

CONTEMPORARY ELDERS ON ZEALOTISM

EX-ZEALOTIST ELDER HARALAMBOS DIONYSIATIS: THE TEACHER OF NOETIC PRAYER

Fr. Haralambos, known in the world as Haralambos Galanopoulos, descended from blessed Pontus and from pious parents Leonidas and Despina.

As we know from History, the glorified and genuine Greeks of Pontus suffered terrible pressures and hardships from the barbaric occupier that endangered not only their property but also their lives. The only way to stay any longer in their homeland would have been under the terrible condition that they deny their ancestral Orthodox faith.

Like many Pontians facing this impasse, Leonidas' parents decided to abandon their property and homeland rather than reject their faith. So, in 1880, there was mass emigration from Pontos to the land opposite, Russia, which was also Orthodox.



The Greeks of Pontus split in three groups. One group preferred expatriation to Moslem conversion. The second group took on the dangerous role of practising their Christianity secretly (crypto-Christians) so they could remain in their homes, as some still do to this day. Sadly, the third group is those who succumbed to the pressures and renounced their faith.

Many are the miracles in the life of pious Leonidas, including how he met his future bride, Despina. However, we shall only concern ourselves here with their blessed son, Haralambos.

Haralambos, an exiled Pontian, was born in Russia in 1910, where he spent his childhood and of course learnt to speak fluent Russian. When he became 12 years old, his family settled in Arkadikon, a suburb of Drama in Greece.

During his early years, the Church of Greece was shaken by the change of calendar that we discuss in some detail on the [main site](#). This caused the elect flock to be divided into two opposing factions. The first supported

obedience to the Church but the second held fast to the festal tradition and would not consent by any means to the change.

Haralambos and his family belonged to this second faction. It wasn't long before Haralambos became a leading member of the struggle. As he said, there were pious, simple, genuine Christians in this group who, believing they were right took on the struggle and were persecuted for it by the civil authorities.

There was a most pious, unmarried, middle-aged man among the second faction called Elias. As soon as Haralambos recognised Elias' virtue and rare mindset for struggle, he stayed with him until the day when Haralambos finally renounced the world and left for the Holy Mountain. Their meeting each other became the first spiritual stop for Haralambos. From that day on, Haralambos began retreating from all secular activities and the secular people and like-minded "fans" began losing track of him.

He became involved in a very strict ascetic programme, which many contemporary ascetics would admire today. He would work during the day and keep vigil at night. Despite the fact that he used to plough the land, often from morning till dusk, during the fasts he would only eat dry foods, and in fact only once a day, at the ninth hour (Byzantine time). He gave up eating meat completely. Every night the vigil would last for many hours.

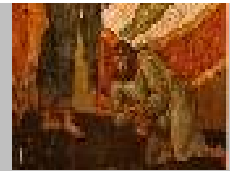
"Sometimes, I would go around midnight to the feasts of the New Calendarists to sell small items. I would search for a suitable place to set up my small trade and then I would continue with up to 1000 prostrations, the services, and my prayer rule with the prayer-rope. By sunrise, when the other merchants would arrive, I would have already finished all my spiritual duties and begun to work," he would confess later on in private.

Haralambos' heart had been warmed by a divine fire and already in those days he had his first thoughts of renouncing the world. However, these thoughts conflicted with his mindset for struggle with the calendar issue. He was encouraged in this latter inclination by his new fans who wanted him ordained in the name of the cause. Although his teacher Elias did not oppose this solution, he was categorical, "You are either going to become a monk or, if you serve in the world, you will be a married priest."

He remained undecided for many years, until the occupation of Greece in World War II. His relatives and friends would pressure Haralambos to marry Maria, a very modest woman who was most suitable to be a priest's wife. They said this



time and again, and finally forced him to agree to see her. Haralambos with a cold heart was being pushed towards the life of a married priest. However, God provided for things differently.



We shall not discuss his adventures with the rebels, his captivity in Bulgaria (1941) and his amazing rescue by Holy Great Martyr George, his return home to his father Leonidas who had stayed kneeling in front of the *iconostasion* at their house for days on end, praying for the safe return of his son.

We shall continue his life story from the moment when his father later on senses that he is close to his death and calls his children one by one and asks them to obey Haralambos and to show paternal respect to him. Haralambos is asked by his dying father to take care of his two siblings - Cosmas and Damian - and to educate them. Afterwards, Haralambos was allowed to take whatever road God would choose for him.

