialogue with Protestantism...

(... and the Eucharist as Spiritual Trinitocentrism)

At the beginning of the life of the W.C.C., in the dialogue with Protestantism, the Orthodox stood against the fragmented Protestant vehicle through the issue of theological principle. Initially they wanted to privilege Trinitocentricity over Christocentricity. And recently they

⁸⁶ See a related reference to Ferencz’s article Bishop and Eucharist as Criteria for Ecumenical Dialogue in St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly 51:1 (2007) pp. 5-21. He stresses that correlating “bishop” with the eucharist and the church in terms of autonomy is an aberration. He says: “I do not think it is possible to retain the Eucharist in the center of one’s worship and prayer (*lex orandi*) if one’s belief is faulty or incomplete. The acceptance and celebration of the mystical power and presence of the Eucharist rests squarely upon belief in a full catholic understanding of the truth of who Jesus is. Outside such a belief, the Eucharist becomes less meaningful, even meaningless, and so loses its centrality in the worship life of the community”.

have shown that they have succeeded entirely in this perspective⁸⁷. That is, instead of exercising themselves firmly in promoting a Christosomatic Trinitology, since formal Christological and Trinitological references exist in the texts of the dialogues⁸⁸, they have operated more within a Spiritual Trinitocentrism and a parallel connection of (the triune) God and the Church.

Regarding contact with this thinking, it is worth reading an article by John Behr [*The Trinitarian Being of the Church*, in Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 48:1 (2003, pp. 67-87)]. At the outset, the author poses the problem which arises from the correlation of Trinitarian theology and Ecclesiology, which came about through Eucharistic ecclesiology (without a connecting bond): "Another way of putting this, using terms which are themselves problematic, would be to say that communion ecclesiology sees the Church as parallel to the 'immanent Trinity': it is the three persons in communion, the One God in relational being that the Church is said to 'reflect'. This results in a horizontal notion of communion, or perhaps better, parallel 'communions' without being clear about how the two intersect"⁸⁹.

Without disregarding the attempt to link Pneumatology with Christology in the proposal by His Eminence Ioannis Zizioulas, Behr notes the relativity which dominates it under the principal term of the Eucharist and the parallel relationship between the Trinity and Church, highlighting the proposal by Bruce Marshall in relation to the Cappadocian view and his own concern with the Christian expression of

⁸⁷ See also S. Tsombanidis, Ἡ συμβολὴ τῆς ὀρθόδοξης ἐκκλησίας καὶ θεολογίας στὸ παγκόσμιο συμβούλιο ἐκκλησιῶν, Thessaloniki 2008, pp. 252-3. See also p. 299.

⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 301-2.

⁸⁹ Behr, *The Trinitarian Being*, p. 68.

the Fathers (4th century)⁹⁰. He thus refers to the three primary scriptural images for the Church- the people of God, the body of Christ and the temple of the Spirit⁹¹- and seeks an overall perspective of theology (Trinity, Incarnation, Passion, Soteriology, Ecclesiology)⁹². Indeed, on page 74 of this study, Behr notes the changing understanding of the ordained ministry, with a reference to Ignatius of Antioch, to demonstrate that, behind his words concerning bishops, there is a clear Christology and a holistic perspective of the Church⁹³.

To return to the initial reflection of this part of my address, it might be considered a success, within the parallel association of the Trinitarian God and the Church, that the Western Christian confessions, in dialogue and in common prayer, avoid the *filioque*, doubtless because separate elevation of the Spirit as a divine hypostatic entity suited their purposes. It may even have been this thrust which was the reason why Orthodox theologians engaged in institutional dialogue with Western Christian traditions have turned to the demonstration of the synthesis which is required between Christology and Pneumatology⁹⁴.

We must certainly investigate whether it is this piecemeal correlation (which, in the end, necessarily becomes prosthetic for the Orthodox in the dialogue) which is what forces the move to a kind of (unnatural) patromonistic expression in Trinitarian theology and

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 69-70.

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 71 ff.

⁹² Ibid, p. 73.

⁹³ He closes this part of his argument by saying: "The Church is not just a communion of persons in relations, but the body of Christ giving thanks to the Father in the Spirit" (p. 78), going on, through this perspective, to stress the importance of eschatology (p. 78 ff.).

⁹⁴ On the subject of this synthesis, see J. Z. Skira, "The Synthesis Between Christology and Pneumatology in Modern Orthodox Theology", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 68 (2002), pp. 435-65.

(correspondingly) to the severance of human life from physical reality⁹⁵. Be that as it may, the (disconnected or confused) dislocations reflect the fact that when, in today's inter-Christian dialogues, mention is made of Christ, this does not necessarily mean that He shares the same energy as the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, and that they (the Orthodox theologians) must (or have the feeling they must) complete Christology "revealing" Pneumatology along the way with other Christians as well as the necessity of their synthesis (their addition).

Indeed, is it the case that the identification of the Eucharist with the Church and the concomitant "Eucharistic ecclesiology"⁹⁶ which sought, within this theological climate (in the dialogue with Protestantism) a "liturgy after the liturgy", is today interpreted, as it seems, by the unconnected (parallel) relationship of Economy/Theology and not from their liturgical viewpoint⁹⁷?

It is my view that, unless people scrutinize critically the course of the dialogues and of the representatives of the Orthodox Churches involved therein, and, in the dialogue with Roman Catholicism, the moves towards bishop-centredness, they will think that they can become involved also in the dialogue with Protestantism, highlighting here, of course, a bodiless Eucharist, in which the presence of Christ is

⁹⁵ Certainly, much as been written about this. Ch. Stamoulis, for example, criticizes Zizioulas for downplaying nature and the creation and "ideologizing" the faith, while removing the real meaning of life *Ἡ γυναίκα τοῦ Ἀὐτῆς καὶ ἡ σύγχρονη θεολογία*, Athens 2008, (p.163).

⁹⁶ See Tsombanidis, op. cit., 281 ff.

⁹⁷ Tsombanidis, op. cit., p. 290, claims that the abandonment of Christocentric universality and the establishment of Christian mission in Trinitarian dogma led to the abandonment of the imperialist and expansionist tactics of the Christian mission in the 19th and early 20th centuries and the adoption of a more well-rounded and holistic conduct of Christian witness. But in this way Christology and Trinitology can easily become tools of ideologies and theology itself can lose its true purpose of salvation and be subjected to other interests.

considered to be no more than a recollection. This may be why there is a need for the verbal pyrotechnics of eschatology as the absolute measure of Christian completion of the ecclesiastical future⁹⁸.

So, in the case where the Orthodox theology of modern inter-Christian dialogues is considered to be involved at this level and in this theological context, adding its own contribution, it is clear that within this loose and parallel relationship of Economy-Theology (Trinitology), what is, in the end, preferred for discussion is an economy of the Spirit and a Spiritual, though bodiless (sterile) Eucharist, even if, from the terminology, the expression “body of Christ” is not omitted in the Ecumenical texts⁹⁹.

Is it then the case that the Holy Spirit, without the *filioque* now, is preferable so that there is a divine enshrinement of a syncretistic theocentrism, since (it is considered) that Christ, who was very demanding in His historical humanity, may be waiting at the door or that He should be tried, having been humiliated, as an imperialist? I believe, therefore, that we should note the theological truth that the Holy Spirit, if we believe in His divinity in the Trinity, is ontologically

⁹⁸ Kalaitzidis believes in a renewal of Orthodoxy “emanating from the future” (Challenges of Renewal, p. 148). I would agree with the idea of reformation if this were seen in terms of salvation and not merely of the future. If this mystery of the transformation of people and the world through fertile recreation in Christ were taken as being not merely an intellectual process and logical response to the needs of the time. Referring to Zizioulas’ eschatology, Turner says: “It must be remembered that the truth of this historical existence is eschatological and the importance of the eschatological truth in history is the ontological meaning of salvation (Knight, op. cit., p. 29). He goes on to say: “Zizioulas’ theological principles and his ecclesiology reflect the development of a neo-patristic theological approach in Greece since the 1930s. Zizioulas’ work represents a commitment to setting out the original theological contribution of Orthodoxy, especially in its application to ecclesiology” (p. 33).

⁹⁹ On the term “communion” in modern dialogical language, see Kourembeles, Ἡ «κοινωνία» ὡς ἐκκλησιαστικὸ θέμα στὸ διαλογικὸ κείμενο «Φύση καὶ σκοπὸς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας» in Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ οἰκουμενικὸς διάλογος, Apostoliki Diakonia Athens 2005, pp. 95-111.

demanding (hypostasized in the Trinity) and not abstract and Word-less. I hope that my observations will contribute to the clearer realization that setting up an ecumenical encounter at a bodiless Eucharist may assist at a spiritually ideological meeting, but not at an incarnate encounter with the Word, involving people in the Spirit, at which God remains the dominant Person, as being active in the Trinity, in the ecumenical flesh of His condescending Word.

B. Post-theological terminology

1. "Post-Patristic theology"

Discussions today about post-Patristic theology have centred around the thinking about Florovsky's expression "a return to the Fathers". Even though it is clear and accepted from the expression of this novel post-Patristic view that Florovsky does not restrict this return to the past, but links it with its function in the present and the future, the post-Patristic view eliminates this observation of his and claims that this great Russian theologian should have been moving in a direction which would have defined it as "beyond the Fathers"¹⁰⁰. This is why the post-Patristic view claims that "the corresponding movement of 'return', which is represented by the neo-Patristic school which triumphed in its contention with the 'Russian' or 'Parisian' school will function as a bulwark against innovation"¹⁰¹. We should note that it is not considered a critical juxtaposition as regards innovation, but a bulwark!

It is precisely here that one can see that modern Greek theological thinking is affected by a view more than a century late: it is a tribute to a

¹⁰⁰ See Kalaitzidis, *Ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν*, pp. 27-8.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

tendency in the views of A. von Harnack (perhaps we might use the term “obsolete Harnackism”) that the Greekness of Christianity is a weight on the theology of the Scriptures¹⁰². And so there is constructed, with the post-Patristic view, an eccentric support of Biblical studies which, in essence, are placed in opposition to Patristics¹⁰³. It is as if to say that reading the Fathers is no more than the outside door of Scripture¹⁰⁴, even if it is said, contrariwise, that the Fathers “were, above all, great interpreters of Scripture”¹⁰⁵. Or perhaps it is no contradiction at all and is aimed at stressing a mere cognitive relationship of the Fathers with Scripture?

The odd thing in fact is that, although, on the part of the post-Patristic view, there is mention of “an unhistorical approach of Patristic theology”, there is no reference to particular examples of this theological

¹⁰² This Protestant evaluation of the ancient ecclesiastical tradition has long met with scathing criticism from the last Pope, Benedict XVI, who has written in support of the particular significance of the combination of reason and faith, of Hellenism and Christianity, for the fruitful transmission of the Christian message which occurs in the Patristic writings. In Jesus von Nazareth (Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2011), Pope Benedict, the pontiff emeritus writes: “Natürlich ist diese Verbindung zweier ganz unterschiedlichen Weisen von Hermeneutik eine immer neue zu bewältigende Aufgabe. Aber sie ist möglich, und durch sie werden in einem neuen Kontext die grossen Einsichten der Väter Exegese wieder zur Wirkung kommen können”. In relation to this, Oda Wischmeyer states: “Er [Ratzinger] versucht, die Hermeneutik der historisch-kritischen Exegese mit der Hermeneutik des Glaubens zu verbinden, wie sie bereits in den neutestamentlichen Schriften selbst vorliegt und von den Kirchenväter weiter ausgearbeitet wurde”. (Der Prozess Jesu aus der Sicht des Papstes, in Th. Söhring (Hg.), Tod und Auferstehung Jesu. Theologische Antworten auf das Buch des Papstes, Freiburg-Basel Wien 2011, p. 35. On Benedict’s view of the importance of the Fathers for inter-Christian dialogue, see J. Ratzinger, Die Bedeutung der Väter für die gegenwärtige Theologie in Theologische Quartalschrift 149 (1968), pp. 257-82. Also in Michels, Geschichte der Theologie, Salzburg/München 1970 and in Ratzinger, Theologische Prinzipienlehre, Bausteine zur Fundamentaltheologie, München 1982, pp. 139-59.

¹⁰³ Από τὴν ἐπιστροφή, p. 29.

¹⁰⁴ Against this, see the article by Triandafyllos Sioulis: «Πατερικός φουνταμενταλισμός» ἢ «μετα-πατερικὴ θεολογικὴ θολούρα»; at <http://www.zoiforos.gr>.

¹⁰⁵ Από τὴν ἐπιστροφή, pp. 29-30. On this contradiction, see Fr. G. Anagnostopoulos, Ἡ πατερικὴ θεολογία, in Σύναξη 116 (2010) pp. 101-6. See also Fr. N. Loudovikos, Ο μόχθος της μετοχής, Armos, Athens 2010, p. 8.

approach. The generalized characterization of some of the supporters of this view that this “return to the Fathers” is neo-conservative is indicative of the lack of rigour which is typical of the post-Patristic view. I actually have the feeling that, while the post-Patristic idea has the self-impression that it is positive towards alterity, which it deduces to be a measure of the success of Christian unity, in practice it proves to be opposed to this expression¹⁰⁶ since it calls its opponents neo-conservatives *a priori*.

I personally am troubled by the reason why this view is not supported with proper references and instead simply makes use of generalizations and “buzzwords”. So if the post-Patristic discourse characterizes the “return to the Fathers” as neo-conservative, then its own turning away from the Fathers is neo-relativistic. Therefore the post-Patristic bilingual reasoning glamorizes the publishing efforts regarding works of the Fathers in the West in order to tell us that the West has returned us to the Fathers and so there is no need to oppose it. Imagine, though how many “ideologically sound interpretations” of the Fathers have been written in such publications and studies, with the result that, today, a great deal of work is required, by the very nature of things, on the part of non-ideological scholars in order to transmit and interpret their theology properly.

Without wishing to discredit the efforts of Western theologians in Patristic theology, I do not think I could say that without the “nouvelle Théologie” “the Orthodox movement towards a return to the Fathers

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Kalaitzidis, *Challenges of Renewal*, p. 163, where there are references to Zizioulas, Kalpsis and Yangazoglou.

would probably be impossible”¹⁰⁷. Beyond the internal contradiction of this generalized assessment, post-Patristic thinking embellishes the Western theological expression of the 20th century, no doubt impressed by the discovery of its vast bibliography, and gallingly detracts from modern Orthodox charismatic and academic theology¹⁰⁸. What would post-Patristic discourse have to say, however, to the finding by important modern Western theologians¹⁰⁹ that, despite all of this monumental production, Western theology in fact has not really been able to speak essentially about Christ and the Christian faith.

So it is no coincidence that post-Patristic thought considers that “the return to the Fathers” constructed the polarization of East and West and the rejection of the West. Clutching at straws, it believes that the person who introduced the “return”, Fr. Georges Florovsky was in dialogue with the Western currents and did not accept this polarization, since he himself was engaged in ecumenical thinking¹¹⁰. But if this was positive in Florovsky, why was he not in the fore, as an example, right from the beginning, rather than being landed with the deficiency of not having a perspective “beyond the Fathers”? Is it, perhaps, because the ecumenical disposition of Florovsky was linked to research and study of the Fathers? Why is Florovsky artificially separated from those who supposedly were a negative drag on this “return to the Fathers”, i.e.

¹⁰⁷ Ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν, p. 31

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. Essentially, then, the centre of gravity of post-Patristic theory is not even Biblical theology, but what S. Gounelas calls “Biblish theology”.

¹⁰⁹ Armin Kreiner in *Das wahre Antlitz Gottes- oder was wir meinen wenn wir Gott sagen*, (Verlag Herder, Freiburg 2006), notes that the crisis in modern Christian expression (in Western theology) has arisen because this expression is not convincing in presenting the incarnation of the Word of God.

¹¹⁰ See Ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν, p. 32

Lossky, Staniloae and Popović¹¹¹? What does this negative charge appear to be and what are its criteria? It is the above three theologians who supposedly idolized Patristic theology, conducting “apologetics without meaning”¹¹².

I, of course, am of the opinion that idolization of the Fathers is the twin sister of relativization, even if the latter refuses to see this. I mean a relativization that is attempted with the enlisted aid of “post-Patristic theory”. This wants to persuade us that Orthodoxy has lost out by not recognizing modernity and has not plunged into post-modernity¹¹³. But I would return this assessment with another reasonable, generalizing question: Why is it that modernity has not lost out by not knowing the depth of the Eucharistic Orthodoxy of the Holy Fathers, instead of merely being acquainted with an incongruous Eucharistic ecclesiology?

Post-Patristic thinking accepts that “Contemporary Orthodox theology, inspired mainly by the spirit of the Fathers, re-formulated, in the 20th century, is a wonderful theology of the Humanization and Incarnation”¹¹⁴. But it no doubt considers this too little, since it believes that it is important that, among other things, weight was not given to issues such as “the carnality and spiritual function of sexuality”¹¹⁵.

¹¹¹ Ibid. John Behr (The Trinitarian Being of the Church, pp. 77-8) mentions Florovsky’s view that the Orthodox Church “is in very truth the Church, i.e. the true Church and the only true Church” so that he considers that “Christian reunion is simply conversion to Orthodoxy”. See also, *ibid*, pp. 79, 80-1 and 84-5. Kalaitzidis (Challenges of Renewal) on the other hand, believes: “Today we live in a completely postmodern world, and yet Orthodox Christianity still has not come to terms with modernity”.

¹¹² Ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιστοφὴν, p. 32.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 33-4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 34.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

Recent theologians have shown that they have misinterpreted the “theology of the Incarnation”, so that, in the present instance, they probably do not mean the incarnation of God but of the Gospel word, that is as script rather than divine hypostasis which interacts with people on a consubstantial level and in the body¹¹⁶. And so people end up today meaning that acceptance of bodily passions is an extension of the incarnation, with the notion and fear, perhaps even the secret wish (?), that the Fathers are Platonists¹¹⁷. It is no accident that post-Patristic thought seeks support, in monist fashion, in eschatology.¹¹⁸ The perspective is clear: there should be an Orthodox theology which is not Patristic¹¹⁹, thanks to the post-modern pluralistic world and to relativization; that theology should be transcended¹²⁰, as being outmoded, in order for the books of the post-Patristic authors to please the louche morals of post-modernity!

The post-Patristic idea, however, is nothing new. So I am at a loss to understand why it has become so important recently to relay it extensively, even though it was already present in the realm of university theological culture. It is worth remarking that, in my opinion, P. Kalaïtzidis, the harbinger of the modern post-Patristic idea, does not provide a reference in his article in Greek to his contemporary post-Patristic source, but does so (why not initially?) nonchalantly in the English version of his article, thus “betraying” the *fons et origens* of the

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 36: “... the demand for a new incarnation of the word and of the eternal truth of the Gospel”.

¹¹⁷ N. Matsoukas observes that the views which hold that Byzantine Orthodox spirituality is dominated by Platonic or Neo-Platonic mysticism are very crude. See his Δογματική και συμβολική θεολογία, vol. 3, p. 131.

¹¹⁸ Από την έπιστροφή, pp. 37-8.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 38.

¹²⁰ Ibid p. 39.

post-Patristic-post-theological idea, by quoting a point in a book by P. Vasileiadis¹²¹, who is also the father of the fanciful term “post-liturgy”.

2. “Post-Patristic theology” is not unattached (the matter of the term “post-liturgy”)

While the term post-Patristic theology made an impression, another term, “post-liturgy”, has gone almost unnoticed. But here we have a misconception of the dogmatic truth that the liturgy of the Church is the very liturgy (=functioning) of the world and the God-inspired love for the rational humanity of Christ¹²². Certainly I ought to make clear from the outset that when we are speaking about the liturgy as a Eucharistic event, it is not a meaningless gathering which then takes on its liturgical role and its active hypostasis.

I personally consider it no accident that the term “post-liturgy” appears today to be being reproduced by the same source which, in essence, produced the term “post-Patristic theology”, and that it

¹²¹ P. Vasileiadis, *Ἐρμηνεία τῶν εὐαγγελίων*, Thessaloniki 1990, p. 7. “That is to say, to dare to transcend the traditional “Patristic” theology, just as the Patristic theology essentially transcended the Proto-Christian and the latter transcended the Judeo-Christian. This, however, does not imply desertion of the spirit or the tone of the Patristic age, nor does it entail a rejection of the Greek philosophical way of thinking in favour of a modern one, only a dynamic transcendence of both. Besides, this is the legacy of the great Fathers of Orthodoxy”. Vasileiadis’ expression is extremely vague here, as he promotes retraction as a practice of the Fathers, only to justify retraction of the Fathers themselves! In order to comprehend the discrepancy between this approach and one which perceives cohesion and continuity in Christian history, I will quote N. Matsoukas and his illustrative remark (question): “how are we to cast the Old Testament out of the unrivalled Byzantine iconography?” (N. Matsoukas, *Νεοελληνικός πολιτισμός και διανόηση*, Thessaloniki 2006, p. 70).

¹²² See also A. Keselopoulos, *Ὁ λόγος τῆς ἐρήμου καὶ ἡ ἀλογία τοῦ κόσμου*, in a reprint from ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΑ ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟΥ ΜΟΝΑΣΤΙΚΟῦ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟΥ, Holy Meteora, 1990, pp. 253-66, here pp. 260-1 and p. 264. Idem, *Die Diakonie in der spirituellen Tradition des Ostens*, in *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἑπετηρίδα τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς*, (Department of Theology), 7 (1997) pp. 133-46, here p. 141.

misrepresents the older expression “liturgy after the liturgy”¹²³ (familiar from His Beatitude Anastasios Yannoulatos and J. Bria). We should pay particular attention to the fact that “post” is now dimensional and is separated from the word “liturgy” by a hyphen. This modern transcription/misrepresentation is, in my opinion, a tendency towards the desire to be innovative by the overstretching of the separator “post-”. By grammatical compulsion, this denotes later time and place as a necessary term for Christians gathering in social activism (and on an idealistic level) rather than liturgical participation at a particular time and place¹²⁴, as an alignment of people with the theandric energy which

¹²³ The use of the term “post-liturgy” by S. Tsobanidis is, in my opinion, an unfortunate transcription of the former title of his doctoral thesis, “Liturgy after the Liturgy” (unpub. Doc. Dissert., Thessaloniki 1996). On p. 245 of a recent publication of his work (Post-liturgy, Thessaloniki, 2009), before he even mentions (elaborates on) the significance of the expression “liturgy after the Liturgy” he makes a reference (in just the second line), where he writes that the term “post-liturgy” is more recent but “has the same meaning”! At this point the author states that he has adopted this term as the title of his thesis after P. Vasileiadis. I am of the opinion that the ontological interpretation of the term that was first and foremost coined by His Beatitude Anastasios (Yannoulatos) is not in accordance with P. Vasileiadis’ perception of the post-Eucharist. This can be established by the fact that Vasileiadis has favoured the concept of the transcendence of the Fathers since 1990 (P. Vasileiadis, *Ἑρμηνεία τῶν εὐαγγελίων*, Thessaloniki 1990, p. 7), thus establishing himself as the forefather (and pastor) in Greece of post-theologism and the barrage of terminology unwisely hurled by some of his younger spiritual “disciples”. At this point, it would be appropriate to mention that, for instance, in his analysis of Paul’s Eucharistology, Vasileiadis favours a monistic interpretation of the Eucharist with an eschatological perspective, thus depriving it of its salvific significance (see Παῦλος: Τομές στη θεολογία του, Thessaloniki, 2006, p. 154). Without actually providing specific reference, Vasileiadis interprets the Eucharist in Paul from a rationalist viewpoint, suggesting its commemorative nature (see, for example, op. cit. , p. 206). Therefore, one should not rush into adopting Vasileiadis’ terms, which are characterized by a specific interpretation of the mystery of the Eucharist and which are distinguished by their monistic eschatology, without bearing in mind the above arguments.

¹²⁴ Within this idealistic context, one may come to operate in a secularization after the secularization. In his reference to secularization, we may recall Father Alexander Schmemmann, the late liturgist, who wisely points out that if secularization is heresy according to theological terminology, then it is primarily a heresy that relates to people. It is the rejection of people as Homo Adorans: a rejection of people, for whom adoration is a substantial practice that “confirms” and at the same time completes their human nature. Regarding Schmemmann’s perception, I would focus on the significance of the liturgical person, rather than on a secularized

is shared in lasting communion and expressed as such by those who experience it truly and substantially in the Eucharistic God/Man. The idolization of the Eucharist which occurred in the globalized dialogue platforms now seeks (additionally) another, idol-like global Eucharist, without the supra-essential, incarnate Creator¹²⁵.

I should note that many recent theologians, Greek and foreign lovers of the socio-moral inter-Christian dialogue of the World Council of Churches, with greed beyond reason, have used Fathers such as, for instance, Saint John Chrysostom, seeing Christ only in part in his writings, i.e. the Christ of the materially poor, but not the God/Man Himself of all defiled people¹²⁶.

This use of Patristic writings in the cause of a flesh-less and Word-less “post-liturgy” indicates a breakdown of the theanthropic functionality and will require, (if it has not already done so) as its opponent, a moralistic pre-liturgy if it is to survive ideologically itself as something which post-liturgizes. The theanthropic Christ will be kept on hold and the post-theologians will create (even if they do not exist) pre-theologians so that they themselves will exist (What an existence is that!) as a counterweight to the pre-barbarians. In this way, the dynamism of

(unsubstantial) post-liturgy, which would seek a reformation of the liturgy for the sake of the aspirations of secularized people. Yet, I would echo the meaning of the liturgy when he says that its singularity lies in the fact that it emanates from faith in the Incarnation, the great, universal mystery of “the Word became flesh”.

¹²⁵ I refer here to J. Behr (The Trinitarian Being of the Church, pp. 82-3), who appears to comprehend this idolization favoured by the communion ecclesiology and to argue with J. Erickson’s corresponding view, in consistency with G. Limouris’ exclusively Eucharistic view.

¹²⁶ It is, of course, gratifying that Fathers such as Saint Basil the Great or Saint John Chrysostom have been studied and become an object of social reflection by great Protestant theologians, so that a more profound viewing and theological reflection can exist as a challenge (see more in Fr. Th. Zisis’ *Ἡ σωτηρία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ κόσμου κατὰ τὸν ἅγιον Ἰωάννην Χρυσόστομον*, Thessaloniki 1992, p. 150, where the ontological dimension of Chrysostomian love is stressed).

the life of the Fathers is relegated to the moral level¹²⁷, as in the case of Saint John Chrysostom, who believed, as far as I understand him, in liturgical participation by people in the theanthropic Person¹²⁸, Who does not have any “before” and “after”: but is He Who was, is and shall be from before all ages¹²⁹.

It would appear that, these days, we are being invaded by a co-ordinated dynamic of socio-politically aligned epistemology which seeks to set aside the ontological and therefore enduring and ecumenical significance of Patristic theology as experience which is lived and

¹²⁷ B. Gallaher describes the faith of the fathers as a “pre-modern faith” (see “Waiting for the Barbarians”, pp. 680-681), as if this faith has changed and is no longer contemporary. Therefore, he views the neo-Patristic synthesis as a reiterative theology, in order to associate it with the duty of modern theology, which, according to him, is its development within an ecumeni(sti)cal context (the parenthetical clarification on the word is mine), (“That such a modest proposal of a new way forward for Orthodox theology is accomplished within an ecumenical context is not by accident, for Orthodox theology if it is to survive and even flourish in the contemporary West must become truly ecumenical”) (p. 680), as though Orthodoxy does not actively participate in a salvific ecumenical-ecclesiastical event, which is manifested as such in its life and theology. It is no accident that Gallaher refers to a Biblical reestablishment of the neo-Patristic synthesis (p. 681). In any event, he is mainly interested in overcoming the polarization of East and West and this makes his proposal debatable, as long as he does not invalidate tradition in favour of this Biblical reestablishment, which is exactly what P. Kalaitzidis does: “It would be a re-envisioning of neo-Patristic methodology, grounded in an engagement with the Eastern Patristic corpus and the liturgy, for an Orthodox theology that goes ‘beyond the Fathers’ is a contradiction in terms. But now with this new paradigm, it is called to step out beyond the sterile polarity of East and West” (p. 683). However, his proposal that the East should picture itself, as well as real life, in the West (p. 683), is a generalization, when he, in fact, favours the need for a transition to a “post-Florovskian Orthodox theology”. Kalaitzidis’ post-Patristic proposal here becomes a proposal for a “post-Florovskian Orthodox theology”. At this point I would certainly like to clarify the following: the term neo-Patristic can only be authentic in a Patristic sense, thus expressing post-Patristicity as Patristicity in time. See also below, note 76, my reference to Karmiris.

¹²⁸ To fully grasp this participation in general, see also G. Mantzaridis, *Ἡ ἐμπειρική θεολογία στὴν οἰκολογία καὶ τὴν πολιτική*, Thessaloniki 1994, pp. 61-2, pp. 112-113, (and p. 112, as well as p. 133 on the support of social justice by the “free” church), esp. pp. 130-1.

¹²⁹ For some key points of my assessment of the fluctuating way of thinking of Orthodox Christians who participate in the modern dialogues see Kourembeles, *Λόγος Θεολογίας*, vol. I, Thessaloniki 2009, p. 170ff. Also, I would refer the reader – following an imaginary line connecting St. John Chrysostom with Dostoyevsky – to the ecumenical interpretation of the Christian (ideal) in F. Dostoyevsky (see Soloviev who points out, in relation to Dostoyevsky that for him, Christ was not a thing of the past, a distant inconceivable miracle).

undergone¹³⁰, de-sanctifying and de-Churching it. Indeed, the problem comes when people insist upon de-sanctifying or de-Churching the Liturgy (Eucharist), so that its theanthropic content is replaced by collective individualisms, which promise economic salvation for us. Consideration is clearly being given here, not to universal salvation in Christ, which heals everything as a whole, but to economic pseudo-salvation in Christianity (or by Christianity)¹³¹.

One may note, then, in theology in Greece, too, the impression that what has gained dominance as a generally accepted truth is an intense (anti-Patristic) relativism which, in essence, I believe meets theological totalitarianism. Indeed, the encounter between relativism and totalitarianism does not concede to others the right to theologize with their own identity and particular experience of faith. It may be that Florovsky's phrase about the "return to the Fathers" is now an apt exhortation also for the relativist "orthodox" theologians, who are blinded by the lights of the complex of inter-religious corridors, without, it seems, being interested in the rich armoury of the ecumenical Orthodox tradition and without seeing its coherence in a theandric

¹³⁰ At this point it would be interesting to examine the concept of spiritual paternity, in order to understand the spiritual background of Patristic theology. I would refer anyone interested to G. D. Martzelos, *Ὁ Μ. Βασίλειος ὡς πρότυπο πνευματικῆς πατρότητος*; idem, *Ὁρθόδοξο δόγμα καὶ θεολογικὸς προβληματισμός*, vol. IV, Thessaloniki 2011, pp. 63-102, here pp. 64-5, and bibliographic indications.

¹³¹ It is therefore no accident that the modern ecumenical texts abound in imperatives and the ethical rules of an inter-Christian elite, which will (promise to) save the economically weak by lending its God (or gods), even though their (literary) language cannot reach the humble, diligent person, who, of course, does not have to be economically deprived in order to be deprived. Studies on modern ecumenical texts are also fraught with imperatives, as they now explicitly reject theological reflection and invest in transcriptional-transcriptive representations of a pluralist religious faith.

Person, which makes it Patristic and, at every time, really interactive with the salvation of all people¹³².

C. The Lesson of Religious Education in Schools

In a climate, therefore, where totalitarian relativism sees tradition as a threat, doubtless because it (also) looks at culture with an intellectualist eye¹³³, theologians of a particular and un-Christological post-Patristic view become the tools for supporting the notion that the lesson of religious education in schools should not be of a confessional nature. How, though, do they understand “confessionality”, when they understand culture through intellectualism.

