

THE KALLINIKITE UNIA

*He who joins hands with the unrighteous will not go unpunished...
He who judges the unrighteous as righteous, and the righteous as unrighteous,
He is unclean and abominable before God.
Proverbs 11.20, 17.6.*

The devil, they say, is in the details. This must surely be true even more of ecclesiastical unions than of business agreements; for the devil is much more interested in the Church, which he does not control, than in business, which is largely his domain. But could God be in the overall conception, or could He be bringing a large good out of, or in spite of, many smaller evils? After all, “all things work together for those who love God” (Romans 8.28)... Let us explore these possibilities in relation to the ecclesiastical union sealed through liturgical concelebration on the Sunday of the Holy Cross this year between the True Orthodox Church of Greece led by Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens (GTOC) and the Ecclesiastical Community of the Synod in Resistance (otherwise known as “the Cyprianites”) together with the Romanian, Bulgarian and Russian Churches that are in communion with the latter.

All those who sincerely believe in True Orthodoxy know that one of the greatest obstacles to the salvation of men, to their joining the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, is our disunity. The multitude of jurisdictions calling themselves True Orthodox but not in communion with each other is a scandal – and it is small comfort to know that this is far from being the first period of such chaos and disunity in Orthodox Church history. As a rule, where there is no Orthodox emperor acting as a focus of unity, heresy becomes dominant and the True Orthodox are divided among themselves...

Unias between True Orthodox Synods in our time have usually been short-lived and highly controversial. In 1969-71 the Russian Church Abroad under St. Philaret united with the Greek Old Calendarist Synods of the Florinites under Archbishop Auxentius (first) and the Matthewites under Archbishop Andreas (a little later). But this unia broke up in mutual recrimination between all three groups less than a decade later. In 1994 another attempt was made: the Russian Church Abroad under Metropolitan Vitaly, the Greek Old Calendarists under Metropolitan Vitaly, the Romanian Old Calendarists under Metropolitan Vlasie and the Bulgarian Old Calendarists under Bishop Photius united on the basis of a “Cyprianite” confession of faith, which contradicted the confession of faith both of the Florinites and of the Matthewites (which is why they were not part of it) and of the Russian Church Abroad (as expressed in the anathema against ecumenism of 1983).

In 2001 the Russian Church Abroad divided. One part under Metropolitan Vitaly (outside Russia; there were other leaders inside Russia) rejected the Cyprianite confession and unia, but then split up into three or four warring synods. The other part under Metropolitan Laurus eventually united with the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007.

The Greek Cyprianites, and Romanian and Bulgarian Old Calendarists remained together, but reunited with one of the Russian bishops, Agathangel, who had refused to join the unia with the MP. Although Agathangel had been the last bishop to leave the sinking ship of the Russian Church Abroad, he refused to join the other Russian bishops who had jumped ship earlier. In fact, he considered himself to be the only completely canonical Russian bishop. All the Russian True Orthodox bishops, in his opinion, were and are graceless. As for the Moscow Patriarchate, while condemning it, he refused to say that *it* was graceless. Since he did not want to remain on his own, however, and wanted to create his own hierarchy, he was looking for a partner. The Cyprianites obliged, and so the Agathangelite hierarchy came into being.

In 2009 the Cyprianites entered into negotiations for union with the Florinites under Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kiouisis). The union talks failed, but the Cyprianites made some significant concessions. In particular, they agreed that their break with the Florinites in 1986 had been “hasty” – in other words, *wrong*, that the new calendarist church of Greece was not their “mother church”, and that they would no longer talk about heretics being “ailing members” of the True Church.¹

In 2010 Archbishop Chrysostomos died, being replaced by Archbishop Kallinikos, and then Metropolitan Cyprian also died. Then the Cyprianites decided to make a second attempt at union with the Florinites. (Or did the Florinites take the initiative? We don't know). Last week agreement was reached between the Greek TOC and the Cyprianites with their allies from Romania (Metropolitan Vlasie), Bulgaria (Bishop Photius) and Russia (Metropolitan Agathangel); and on the Sunday of the Holy Cross the uniates concelebrated the Divine Liturgy in Athens.

In almost all political unions, there is a signed treaty for everyone to see, and then there are secret clauses, which may or not be written down... Again, in almost all political unions, there is the supposed “great joy and victory for everyone”, and then there are the real winners and losers. It shouldn't be like that with ecclesiastical unions, in which even those who submit and repent have truly triumphed – by saving their souls. But in false unias there are real winners and losers. Or rather: in the long term everybody in the unia is in fact a loser...

