The True Orthodox Church
in Opposition to the Heresy of Ecumenism

Dogmatic and Canonical Issues

I. Basic Principles

The True Orthodox Church has, since the preceding twentieth century, been struggling steadfastly in confession against the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism and, as well, not only against the calendar innovation that derived from it, but also more generally against dogmatic syncretism, which at an inter-Christian and inter-religious level inexorably cultivates, in sundry ways and in contradiction to the Gospel, the concurrency, commingling, and joint action of Truth and error, Light and darkness, and the Church and heresy.

• In Her struggle to confess the Faith, the True Orthodox Church has applied, and continues to embrace and apply, the following basic principles of Orthodox ecclesiology:

1. The primary criterion for the status of membership in the Church of Christ is the “correct and saving confession of the Faith” (St. Maximos the Confessor, Patrologia Graeca, Vol. XC, col. 93D), that is, the true, exact and anti-innovationist Orthodox Faith, and it is “on this rock” (of correct confession) that the Lord has built His Holy Church.

2. This criterion is valid both for individual persons and for local Churches.

3. The Catholicity of the Church of Christ, always with respect to Her Uniqueness, Holiness, and Apostolicity, is Her qualitative and internal, and not quantitative and external, hallmark; it is Her fundamental attribute, which expresses, on the one hand, the integrity and the fullness of the Truth that She preaches, independently of Her demographic and geographical dimensions, and, on the other hand, the authenticity and completeness of the means provided for the healing and deification of fallen human nature.

4. It is on the basis of this correct confession that the Mysteriological (“Sacramental”) communion of the faithful with Christ, and between one another, is realized, as an expression of existing unity, not, indeed, as a means to the attainment of this unity; that is to say, unity in correct confession is prior and communion in the Mysteries subsequent.

5. All pious Christians who hold to an Orthodox confession, if they are to be living members of the Church, ought without fail to be in Mysteriological communion with each other, since
communion in Faith and communion in the Mysteries (“Sacraments”) mutually interpenetrated among the faithful, reify the one and unique Body of Christ.

6. Unshakable abidance in correct confession, as well as the defense thereof at all costs, is a matter of the utmost soteriological importance, and it is for this reason that our Holy Fathers valiantly confessed and defended our Holy Orthodox Faith in word and deed and with their blood, doing so on behalf of the Orthodox Catholic Church and in the name of Her very existence.

7. All those who preach or act contrary to correct confession are separated from the Truth of the Faith and are excluded from communion with the Orthodox Catholic Church, be they individual persons or communities, even if they continue to function formally and institutionally as putative Churches and are addressed as such.

• “Those who do not belong to the Truth do not belong to the Church of Christ either; and all the more so if they speak falsely of themselves by calling themselves, or are called by each other, holy pastors and hierarchs; [for it has been instilled in us that] Christianity is characterized not by persons, but by the truth and exactitude of Faith” (St. Gregory Palamas, “Refutation of the Letter of Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch,” Codex Coislianianus 99, f. 144A, cited by George Mantzarides, “Περὶ θεώσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: Μυστηριακὸς καὶ ἐκκλησιολογικὸς χαρακτήρ τῆς θεώσεως,” in Παλαμικά [Thessalonike: Ekdoseis P. Pournara, 1998], pp. 197-198).

8. The unity of the Church in the Truth of the Faith and in communion of the Mysteries, bestowed from on high from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, is assuredly Christocentric and Eucharistic, and is experienced as a perennial assemblage and concelebration in space and time “with all the Saints,” since it has as its guarantor the Orthodox (right-believing) Bishop, the bearer—by Divine Grace—of the “tradition of the Truth” (St. Irenæus of Lugdunum [Lyon], Against Heresies, III.4.1, Patrologia Graeca, Vol. VII, col. 855B).

9. Each Orthodox Bishop, as a “sharer in the ways and successor to the thrones” of the Holy Apostles, as Father of the Eucharistic Synaxis, as a Teacher of the Gospel of Truth, as a Servant (Minister) of love in truth, in the image and place of Christ, thus expresses, embodies, and safeguards the perennial Catholicity of the Church, that is, Her unity with Christ and, at the same time, Her unity in Christ with all of the local Churches which have existed, exist, and will exist as the One Body of Christ.