¹³² In the study *Waiting for the barbarians*, by B. Gallaher, esp. p. 679, an interested party will encounter Florovsky’s main style of expression. We ought to point out that Florovsky referred to the ecclesification of knowledge and life and it was from this perspective that he understood the creativity of the living church (see for example op. cit. P. 671). In this study, Florovsky is said to have drawn upon the work of Russian, as well as Western thinkers, such as the German Möhler (see p. 674ff.); through the latter’s work he is said to refer to the living tradition of the saints, the living continuation of spiritual life (p. 676). Yet it is a fact that even such a representation could not surmount Florovsky’s Christological interpretation of theology and the church, let alone the criticism he exercises against those who overemphasized Pneumatology independently of the fact of Christ, the hypostatic centre of ecclesiastical life (see p. 678). I am of the opinion that, while B. Gallaher believes that Florovsky has invented barbarians in order to validate his own critique of Western theology, he nevertheless ignores in practice the significance of Florovsky’s Christocentric theology for his critique of Western theology and spirituality, by reducing his reference to it to a single page (678). What Gallaher wants to say is that Florovsky borrowed from Western thought and tried to dispute it with what he had borrowed. However, this simplification is a rather savage interpretation of the late Russian theologian and we ought to be sceptical about Gallaher’s ultimate proposal for a modern Orthodox theology: “Critics of modern Orthodox theology need to go beyond the all-too-common stereotype that while Bulgakov was beholden to idealism and sundry tainted Western sources, Florovsky’s theology was a creature merely of the Fathers” (p. 679).

¹³³ N. Matsoukas, (see more in his book *Πολιτισμός αὐθαγῆς λεπτῆς*, Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 75-140) wisely points out that the blame is to be found in our inadequate and defective education system, which teaches us that civilization means nothing but battles, heroes and revolutions. He states emphatically that tradition and culture involve an unquenchable and uninterrupted fermentation process and impetus for ideas and actions over the whole length and breadth of a society, and even more so, ecclesiastical society. See below my specific references to Matsoukas’ perception of the “Greek-Christian culture”. What I ought to note here is that the detailed reference to Matsoukas on my part in this section is fully intentional, as I observe a misuse of his discourse on such serious matters as education and culture.

In every instance, they consider that, since it is difficult for syncretistic thought to pierce the block of the institutional Church, which is indifferent to it, it might be easier to have it pass through the state, which is indifferent to the conflicts between theologians, and through the state's mechanistic education system. The nature of the lesson, they say, should be cultural¹³⁴. Here, of course, we see an extension and attempt at the practical application of the whole school of thought we have been looking at, which now has to pass on to the level of the education of young people in Greece. Clearly those who do not have the power to look into the eyes of and delight in a rich and vital

¹³⁴ See P. Kalaitzidis, Τα θρησκευτικά ως πολιτιστικό μάθημα, in Σύναξη 74, (2000) pp. 69-83. In this text, the author speaks of the historic end of the subject of religious education as a lesson of Orthodox catechism and of the historic privileges of the Orthodoxy (p. 69). Therefore, he suggests that the lesson be cultural (p. 70). Now what does this mean? Culture becomes the criterion for the lesson (p. 70). Culture as a modern pluralistic fact and reality, rather than an ecclesiastical product, whose life and history reflect an ontology and point to this interaction with education. As such, from an epistemological perspective (through a descriptive, historical-hermeneutical approach), theology ought to give answers through a lesson that should not be associated with the Greek nation but should be a "lesson on Orthodoxy rather than on Greek Orthodox culture" (p. 72). In fact, the author even questions the constitutional and legislative validity of the lesson (pp. 73-74); Clearly the author does not want others to be content with being appointed by the state (p. 73) and, in my opinion, he goes on to preach the ideology behind a multi-cultural lesson of Religious Education (p. 74). It is not merely a cultural lesson but a multi-cultural one, which ought to be de-Hellenized in order to address this need. The problem the author sees when thinking of (imagining) Greece full of immigrants is the following: "Who are we going to teach the confessional-catechistic lesson to?" (p. 75). The above author perceives Religious Education as an educational lesson, rather than a catechistic-confessional one. This, however, makes him ignore the ontological background of a lesson which conveys the freedom in Christ as an everlasting reality. And here is another pseudo-dilemma regarding the question as to what kind of lesson we want: "A catechistical-confessional lesson which will be optional? Or a cultural-historical-hermeneutical and, therefore, compulsory lesson?". If the catechistical-confessional lesson is associated with freedom more than the other, then I would personally choose a confessional one. What I mean to say, in jest, is that from the absolutism of confessionalism, one is led to the other extreme, the relativization of truth and the epistemological monism that is proposed by those who defend religious freedom. I certainly cannot deny the epistemological nature of the lesson; it is the absolutization of this character that I fear, and the "epistemologically orthodox" who refer to the incarnation of the word (p. 77) and definitely not of God's Word. 4737489578

tradition, and chant slogans from positions of strength which they seek frantically, may yet cause irreparable damage with the legitimization of their slogans.

So the issue is no longer so unimportant that we can be indifferent to its consequences, for fear the relativists might call us conservatives, which is the norm in today's institutional dialogue terminology, in order to avoid real critical dialogue and the self-criticism of those who call themselves something else¹³⁵. It is the Church which is hypostasized by participation in the very flesh of God and does not need post-fridges or post-freezers¹³⁶ to be saved and to save, to create culture and to create, in its proper identity, from the experience of human cultures. In its incarnation in this flesh, Patristic theology remains Patristic and testifies in any context, to true and unfeigned affection for the whole world and concern for the existential destitution of all people. As such, this theology remains assumptive, knowing what it brings with

¹³⁵ It makes an impression that, while the "weight" of the conservatives is given as a reason for the failure of a combined quantitative participation of the Orthodox in the WCC, in G. Laimopoulos' book *Δομή*, pp. 55-6, ultimate failure is ascribed to the "North Atlantic, Anglo-Saxon, Reformed dominance in the Council". In any case, when we are not talking about participation in a quality destination, why is it necessary, a priori, to divide the Eucharistic body of the Orthodox church into conservatives and progressives, thus leading to a potentially explosive situation for the ecclesiastical communion of the Orthodox? So we cannot but notice that, while some profess "orthodox Orthodoxy", others profess (what kind of profession is that!) "Eucharistic unification" (of which Orthodoxy really?) with the heterodox traditions that dominate the confessional councils in quantitative terms. Is it perhaps the time (after a century of novel and modern or post-modern, inter-Christian contacts) to look to the significance of inter-Orthodox Eucharist communion as an exercise in ecumenical practice? Orthodox theology is a theology of sincerity hypostasized in the incarnate, unfeigned God. The practice of Orthodox, diligent sincerity is what we are searching for in the truly ecumenical behavior taught by the history of Patristic tradition, which is disregarded today, not fortuitously in my opinion, by the pretentious post-Patristic or post-liturgical ideology.

¹³⁶ It is Kalaitzidis' view that the Orthodox Church "...often finds itself trapped and frozen in a "fundamentalism of tradition", which makes it hard for its pneumatology and its charismatic dimension to be worked out in practice". [Challenges of Renewal and Reformation Facing the Orthodox Church, in *The Ecumenical Review* 61 (2009), pp. 136-4, here p. 137].

it and what it really has to offer, through its theanthropic experience, to humanist learning in Greece, which ignores this perspective:

“And, indeed, even to this day, the lesson of religious education is a caricature of moralistic and abstract metaphysical aphorisms, while the culture of Orthodoxy remains inaccessible to students in such a way that they do not get so much as a whiff of the fact that a great, historical legacy exists”¹³⁷.

One suspects that the object of the thinking of those who support the relativist view we are discussing is not the global event of Christ, but culture as “art for art’s sake”, a pretentious art. It seems to be a committed theological view, which, in the end, attempts, in its confusion of mind, to find support in the declared position of the late Professor Matsoukas regarding the cultural religious lesson. It does so to find a reference and to give itself some sort of existence¹³⁸. In other words, to save itself, rather than theology, as the candid and indwelling life in a world which is reeling and needs it as a valid branch of knowledge. Beyond the fact that no reference is, in itself, salvation, especially if it has

¹³⁷ See Matsoukas, op. cit., p. 200.

¹³⁸ For this use of Matsoukas by Stamoulis, see his website (<http://antidosis.wordpress.com/2011/12/12/τα-θρησκευτικά-ως-μάθημα-πολιτισμού/#more-11>) (25/1/12), where, with regard to his proposal on the lesson of religious education, there is a reference to the following characteristics: “By claiming that the time when the lesson had a confessional and catechistic aspect is gone forever, Stamoulis describes the monumental proposal that was submitted by the late Professor Matsoukas of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki as a milestone for the lesson of religious education, in the 1st Conference of Theologians of Northern Greece (May 1981). Based on this proposal- to which the Theology Department of AUTH and eminent contemporary thinkers also lean- the lesson of religious education, unfettered by extreme ideologies and incorporated into an open school context, must be free from any kind of moral, catechistic and confessional bonds and become a lesson of culture, with an entirely epistemological content. Its primary subject matter should be the Bible, Patristic and liturgical texts, all monumental works of art and ecclesiastical history that reveal the person of Christ, which ought to be the focal point of the lesson.

not been investigated in depth¹³⁹, the cultural theologians forget that the culture of the homiletic tradition, of hymnography, iconography,

¹³⁹ In his well-known study on the lesson of religious education, N. Matsoukas was perfectly clear from the outset: "The universal and timeless nature of the lesson does not disregard the given historical background and ecclesiastical life, while at the same time it can be placed among the general objectives of Education" [A theological interpretation of the objectives of the lesson of religious education, in *Κοινωνία* 24 (1981) pp. 307-320, here p. 307. Matsoukas points out the particularity of Orthodox life and of our cultural tradition (p. 311). He is against the moralistic and confessional nature of religious education in the West (p. 311), as he perceives its confessional aspect as something that is opposed to cultural tradition, as well as to Christian life and its universal message (p. 311). Therefore, Matsoukas does not seem to prefer religious education with an epistemological nature. He underlines the need to be free from the Western model of religious education that has been followed by the Greek system and calls for a connection between knowledge and faith (p. 311-2). He writes: "It can be readily understood that the objective of the lesson of religious education, which in our case is to foster the Orthodox spirit, cannot be achieved if the wealth of our Byzantine tradition, as well as the teachers who will inspire a love for it, are not present. It is, of course, a prerequisite to keep the Christian spirit alive, a spirit that will be reflected in the practice of worship" (p. 313). He goes on, then, to talk about epistemological content, after having associated it with ontology and he objects to the absolutization of epistemological soteriology. In fact, he refers to the teacher as the embodiment of morality, thus associating knowledge with ethos, and raises objections to the dissociation of knowledge and faith or knowledge and morality, which we see in the Western approach (p. 313). Therefore, for Matsoukas, "confessional" is that which refers to the fragmentation of being and seeks the disruption of man. This is not what compromises faith, which, for Matsoukas, is one with reason ("because faith, though it can never be a function of a self-governed reason, is yet a manifestation of the whole being, where reason is always present. This is why, according to a dominant trend in Patristic theology, knowledge is realized "in deed" and action in "reason", pp. 313-4). So, in this case, confessional is dogmatic (from the word "dogmatism"). And so, the great Matsoukas defends the piety of the unlearned while he opposes the dialectic of the West, which is still coveted today by contemporary academic theologians, as is clear from my references in this work. This is why he refers to a "historical learning and familiarization with the cultural artefacts that are associated with Christian life" (p. 314) and disputes the cold moralism, that, in my opinion, characterises totalitarianists and relativists alike. On this account, he equates Orthodox asceticism with culture, within the context of ecclesiastical culture [see his work *Ὁ θαμβὸς καθρέφτης*, Thessaloniki 2000, p. 26; see also his work *Εὐρώπη ὠδίνουσα*, Thessaloniki 1998, pp. 266-7, on the cultural value of asceticism].

I am tempted to relate several of Matsoukas' theories, knowing well that those who quote him on their views concerning the lesson of religious education do not fully comprehend him and actually misquote him. I will, at this point, cite a passage, indicative of his views: "As a result, the objective of the lesson of religious education cannot be achieved unless it is dictated by the Orthodox cultural tradition of Byzantium and unless we realize that the lesson must in a plain and lively manner represent the secondary aspect of our tradition, which is the culture of Byzantium...we observe the dominance of the Greek Orthodox tradition which is in fact the Byzantine culture that we experience in ecclesiastical life..." (p. 315). Matsoukas wants contemporary thinkers to relate to this culture and fertilize it here and now. It is no accident that

ecclesiastical literature in general, and of life are museum style exhibits only for those who treat them as such¹⁴⁰.

Cultural theologians today equate the confessional aspect with the Patristic-theological-traditional¹⁴¹ and the existential declaration of faith, giving greater emphasis to the de-constructed faiths within the

he says: "Neither the defenders nor the opponents have ever realized that Greek Christian culture, if we wish to adopt this undue and misused term, is in fact the Greek Orthodox tradition or Byzantine culture in its specific traditional landmarks and its current life form, even more so in living ecclesiastical tradition and liturgical life" (p. 316). This is Matsoukas responds to the neologism "Greek Christian culture", which was condemned by modernist theologians, in the same way as Patricity has been condemned by today by post-Patristic, modern and post-modern theologians.

On this account, he refers to a Byzantine art that is closely knit to the Greek character and Christianity (p. 316), art that springs from experiencing the mystery of Christian life, where theology (dogma) and culture are interwoven (see for example, *Μυστήριον ἐπὶ τῶν ιερῶς κεκοιμημένων καὶ ἄλλα μελετήματα*, Thessaloniki 1992, pp. 83-101, and pp. 271-88). For Matsoukas, the theological prerequisite is experiential, a specific act that appropriates the Greek expression morphologically, without assimilating the morphology (pp. 316-7). He wonders "Is it perhaps because of this that, during the Ottoman occupation, when those who lost their Greek tongue were still considered Greek, whereas those who lost their Orthodox faith were by no means considered Greek?" (p. 317). Matsoukas stressed the rift between Greekness and Christianity in our contemporary society as a way of life that was responsible for the distortion of the Greek identity. The focal point of his thought is living Orthodoxy, which he associates with the modern Greek identity [*Πολιτισμός αὐρας λεπτής*, Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 2256, p. 232 (in fact, in this work Kosmas Aetolos is depicted as "the real Byzantine Greek") see also Matsoukas, *Σκέψεις καὶ σχόλια στὰ Ὁράματα καὶ Θάματα τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Μακρυγιάννη*, in Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς 699, (1984), pp. 135-149]. He claims that Orthodoxy in Greece was attacked by the Greek Enlightenment and the thinkers who virtually rejected Greek Byzantine culture, thus aiming at an uncritical dependency on the West, instead of a dialogue. He discerned the moralist and puritan side of the West in the advocates of the Greek Enlightenment and I am sure that he would attribute it without hesitation to the modern socialist and post-Patristic theologians, some of which actually identify him as their mentor, just as he would attribute to them, based on his criteria, a degradation to neo-idolatry and neo-demystification.

¹⁴⁰ Since Matsoukas did not treat them as such and because of his belief that the main reason for the disagreement between thinkers and theologians was the existence of this confessional aspect in both Departments of Theology in Greece, which hindered the carrying out of original scientific research, he does not hesitate to suggest that the two Departments of Theology be subsumed under the Faculty of Philosophy (*Νεοελληνικός πολιτισμός καὶ διανόηση*, pp. 40-41). Clearly, he is afraid of committed theological research (either conservative or progressive), which will eventually contend with an uncommitted Orthodox research prospect.

¹⁴¹ Matsoukas was right to foresee and understand (*Εὐρώπη ὠδίνουσα*, p. 167) that "tradition wants yet to live, it holds on in anguish to the hearts of men, so that it does not perish" and to stress that "if we lose it, we will certainly lose an essential part of our existence, of our roots".

epistemological arena of multiculturalism. Clearly, this cultural view of the lesson has in mind its detachment from educational ontology, from the ontology in Christ, of Christ Who is always experienced in the Church. And so it is fighting on the side of religious personalities and cultures, and supports its epistemological all-round education, making a caricature and, if the reader will permit me the expression, a literary confusion of Christ, the condescending God.

So, great weight should be given, in a traditional understanding of the lesson, to not misconstruing the meaning of tradition, so that it does not appear that it functions in life as an un-Christologized pre-liturgy, which the post-Patristic, post-liturgical theologians who are seeking a post-theological lesson are ready to declare officially to be the enemy. As mistaken as the post-Patristic, post-liturgical theologians are in their views, equally so are the traditionalist theologians who see the traditional without Christ, Who contains its and its holy Fathers; Christ the dismembered but not divided God, Who invites us continuously and creatively to the culture of His corporeality¹⁴² for the sake of all humankind and its cultures¹⁴³.

¹⁴² Here I use corporeality not by accident but because the culture of incarnation that is favoured by cultural theologians appears to be covert support of the view of Patristic Platonism, while at the same time these theologians seem to favour a Platonic relationship between epistemology and the ecclesiastical and charismatic theology of the Fathers. I thereby dissociate myself from the fleshly perception of the Christian culture as a sin-friendly culture.

¹⁴³ The point is that one should embrace the idea that the church is able to create culture, rather than believe, as is usually the case, that it is impossible to produce something of a cultural nature under the auspices of a conservative and fundamentalist community, as the ecclesiastical community is perceived, according to Matsoukas, by some intellectuals, mostly foreign, and also by those who have no relation to the church whatsoever (see these views in Νεοελληνικός πολιτισμός και διανόηση, pp. 35-40). Matsoukas is against the division between the cultural and ecclesiastical world, as is evident, for example, in his critical attitude towards the separation of the theological from the literary that he detects in Elytis' critique of ecclesiastical writers (see Matsoukas, Πολιτισμός αὐρας λεπτῆς, pp. 371-4).

In this misconstrued expression of a post-Patristic, or post-Patristic and pre-liturgical, or post-liturgical apportionment, theology works as an ideology and seeks supporters and new alignments, flags and slogans, electrical cables for the one to shock the other, using Christ either as the only traditional religious leader or as one of the many religious leaders in the world.

Instead of an epilogue

There are times when modern post-theology of the views which I have described reminds me- it and its opponents, which it *a priori* imagines and creates ideologically- that it deals with Patristic theology as if it were a bag left on the belt at the luggage claim of a closed airport with no-one there to claim it. Some would probably like it to be stuck on the belt, while others fear that it is packed with explosives and other obstacles to their personal success¹⁴⁴. I am of the view that Patristic theology is the theology of the holy Fathers, which certainly seems not to attract the modernist-friendly theologians of late modernity, to use their own terminology. If some supporters of the Patristic tradition want it to be stuck on the belt, they are at fault, as are they who do not wish to accept that the only (and certainly resurrectional) explosive material it contains is the incarnation of God and the possibility of people's deification (glorification). As long as theologians remain forcibly closed

¹⁴⁴ Here I will repeat Matsoukas' apposite remark: "I wish to emphasize that history is neither written by Little Red Riding Hoods nor judged by one-sided choices of a Puritan nature at will" (Μυστήριον ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶς κεκοιμημένων, p. 273) which I shall link, not randomly but indissolubly to his other remark: "there is no such thing as a discontinuous culture, therefore, conservatism [...] is signified by the previous bridges, while progressiveness by the next ones" (Matsoukas, Νεοελληνικὸς πολιτισμὸς καὶ διανόηση, pp. 16-7). I will let the reader draw their own conclusions as to my views- by means of a conscious association of the above remarks.

to this mystery they will post-philosophize with many ulterior motives and not a few post-theologies.

In the age of computers and the era of TLG, many theologians want their nourishment ready-chewed and vapidly mutilate their imagination with electronic search-engines¹⁴⁵, underestimating the value

¹⁴⁵ Originally, there was no reference at this point of my text, wearisomely yet necessarily full of references. Just before I had it sent to those responsible for the publication of the Proceedings of the Meeting where it was delivered, I was informed on the internet of the Memorandum that was sent by the Academy of Volos to the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece (see the text in <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/417/1/lang,el/>). In it, it is said that “we ought to bear in mind that the Academy of Theological Studies was not the first to use the term “post-Patristic” theology. Ioannis Karmiris, the eminent dogmatologist and Professor of the Department of Theology of the University of Athens, used it in his classic work: *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησιολογία (Δογματικῆς, Τμήμα Ε'*, Athens 1973, p. 679 and passim). Regarding the reasons for which his work *Μυστικισμός, Ἀποφατισμός, Καταφατική Θεολογία* (Athens 1974, p. 5) was compiled, Panagiotis Trembelas, another eminent Orthodox theologian, explicitly states that: “Frequently in his recently published important work *Ἐκκλησιολογία*, Ioannis Karmiris prompts the contemporary generation of Greek-Orthodox theologians to make a great effort to develop a post-Patristic theology”. Alexander Schmemmann, the eminent Orthodox theologian and liturgist of the 20th century, talks about post-Patristic theology as well (see *Russian Theology: 1920-1972. An Introductory Survey*, SVTQ, 16 [1972], p. 178)”. The wary reader will clearly understand that “modern Greek post-Patristic theory” cannot be saved from its belly-flop by an amputated-forged epistemology unless it engages in really fasting self-criticism. What we are dealing with here is definitely an effort to mislead. As I believe that this distortion ought to be the reason for a specific study, I will, at this point, mention in a few words that in his work, Schmemmann was actually referring to the movements that had been dominant since the beginning of the 20th century, without actually using the term himself. He refers to the first theological trend, which ought to go “beyond the Fathers” “while staying true to its Patristic roots”, as well as to a second trend which urged the “return to the Fathers” and the rediscovery of their creative spirit (a spirit that was connected to the Greek ways of theological creation). This is Schmemmann’s descriptive reference to the movements mentioned above. As far as Trembelas is concerned, he is aware of Karmiris’ study, which urges the need for the development of a post-Patristic theology, without (on the part of Trembelas) showing any particular interest in this term (he simply transmits Karmiris’ words). What he is interested in, is associating Karmiris’ exhortation with the need for an apophatic theology (that is derived from the Fathers) (here the term post-Patristic theology is not an ideological term that Trembelas is interested in, as we are today because of the “post-Patristic theory”). In fact Karmiris, who is obviously aware- as his references reveal- of the period of ferment in Russian theology and the theological movements of his time, associates the neo-Patristic with the post-Patristic and the modern state of theology (of his time), so as to weld them with the blowgun of Patricity and eventually to claim that Orthodox theology ought to turn to the Fathers themselves. That is, he perceives a post-Patristic theory that needs to follow after Patricity (I would say Patricity after Patricity as an uninterrupted event). However, this is his way of taking a stand against the extreme cataphatic trends in Western theology, through his

of it exercising itself actively in Christ and really re-creating from the experience of the holy Fathers and their theology¹⁴⁶. But Orthodoxy is unorthodox, like Christ's mother, and His Church is a bride unwedded, because it gives birth to the incarnate God and is born from Him sacramentally¹⁴⁷.

If, therefore, Orthodoxy is understood in the context of extreme human affirmation and of the logical necessity for relevancy, then it becomes dogmatism. Orthodoxy certainly needs to co-mingle with the strange Christ, in order to exist in fact as an explosion of our logic within the unorthodoxy of the union between the divine and the human, in which true ecumenicity is experienced. Only thus can we speak of Orthodoxy, when we conceive of it as experienced para-doxo, which seems to be something entirely ignored in the post-theological views (or

proposal for a combination of what he himself (not moved by ideology) calls post-Patristic theology with the "return to the great Orthodox Fathers" and through the use of the "Patristic theological way of thinking to a great extent and in depth" (p. 679). On p. 680 he goes on to clarify: "We deem it absolutely the broad and in depth use of traditional Patristic thought by modern theology in general to be absolutely..., as tradition is not a dead entity, rather a life-bearing spirit...". It is clear that Karmiris' ontological/theological considerations bear no relation whatsoever to that of the Greek modern "post-Patristic theology", which would understand Florovsky's anxiety for the Greek Patristic spirit as a true ecumenical spirit if these older texts had been taken into account and it would not, as an aspiring theory, differentiate between what is Greek and what is Christian. I do not believe that anyone might claim (now or in the future) that I agree with this theory, just because I, not, of course, as an eminent theologian, have often used the term "post-Patristic" theology in this text.

¹⁴⁶ In a characteristic remark, in *Θεολογία καὶ πολιτισμὸς* (in the collective work *Θεολογία καὶ τέχνη*, Thessaloniki 1998. Pp. 80-85), Matsoukas talks about the attuned sense organs of the Scriptures and of Patristic theology that are collected in the Byzantine tradition, as he clarifies elsewhere the non-static nature of the content of the Scriptures and of theology (see *Χριστιανισμὸς καὶ τεχνολογία*, in *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐπιστοασία* 300 (1975), pp. 60-61).

¹⁴⁷ See also Behr, *The Trinitarian Being of the Church*, p. 88: "The Church, as the body of Christ and the temple of the Spirit, incarnates the presence of God in this world, and does so also as the mother of the baptized, in travail with them until their death in confession of Christ, to be raised with him, as the fulfillment of their baptism and the celebration of the eucharist".

pre-theological intentions) to which I referred above in brief and with my admittedly poor critical faculties.

To Sum Up

In what has been said above, there was movement along three axes towards a critical reading centred on the expression of contemporary post-theological terminology:

a) in the progression from the dialogue with Roman Catholicism and static eschatology to pneumatic eschatology, which favours dialogue with the Protestantism; b) in the introduction of newly-coined terms into theological thought and into this dialogical direction which is being activated by modern theologians; and c) in the problematics created today about the lesson of religion education in schools. Let us look at them briefly.

In the first part, a view is given of the kinesiology of the theological dialogue in the form of institutional Eucharistology, which was used as a tool for dialogue with Roman Catholicism until the post-Patristic proposal. The latter shows a preference for "Pneumatic Trinitocentrism" which is used as a lever of communication with Protestant ecclesiology and inter-religious thinking. It is precisely here that a parallel route of Trinitology and Ecclesiology seems to thrive, one which is in a loose or even indifferent relationship with the ontology of the Eucharistic life.

The terms post-Patristic theology and post-liturgy, as they are analyzed, indicate that they are in organic affinity with the tendency among modern theologians to act in the margins of theology (in the context of a post-theology) and to seek this post-theology as a more

promising prospect for inter-Christian (or inter-religious) dialogue in today's multi-cultural age. The criticism levelled at the above terms focuses on the field of their paternity and where their content leaves behind unanswered theological questions, that is, where the actual theology of the Fathers is ignored as the true ecumenical theology. The fanatical slogan "beyond the Fathers", as well as an un-Christologized post-liturgy are judged by the use of the proposition "post", in the sense that, for those who employ it, it clearly means "later time" and moving away from Patristic and liturgical theology to superseding the incarnated theology itself and the historical flesh of God, which the liturgical life of the Church brings with it.

The third part highlights the thinking concerning the lesson of religious education and the new tortuous paths this leads to when it is looked at in post-theological terms. The use of its concept as a cultural, religious lesson has received criticism from the point of view of the dangers that lurk in its epistemological exclusivization. Therefore it is considered that the lesson as a cognitive object is in mutual dependence with the Church experience, with the ontology (and not exclusively the epistemology) of Orthodox culture, something which also demonstrates the importance of the indivisible relationship between charismatic and academic theology and their unconfused union.

Finally, the characteristic element which is stressed emphatically is the paradoxical fact of the divine incarnation as an event of comingling Eucharistically and of importance educationally. This is why the paradoxical form "Unorthodox Orthodoxy" was chosen for our title, with a positive meaning, in order to note, as a theological refrain in the study, the feebleness of human logic in the face of the strangeness of the

divine incarnation, which wants people to respond positively to God the Word in logical faith. The lack of this perspective in the ideological snapshots of modern post-theological patterns and systems demonstrates how weak and non-existent their soteriology is. Soteriology is actually experienced and expressed ecumenically and truly dialogically by the ever-alive tradition of the holy Fathers and the theanthropic culture of its saints.

Ioannis N. Markas

Researcher

POST-PATRISTIC WORKS AND DAYS

INTRODUCTION. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

We ought to note, at the outset, that our paper will be restricted almost exclusively to the exploits of the “Academy of Theological Studies” of the Holy Metropolis of Dimitriados and to the representative activities of certain people who participate in its programmes. This is because, in our humble estimation, this particular theological institute was the first in Greece to officially establish and give foundation to the term “post-Patricity” in the well-known, four-day conference which took place between 2-6 June, 2010. This certainly does not mean that the Academy and its collaborators coined post-Patricity, nor that well-known post-Patristic circles are not active outside it, since the post-Patristic issue is as old as the all-embracing heresy of Ecumenism, which, in order to gain traction, was based largely on the famous “transcendence of the Fathers”. We consider, however, that it is worth taking the trouble to investigate, within the context of a brief paper, the case of the Academy in particular, in such a way as to approach the “works and days” of its post-Patristic agents, who have caused so much noise in the whole of the Orthodox theological world.

For many, of course, it may sound strange that an academy of theological studies should create such noise and so many reactions to its very name. Is the problem of its operation really so important, and on what points is this focused? In the first place, very generally and roughly, an initial answer might be the fact that it is a theological institute within the Greek Orthodox sphere, which is producing a “new wave” of theology, a kind of “theological studies” different from what we have known so far, a purely “new age” model of the workshop theology of syncretism, with a specialist academic work group, whose mutual

association seems to extend beyond the narrow bounds of the academic/theological field. The problem, in short, is not superficial, or one-dimensional, as some people might think, but complex, many-layered, with deep roots and therefore difficult to approach and deal with. What, a few decades ago, was thought of as the “margin” is now the dominant stream in the theological sphere, even among the Orthodox.

The Volos Academy is the fruit and acquisition of the modernizing spirit which has been relayed from the West into the Orthodox East. The tactic which has been followed and is still being implemented is simple and well-designed: teachers of the “New Age” undertake the education of suitable people in order to make them the next heralds and missionaries of the New Age theology of inter-Christian and inter-religious syncretism, to an Orthodox body entirely uninstructed and uninformed as to their real intentions. A part of the Church establishment is now assisting in this effort, hesitantly entering the modernizing stage, supporting this new theology and its official agents and encouraging it in practical ways. As we shall see shortly, all this subtle and imperceptible apostasy in the field of theology, in combination with the way of life - imported from the West - which has come to dominate everyday affairs, is shaping, in the Orthodox world, with slow but steady and methodical steps, a pseudo-Christian spirituality, a theological caricature which is leading with mathematical precision to the “religious baggaging” of peoples, via Universal Religion and Ecumenism, i.e. to a new religious awareness of the global system.

A. Purpose – Structure- Funding of the Volos Academy

The Academy of Theological Studies seems to serve such a modernizing plan faithfully. One of the close colleagues of the Academy, the well-known journalist, Stavros Zoumboulakis, of the *Kathimerini* newspaper, in an article in

the periodical he edits entitled “The renewal enterprise of the Academy of Theological Studies”¹⁴⁸, expressed precisely that enthusiasm, over the birth of substantial change in theological thought in Greece. His view is of particular interest because it expresses the views of almost all those who are taking part in this profound theological think-tank and shows us the sign-post being used as a direction finder by the institute and its representatives. The first element is the fact that the “Academy is entirely free of any theological anti-Westernism”. The position of the Holy Fathers, that Western Christianity is- in the post-schism era- a heresy, is characterized as laughable and, at the same time, theologians of the West such as Aquinas and Luther are recognized as “colossal” names. A second feature, according to Zoumboulakis, is that the Academy resists the embellishment and much-lauded image of Byzantium, while at the same time is praised for the fact that it is beginning to de-demonize the Enlightenment and approach it without obscurantism and a fanatical spirit, while at the same time targeting Byzantium for the way it has fought against it. A third feature, a real achievement for the “academic” theologians is the conversation with intellectuals and thinkers outside the Church “who are not Christians, but agnostics and atheists”. This theological turn is of the greatest assistance in making it possible for the issues under discussion by the Academia to be characterized by an extroversion, “that is to be directed towards society and culture”.