After his father's repose, his grieving widowed mother beseeched and sought the same favour. Faced with this new and unforeseen event, Haralambos temporarily took on the responsibility of protector of the family. However, he did not abandon his pious desire for monasticism. He worked hard during the day and always spent the night in vigil. When it came to fasting, he was stricter than ever. His teacher, Elias, was his comfort and companion as were the like-minded Old Calendarists. He ate only once a day on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and that was bread and water after the sun set.

After the end of the war, life continued normal for a while. Cosmas and Damian finally came of age and graduated from higher studies. Cosmas became a public school teacher and Damian a public servant. Set free, Haralambos prepared for the great dream of his life. However, there were more obstacles, this time from within the religious group where he met the opposition of the like-minded Old Calendarists.

- Don't you understand I have made a promise to God?

- No, you have a duty to the cause to remain in the world. You are dedicated to God here, too.

And so, the departure was again hindered. This held out until 1950.

Until then, Haralambos was one of the leading members of the Old Calendarist movement. He had a lot of zeal; however, he also had

discernment to recognise limits.

The ever-memorable Elder related the following story:

<<When we separated from the official Church because it followed the new calendar, we encountered a very serious problem. We were leaderless. Many clergy joined the Old Calendarists. Some priests from the Holy Mountain also came down. However, we didn't have a bishop. In 1935, the Bishop of Florina, Chrysostom, left the official Church and joined us.

This was hailed with great joy. However, there was dissension among the ranks of the Old Calendarists. Some believed that grace was lost in the official Church along with the change of the calendar while others said that grace remained, and ours was a stance of protest.

I agreed with the latter.

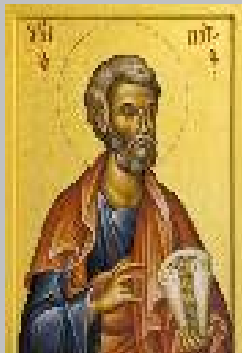
When the Bishop of Florina joined us, he believed the same as the latter group. Actually, he circulated an encyclical, from what I remember, which declared: "The Church of Greece is our Mother and we receive grace from there. However we protest and sever our responsibilities because of the change in the calendar." However, in 1950, the fanatics prevailed. We gathered for a meeting with the bishop as president. He explained and pleaded with them:

- Please, don't take an extreme position. Listen to me and I promise that we will win the struggle. I was a bishop with the new calendar for 10 years. If I support the view that grace has been lost from the New Calendarists then I don't have grace either. I am a pseudo-bishop.

The fanatics took no notice. They answered:

- You are a bishop. You have grace because you are an Old Calendarist.

However, the New Calendarists don't have grace to have [proper Sacraments](#).



I too tried to argue with them, but I saw nothing would come of it, only misunderstanding and confusion. They finally forced Chrysostom, as president, to sign an encyclical that the official Church of Greece, by following the new calendar, had automatically become heretical and lost grace. The bishop is believed to have said, "I signed that which I don't believe". But [he signed](#).



As soon as the encyclical reached my hands I was so upset, I wept whole-heartedly. I was so disheartened I said to myself, "Oh, you wretch. God called you to the angelic life and you stayed to save the world. And here are the results. Go to your destination, as quickly as possible, lest you suddenly die and find you have been unfaithful to the promise you made to God." >>

Despite the disagreement of the bishop, the Old Calendarists released the infamous encyclical of 1950 with which they declared the Church of the new calendar heretical and divorced from grace. Haralambos, disheartened by the outcome of the struggle, could no longer be held back by anything. He said goodbye to his relatives and quickly went to Little St. Anne on Athos to meet his godfather and uncle.

And we leave the memory of the life of this holy father at this point.

For more details, the reader is advised to read his biography, life and miracles, as that was written by his spiritual son Monk Joseph Dionysiatis who lived with him for 35 years ("Abbot Haralambos Dionysiatis: The teacher of noetic prayer" by Monk Joseph Dionysiatis).

ELDER PAISIOS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN ON ZEALOTISM

Let us now turn to Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain, the greatest Saintly figure in Greece of 20th century, with over 200 recorded large miracles known to have taken place by the Holy Spirit through him during his life, as well as countless others after his repose.

First let us point out that when he had gone to serve in Esfigmenou on Athos, the monastery had not yet become deluded with the Old Calendarist fanaticism known as Zealotism, as is affirmed by his biographer Hieromonk Isaac on p.86 of his biography (in Greek).

Secondly, we should perhaps remember that at times the whole of Athos stopped commemorating Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in the Liturgy (after common decision, not individually) due to his dangerous openings towards Rome.

But **how** did he do this act of his?

Not like certain Old Calendarists do by deciding to do so *unilaterally* and by claiming "I thank God every day I am not like that so-and-so heretical hierarch" (typical words of an Old Calendarist mindset) but in order to be faithful to the Holy Fathers.