• “What is the ‘one body’? The faithful who are, were, and will be everywhere in the world” (St. John Chrysostomos, “Homily X on Ephesians,” §1, Patrologia Graeca, Vol. LXII, col. 75).

10. Every Bishop who proclaims “heresy publicly” and “barefacedly in Church” (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod) and who teaches “another Gospel than that which we have received” (cf. Galatians 1:8) or is in syncretistic communion with those of other beliefs or religions, doing so persistently and continually, becomes a “false bishop and a false teacher” (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod), while those Bishops who commune with him, indifferent towards, tolerating, or accepting his mentality and these actual declarations of his, “are destroyed together with him” (St. Theodore the Studite), thereby ceasing to be canonical or in communion with the Church, since the Catholicity of the Church, Her unity, and Her genuine Apostolic Succession, which unfailingly guarantee the Bishop’s status as canonical and in communion with the Church, are founded on, flow from, and are safeguarded by the “correct and salvific confession of the Faith.”

II. Ecumenism: A Syncretistic Panheresy
1. Ecumenism, as a theological concept, as an organized social movement, and as a religious enterprise, is and constitutes the greatest heresy of all time and a most wide-ranging panheresy; the heresy of heresies and the pan-heresy of pan-heresies; an amnesty for all heresies, truly and veritably a pan-heresy; the most insidious adversary of the local Orthodox Churches, as well as the most dangerous enemy of man’s salvation in Christ, since it is impossible for Truth and Life in Christ to exist in unbreakable soteriological unity within its syncretistic boundaries.

2. Ecumenism came forth from the Protestant world (in the nineteenth century and onwards) and fosters the relativization of truth, life, and salvation in Christ, in essence denying the Catholicity and uniqueness of the Church, since at its base there lie both the erroneous theory of an “invisible Church” with vague boundaries, members of which can supposedly belong to different “Confessions,” and a variant of this, that is, the so-called “branch theory,” according to which the different Christian “Confessions” are allegedly branches of the same tree of the Church, each branch possessing part of the Truth and thus putatively together constituting the whole of the Church.

3. In spite of the variety of theories that ecumenism has produced, its basic aim is the cultivation of syncretistic coexistence (concurrency) and coöperation (joint action)—but also, beyond that, of a fusion—initially of all Christian creeds and “Confessions” (inter-Christian ecumenism), and subsequently of all religions (interfaith ecumenism), that is, (the cultivation) of an approach contrary to the Gospel, leading inevitably to the establishment of a kind of pan-religion, which would pave the way for the advent of the tribulation of the last times, namely, the era of the “lawless one” (II Thessalonians 2:8), the Antichrist.

4. By reason of its syncretistic character, ecumenism is closely akin to Freemasonry, which promotes itself as religiously tolerant, convivial, and open-minded towards heresies and religions, having proved to be, in practice, a religion—indeed, a super-religion—contributing directly and indirectly to the advancement of the ecumenist vision; that is, to the creation of an all-inclusive base for every creed and religion, wherein revealed Truth will have been completely relativized and put on the same level as every human and demonic delusion and belief.

5. Ecumenism began to assail the Orthodox Catholic Church with the sunset of the nineteenth century, through a Synodal Proclamation, in 1920, from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, “To the Churches of Christ Everywhere.” It constitutes the “founding charter of ecumenism,” which it preaches “barefacedly,” since it characterizes the heresies of the West and everywhere else as, supposedly, “venerable Christian Churches,” no longer as “strangers and foreigners,” but as “kith and kin in Christ and ‘as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, [and partakers of] the promise of God in Christ’” (cf. Ephesians 3:6), proposing, indeed, as the first step towards its implementation the use of a common calendar for the simultaneous concelebration of feasts by the Orthodox and the heterodox.