But what exactly is the complex known to us as the “Academy of Theological Studies” of the Holy Metropolis of Dimitrias, which made its appearance for the first time in the year 2000? In actual fact, it is an Non-Governmental Organization, entitled “Academy of Dimitrias NGO”, headed by the president, who is the local Metropolitan, Ignatios, and it follows the classic

¹⁴⁸ *Νέα Εστία*, no. 1805, November 2007. All the references are in Greek unless specified.

tactic, as all NGOs commonly do: it participates in open government-funded programmes. As has been aptly said, if you want money by the bucketful, found a non-governmental organization. The truth is that, until recently, it was a reasonable and serious question how such an institute was funded, to the extent of being able to organize extremely expensive symposia and conferences or carry out programmes and missions “away from home”, even in far away lands abroad¹⁴⁹, **and generally how it is possible in the middle of a severe economic crisis for such an institution to function at full tilt.**

So the interesting point is that we have to do with an institute whose title and charter declare that it has no connection with states or governments, yet whose funding, in a good number of cases is from the state. Besides, only recently it was revealed that the Academy of Dimitrias NGO was queuing up, with another 174 NGOs, to claim (and share with whoever it chose to) 280 million euros for “social work” from a programme of the Ministry of Employment¹⁵⁰. The example, moreover, is indicative of a day conference in April 2011, in Athens, at the Caravel Hotel, on “the importance of inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue”¹⁵¹, and in which the Academy of Theological Studies played a leading role. The conference was organized by the Embassy of Indonesia, in Athens, under the aegis (and, therefore, funded by) the Foreign Ministries of Greece and Indonesia. The conference was attended by religious functionaries, university professors, ambassadors, and highly-placed members of diplomatic delegations in Athens, of more than 20 states, as well as journalists and also students. Among much else, a message was read out from the Archbishop of Athens by his representative, an indication of the high level of support it enjoyed

¹⁴⁹ <http://amen.gr/index.php?mod=news&op=article&aid=5798>

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.kerdos.gr/default.aspx?id=1566728&nt=103>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.amen.gr/index.php?mod=news&op=article&aid=5354>

from different circles- including the Church- while an impression was made by the variety of speakers: Muslims of university level, a Protestant woman “priest”, Orthodox university professors, the mastermind of the Academy, Pandelis Kalaitzidis, and also a representative of the Greek Institute for European and Foreign Policy (better known as ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ/ELIAMEP), **Professor Anna Triandafyllidou**, a researcher at the above centre, which is funded generously by George Soros’ “Open Society Foundation”, the Ford Foundation, the Marshall Foundation, the World Bank and other relatively “charitable” foundations¹⁵².

Among all of these colossi- entirely fortuitously- a leading role is played by the humble Volos Academy. And the equally humble question which arises is **what reason do the Foreign Ministries of Greek and Indonesia have to be interested in inter-faith dialogue? Why should NGOs with a global range, with well-known officials in the Bilderberg Club and in the multi-national super-lodges, which now quite openly promote the idea of world government, fund such an inter-faith day conference? And how is it that a theological institute of an Orthodox Metropolis should be in co-operation with all of them?** Very simply, because, alongside world government, there follows the idea of religious homogenization, through a call by religions to peace, tolerance and reconciliation. And the mission of the Academy, as will be shown in the unit immediately following, with the programmes and conferences it organizes, is precisely this.

B. The programmes of the Academy:

Towards a “Post-Patristic” Theology

1. Leading Personality of the Academy of Theological Studies, Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitrias.

¹⁵² Yorgos Rakkas, ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ ή μήπως Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Αμερικανικής Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής; periodical Άρδην, vol. 58, p. 20.

Certainly the Academy of Theological Studies would not enjoy the status and legitimacy it does were it not under the protection of an Orthodox Metropolis. Its foundation and operation by the Holy Metropolis of Dimitrias fortified and extended the enterprise, as is clear from its international recognition, as is the support it enjoys both from the Ecumenical Patriarchate¹⁵³, as well as the Archdiocese of Athens¹⁵⁴. This is borne out by the leading role of His Eminence Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitrias, who, by his position, is the director of the Academy, together, of course, with the co-ordinator and person responsible, Pandelis Kalaitzidis. And since, in a text/response written by the Academy to its critics, entitled “Let us stand aright”¹⁵⁵, it was claimed that the local metropolitan was on the end of “ill-intentioned” and “dishonourable” comments concerning “words and phrases which he never said or wrote”, let us examine carefully a very small sample of what His Eminence has said, as published in his own sources.

For a start, let us refer to the fact that, although Ignatios’ positions attempt to place themselves on the side of moderation, in fact they clearly give directions for the course of a conference, while also presenting a concurrence with the spirit of the speakers, who usually follow his own. The phraseology, as we shall see, is particular and tries to create a climate in favour of “altericity”, of “extroversion”, of “Peace” and “reconciliation”, against “anti-Europeanism” and “anti-Westernism”. In the address he gave at the “Theology and Literature II” conference¹⁵⁶, the Metropolitan of Dimitrias, stressed precisely this: **“There is a present danger of the Church becoming a closed caste of the pure, with ready answers, dogmatic immobility and entrenched positions”**. These “ready

¹⁵³ http://fanarion.blogspot.com/2010/12/blog-post_21.html

¹⁵⁴ http://thriskeftika.blogspot.com/2011/12/blog-post_7348.html

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/314/1/lang,el/>

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/173/48/lang,el/>

answers” and the “dogmatic immobility” which terrify the Metropolitan of Dimitrias are the post-Patristic seeds, which, as we shall see below, abound in almost all the papers by the theologians of the Academy.

2. Religion for all, but not for the Orthodox.

One of the issues that the Academy in Volos has undertaken to expedite, unfortunately with catastrophic consequences, is that of the nature of religious instruction in schools and the way it is taught. Unfortunately for the Holy Metropolis of Dimitrias, its Academy has become the centre for the modernization theological group ΚΑΙΠΟΣ (TIME), a theological association of recent appearance, which, meeting no resistance from anywhere, has promoted the deconstruction of the Orthodox confessional character of the lesson of religious instruction as well as the introduction into school timetables of a religion-related, syncretist lesson which will in essence bring epistemological confusion and cause spiritual damage to Orthodox pupils. In this field, too, the Volos Academy is taking the lead in the related propaganda, basically posing to the theological world the ultimatum of: “either a compulsory and religion-related lesson, or religion dropped from school timetables”.

Equally incendiary are the papers by modernizing theologians at various events and conferences organized by the Academy on the subject, often with the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of (formerly “National”) Education and Religious Beliefs. Let us see some typical examples. In one of its assertions on the subject, the “Academy of Theological Studies’ Training Team for the Lesson of Religious Instruction”, consisting of three ladies and one man, states explicitly that the time has come **“to break all the negative terms mentioned above** (that is the confessional and catechetical lesson) **and to work in the opposite direction: that is to be with, talk to, measure up to the “different”, to overcome**

determined defences and entrenched positions, to pursue not ideals inspired by ideology but ones which are educationally vigorous, not to be satisfied with hand-me-down answers, but to seek new ways to respond to active requirements”¹⁵⁷.

This position is also advocated by Stavros Yangazoglou, one of the orchestrators of the de-construction of the Orthodox confessional lesson, advisor to the Pedagogical Institute and prominent member of “KAIPOΣ”. An ardent admirer of the multicultural model, he constantly projects as a logical argument the right of the minority against that of the majority. For him the priority is the encounter with the other “with respect and understanding for the person of the heterodox, for those of other religions, those who are indifferent”¹⁵⁸. Clearly to multiply the numbers of the indifferent. Of course, the issue is one of great importance for Orthodox parents, because the insistence shown by the theologians of “KAIPOΣ” that the lesson of religious instruction be related to knowledge of religions is anything but accidental. They knew full well that children, especially at the impressionable age of the primary school do not have the epistemological foundations to compare good and bad knowledge and to reject the latter. So the first knowledge to which the unsuspecting little pupils will be subjected may well turn out to be definitive as regards the concepts they will form about God and religions¹⁵⁹.

3. Front and centre: “Feminist theology”; “liturgical renewal”; “innovation”; and “world peace”.

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/325/48/lang,el/>

¹⁵⁸

http://www.acadimia.gr/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=154&catid=40%3A---2005-2006&Itemid=76&lang=el

¹⁵⁹ See

http://www.acadimia.gr/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123&catid=38%3A---2003-2004&Itemid=76&lang=el

In the period 2002-3, the advances attempted by the Volos Academy towards “feminist theology” were really impressive; unheard of, however, in Greek terms. One issue literally non-negotiable for the Orthodox was cleverly presented in the papers of the modern theologians as an “existent” and deeply ecclesiological problem¹⁶⁰. We are talking about one of the favourite issues of the “post-Patristic” adherents, which, from the beginning was shown, with good evidence, to be, theologically, **“a form of contextual theology”**¹⁶¹. The tendency which dominates in the papers is clearly in favour even of the “ordination” of women, making the riposte **“the fact that arguments put forward on the part of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church are not founded on decisions of Ecumenical Synods, and the Church clearly does not reach decisions in conferences, but in Ecumenical Synods...”**¹⁶²¹⁶³.

As regards the “liturgical renaissance”, much has been said and written in this area, too. A well-known professor of the Theological School at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has called it an imperative need, and claims that the prime concern of this “renaissance” is **“initially, the participation of the laity in the matter of the liturgy, and thereafter in the administrative and instructive work of the Church. That is, that those who are baptized should express, as the “royal priesthood”, the triple (priestly, royal and prophetic) office of Christ”**¹⁶⁴. But this proposal is a purely Protestant approach, where the things

¹⁶⁰ Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivasileiadi, Η Συμμετοχή των Γυναικών στη Ζωή της Εκκλησίας: μια ακόμη Υποτίμηση του Λαϊκού Στοιχείου,, http://www.acadimia.gr/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=128&catid=39%3A---2004-2005&Itemid=76&lang=el

¹⁶¹ Katerina Karkala-Zorba, Υπάρχει θέση στην Ορθοδοξία για μια Φεμινιστική Θεολογία; <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/78/35/lang,el/>

¹⁶² On the ordination of women, see <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/100/35/lang,el/>

¹⁶³ <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/107/35/lang,el/>

¹⁶⁴ P. Vasileiadis,, Λειτουργική Αναγέννηση και Συμμετοχή των Λαϊκών, http://www.acadimia.gr/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=133&catid=39%3A---2004-2005&Itemid=76&lang=el

concerning the “special” and the “general” priesthood are absorbed and equated and so, precisely as in Protestantism, each person can be a pastor and carry out priestly duties. Also, the other positions it expresses, such as the removal of the exclusion of women from liturgical action; bringing back the people in the place of the choir and the chanter; the translation of liturgical texts; the abandonment of the secret reading of prayers; the removal of the iconostas and, above all, **the participation of all the congregation in Holy Communion without the condition of proper preparation, are anti-Patristic and unacceptable in their totality.**

The above approaches, which probably surprise those hearing them for the first time, are founded on and supported by the dogma of “modernity”, which for some decades now has burst into the theological sphere. In essence it is a reconciliation of theological thought with the spirit of the Enlightenment and, as the post-Patristic-friendly professor of the Panteio University, Thanos Lipovats, says, **“the freedom of modernist Christianity results, however, in the fact that people, as thinking and acting individuals, are no longer bound by traditions and closed patterns of organization and interpretation of nature and society”**¹⁶⁵¹⁶⁶.

In the end, all this is happening **“always with the intention of compromise, generosity and an updated gambit towards them”** (i.e. the heterodox or even those of a different religion) **“in the name of the terms of modernity”**¹⁶⁷. The acceptance of “others/partners” legitimizes the famous

¹⁶⁵ Thanos Lipovats, *Νεωτερικότητα και Εκκοσμίκευση*, http://www.acadimia.gr/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=141&catid=40%3A---2005-2006&Itemid=76&lang=el

¹⁶⁶ Dimitris Bekridakis, *Μετανεωτερικότητα, Θρησκεία και Ορθόδοξη Θεολογία*, http://www.acadimia.gr/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=96&catid=37%3A---2001-2002&Itemid=76&lang=el

¹⁶⁷ His Eminence Elder Chrysostomos (Konstnatinidis) of Ephesus, *Ορθοδοξία και Θρησκευτική Ετερότητα*, <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/83/35/lang,el/>

encyclical of 1902 from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the “Christian Churches”, which makes mention of “offshoots” of Christianity. Only that, in their anxiety to bring about their much-desired “world peace”, some circles forget the incontrovertible words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that: “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”¹⁶⁸. It would appear, however, that this is of small importance to the “office theologians”. The question is whether we are to arrive unconditionally at “they may be one”, not only on the inter-Christian level but also the inter-faith. The conference the Academy organized in 2006-7 and dedicated to Islam found the apt element of unity (apart from “love” which is a given for them) in the common provenance of the “**children of Abraham**”¹⁶⁹¹⁷⁰.

4. The post-Patristic conference.

The straw that broke the camel’s back.

And so we come to the four days of June, 3-6, 2010 and the famous conference “Neo-Patristic Synthesis or post-Patristic Theology? Can Orthodox Theology be Contextual?”. A conference which was funded by the “Orthodox” section of Fordham University of New York, a Jesuit-Papist foundation which is behind the organization of most of the inter-Christian and Ecumenist symposia all over the globe, as well as the German University of Münster. A great deal has been written about this conference, there have been many reliable analyses, so we have no intention of adding yet another. In our estimation, an entirely pertinent analysis can be found in the astonishing “Note” by Metropolitan Pavlos of Glyfada, against “post-Patristic/contextual theology” addressed to the

¹⁶⁸ *Matth.* 7, 19.

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/1/44/lang,el/>

¹⁷⁰ See Petros Vasileiadis, *Το θεολογικό πλαίσιο του διαθρησκευτικού διαλόγου*, <http://www.acadimia.gr/content/view/42/35/lang,el/>

Holy Synod¹⁷¹. All we would add here is that the conference in question essentially concentrated the subject matter of all the previous periods of the Academy, the sole difference being that **officially** “the contentious term was posed as an open question for discussion and expansion”. The- essentially-affirmative question (“Toward a post-Patristic theology?”) which was chosen as the title of his paper by the director of the Academy, Pandelis Kalitzidis, together with his observation that **“the demand for a new incarnation of the word and of the textual reading of the Fathers has become urgent, also posing, at the same time, the question of the possibility of the existence of a post-Patristic Orthodox theology”**¹⁷², answers the hypocritical question of the post-Patristic theologians, who, six months later, wanted to “gain the higher ground” saying that at this conference “no ecclesiastical dogma or creed was touched upon”. They do not have the elementary courage and decency to support, openly, their heretical creeds, which constitute a Protestant-inspired diminution and abrogation of Patristic Tradition.

5. From Post-Patristic to Nation-Annihilation Style.

The multicultural spirit of the Academy of Theological Studies, however, apart from being post-Patristic, is also extremely “nation-annihilistic”. In a theological institute where the word “heresy” seems to be entirely forbidden, there is one instance where this word is used generously. This is the case where the post-Patristic modernizers have the chance, appositely or otherwise, to blast anything patriotic that spoils their multicultural, New Order recipe. So they remember to talk about the heresy of ethno-phyletism and, at the same time, to attack bishops who are inspired by a strong patriotic outlook and/or prominent members of society when they express their anxiety regarding the break up of

¹⁷¹ <http://www.impantokratoros.gr/2BE58A08.el.aspx>

¹⁷² <http://www.amen.gr/index.php?mod=news&op=article&aid=2570>

the nation, forgetting, in this case- according to the post-Patristic paper by Kalaïtzidis- to speak of “tolerance for heretics... in today’s cultural pact”. On the contrary, the euro-theologians of the Volos Academy, like faithful little soldiers of a supra-religious and supra-national plan, even align themselves with plans for the betrayal of the nation, such as that of Anan for Cyprus¹⁷³, together with nation-annihilating groups of people like Bistis and Kounalakis in this country, or members of anti-Hellenic NGOs such as the “Greek Observatory for the Helsinki Accords”, of the well-known- by his own public admission- homosexual, Grigoris Vallianatos, in which the late professor of the Theological School of Athens and one of the great teachers of post-Patristic theologians, Savvas Agouridis¹⁷⁴, served for years.

C. The activity of the Post-Patristic supporters is fundamentalist-

The phenomenon of “Academic Fundamentalism”.

As is natural, the identification of the Orthodox modernizing theologians with the spirit of the post-Patristic West provoked, and continues to provoke, a variety of reactions throughout Orthodoxy. The response on the part of the Post-Patristic supporters to these reactions speaks of “Patristic fundamentalism” and “ecclesiastical triumphalism” to the detriment of the “other”. Bereft of serious scientific arguments, that is to say, the Academy people attempt, through these slogans and New Order catchphrases devoid of content, to terrorize those who dare to utter traditional views and this is why, as we shall see shortly, they do not hesitate to fire off slurs and insults at those persons who put them in a difficult position. In this way, they convert themselves into what they accuse the others of being, i.e. fundamentalists of an “academic” type and so we can say that, as opposed to the non-existent “Patristic fundamentalism”, they operate

¹⁷³ <http://olympia.gr/2011/02/17>

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/bhr/greek/profile.html>

and express a genuine “academic fundamentalism”, which, in reality, is an “anti-Patristic” fundamentalism.

How is this “academic, anti-Patristic fundamentalism” expressed?

a) with immoderate insults and base slurs. For the “civilized” theologians of the Academy, their opponents are people: with complexes; fanatics; brainless; racist; anti-Semite; revisionists; phobic; traditional-minded; nationalists; conservatives; immature; and mythomaniacs.

b) with slander and blows “below the belt”, i.e. *ad hominem* attacks on those who oppose them.

c) with exclusion from the media, which, in part, funds the conferences of the Volos Academy, as is the case of the newspaper “Thessalia” in Volos.

d) with the criminalization of anti-heretical struggles and of actual people who have the fibre to challenge the heretics: those “within” who, like wolves posing as shepherds, are deconstructing Orthodox theology and dogmas; and those “without”, who belong to other dogmas and religions. With freakish legislation of the “hate speech” type which obtains in the USA and will be aimed at anyone who criticizes heretics, international Zionism and even homosexuals. The Volos Academy is working methodically in this direction.

In brief, this is the totalitarian manner of managing the “reactionaries with complexes” on the part the luminaries who are professors at the Academy. The only thing is that the real ones with complexes are not those who insist on not moving the boundaries of the Faith which they received from the Fathers, but are the self-same defenders of the Academy of Theological Studies, with the frantic efforts they make to put Orthodox theology, at any price, on the rails of the modernism of the enlightenment, or- even worse- of the post-modernity of universal nihilism and the questioning of everything. These theologians of our times who, according to the late Fr. John Romanides, are close in their approach

to the theology of the Roman Fathers, are the ones who are suffering from an “inferiority complex”. This position is worth noting and entirely well-supported, precisely because the theological method of the Fathers is based on Orthodox spirituality and it is impossible for people who have an inferiority complex and are slavishly attached, spiritually, to any and everything foreign to Greek, Christian culture to understand Patristic theology and spirituality¹⁷⁵.

Besides, it would be good for some people to realize that the Orthodox Church does not seek unity in the “that they may be one” sense which the post-Patristic theologians have distorted, for the simple reason that the Church itself has the whole of the truth and does not seek “a part of the truth” to the left or to the right. The problem lies with the so-called “Western churches” which of their own volition cut themselves off from the unity maintained by Orthodoxy, as the true bearer of the revealed truth. For this attitude to be construed by some “janissary” theologians of Orthodoxy as “fundamentalism” or “introversion” is, at the very least, laughable and comical. Orthodoxy has not and does not serve any kind of “fundamentalism”, but nor does it serve the theological pluralism which leads to Ecumenism and Syncretism. It refuses to accept the “branch theory” of the “capacity” of “two lungs”, “baptismal” or “post-Patristic” theology. This attitude is entirely honourable, since, for 2,000 years now it has served the truth and only the truth, conscientiously and precisely, without relativizing it or contaminating it. It totally rejects the Western Christian criteria for unity, because these are, at bottom, imperialistic and extremely fundamentalist, since they rest on underhand methods which clearly recall practices of Masonry. Today’s fractured confessional Christianity cannot be repaired by a all-embracing confessional agreement, nor with confessional

¹⁷⁵ Protopresbyter John Romanides, *Δογματική και Συμβολική Θεολογία της Ορθοδόξου Καθολικής Εκκλησίας*, vol I, p. 83.

equivalence, nor even with pan-confessional welding or collocation¹⁷⁶, but by the return of the deceived to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

D. New Pan-Heresy, “Patroclasm”.

The encouraging thing in the whole story, though, is undoubtedly the fact that many of those who reacted against the anti-traditional activities of the Academy were Bishops of the Church of Greece, who almost immediately published monumental texts, with excellent Patristic argumentation, which was a great comfort in this age of universal apostasy in which we are living. In our own humble opinion, the best-supported position on the issue of post-Patristic theology and its official spokespersons, came from the distinguished emeritus professor of the Faculty of Pastoral and Social Theology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis, who also proved that, with the continuous anti-Patristic programmes being carried out by the Academy, they are becoming associated in the conscience of the Church as “Patroclasts”. That is they have launched a direct, frontal attack on the holy Fathers and recall the iconoclasts of Byzantium¹⁷⁷.

The position of Fr. Theodoros cannot in any way be considered exaggerated or anti-scientific, because at this conference the Fathers of the Church really were cast out and had their places taken by Biblical theologians, mainly from Protestant circles, or even by agnostic philosophers. The names which dominated in the papers were not those of Gregory the Theologian, John the Damascan or Gregory Palamas, but Berdiaeff, Jung, Barthes, Flaubert and Gartner! The implant, consequently and officially, of post-Patristic theology is a serious departure from the Tradition of Holy Orthodoxy. It is lack of knowledge

¹⁷⁶ Konstantinos Kotsiopoulos, *Ορθοδοξία και Φονταμενταλισμός*, Νέα Σιών, vol. 90 (2006), p. 136

¹⁷⁷ http://thriskeftika.blogspot.com/2010/12/blog-post_2310.html

and experience of the truth, a deviation from the original theology and, as a result, is, according to the teaching of the holy Fathers, a demonic situation, seeing as they emphasize explicitly and categorically that each heresy “is not from the apostles but from the demons and their father, the devil, and, rather, is barren and without reason and not of the right mind, like that of the asses”¹⁷⁸. In the same spirit, the Fathers of the Ecumenical Synods declare heretics to be of not sound mind spiritually.

Here, against this theological/ideological backdrop of the pan-heresy of Ecumenism, we have the formal, forceful recognition of their declaration of autonomy and departure from the truth as it was revealed to us by the Word of God Himself. But this autonomy comes at a high price. Without enlightenment from above, the theologians of modernity see the world of beings very murkily, in essence they imagine, they do not see, and therefore optical and evaluative competence become weak, with the result that (new) idols are shaped and vices are considered virtues¹⁷⁹. And since, in the papers of the supporters of post-Patristic theology, the feeling is often given that the Holy Spirit “will unfold new facets of the revealed Truth, as progress and enrichment on the faith”, and, in particular, Saint Augustine’s mistaken view is projected that “in the depths of time we approach the truth more objectively”, it may be proper to stress, for the correction of these theological inaccuracies, that the Fathers never accepted Augustine’s position or that of the Latins who later followed him- and now of the post-Patristic Orthodox- that the Church understands the faith and dogmas better and more profoundly as time goes by. Every instance of glorification

¹⁷⁸ Anthony the Great, *Life and Works*, 82, PG26, 960B.

¹⁷⁹ Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis, *Επόμενοι τοις Θείοις Πατράσι*, p. 28

throughout the centuries is participation “in the whole truth of Pentecost”, which is susceptible neither to increase nor deeper understanding¹⁸⁰.

**EPILOGUE. WHAT IS REQUIRED
IS THE AWAKENING OF THE PATRISTIC CONSCIENCE
OF THE FAITHFUL.**

Before concluding, I should like to note that what puts us in opposition to the Volos Academy is not its existence in itself, but the distorting role it has undertaken to play in theological matters. In its pure form, theology cannot be a discussion between offices or drawing-rooms, accompanied by the accoutrements of those places, but should, on the contrary be experienced, lived and charismatic. Pure theology is a created expression of the experience of the uncreated God and His mysteries, of the uncreated light, of the place and manner of the presence of God. Truth in the Church is not an abstract notion or an idea of the genuine. Truth is the outstanding hypostatic reality, i.e. the person. It is Christ, as He Himself assured us: “I am the truth”¹⁸¹¹⁸². Moreover, charismatic theology, as the experience of the Church in the Holy Spirit, is not for everyone, and certainly not for those who have the uncleanness of the passions ingrained within them. The God-taught manner of theologizing without error, according to Saint Gregory Palamas is not the result of the “ascent of the intellect” and of speaking about God intellectually, but rather of “speaking to God”¹⁸³. Unfortunately, the practice of the Volos Academy is aimed in exactly the opposite direction, and so the position once occupied by pure love for the truth, is today taken over by the “elevation” of “mere curiosity”.

¹⁸⁰ Protopresbyter John Romanidis, *op. cit.*, p, 27.

¹⁸¹ *Jn.* 14, 6.

¹⁸² Dimitrios Tselengidis, *Ορθόδοξη θεολογία και ζωή-Μελέτες Συστηματικής Θεολογίας*, Part IV, p. 162.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 233.

The most worrying point of all, however, seems to be the total ignorance- in essence, the total indifference- of the Orthodox faithful as regards this anti-traditional and anti-Patristic pillage which has been precipitated in the realm of theology. The various innovations which are being introduced gradually into the ecclesiastical world, as a result of this long theological vitiation, have not merely not been picked up in good time (e.g. the discontinuation of the anathemas which used to be read on the Sunday of Orthodoxy), but also, when they are, they do not trouble us, because of the intense secularization of the members of the Church. Allow me to remark, then, that as Christians, we have all become, long since, post-Patristic, with the result that, today, particular theologians have come along and are putting this into words. Once, in the Early Christian years, the Christians were full of Godly zeal and kept vigil and prayed constantly, to be ready for anything. The wonderful story described by Saint Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, with Peter sleeping quietly, “between two soldiers, bound with two chains”¹⁸⁴, but the Christians of Jerusalem praying all night “on his behalf” demonstrates this very forcibly. In today’s era, unfortunately, most Christians sleep quietly, because an awakening, living, prophetic, apostolic, patristic voice is not longer heard in the churches. Today’s seminar certainly follows the thought of the Holy Prophets, Apostles and Fathers, which is why we thank His Eminence the Metropolitan of Piraeus for this God-pleasing initiative and pray that God will keep him “safe, honourable, healthy, full of days and rightly dividing the word of truth”.

¹⁸⁴ *Acts* 12, 6.

Embroidered Pagasetics
(brief history, sharp diagnosis,
mild antidote)

Allow me at once to beg your forbearance, because I do not have the high range of the previous speaker. From top C, permit me to drop two, maybe four intervals on the diatonic scale.

Apart from being a teacher, of necessity I also became a farmer recently, a farmer on barren and dry land. I labour, but do not succeed, to imitate Saint Gregory the Theologian, who says- and, of course, did so- “he piled the fallow”, meaning he brought under cultivation arid fields and, in particular, ploughed them well. The recent appearance of newly-made post-Patristic theology is a shoot from an imported hybrid, which was introduced by us into a greenhouse with a para-ecclesiastical monoculture. The greenhouse has, among other things, competent directing staff of para-scientific personnel, a great deal of moisture, much putridity- I had another word in mind, less mellifluous- greater self-regard and an equal portion of ambition. The label is written in a dialect that is not masculine, in a style not manly.

The closest beginning, to us, of this phenomenon can be traced to seeds in the 1970s. When an archiepiscopal cadre, with a great deal of heterodoxy and a little immorality, defamed the two theological schools. And founded, in 1972, the higher, clerical school (I was a boarder for five months and have some idea of its operation, staffing and aims). At that time, the enthusing, bombastic leading lights of Ζωή (Life), hoped, and planned, with *sui generis*, secular arms, to renew rotten and immoral Greece, and the Church along with it. In this school, what would be taught would be, among other things, pure and modern, though

elevated, Orthodox theology. And the Church would galvanize it with its own executives.

The second enterprise, in terms of time, was brought about, a few years ago, by an archiepiscopal garrison. And after much friction and many vicissitudes, four higher ecclesiastical academies were founded. Four times more the money for those students, four times less the state money for those studying medicine, agriculture, theology, literature...

Now it is not *Zωή* that saves; now it is the voluble, brilliant Chrysopaga. The aim is the same as that of *Zωή*, though now endowed with a modernizing patina: careerists within universities, bourgeois preachers, average scribblers- naturally of the theological market- and ring fingers supported and vitalized the allotments with their monocultures.

Third, not in terms of time, but different and related as regards cost. The third enterprise, the foundation and functioning of *sui generis* theological academies, without girls, with boys as regular students in Metropoles. Beginning in Crete. In Church matters, things do not happen with virgin births, whether they be from us or from the common enemy.

In Metropoles (?) under (?) through (?) the bishop (?) I do not know!

The most diversely occupied has sprouted in a Metropolis in Central Greece. Its aims, structure, activities are almost photocopies, deliberately blurred sometimes, of those of the earlier enterprises.

I note two:

a) rabid polemic and defamation by midgets against the native theological personnel, even though this latter body of people enjoys

world-wide recognition; b) building-developer style selling on the internal market of ideological constructs and insistence on transatlantic constructs. That about says it all. The level of journalistic discourse is lower than average by academic standards, but is aided by lavish resources- a good number of which have already been mentioned- and in co-operation with powerful contacts with renowned circles at home and abroad.

The Academy - no more than a little office in the beginning - today speaks to the mighty, to people in the Church and universities, with index finger pointing, the thumb, of course, indicating back towards the kowtower, the least of those who are puffed up. Because of the brightness of the wrapping paper, because of its coincidental (?) alignment with related political and social redistribution enterprises, the work of the *sui generis* academy has gained unusual circulation. This construct is a special figurative edition of another general one, that of post-modernism in Western bibliography and life in general. We do not need an analysis of it here; that can take place in university reading-rooms. What is of urgency here, or merely required, is an ecclesiastical dissection and diagnosis, and since there are people here who are more specialized and worthy than I am, they have done this and will continue to do so. I shall only make two indicative incisions, which, I emphasize, will be painful for all of us.

The first incision. I found the very powerful fluoroscope of a mighty anatomist, Saint Gregory the Theologian. It worked in the case, I stress and ask you pay particular attention, of the female vilifier. That is what the saint called Eunomios. This tool penetrates and films in ten successive tomes. He found and dissected "the new workshop of

impiety”, of Eunomios and his supporters. Please listen, with attention and trepidation, for we’ll need it, to what the saint diagnosed as the programme of this workshop. The workshop, then, (1) directly makes saints, (2) ordains theologians, (3) inspires and runs instructions in such a way that it produces unlearned scholars. It makes the unlearned scholars (4) in order to baptize them, (5) calls many “*conferences of unlearned scholars*” (6) trusses, that is binds tightly, ties and traps weaker people in its arachnidan webs, (7) stirs up swarms of black and yellow hornets against the faith, (8) plans the dissemination of the most current dialectics! That is, it cultivates and distributes philosophical, secular and other lessons, and (9) most brazenly feminizes ever more, through flattery, the already unmanly features of its male adherents. Through all this, the saint makes his diagnosis: “it creates the new workshop of impiety”. After the ten neoplasms or functions of the workshop, the saint concludes with a final one: it reaps the folly of those male adherents. That is, of those ever more feminized by unmanliness. I translate freely: “the cunning programme and workshop of Eunomios did not entertain European programmes. It was self-nourished by the sweet bleeding of its adherents, its feminized adherents”.

I leave it to you, as homework, to find similarities, differences, developments, and current trends, through a comparison with today. I also found a second fluoroscopic tool, supplementary to the first. It was employed by Saint Gregory Palamas against the perverse Barlaam. I bring the figure up to date, applying it to current issues. Post-Patristic theology, the hybrid seed in both essence and word, is a mixed fabrication, concept, construct. It mixes a little ecclesiastical theology, which is sprinkled with catch-phrases of its own choice which are the

absolute latest fashion, or are from special, secular workshops. This mixed fabrication is sown to lunkheads, and for those not familiar with the term, I will translate: gawping simpletons. The fabrication is then watered, fertilized in permanent tubing with damp tons of secular support, a great deal of mannish egotism, and good deal of obsequiousness, that true offspring of the unnatural bond between selfishness and ambition. The plants from the seeds are supported and tied to embroidery, fool's gold and silk ribbons which in days of yore ladies would put in their hair. By versatile para-university types who, of course, earn respectable remuneration.

My dear friends, do not rely merely on the diagnoses I have just outlined. It is with sadness and compunction that I confess and declare that what the Saints diagnosed and I presented briefly, I am in a position to confirm from the profession of teacher (which I have followed for about thirty years now). So what I read in brief is true also, *mutatis mutandis* of course, for many of us here, myself most of all: that we have exchanged the fervent faith of our natural and spiritual fathers, or converted respect for the Holy Fathers into an ideology, a shallow faith, merely to be able to invoke it, a fleshless ideology, sometimes spoiling for a fight, over-zealous. An ideology that at times is close to that of football supporters. And we invoke this ideology either to secure our rootless Orthodox outlook or to grind down brothers as weak in faith as we are. Of course, we haven't stuffed large greenhouses, we haven't stuffed workshops, but we do have our own little individual greenhouses.