And this was done with humility and love and, as he had said "I do this with great pain of heart" and had added "in order for God to cut days off my life and add them to patriarch Athenagoras, in order for him to complete his repentance". It is noteworthy that this was done due to the Ecumenist stance of Athenagoras and not due to the calendar issue which the elder did not consider related or responsible. Furthermore, the Elder stayed obedient to Athos and all the monks gathered together to take this serious decision. It was not done by some of them individually, as if they were cut off from the rest, and it was done with love and humility. It goes without saying that Athos remained canonical since it was accepted as such by all other Patriarchates.

Elder Paisios would not insurrect but always obey the Bishops of our Church and respect them. More than anything, he respected the Ecumenical throne. He understood its pan-orthodox mission and realised the difficult position where it is situated in. He respected the Ecumenical Patriarchs a lot and would defend them on a number of cases (yes, surprising it may seem to some who read certain "traditionalist" pages all the time, they also do many things right too).

It is perhaps noteworthy that Elder Paisios thought that Patriarch Demetrius was a holy man, whereas most Old Calendarists and other self-proclaimed "traditionalists" slander his name to this very day.

Unlike OCs, not wanting to show off as a "martyr to a cause" in the eyes of the whole world, he would react quietly and calmly, write, and talk towards ecclesiastical hierarchs and *not* in public.

"The Church", he used to say "is not the ship of every bishop in order for him to do whatever he wants". These reactions of his however were followed by a lot of prayer and love for the Church, but also for the deviant people, and presupposed and indeed were followed by true (Orthodox) apathy (*apatheia*), discernment and divine illumination.

Elder Paisios dealt with the Calendar issue too, something the various "traditionalist" sites on the web will always try to hide. He was hurting for the separation and would pray for healing to come. He felt sorry for the parties of the OCs which had been cut off like the removed vines off the Vineyard, and do not have communion with the Orthodox Patriarchates and the local autocephalous Orthodox Churches any more. Some such communities in Athens and Thessalonica were eventually [united back](#) to Mother Church according to his suggestion, while keeping the Old Calendar.

He would say: "It would have been good if this calendar difference did not exist, but it is not a matter of faith". In the objections that the New Calendar was done by a Pope he would reply: "The new calendar was made by a Pope and the old one by an idolater," meaning of course Julius Caesar.

In order to see the position of the Elder more clearly on the matter, the following incident is mentioned.

An Orthodox Christian who was Greek in origin had lived with his family in the USA for many years. He had a serious problem, though. He was himself a "zealot" whereas his wife and children followed the New Calendar.

"We could not celebrate a feast together like a family", he used to say.

"They would celebrate Christmas when for me it was St. Spyridon's Feast. When I had Christmas, they had St. John's. And that was the least of our problems. The worst thing was to know, as they had been teaching us, that the NCs are heretics and will be damned. It is no little thing to keep hearing that your wife and your children betrayed their faith, went with the Pope's side, their mysteries have no grace *etc.* We would talk for hours on end without coming to a conclusion. But to say the truth, there was something I did not like with the OCs too, especially when some of our bishops would come to talk to us. They were not talking with love and pain in their heart for the deceived New Calendarists (as they considered them to be). But it was as if they had hatred and were happy when they would proclaim that the New Calendarists would go to hell. They were very fanatical. But when their speech would end, I would feel inside me an internal agitation. I was losing my peace. But I would not even think of leaving our tradition. I was greatly distressed with the whole issue. Surely something would happen to me from the constant worry.



In one of my travels to Greece I mentioned my problem to my cousin Yianni [John]. He told me about some elder Paisios. We decided to go to the Holy Mountain, in order for me to meet with him.

We arrived at "Panagouda" [where the Elder resided]. The Elder offered us the usual *kerasma* [traditional offering of *raki*, Byzantine coffee or *loukoumi*

to the weary traveller] that is traditional on Athos and with a smiling face made me sit next to him. I felt at a loss with his behaviour. I felt that, as he was acting as if he had known me forever, he also knew all about me.

- How are things going there with the cars, in America?, were his first words.

I was taken aback. I had forgotten to mention that my job was at parking lots, and of course I was dealing with cars all day long.

- I'm doing well, was the only thing I could falter, looking at the Elder with surprise in my eyes.

- How many churches do you have there where you live?

- Four, I replied and a new wave of surprise came over me.

- With the old or with the new [calendar]? , came the third "thunderbolt" which, however, instead of increasing my surprise, somehow made me feel more at ease with the Elder's charisma.

- Two with the old and two with the new, I replied.

- Which one do you follow?