6. By way of implementing this ecumenist proclamation, following the uncanonical decisions of the anti-Orthodox Congress of Constantinople in 1923, what was essentially the so-called Gregorian Calendar was adopted, as a soi-disant “Corrected (Revised) Julian Calendar,” even though, as soon as it originally appeared in the West (in 1582), the former was censured and condemned as a calamitous Papal innovation by three Pan-Orthodox Synods in the East (in 1583, 1587, and 1593).
7. The calendar innovation, introduced in 1924 into the Church of Greece, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Church of Romania, and later, gradually, into the other local Churches, conflicts with the Catholicity of the Orthodox Church, both in the manner of its implementation (unilaterally and uncanonically) and in terms of its purpose (ecumenistic and syncretistic), thereby rending with a mortal blow the external manifestation and expression of the One Body of the Church throughout the world, which is also reified by way of a uniform Festal Calendar.

8. The Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, by means of Her supreme Synodal authority, expressed Her abiding and unchangeable will that Her unity be likewise manifested through the common celebration by all Christians of the greatest of the Feasts, namely, the Holy Pascha [improperly called “Easter” in the West—trans.], decisively setting forth at the First œcumenical Synod in 325 the eternal rule for determining Pascha, the Paschal Canon (the Paschalion).

9. This Synodal act, in essence profoundly ecclesiological and dogmatic, presupposed as the basis of what is called the determination of Holy Pascha the vernal equinox, which, as a date firmly fixed by the Church, would thenceforth be set by convention as the 21st of March by the Julian Calendar then in use, which was thereby consecrated as the Church Calendar and as the axis of the annual cycle of the Orthodox Festal Calendar. On this foundation, the harmonization of the calendars of the local Orthodox Churches, which were on different calendar systems, was gradually accomplished by the sixth century.

10. The Holy Fathers of the First œcumenical Synod in Nicæa gave expression by Divine inspiration, but also prophetically, to the anti-syncretistic spirit of the Church: by “not keeping feast with the Jews” and, by extension, not aspiring to concelebrate with heretics, the external and visible unity of the one Body of the Church was preserved and the boundaries between Truth and heresy established, wholly in contrast, let it be said, to the reprehensible calendar reform of 1924, which aimed at concelebration with the heterodox of pan-heretical Papism and Protestantism, for the purpose of making visible the putative invisible unity that existed between them and Orthodoxy.

11. The Orthodox ecumenists, and especially the more extreme among them, having suffered the pernicious effects of corrosive syncretism, think that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ has, supposedly, lost Her Catholicity, by reason of theological and cultural conflicts and divisions; they propose and aim at its reconstitution by way of a union by compromise of the divided parties, Orthodox and heretics, which would supposedly restore Eucharistic communion, without, of course, a common confession of Faith, evidently in line with the model of the Unia. Other, more moderate ecumenists are content to number the heterodox among the Orthodox, speaking “on behalf of the whole Body of the Church,” the heterodox supposedly being within the boundaries of the Church, since these ecumenists, as advocates of the “broad Church” or the “Church in a broad (wider) sense,” do not deem the charismatic and canonical boundaries of the Church equivalent, inasmuch as they find and acknowledge the existence of Divine Grace and salvation even outside the confines of the Truth.

12. The participation of the Orthodox ecumenists in the so-called World Council of Churches (1948 and on), and also in other ecumenist organizations, constitutes a denial in practice of the Orthodox Church as the fullness of Truth and salvation in Christ, insofar as a basic precondition for organizational participation in such inter-Confessional bodies is, in
essence, the denial, albeit tacit, of the existence of authentic ecclesiastical Catholicity today, as well as a recognition of the necessity of reconstituting a putatively genuine Catholicity, that is, of the necessity, supposedly, of re-founding the Church.

13. At the core of these un-Orthodox and totally newfangled conceptions are so-called “Baptismal theology,” dogmatic syncretism, the abolition of the “boundaries” of the Church, the recognition of “ecumenical brotherhood,” the theory of “Sister Churches,” the so-called “theology of the two-lungs of the Church,” the theory of the “one broad Church,” in addition to sundry other misbeliefs that have gradually led the Orthodox ecumenists even to a synodal recognition of heterodox communities and their mysteries; to joint prayer with them and, indeed, at the very highest levels, to offering them the Mysteries; to the signing of joint statements and declarations towards a common witness with them; and, as well, to an acknowledgement of the need for common service to the world, as allegedly jointly responsible (Orthodoxy and heresy) for its salvation.