The difference between us is a matter of degree, the extent to which audacity, gall and temerity are calibrated. We cowards dare not

come up with new-fangled teaching. But some of us also experiment with obsequiousness at times, we score victories over our brethren, we enjoy rich remuneration and we do not even put our Orthodox outlook at risk. Rather we seal it with seven seals. And with very many quotations from the Fathers, with sayings of Prophets, Saints and Martyrs. If, then, we come to ourselves, if we look with affection, as brethren, upon those called "opponents of the Fathers", as members of the same body for which Christ died, then it is likely that we shall draw down upon ourselves the mercy of the Thrice-Holy God and that we will help to support those who seems to us to be wavering in the faith or even fighting against it. The suggestions which follow attempt to retain this ecclesiastical sense of honour, along with solidarity and fraternity.

The wide-spread pestilence and particular aspects of post-Patristics can therefore be handled, can begin, on the basis of three simple things, though in an ecclesiastical manner. (1) We should examine ourselves honestly and in repentance. (2) We should support our brothers and sisters who are as weak in the faith as we are. (3) Then we should address ourselves to our bishops and spiritual fathers. In brief, to scrutinize ourselves means that all we who blithely declare our Orthodox outlook should come under, or stand before, the checks and balances of confession. It may be that we, too, believe that our faith and our reverence towards the Saints is a personal achievement, a sublime ideology and that we are content with this. Scrutiny proceeds gradually, ecclesiastically. (1) We repent. We bend the knee, shed tears. We light candles or icon-lamps. We bake and bring loaves for the liturgy rather than buy ready-made ones. We suffer with miscreants. We give alms, secretly, to the indigent. We forgive those who have wronged us and do

all the other things that we've known about since we were little children.

(2) We support our brethren, we examine our words and actions in case the brothers we're judging have been crushed by them. Perhaps, in seeking to crush them we are confirming our own self-satisfaction: that is, that we are believers and God-fearing and have an Orthodox outlook. That we confirm ourselves as pious, champion defenders of the faith and infallible. Might it not be better to imitate certain Fathers of today, who- a truly surprising thing- are keeping silent. They do not libel. They do not have the time. Because they are praying without ceasing. Shedding copious tears, they pray for all, without exception, for all those who are sorrowful and shaken. (3) Not us, the ordinary laity, even teachers, supposedly mighty, going by the name of professors, but those in charge of ecclesiastical decoration and legislation, might, among their other duties and because it might be pleasing to God - that is demonstrating love for one's neighbor - attempt personal communication with one of those who are rumoured or confirmed through texts to be advocating or teaching new-fangled doctrine. The same should happen with any co-bishops, say those present here today (in the event that some of their fellow bishops ever give them room to), with any bishops who acquiesce to, concur with, are merely charmed or tempted (all of which is human and not unlikely) by similar teachings. If personal communication between bishops does not bear fruit, then perhaps it might be necessary for the bishops to move on to the next step. Some of the more alert bishops should summarize the new-fangled teaching, summarize the theological diagnosis, weigh the issues spiritually and, if they think it incumbent upon them, should bring the matter in question before the Body of Bishops for discussion. We, in the meantime, continue to pray

for all, as the Church wishes us to. And always gratefully thanking God, the Good Lord, who, of old gave us, as He does to this day, Holy Fathers who engender- this is what makes them Fathers- children of love, patience and intercession.

His Eminence Metropolitan Ierotheos
of Nafpaktos and St. Vlasios.

**POST-PATRISTIC THEOLOGY
FROM A CHURCH PERSPECTIVE**

It has been well remarked that the ideological, cultural and spiritual movements which appeared in the West, such as the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Modernism, came to Greece some thirty to thirty-five years later. So what appeared new to us, had already come to dominate in the West many years before. The same is true of the phenomenon of *post-Patristic theology*, which has been much talked about here in Greece. I think that the initiative of His Eminence Metropolitan Serafeim of Piraeus and Faliron is worthy of attention and praise. This phenomenon must be faced, because such movements represent secularization in theology and the pastoral practices of the Orthodox Church.

The previous speakers at this seminar touched on basic and important points of this matter. My own paper has as its theme: "Post-Patristic Theology from a Church Perspective". In it, I shall emphasize five individual points, in the main.

1. The theology of Aleksei Khomiakov as the nucleus of post-Patristic theology.

Before stressing the basic points of post-Patristic theology, as these are formulated today by theologians and others, I think it might be useful to refer to the views of the Slavophile theologians, particularly Khomiakov, who is one of the most important voices of this movement, because it is here that we encounter the nucleus of this post-Patristic

theology. The term post-Patristic is not to be found in his works, but it is certain that the seeds for it do indeed exist there.

Aleksei Khomiakov (1804-1860) belonged to the initial core of a group of six young landowners who met at the beginning of the 1820's and formed an informal group of Russian intellectuals who developed what is often known as the "Slavophile movement" though they themselves called it "Orthodox-Russian orientation".

Khomiakov belonged to a rich family of the Russian landed aristocracy, took a degree in mathematics at the University of Moscow, studied art, learnt English and French, travelled to London, wrote poems, was an important person of culture in the centre of Europeanized Russian life, frequented salons and intellectual circles, stood out for his deep Christian faith and firm piety and became a well-known advocate of traditional Orthodoxy and old Russian culture. He died of cholera when he was trying to treat farm labourers on his lands, as an amateur traditional doctor¹⁸⁵.

Khomiakov formulated his theological views on the basis of the Enlightenment nature of his national and religious patriotism. He felt that Russian culture had something to say to the West, from the point of view of civilization, and found in traditional Russian culture the sense of *sobornost'* (community) which depended on love and not only on common benefit and security. After theology, he extended himself into philosophy¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁵ Robert Bird in *On Spiritual Unity, a Slavophile Reader*, Aleksei Khomiakov, Ivan Kireevsky. Translated and edited by Boris Jakim and Robert Bird, Lindisfarne Books, 1998. General Introduction by Robert Bird, pp. 7-25.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 12, ff.

Bird observes that, in Khomiakov's valuable work entitled *Notes on World History*, he divided the world into two types of civilization, the Kushite and the Iranian; true Christianity is presented as being contingent upon the virtues of Russian national identity as the highest example of the Iranian principle¹⁸⁷. I shall refer to this issue in greater detail later. Here we must present the fundamental positions of Khomiakov's ecclesiology.

There is one basic work by Khomiakov which refers to the Church. It was first published after his death, with the title "On the Church". In his *Collected Works*, it is called "A Catechetical Exposition of the Teaching of the Church" and thereafter it was published with the title "The Church is One"¹⁸⁸.

If one reads this text by Khomiakov concerning the Church, it is clear that he depends mainly on Scripture, rather than the texts of the Fathers; he talks about Tradition; he refers at length to the spirit of freedom and love, but seems not to accept the canon law of the Church. He has a tendency to move towards the positions of the Protestants, because he talks about the community of faith and in some ways is a herald of ecumenism, which functions within an atmosphere of the detachment of Christians from canons and dogmas. I shall quote some examples from this fundamental text of his.

Referring to the Church as one, holy, collective and apostolic, Khomiakov speaks of a Church which "belongs to the whole world and not any specific locality". It is not clear whether he is referring to local Orthodox Churches or to the Orthodox Church and the other

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 29.

confessions. Probably the second is the case, if we compare it to the whole spirit of the text. Be that as it may, in speaking of faith, he writes the following, somewhat confusedly and admitting of various interpretations:

“... and does not entail the claim that one community of Christians could express Church doctrine or give dogmatic interpretation to Church doctrine without the agreement of the other communities. It is still less supposed that any community or its pastor might prescribe its interpretation for others. The grace of faith is inseparable from the holiness of life, and no one single community and no one single pastor may be recognized as the preserver of the entire faith, just as no one single pastor and no one single community may be considered representatives of the entire holiness of the Church”¹⁸⁹.

On the Scriptures, he writes:

“The Church does not ask: Which Scripture is true, which Tradition is true, which Synod is true and what work is pleasing to God. For Christ knows His own inheritance, and the Church in which He lives knows with inner knowledge and cannot help but know its own manifestations. Holy Scripture is the name for the collection of Old and New Testament books that the Church recognizes as its own. But there are no limits to Scripture, for any Scripture that the Church recognizes as its own is Holy Scripture”¹⁹⁰.

On baptism, he writes:

“...the Church does not judge those who have entered into communion with it through baptism, for it knows and judges only

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 24.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 36.

itself... Many have been saved and have received their inheritance without accepting the baptism of water for it was instituted only for the Church of the New Testament”¹⁹¹.

On the sacrament of the Divine Eucharist, he writes:

“Concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Holy Church teaches that in it is accomplished in truth the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Also, it does not reject the word ‘transubstantiation’, but does not ascribe to it the material sense attributed to it by the teachers of the churches that have fallen away. The transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is completed in the Church and for the Church. If you receive the sanctified gifts, or venerate them, or think of them with faith, you truly receive, venerate and think about the body and blood of Christ”¹⁹².

On the sacrament of marriage, he writes:

“Therefore the great teachers of the Church- the Apostles- recognize the sacrament of marriage even among pagans, for, in forbidding concubinage, they uphold marriage between Christians and pagans, saying that a husband is hallowed by a faithful wife, and a wife by a faithful husband” (*I Cor. 7, 14*)¹⁹³.

He writes of the Church that it is divided by the evil passions of its children:

“Its visible manifestation is contained within the sacraments; its inner life, by contrast is contained in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in faith, hope and love. Oppressed and persecuted by external enemies, often

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 41.

¹⁹² Ibid, pp. 41-2.

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 43.

unsettled and divided by the evil passions of its children, she has been preserved and is preserved as unshakeable and unchangeable wherever the sacraments and spiritual holiness are preserved unchangeably; it never suffers distortion and never has need of correction”¹⁹⁴.

He also writes:

“If you believe in Christ, you are saved **in** by your faith by Christ; if you believe in the Church, you are saved by the Church; if you believe in Christ's Sacraments, you are saved by them; for Christ our God is in the Church and the Sacraments. The Church of the Old Testament was saved by faith in a Redeemer to come. Abraham was saved by the same Christ as we are. He possessed Christ in hope, while we possess Him in joy. Therefore if you desire Baptism you are baptized in will; while if you have received Baptism, you possess it in joy. An identical faith in Baptism saves in both situations. But you may say, ‘if faith in Baptism saves, what is the use of being actually baptized?’. If you do not receive Baptism then what is it that you wish for?”¹⁹⁵.

Khomiakov considers that: “Love and unity are above all. Love is expressed in many forms: with words, prayer with spiritual songs” And he goes on to say:

“The Church bestows her blessing upon all these expressions of love. If you cannot express your love for God by word, but expresses it by a visible representation, that is to say an image (icon), will the Church condemn you? No, but it will condemn anybody who condemns you, because they are condemning another’s love. We know that without the use of an image people may also be saved and have been saved, and if

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 44.

¹⁹⁵ The Church is One. Faith and Life in Church Unity.

your love does not require an image you will be saved without one; but if the love of your brother or sister requires an image, you, in condemning this brother's love, condemn yourself; and if as a Christian you listen, without respect, to a prayer or spiritual song composed by your brother or sister, how dare you look without reverence upon the image which their love, not artifices, has produced? The Lord Himself, Who knows the secrets of the heart, has desired more than once to glorify a prayer or psalm; will you forbid Him to glorify an image or the graves of the Saints?"¹⁹⁶.

It is obvious that Khomiakov does not set clear boundaries between the Orthodox Church and the other Confessions, as regards baptism, the faith, Holy Scripture and so on. He speaks in an ecumenist spirit, expresses a theology of freedom and love, relieved of canonical ordinances and has various Protestant principles more in mind.

Of course, there are texts by Khomiakov in which it is clear that in his view Roman Catholics and Protestants have lost *sobornost'* (catholicity) and that in one sense they have ceased to be Churches, because of the Schism of 1054 and that only the Eastern Orthodox Church preserves catholicity and is the true Church¹⁹⁷. In general, however, the text is vague at a number of points and the influence of Protestantism shines through. Referring to Khomiakov's ecclesiology, Robert Bird, who has translated a number of texts on Slavophilism into English, remarks that: "Khomiakov's first essay in theology radically changed Orthodox ecclesiology and has even been credited with influencing the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 55

The originality of Khomiakov's conception has been widely disputed; some point to the German theologian Moehler as the source of the concept of the Church as the community of faith. Needless to say, Orthodox thinkers have also found it important to demonstrate lack of originality, that is, the extent to which he was faithful to the Fathers of the Church"¹⁹⁸.

Pavel Florensky, who "is becoming recognized as the greatest Russian thinker of the twentieth century, and one of the greatest of any age, land or culture", criticized Khomiakov's positions. Florensky's essay on Khomiakov, again according to Bird, is perhaps the most crucial assessment in Russian philosophical literature: the, perhaps, greatest Orthodox theologian of the 20th century criticizes in no uncertain terms the greatest of the 19th. It is in this essay that Florensky accuses Khomiakov of "Protestantism"¹⁹⁹.

Referring to Khomiakov's theology, Florensky says, among other things, that attacking the legalism of Catholicism is a departure from Orthodox Tradition and this is why the need arises for the ecclesialization of Khomiakov himself. He writes:

"...by getting rid of the chaff of Catholicism, does not this polemic also risk tearing the wheat of Orthodoxy out of the soil? For example, by getting rid of the apparent chaff of authority in the Church, which supposedly does not exist in Orthodoxy, does one not risk getting rid of the principle of fear, the principle of power and the obligatory nature of the canonical order? At the present time- which in general has such a great tendency to negate norms and even to struggle against all

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 29-30.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 317.

norms- does not this dissolution of canons in an abyss of altruism represent a very serious danger? As dangerous aspects of Khomiakovism one must also cite Khomiakov's critique of the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments and the Protestant doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the Bible. Containing *some sort* of truth, this critique inevitable leads to a clearly non-churchly pragmatism r modernism, which destroys the very essence of the doctrine of the sacraments, leaving only an external, intrinsically *not* valuable shell of this doctrine"²⁰⁰.

Nikolai Berdiaev (1874-1948), perhaps the greatest existential philosopher of Russia and one of the greatest philosophers of European personalism²⁰¹, commented on Khomiakov as a theologian and as a philosopher and presented the most important of his views. On his theological views in particular, he notes, among other things, that Khomiakov was a free Orthodox and that he felt free in the Church and freely defended the Church. He opened the way for free religious philosophy among the detritus of Scholastic theology. He was the first to transcend Scholastic theology. Berdiaev claims that it would be difficult to find a freer concept of the Church, because nothing is forced in Khomiakov. The Church really is an entity in love and freedom. The Church is not an institution and it is not one Church. There is nothing disputatious, no rationalization. He says that for Khomiakov the Church is wherever anyone finds genuine love in Christ, freedom in Christ, unity in Christ. The essence f the Church is not determined by formalized characteristics. Even the Ecumenical Synods are genuinely

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 322.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p. 318.

ecumenical only because they are confirmed in freedom and love by the people of the Church²⁰².

But Berdiaev considers that the Slavophiles, such as Khomiakov, themselves committed several errors, i.e. they supported the superiority of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Russian Church over the Western Christian world, and even claimed that Protestantism was superior to Catholicism. Out of fear of the magical tendency in Catholicism, Khomiakov sometimes fell into Protestant moralism. Berdiaev did write, however, that the theology of the Slavophiles came like a rush of fresh air, a lively, not Scholastic, way of thinking, within the mildew of the theological atmosphere²⁰³.

In one of his first studies, Fr. John Romanides dealt with the ecclesiology of Aleksei Khomiakov²⁰⁴. In this study, he notes that Khomiakov wrote about the Church through his personal experience as a living member of it, rather than analysing it from the outside as a historical phenomenon. He saw the fall of humankind through necessity and utilitarianism, while he saw the Church through the organic and collective principles of freedom and selfless love.

He goes on to say that Khomiakov described the two dominant spiritual movements in history as Iranianism and Cushitism. Iranianism is characterized by his faith in the divine creation, by freedom, by moral goodness as the aim of existence and by his hope for the final victory of good over evil. By extension, he is repulsed by matter and logical analysis, is not interested in architectural monuments nor the

²⁰² Ibid, pp. 326 ff.

²⁰³ Ibid, pp. 326, 330-1.

²⁰⁴ John Romanides, *Orthodox Ecclesiology according to Alexis Khomiakov*, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 2 (1956), 578 ff.

organization of political life with its laws, institutions and monuments, but **stands on** freedom and organic unity in love, free from utilitarian ideas.

Cushitism, on the other hand, is dominated by ideals of material necessity, projects the laws of material analysis into eternity, worships the material in a pantheistic manner, projects the laws of necessity, and confuses the logic of rationalistic analysis with the truth. Through people and within society there are various degrees of interaction between Iranian and Cushite ideas, and there is a conflict between freedom and necessity.

The issue is too broad to be analyzed sufficiently in this paper, but it must be stressed that Khomiakov links Christianity with culture. He also claims that Orthodoxy, and, particularly Russian Orthodoxy, preserves the most pure form of the ideals of freedom and love, according to the Iranian model, whereas Western Christianity is characterized by elements of Cushitism, and he uses examples to support this analysis. The fact is that Khomiakov, according to Fr. Romanides, arrived at general conclusions quite similar to the sum total of Patristic tradition, and contributed to the liberation of Russian theology from Western theological methods and that he even made it feasible for the Orthodox Church to be present in the West in a comprehensive way. But he did fall into theological errors. One of these was that he ignored the fact that the aim of the Church is the struggle against death, corruption and the devil and that he saw it rather through cultural values. It is this view that resulted in what we call today post-Patristic theology, which accepts that our own day has other codes of communication with the Church, since modern culture is different from

that which obtained in the age of the Fathers and that therefore Patristic discourse, which was formulated in other times. ^^^ Today it is inadequate, so there is a need to find another language to communicate with the people of our own era.

Characteristically, Khomiakov's friend, the philosopher Ivan Kireevsky had declared that it is impossible for the philosophy of the holy Fathers to be renewed in the ^^^ from that which it had in their time. It responded to questions of their time and the culture which gave rise to them. Khomiakov agreed with this observation and with the need to develop a Russian Christian philosophy which will respond to the social and religious demands of today's contemporary society. It was within this perspective that the Slavophile movement was born, one of whose founders was Khomiakov.

Fr. Romanides observes that a view such as that is held by somebody who is willing to ignore Orthodox soteriology [*** in the positive element of communion with the Source of Life only through the flesh of Christ in the collective Eucharist, in the same place, and in the negative element of ***????] the battle against the fragmentifying forces of Satan through the life of selfless love in this Eucharistic life itself . The battle between God and the devil cannot be understood from philosophy. And this battle against the devil, corruption and death, which is the basic purpose of the Church, is the same as it was in the time of the Fathers. This is why there is no need of another theology which would employ philosophy.

Christians are saved when they renounce the world of sins and passions, and live and partake in the flesh of Christ. The Church cannot save those who are outside; it can only invite them to salvation through

baptism and its sacramental life. And Fr. Romanides observes that to talk about a relationship between the Church and society or culture is totally useless and can lead only to an ecclesiology based on nationalism. Within the realm of faith, which is the flesh of Christ, there is no room for philosophy, whether social or dialectic. Khomiakov's and Kireevsky's claim that the philosophy of the Fathers does not speak to contemporary people can only mean that the Slavophiles misunderstood both the Fathers and Orthodoxy, which the Fathers inspired. Instead of basing their theology concerning the Church on Patristic soteriology and Christology, they adapted to a contemporary German philosophy of social life as an organism and imagined that Russian peasants were the **outstanding** Orthodox *par excellence*, because of some inherited feature of the national character.

Post-Patristic theology, which began with the Slavophiles in the 19th century, was cultivated intensely in Paris by the Russian émigré theologians and the environment of the Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge. A theological movement was created which had positive features, but also negative ones, since it expressed the **so-called** *Parisian Theology*, with its special characteristics to which we referred earlier. The publisher of the book *On Spiritual Unity, A Slavophile Reader*, remarks appositely that "Slavophile thought in general, and Khomiakov's thought in particular, had a vast influence on the Russian religious renaissance of the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. In fact, modern Russian religious thought, in its ontological 'face', can be seen as originating in the thought of Khomiakov and Kireevsky. Among the major figures influenced by the

Slavophiles are Fyodor Dostoevsky, Pavel Florensky, Sergius Bulgakov, Nikoali Berdiaev and Lev Karsavin”²⁰⁵.

In a letter to Georges Florovsky, Fr. Romanides also referred to this theology which he encountered at Saint Serge when he was a student there. He wrote that when he took his examination in Russian philosophy before the professorial body, he learned many things. His special subject was Aleksei Khomiakov and his position was that there is no modern Orthodox and Russian Orthodox philosophy, whether social or otherwise anything else. Orthodox theology is /an absolute/a single /one demand in the overall life of a person, so no-one can, at the same time, be half Orthodox and half philosopher. It was Professors Zankorski and Kartashoff who asked most questions and continued the discussion. They were the people who claimed a specialness for Russian Orthodox theology, which constituted progress in relation to Patristic theology and was superior to it²⁰⁶.

The link between Christianity and culture led Khomiakov, the Slavophiles in general and their disciples to the theory that scholastic theology is superior to that of the Fathers and, thereafter, that Russian theology is superior to both.

Fr. Romanides had sufficient knowledge of these matters to analyze the fact that the Russians in the 18th century adopted scholastic theology as well as and the view of the scholastic theologians that their theology had surpassed the Patristic tradition, which had been completed in the 8th century. Thereafter, in the mid-19th century, when

²⁰⁵ On Spiritual Unity..., p. 317.

²⁰⁶ Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos and Saint Vlasios, Π. Ιωάννης Ρωμανίδης, ένας κορυφαίος δογματικός θεολόγος της Ορθόδοξου Καθολικής Εκκλησίας, published by the Holy Monastery of the Birth of the Mother of God (Pelagia), 2012, pp. 123-4.

Russian intellectuals were profoundly influenced by the hesychasm which, with Paisy Velichkovskij, had been revived in Russia from the Holy Mountain, they believed that, just as they had surpassed the Greeks with Russian scholasticism, so would they surpass them with Russian hesychasm²⁰⁷.

The Slavophiles maintained that the Greeks and Latins, as “Cushites”, did not understand Christianity sufficiently and in depth, as did the “Iranian” Slavs. And so, books made their appearance which presented Russian philosophy, Russian theology and Russian spirituality, and all of this contributed to the reinforcement of the idea of the superiority of a more modern theology, rather than that of the Fathers²⁰⁸.

Georges Florovsky worked against the view that Scholastic theology completed Patristic theology and that Russian theology is superior to Patristic and Scholastic. For more than half a century, Florovsky mercilessly chastised the Russians who maintained that the Fathers did not understand Christianity sufficiently, as also the Protestants, who tended to the view that the Fathers adulterated Christianity. He also successfully stressed the permanent importance for Christianity of the Hellenism of the Fathers²⁰⁹. It follows, then, that Florovsky was against post-Patristic theology, as the Slavophile Russian theologians expressed it, while what he called the *neo-Patristic synthesis* was not the disregard or transcendence of the Fathers of the first centuries, but the rejection of post-Patristic theology, with the acceptance

²⁰⁷ Fr. John Romanides, Εἰσαγωγή εἰς Γρηγόριον Παλαμᾶν, Ρωμαῖοι ἢ Ρωμηοὶ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, vol. I, Pournaras, Thessaloniki 1984, pp. 77-82.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 85-6.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 88-9.

of later Fathers, as a continuum of the former, such as Saint Gregory Palamas and those of the Philokalia. In other words, the neo-Patristic synthesis is the acceptance of the hesychast/niptic tradition, as this was established synodically in the 14th century by the 9th Ecumenical Synod²¹⁰.

This post-Patristic theology gradually came into Greece via theologians who had studied at Saint-Serge in Paris, and was called Neo-Orthodoxy. The fundamental mistake of post-Patristic theology, as was mentioned above, is that it links theology with culture, it sees the questions posed by the particular culture of our age and ignores the reality of the struggle of Christians against the devil, sin and death, believing that salvation is connected with cultivation and not with the transcendence of those powers which are linked to the fall of humankind.

Of course, the Fathers did not deny the culture of the age, they used it to manifest the triumph of the Resurrection of Christ and of Pentecost, but they saw the salvation of people precisely in the struggle against the devil, sin and death, not in the sphere of culture. Besides, the Fathers used the terms of Greek philosophy to express the revelatory truth, not because it was necessary for people's salvation, but to deal with the heresies which Greek philosophy deployed. Polemical theology is one thing, the theology of salvation another.

2. Basic Points of Post-Patristic Theology

For a start I will give a definition which will show what post-Patristic theology consists of.

²¹⁰ See Florovsky, *On Church and Tradition, an Orthodox View*, and, *idem*, *Aspects of Church History*.

The word post-Patristic means theology after the Fathers, which declares that the word of Christ must be formulated with a thought other than that of the holy Fathers of the Church because today we have a different culture. According to these views, the Fathers of the 4th century, in speaking about the dogmas of the Church, used Stoic and Neo-Platonic thought²¹¹. This means that in today's era we should read the Gospels with post-Patristic thought, i.e. "to find ourselves we have to clear time of inert piles of rubble which transform the memory into vampires of the life of our soul". Of course, if I am going to be fair, I should mention that there are other defenders of post-Patristic theology who express themselves in a manner less provocative to the reader than that just quoted (that the Patristic thoughts of the past "transform the memory into vampires of our psychological life"²¹²). There are still, however, many problems as regards Orthodox theology.

After this definition, I shall identify the general views of the post-Patristic theologians.

According to the views of modern post-Patristic theology, over the life of the Church two types of ecclesiology were developed: the original, as expressed in the books of the New Testament, and the later, as expressed by the Fathers of the Church from the 3rd century onwards. The first (original) is called the "ecclesiology of society and Eucharistic spirituality", which is a horizontal, historical eschatology. The second is "a vertical and more personalistic concept of history", which was

²¹¹ Stelios Ramfos, *Τὸ μυστικὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*, Armos Publications, Athens 2006, p. 9.

²¹² *Ibid*, p. 11.

defined on the basis of Gnostic Christianity and Neo-Platonist views²¹³. I quote a typical example which expresses this view. It says: “So the ecclesiology of society and spirituality have as their aim the greatest possible equation of Christian communities in various places with the authentic expression of the eschatological glory of the Kingdom of God. This basic and original Christian ecclesiology, under the intense ideological pressures of Christian Gnosticism and particularly (Neo-) Platonism, began, from the 3rd century, gradually to retreat, or, in the best case, to co-exist with another spirituality (and also ecclesiology) which has its roots in the Neo-Platonizing mystical theology of Evagrius and the Messalianizing mystical theology of Macarius, but are founded academically on the Catechetical School of Alexandria. The main representatives of this school, Clement the Alexandrian and Origen, give ecclesiology, and, by extension, spirituality, another turn, which Metropolitan Ioannis (Zizoulas) of Pergamon emphatically calls: ‘not merely a turn but an overturning’.

In consequence, the interest in history is nullified and we note an increasing distancing from the institutional ecclesiastical reality, the Eucharistic society. In the best case, the Church is characterized as a *sanitarium* for souls. Historically, and also temporally, this spirituality is linked to the *desert* and the withdrawal into monasticism, where the works of Origen were read with excess devotion, even after his condemnation by a Synod.

²¹³ Petros Vasileiadis, Κοινωνία καὶ ἐρημία, Τὰ Βιβλικά δεδομένα (καὶ οἱ ἐκκλησιαστικὲς τοὺς προεκτάσεις), Σύναξη, no. 117, January-March 2011, pp. 41-2.

It would be good to note that the theological works attributed to Saint Dionysius the Areopagite acted as the catalyst for the marginalization of the dominant concept of society”²¹⁴.

It is very obvious that in this excerpt two kinds of spirituality and ecclesiology are under discussion: the one is original and social, depending on the Divine Eucharist as the manifestation of the eschatological glory of the Kingdom of God, and the other is later, personalistic, Neo-Platonic, mystical and ascetic. It is “a desertion from Eucharistic Liturgical ecclesiology and spirituality towards therapeutic and cathartic ones”, which may be “described as parallel to the desertion from prophetic to apocalyptic theology and literature in the Old Testament”²¹⁵.

With this theory, what is presented is a “Eucharistic ecclesiology” without asceticism and a “therapeutic cathartic ecclesiology” without the Divine Eucharist, and so society is set in opposition to the desert and vice versa. It is clear that such views are, at the very least, unacceptable from an Orthodox angle, as will be stressed below.

As regards “later ecclesiology”, which, according to post-Patristic theologians altered the original ecclesiology and which is expressed by the Fathers of the 3rd and later centuries, it has a variety of directions, since it was influenced by analogous currents which were dominant in Ancient Greek philosophy. And so we observe two tendencies of the Fathers- according to the post-Patristic theologians, naturally.

The first has to do with “gazing mystically upon the divine”, which occurs through the guileless *nous*. This spirituality begins with

²¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 42-3.

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 43, note 34.

Anaxagoras and Plato and continues through Philo on into the Neo-Platonists, Clement the Alexandrian and Origen, to be finally formed by Evagrius Ponticus, who gave it an organized character²¹⁶.

So the basis of the Evagrian position is “(Neo-) Platonic”, as is the background to the theology of Saints Gregory the Theologian and Gregory of Nyssa²¹⁷. Within this framework are interpreted the issues concerning the contemplative and practical life, purification, enlightenment and deification, the whole content of the Philokalia. The *nous* conceives the causes of created beings, and, within the *nous*, the divine Light shines. All the later fathers followed this perspective, as can be seen in the works of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, Mark the Ascetic, Diadochus of Photice, Maximos the Confessor, John of the Ladder, Philotheos the Sinaite, Hesychius of the Bush, Nicetas Stethatos, Gregory the Sinaite and the hesychasts of Athos, with chief among them, of course, Saint Gregory Palamas²¹⁸.

The second trend- the spirituality which developed immediately after that of Evagrius, and which operated in parallel with the “mystical gazing on the divine”, of the first spirituality- started from the “Messalianist” Saint Macarius the Egyptian, has its “origins in Stoic philosophy” and “folk piety”, and gives priority to feeling, information, and the heart. “With ‘Macarius’, people stopped being primarily *nous* and became innate feeling which conceives inner reality, including that of Grace”. The feeling of the heart “confirms or gives the lie to how much the Holy Spirit is at work within us and how much our existence

²¹⁶ Stelios Ramfos, *Τὸ ἀδιανόητο τίποτα*, Armos Publications, Athens, 2010, p. 266.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 86-7.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 266-7.

has acquired the fullness from on high". It was within this perspective that Saint Symeon the New Theologian "would operate in order to pursue a personal relationship with God, employing at the same time the Evagrian/Origenic feelings and the ideas of Diadochus of Photice"²¹⁹.

These two Patristic traditions and spiritualities, according to the post-Patristic theologians, are characterized by two definitive phrases. That is, the theology of the Evagrian tradition is considered a "contemplative mysticism", which has the guileless *nous* at its centre, while that of the Macarian tradition is called "spiritual materialism", which is centered on the heart²²⁰. Through these two traditions all the positions of the holy Fathers of the Church are interpreted, from Dionysius the Areopagite, Macarius the Ascetic, Diadochus of Photice, Maximus the Confessor, Hesychius of the Bush, Macarius the Egyptian, through to Saint Symeon the New Theologian, and from Nicephorus the Solitary, Saint Gregory the Sinaite and Gregory Palamas, down to Callistus and Ignatius Xanthopoulos.

The conclusion is that, according to the post-Patristic theologians, the Fathers are supposed to have overturned the ecclesiology of the ancient Church, and that the Fathers themselves are divided into two categories, as was mentioned above, which supposedly were influenced by philosophy, particularly Neo-Platonism, the Stoic philosophers and other mystical traditions.

Naturally, with such an external and logical analysis of the teaching of the Fathers, especially those of the Philokalia, the whole theology of the Church concerning the conditions for knowledge of God

²¹⁹ Ibid, p. 267.

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 248.

is deconstructed, the comprehensive tradition of the Fathers is broken up, and the hesychastic tradition of the Church is undermined, as these have been formulated in the prayers and hymns of the Church, and were adopted by the Ecumenical Synods, particularly the 9th Ecumenical Synod concerning Saint Gregory Palamas. Also, with these interpretations, the whole of the spirit of the Philokalia and the teaching of the Niptic Fathers of the 18th century is neutralized, particularly Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, who is slandered, attacked and abused.

The truth is that such an interpretation of the Fathers began with the Protestants who found a way to cast doubt on the Fathers and monasticism, but unfortunately it was adopted by Orthodox theologians in the West, and passed thence into theological bibliography.