Let us see who the real winners and losers are in this false unia. Already in February, when it looked as if the unia would go ahead, the Cyprianite Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna declared, on the one hand, that there would be no winners or losers in this unia (“foolish and evil prattle” was his name for this “inappropriate triumphalism”), and on the other hand that they (the Cyprianites) were not required to abandon any of their principles as a result of the unia. “*Be assured,*” he writes, “*that none of our principles, none of our moderation, and none of the spirit bequeathed to us by our late and venerable Metropolitan Cyprian have been set aside, as some naysayers have suggested.*” But since the principles of the Cyprianite ecclesiology are false, this means that no repentance for their errors was required from the Cyprianites!

¹ See “The Cessation of Informal Dialogue”, <http://www.synodinresistance.org/pdfs/2009/06/02/20090602aCessationofDialogue%20Folder/20090602aCessationofDialogue.pdf>.

Chrysostomos himself gains much from this unia. Not having been required to renounce his errors, he can repeat them. Nor is it likely that he will be brought to order: according to the administrative arrangement agreed upon, he is a metropolitan not subject to the senior hierarch in America, Metropolitan Demetrius of America!

On March 7/20, just after the unia had been signed, the senior Cyprianite hierarch, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos (the younger), confirmed the victory of the Cyprianites. *“The Official Dialogue (December 2012-February 2014) led us to the realization that our Act of walling ourselves off in 1984 from our True Orthodox brethren should be abrogated, since the reasons of faith and righteousness that then provoked it no longer exist.”* In other words: “In 1984, we broke communion with the TOC for perfectly valid ‘reasons of faith and righteousness’. But now those reasons no longer exist, the TOC have corrected themselves, so we can go back into communion with them.”

This is, in effect, a retraction by the Cyprianites of their admission in 2009 that they had been “hasty” in breaking with the GTOC in 1984: in fact, it implicitly accuses the GTOC of causing the schism. Moreover, none of the other concessions they made in 2009 are confirmed now, in 2014. In reality, as we shall see later, it is the True Orthodox Church of Greece that has made the concessions.

How is it that the two Cyprianite metropolitans can be so bold, basically reaffirming their loyalty to the ecclesiological heresy of Cyprianism, even after the union with the GTOC has been signed? The answer is that *they were not asked to renounce their heresy* – in public, at any rate. Of course, we do not know what went on behind closed doors, or what was contained in the secret clauses of the agreement, if such existed. But even if they were asked to renounce certain positions in private (of which, however, we have no evidence), it is obvious that they have no inhibitions about renouncing any such renunciation in public. Nor – most significantly and fatefully – have the TOC hierarchs rebuked them in any way...

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But what about the official joint confession of faith, the Common Ecclesiological Statement, which all parties signed? Does that not contain the renunciation of any Cyprianite position? As we shall see, it does not... Nor is this surprising since it was in fact written by a Cyprianite, Bishop Photius of Triaditsa (Bulgaria)!... What it does contain is a highly rhetorical condemnation of Ecumenism; a more sober and useful condemnation of Sergianism; and a significant weakening of the True Orthodox position with regard to the validity of the sacraments of the “World Orthodox”.

Before examining this Statement, let us remind ourselves what Cyprianism is in essence. Cyprianism is a hidden form of Ecumenism, an attempt, unheard of in the writings of the Holy Fathers, to separate grace (blagodatnost') from Orthodoxy (pravoslavnost'), as if the one could exist without the other. It supposes that it is possible to be a “heretic of heretics”, and a “pan-heretic of pan-heretics”, and yet remain an “uncondemned” member of the True Church having the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Cyprianism has already been condemned by several Greek and Russian Synods. This Statement could and should have given it the final death-blow...

The Statement's section on Ecumenism begins thus: "**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**". Point taken! With such sturm und drang, we cannot accuse the signatories of this confession of being ambiguous or tepid about ecumenism!

Nor about sergianism – the section on that subject is good and especially welcome in view of the fact that Greek Synods very rarely mention the subject. In fact it corrects one of the lesser-known errors of the Cyprianite ecclesiology, its affirmation that Sergianism "no longer exists". For on May 10/23, 2007 the Cyprianite Synod declared that "the historical basis and occasion for the rift among the Russians (1917-) has been removed and no longer exists. It is quite different from the dispute which divided, and continues to divide – since it still exists and is, indeed, reinforced daily, – the Orthodox into *ecumenists and resisters (1920, 1924-)*."(point 9) Perhaps the correction of the Cyprianite position here is owing to the fact that the confession was written by a Bulgarian bishop who knows from experience what communism and its evil effects on church life are. In any case, this section of the confession is to be welcomed as constituting probably its most useful part.

But then we come to the section on the "Return to True Orthodoxy". The first four points are fine:

"1. 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*.

"2. 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**.

"3. 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.

"4. 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."