- I with the old, my wife with the new, I replied.

- Look. You should go where your wife goes, he told me with firmness, and was preparing to give me explanations.

But for me the matter was already closed. I did not need more explanations or arguments. Something unbelievable had happened inside me; something divine. All the arguments and all the threats and anathemas against the new calendarists that I would hear for years now had vanished from the depths of my soul. I felt the grace of God who through His Saint [the Elder] was acting on me and filling me with a peace that I had long longed for.

My internal situation was evidently seen through my eyes . . .

What I do remember is that this made the Elder pause for a little. But then he continued to give me some explanations. Perhaps for me to tell others, and also so that I could use them in a time of temptation, when that divine situation would come to pass.

- We too of course follow the old [calendar] on Athos. But this is a different situation. We are united with the Church, with all the Patriarchates, both of the New and of the Old Style. We recognise their mysteries as valid and they recognise ours. Their priests co-officiate with our priests. Whereas these poor folk [the OCs] were cut off. Most of them have piety, accuracy [in following the canons] and a fighting spirit and [a true] zeal of God. Others due to simplicity, others due to lack of knowledge, and others due to selfishness though, went astray. They considered the 13 days as a dogmatic issue and all of us deceived, and thus left the Church. They do not have communion with the Patriarchates and the Old Style Churches because these supposedly became contaminated through their communion with the new calendarists. And this is not the only thing. Even those few that have remained [as OCs in Greece], have become ... even I don't know how many pieces! And they keep being cut off into smaller pieces all the time and they keep anathematising each other, excommunicating each other and defrocking each other.

[*Our parenthesis:* Elder Dionysius the Ayiannanites related to me a story once about a little old lady who was too old to know anything about these issues. One of her siblings wanted to take her to the local "true church" so the sibling took her to an OC group which turned out to be ... the wrong one. Then a second and finally, the third time, they managed to find the ... true group, where they ushered in the poor woman! The Elder then smiled sadly and told me that, "OK, I understand that they are zealotists, but this way they are going too far". We continue with our story now.]

- You do not know how much I have grieved and been saddened by this situation. It is important that we show love towards them and feel for them and not to condemn them; and more importantly, for us to pray for them so that God illumines them, and, if once in a while one of them asks help from us in a good-natured manner, we could say a word or two, the Elder concluded.

More than five years passed since the Elder's repose. Mr. X. returned to "Panagouda" to thank the Elder, because after that time when he first met him, he found his spiritual but also familial happiness, and with tears in his eyes described the above events to Hieromonk Isaac, the Elder's biographer, recorded for the reader (in Greek) on p.696 of the Elder's biography.

It is perhaps of pastoral importance to also add the Elder's discernment on other issues that scandalize the faithful, especially in the Diaspora.

An Orthodox cleric from abroad [not in Greece] placed a difficult situation in front of the Elder. His Bishop had constructed underneath the temple, halls for dancing and other non-traditional events. The Orthodox Christians were not happy with the situation and would go to a schismatic Church instead. The Elder's reply was:

"If you want to help the people you must not relax in your Bishop's actions. If you do that, then you succeed in people leaving from the Church. I do not ask that you stop being in communion with him [*our note*: as the OCs would do immediately!] and thus form a schism [*our note again*: St. John Chrysostom says that to cause a schism is an unpardonable sin], nor to speak in public against him; but nor must you praise him."

With his love, prayer and discernment, the Elder knew when to speak, how to act, and how to help Mother Church quietly, avoiding extremisms and healing the wounds that torment the body of the Church and scandalize some faithful.

Let us now turn to another former "zealot" who realised his error, and a saintly figure of our Church.

THE WITNESS OF THE RENOWNED ELDER OF ATHOS AND EX-ZEALOT, EPHRAIM OF KATOUNAKIA

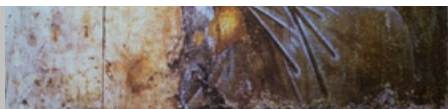
(Official biography of the Elder, by Holy Hesychasterion "St. Ephraim", *Katounakia, Mount Athos*; p.56, *English edition*)

Amongst the greatest achievements of our elders was their position on the matter of Zealotism, which, being a new issue was prominent at that time.

From 1924 and on, the New Calendar entered the life of the Church. The



Holy Mountain, for reasons of tradition, maintained the use of the Old Calendar, but without cutting spiritual contact with and dependence on the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and, therefore, on all Orthodox Churches. Some of the monks on Athos, self-proclaimed "Zealots", cut all spiritual communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the rest of the monasteries on the Holy Mountain; they neither participate in Liturgies nor in feasts and have no ecclesiastical communion with the rest of the fathers [on



Athos].