The views of John Meyendorff are typical, formulated in a book as early as 1959 interpreting the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas. Concerning Evagrius, he writes that he was the first intellectual to adopt, in the Egyptian desert, the life of the hermits. He was not content to imitate the asceticism and mode of prayer, but attempted to integrate them into a metaphysical and anthropological system inspired by Neo-Platonism. In this, the monks of the Christian East would learn to express themselves in Neo-Platonic language, which threatened to distort the spirituality of the desert, leading it in a direction foreign to the spirit of the Gospels, transforming the prophetic element of the monks into spiritual intellectualism²²¹.

²²¹ Saint Grégoire Palamas et la mystique orthodoxe.

On Saint Macarius the Egyptian, he writes that while Evagrius is essentially Platonic, Macarius introduces unceasing prayer into the context of a monistic anthropology which is directly inspired by the Bible, echoing in part the teaching of the Stoics. In opposition to the "Platonic intellectualism of Evagrius, Saint Macarius expressed "mysticism" and was looking at a world entirely different to that of Evagrius.

About Saint Diadochus of Photice and Saint John of the Ladder, he writes that they contributed to the realization of a synthesis between Evagrius and Macarius.

On Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Saint Maximus the Confessor, he writes that they both belong to the great line of mystic Christians who were able to express the fundamentals of the Christian spiritual life within the framework of a Neo-Platonic philosophy.

From Saint Symeon the New Theologian, he mentions that one of the chief features of his work is the intense realism of the Christocentric mystical life and that his opposition to any mechanical concept of the Mysteries did not in any way lead to a reversion to the mystical intellectualism of Evagrius or to a Neo-Platonic pneumatocracy.

As for Saint Gregory the Sinaite, he writes that he belongs to the most individualistic trend, the most inclined to the spirit, and is, among Byzantine hesychasts, also the most faithful to Evagrius Ponticus. He adds that his closest disciples would all stand at the side of Palamas. Indeed, he writes of Saint Gregory the Sinaite that, despite the Evagrian nature of his spirituality, the tradition of Macarius and of Symeon the New Theologian was so much alive amongst the monks that he had no choice but to remain faithful to them.

As regards the clash between Barlaam and Saint Gregory Palamas, he writes that Barlaam, who, in the West had despised the intellectual realism of Thomist scholasticism, now clashed with the mystical realism of the monks. In his writings, Barlaam demonstrated that he was perfectly well aware of the whole thought of the East which could have supported his intellectualism and nominalism and, particularly, of the apophatic theology of Dionysius and the pneumatocratic mysticism of Evagrius.

The culmination of Meyendorff's thought is that the whole work of Palamas is the completion of the mystical tradition which goes back to Evagrius and Macarius. This work is objective Christian thought, Biblical and founded upon very broad Patristic wisdom. According to Meyendorff, the position of Barlaam, on the other hand, was founded on two demands: 1. the Aristotelian demand that all knowledge- including that of God- has its source in acceptance or "experience" by the senses; and 2. the Neo-Platonic demand, which is also supported by Christian writers- especially Dionysius the Areopagite- that God is beyond experience by the senses and is therefore unknown. According to Barlaam, all knowledge of God is therefore indirect. It always passes through entities which are perceptible to the senses. Mystical knowledge, too, cannot be other than merely symbolically real. The whole battle would be fought around these two demands of Barlaam's, which he borrowed from Greek philosophy.

In general terms, Meyendorff claims that Barlaam and Saint Gregory Palamas expressed two trends and traditions which existed within the Orthodox Church, with the difference that the one tradition is

philosophical Greek Patristics (Barlaam) and the other Biblical Patristics (Saint Gregory Palamas).

These views on the part of Meyendorff, which were formulated in the 1950's, are unacceptable from an ecclesiastical standpoint but, alas, have influenced many Orthodox theologians. These views were repudiated by Romanides, who showed that they did not stand up from an ecclesiastical point of view. This is because the discussion between Palamas and Barlaam showed that the former was the voice of Patristic Church tradition, while the latter was a defender of the Augustinian Western tradition. So in the Orthodox Church there is no such thing as a Hellenizing Patristic tradition and another, Biblical Patristic one; rather, the tradition is one and is based on hesychasm. Barlaam was an Augustinian monk who was entirely ignorant of the Orthodox Patristic tradition, which is why he was surprised when he encountered it in the East, among Athonite monks²²².

3. Applications of the post-Patristic theology in modern theological thought

The basis of post-Patristic theology appeared many years ago and was unwittingly brought into Greece through translations into Greek of works by post-Patristic theologians, though lately there has been much discussion of post-Patristic theology, since it has challenged the common

²²² See Notes on the Palamite Controversy and Related Topics, Greek Orthodox Theological Review 6 (1961), 186-285, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School Press, Brookline, Massachusetts; Notes on the Palamite Controversy and Related Topics II, Greek Orthodox Theological Review 9 (1963-4), 225-70, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School Press, Brookline, Massachusetts; Εισαγωγή Ιωάννου Ρωμανίδη εις Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶν, Ρωμαῖοι ἢ Ρωμηοὶ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, vol. I, Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1984, p. 89 ff; Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos and St. Vlasios, π. Ιωάννης Ρωμανίδης, ἓνας κορυφαῖος δογματικὸς θεολόγος τῆς Ορθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἐκδ. Ἱ. Μονῆς Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου (Πελαγίας) 212, pp. 259-88.

ecclesiastical conscience. Without wishing to be too dogmatic, I would like to identify a few typical teachings noted by Fr. John Romanides some of which were supported by Fr. Georges Florovsky.

The first post-Patristic view, which cannot be found in the whole of the Biblical/Patristic tradition, is that ecclesiology and anthropology are to be interpreted on the basis of Trinitology, rather than Christology. There is a tendency today for discourse to centre on Trinitology rather than Christology, as Florovsky observed. Romanides writes in a letter to Florovsky that his description of the desire of some people to use a Trinitarian formula instead of the current Christological one is characteristic of the myopia of contemporary Greek polymaths²²³. But the Church is the Body of Christ and people are created in the image of the Word. We know that Christ is the head of the Church and the archetype of the creation of people, but it is also He through Whom people were reborn, which is why the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was made incarnate. Of course, Christ was never separated from the Father and the Holy Spirit, since the essence and energy of the Triune God is one, but Christ is the head of the Church, and through Christ we know the Father in the Holy Spirit, as He Himself says: “ whoever has seen me has seen the Father; so how do you say ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?” (John 14, 9-10). So it is not possible to make analogies between the Church, people and the Triune God. We interpret ecclesiology and anthropology on the basis of Christology.

²²³ Metropolitan Ierotheos, π. Ἰωάννης Ρωμανίδης, ἕνας κορυφαῖος δογματικὸς θεολόγος,..., p. 125.

Saint Paul writes that Christ is the “image of God” (*II Cor.4, 4*). And elsewhere: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him”.

So Christ is the image of God the Father, and through Him all things were made. He is the head of the Body of the through Him is our redemption from our sins. People are an icon, of Christ, i.e. an image of the image and so our structure is Christological, and our maturation coincides with becoming Christ-like, since we must bear “the image of Christ in heaven” (cf. *I Cor. 15, 49*) and must come “to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (*Eph. 4, 13*) and this “so that we are no longer children” (*Eph. 4, 14*). So it is Christ Who is the archetype for people, and our destined goal is Christological: to be united with Him and, through Him, with the Father in the Holy Spirit. In the end, people are interpreted in Christ, as is their spiritual maturation²²⁴.

Athanasius the Great, in confronting Arius, taught that only the Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, is the image of God by nature, while people are so by grace, not by nature. In his works against Arius, he often referred to the fact that the Word is the real image of God, in accordance with the teaching of Saint Paul I quoted above. At one point he writes that the Word is the “unchanging image of the immutable God”. Elsewhere he writes that the Word “is not a creation, nor of those born, but Himself the Word and image of the essence of the Father”.

²²⁴ Panayiotis Nellias, Ζῶον Θεούμενον, Eopteia Publications, Athens 1979, p. 19 ff.

At another point Athanasius underlines the truth that only the Word is the image of the Father and that we have become so because of the true image of God, which is the Word. In particular, he declares: “only He is the only-begotten Son, and Word and Wisdom”. Thereafter, referring to various portions of Holy Scripture, according to which we must become merciful like the Father in Heaven, and become imitators of God and walk in love, as Christ loved us, he writes: “who will be likened to the Lord among the children of God? Concerning whom, only He is, by nature, the true image of the Father. Even if we have become the image and have been endowed with the likeness and glory of God, again this is not of ourselves, but through the image and true glory of God residing in us, Who is His Word, Who later became flesh for us and thus we have this grace of the calling”.

It is abundantly clear from this passage that the only image of God the Father by nature is the Word, whereas we people are images of God by grace and, indeed, through the image and true glory of God residing in us, Who is the Word Who became human for us. Christology is therefore the basis of anthropology.

The second post-Patristic theology is the theory concerning the “ontology of the person”. This view is post-Patristic for many and various reasons.

In the first place, the Fathers of the Church reject ontology, which they equate with metaphysics and which was condemned by the Church, as is clear from the Synodal Tome of Orthodoxy. The theology of the Holy Trinity is founded on the experience of the revelation of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers who saw God; it is not founded on the philosophy and thinking of heretics. It is typical that the Arians and

Arianizers, in their efforts to speak about the Triune God, use the principles of Greek philosophy, whereas the Fathers (Athanasius and the Cappadocians) stand on their own personal experience and that of the Prophets and Apostles, which is why they use passages from Scripture to rebut the views of the heretics.

Thus, the Holy Fathers talk about the Persons of the Holy Trinity because of the modalistic and dynamic forms of Monarchianism which appeared in their days, but they see them through the theology of the “Triune effulgence of the One Godhead”, and not through philosophy. The Fathers never claimed that the person hypostasizes nature/essence nor that the person is a mode of existence of nature/essence – that is Sabellianism –but they stress (rather) that the hypostatic features (unborn, born, proceeding) are a mode of existence of persons²²⁵. Nor do they ever claim that the person/hypostasis of the essence comes first, since the person consists of essence and personal features.

Then, the holy Fathers never associated nature with necessity, in order, thereafter, to associate will/volition with the person, as did the Arians, with their philosophical thinking. The Fathers of the Church taught that “by nature” does not also mean “by necessity” and that energy and volition are of nature - not the person – and that free choice is different from natural will. At this point, the teaching of Saint Maximus the Confessor on natural will/volition and free choice is important.

This means that the views of modern theologians that, supposedly, the freedom of the person is of value because it transcends

²²⁵ Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos and St. Vlasios, *Τὸ πρόσωπο στὴν Ὁρθόδοξη Παράδοση*, ἐκδ. Ἱ. Μονῆς Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου (Πελαγίας) 4th ed., 2005, pp. 142-52.

the inexorability of nature and that nature is linked to necessity and will to the person, cannot find any support in Patristic theology. So the view that “what the Fathers testify to is the freedom of God from His divinity, His potential to become human, to exist in the mode of divinity as well as in that of humanity, free of any pre-definition, either from the mode of divinity or that of humanity”²²⁶, and the view that “the free will of the Father is what the Triune hypostasis of God derives from, where the essence is hypostasized in the Triune God. The notion of will (that is in Man) is precisely the notion of choice”²²⁷, are unacceptable from the point of view of Orthodox theology. This is because the Fathers associate will/volition with nature, so that there is will and volition in God, while they also identify the difference between will/volition and free choice. Of course, “to will” is one thing and “how to will” is another.

Besides, the Fathers of the Church interpret the human person through the image and likeness of God (the Word) and did not make philosophical analyses concerning the human person, by analogy with the Triune God, since they reject the *analogia entis* of metaphysics and claim that there is no correspondence between the created and the uncreated²²⁸. The so-called “ontology of the person”, with the simultaneous disrespect for the life of quietude, which is understood as

²²⁶ Christos Yannaras, “Ἐξι φιλοσοφικῆς ζωγραφιᾶς, Icarus Publications, Athens 2011, p. 78.

²²⁷ The lessons of Metropolitan John of Pergamum have circulated in a variety of forms. In the paper I delivered at the Holy Metropolis of Piraeus, I used the form, the title and the page numbers of the notes which were circulating in the Ecclesiastical Upper School in Patra. The references here will be to the notes from the University of Thessaloniki, that is Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου Ἰωάννου, Μαθήματα Χριστιανικῆς δογματικῆς, Σημειώσεις ἀπὸ τῆς παραδόσεως τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου, Καθηγητῇ Ἰωάννῃ Ζηζιούλᾳ, Μέρος Α', Thessaloniki 1998, p. 111.

²²⁸ Andrew Sopko, Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy, the Theology of John Romanides, Synaxis Press, Canada 1998, pp.147-50.

being pietism, is a post-Patristic view because it ignores the distinction between the people of the flesh and those of the spirit, as this is presented by Saint Paul. (*I Cor.* 3, 1-3).

Moreover, the view of a “community of persons” is rejected by Patristic/Church teaching because there is no communion of persons either in the Triune God or in Christ the God/Man or in people. In the Triune God there is a communion of nature/essence and coenergy, but not a communion of persons, because there are also the incommunicable features (unborn, born, proceeding). The inter-residence of the persons is not communion of the persons. In Christ the God/Man, the union of the two persons is by hypostasis and there is no union of persons, because there are not two persons in Christ, as Nestorianism claims. And people commune in the energy of God, in the person of Jesus Christ and, through Him, with the energy of the Holy Trinity²²⁹.

A concomitant of the previous post-Patristic view is also what is said about people’s personality, in a psychological mode, with the “psychological-ization” of anthropology, especially when the niptic tradition of the Church is looked upon askance. Finally, voluntaristic personalism is also a post-Patristic view.

On the subject of the ontology of the person and voluntaristic personalism, I am preparing a special study which will demonstrate that the analyses concerning the person in God and the view of the person in the human being came to us from the West, and in particular from German idealism and existentialism.

²²⁹ Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos and St. Vlasios, Πρόσωπα καὶ «κοινωνία προσώπων», Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Παρέμβαση, no. 171, Oct. 2010, pp. 8-9.

The third post-Patristic teaching is what is known as “Eucharistic ecclesiology”²³⁰. Of course, no-one would want to deny the great value of the Divine Eucharist, at which we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ and to which all the sacraments and the life of the Church are directed, but it is not possible for the Divine Eucharist to be made independent of the Church and the whole of ecclesiastical life.

In the first place, there is a close connection between Church, Orthodoxy and Eucharist, as we see in Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons²³¹. There is no Church without Orthodoxy and the Eucharist; nor is there Orthodoxy without the Church and the Eucharist; just as there is no Eucharist outside the Church and Orthodoxy. Then, the Divine Eucharist cannot be considered Orthodox outside the canonical structure of the Church and the necessary requirements for participation in it. The Fathers of the Church and the Canons of the Local and Ecumenical Synods record the requirements for people wishing to participate in the Divine Eucharist and Holy Communion, which are the ascetic life and the hesychast mode of life. The Divine Eucharist cannot replace purification, enlightenment and deification nor, of course, can the opposite obtain. Here, too, there is balanced reciprocity.

Besides, apart from the Divine Eucharist, basic centres for the life of the Church are Scripture, dogma and prayer, which the Divine Eucharist presupposes. There is a very profound association between the *lex credendi* and the *lex orandi*. The bishop is the President of the Eucharistic Synaxis but at the same time [should be] a prophet who

²³⁰ Sopko, op. cit., pp. 150-3.

²³¹ See Bishop Afanasije Yeftić Ἐκκλησία, Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Εὐχαριστία παρὰ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Εἰρηναίῳ ἐν Χριστὸς ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος, Goulandris-Horn Institute, Athens 1983, pp. 109-46.

proclaims prophetic words to the congregation who desire to progress from the image to the likeness. Of course, within the Church and at the Divine Eucharist there are different spiritual ages, and the Holy Spirit ministers appropriately to each. And then, the grace of God in the sacraments acts independently of the condition of the canonical clergy and laity, but not all those who partake of the holy sacraments benefit, unless they take part in the purifying, enlightening and glorifying energy of God.

Moreover, any eschatological interpretation of the Divine Eucharist which rejects or undervalues the niptic/hesychast tradition is a post-Patristic teaching foreign to that of the Fathers of the Church. The eschatological experience of the Kingdom of God in the Divine Eucharist- as long as we are in this life- is a concomitant of our participation as Christians in the purifying, illuminating and glorifying energy of God. Saint Maximus the Confessor in his *Mystagogy* does not present only the eschatological side of the Divine Eucharistic, but also the hesychastic dimension, as the return of the *nous* from things perceived back to the heart, when those who love God are counted worthy to see, with the eyes of their ever-vigilant *nous*, the Word of God Himself. So the eschatological experience of the Kingdom of God in the Divine Eucharist cannot be conceived outside the activation of the grace of God, which is in the heart, through holy baptism and holy anointing, which the Fathers call the sacred altar of the heart.

All of this made Fr. John Romanides say that it is not the Eucharist that makes the Church the real Church, but the Church which makes the Eucharist the real Eucharist. In other words, the horse

(dogma/canons) comes before the cart, not vice versa²³². In any case, as we know, outside the Orthodox Church, with its dogmas and sacred canons, there is no Eucharist in the Orthodox meaning of the word. So we can talk about ecclesiastical Eucharist, but not about Eucharistic ecclesiology.

The fourth post-Patristic view, which is a consequence of the preceding one, is over-emphasis on the resurrectional nature of the Orthodox Church, with an under-valuation of the life of the Cross, that is the separation of the mystery of the Cross from the vision of the glory of the Resurrection of Christ. Some post-Patristic theologians claim that the Orthodox Church is the Church of the Resurrection, whereas the other Churches live the Cross of Christ. This is a dichotomy of ecclesiastical life, since the Cross is separated from the Resurrection of Christ. So when the glory of the Kingdom of God is presented, and the intermingling of this glory of the Resurrection with an indifference towards purification and illumination, which are experiences of the life of the Cross, i.e. when the Resurrection is separated from the Cross, then that is post-Patristic theology and does not sit well with the teaching of the Prophets, the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church.

The experience of the Cross is not linked only to the ascetic life, to what is called “practice”, but also to contemplation, which is why we talk about the intermingling of the mystery of the Cross and of the Resurrection of Christ.

Abba Isaac the Syrian talks about the double working of the Cross, i.e. that of practice and contemplation. He writes: “The working

²³² Sopko, op. cit., pp. 147 and 128.

of the Cross is twofold and in accord with the division of nature into two parts". The one, practice, "purifies the passionate part of the soul in the power of zeal" and is associated with patience in the sorrows of the flesh, while the other, contemplation, "by the action of love of the soul, which is a natural desire, which distils the noetic part of the soul" and consists of "the subtle workings of the *nous* and in divine meditation and persistence in prayer and so forth".

In his homily on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, Saint Gregory Palamas develops in detail the point that experience of the Cross means experience of the practice and contemplation of the Word, as was the case with the Prophets and the Righteous of the Old Testament, and as is experienced in the life of the Church.

On Moses' vision of God in the bush, he writes: "Thus it is that that vision by Moses of the burning but unconsumed bush was a mystery of the Cross, greater and more perfect than that mystery of Abraham". Besides, the Cross of the Lord includes the whole of the mystery of the divine dispensation: "For the Cross of the Lord manifests the whole of the dispensation of the presence in the flesh and contains the whole of the mystery thereof and extends to all the ends of the earth and includes all things above, below, around and in between". This is why, in concluding his homily, Saint Gregory urges the faithful to venerate the spot where the feet of Christ stood, i.e. the Cross, "as if also attendant at the future presence of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, seeing it beforehand in glory, we shall rejoice and skip lightly, having achieved a place at the right hand and hearing the promised, blessed voice and blessing, to the glory of the Son of God, Who was crucified for us in the flesh".

It follows that the co-mingling of the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ occurs in practice and contemplation, in the whole of the life of the Church, in the sacraments and the Divine Liturgy, i.e. in the co-mingling of the love of God. So the Cross is never separated from the Resurrection, since it is an expression of the love of God and a co-mingling of this divine love which constitutes our salvation. Unfortunately, these post-Patristic views, which we do not encounter in the texts of Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church and which, at some points are expansions of teachings which we find in the Fathers, have made their way into modern Greek theology and they need to be expunged. Commenting on these views, Fr. John Romanides writes that the problem for contemporary and future theology is not scholasticism, which has been belaboured a great deal, but, in particular, the views on the “ontology of the person”, “eucharistic ecclesiology” and the dichotomy between “the theology of the mystery of the Cross and the vision of the glory of the God of the resurrection”²³³.

Be that as it may, the fundamental signature of the post-Patristic theologians is that they undervalue or reject the niptic/hesychast tradition of the Church and, in particular, they ridicule in a most unbecoming manner what this tradition has to say about purification, illumination and deification, which is the core of the theology and of the life of the Church. There is an explanation for this outlook and Romanides interprets it as follows:

“There is a view that the teaching on perfection, as formulated by the Holy Fathers of the Church is of idolatrous provenance and that the

²³³ Ibid, pp. 146 ff.

Fathers of the Church were supposedly influenced by the distinctions between purification, illumination and deification- because there are similar notions in Neo-Platonism, i.e. this distinction of the stages of perfection does, clearly, exist. And because of a similarity between the two, our own people have adopted this view, which, for the most part derives from studies made by Protestants. In other words, because Protestants have rejected monasticism and adopted either the absolute predetermination of Calvin or the teaching of Luther concerning our salvation purely through faith and so on, and are opposed to the monasticism of the tradition (the Franco-Latin one) which they encountered, which was based on “satisfaction” (transferred merit), and once they discovered that this is an erroneous teaching, they abandoned celibacy and monasticism, too. Together with this, Luther in particular but Calvin, too, very much struck a blow against the stages of perfection. Thereafter, Protestant historians dealt with the issue and rejoiced so very greatly when they found the astonishing similarity between Patristic teaching and that of the pagans that they claimed that the stages of perfection are of pagan origin.

This is why our own people go, with such great appetite, to study- not that they should not do so, but at least it should be done with discernment- at foreign universities, and now you see the works of Orthodox theologians full of this idea that the Church has been influenced by the pagans, particularly concerning the stages of perfection”²³⁴.

²³⁴ Fr. John Romanides in Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos and Saint Vlasios, Ἑμπειρική δογματική, vol. II, ἐκδ. Ι. Μονῆς Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου (Πελαγίας), 2011, pp. 296-7.

4. A Characteristic Example

In order to see how so-called post-Patristic theology works, we will cite a very expressive example. This is the post-Patristic interpretation of the event of Christ's Transfiguration. The Gospels describe how, on Tabor, the face of Christ shone like the sun and that His garments became as white as light. The Fathers of the Church teach that, with the incarnation, the Body of Christ also became a source of the uncreated energies of God.

In the 14th century, a great discussion took place between Saint Gregory Palamas and Barlaam concerning the nature of this light, i.e. whether the Light of the Transfiguration was created or uncreated. Saint Gregory taught the Orthodox position that this light was not a third, hidden power within Christ, but was the Light of His divinity. Barlaam, on the other hand, claimed that it was created light. In general terms, Barlaam took the position that the Light seen by the Prophets and Apostles was created and was lower than reason, which is why he also thought that philosophers, who thought logically, were superior to the Prophets and Apostles who saw this light. The result of this discussion was that the Church in Synod, established the teaching of Palamas, who was numbered among the saints, whereas Barlaam was condemned as a heretic.

Modern post-Patristic theology interprets the event of the Transfiguration of Christ from Barlaam's perspective and casts itself off from the teaching of one of the greatest fathers of the Church, Saint Gregory Palamas. Concerning the theology of Palamas, it writes that "his thinking" - as if it were not the theology of the Church- and the whole of Eastern Patristic theology from the third century, particularly

Origen, “refers strongly to categories of Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy”. And then, “the homilies of Palamas on Christ’s Transfiguration are full of Platonic and Platonicizing expressions”, and also “follow corresponding syllogistic patterns”²³⁵. The “reconstitution or alternation of the senses”, the vision of the uncreated light, the homology of the intellect and the divine light and “vision with psychological purity” are also enlisted into this philosophical perspective²³⁶.

Thus, according to post-Patristic theology, it is imperative that “we abandon Neo-Platonic and Patristic allegorism, without ceasing to study it and learn from it and, submit a reading of the Transfiguration within the perspective of the unity of the world and people”²³⁷. This means that we must reject the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas on the Light of the Transfiguration and also that of the 9th Ecumenical Synod (1351), as well as that of all the saints who have interpreted the event of the Transfiguration. Likewise, we must abolish or replace all the hymns of the Church on the subject.

So, according to this post-Patristic interpretation, at that moment, on the mountain, the disciples did not take part in the uncreated Light of deification, but came to know “a world of fullness” and to experience it as joy. The Light of Christ, with which He shone on Tabor is His completeness, and so “Christ shines with fullness and opens up with His radiance in place”. “He addresses God, and, in response, God brings about the Transfiguration.” “Jesus shone entirely and the fullness of his

²³⁵ Stelios Ramfos, *Τὸ μυστικὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*, Armos Publications, Athens 2006, p. 353.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 354-5.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 357.

elevation flooded His being with a light that overflowed into His clothing". "When people are 'in the truth', the truth is written on their faces and their accoutrements- all of these shine spontaneously". The light of Christ "is not the metaphysical light of Gregory Palamas", but "in His face and person, God is manifested in the transparency of mankind". This transparency "means the theophany of the flesh". "It is the presence of God upon a person as existential completion, a transfer from density to the luminous attenuation of the person."²³⁸. Obviously, the theology of deification is placed in the margin here, and the whole teaching of the Church is abolished.

And then, the presence and Transfiguration of Christ between the Prophets, Moses and Elijah, indicates that with Christ we abandon a world which they express. "Between the freedom of the commandments which Moses expresses, and the faith in a God beyond any feature of the world, which Elijah expresses, Jesus stands as incarnate eternity, truth independent of phobias and conventions." In this way, Jesus tells them that "we can justify existence on earth provided we die and we have lived", "with an opening of the conscience to pain in honour of life". In the same way, Jesus makes His way to Jerusalem and death: "He will withstand Golgotha because he ascended Tabor and the theophany occurred"²³⁹.

The request by Saint Peter: "It is good for us to be here and let us make three tabernacles" is interpreted through the perspective of "Hellenistic asceticism" as "a request to escape to timeless reality" or "to retain for ever this happy circumstance", for "success to be capitalized,

²³⁸ Ibid, pp. 358-60.

²³⁹ Ibid, pp. 360-1.

blessedness to be institutionalized and made part of the continuum of time”²⁴⁰. This is why Christ did not agree to the request.

The cloud of light which covered the disciples “was an aethereal reality between earth and sky”, its celestial energy “describes the luminous Transfiguration as an internal change, while its shadow functions as a protective veil for the senses, since they cannot bear absolute light”. The voice which is heard within the cloud “sheds the light of the Transfiguration onto the disciples and the surrounding area”. “The glory of Jesus means the encounter on earth between God and humankind, a time of rupture with the past in our nascent present.”²⁴¹.

This whole interpretation proposes that we should see the fact of the Transfiguration “as a proposal of eschatological existence, of a nascent, new life”, and “not some salvation in the future which does away with the present, nor on a magical/miraculous level, indicative of Jesus’ divinity”. We are dealing with the “ethos of the Kingdom”, which “is understood as life within the world, free from the weight of the world, that is as a transformed life, for which tomorrow is an open possibility and never a de-spiritualized ritual form”. “The pure white emphasizes the impartation of the pure gaze and directs us towards the pure heart”, “it invades the density of being like abundant, eschatological light, while the brilliance of the scene interprets a persistent demand for authentic feeling in a world of illusions”²⁴². The transparency of the Transfiguration is a “form of individual existence”,

²⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 362.

²⁴¹ Ibid, p. 363.

²⁴² Ibid, pp. 363-5.

which “is equivalent to liberating purity which makes a person unite with its light”, “it is a choice of an open life for societies and individuals, which promotes their moral maturity”²⁴³.

This example clearly demonstrates how so-called post-Patristic theology works, since it attempts to free itself from the hermeneutic analysis of the Fathers concerning the revelation of the glory of God as uncreated Light and the deification of the person by co-mingling in the uncreated Light. It considers this to be Neo-Platonic and interprets the events of the New Testament through modern, Protestant, Biblical and humanistic hermeneutical principles. The view that we should not see the event of the Transfiguration “on a magical/ miraculous level, indicative of Jesus’ divinity”, as well as the view that the light of Christ “is not the metaphysical light of Gregory Palamas” are really unacceptable from all points of view. Such opinions take no proper account of the whole hermeneutic tradition of the Church, nor of its whole life of worship. A modern way of thinking is introduced and, in effect, the whole of the Orthodox tradition is Protestantized: that of the Prophets, the Apostles and the Fathers, which is the experience and theology of the Orthodox Church. From Christ Who is God and Man, we arrive at Man who is God.

The objection might be made that the example to which we have referred is isolated and potentially inordinate and that it is not accepted by all the so-called post-Patristic theologians. But the fact is that this example is contained in a book which expresses post-Patristic theology,

²⁴³ Ibid, p. 366.

as the author writes, and is connected to related books which have been accepted by a university theologian, himself the voice of this theology.

To be precise, Professor Petros Vasileiadis in a text of his in which he speaks of double ecclesiology, refers to the trilogy of works by Stelios Ramfos, that is *Ὁ Καημὸς τοῦ Ἐνός, Τὸ Μυστικό τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* and *Τὸ ἀδιανόητο τίποτα: Φιλοκαλικά ριζώματα τοῦ νεοελληνικοῦ μηδενισμοῦ. Δοκίμιο φιλοσοφικῆς ἀνθρωπολογίας* (Yearning for the One, The Secret of Jesus, and The Inconceivable Nothing: Philokalic Rhizomes of Modern Greek Nihilism. An Essay of Philosophical Anthropology,) the last of which Vasileiadis calls “very interesting for modern Orthodoxy”²⁴⁴.

Concerning the second of these works, *The Secret of Jesus*, from which the above quote about the Transfiguration was taken, Vasileiadis says that Ramfos “attempted to support his observations by drawing on the conclusions of the scientific Biblical study of the last two centuries”²⁴⁵. This is the scientific research which was carried out by Protestants and some Orthodox who represent Russian theology. Of the third of Ramfos’ work, “*The Inconceivable Nothing*”, Vasileiadis writes: “Analysing in detail the nihilistic impasses of the Philokalic anti-modern programme of Nicodemus/Macarius, and also the contemporary notion of individuality and the responsible subject, [Ramfos] wonders whether a balanced synthesis between society and individuality/ withdrawal is feasible in Orthodox, Eastern Christianity”. And he concludes, “Only that after the end of the first millennium in the Eastern tradition were monks- and the average Orthodox Christian, in general- closed in their

²⁴⁴ Op. cit., pp. 48-9.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 48.

conventional 'community and remained outside society, forgetting their revolutionary beginnings', "They held on to the desert and abdicated their own entity""²⁴⁶.

The same professor, in an article referring to Ramfos' book *"The Inconceivable Nothing"* writes: "...with its profound and scientifically well-supported philosophical and anthropological analyses- from the outset he makes it clear and 'predisposes us' to the fact that he does not write 'as a theologian, even though he did try to unlock a prayer book"- in essence he goes on to deconstruct what is, for many, the most sacred parameter of modern Orthodoxy. That is, the prevailing tendency to see Orthodox Eastern Christianity exclusively from the point of view of hesychasm and Palamism generally. He garners "some of his assessments": "The evolution of thought and the affirmation of the individual subject was cancelled in Byzantium, since the group, with its stereotypes (concerning the pro-Palamite party of anti-humanists) did away with individuality at the very moment that it was dawning". "The imposition of Palamism, with the Great Synod of 1351, put the whole of the Christian East outside history". "The discrimination between divine essence and uncreated energies involves an anthropology of closed feeling which excludes the formation of a self-aware subject, and an eschatology which excludes or amputates historicity". Vasileiadis concludes: "Without contending that he has said the last word about the substance of the issues, in this work Ramfos opens wide the gates for a profound philosophical, anthropological and also theological self-

²⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 49.

examination. A work (and the whole trilogy, actually) that no serious scholar will be able to ignore in the future"²⁴⁷.

It is abundantly clear from these views that post-Patristic ideas have infiltrated the academic world and that with these, those younger theologians, clergy and laity, are being formed who will staff the theological and clerical posts over the coming years. It is, indeed, saddening that the Fathers of the Church should be insulted so nastily, especially by those who wrote mostly about hesychast/niptic theology, and in particular the great Father of the Church, Saint Gregory Palamas and the other holy Niptic Fathers.

In general, this movement which today is called post-Patristic theology, is a return, in a more intense form, to that which, a few years ago, was known as Neo-Orthodoxy and, much earlier, as Barlaamism. If we investigate these currents, we shall see that they have common starting- and other- points.