This is good. But now we come to point 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**, in particular for those who commune "**knowingly**" [wittingly] with syncretistic ecumenism and *Sergianism*, even though She does not in any instance repeat their form for those

entering into communion with Her in repentance, having in mind the convocation of a Major Synod of True Orthodoxy, in order to place a seal on what has already occurred at a local level.”²

This is pure Cyprianism! The signatories are saying in effect: “Although the World Orthodox are heretics, we don’t know whether their sacraments are valid or not.” But this “agnosticism” contradicts Apostolic Canon 46, which insists that the sacraments of all heretics and schismatics are *definitely invalid*. It also contradicts the confession of faith of the True Orthodox Church of Greece in 1935, 1950, 1974 and 1991! Moreover, the anathema of the Russian Church Abroad specifically *anathematizes* those who affirm that the sacraments of heretics and schismatics may be valid. In 1994, at the time of the Russian Church Abroad’s acceptance of the Cyprianite ecclesiology, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) affirmed that she had fallen under her own anathema. This present point, although more veiled, and camouflaged, as it were, by the much stronger points that precede it, comes perilously close to the same position.

So the devil is definitely in this detail. Moreover, there are other dubious details. Point six appears to be asserting (although not very clearly) that whether or not the sacraments of a World Orthodox church are valid depends on whether the person who approaches them *knows* about the heresy that church confesses. However, this is to confuse the objective *validity* of the sacrament in a heretical church with the subjective *degree of guilt* of the communicant in that church. Apostolic canon 46 quite categorically declares that the sacraments of heretics are invalid, and makes no qualifications with regard to the worthiness or knowledge of the communicant. Of course, the guilt of the communicant in a heretical church will be greater or lesser depending on many things, including his knowledge of the hereticalness of that church. But this in no way affects our judgement as to whether the sacrament itself is valid or not. If, as the Cyprianites admit, the World Orthodox are heretics, then ipso facto their sacraments are invalid, and he who denies this comes under the penalty prescribed by the canon.

Another dubious detail is the phrase: “bearing in mind the convocation of a Major Synod of True Orthodoxy, in order to place a seal on what has already occurred at a local level.” What the Cyprianites – with the acquiescence of the TOC – are here trying to assert is their old error, the idea that the Councils that have so far condemned Ecumenism and Sergianism were only Local Councils that did not have the authority to expel heretics from the Church. Only a Pan-Orthodox or Ecumenical Council, according to the Cyprianites, can do that. And until the convening of such a “Major” Council in order to “seal” the decision of a Local Council, the heretics remain “uncondemned”...³

2 For those who read Greek we provide the original Greek text for greater clarification: “Εἰδικώτερον περὶ τῶν Μυστηρίων τῶν τελουμένων εἰς τὰς λεγομένας ἐπισήμους ὀρθοδόξους Ἐκκλησίας, ἡ Γνησία Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία δὲν διαβεβαιοῖ περὶ τοῦ κύρους αὐτῶν, οὔτε καὶ περὶ τῆς σωτηριολογικῆς ἀποτελεσματικότητος τούτων, ἰδίως εἰς ὅσους κοινωνοῦν «ἐν γνώσει» μετὰ τοῦ συγκρητιστικοῦ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ, ὡς καὶ τοῦ Σεργιανισμοῦ, ἔστω καὶ ἂν Αὕτη δὲν ἐπαναλαμβάνῃ ὅπωςδὴποτε τὸν τύπον αὐτῶν εἰς τοὺς ἐν μετανοίᾳ εἰσερχομένους εἰς κοινωνίαν μετ’ Αὐτῆς, ἐν ᾧ μάλιστα τῆς συγκλήσεως μιᾶς Μεγάλῃς Συνόδου τῆς Γνησίας Ὀρθοδοξίας, εἰς ἐπισφράγισιν τῶν ἤδη γενομένων εἰς τοπικὸν ἐπίπεδον.”

3 The present writer has analysed and refuted this position in detail here:
<http://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/263/-condemnation-heretics/>

This idea was first developed by Metropolitan Cyprian (the elder) in 1984, in his notorious *Ecclesiological Theses*. The unspoken aim of these *Theses* was clearly to undermine the authority of the Russian Church Abroad's anathema against ecumenism the previous year. By hook or by crook, Cyprian was determined to demonstrate that the anathema did not say what it clearly *did* say: that all the ecumenists of World Orthodox were outside the True Church and deprived of the grace of sacraments.

To this end he and others mobilized a whole variety of arguments. Some said that the anathema did not expel anyone from the Church, but was only a “warning” to the World Orthodox. In other words, it was just “a rap on the knuckles”, no more. Again, it was said that the anathema expelled only ecumenists *inside* ROCOR. In other words, a Russian old woman inside ROCOR might be under anathema, but the patriarchs of Constantinople and Moscow were not! Again, others said that since the wording of the anathema was not composed by the Russian bishops themselves, but by some American monks inside ROCOR, it could not be valid. Again, others said that since no heretic was specifically named in the anathema, it fell on nobody...