Katounakia was one of the centres of the Zealots. The Elder, coming from an Old Calendarist family, stayed with the brotherhood of St. Ephraim's hut, where the elders were Zealots.

When he met Elder Joseph, both of them, motivated by spiritual zeal, joined the extreme party of the Matthaïans [one of the OC groups]. The reason for this decision was that the leader of the moderate party of the Florinians [an OC group], bishop Chrysostom Kavourides, accepted the mysteries of the New Calendarists (namely, of the official Church). They sent him a written renunciation, in which they accused him of being a New Calendarist since he accepted their sacraments.

One day, fr. Bartholomew, who was a Florinian, visited Elder Joseph and tried to talk to him about the zealots. Elder Joseph refused to enter into any conversation on the matter and said: "Drop this subject, otherwise we will exchange harsh words and regret them!" The other monk insisted and Elder Joseph irritated, used sharp words against him.

Afterwards, when he went back to his cell to rest, he realised that the devil had gained some power over him. Something was wrong. He struggled through prayer and when he found peace he went to bed to rest. He had an ominous dream: He was on a small rock in the middle of the sea. The waves were moving the rock back and forth. He wondered how he got on that dangerous spot, when just a short distance away was the age-old mountain. So, he thought, he should jump towards the mountain as soon as the small rock approached it. This way he could be saved, otherwise, sooner or later, the waves would carry both him and the rock away. Indeed, given the first chance, he jumped and found himself standing on solid ground. "Glory to God!" he said and woke up.

Father Ephraim also heard a voice while praying, about this subject: "In the person of the bishop of Florina you renounced the whole Church." Thus, they asked for forgiveness and rejoined the Florinians.

On another occasion, while praying, he heard: "You are subject to the Patriarchate, not the bishop of Florina." He was left speechless. He did not believe these words for he was sure it was delusion. Later on, after being informed by God, they joined the Church and their souls found peace.

Father Nicephoros slightly reacted, but the Elder could not bear to be separated from elder Joseph so he put pressure on him and they all joined

the Church. In 1952, they went to the neighbouring brotherhood of Danielaioi to celebrate Pascha. The fathers welcomed them with much love: "Welcome, welcome. Elder, please take the *stasidion* [chair in church reserved for the elders]. Father Ephraim, please come and celebrate the Liturgy for us." Danielaioi chanted the hymn "*Theotoke Parthene*" (O Virgin Theotokos) on the soleas and I, standing in the sanctuary, could almost see the Mother of God; so great and so tangible was the grace I was feeling, the Elder confessed with nostalgia.

But Father Nicephoros, accustomed to their zealot neighbours, started grumbling and getting very upset. The Elder found himself in a difficult position. While praying, he felt that the will of God opposed him. He was frightened then. He consulted Elder Gabriel, the Abbot at the monastery of Dionysiou, as well as Father Gerasimos, the hymnographer. They told him: "My brother, obey your spiritual father." In prayer it was even harder. He felt that God had imposed a penance on him. The dilemma was whether to maintain obedience or follow the Church. He was forced to choose the first option, which made us realise that obedience is fundamental to the Church; for the divine founder of the Church "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death --- even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8).

Then, he went through a crisis of conscience of another kind. He, who had been informed that he was subject to the Patriarchate, and that the word "Church" means love which he found in the warm behaviour of Danielaioi; he whose heart leapt for joy when he said the word "Church" like a child's heart leaps when it needs its mother's hug; he who considered Elder Joseph and his brotherhood his own beloved family; how could he now abandon them? Fortunately, these doubts lasted only a few days. He then thought: "In spirit I will always be with the Church, but with my body I will be with the Zealots for a while, as long as my elder is alive."

Thus he made peace with himself. He waited patiently until 1975, *i.e.* for 23 years. He never gave anyone the right to criticise him. When he finally established his own brotherhood, **he left the Zealots forever** with great humility.

And finally a list of suggestions for our readers. We hope the following words will speak better to you being the enlightened words of Elder Paisios.

ELDER PAISIOS' COUNSELS

(from his **Epistles**, p.42)

"Do not read rebellious books or pamphlets that mention Church matters if you wish to be calm, since you are not responsible for such serious affairs. You have need of books that will assist you in your repentance. If you want to help the Church, correct yourself and immediately amendment is made to a small part of the Church. Naturally, if everyone did this, then the Church would be put in order.