It is obvious that, as scholastic theology was distinguished by a variety of trends, so post-Patristic theology is expressed by many trends, because each post-Patristic theologian differs from the other post-Patristic theologians. The basis, however, is the undervaluation and marginalization of the teaching of the Church, as this was expressed by the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers.

5. Ecclesiastical Tradition

For an event to be investigated, there have to be the "research keys", as Fr. John Romanides repeatedly said. No-one can understand a set of circumstances unless they have the tools to do so. This is true of

²⁴⁷ In the newspaper Kathimerini, 12-9-2010.

any movement, including that known as the post-Patristic. Some points will be emphasized which indicate that so-called post-Patristic theology operates outside the tradition of the Church.

a) The Unity of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers.

In the whole of ecclesiastical tradition it is a given that the theology of the Church is not a matter of thinking, but is the revelation of God to those who have been glorified- the Prophets, the Apostles and the Fathers- over the centuries. In the "Synodal Tome of Orthodoxy", the phrase is often repeated that we proceed "according to the God-inspired theologies of the saints and the pious outlook of the Church". This phrase is found in the Acts of the 9th Ecumenical Synod, and is said to have been formulated by Saint Philotheos Kokkinos, Patriarch, and a fellow-monk of Saint Gregory Palamas. There is no other theology in the Church, whether post-Apostolic, pre-Patristic or post-Patristic.

Saint Gregory Palamas declared that there is a unity in the teaching of the Prophets, the Apostles and the Fathers: "For what else is this other than saving perfection, one in knowledge and dogmas, which all prophets, apostles and fathers think alike; through whom the Holy Spirit testifies, speaking of God and His creations". In the Old Testament, the prophets saw the bodiless Word, and in the New, the Apostles and Fathers were in communion with the incarnate Word.

There is unity in the faith, since there is common experience and a common prerequisite for experience, which is Orthodox hesychasm, in combination with the sacraments of the Church. This experience is a comingling of the mysteries of the Cross and of the Resurrection of Christ, as well as experiencing the mystery of Pentecost. In the Church, we do not accept merely the Christ of history and the Christ of faith, i.e. the

faith of the first Christians, but also the Christ of the resurrection, the Christ of glory Who manifests Himself to those who are worthy of the revelation. So the Christ of the revelation cannot be associated with the thinking of philosophy.

b) Ineffable Words and Created Words and Concepts.

Saint Paul ascended into the third heaven and from there he entered Paradise, where he heard “ineffable words which it is not proper for a person to utter.”(*II Cor.* 12, 4). Thereafter he described the experience he had undergone in created words and concepts. So, ineffable words are one thing and created words and concepts another and there is no equivalence between these two things. Fr. John Romanides taught that spiritual concepts are the same in the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers, whereas created words have changed at different periods. The words changed, but not the concepts, which are the fruit of the revelation of the ineffable words. Naturally, the terms of the Ecumenical Synods are part of Tradition, which cannot be altered.

The fact that the Fathers took some terms from ancient Greek philosophy which were being used by philosophizing Christians of the time does not mean that they also accepted the views of Greek philosophy or that they secularized the revelation. Besides, the Fathers removed the charge from the words they borrowed from Greek philosophy and re-charged them with a different content, in accordance with the experience they had undergone. This was the case with the words “person”, “consubstantial”, “apathy”, “ecstasy” and so forth.

Saint Gregory Palamas writes that the heretics used philosophy and based their views thereon. “And if you investigate, you will see that if not all, then most of the dire heresies take their principles therefrom”.

The Fathers of the Church, on the other hand, even when they used words from Greek philosophy, gave them a different meaning. He writes: "And if one of the Fathers speaks thus to those outside, it is only as regards the words. For there is a great difference in meaning. For according to Paul they have the *nous* of Christ, while the others speak from the human brain, if not worse" .

We see this in the writings of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, which many theologians claim to be Neo-Platonic. In these works, the terminology is that of the time but the teaching opposes the views of Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism. A typical example is what is written of God as being both loving desire and beloved. Saint Dionysius the Areopagite writes that the theologians call God both "love longed for and beloved" and also "a force moving and drawing beings to Himself". This is also taught by Saint Maximus the Confessor, who interprets the writings of Dionysius. He writes that God is truly love and beloved, "because loving desire is poured out from Him, He Himself, as its begetter, is said to be in movement, while, because He is what is truly longed for and loved, He stirs into motion the things that look to Him, and grants them the power appropriate to each". In speaking of the movement of God, he says: "God stimulates in that He impels each being, in accordance with its own principle, to return to Him".

Here we are told that God is erotic love and moves towards people, so this is far from Plato's theory that God has no love- which is a characteristic of humankind. It also overturns Aristotle's theory that God is the first unmoved mover, since God does move.

So, to attribute descriptions from Neo-Platonism to Orthodoxy, and to present the Fathers as being influenced by Platonism, is

disparaging and, scientifically, even unsound. This is indeed said by the Protestants to undermine the status and worth of the holy Fathers.

c) The Riches of Worship and Liturgy.

The Church has put all its revelatory theology into worship, both in the hymns which are sung on Sundays, feasts and weekdays as well as into the prayers of the sacraments. If you read the Paraclitic Canon or the Services for the Month you will see the whole of the dogmatic and hesychast tradition of our Church. And if you read carefully the prayers of the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, the Divine Eucharist, Repentance, Marriage, and the Anointing, you will see that the *lex credenti* is closely linked to the *lex orandi*.

So how is it possible for us to speak of post-Patristic theology when the hymns of the Church, which are the basis of prayer, are linked with the enduring tradition of the Church, the dogmas and the ethos of ecclesiastical life? How can anyone speak of two kinds of ecclesiology, when there is a wonderful unity in the prayers of the Sacraments and of worship?

There is, for example, a marvellous *tropario*, which is used as the dismissal hymn for many Episcopal saints, such as Saint Ignatius the God-bearer: "As a sharer of the ways and successor to the thrones of the Apostles, inspired by God, you found practice to be a transport to contemplation. Therefore, having rightly construed the word of truth you also contested for the faith even with your blood, Hieromartyr Ignatius. Intercede with Christ our God that our souls may be saved". In this *tropario*, it is said that the Fathers are successors not only to the thrones but also to the ways of the Apostles. This 'ways' is the stages of spiritual perfection: practice and contemplation- i.e. purification,

enlightenment and deification. With this way of piety: the Fathers become inspired by God, and hence rightly construe the word of truth and are martyred for this confession. Thereafter they have the boldness to pray to God for our salvation.

Any alteration of the spirit of this *tropario* and, in general, of the worship of the Church, is a dichotomy between the *lex credendi* and the *lex orandi*; it is a fragmentation of the spiritual life; it is a Protestantization of Orthodox theology. This may be the reason why there is an attempt to undermine the life of worship and liturgy by post-Patristic theologians; why they speak of cleansing worship of its “Byzantinisms”; why they are against the Philokalia, Saint Gregory Palamas, Saint Nicodemus the Athonite and contemporary Philokalic Fathers; why they speak of “neo-conservatism”. Post-Patristic theology is not expressed only by those who clearly are concerned with references to it, but also by others who speak conjecturally, moralistically and also contemptuously of the hesychast Patristic tradition, even though they present themselves as super-Orthodox.

d) The Case of Elder Sophrony.

There is a very clear distinction between the Fathers of the 4th century and the heretics of their time. The former (the Fathers), at some points used the terminology of the heretics, such as: “person”, “essence”, “energy”, “apathy” and so forth, but they gave it another context. The main thing is that the heretics were philosophers/thinkers who attempted, through reason, to understand the relationship of the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the union and communion of mortals with the Triune God. The Fathers of the Church, on the other hand, began with the experience of the uncreated, deifying energy of God, and thereafter

used some expressions of their own day to put this experience into words as well as possible.

This task of the Fathers has been continued into our own days by the late Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov who was not a post-Patristic theologian. Although he writes of people as 'persons', he nevertheless places this in the perspective of deification rather than that of humanistic philosophy. He mentions that glorified people, when they see the uncreated Light, the hypostatic principle is energized through it and they realize that they are the image and likeness of God and then the hypostasis emerges and people feel themselves drawn actively into Divine eternity, and Time/Age comes to an end for them²⁴⁸.

In this way, Elder Sophrony spoke about people as persons, but saw them entirely differently from the philosophizing theologians of our own day, who refer to the ontology of the person and have been influenced by Western theology, especially that of German idealism and existentialism. In a reference to an excerpt from Palamas' letter to the Nun Xeni, where he mentions the hesychastic way, Archimandrite Zacharias Zakharou, who expresses the authentic teaching of Elder Sophrony, writes that the latter saw people as persons through the theology of image and likeness and the hesychast life. He writes that this text recalls the chapter on the vision of the uncreated light in Elder Sophrony's book *We shall see Him as He is*. He there refers to the fact that the uncreated light causes a wonderful flower to bloom, the name of which is hypostasis or person. When people are enlightened, they bring the whole of creation to God. Herein lies the central meaning of the

²⁴⁸ Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharof), Saint Siluan the Athonite, the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, Essex.

person, which the Elder was so concerned to help us see. He describes how the divine image and likeness is achieved in people, and also the path of hesychasm which leads to it. The Elder's great desire was to make us able to plumb the depths of our heart, and keep our *nous* crucified there, so that we can understand the consolation of Christ²⁴⁹.

In the Elder's texts, although he does, indeed, use Western terminology, he gives it a different meaning. For instance, by the phrase '*actus purus*' he does not mean what Thomas Aquinas did, but rather that, during the experiences, when a glorified person sees the uncreated Light, they feel that this is the brilliance of God, and this brilliance they call '*actus purus*', in accordance with the words of Saint John the Theologian: "This is the message which we heard from Him and proclaim to you: that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all". (*I Jn.* 1, 5). Indeed, at the particular point where he is referring to the '*actus purus*', there is a footnote in which he writes that although the terms of Aquinas are used here, readers can see for themselves that our thought and concepts differ greatly (from those of Aquinas)²⁵⁰.

But Archimandrite Sophrony's teaching on the value of the divine Eucharist is closely connected with the hesychast and ascetic tradition, which is why he also mentions mourning, repentance, keeping Christ's commandments, the Cross of Christ and so forth. Again, Archimandrite Zacharias observes that Elder Sophrony often said that we are strangers to the spirit of the divine liturgy unless we come into church with pain in our hearts. He goes on to say that a careful reading of the Elder's

²⁴⁹ Archimandrite Zacharias (Zacharou), *The Hidden Man of the Heart*, the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, Essex 2011.

²⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*

works makes us see that that he considers hesychasm as the necessary prerequisite for the proper approach to the liturgy. He also considers hesychasm to be a necessary tool for any spiritual father, because, unless he works on his heart, he cannot understand the word of God and pass it on, filling the hearts of his children with grace. In the final analysis, hesychasm enables us to grasp the deep meaning of Scripture²⁵¹.

So it would not be true to say that the theology of Man as a person and participation in the liturgy without the hesychast way of life expresses the teaching of the Church, as taught by the Fathers of the Church and by Elder Sophrony.

If the so-called Post-Patristic theologians wished to speak about modern people without disengaging from Patristic theology which is ecclesiastical experience, not ideology, then they should have taken into account the case of Elder Sophrony, in particular, his hesychast life, expressed in his eucharistic life, and his teaching. Elder Sophrony was a hesychast monk who lived for twenty-five years on the Holy Mountain and in its desert, in deep mourning and with the prayer of the heart. He saw the glory of God in the person of Christ and is a genuine theologian of our Church today. He can speak to the people of our times without disengaging from the teaching and spirit of the Fathers of the Church.

Epilogomena

The experience of the vision of God, the hesychast/Philokalic tradition and the worship of the Church negate the views of post-Patristic theology which undermines these three dimensions of Church

²⁵¹ Op. cit.

life and, in effect, Protestantizes Orthodox theology. In order to make clear what precisely Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition is and to demonstrate that it is opposed to post-Patristic theology- which is based on culture and philosophy- I shall refer to an example from the first day of the Resurrection of Christ, i.e. the appearance of Christ to two of his disciples while on the road to Emmaus.

On that day, the first of the sabbaths, [i.e. the first Sabbath after the Passover] the disciples were walking to Emmaus and discussing the events of the crucifixion of Christ. They were sad and were approached by a stranger (Who was Christ) and this man began to interpret passages of Scripture, according to which Christ would be crucified. While He was speaking, their hearts burned with the grace of God. They asked Him to remain with them and, as He broke bread, it was revealed to them that He was the resurrected Christ (*Luke 24, 13-35*).

This event is most indicative. It is a journey of the disciples, with Christ, towards the Divine Liturgy. Christ is present at all the stages, but is revealed gradually. The burning in the hearts of the disciples occurred when He analyzed the word of God, since His action touched the internal locus of the spiritual heart. This means that analysis of the word of God illumines people's hearts and there follows the vision/revelation of the Risen Christ in the Divine Eucharist. After this, the joy of the vision of the Risen Christ is made manifest to the Apostles, to the whole Church.

Post-Patristic theology attempts to analyze the Scriptures using logic as a tool, or imagination or thinking, but not the heart. It wants the Divine Eucharistic and Holy Communion without the burning of the heart, without prayer of the heart. It refers to the ontology of the person,

but not to their progression from image to likeness/deification. It speaks of the person presiding at the Eucharistic gathering, but not of the Prophet who preaches. It speaks of the Resurrection of Christ with no experience of the mystery of the Cross, which is the ascetic/hesychast tradition. It seeks to answer the questions posed by modern culture, but does not mention the victory of the Christian, through the power of Christ, over the devil, corruption and death. It wants to receive answers to the questions of contemporary culture and is not interested in participating in the glory of the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.

This is the problem of post-Patristic theology, and of any other theology that is not Ecclesiastical. In his address to the well-known conference at the Theological Academy in Volos, and having first remarked that the theology of the Church cannot ignore contemporary culture, the Ecumenical Patriarch wrote: "The future belongs to an authentic, 'Patristic' theology, **beyond Neo-Patristics and Post-Patristics**, to an ecclesiastical theology which is actuated by the tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet' of the Kingdom of God"²⁵².

It follows, then, that the basis of Orthodox theology is ecclesiastical, as described wonderfully in Saint Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians as well as that to the Colossians, and is not post-Apostolic nor post-Patristic.

²⁵² Address by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, July 2010.

*Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis Emeritus Professor of the Aristotle University
of Thessaloniki*

BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF THE POST-PATRISTIC BATTLE
AGAINST THE FATHERS

The Scholasticism of the Franco-Papist West against the Patristic East

In the West, until the 8th century, theology and spirituality, in essence, followed the route marked out by the East. As G. Dumont points out, the sources and principles of theological thought, liturgy and spirituality for the West, which characterize the flourishing era of Latin Catholicism, are to be found in the East, however much this may come as a surprise to many Western Christians. The West owes the East a debt as regards the fact that it formulated into dogmas the great mysteries of Christianity concerning the Holy Trinity, the union of divine and human nature in the one person of Christ, a large number of feasts in the Church's year, especially in honour of the Mother of God, as well as the foundation and organization of monasticism. The estrangement between East and West begins at a particular time in history: the dynamic appearance on the historical stage of the German Franks of Charlemagne offered the throne of Rome a powerful ally against the pressures of the Byzantine emperor and gave the German prince and his successors the opportunity to found and construct the Holy Roman Empire of the German people as a replacement for Romania (New Rome/Constantinople) which was henceforth known as Byzantium. According to the analysis of Le Guillu, Charlemagne's ambition was to

create a new theological tradition independent of the Patristic Tradition of the East. As he explicitly says: “In the Carolingian books, the first attempt is made by the West to define itself in opposition to the East”²⁵³.

The greatest contribution to this estrangement was made by the abandonment of the Patristic Tradition and by the construction of a new theology on the Aristotelian syllogistic method, i.e. the formation of the Scholastic Theology. In the 14th century conflict between Saint Gregory Palamas and Barlaam the Calabrian, we have the clash of the new, scholastic theology with that of the Patristic Tradition of the East which was rooted in the Holy Spirit, and which, until then, the West had followed, too.

The Clash between Orthodox Illumination and Western Enlightenment in the 14th Century

There was, indeed, a severe conflict between the scholastic, post-Patristic theology of the Westerners and the empirical theology of the Fathers of the Church which was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The former was expressed by Barlaam the Calabrian, one of the chief architects of the Western Renaissance and the latter by the great God-bearing and God-revealing Theologian, Gregory Palamas, who achieved in the 14th century what John Damascene had in the 8th: the expression and codification of the teachings of the Fathers who came before on many issues, the most important being: a) whether theology ought to be dialectic or demonstrative, i.e. whether it should be founded on

²⁵³See H. Biedermann, “Einige Grundlinien Orthodoxen Kirchenverständnisses”, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 19 (1970) 3rd ed.; M-J, Le Guillu, *Vom Geist der Orthodoxie*, Aschaffenburg 1963, p. 7. Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis, *Ἐπόμενοι τοῖς θείοις πατράσι, Ἀρχές καὶ κριτήρια τῆς Πατερικῆς Θεολογίας*, Thessaloniki 1997, p 179, ff.

philosophical analysis and discussion, as Barlaam wanted, bringing the scholasticism of the West into the East, or founded on the certainty of the experience of the Holy Spirit which the Prophets, Apostles and Saints had enjoyed, as taught by Palamas; b) whether human wisdom leads to perfection and deification, as Barlaam claimed, or whether these were achieved only through divine wisdom, which is granted to those who keep the commandments of God and are cleansed of the passions, in which case, after purification, they receive divine illumination and thereafter attain to the vision of God, as Saint Gregory Palamas contended; and, c) whether this illumination is the fruit of the created energy of the intellect, as Barlaam would have it, or of the uncreated energy of God, as stated by Saint Gregory, which really deifies people by energy, by grace, but not by nature and essence, because the uncreated energies are distinct from the essence of God. Saint Gregory's arguments were overwhelmingly successful and a famous victory was won by the Patristic East, inspired by the Holy Spirit over the scholastic and post-Patristic West. We shall not analyze this here²⁵⁴, but merely observe that without observance of God's commandments, the ascetic way of living, and the effort to purify oneself of evils and passions, as the Holy Fathers, those theologians of experience, lived and taught, without these no-one can become wise in divine matters. So the only chance that someone who is not illumined and glorified has, when wishing speak about theology, is to follow those who were illumined and deified by the grace of the Holy Spirit. If this condition is not in place, we have no wisdom or theology, only foolishness and childishness. Addressing Barlaam, and

²⁵⁴ There is a very rich bibliography on the theology of Saint Gregory Palamas. Among many others, see my own studies in my book *Θεολόγοι της Θεσσαλονίκης*, Thessaloniki 1997.

all the post-Patristic theologians of all ages- the thinkers, philosophers, academics- Saint Gregory observes pithily in the Holy Spirit: “Without purification, even if you learn natural philosophy from as far back as Adam and up until the end of the world, you will be none the wiser”²⁵⁵.

Over the last few days I have been looking closely at Saint Gregory Palamas’ writings, to confirm what I wanted to say here “following the divine fathers and this God-revealing and God-seeing Father”. It would take a long time for me to present the Patristic attitude of Palamas, the honour and value he accords the Holy Fathers. Of the many things I have perused, I would present merely a few which are indicative, in order to show how mistaken and how far outside the Orthodox Tradition are those clergy and laity who, (at their academies and theological schools) instead of making the Spirit-inspired and God-illuminated Holy Fathers the object of their studies, those who have given us access to the vast, uncreated world of divine majesty, instead bring us down to the created and petty things of human thoughts and philosophies and, often enough, initiate us into the depths of Satan, as Saint Gregory says. For example, they get rid of the confessional lesson of Religious Instruction from schools, catechism, dogmatics, liturgics, history, references to the Mother of God and the Saints, Scripture- Old and New Testaments- and have, instead, through the lesson dubbed “Religious Knowledge”, introduced Masonic, Satanic syncretism.

In confirming his truly wondrous accord with the Fathers over all the intervening centuries, Saint Gregory says that it is impossible for the God-bearing Fathers not to agree among themselves, because they are all

²⁵⁵ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 1, 1, 3.

guided by the inspiration of one and the same Holy Spirit²⁵⁶. The Fathers are the sure guardians of the Gospel and Theology because the Spirit of genuine truth is manifested and resides in their spirit, so any people who apprentice themselves to them are taught by God²⁵⁷. With authority and mastery he stresses that: “this perfection is for salvation, both in knowledge and dogmas, saying everything regarding God and His creatures, as the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers held, and as all those through whom the Holy Spirit witnessed”²⁵⁸.

Barlaam would not have ended in heresy, and with him all the modern, post-Patristic Neo-Barlaamites, had he believed that the divine is not to be approached through human reasoning but with Godly faith; had he accepted, in simplicity, the traditions of the Holy Fathers, which we know are better and wiser than human musings, because they come from the Holy Spirit and have been proved by words rather than deeds²⁵⁹. In a snapshot of the Barlaam-like terminology of today’s post-Patristic theologians, Saint Gregory asks Barlaam if the latter has understood where this “piety greater than the Fathers” will lead²⁶⁰.

Barlaam was led there, to such a pit of impiety, because, with reason and philosophy, he investigated what is “beyond word and nature” and did not believe, as did Saint John Chrysostom, that it is not possible to interpret in words the manner of the prophetic sight except and unless you have learned it clearly through experience. For if no

²⁵⁶ Περί τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος 2, 38.

²⁵⁷ Πρὸς Βαρλαάμ, 1, 31.

²⁵⁸ Ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 2, 1, 42

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 1, 1 14.

²⁶⁰ Πρὸς Βαρλαάμ, 1 55.

word is able to present the works and passions of nature, how much more is this true of the energy of the Spirit²⁶¹?

What we have said so far has been aimed at demonstrating that doubts began to be cast on the standing of the Fathers from the 9th century, with the development of scholastic theology and then the anthropocentric Humanism of the Renaissance. The scholastic theology of Papism is responsible for the neglect of the Fathers, not only because it made logic and dialectics the basic tools for theologizing and ignored the illumination from above, divine wisdom, but also because it dogmatized the elevation of the Pope over the synods and Fathers, even over the Church itself. The criterion for correct theological thinking was no longer one of being in agreement with the Fathers, but with the Pope.

Whereas the Tradition of the Church functioned along the line of Christ – Apostles – Fathers, the Papal monarchist view went Christ – Peter – Pope. This powerful post-Patristic storm did not shake the Patristic tradition, the Patristic foundations of the Church, because God revealed, in the middle and late Byzantine times, three new, great hierarchs and ecumenical teachers: Photius the Great, who was the first, in the 9th century, to oppose systematically and most theologically the anti-Patristic and heretical Papist teaching on the issue of the *filioque* and that of the primacy of the Pope, endorsing the Orthodox teaching with a decision of the synod in Constantinople in 879, which is considered ecumenical; Saint Gregory Palamas, who, in the 14th century, opposed the humanist philosopher, Barlaam, at the time when Scholasticism was at its height, and who promulgated the illumination of theologians

²⁶¹ Ὅτι ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶς ἡσυχάζόντων 3, 3, 3.

through the uncreated grace and energy of God, as opposed to the created and limited illumination of human wisdom, a position completely endorsed by the hesychast synods of 1451, in Constantinople, which are also considered ecumenical; and Saint Mark of Ephesus, that giant and Atlas of Orthodoxy, rightly called Anti-Papist and the Scourge of the Pope, who alone negated and nullified the decision of the pseudo-unifying synod of Ferrara-Florence, which scurrilously and oppressively dogmatized anti-Patristic and heretical teachings, and which to this day is numbered among the ecumenical synods by the Papists.

b) Patristics and Post-Patristics at the Pseudo-Synod of Ferrara-Florence

Sylvestros Syropoulos, who wrote the history of the pseudo-synod of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439), where, on a Synodal level, Patristic Orthodox theology came into conflict with the post-Patristic scholastic theology of Papism, has preserved for us facts and information which help us to realize how far the Church is Patristic and how far the West, since the Franks seized the, until then, Orthodox Patriarchate of Old Rome in the 9th century, was converted into being post-Patristic, and anti-Patristic, giving rise to a whole host of heresies and schisms.

The Orthodox patriarchs knew that Papism and scholastic theology had transcended and pushed aside the Fathers of the Church and had replaced them with their own "Fathers", chief among whom was Thomas Aquinas (13th century), and so, in their letters appointing their representatives, (their *locum tenentes*) they (the patriarchs) also set out the limits for the discussions and decisions of the Synod, whether

this was to take place in Basel, Switzerland, where the reformist delegates awaited the Pope, or in some other place designated by the Pope. Union was to take place “canonically and legally, in accordance with the traditions of the holy ecumenical synods and the holy teachers of the Church and nothing was to be added to the faith nor removed or introduced as new”²⁶². Otherwise they would not accept the anti-Patristic and post-Patristic decisions of the synod. By taking this stand, the patriarchs expressed the firm, permanent and inviolate position of the Church over the centuries that the Fathers constitute a *sine qua non* element of the identity of the Church and its theology. There is no theology which transcends the Fathers, and those who denigrate them, or, condemn them, or, even worse, transcend and surpass them, as at the well-known Conference in June 2010, at “The Academy of Theological Studies” of the Holy Metropolis of Volos, are no theologians. According to Saint John Damascene, the mouthpiece of all the Fathers and voice of the self-awareness of the Church, anyone who does not believe in accordance with the Tradition of the Church is an unbeliever²⁶³. Earlier than this, the truly great Athanasius, in his well-known letter to Serapion, makes it clear, in wonderful fashion, what this Tradition is on which the Church is founded: it is what Christ handed down, what the Apostles preached and what the Fathers preserved²⁶⁴.

The Orthodox Patriarchs’ most Orthodox and Patristic framework for the discussions and decisions of the council immediately met with resistance on the part of the papal theologian of the Council of Basel and

²⁶² V. Laurent, Les “Memoires” de Grand Ecclésiarque de l’Eglise de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438-9), Paris 1971, Memoirs 3, 5, p. 166.

²⁶³ Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, PG, 94, 1128.

²⁶⁴ Πρὸς Σεραπίωνα 1, 28

legate to Constantinople, John of Ragusa, who, expressing the Western-Frankish spirit of theology which no longer needed the Fathers, intervened with Emperor Ioannes VIII Palaeologus to ask the patriarchs- and he succeeded in his aims- to change their letters, omitting the terms and limitations regarding agreement with the synods and the Holy Fathers. Unfortunately, the emperor gave way, in the face of his great need for financial and military assistance. But even worse, the patriarchs themselves retreated, even though their criteria ought to have been unalterable and firm, purely spiritual and never political, as regards matters of faith. Syropoulos sadly notes that this was an unfortunate prelude for what was to follow and indicated that the emperor had abdicated his role as "*fidei defensor*": "It was to such preconditions that the *defensor* of the dogmas of our Church had submitted us"²⁶⁵.

Of course, the theologians on the Orthodox side, particularly Saint Mark of Ephesus, had no need of patriarchal suggestions in order to take a stand firmly on the Fathers and to force the Latin theologians into a difficult corner²⁶⁶, since the latter did not have Patristic arguments and attempted to endorse their positions dialectically and philosophically in accordance with the prevailing Scholastic Theological method, which was based on the logical categories of Aristotle. Syropoulos actually preserves a charming and most instructive event for all of us, especially the post-Patristic innovators of our own times. According to him, when the representative of the Orthodox Church of Georgia (Iberia) heard Juan de Tarquemada, from Spain, frequently invoking Aristotle, he turned to Syropoulos in consternation and said:

²⁶⁵ Laurent, op. cit., 3, 5. p. 166.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 5, 29, p. 282.

“What Aristotel, Aristotele? Aristotele no good”. When Syropoulos then asked him what was good, he replied: “Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Basil, theologian Gregory, Chrysostom. No Aristotel Aristotele”. He mocked the Latin scholiast with hand movements, nods and gestures, but, as Syropoulos observes, “he was probably mocking us Orthodox, who had abandoned the Fathers and polluted ourselves with such teachers”²⁶⁷.

Earlier, he relates another incident, with the same Georgian delegate leaving the Pope speechless and acting as a teacher to him. Just before the apostasy was completed and the shameful unifying text was signed, the Pope summoned this cleric and with the sweetest affability, which recalls the blandishments and geniality of our contemporary ecumenists, advised him to recognize that the Church of Rome was “the mother of all Churches and indeed the successor to Saint Peter and the *locum tenens* of Christ and the shepherd and universal teacher of all Christians”. So, in order to find salvation for your soul, added the Pope, you must follow the Mother Church, accept what She accepts, submit to the bishop and be taught and shepherded by him. The answer of the truly Orthodox bishop lies within the enduring position of the Church and is in agreement with the Fathers. It is a word for word repetition, a thousand years later, of the stance of Athanasius the Great, whom we have mentioned, and of all the Holy Fathers who came after him: “By the grace of God we are Christians and we accept and follow our Church. For our Church holds true to what it has received both from the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ and from the tradition of the Holy

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 9, 28; Laurent, p. 464.

Apostles and of the ecumenical synods and of the holy teachers recognized by the Church; and it has never departed from their teaching nor has it added nor left anything to chance. But the Church of Rome has added to and transgressed the bounds of the Fathers. This is why we, who hold fast to the things of the Fathers, have cut it off or have removed ourselves from it. So, if your beatitude wishes to bring peace to the Church and unite us all, you must expunge the addition of the *filioque* from the Creed. You can do this easily, should you wish, because the nations of the Latins will accept whatever you suggest, since they consider you the successor to Saint Peter and respect your teaching”.

Syropoulos’ conclusion: the Pope expected to lead by the nose and win over the Iberian with his false blandishments, given that the man was a foreign-speaker, an individual both unlearned and barbarian. “But, when he heard this answer, he was left speechless”²⁶⁸.

Expressions of post-Patricity during Turkish rule and in the Period after 1821

a) Turkish rule

What happened, however, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and after the liberation and creation of the modern Greek state in 1821? In brief, the picture as regards the faith and Patristic tradition is as follows: by divine providence the reins of the church were taken over by Gennadius Scholaris, the first patriarch and ethnarch after the fall. He had been a prominent official at the imperial court, a professor and high judicial functionary. For two years prior to this he had also been a monk,

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 9, 27-8; Laurent, pp. 462-4.

a faithful disciple of Saint Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus, and adhered to the latter's views in relation to the Fathers.

Well aware of Scholaris' piety and abilities, Mark, shortly before his death, named him his successor in the struggle on behalf of Orthodoxy, and was not mistaken in his choice. Saint Mark annulled the decisions of Ferrara-Florence with his decision not to sign them, and Gennadius Scholaris, advisor to the two emperors, John VIII and Constantine XII, the last, heroic emperor, prevented the renewal and implementation of the decisions of the council for more than ten years, until he became a monk in 1450 and withdrew voluntarily from the imperial court. As a result of this, the union was renewed with an anti-Patristic joint service on 12 December 1452, which was the main reason God abandoned the City and why it was captured by the Turks a few months later. Scholaris was himself an excellent Aristotelian philosopher and familiar with the theology of Thomas Aquinas, whose works he had translated. Moreover, he was present, as a theological advisor, at Ferrara-Florence, took an active part in the proceedings, and knew very well that the Orthodox faith had to be preserved in this new, painful captivity because, if it, too, were lost, then, together with political subjugation, there was a risk that Orthodox culture would also be lost, that New Rome would disappear and that the Church of the Fathers would be subjugated to that of the Pope²⁶⁹.

²⁶⁹ On this great, prophetic figure of the Greek nation and of Orthodoxy, who has been slandered and maltreated by Western historians and by some of our own foolish writers, see my extensive monograph Γεννάδιος Β' Σχολάριος, Βίος-Συγγράμματα-Διδασκαλία, Ανάλεκτα Βλατάδων 30, Thessaloniki 1988.

Amidst the ruins, as patriarch he rebuilt and reorganized the Church along the Patristic lines of Photius the Great, Saint Gregory Palamas, and his own teacher, Mark of Ephesus. As regards the Fathers, we shall mention only two of his important positions. In the first place, he says that the guidance of the Holy Fathers is so rich and so superior that following it is a sign of prudence and great intelligence, so that those who do not do so are being obtuse. Summing up the opinion of the Church regarding the Fathers, he says: "We are convinced that nothing is more sacred, nothing more wise than the Patristic tradition and we hope to run this course under faithful leaders"²⁷⁰.