14. By means of all of these things, there has been a complete distortion of the meaning of evangelical love, exercised in the Truth and through the Truth; a profound and ever-deepening syncretistic hobnobbing has taken root; there has come forth a mixture of things unmixable; there has emerged a truly substantial union between ecumenists of every stripe, not, of course, in the unique Truth of the Orthodox Catholic Church, but on the basis of a nebulous humanistic vision, without any missionary dimension or any calling of those in error to a return in repentance to the House of the Father, that is, to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

III. Sergianism: An Adulteration of Canonicity

1. Another phenomenon and movement akin to ecumenism, likewise possessing an ecclesiological dimension, is so-called Sergianism, which, in the unprecedented circumstances of the persecution of the Church in the former Soviet Union, through the agency of the fallen and compromised Sergius Stragorodsky (†1944), originally Metropolitan, and later Patriarch, of Moscow, surrendered to the atheistic Bolsheviks and their struggle against God an outwardly proper Church organization, so that, in the hands of the revolutionaries, it could become an unwitting tool in their unrelenting warfare against the very Church Herself, as the Bearer of the fullness of Truth in Christ.

2. Sergianism is not simply a Soviet phenomenon, for it caused severe damage to the local Orthodox Churches in the countries of Eastern Europe, where, after the Second World War, atheistic and anti-Christian Communist régimes were established.

3. The quintessence of Sergianism is the adoption of the delusion that deception could be used as a means to preserve the Truth and, likewise, that collaboration with the enemies and persecutors of the Church was the way to ensure Her survival; in practice, however, the exact opposite occurred: the Sergianist Bishops became tools of the atheistic Communists for the purpose of exercising control over the Church, to the end of Her moral and spiritual enfeeblement and with a view to Her ultimate dismantlement and annihilation.

4. At the level of ecclesiology, Sergianism completely distorted the concept of Orthodox ecclesiological canonicity, since in the Sergianist context, canonicity was essentially torn away from the spirit and the Truth of the canonical tradition of the Church, assuming thereby a formal
adherence to legitimacy, which could be used to justify any act of lawlessness committed by the ruling Hierarchy; in fact, ultimately, such a veneer of canonicity degenerated into an administrative technique for the subordination of the people of the Church to the Sergianist Hierarchy, regardless of the direction in which it led the faithful.

5. After the collapse of the anti-Christian régimes around the end of the preceding twentieth century, the very grave ecclesiological deviation of Sergianism, under the new conditions of political freedom, was preserved as a legacy of the past and, at the same time, changed its form.

6. Anti-Ecclesiastical Sergianism, having long ago incorporated within itself a worldly spirit, unscrupulousness, deception, and a pathological servility before the powerful of this world, continues to betray the Church, now no longer for fear of reprisals from atheistic rulers, but for the sake of self-serving and secularist motives and under the cloak of supposed canonicity, still peddling the freedom of the Church in exchange for gaining the friendship of the powerful of this world, with all of the concomitant material benefits, to be sure, and prestigious social status.

7. Today, the virus of Sergianism, in this modified form, as neo-Sergianism or post-Sergianism, and also in other forms of state control over the Churches, affects a large part of the Episcopate of the official local Orthodox Churches around the world, thereby contributing to the promotion of an equally secularist and syncretistic ecumenism, under the cover of a false canonicity.

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8. The faithful, both clergy and laity, who possess a healthy dogmatic and canonical conscience ought to maintain an authentic Patristic stand in the face of phenomena and movements that have ecclesiological significance, such as ecumenism and Sergianism, and especially when these phenomena become systematically entrenched and widely disseminated, even if they do not achieve a clear doctrinal expression, yet penetrate and spread into the Body of the Church in an insidious and corrosive manner; that is, when they are actively adopted or passively allowed by all of the Bishops of one or more local Churches.