Therefore, limit yourself to the Patristic writings I mentioned [*viz. The Lives of the Saints, the Gerontikon or the entire Evergetinos, the Ladder of Divine Ascent, Unseen Warfare, St. Ephraim and Lausiac History, and Abba Isaac the Syrian for the advanced*] and avoid sappy and superficial books by contemporary writers, who use long titles to provoke spiritual interests. One gets tired only by reading them, just like the cow, when its stall is full of straw, tires of chewing and ruminating food all day long, and in the end does not produce even one glass of milk."

p.134

"Unfortunately in our day, words and books have multiplied and experiences diminished, because the worldly spirit, which pursues all conveniences and avoids all bodily effort, influences people. Most of us find rest in much reading but little or no implementation. We simply marvel at the holy athletes of our Church without realising how much they laboured, for we have not toiled so as to be able to understand their toil, to love them and to struggle out of [philotimo](#) in order to imitate them.

Those, however, who struggle with [philotimo](#) and do not give themselves to rest, removing their ego from every one of their actions, help very positively. For, only then are the souls in need of help given rest, and only then will their own souls find inner rest, in this life as well as in eternity.

Those who pursue power while being overpowered by passions, who pass off their personal interests as spiritual, and who resort to worldly authorities in order to solve their ecclesiastical problems are left abandoned by the Grace of God.

Don't let the devil fool you with the words "I appeal unto Caesar" (Acts 25:11) because Apostle Paul was submitted to Caesar's authority, and since God had previously informed him that he would preach Christ in Rome as well, he asked Caesar to transport him to Rome (to pay his way).

When someone tries to settle ecclesiastical matters in an Orthodox way, but his goal is to better establish himself, how can he be blessed by God?

Neither should anyone be impressed by those who settle ecclesiastical matters exceptionally well - even "orthodoxically" - if these same people are not well situated in the life of the Church, but rather trouble Her with imprudent excessiveness [*our note*: read "traditionalism"] or frivolity [*our note*: read "ecumenist tendencies" and "modernism"].

The two extremes always weary Mother Church, as well as those who hold to them, because the two extremes as a rule stab one another. In other words, it is as if the one extreme is held by a possessed man who is spiritually insolent (and feels contempt for everything), and the other extreme is held by a madman who is childishly zealous with narrow-mindedness. God forbid - these two ends could strike at one another continually and "an end to it all" no one will find.

Those who will be able to bend these two extremes and make them unite will be crowned by Christ with two imperishable crowns.

We should neither create problems in the Church nor magnify the minor human disorders that occur, so as not to create greater evil and the wicked one rejoice.

He who is irritated about a minor disorder and abruptly rushes to ostensibly correct it (with vehemence and petulance) resembles the light-headed sacristan who sees a candle dripping and abruptly dashes to fix it, stumbling over people and candlesticks, and thus causing an even greater disorder during the Divine Service.

Unfortunately, in our day, there are many who weary Mother Church. Among these, those who are educated have grasped the dogma with their mind and not with the spirit of the Holy Fathers. Others, who are unlearned, have grasped the dogma with their teeth, which explains why they grate their teeth when discussing ecclesiastical themes. Hence it is that they cause more serious harm to the Church than the enemies of our Orthodoxy.

There are people who justify their wickedness by examining others and not themselves, or by publicizing predicaments of the Church to the world - even things that should not be said in public -- using as a pretext the "tell it unto the church" (Mt. 8:17) of the Gospel. Let them do this first for their small church, their family, or their brotherhood [of monastics]; if they think this is good, let them then disgrace Mother Church as well. Good children, I believe never accuse their mothers. Unfortunately, however, many inconsiderate people offer a wealth of live ammunition to heretics, enabling

Jehovah's witnesses and other heretics to seize Orthodox cities and villages and expand their missionary work.

It is well known to discerning spiritual Fathers that this demonic practice (namely, deriding the clergy and the Church) has turned many people into Jehovah's witnesses. It is also known to the whole world that not even one Jehovah's Witness has become Orthodox in this unorthodox way.

The Good God, on the other hand, endures us lovingly without ridiculing anyone, even though, as the Beholder of hearts, He knows our pitiful state well. The same thing applies to Saints who never insulted a sinful person in the presence of others, but with love, spiritual nobility, and in a hidden way, helped in the correction of the evil. We, notwithstanding that we are sinners, do the opposite (like hypocrites).

Only a man possessed by a demon is justified to mock people in the presence of others and tell them about their past (in as many as the demon has rights, of course). The unclean spirit, naturally, does not reveal people's virtues, but only their weaknesses. Those who are liberated from their passions however, since they no longer possess wickedness, correct the evil by their kindness. If sometimes they see a little uncleanness that is not easily cleaned, they cover it up with a plate, in order for the others who might see it not to be disgusted by it. Those, on the contrary, who reinvestigate the rubbish, resemble scavengers.