The Church and theology proceeded along these Patristic lines, which were never broken, until the creation of the modern Greek state, even though new problems and challenges which were hostile to the Fathers of the Church now presented themselves. This had to do with the emergence and formation in the West of the great Protestant schism, which reinforced the anti-Patristic spirit, as well as the European Enlightenment, which was linked to the atheism and anthropocentrism of the Renaissance. This passed into the East, too, as modern Greek Enlightenment, with Adamantios Koraïs as its main proponent. Papist and Protestant missionaries exploited the difficult historical circumstances, the poverty and the misery of the subjugated Orthodox by engaging in hostile proselytism, while many young Orthodox who went to the West to study brought back the innovations of the Enlightenment into the spheres of the Church and education.

²⁷⁰ Oeuvres complètes de Georges Scholaris, ed. L. Petit- X. Siderides- M. Jugie, Paris 1928-36, vol. II, 15 and II, 44.

It might be useful if I explain why Protestantism reinforced the anti-Patristic spirit, so that it may be better understood that today's prevailing heresy of Ecumenism, which organizes and reinforces post-Patricity, is basically of Protestant provenance, with Papist roots, of course. The only difference is that the rationality and anthropocentrism of Papism pushed every Protestant to the extreme and changed them into an authentic voice and interpreter of the faith. Saint Justin Popović has this to say on the matter: " Let us not fool ourselves: Western Christian/humanist maximalism, Papism, is really the most radical Protestantism and individualism, because it has transferred the foundation of Christianity from the eternal God to the individual human person. The Protestants did no more than accept this dogma (infallibility) in its essence, and then develop it to such an extent that it acquired terrible dimensions and detail. Essentially, Protestantism is nothing other than a generally applied Papism. For, in Protestantism, the fundamental principle of Papism is brought to life by each man individually. After the example of the infallible man in Rome, each Protestant is a cloned infallible man, because he pretends to personal infallibility in matters of faith. It can be said: Protestantism is vulgarized Papism..."²⁷¹.

The abandonment of the Fathers of the Church by Papism, and its over-evaluation of philosophy, resulted in innovations being introduced in the West, anti-traditional teachings and heresies being formulated, and the unity of the Tradition which had linked the apostolic and

²⁷¹Archimandrite Justin Popović, *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*, (in Greek) pp. 176 and 219.

patristic ages being fragmented. In the tradition of the Church, the faithful no longer saw the preaching and life of the Apostles, but human and secular patterns. This is why the Reformation of Luther and others brought everything crashing down. It turned to *sola scriptura* and diminished the Fathers of the Church and Tradition in general, because the reformers did not understand that it was the Fathers who, first and foremost, laid bare the recalcitrant attitude of Papism. As former papists, they were prejudiced against the “schismatic” East. They did not see the Patristic age as a continuum of the Apostolic, or the Fathers as continuing the work of the Apostles. Had Luther known the Eastern Patristic tradition (we know he was acquainted with but one work of Athanasius the Great- and that not genuine- and a few dogmatic works of the same author from Latin translations), he would certainly not have identified the whole of Patristic tradition with Papism and scholasticism. He may then have acknowledged in the Eastern Church the continuity of the Apostolic Church which he was seeking, and the Fathers of the Church as successors of the Prophets and Apostles, keeping alive, pure and unadulterated, the word and life of Christ and the Apostles.

Of course, thereafter, both Papists and Protestants were forced to use the Fathers of the Church- each for their own purposes- in their internecine struggle, especially after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which is why we have so many editions of Patristic works in the West at this time, not because they particularly respected and honoured the Fathers. The most serious charge of the Protestants against the Fathers, though it is entirely unfounded and flimsy, is that the Fathers altered the original message of the Gospel, overturning its biblical/Judaic

foundations, and turned it into dogmas clearly influenced by Greek philosophy. This is the familiar theory of the Hellenization of Christianity by the Fathers as was formulated by the well-known Protestant historian, Harnack. Protestants continue to accept it to this day, and, like the pseudo-Jehovah's Witnesses, suggest to the Orthodox in discussions between them, that they, too, should adopt *sola scriptura* and ignore the Fathers of the Church. It would be worth looking into whether the Orthodox in today's theological dialogue accept this position and use the Fathers in a way which imitates that of the post-Patristic Protestants. The truth of the matter is that the Hellenization of Christianity, that is to say the alteration of knowledge, is what the heretics wanted to achieve- as they always do, whereas the Fathers, working against the heretics, saw off this danger, as was the case with Gnosticism, Arianism and Scholasticism, and as can be seen very clearly in the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas against Barlaam the Calabrian. The Fathers do what the Apostles did in using Greek terminology. This was the case with Saint John the Theologian with the concept of the Word, and Saint Paul, with even word for word quotations from ancient Greek sages, since they were addressed to Greek audiences- indeed mainly to Greek audiences. So there is also Hellenization in Scripture, in the New Testament, the sole source of the faith of the Protestants.

Be that as it may, during Turkish rule, and despite its captivity to a barbarous and ruthless conqueror, as well as the lack of education and of a satisfactory number of teachers and theologians, the Church never budged an inch from the Tradition of the Fathers, but defended itself effectively against the attacks of the post-Patristic Papists and

Protestants, as well as of the Greek Enlighteners, who wished to supersede the Fathers in the education of the Greek nation. Most of these people were imbued with uncritical admiration of Classical Greek antiquity and were intent on linking modern Greece to the ancient, missing out the intermediate stage of Byzantium, or New Rome.

With repeated and strict Synodal decisions, the Church condemned the Papists and Protestants to its flock as dangerous heretics. It also condemned the subversive ideas of the supporters of the Enlightenment. With the well-known Kollyvades movement on the Holy Mountain, which successfully renewed the Patristic Tradition in the 18th century, it prepared its flock to resist the anti-Patristic spirit which was to become institutionalized with the Bavarian state apparatus after the [murder of the] only Orthodox governor, Ioannis Capodistrias, and was to Frankify, Europeanize Greek Orthodox culture. It did exactly the opposite of what the Church is doing today, the heads of which, in post-Patristic fashion, not only refuse to call Papism and Protestantism heresies, but have reached the point of recognizing these heresies, as well as the old one of Monophysitism, as Churches which provide grace and salvation.

As a small example of this Patristic stance during Turkish rule, we quote a few opinions, synodal and patriarchal, as well as some actions of the Holy Kollyvades Fathers. In reply to the Anglican Nonjurors, the Patriarchs of the East (1716/1725) made it perfectly clear that the dogmas of the Orthodox Church were defined “correctly and piously” by the Holy Fathers at the Ecumenical Synods and that it is not possible either to add to or subtract from them. They strictly exclude any

discussion on matters of faith and call upon the Anglican Protestants, if they desire union, to agree with what the Church taught, from the time of the Apostles and thereafter, through the God-bearing Fathers, without investigation and discussion, but in simplicity and obedience²⁷². In the same spirit, the Confessor of Faith of the Synod in Constantinople in 1727 declared: "We pious Christians of the Eastern Church have been called from above through the Holy Spirit by the prophets, by our Saviour, Christ, by the Apostles, by the Ecumenical Synods and by all the Holy Fathers guided by the Holy Spirit, to believe and countenance whatever our Church of Christ has received and preserved to this day, unchanged and unadulterated, in its entirety, whether dogmas of the faith, terms and canons, or traditions of the Church, whether written or unwritten"²⁷³. Earlier, the well-known and truly great patriarch Jeremiah II (Tranos) in his second reply to the Lutheran theologians of Tübingen, after he had quickly realized that there could be no theological dialogue with them, particularly because they rejected the Holy Fathers, on whom the teaching of the Church is based, put an end to the dialogue, politely but decisively and let them go their own way (1581)²⁷⁴. On the basis of this most Patristic patriarchal position, all the harmful theological dialogues with all the heretics would have ended many years ago, as many clergymen and theologians have been demanding for long enough.

²⁷² I. Karmiris, *Τὰ Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, Graz 1968, vol. II, p. 819 (899).

²⁷³ *Ibid*, pp. 862-3 (942-3).

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 489 (589).

The Kollyvades, and particularly the most prominent among them, Archbishop Makarios Notaras of Corinth, the Athonite monk Nicodemus and the hieromonk Athanasius Parios, completely neutralized the post-Patricity of the Papists, the Luther-Calvinist Protestants and the Enlighteners, essentially through these measures: with the impressively massive publication of various Patristic works, chief of which is the 'Philokalia' of the holy Niptic fathers; with the promotion of Patristic liturgical traditions, such as frequent communion; and the performance of memorial services only on Saturdays, not on Sundays; with the composition of a rich store of hymns and services in the established language of the Church, despite the low level of education of the faithful at the time; with the anti-Papist and anti-Protestant teaching which we come across frequently in their works as well as their opposition to the European and Greek supporters of the Enlightenment, especially on the part of Saint Athanasius Parios, who, because of this, was greatly criticized by these 'enlightened' scholars. Particularly as regards the issue of the translation of liturgical texts, which is unnecessarily vexing Church circles currently, apart from the fact that such a concern never occurred to the Holy Fathers over the centuries and that, on the contrary, indeed, they have continued to compose services in the ancient language down to our own days, there is an almost unknown, important stance taken by Saint Nicodemus the Athonite, which we present here, in case it, together with other Patristic views which have been discussed²⁷⁵, may enlighten the three hierarchs, Meletios of Nikopolis, Ignatios of Demetrias, and Pavlos of Siatista, to

²⁷⁵ On this, see Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis, Πρέπει να μεταφρασθούν τα λειτουργικά κείμενα; Νεοβαρλαμισμός ή «Λειτουργική Ανανγέννηση», Thessaloniki 2003.

return to the Patristic road. This most Patristic Athonite Saint writes: “Also beware, brethren, the thought which the devil implants in some and which says: you are unlettered and unlearned and do not understand what is said in church and so why do you submit to the Church in all things? You are answered, brethren, by an abba in the ‘Sayings of the Desert Fathers’, who tells you: ‘It may be that you do not understand what is said in church, but the devil does and quakes and fears and flees. I mean that you, too, even if you do not understand all the words spoken in church, you will understand a lot of them and benefit from them’. And I would add this: if you go often to church and hear divine words, the continuation of this is that, in time, you will understand what you- earlier- did not, as Chrysostom says, because God, seeing your willingness, will open your mind and illumine you to understand”²⁷⁶.

When referring to the Holy Kollyvades and, in general, to the Patricity of the period of enslavement, we cannot forget the glory and boast of the Church in more modern times, the New Martyr Saints. Not only those who had the blessing to have the Holy Kollyvades and other blessed Elders, as ‘trainers’ for their martyrdom, but also the host of other New Martyrs, men and women who followed the Tradition of the Holy Apostles and Fathers which asserts that Christ is the only road to salvation. They refused to convert, and even used harsh words against Mohammed, paying for their refusal and confession with their blood. It is a gross insult to the new martyrs, what is being said in the context of

²⁷⁶ Nicodemus the Athonite, Χρηστοθήθεια τῶν Χριστιανῶν, Rigopoulos Publications, Thessaloniki 1999, p. 305, footnote.

the inter-faith dialogues of the Ecumenists, even by patriarchs, bishops and other clergymen and theologians, to wit, that other religions are a road to salvation, that Mohammad is a prophet, that the three monotheistic religions- Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism- have the same God, and that the Koran is a holy and sacred book, worthy of being given as a gift. Do they not know of the great Holy Fathers' severe criticism; of the total rejection of Mohammed and the Koran by Saints Maximus the Confessor and John Damascene, by Gregory Palamas and many others²⁷⁷? Do they not know that that most celebrated popular teacher and equal to the Apostles, Saint Cosmas Aitolos identified- very carefully and covertly, of course- both Mohammed and the Pope as anti-Christ? He said: "The anti-Christ is: one, the Pope, and the other, he who is over our heads, though I won't say his name. You understand, but its saddening to tell you, because, as things stand these anti-Christ are for perdition. We have restraint, they have perdition; we fast, they gorge; we are chaste, they are licentious; we have justice, they have injustice"²⁷⁸. Let us not forget, also, his Patristic prophecy and recommendation: "Curse the Pope, for he will be to blame"²⁷⁹. How encouraging for the faithful was what he said about Orthodoxy and the Holy Fathers. "I read about sacred things and impious, heretical and ungodly. I searched the depths of wisdom. All faiths are false. This I understood as true: only the faith of Orthodox Christians is good and holy for us to believe and we should be baptized

²⁷⁷ On all this see, Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis, Διαθησκειακές Συναντήσεις. Άρνηση τοῦ Ἐυαγγελίου καὶ προσβολή τῶν Ἁγίων Μαρτύρων. Thessaloniki 2003.

²⁷⁸ Bishop Avgoustinos (Kantiotis), Metropolitan of Florina, Κοσμάς ὁ Αἰτωλός (1714-1779. Συναξάριον-Διδαχαί-Ἀκολουθία Athens 2005, p. 286.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 348.

in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let me tell you this at the end: be glad that you're Orthodox Christians and weep for the impious and heretics who are walking in darkness"²⁸⁰.

Post-Patricity after the Creation of the Modern Greek State.

The conclusion from our references to the period of Turkish rule is that the post-patricity of the Papists, the Protestants and the Enlighteners did not shake the patricity of the Tradition of the Church. We lost our freedom in the body, but retained our souls, free and unsubdued, to the point where martyrs for the faith came forth. But how were things in the period of free political life? Alas, we must begin with "where shall I start to mourn" and write a new Jeremiad. That which the great figures of the Greek nation- Photius the Great, Saint Gregory Palamas, Saint Mark Eugenikos and Gennadios Scholarios- refused to accept, that is, the betrayal of Orthodoxy in order to save the state, or, under Turkish rule, what the Saints and New Martyrs refused to do to save their skins and their enjoyment of life, we unfortunately did and do worse today. We handed Greece into the hands of foreigners, Otto's Bavarians and their indigenous supporters, who, from that time forth, have had as their permanent aim the uprooting and abolition of anything that recalls Orthodoxy and Byzantium and the Fathers of the Church. They want to weaken spiritual resistance completely, to make Greece unrecognizable, un-Orthodox and un-Greek, so that, once it is Frankified, Latinized, Papist, Protestant, and 'enlightened' (endarkened), they can then absorb it and get rid of it.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, p.p. 131-2.

The post-Patristic and anti-Patristic supporters exist and have been active for years now. It is simply that now they have been given form, outline and expression, quite openly, by the 'Academy of Theological Studies' of the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias, which, as a most pious and combative fellow-clergyman brilliantly observed, has ceased to be academic and has become epidemic. We owe a debt of gratitude to the hierarchs who, in the face of the danger to the faith, ignored the much-abused 'brotherly love' and excoriated what was said at the post-Patristic conference at the Academy in June 2010. In particular, to Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos, whom we have with us, teaching and confessing, and who has lost no time in aligning himself with those hierarchs with a most theological article in which he condemned the burgeoning, new heresy of post-Patricity. And finally, to other hierarchs, clergy and laymen who criticized the heretical gathering in Volos, in articles, comments and phrases, and especially to the flagship of Orthodox struggles for fifty years now, the combative newspaper *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος* (Orthodox Press), the newspaper of the blessed Elders, to the founders and editors, the late Charalampos Vasilopoulos, and his worthy successor, Fr. Mark Manolis, which brought to the fore and highlighted the issue of the post-Patristic heresy.

But let us now look at some of the tallest trees and the most bitter and deadly fruits of the post-Patristic forest.

The 19th century, during Bavarian rule, unfolded with serious anti-Patristic actions, which, however, came up against Orthodox resistance. In defiance of the sacred canons of the Holy Fathers, the schismatic autocephaly of the Church of Greece was proclaimed,

peremptorily, without the opinion or consent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. A statist system was imposed on relations between Church and state, which brought about the subjection of the Church to Caesar, the boss of the synod being a royal commissioner, without whose agreement the Holy Synod was unable to decide anything whatsoever. Otto's Protestant commissioner, Mauer, eradicated monasticism by dissolving 400 of the 500 monasteries in existence and, at the same time, seizing their property and casting the monks and nuns into poverty, as that genuine Greek patriot, General Makrygiannis charges in his very moving *Memoirs*²⁸¹. The blows against monasticism in any age, including ours when a plan has been put into operation to defame and corrode, from the inside, the Holy Mountain- that unique ark of Orthodoxy- are costly because they are aimed at drying up the source which produces, which gushes forth, Fathers, since it is well-known that almost all the Holy Fathers came from the order of monks.

In the same period, the organization and curriculum of the Theological School founded at the National Capodistrian University followed German models, and an almost necessary requirement for a career there was to have studied in the West. The result was that Papist

²⁸¹ Makrygiannis, *Memoirs*: "They demolished all the monasteries and the poor monks, if they didn't die in the struggle, starved to death in the streets, as if those monasteries weren't the outposts of our revolution. Because that's where all our food and supplies were and all the necessities of war and that they were hidden and a mystery to the Turks. And the poor monks sacrificed and most of them were killed in the struggle. And the Bavarians, expecting them to be the Capuchins of Europe didn't know that they were modest and good people and that they'd gotten those things by the work of their hands, struggling and working for so many centuries and that so many poor people lived with them and were fed. And the accursed politicians of our country and the corrupt bishops and the Turkish-minded Kostakis Skinas from Constantinople agreed with Bavarians and damaged and despoiled all the churches in the monasteries".

and Protestant theology began, through the teachers, to influence clerical and lay graduates. Two telling examples, to prove the point: Professor Demetrios Balanos, who held the chair of Patrology at the Theological School of Athens, spoke slightly and disparagingly of the struggles and theology of Saint Gregory Palamas, that preacher of Grace and of the light of the Transfiguration, the voice of the Fathers who went before him. To this day, in the same school, the Patristic era is limited to the first eight centuries, up to John Damascene, and lessons in Patrology deal only with them, whereas the later saints belong to a different category of knowledge, that is Byzantine Church writers, as if the Holy Spirit had ceased to act in the Church from then until now and did not beget Fathers such as Photius the Great, Symeon the New Theologian, Gregory Palamas, Mark Eugenikos, the prominent Kollyvades Fathers, and Nektarios of Pentapolis in the 20th century. Here, too, it succumbs to the Papist notion of sidelining the Holy Fathers by their own scholastic 'Fathers' and theologians from the ninth century onwards, and, much more so, by the Protestant concept that only those who lived almost in Gospel times, that is in the first centuries and at the latest the 5th, can be called Fathers. Having taught Patrology for years at the Theological School in Thessaloniki, we have been forced, each year, to explain to the new intake of students that for an author to be called a Father of the Church, he does not have to have the characteristic of antiquity, as the heterodox manuals of Patrology demand, and as indeed do some of our own; what is required is purity of life and Orthodox teaching.

The reference to the Theological School in Athens should not be taken to mean that every single one of the teachers there reinforced the

post-Patristic and anti-Patristic spirit. There are splendid examples of genuine, Patristic, academic teachers, such as the late Professor Konstantinos Mouratides and certain others, outstanding among whom is my splendid and beloved fellow-priest, George Metallinos, whose presence in theological literature emits the scent and authenticity of Patristic wisdom. In relation to this, I would like to make a suggestion and a rectification which concerns the Volos Academy. My suggestion is that an event or conference be organized on the person and work of Professor Konstantinos Mouratides, as the Metropolitan of Nafpaktos and Fr. George Metallinos most worthily did with the great Patristic theologian, Fr. John Romanides. The rectification has to do with the dean of theologians in the 20th century, that giant of theological thought and production, the late Professor Panagiotis Trembelas. Any misjudgements on his part regarding the theology of Saint Gregory Palamas, and regarding his theological conflict with Fr. John Romanides, can be justified, in part, by the ignorance, at that time, of the writings of Saint Gregory. He was not, however, post-Patristic or anti-Patristic, as the Volos 'Academy' gave out at the conference we have referred to. We will not give him up to the post-Patricians. He is Patristic, most Patristic. The mere study of his three-volume Dogmatics and his valuable hermeneutical notes on the Old and New Testaments, where the reader will admire the abundant use of Patristic writings and what he wrote critically about the theological dialogues with the heterodox, estrange him entirely from the post-Patristic ecumenists²⁸².

²⁸² Protopresbyter Ioannis Romanides, *Δογματική καὶ Συμβολική Θεολογία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας* vol. I, Pournaras, Thessaloniki 2009[4], p. 6.

The Theological School of Thessaloniki, much younger than that of Athens, having been founded in 1942, was able, within the first two decades, to shift the centre of gravity with the decisive contribution of the late Professor Panagiotis Christou to the publication and investigation of the writings of Saint Gregory Palamas and other Fathers of the Church, through which it acquired international status as the School of the Fathers of the Church. This early blossoming, however, soon faded and today it is characterized by the Ecumenism of the majority of the professors, outstanding exceptions being those colleagues who are present this evening, chairmen of the session and speakers.

But the great earthquake of post-Patristy began at the start of the 20th century with the two synodical and patriarchal encyclicals of the reign of Ioakeim III, in 1902 and 1904. It became more powerful with the synodical encyclical of 1920 and has continued to this day, with even greater intensity. In the encyclicals, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in a completely new, post-Patristic spirit, abandoned the strict Patristic attitude towards the heretics of the West, Papist and Protestant, which it had held until a few years before, until 1895. Addressing the heads of the autocephalous Churches, among others, it sought their views on the relationship of the Orthodox “with the two great branches of Christianity, that is of the West and of the Protestants”. At the same time, it posed the question of the reform of the calendar, not, however, taking a stand in favour of the retention or rejection of the Julian calendar, which had been observed for centuries, but awaiting the views of the autocephalous churches. Since the answers from almost all the

Churches was negative, the initial surge slackened for a while, only to return with a vengeance in 1920, when the modern, post-Patristic spirit recognized, for the first time officially, the ecclesiastical standing of the heretical communities, since the encyclical was addressed “To the Churches of Christ everywhere”, and not only to the Orthodox. The powerful personality of Meletios Metaxakis, who was beyond question a Mason²⁸³ and served as Metropolitan of Kition in Cyprus, Metropolitan of Athens, Ecumenical Patriarch and Patriarch of Alexandria, played a decisive role at this point in the Masonic promotion of Ecumenism, which they planned and have been promulgating to this day. This Ecumenism is inter-Christian and inter-faith and its aim is to weaken the uniqueness of Orthodoxy in relation to other confessions and to equate it to them, as it does Christianity to other religions. The most heinous achievement of Metaxakis was the promotion of the reformation of the calendar and the replacement of the Julian, which was the ancient practice, with the Papist Gregorian one, without a Pan-Orthodox resolution, but with the support, unfortunately, of the exceptional ecclesiastical historian and scholar, Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) of Athens, a former associate of Metaxakis at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whence he began his impressive, but, also, destructive activities which resulted in the creation of the well-known schism in the Church.

²⁸³For the Masonic capacity of Meletios Metaxakis, see the entry “Geistliche” in *Internationalisches Freimaurerlexikon*, E. Lennhof- O. Posner, Amalthaia, Wien-München 1975 (Reprint of the 1932 edition). Also Alexandros Zervoudakis, «Μελέτιος Μεταχάκης» *Τεκτονικὸν Δελτίον*, year 17 (Jan.-Feb., 1967), pp. 25-50.

The foundation of the Protestant World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, in which the Ecumenical Patriarchate willingly took part, as did other Orthodox Churches, is the worst ecclesiological deviation on the part of the leadership of the Orthodox Church. Through the WCC, the devil, appearing as an angel of light behind the mask of love and unity, is attempting to shake the Apostolic and Patristic foundations of the Church, annulling what the Holy Fathers taught about heretics and heresies which are not equated to the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Patristic Church. This is not a World Council of Churches, but a “World Collection of Heresies” as Professor Konstantinos Mouratides eloquently dubbed it²⁸⁴.

The legacy of Meletios Metaxakis was invested and increased by another powerful personality, Patriarch Athenagoras, who was called from America to the ecumenical throne, and it has been continued ever since then relentlessly and powerfully, within the context of the anti-Patristic Ecumenism of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, despite an intervening period during the modest, but focused reign of Demetrios.

Within this climate of opposition to the Patristic Tradition, post-Patristic and anti-Patristic positions have been expressed which entirely justify the post-Patricity of the ‘Academy of Theological Studies’ in Volos, which in any case is supported, protected and justified by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

²⁸⁴ K. Mouratidis, *Ἡ Οἰκουμένη Κίνησις. Ὁ σύγχρονος μέγας πειρασμός τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας*, Athens 1973, p. 14.

A few indicative positions of the post-Patristic Ecumenists who have been active for sixty years now, demonstrate that, unfortunately, the healthy part of the Church has been slow to awaken and react.

Patriarch Athenagoras recognized the primacy of Pope Paul II, without the latter's repentance and rejection of errors. He places him directly with his namesake, Saint Paul the Apostle, and describes him as one of the greatest popes in history²⁸⁵. The heresy of the *filioque* was not, for Athenagoras, an impediment to the union of the two churches. The opposition expressed in the theology of the Holy Fathers was not heeded in our times. He literally said: "What ink has been shed and what hatred, over the *filioque*. Love came and everything retreats at its passing"²⁸⁶. Here is another of his many other anti-Patristic declarations: "We are deceived and sin if we think that the Orthodox faith descended from heaven and that the other dogmas are unworthy. Three hundred million people have chosen Mohammedanism to reach their God and hundreds of millions of others are Protestants, Catholics and Buddhists. The aim of every religion is the improvement of people"²⁸⁷.

Two of his close and favourite associates said terrible things and it is a matter of wonder how neither the Synod at the Phanar nor any other Orthodox synod ever dealt with these people. Archbishop Athenagoras (Kokkinakis) of Thyateira and Great Britain, described the sacred canons of the Holy Fathers as "human commands and patterns of

²⁸⁵ See «Καθολική» 38 (1996) p. 4, in Archimandrite Spyridon Bilalis, Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Παπισμός, Athens 1988, p. 409.

²⁸⁶ Aristeidis Panotis, Παῦλος ΣΤ' Ἀθηναγόρας Α'. Εἰρηνοποιοί, Athens 1971, in Archimandrite Spyridon Bilalis, Ἡ αἵρεση τοῦ Filioque, Athens 1972, vol. I, p. 476.

²⁸⁷ See the newspaper «Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος», no 94, Dec. 1968.

foolishness and hatred". He also said: "What is the criterion by which what claims to be exclusive knowledge of the truth will be proved? Whatever we say, the fact remains that, divided as it is, it cannot be healthy, but is wounded, and a part cannot claim to be the whole in truth. Neither the riches nor the oft-repeated in words and arguments-integrity of teaching, nor the patterns of traditional conservatism are of benefit to or strengthen the arguments of those seeking exclusivity. I know the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas and the positions of modern theologians of the East, but these are human volitions and inventions"²⁸⁸.

Even greater is the blasphemous position of Iakovos of America, even worse than the heresies of Arius, because he denies *in toto* the dogma of the Holy Trinity. He was accused by scandalized Greeks in America and by monasteries on the Holy Mountain which demanded that the Synod of the Phanar depose him, but in vain. Iakovos said: "The notion of God is an abstract, Greek idea which people today do not accept, nor will they tomorrow. In particular this verdict has to do with the Trinitarian dogma. So it is necessary that the Theology of the Church be stripped of its Greek vestments, one of these is the dogma of the Holy Trinity"²⁸⁹.

In the study "On the codification of the Sacred Canons and canonical ordinances in the Orthodox Church", the claim is made that many of the canons of the Holy Fathers should be abolished, and then

²⁸⁸ Mouratidis, op. cit., p. 29 and idem *Οἱ Ἱεροὶ Κανόνες στύλος καὶ ἐδραίωμα τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας. Ἀπάντησις εἰς τὸν σεβασμιώτατον ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Θυατείρων καὶ Μ. Βρετανίας κ. Αθηνάγοραν*, Athens 1972, pp. 21-2.

²⁸⁹ See Mouratidis, *Ἡ Οἰκουμένη Κίνησις*, p. 45.

follows these exact words (in Greek): “ The ordinances governing relations between Orthodox Christians and heterodox and those of other faiths cannot be applied today and should be amended. It is not possible for the Church to have ordinances forbidding the entry of heterodox into churches and common prayer with them, at the same time as, through its representatives, it is praying for final union in faith, love and hope. Many canonical ordinances need to be ‘irrigated’ with more love in order for them to ‘revive’. We need the amendment of certain ordinances, to make them more charitable and realistic. The Church cannot and must not live outside space and time”²⁹⁰. In the above spirit, certain Sacred Canons have been broken in repeated, brazen services of common prayer with heretics. It would appear that the Patriarchate of Constantinople has abdicated from the duty of the Church to bring the heterodox and those of other faiths to the truth of the Gospel, because it has, literally, been said : “the Orthodox Church does not seek to persuade others about any particular concept of the truth, nor does it seek to convert them to any particular mode of thought”²⁹¹. Much has been made of the sanctity and equality of the “Sacred Scriptures” of the Church and Islam, i.e. the Gospels and the Koran. And the most terrible of all is what has been said about the Holy Fathers by the most official lips, which has led to intense protests from the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain. It has been said: “Our forefathers who bequeathed to us

²⁹⁰ See Περί τήν κωδικοποίησιν τῶν Ἱ. Κανόνων καὶ τῶν κανονικῶν διατάξεων ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων 6, Thessaloniki 1970.

²⁹¹ See «Καθολική», 22-7-2003, pp. 4 and 5, and Nikolaos Sotiropoulos, Ἀντισοικουμενιστικά Athens 2004, pp. 24-6.

the rift were unfortunate victims of the evil serpent and are now in the hands of God, the Righteous Judge”²⁹².

In agreement with all that has been said above is Metropolitan John of Pergamon. Apart from his old position on ‘narcissized Orthodoxy’ which denies the exclusivity of the Truth for the Orthodox, as Athenagoras of Thyateira had preached before him, he now promotes so-called ‘baptismal ecclesiology’ claiming that even the baptism of the heretics leads to the Church. He accepts the following unheard of statements: “Baptism sets a bound on the Church. Baptism, Orthodox or otherwise, encompasses the Church, which includes Orthodox and heterodox. There are baptismal limits to the Church and ‘outside Baptism’ there is no Church”. On the other hand, “within Baptism, even if there is a separation, a division, a schism, we can speak of the Church”.

I shall refer to very few of the positions of the still very few post-Patristic Ecumenists in order for us to form a first, painful picture about where post-Patristic humanism has led us, and also to strengthen and reinforce the awareness of the need to understand that we must not hide, or ignore, or underestimate, the delusion and lies which appear as truth and light and thus corrupt and seduce the uninformed and uninstructed Orthodox faithful. It is a pressing need and urgent priority to compile all of the most important wrongly-held opinions of known Ecumenists, clergy and laity, so that the faithful can know them by name, and with proof, and learn of the extent of the abuse which the

²⁹² See Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Αλήθεια, 16/12/1998.

truths of the faith are suffering, without, unfortunately, the healthy part of the Church reacting and resisting in an Apostolic, Patristic manner.

Earlier, a similarly prominent lay theologian, Nikolaos Nisiotis, Professor of the Theological School of the University of Athens, one of the prime movers and officials of Ecumenism, made unacceptable statements concerning ecclesiological positions, though he was censured by Konstantinos Mouratides (whom we have already mentioned) for denying the truth that the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Nisiotis condemns the Ecumenical provincialism of the Orthodox and, through a question, excludes the identification of the Orthodox Church with the One Church. He asks: "Do we not think continually and act as if the *Una Sancta* were restricted to the bounds of our own Church or Confession? But the experience of encounter at conferences and meetings shakes this self-satisfaction of ours"²⁹³. Pergamon's 'narcissim' was preceded by the 'self-satisfaction' of Nisiotis, who, as Professor Mouratides observes: "asks that we should avoid calling each other 'schismatics' or 'heretics', since there are no schismatics but only historical Churches, which in their divisions present a schismatic condition within the one indivisible Church!"²⁹⁴. We are all divided and in schism, within an undivided Church, clearly invisible, according to the Protestants, who have made it visible as the "World Council of Churches".

Of the modern lay theologian professors, one who has particularly saddened the Orthodox and brought joy to those mistaken

²⁹³See Mouratidis, *Ἡ Οἰκουμένη Κίνησις*, p. 33.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 34-5.

in their beliefs, according to the apposite Dismissal Hymn of Saint Euphemia, is Georgios Martzelos, Professor of Dogmatics at the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki. He promoted and approved two doctoral theses which rendered obsolete, in post-Patristic fashion, the decisions of synods and the teaching of the Holy Fathers, as well as the enduring conscience of the Church, expressed in very many texts of worship and in the “Synodal Tome of Orthodoxy”, that Dioscorus and Severus are heretical Monophysites. These two doctoral theses by young theologians go beyond the Tradition of the Holy Fathers, their authors are wiser than the instructors of the Faith. Saint Maximus the Confessor, Saint John Damascene, Photius the Great, were all mistaken and now Professor Martzelos’ students have come to correct them. And so, Dioscorus and Severus, who for centuries have been anathematized as heretics, are presented as Orthodox. But the professor, in general, acquits the Monophysites, and, in related publications by the Holy Monastery of the Blessed Gregoriou on the Holy Mountain, has been sharply and most Orthodoxically chastised for doing so.