9. In such cases, the essence of the struggle against these anti-Evangelical, anti-Orthodox, and degenerative phenomena is not an optional stand, but there is, rather, an obligation to terminate forthwith ecclesiastical communion with a Bishop or a Hierarchy that introduces heresy into the Church in a conciliar manner, either by preaching it or by contributing to its dissemination through silence, passivity, or indifference (Canon XV of the First-Second Synod).

10. Walling off from fallen Shepherds, who are henceforth characterized as “false bishops” and “false teachers,” is a binding obligation for true Orthodox in a time of heresy, for the safeguarding of the uniqueness, unity, and Catholicity of the Church, for a confessional witness to the Faith, and also for a saving call to repentance, missionary in nature, directed towards those who have deviated and those who commune with them.

IV. So-Called Official Orthodoxy

1. The meaning of the term “official Orthodoxy” is closely connected with the meaning of the concepts of “official Church” and “official local Churches.”

2. “Official Orthodoxy” is that peculiar ideology of the so-called official local Churches,
representative of an ever more lukewarm Orthodoxy, which, through the implementation of the ecclesiological and canonical innovations envisaged by the aforementioned Patriarchal Proclamation of 1920, has been led into a gradual estrangement from authentic Orthodoxy.

3. In 1924, the first major step towards the implementation of this premeditated alienation from authentic Orthodoxy was accomplished through the introduction of the Papal calendar into some of the local Churches, which in time was expanded to the point of acceptance, in certain cases, even of the Papal Paschalion, in open violation of the Decree of the First (Ecumenical Synod.

4. “Official Church” is the name given by the faithful of the Russian Catacomb Church to the State Church, that is, the Church recognized by, and totally dependent on, the atheistic Soviet régime, which evolved into the notoriously Sergianist and ecumenist Moscow Patriarchate.

5. Today, the terms “official Church” and “official local Churches” denote the well-known historically formed local Churches, whose Hierarchical leadership officially accepts and participates synodally in ecumenism, promotes, permits, or tolerates it as a theological concept and as a religious enterprise, hides under the cloak of supposed canonicity, as understood by Sergianism, and adopts—directly or indirectly—many other forms of apostasy from Orthodoxy (see such corrosive phenomena as the adulteration of the Mysteries, and especially of the rite of Baptism, liturgical reforms under the guise of “liturgical renewal,” the newly minted “post-Patristic theology,” which at an official level is effecting a profound infiltration of syncretistic ecumenism into university theological schools in particular, the loss of ecclesiastical criteria for the Glorification of Saints, various forms of secularization and alteration of the authentic ethos of the Church, etc.).

6. All of these so-called official Churches have now joined decisively, unwaveringly, and unrepentantly in the process of syncretistic apostasy of a Sergianist and ecumenist kind, an anti-ecclesiastical and uncanonical process synodally promoted or permitted by their Hierarchies, with which true Orthodoxy, consistent with its ecclesiological principles regarding “false bishops” and “false teachers,” cannot have any prayerful, Mysteriological, or administrative communion whatsoever.

V. The True Orthodox Church

1. The True Orthodox Church includes within Her bosom that major faction of the pious clergy and laity of the local official Churches who have reacted resolutely to the proclamation of the “ecclesiocidal” heresy of ecumenism and to its immediate practical applications, as well as to anti-ecclesiastical Sergianism, severing all communion with the innovating ecumenists and the Sergianists.

2. The faithful upholders in Russia of the legacy of the most holy Patriarch Tikhon (†1925) did not accept the established Church or Sergianism (1927 and on), preferring to undergo persecutions and to take refuge in the catacombs, thereby showing forth Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith, while another faction, which departed from Russia and formed an ecclesiastical administration in the diaspora, produced equally resplendent Confessors and Saintly figures, of worldwide reputation and distinction.

3. In Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and elsewhere, close-knit groups of people rejected
the calendar innovation of 1924 and the heresy of ecumenism, likewise preferring persecutions and producing Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith, thereby showing themselves faithful to the sacred Traditions of the Holy Fathers of the Church. In addition, through impressive and wondrous miracles, such as the appearance of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross in Athens (September 14, 1925 [Old Style]), our Lord encouraged and rewarded the Godly zeal of these, His genuine children.