An honest and straightforward person is neither he who speaks the truth to your face, nor he who publicizes it, but rather such a one is the person who has love, lives a true life, and speaks with discernment, when he should, saying the right words at the right time.

Those who admonish others without discernment are spiritually darkened and hardened and haplessly view people as lifeless logs. And, although they hack at them unmercifully, and the people suffer, they rejoice over the "rectangle" they've made out of their lifeless logs (cubism!)

[...]

Of greater value is one word of a humble man, who has spiritual experience, than a whole array of learned words from a superficial man, coming with great speed from his learned tongue. His tongue does not enlighten souls for it is fleshly and not that fiery tongue of Holy Pentecost.

PAPA-DIMITRI'S (THE MAN OF GOD) TESTIMONY AND MIRACULOUS EXPERIENCE

(The Amazing Life of Papa-Dimitri, the Man of God, original book by Orthodoxos Kypseli, revised translation by D. Kagaris, [Orthodox Witness](#) publications 2009, p.96)

How do the Old-Calendarists say that our sacraments are invalid? In 1947, while ministering to the Blessing-of-the-Water Service, I was chanting "Great are You, O Lord, and marvellous are Your works" when steamy smoke rose up out of the bowl; the water in it had become heated. Even within the cups held by pious parishioners, the water also became heated. How then do they say that our sacraments are invalid?

How can God work miracles in accordance with the New Calendar if it is not right? **How, then, has it been possible for Saint Bessarion's miracle to have happened in the village of Dousikon?** This is sufficient to show us that the right faith, love, and keeping of the commandments play an important role in the sanctification of man. Nothing else counts.

I wrote to **Fr. Philotheos Zervakos** and he **responded to me correctly about this matter**. I too, the unlearned one, believe from my life experience, that thirteen days can neither cast you out from nor place you into the Kingdom of God. **I also asked [the Archangels](#) about this issue and they told me: "Stay where you are".**

ELDER PORPHYRIOS' COUNSELS

(Constantine Yannitsiotis; **With Elder Porphyrios: a spiritual child remembers**, p.97)

One morning I [Constantine Yannitsiotis, spiritual child of Elder Porphyrios] arrived at the Elder's yard, with some company of mine. I made out an acquaintance of mine, at a distance. He was quite a zealot and a strict Christian. I approached him and he was glad to see me suddenly before him. We said various things about the Elder, and I started to hear him say: "Some people come to the Elder who are totally out of touch and they tire him out unfairly. See! Look over there, that lady, who's smoking without shame. I really do wonder how the Elder is willing to see her." I bit my tongue as the lady was part of my company and the acquaintance of mine did not know this. I chose to keep silent and not put my acquaintance in a difficult position. The Elder, however, was not so quiet. When his turn came, and he went into the Elder's cell, before me, the first words heard from his lips were "You know I'm not strict like you". When the lady left the Elder's cell she informed me of what he had told her, rounding off his advice saying: "Your struggle for your sanctification should begin by

quitting smoking". The Elder found the most suitable medicine for both the critic and the criticized.

A CONCLUSION

I who write these words to you, dear reader, was away from the Church for many years, even though I had been baptised as an Orthodox when I was an infant. I did not change my life by reading all the words you read on the website, which are placed for some help for the heterodox and especially the Orthodox who are confused about the faith and want simple straightforward words on issues of the Faith.

I began to understand them later on, together with those I read in the Holy Fathers and the Bible, only after I began to make a small effort by myself. But the change came in my heart through my own choice but also through looking at the eyes of a contemporary saintly figure of our Church on Athos, whom I am blessed to have now a spiritual father and guide, who changed me by not uttering a single word: just by the light in his eyes.



Since then, I have seen numerous Elders on Athos and outside in Chalkidiki, charismatic, clairvoyant, transmitters of divine happiness and miracle-workers, but first and foremost Orthodox witnesses to our Orthodox Christ and His Body. These have always explained to me that the division over the Calendar issue, an insignificant issue by itself, was caused by the excessive zealotism, selfishness (wanting to be at the forefront of the news) and the stubbornness of certain hierarchs and laity who maintained extremism as their substitute for genuine Orthodox mentality in their lives.

Many have returned to Mother Church and a few of them are still around, good-willing people in deceit, and with our prayers we hope that they will return to the Body of Christ. Until then we have an obligation to point out that Old Calendarist sympathiser sites include some material that is not in accordance with the spirit of the Church but present distorted views and more importantly that the thing that truly matters is for you the reader to **leave the Internet** and to learn to live the life taught by the Elders.

