

The Mustard Seed

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Priest's Corner Ecumenism Father John Fleser

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
Ephesians 4:4-6*

The premise from which the Orthodox Church begins when speaking about the mysteries outside the Church is summed up in the Creed: "I believe...in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." The Orthodox Church teaches there is only One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church: it is the Orthodox Church, there is no other. The Councils of the Church, the Fathers in their writings, the liturgical texts, the Scriptures and the canons all teach the same and the extension of that is there are no mysteries (*sacraments*) outside the Church. Throughout the history of the Church none of the Saints ever recognized mysteries outside the Church, i.e.,

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Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day

History is not of particular interest to most Americans, but this Proclamation illustrates how important it is for all of us to know what men in positions of responsibility believed years ago so we can judge changes which have occurred and impact on our lives. The leaders of our nation today neither refer to nor respect the Scriptures as did the men who have gone before them.

Senator James Harlan of Iowa, whose daughter later married President Lincoln's son Robert, introduced this Resolution in the Senate on March 2, 1863. The Resolution asked President Lincoln to proclaim a national day of prayer and fasting. The Resolution was adopted on March 3, and signed by Lincoln on March 30.

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of

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baptism, communion, etc. Historically individuals from Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have been brought into the Church through baptism, chrismation and even confession of faith. However, never was it taught or implied that those individuals who were chrismated or entered into communion in the Church through confession of faith, had been baptized, or using the vernacular of today, had valid baptism. The general rule for receiving heterodox into the Church has been through baptism: not a rebaptism because the Church never recognized the baptism from before.

This has always been the practice of the Church. However, today there is much confusion because emanating from the mouths of 'Orthodox' bishops and theologians is a teaching that denies the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The instructors at the 'Orthodox' seminaries of Holy Cross, Brookline, MA, and St. Vladimir's, Crestwood, NY, teach there are mysteries outside the Church: in essence they teach there is no One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The following is excerpted from An Agreed Statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation on '*Baptism and "Sacramental Economy"*', held at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, NY, June 3, 1999.

3. The fact that our churches (*Orthodox and Roman Catholic*) share and practice this same faith and teaching requires that we recognize in each other the same baptism and thus also recognize in each other, however "imperfectly," the present reality of the same Church. By God's gift we are

each, in St. Basil's words, "of the Church."

4. We find that this mutual recognition of the ecclesial reality of baptism, in spite of our divisions, is fully consistent with the perennial teaching of both churches.

Think about what they have agreed to: the churches 'share and practice this same faith and teaching'. If they truly believe this, and I must admit that since that have publicly stated it, they must believe it, then they are hypocrites and liars.

They are hypocrites because they do not

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practice what they preach! If they recognize each other's baptism, however, 'imperfectly', then the 'Orthodox bishops' should be instructing their flocks to take their children to a Roman Catholic church to be baptized. Implicit in this statement is a belief there is no value for a Roman Catholic to become Orthodox because, according to this teaching, the same Holy Spirit is found in both churches. What is the value of being Orthodox? The bishops should tell their flocks to go to the nearest Roman Catholic church to take communion as well. If the Holy Spirit is present in their baptism, then why is He not present in their communion? They should pay heed to the words of Jesus Christ: 'Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the com-

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men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are

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And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior

wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th. day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the People to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done, in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the Nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings, no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering Country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this thirtieth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty seventh.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln
William H. Seward, Secretary of State.

Source: *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler.

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mandments of men (Matthew 15:7-9).”

Not only are these bishops and theologians hypocrites but they are blasphemers as well. If they say the Roman Catholic baptism is valid and they do not themselves go to the Roman Catholic church for baptism or communion then they, by that very action, deny the presence of the Holy Spirit in that church. How can you say "we recognize in each other the same baptism and thus also recognize in each other, however "imperfectly," the present reality of the same Church" but then tell the Orthodox parishioners not to have their children baptized in a Roman Catholic church or take communion? They truly speak with a forked tongue.

They are liars because they deceive the Orthodox faithful by deliberately perverting the teaching of the Orthodox Church. The

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mandments of men*

bishops are introducing a new ecclesiology by declaring the Holy Spirit is present in heresy. They ignore what St. Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (6:14-15)"

The bishops, priests and teachers at the seminaries have read the Scriptures, the canons, the writings of the Fathers and studied Church history but they choose to present their own views rather than what the Church has taught for 2,000 years.

When they stand before the throne of God they will be held accountable for all those souls they have deceived and led away from the Church.