The anti-Patristic post-Patricity of Professor Christos Yannaras is different because he is not much involved in the goings-on of the ecumenists, as are all the other post-Patristic theologians, even though in older publications he adopted Athenagoras’ positions against the forensic theology of the Fathers and spoke of ‘the pointless efforts of those who are concerned with the research into the *filioque*’²⁹⁵, being

²⁹⁵See Monk Theoklitos of Dionysiou, Περί Θείου καὶ ἀνθρωπίνου ἔρωτος Α΄, Ὁ Νεονικολαΐτισμός τοῦ Χρ. Γιανναρά, Spiliotis Publications, Athens 2003, p. 27.

praised for this by the Uniates. His weighty philosophical equipment and his disposition to meditation have not allowed him to place his undoubted gifts, in humility, at the service of the promotion and interpretation of the concord of the Holy Fathers, as this has been manifested over the centuries, to follow the Holy Fathers, as many other philosophers, academics and thinkers have done with the Holy Fathers who preceded them. We would simply recall the example of Saint John Damascene, who was endowed with rare philosophical gifts and who, in humility, tells us that nothing that he writes is his own, but rather an anthology of the Saints. This is why he is considered the voice of the Patristic Tradition before him and why his Dogmatics, i.e. his work 'Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith' is and will remain the most authentic, genuine and most precise source for the dogmas of the faith.

Unfortunately, Professor Yannaras has transcended the fathers, he does not follow the Fathers. He writes anti-Patristic teachings which are also morally dangerous, such as his teaching on human, physical love as a way to knowledge of God, for which he was chastised with powerful and invincible arguments by the late Elder Theoklitos of the Monastery of Dionysiou, in a series of publications in which this teaching is called a re-appearance of the heresy of Nicolaitism, or Neo-Nicolaitism. Indeed, Fr. Theoklitos not only found transcendence and disregard of the Fathers, but also polemics and calumny against them. He writes: "And though, on the one hand, he possesses 'rather well-developed thinking and judgement', he does not, on the other, possess adequate spiritual experience, and having no suspicion of this inadequacy of his, he has ranged himself, without fear of God, against

the moral and spiritual teaching of our Most Holy Orthodox Church, with articles accusing it of Manichaeism! He has suffered a psychosis over this, it has become his purpose, he uses it in all his attempts aimed at reshaping, and, everywhere in Patristic spiritual teaching, he discerns influences of Manichaeism. In one of his boldest books, which was published recently...he feels the need to commemorate 'the perversion of the Christian soul by Manichaean influences'! What are we to say? Does the Church not care about these heretical outlooks of this brazen theologian? Is there no press office... to follow the calumnies directed at Orthodox spiritual teaching by supposedly Orthodox theologians?"²⁹⁶. And, addressing Professor Yannaras at another point, Fr. Theoklitos writes: "With anti-academic frivolity and journalistic shallowness you touch upon the most basic issues of the Church, indifferent to your diversions into a variety of heresies. You began your theological career with a war against the sacred canons- which you are still conducting indirectly, and in a frenzy of conceit you do not shrink from attributing carnal accretion to the Holy Fathers, without this causing you any concern as to your unfathomable aberration. And you continue to distort them, or ignore them or mock them"²⁹⁷.

Indeed, Professor Yannaras has continued to mock and slander the Holy Fathers, his particular target now being the most prominent and prolific of the Holy Kollyvades Fathers, Saint Nicodemus the Athonite. He accuses him of creating, through his writings, "an outlook which seeks to sow into a traditional Christian society the seeds of the

²⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 28-9

²⁹⁷ Ibid, p.77.

Manichaean distinction between ‘pure’ and ‘impure’ people” and that, supposedly, “scattered throughout the works of Nicodemus is the insistence of the teaching of Anselm and the Thomists concerning the satisfaction of divine Righteousness by Christ’s death on the Cross” in that, in the ‘Guide to Confession’, by Saint Nicodemus, “the legalistic, entirely Western, spirit reigns”²⁹⁸.

A fundamental and successful critique of Yannaras’ unsupported, unjust and blasphemous polemic against a great Father and Teacher of the Church, was written by Fr. Vasileios Voloudakis in his exceptional work, ‘Orthodoxy and Ch. Yannaras’, in which, at the end, is published a text from the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain entitled: “Negation of the mistaken positions of Christos Yannaras regarding our Father among the Saints Nicodemus the Athonite”.

The post-Patricity, then, of Professor Yannaras assumes a more weighty character than that of the other post-Patristic theologians mentioned, because it ends in a clear anti-Patricity with calumnious, unjust and unfounded polemic against the whole of Patristic Tradition, singling out Saint Nicodemus the Athonite and encouraging young people to moral laxity. As the text of the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain notes: “Mr. Yannaras urges his readers, and particularly the young, to become critics of the Saints and to remain in the Church, but all the while satisfying their passions, without being trained in the

²⁹⁸ Presbyter Vasileios Voloudakis, Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Χρ. Γιανναράς, Athens 1993, Υπακοή Publications, pp. 37 and 53-4.

acquisition of true repentance, humility, purity and obedience, without which true freedom in Christ is unfeasible”²⁹⁹.

We would also mention, as fruits of this anti-Patristic post-Patricity, the unacceptable texts co-signed by representatives of the Orthodox Churches at the Theological Dialogues, texts which overturn the Patristic, Orthodox tradition. In the dialogue with the Papists, the text signed at Balamand in the Lebanon in 1993, apart from acquitting the Unia for the first time, also offers ecclesiastical fullness and validity to heretic Rome. The Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches are held to be equal and both are considered to be possessors of the genuine apostolic faith, sacramental grace and the apostolic succession. For the first time, Orthodox ‘theologians’, setting aside the firm and holy Tradition of the Fathers, denied that the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, because the terms of the text mean that the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches constitute the One Church, and that they are both co-responsible for people’s salvation. The teaching of the great saints and Fathers of the Church concerning the fact that the Latins are schismatics and heretics was also dismissed at the same time and abandoned. The terms of the Balamand text are very treacherous for the Creed: “On each side it is recognized that what Christ has entrusted to his Church- profession of apostolic faith, participation in the same sacraments, above all the one priesthood celebrating the one sacrifice of Christ, the apostolic succession of bishops- cannot be considered the exclusive property of one of our Churches. It is in this connection that the Catholic Churches and

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 268.

Orthodox Churches recognize each other as Sister Churches, responsible together for maintaining the Church of God in fidelity to the divine purpose, most especially in what concerns unity” (Balamand Declaration paras. 13,14) ³⁰⁰.

The text of the 9th General Assembly of the “World Council of Churches” in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in February 2006, is on precisely the same wave-length. This heretical text, which was signed by the vast majority of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches, including, unfortunately, the Church of Greece- though they have not been called to answer before synods- rejects the most basic Orthodox ecclesiological dogmas. It proclaims the dreadful ecclesiological heresy that the total membership of the “World Council of Churches” makes up the Catholic Church. “Each church is the Church catholic, but not the whole of it. Each church fulfils its catholicity when it is in common with the other churches” (para.6., Official Report, page. 257). “Apart from one another we are impoverished” (para.7)³⁰¹. What synod will call to account those delegates who signed this heretical document, when the “*leader of Orthodoxy*” (!) speaks in triumphant terms about the text and considers that with it “we have been freed from the rigidities of the past”?

Earlier, and quite contrary to the clear teaching of the 4th Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon, the Orthodox representatives signed two Common Declarations with the Anti-Chalcedonian Monophysites

³⁰⁰ More in Protopresbyter Theodoros Zisis, Οὐνία. Ἡ καταδίκη καὶ ἡ ἀθώωση (στοὺς Freising καὶ στοὺς Balamand), Thessaloniki 2002, p. 156 ff.

³⁰¹ Synaxis of Orthodox Clergy and Monks Οὐκ ἐσμὲν τῶν Πατέρων σοφώτεροι, in Fotis Kondoglou Ἐκδοσις τῆς Συνάξεως Ὁρθοδόξων Ρωμηῶν «Φώτης Κόντογλου», Trikala, Christmas 2011, p. 72 ff. and Θεοδρομία13 (2011), 629.

(1989 and 1990) in which they recognize that we have a common faith (!) with the heretical Monophysites, who at no stage in the Dialogue agreed to recognize the 4th Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon (451) and to number as two the natures of Christ after union. The second “Agreed Statement” of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, which was drawn up at Chambesy in September 1990, states: “In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology as well as the above common affirmations, we have now clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion” (para. 9)³⁰².

We would also mention certain anti-Patristic measures which have been taken and are in operation in the Church of Greece, such as the performance of mixed marriages, the abolition of the reading in churches on the Sunday of Orthodoxy of the anathemas against heretics, the removal from Lauds at Matins on Great Saturday of hymns that contain slighting references to Jews, and other liturgical innovations of the so-called “Liturgical Renaissance”, such as translations of the

³⁰² See Stavros Bozovitis, *Τὰ αἰώνια σύνορα τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας καὶ οἱ Ἀντιχαλκηδόνιοι*, “Soter” Brotherhood of Theologians, Athens 1994, p. 109. We owe the best critical presentation of what transpired and was agreed in the dialogue with the Monophysites to Dr. Andres Papavasileiou, former Inspector of Secondary Education in Cyprus, who took part in the dialogue as representative of the Church of Cyprus and has given us an objective historico/dogmatic picture in his monograph: *Ὁ Θεολογικὸς Διάλογος μεταξὺ Ὁρθοδόξων καὶ Ἀντιχαλκηδονίων. Εἶναι ἡ συμφωνία ἐπὶ τοῦ χριστολογικοῦ δόγματος θεολογικῶς ἀδιάβλητη καὶ πατερικῶς ἔγκυρη*, Lefkosia 2000.

liturgical texts, to which we have already referred. Even the visits and the welcome extended in Orthodox churches in Greece to the Pope, as the canonical Bishop of Rome as well as the annual increase in ecumenist joint prayer services, especially the one appointed for the last week in January each year, in which even Orthodox Patriarchs take part. As regards the last point it is worth noting the Patristic and confessional statement by Metropolitan Anthimos of Thessaloniki when he was asked why no Orthodox clergy were present at the joint prayer service held in the Roman Catholic church in Thessaloniki. He said: "It is not within the order of the Orthodox Church to take part in religious services or joint prayers with heterodox, much less with representatives of other religions". The Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education has been trying for years to reduce the catechetical, confessional Orthodox lesson of Religious Instruction, either by reducing the number of hours of teaching or by making it optional, even for Orthodox pupils. The final and desired aim is to transform it into a lesson of general religious knowledge, so that even from Primary School, children will be initiated into the Satan-inspired heresy of Ecumenism and World Religion. Alas, it appears to be succeeding with the collaboration, agreement and encouragement of its theological advisors, co-workers of the Governing Church, friends and fellow-travellers of the Volos "Academy of Theological Studies". The leading light in this is the theologian, Stavros Yangazoglou who has recently been appointed editor of "Theology", the Church's official periodical. How is it possible that an official in the upper echelons of the Church should undermine the Orthodox character of the lesson of Religious Instruction? What is worth noting here is that when it was confessional and catechetical it was under fire, but now that

it is general religious knowledge it has been upgraded and even provides points for university entrance. Many and great are the ploys of Satan!

Epilogue

With enduring awareness throughout the years from Apostolic times until today, the Church has always respected and honoured the Holy Fathers and teachers, not for their human wisdom, which, being created, grows old, decays and becomes obsolescent, but for their illumination by the Holy Spirit, the action of Whom, in their teaching and in their lives, does not grow old nor become obsolescent, needing to be transcended and surpassed by the newly-minted teaching of older and younger Post-Patristic Theologians.

The Church is not only Apostolic, it is also Patristic. If it were allowed to make an addition to the Creed, to the ecclesiological article “In One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”, we might very well add “Patristic”: “ In One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Patristic Church”. The Fathers do not need to be transcended or surpassed, just as the message of the Apostles cannot be transcended, because, as Canon 1 of the 7th Ecumenical Synod says: “for, enlightened all by one and the same Spirit, they determined what was best”. The message of the Apostles and the dogmas of the Fathers together weave the garment of Truth, as it says in the beautiful hymn for the feast of the Holy Fathers. Indeed, the Synodikon of Orthodoxy repeats the Term of the 7th Ecumenical Synod: “This is the faith of the Apostles, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the faith of the Orthodox, this faith has supported the whole world”.

We are sad that Papism, Protestantism and the Enlightenment, which first denigrated the Holy Fathers, should have found good pupils and supporters even among the Orthodox, particularly those who back the universal heresy of Ecumenism, to which belongs the “Volos Academy of Theological Studies”, which gave rise to this discussion through its anti-Patristic conference on “post-Patristic” and “contextual” Theology. Why is it that modern anti-Patristic theologians ignore and transcend the Fathers? For the same reason that the Papal theologian, John of Ragusa, reacted just before the Council of Ferrara-Florence, when the Orthodox Patriarchs bound their representatives, with official letters, to follow what the Fathers had determined at the Ecumenical Synods and in their writings. If that policy had been adhered to, we would not have arrived at the final betrayal of and apostasy from the faith. So now, when a similar or worse apostasy is being planned with Ecumenism, they believe that the Fathers of the Church are a great obstacle to their plans and they therefore wish to transcend them. But this, too, is a famous victory for the Holy Fathers because it demonstrates that the post-Patristic theologians cannot argue and oppose their teaching and so have had to find a way round them.

The anti-Patristic stance of Masonically-inspired Ecumenism and Syncretism is a clear indication of their anti-Christ nature, since according to the sacred text of the Revelation, the Antichrist himself will blaspheme against the Saints: “It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is those who dwell in heaven”³⁰³. We of the Church will continue to follow the Holy

³⁰³ Rev. 13, 6.

Fathers and will not move nor overstep the bounds they have set. To all the post-Patristic and anti-Patristic theologians of modern Ecumenism and universal Syncretism, who, apart from anything else are imbued with egotism and philosophical arrogance, we would repeat what Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote: "Let us cease to want to be teachers of the teachers. Let us detest quarrelsomeness to the detriment of those listening. Let us believe what our Fathers have passed down to us. We are not wiser than the Fathers: we are not more exact than the teachers"³⁰⁴.

³⁰⁴ PG, 46, 1112A.

Question and Answer Session

Fr. Christos Christodoulou writes:

“After the detailed and scientifically well-defended papers, it has been shown that Post-Patristic Theology is a heresy; it reeks of Masonic theology, at the heart of which is Ecumenism, with the syncretist, ecumenist “god”, the Great Architect of the Universe.

Since it is a heresy, what organization will condemn it, seeing as the highly-placed ecclesiastical leaders are flirting with it, or are even admirers of it, though they may not actually disseminate it?”.

My answer would be that it’s a tragedy, because, in the first place, our Synodal system is not functioning as it should, and not only in the Church of Greece. The members of the Church are also divided to a tragic extent. What is required is unity of outlook and this is what we should cultivate if we are to reach sound decisions, in accordance with our tradition, answers to the problems and the proper attitude.

Another question from Fr. Christodoulou. “ Most Post-Patristic theologians are not merely admirers but devotees of the translation of the Liturgical language. Since they translate as they wish, do they perhaps want, through translations to challenge and erode the Orthodox Patristic spirit and theology with Neo-Patristic and New Age theology?”.

We agree with the spirit in which his question is asked and with the question itself. To a large extent, this is what’s happening. Once you start on the slippery slope of ecumenism, which began officially in 1920, anything’s possible. I mean, as regards deviations from the Orthodox Patristic tradition.

I would say that what remains for us to do is to protest and to support the Orthodox texts.

Mr. Georgios Kourtidis asks: "Why did all the residents of the Prefecture of Magnesia, those imbued with pure religious and patriotic sentiments, not react forcefully and in a timely manner, against this heresy, so that it could have been repudiated in a trice?"

Unfortunately, this is the state our people are in. We think we're united, but there's no common outlook, so we can't all react in the same way.

The question is: how sensitive are we in matters of faith?

We're interested in other issues. Recently, with regard to the 8th and 9th Ecumenical Synods, a venerable prelate said: "We're mostly involved with economic issues, as if matters of the Faith weren't the fundamental and main concern of the Church".

Be that as it may, the question is: how many know our faith or want to learn about it? This is where the responsibility of the clergy lies. Our people are uncatechized or, rather, badly catechized, those who have a direct relationship with the life of the Church because we concern ourselves primarily with moralistic, not even moral, problems think that matters of the Faith are not for ordinary people but only for an elite, for a small group of people who deal with such matters in a professional capacity, people like us, hierarchs or theologians.

Another question: "The Lord came down to earth to bring justice to people. We tell the faithful who come to Church and to symposia, but is there not an even greater need for His apostles, the priests, to tell parents, ordinary people living nearby, how we should react to the signs of the times, which are so clear, and what they should do?"

Certainly, as I said earlier, Greeks are uncatechized. And it's our task, first and foremost, to teach them the faith.

If you'll allow me, there are three circles regarding the attitude of Greeks in relation to the centre, which is the Holy Altar and the Sacrament of the Divine Liturgy, the consolidating and unifying sacrament in the life of the Church.

The closest circle has a more immediate relationship with the Holy Altar and some knowledge of theological matters. There's another, second circle with a looser connection to the centre, the Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist. And then there's a third circle, much wider, which consists of those who have hardly any connection at all; they go only at Easter, if they go even then, they've been baptized, but they maintain the faintest of relationships with the life of the Church, so the knowledge they have of our faith is commensurate. This is why we feel we have the need to support this faith, which for us is a matter of life eternal, a matter of salvation... Orthodoxy!

Another question: "You've all spoken very well but few have understood you, only the very well-educated. Could somebody explain, in a few simple words what precisely has been said?"

I know that these are theological matters, but they were once the concern of all the faithful. Saint Gregory of Nyssa tells us that in the 4th century, at the time of the battles against Arianism, even the girls selling vegetables in the market would ask: "Who's greater, the Father or the Son?"

So do you see the state we're in today, not merely how many of us are interested in theological matters which are the centre of Orthodox

life, but how much knowledge do we have of these things, so that we can position ourselves as God wants and our salvation demands?

What we need to recognize, I believe, is the need to study the holy Fathers. This is my conclusion after teaching Theology for decades at the University of Athens.

I'd say it would be safest to start our reconnection to the Orthodox theological tradition with Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, because he brings the whole of the Patristic tradition of the Church to the surface within a soteriological, hesychast context. It's the biggest and best chance we have of becoming acquainted with our faith, so that we know what we're fighting for.

Of course, there are others who understand what we were talking about. But I do think that, as in the worship of the Church, just the ambience, the way in which the problems are approached, allows even those who are less educated and trained to realize that something's going on And that's what interests us.

I repeat, it's like what happens in worship. Do we understand everything? Including us, theologians, university staff, do we understand everything that's said in the hymns, in the prayers of the Church? There's lots of gaps. But the rest, what we do understand, helps us to understand what we couldn't at first sight. The laity understands, by God's grace, much more than we might imagine.

Another question: "Why don't we listen to the voice of the Confessors of Orthodoxy concerning Ecumenism? What should be the position and attitude of the flock of our Church?"

All that remains for us is our resistance, which is: permanent protest, and confession of our faith. But this is reinforced and assumes a

more substantial character if we, who want to think of ourselves as faithful to the Tradition of the Holy Fathers, stand firmly at the side of bishops who have an Orthodox outlook and all Orthodox Pastors and so fight all together, within the Church for the Church.

Another question: "What connection is there between the new calendar and post-Patristic theology? In other words, are we, who follow the new calendar, going along with something which is in the van of post-Patristicity and should we therefore abandon it?".

The short answer is that at the moment there's no suggestion of changing the calendar. It's an enormous question, which, again, if we had a proper Synodal system, would involve everybody, so that the Synod would take account of the reaction of the faithful laity.

It's an enormous problem because there's neither start nor finish to the state we're in, with the distinction between the two calendars and other related problems.

I have to tell you that I was in America last year, in Chicago, and was in contact with many Orthodox there, including Old Calendarists, and we came to the conclusion that the sooner we could engage in substantial dialogue the better for the faith, for ourselves and for our salvation. The problem is the syncretism which, for us, began with the Edict of 1920 from the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Encyclical, or rather Resolution, of 1952. Our weapon at this time is reaction, refusal and critical monitoring of all those who deviate from the Orthodox Patristic tradition.

It doesn't follow that anyone who is on the new calendar must necessarily also be post-Patristic. Our dialogue at today's event shows

the opposite. Orthodoxy can remain, not only as discourse but as an act of life.

What we need to ensure is that Ecumenists, whoever they may be, should be isolated. The people who leave the Church of the Holy Fathers and of the Apostles through their actions are the syncretist Ecumenists.

Why should we leave our Church? We've stayed within the tradition of our Saints and never cease to thank God for our salvation. If they excommunicate us, that's a different matter, but let's not do them a favour by leaving of our own accord.

So what's required is defiance and a continuous confession of the faith. Whether we follow the old or new calendars, we should be ready to shoulder our responsibilities. I hope we are.

You know, I'm afraid we're experiencing something akin to those who're concerned with the Second Coming. Instead of rejoicing that the Lord Christ will come and sweep us all up, we're in fact sad and are trying to find out exactly when the end of the world will be, instead of being concerned about our repentance, so that our death, which is the count-down to the Second Coming, will find us in the grace of God, in Orthodoxy.

So we concern ourselves with such secondary issues and miss out on the core of the problem, which is our union in Christ and our adherence to Orthodox Tradition.

Another question: "Since we're all members of the same Church, why don't we start a dialogue between the two Orthodox groups, instead of condemning each other from afar?".

Very good question. Would that it were so, and many people on both sides do indeed want a dialogue. But authority is a great temptation, the third of such which Satan used against Christ. Let me not say any more...

"In that case, why are you still in communion with them, commemorating them in Church?". (The questioner means those hierarchs who act in accordance with post-Patristic theology).

It is, indeed, a great problem, but the greater danger is that of schism, each building their own church, which is exactly what happened with the Protestants.

Why is it that from Luther, the original Protestant dogma, the stage has been reached where there are five hundred or so offshoots, each one claiming to be a Church? It's an enormous problem. I realize that some people won't be pleased by what I've said, but everybody has their own conscience. We stand by the Orthodox hierarchs and the Orthodox clergy in general and pray continuously for the repentance of the Ecumenists and post-Patristic theologians. God will illumine us as to the future.

Another question: "It's recognized that the 'common cup' is the red line for us. But it's been claimed that, unofficially and occasionally, the Holy Sacraments have been given to the heterodox. Perhaps tolerance has now become unforgivable guilt?". (The question was submitted by Archimandrite Lavrentios Gratsias.)

It's a fact that the late Patriarch Athenagoras, shortly before his demise, declared that he gave the Holy Sacraments to all the heterodox and asked all the clergy to do the same.

I wrote about this some years ago in the *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος* . Of course, we haven't reached the stage of official intercommunion, but it's coming and we need to be ready. What's important is that we should continue with the preparation of the laity with proper theological and dogmatic catechesis, so that we'll also be able to rely on the resistance of those who want to react but often don't understand the crucial nature of things because of ignorance of them. It's time we went back to catechizing the laity.

Another question, again from Fr. Christos Christodoulou: "In the Service Books published recently why has commemoration of the Ecumenical Fathers and Teachers been omitted from certain services? Is this also part of the spirit of post-Patristic theology?"

I think the first thing to say is that it's the responsibility of the Holy Synod, which decides what goes into these texts. Of course, some names are mentioned, but if the whole of the Standing Holy Synod has seen the texts, then the whole Synod's responsible, or certain people are. Just as the petition "For God-fearing and Orthodox Christians" is omitted from the Great Litany.

I do think that this is a problem. Research comes along as a substitute for theology and says that these phrases are not to be found in the oldest manuscripts. I don't think that we have some sort of antiquarian attitude, but that we have Tradition, that is a continuum in our lives as members of the Body of Christ and as a local Church. So if something of this nature isn't to be found in ancient manuscripts, but needs to be inserted to meet the needs of today, then we should do so. Don't forget that what was written in the ancient manuscripts also arose

from the need to meet a challenge. Heresy's a challenge, and the Church, as the body of Christ, gives the answer.

Another question: "Should some of the hierarchs be charged with heresy? Why does the Church of Greece belong to the World Council of Churches? Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitriada and the Ecumenical professors should be taken to task by the Synod. The fore-runner of these delusions is the Neo-Orthodox movement. See Mr Yannaras".

I'm sad that Mr Yannaras contradicts himself, because he wrote one thing before and now is writing something else. Indeed, at conferences where he speaks in his capacity as honorary Doctor of the School of Theology of Holy Cross, he speaks with anger and passion against the "zealots" as he calls us all.

It's something we lament, but we pray that God will at least illumine us so that we don't contradict ourselves or our older Orthodoxy.

The nub of the issue of why we belong to the WCC is that, again, responsibility lies with the Synod. We do not belong, because in our hearts we've understood what that would mean. We've distanced ourselves and continuously confess our opposition, and will protest until God enlightens our hierarchs, as a Synod, to take the right decision.

Another question: "From what we hear, post-Patristic theology has infiltrated everywhere, from churches and monasteries to Metropoles. The question is: how should we ordinary, everyday Christians, lukewarm, unread and so on, protect ourselves? And if it comes to our attention that the Parish priest is following this trend and dragging along with him those of the faith and of little faith, how should we react, if we do at all?".

I think that's already been answered. We distance ourselves, protesting continually about this state of affairs, we stand firmly at the side of the Confessors of our faith, who are always loyal to the Patristic tradition.

And so a united front is formed, though we should remember that it's not a matter of secular opposition and struggle, but more to do with prayer. We say more through our prayer than by launching curses and insults against those who have fallen victim(s) to certain things or who follow these ecumenical trends.

Another question asks: "Frau Merkel is Protestant. Would you say that this affects her economic policies?"

That's not far from the truth. This is exactly what's happening. A fundamental teaching of Protestantism is that profit comes from God. That's the root of capitalism. How this profit is acquired is another question which doesn't interest us here. So the faith produces an outlook. And what holds for Frau Merkel, holds for us, too: heretical faith produces a heretical outlook.

Another question: "According to what you've said, the post-Patristic heresy is to be condemned. So what should the faithful do when it's preached in the metropolis to which they belong?"

Let me repeat that we don't want to become Protestants and create schisms and so we have to stand fast beside the Orthodox clergy: bishops, priests and confessors of Orthodoxy. That would be an immediate antithesis to anything that happens to the detriment of our spotless faith.

Another question: "We'd like to ask whether Metropolitan Zizioulas of Pergamum, who was recently honoured by the Academy of

Theological Studies in Volos is a heretic, since he supports the post-Partristic heresy?"

It's not for us to say who are heretics and who aren't. What we're interested in are words and actions and then we can declare that this or that is outside our tradition. This is yet another instance that confirms the need for our Synodal system to function properly.

But as I've said, His Eminence Serafeim, the Metropolitan of Piraeus, recently added to those anathematized in the *Synodiko* of Orthodoxy, he added syncretist ecumenism as a heresy and ecumenists as heretics, because, the *Synoiko* of Orthodoxy, in its final sentence declares "to all heretics, anathema". This includes all heretics throughout all the centuries until the end of the age, because syncretist ecumenism is an all-embracing heresy which homogenizes divine truth with the Satanic lie.

As regards our own case, the words of Christ concerning the Pharisees hold good: "Do according to their words" i.e. when they're teaching the Gospel; "do not act according to their works" (*Matth.* 23, 3).

I also think that in these days [i.e. Great Lent], the Church teaches us through Saint Ephraim the Syrian, that we shouldn't judge our brother, but should examine ourselves first: "Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother".

We do, however, have the right, each of us down the last, the simplest, the most insignificant- even a child, as a venerable Elder put it to me- and anyone can come to me and say: "Papa-Georgis, I reverence your priesthood, because it's not yours, it's Christ's. But you're a phony".

That's what I believe should be the attitude of the Orthodox faithful. We respect institutions, we respect the hierarchy and the priesthood, because they're from Christ, they're not ours. And our reactions should be governed by the spirit of love, the spirit of respect, the spirit of friendship and a disposition towards prayer and repentance.

That's been the attitude of the Orthodox throughout the centuries and that's how we are reasoning, not unreasoning sheep of the flock of Christ.

**CONCLUSIONS-RESOLUTION OF THE SYMPOSIUM OF THE
HOLY METROPOLIS OF PIRAEUS ON THE THEME
“PATRISTIC THEOLOGY AND POST-PATRISTIC HERESY”**

Today, Wednesday 15 February 2012, at 4 p.m. in the Stadium of Peace and Friendship in Piraeus, on the initiative of the Holy Metropolis of Piraeus, a one-day Theological-Academic Conference was arranged, with the theme “Patristic Theology and Post-Patristic Heresy. The conference was honoured with the presence of Most Eminent Hierarchs, Abbots and Abbesses of Holy Monasteries, Theologians and some one thousand five hundred of the faithful.

The general theme of the symposium was examined in two sessions by the speakers: His Eminence Ierotheos, Metropolitan of Nafpaktos and Saint Vlasios, the University professors Fr. Georgios Metallinos, Fr. Theodoros Zisis, Dimitrios Tselengidis, Lambros Siasos and Ioannis Kourembeles, and also the researcher Ioannis Markas.

Arising from the papers and the discussion which followed, the Resolution-Conclusion below was passed unanimously:

The term post-Patristic or contextual theology is new to the Greek situation and has been borrowed from Protestantism where it has been used for more than forty years to state the need, as they see it, for weight to be given to the witness of “churches” in social affairs, not in matters of the faith, because “dogmas separate”.

From the point of view of the Orthodox, the catchphrase about “transcending the Fathers” is misguided, if not blasphemous, because theology without asceticism and a Church without Fathers, that is saints, is inconceivable. A Church without Fathers would be a “spurious Christian Protestant construct, which would not bear any relation to the

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church” which we confess in the Creed.

In the dogmatic conscience of the Orthodox faithful, the most destructive work has been carried out by Ecumenism, because this relativizes and, in practice, invalidates the enduring status of the teaching of the Holy Fathers. The newly-minted movement of the post-Patristic theologians belongs organically to Ecumenism. In their texts, these theologians appear to not understand that Orthodox and error-free theology is produced originally only by those who have been cleansed of their passions and illumined by the uncreated light of divine grace. And that the prime criterion of the error-free nature of ecclesiastical theology is the sanctity of the God-bearing fathers who formulated it.

When the sanctity, or just the Orthodox theological methodology of “following the holy Fathers” is ignored or set aside, then the adoption of “free” thinking and theological speculation is inevitable. But this leads to a “neo-Barlaamic” theology which is anthropocentric and has a self-regulating logic.

According to the criteria of the Church, “post-Patristic” theology is proof of a puffed up intellect. This is why it cannot be legitimized in Church terms.

Orthodox academic theology is not called upon to replace holy Patristic and charismatic theology, and nor is it justified in presenting any other, outside the authentic theology of the Church.

The aspiring “post-Patristic” theologians reject the clear boundaries which Patristic theology sets between Orthodoxy and heresy, the result being that they adopt a rather syncretist model.

“Post-Patristic” theology clearly deviates from traditional theology, both as regards the manner, the requirements and the criteria of theologizing in an Orthodox manner as well as the content of the Church’s Patristic theology.

“Post-Patristic theologians prove to be “non-receptive towards the different”, charging those who disagree with them with “Patristic fundamentalism” and exercising criticism in their newfangled theories.

The responsibility of the Church leadership is great as regards ensuring the avoidance of any alteration of the Orthodox faith, theology and witness today.

What is known as post-Patristic theology functions within a philosophical and meditative perspective and leads directly to Protestantism.

Given that the Church is Apostolic, it is Patristic and constitutes a wonderful victory of the Holy Fathers, because the “post-Patristic” theologians, unable to extend their flawless teaching, change their tack and simply expunge them.

We who are faithful members of the Church will continue to follow the Holy Fathers, refusing to move or transcend the boundaries which they set.

We urge everyone to be aware of the Patristic conscience, in conjunction with the required vigilance on the part of the Church’s pastors, so that we can contribute decisively to the thwarting of the alteration which is being attempted with underhand means.

All those who took part in the theological symposium.