[Let us not fall into an excessive zeal](#) or "ecumenistic" mind. Let us stay

humble and work on our old self, so the new can emerge and a bright lamp will then help the people around us whereas our prayers will have more power because we will have more outspokenness in front of God. Otherwise we might figure out the full political implications of the Ecumenical Movement and the Calendar Issue in the emerging century and lose our soul.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers and the Theotokos in XC

The Web Administration

Eastern-Orthodoxy.Com



FOOTNOTES

proper sacraments = This prudent and wise hierarch had realised that, apart from the declared Old Calendarists, the overwhelming majority of the nation, during that period, inclined towards the old calendar. It would have been inevitable for the official Church not to return to the old calendar if, with a conservative and wise stance, the leaders of the Old Calendarists had extracted the majority of the Orthodox flock. However, the fanaticism, egoism, ambitions, and division of the leaders resulted in completely the opposite.

he signed = This encyclical was released on 13(26) March 1950.

the Archangels = His life-long protectors that he would often converse with, as he would serve in a temple dedicated to them and had a particular affinity with them.

united back = We consider these groups as Old Style Orthodox Christians who are under the jurisdiction of the Church of Greece and not as Old Calendarist; in the way we have used the term all along, in order to be consistent with our definition and not provide an unintentional clouding of issues. Furthermore, since we are talking about terminology, we need to underline that Athonite monks refer to the New Calendar as "Papic" because it is essentially the same as the Gregorian Calendar from a calendarist point of view; and *not* because they identify it with malice and ignorance to be identical to it, which is the main cause of Old Calendarists

who try to prove it is a dogmatic issue. Other Old Calendarists or some ROCA sympathizers (even priests) will often claim that they do not consider it a dogmatic issue but they still avoid co-officiating with New Calendarists! Yet that is *not* the official position on Athos, as evidenced by the fact that all elders write letters to their spiritual children under the "New Calendarist" State Church of Greece using the format "Date: OC = NC . Dear John, ... ". Notice the equal sign that they use to confess to everyone that there is no issue and that the two are the same. Of course, they would prefer if there was no calendar issue to start with, but that is something we all agree with!

philotimo = According to Elder Paisios, it is the reverent distillation of goodness, the love shown by humble people, from which every trace of self has been filtered out. Their hearts are full of gratitude towards God and to their fellow men, and out of spiritual sensitivity, they try to repay the slightest good which others do for them.

excessive zeal = Instead of losing your breath, dear reader, in long discussions with people affected by modernism, there are many things you can do if you really want to fight such issues in Diaspora parishes or wherever else the need may arise to work to reduce levels of "spiritual immaturity". Some of the people we know of, and who help this site on occasion from the Diaspora where they live, have had the opportunity to be in areas where at least one very pious Orthodox community exists. All however agreed to visit more "modernist" communities in order to support the priests and lay who are fighting the secular spirit through prayer and their example but need more help, as they are few.

Already, some people have reported that many Orthodox "modernists" following their example, learn to come earlier to Matins, to stand up for longer during services, to pray for longer. When people begin to taste the "honey" of Paradise, when they stand witness to the miraculous wisdom of the Church through the ages, they stop being modernist. They stop trying to explain their slackness through scholastic works, they stop trying to find excuses for their deviation, and eventually they return to the sanctified words of the Fathers (contemporary and ancient) who wrote about these situations that they lived. Through our prayers for them, that allow God to work inside their soul, and through our example, that allows them to have at least one example of the living experience of the Fathers they read, they change. Whereas when they have no one to bring an example to them (for Orthodoxy is imitation, above all) what can the poor people do but stay sadly frustrated?

Maybe you too can help these communities; *first* by your prayerful example and *then* by your words, which must be followed by discernment.

Alternatively, if the parish nearest to you is modernist -- and, while *you* may be happy to help the parish itself, you feel however that it may not serve your family or other friends so well, or due to other personal reasons (perhaps you cannot take up this Cross), then at least make sure that you find another more pious parish *that is canonical*. Do not end up in a schismatic parish by mistake! If you cannot find a pious community in your vicinity *do not* change parish, even if you do not like it much, for the mysteries must be proper. And it is through these that we are saved. Christ will judge the deviations of others and He will also help these issues, do not doubt this for one second.

For it matters not how the tap looks on the outside (to bring our older example from the Eucharist Chapter [here](#)), as what we truly need is to quench our thirst; and this we can do if we manage to turn it on for the Living Water to pour out for us to drink. Yet a tap that is made of precious gold and is adorned by majestic art is of no use if it is stuck or if we turn it on only to find out that the Living Water does not run through it; for then we eventually die of thirst.

.

.