I attended St. Vladimir's Seminary and know what they taught then and still teach now, little has changed; the difference now is they are teaching more blatantly falsehood because they know the faithful, including their priests, will not stand up for the truth. These men have read the Scriptures but have chosen to become false shepherds as St. Peter wrote in his 2nd Epistle: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Most of the Orthodox faithful are not well read either in the lives of the Saints, the Scriptures or the writings of the Fathers and, because of this, they accept what their alleged 'Orthodox' bishops and priests tell them: however, just ask yourselves this question: If we are all Christians and worship the same God — for we are, as they say, imperfectly the same Church — then why shouldn't the Orthodox just close their churches and go to the Roman Catholic churches? Why do these same 'Orthodox' bishops publicly state they do not give communion to Roman Catholics when they believe the same Holy Spirit is in both churches? According to this new teaching of the new calendar bishops, no Roman Catholic should be accepted into the Orthodox Church because he is already in the church. If we are all Christians, which is what everyone says, then why should we not all go

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to each other's church and join them in their 'fellowship'? Why then does it matter to which denomination you belong? According to the new teaching of these bishops, 'Why be Orthodox?' These bishops are truly Protestants for they are declaring there is no truth and thus, if no truth, then no one Church.

Orthodox wake up! The Orthodox Church is THE CHURCH, there is no other and in her, and only her, are found the mysteries which unite us to Our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, God-Man. There are no mysteries outside the Church. What these bishops, priests and theologians are saying is FALSE. They are deceivers and ultimately murderers for they are leading those who follow them away from the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

What must the individual Orthodox do?

1. Begin to follow the Orthodox way of life: fast, say your prayers, read the Scriptures and lives of the Saints and attend the services for in this way will you become more

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

2. knowledgeable about your faith.
2. Question your bishop or priest about what he teaches regarding the heterodox. If you have no knowledge about your faith how will you know if he is teaching falsehood regarding the Church?
3. Ask him directly, 'Are there mysteries outside the Orthodox Church?' If he answers yes, then ask him to show you the quotes from the writings of the Fathers, the Scriptures and the canons that support his teaching. Our bishops and priests are not infallible,

as the pope so claims to himself, but **must** explain what they teach to the faithful.

4. If they persist in denying the Orthodox faith, then the faithful should do what they have done for centuries, either remove them or, if that is not possible, leave and locate Orthodox bishops and priests. St. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Timothy 4:2-4)."
5. Why is this important? Because our salvation depends on our being united to Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, God-Man and that is done by being baptized in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Orthodox Church where God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are worshipped and glorified.

We have been given a 'pearl of great price' and we must become willing to give all in order to obtain it. St. John wrote in the book of Revelation: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (Revelations 3:15-16)".

May we not be lukewarm towards the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Church Activities

July 29/16: Christos Macromallis and Catherine (Cathleen) Chapin were married: Metropolitan Ephraim, Father John Fleser and Deacon Neil Galarneau performed the marriage service. Many years to the newly weds.

August 6/July 24: Great Vespers with Liti and Lesser Blessing of the Waters for St. Anna's Feast day: Metropolitan Ephraim, Bishop Moses, Suffragan Bishop of Roslindale, Fathers John Fleser, John Bruk, John Knox, Sergius Pellegrini, John Routs, Deacons Elias Fagan, Andrew, from Holy Transfiguration Monastery, and Neil Galarneau all served. There were over 60 faithful who attended the service.

August 7/July 25: Matins began at 7:30 AM, Metropolitan Ephraim was met at 9:00 AM: serving with the Metropolitan were Bishop Moses, Fathers Isaac, Abbot of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, John Fleser, Christos Constantinou, George Liadis, John Bruk, John Knox, Sergius Pellegrini, Deacons Elias Fagan, and Andrew. There were over 100 of the faithful who attended the service and joined in the meal immediately after the Liturgy.

Recommended books for every home

⇒ *The Great Horologion or Book of Hours* translated from the Greek by Holy Transfiguration Monastery. This is a

most important book for not only does it have services of the Church but the dismissal hymns and short lives for Saints for every day of the year

⇒ *The Pentecostarion* translated from the Greek by Holy Transfiguration Monastery. The services from the Passover (Pascha) to the Sunday of all Saints which is the Sunday after Pentecost.

⇒ *The Psalter* translated from the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament by Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

⇒ *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*. This is the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. This was translated into Greek circa 284 B. C. It is available in English in any bookstore.

⇒ *The New Testament*. Until we have an Orthodox translation, the King James translation provides a better rendering into English what exists in Greek. You can also buy the New Testament with the Greek text with a transliteration into English under each word. On the opposite page is an English translation.

⇒ *The True Vine* published by the Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston. It contains articles never before translated into English. Volume 27&28 contains the translation of the *Synodicon* which the new calendar bishops do not want their parishioners to read: it contains all the anathemas against the heresies taught through the centuries as well as those of the Roman Catholics and Protestants.

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