4. After the introduction of the calendar innovation in Greece in 1924, those who abided by the Traditions of the Fathers began using the title “True Orthodox Christians,” and the Catacomb Orthodox Christians in Russia, the so-called Tikhonites, did the same.

5. However, from place to place and from time to time various other appellations were used for those who rejected the calendar innovation of 1924 and the heresy of ecumenism, but who have also always situated themselves within the boundaries of the authentic mind and Evangelical ethos of the Church and, in addition, of lawful and canonical order, possessing genuine and uninterrupted Apostolic Succession, and who assuredly in their totality make up the True Orthodox Church, which constitutes, in the wake of the constantly increasing departure of the ecumenists from the path of Truth, the authentic continuator of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in our contemporary era.

6. The Episcopal structure that is dogmatically necessary for the constitution and continuation of the local True Orthodox Churches was ensured, by the Grace of God, either by Hierarchs from among the innovators (New Calendarists) joining them, or by the Consecration of Bishops by a True Orthodox ecclesiastical authority in the diaspora, having indisputable Apostolic Succession, and thus the Apostolic Succession and canonicity of the True Orthodox Church is proven and assured, unquestionable and incontrovertible, and confirmed by signs from God.

VI. The Return to True Orthodoxy

1. In the acceptance of repentant heretics and schismatics, the Œcumenical and local Synods of the Church have, from time to time, in addition to the principle of exactitude, applied the so-called principle of œconomy, to wit, a canonical and pastoral practice, according to which it is possible for there to be a temporary divergence from the letter of the Sacred Canons, without violating their spirit.

2. Nevertheless, œconomy assuredly can never and in no circumstance whatever permit the pardoning of any sin or any compromise concerning the “correct and saving confession of the Faith,” since œconomy aims clearly and solely, in a spirit of loving kindness, at facilitating the salvation of souls, for whom Christ died.

3. The application of œconomy in the reception of heretics and schismatics into communion with the Church in no way betokens that the Church acknowledges the validity and the reality of their mysteries, which are celebrated outside Her canonical and charismatic boundaries.

4. The Holy Orthodox Church has never recognized, either by exactitude or by œconomy, mysteries performed completely outside Her and in apostasy, since those who celebrate or who partake of these mysteries remain within the bosom of their heretical or schismatic community.

5. Through the application of œconomy in the reception of persons or groups outside Her in repentance, the Orthodox Church accepts merely the form of the mystery of heretics or
schismatics—provided, of course, that this has been preserved unadulterated—but endows this form with life through the Grace of the Holy Spirit that exists in Her by means of the bearers of this fullness, namely, Orthodox Bishops.

6. More specifically, with regard to the Mysteries celebrated in the so-called official Orthodox Churches, the True Orthodox Church, within the boundaries of Her pastoral solicitude, does not provide assurance concerning their validity or concerning their salvific efficacy, having in view the convocation of a Major Synod of True Orthodoxy, in particular for those who commune “knowingly” with syncretistic ecumenism and Sergianism, even though She does not in any instance repeat them for those entering into communion with Her in repentance.

7. It is in any event certain that when the purity of the dogma of the Church is assailed and the irrefragable bond between confession, Catholicity, and communion is thereby weakened or even completely broken, the Mysteriological and soteriological consequences, clearly foreseen by the Apostolic, Patristic, and Synodal Tradition, are very serious and very grave.

8. Taking into account that St. Basil the Great, although he declares himself in favor of exactitude, nonetheless accepts and introduces the use of œconomy with regard to certain heretics and schismatics (First Canon), it is important to note that the Holy Orthodox Church has synodally sanctioned the use of œconomy for “those who are joining Orthodoxy and the portion of the saved,” as is evident in Canon XCV of the Holy and Ecumenical Quinisext Synod (the Synod in Trullo), whereby different heretics and schismatics are accepted in a variety of ways, whether solely through repentance, a certificate of faith (λιβελλος), and Confession, as are the Nestorians and Monophysites who were condemned centuries ago, through Chrismation, or through Baptism.

9. In awareness of all the foregoing, and of the particular conditions in each local Church, the True Orthodox Church deals with especial care with any clergy or laity from the so-called official Orthodox Churches who desire to enter into communion with Her, being concerned—in the exercise of pastoral solicitude for them—about what is absolutely essential, namely, that they proceed in their choice freely, conscientiously, and responsibly.

10. As a general rule, monastics and laity from these Churches, who have definitely been baptized according to the Orthodox rite, are received into communion through anointing (Χρῖσμα) by means of a special order, in conjunction, to be sure, with the Mystery of sacred Confession, while clergy submit a written petition and, as long as this is approved, are received into communion through a special brief Order of the Imposition of Hands (Χειροθεσία), specifically compiled for such cases.

11. It is understood that, on the basis of idiosyncrasies in different places and in different cases concerning the application of a more lenient or a stricter order, a decision is to be made by the local Bishop or by a competent Synod, according to St. Cyprian of Carthage:

- “In this matter we do not coerce or impose a law on anyone, since every Prelate has freedom of will in the administration of the Church and will have to account for his actions before the Lord” (“Letter to Pope Stephen,” in Concilia ad regiam exacta, Vol. I [Lutetiae Parisiorum: Impensis Societatis Typographicae Librorum Ecclesiasticorum iussu Regis constitutae, 1671], col. 741).

12. A Major General Synod, of Pan-Orthodox authority, would be able to decree the general criteria and the preconditions for the exercise of the practice of receiving those who return to True Orthodoxy from various newfangled schismatic and heretical communities.
VII. Towards the Convocation of a Major Synod of the True Orthodox Church

1. In the preceding twentieth century, True Orthodox Hierarchs, whenever this could be brought to fruition, issued Synodal condemnations, at a local level, both of ecumenism and of Sergianism, and also of Freemasonry.

2. By way of example, we cite the condemnations of ecumenism by the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1983, and also by the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in 1998; as well, the condemnation of Sergianism by the Catacomb Church in Russia, and also by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at different times; and finally, the condemnation of Freemasonry by the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece in 1988.

3. These Synodal censures, especially of the heresy of ecumenism, are assuredly important steps in the right direction towards the convocation of a General Synod of True Orthodox, which, with expanded authority, will arrive at decisions concerning the calendar innovation and syncretistic ecumenism, which contradicts the Gospel.

4. What is necessary today, on the basis of a common and correct confession of the Faith, is the union in a common Body of all the local Churches of the True Orthodox, for the purpose of creating the antecedent conditions for assembling and convoking a Major General Synod of these Churches, Pan-Orthodox in scope and authority, in order to deal effectively with the heresy of ecumenism, as well as syncretism in its divers forms, and also for the resolution of various problems and issues of a practical and pastoral nature, which flow therefrom and which concern the life of the Church in general, and of the faithful in particular.

5. The True Church, as the actual Body of Christ, is by Her very nature Catholic and through Her Bishops puts forth Synodal declarations in the face of heterodox teachings and the global scandal that derives therefrom; thus, She ought to pursue, on the one hand, the articulation of the Truths of the Faith, for the delineation of the Truth in contrast to falsehood, and on the other hand, the condemnation of the error and corruption that stem from heresy and heretics.

6. Thus, in a Major General Synod there will be proclaimed, on the one hand, the Sole Hope among us in all creation, as the only way out of all impasses, for the eternal salvation of the children of God, and, on the other hand, the complete and definitive antithesis between Orthodoxy and syncretism of an ecumenist and a Sergianist bent, unto the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, by the intercessions of the Mother of God, the Apostles, and the Fathers.

7. May we counted worthy, in the near future, following the Holy Fathers and the Holy Synods, preserving free from innovation the Faith once for all delivered to us (cf. St. Jude 1:3), to proclaim, with the Fathers of the Pan-Orthodox Synod of 1848:

   “‘Let us hold fast the Confession’ which we have received unadulterated..., abhorring every novelty as a suggestion of the Devil. He who accepts a novelty reproaches with deficiency the Orthodox Faith that has been preached. But this Faith has long since been sealed in completeness, not admitting either diminution or increase, or any alteration whatsoever; and he who dares to do, advise, or think of such a thing has already denied the faith of Christ.”