But the least implausible of the arguments was this one, that ROCOR was a Local Church, so its decisions could not have universal power or significance. In fact, in their later writings the Cyprianites went further and declared that *no present-day Synod has the authority to launch an anathema expelling heretics from the Church*. Thus they wrote in 2009 that “so great a right and ‘dignity’ [of anathematizing] is ‘granted’ only to the choir of the Apostles ‘and those who have truly become their successors in the strictest sense, full of Grace and power’ (St. John Chrysostomos)”. And they go on: “We are unable to understand this hasty tendency in our day to anathematize and condemn, since until such successors come into existence, ‘everyone who is Orthodox in every respect anathematizes every heretic potentially, even if not verbally’ (St. Theodore the Studite).”

The present writer has criticized this position in detail elsewhere.⁴ If there is no Synod in the world today which has the Grace and power to anathematize heretics, then the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church – God forbid! - has lost her power to bind and to loose! Then even if the Antichrist were to appear and pronounce himself to be God today, the Church on earth would have no power to anathematize him – he would be an “ailing” and “uncondemned” member of the True Church! Away with such blasphemy, such manifest lack of faith in the power and dignity of the Church, which, by virtue of its Catholicity, exists in every right-believing Synod, whatever its size! If “everyone who is Orthodox anathematizes every heretic potentially, even if not verbally”, then a fortiori the hierarchs of the Church have the power to anathematize every heretic, not only potentially, but actually, and not only under their breath, but verbally and from the housetops! For, as St. John Chrysostom said, “in worldly matters we are meek as lambs, but in matters of the faith we roar like lions!”

Returning to the Ecclesiological Statement, we see a continuing alternation of strong and weak points.

4 <http://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/240/-cyprianites-power-anathema/>.

“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.”

This is strong. To chrismate a layman is to recognize that the church he is coming from is false and graceless. **However:**

“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 [Lutetiæ Parisiorum: Impensis Societatis Typographicæ Librorum Ecclesiasticorum iussu Regis constitutæ, 1671], col. 741).”

This is much weaker. It is not wrong for being weaker, because it is true that a hierarch can relax the rule of reception if he wants. As St. Cyprian says, it is his right as having “freedom of will in the administration of the Church”. However, the irony is that, in the failed negotiations for union between GTOC and the Russian True Orthodox Church under Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia (RTOC) that took place in 2009-11, the major stumbling-block was precisely the Russians’ insistence on this right, which the Greeks denied them (at least, perhaps, until the final agreement statement on oekonomia, which the writer has not seen published anywhere). So why are the True Orthodox Greeks being so much more flexible on this point now?

There are probably two main reasons. The first is that to “reform” the practice of all the hierarchs of the newly-formed bloc so that all, or at any rate the majority of the heretics who come to the Church are chrismated, is an unattainable goal. Probably only the Romanians consistently chrimate the new calendarists who come to them. Both the Cyprianites and the Greek True Orthodox are far from consistent in this practice. As for the Russians under Metropolitan Agathangel, as we shall see later, their practice goes beyond the bounds of the laxest permissible oekonomia...

The second reason lies in the personality and empire-building ambitions of Archbishop Kallinikos, who clearly thought that union with the Cyprianites and their allies was a far larger and more “juicy morsel” than the comparatively small and poverty-stricken RTOC. This hierarch has the reputation of being extremely strict on matters of the faith. But the truth is that he is “strict” to the point of manifest injustice when some person or community is not useful to his plans, but the strictness disappears when he wants to draw the person or community into his net. No doubt some would justify this on the grounds that a hierarch has to manoeuvre between strictness and laxity in order to serve the good of the Church as a whole. But “the good of the Church” is a slogan that can justify any lawlessness in the mouth of an unscrupulous man: in matters of faith, as St. Mark of Ephesus said, the true good of the Church can only reside in consistent strictness and exactness...

And so we may agree with Fr. Roman Yuzhakov, who has written on Facebook concerning the Ecclesiological Statement: “It is already clear that the basic principles of Cyprianism are not being placed in doubt. The sharp anti-ecumenist rhetoric of the document should not mislead us: the grace-filled nature of the sacraments of ‘World Orthodoxy’ is, as before, not being denied; it is just that it ‘is not recognized with certainty... especially in relation to those people who are consciously in communion with syncretistic ecumenism and sergianism’. It is evident that this formulation is that invisible difference – invisible, that is, to the naked eye – between ‘Cyprianism’ and ‘the Bulgarian Old Calendarist confession’ which must now become the official doctrine of this union...”⁵

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Let us now turn to an aspect of the agreement of March, 2014 that has especially scandalized Russian Orthodox Christians: the inclusion of “Metropolitan” Agathangel in the new bloc. It is in relation to Agathangel that the opportunism of Kallinikos manifests itself most clearly. Having rejected communion in 2009-11 with the most canonical of the Russian chief-hierarchs, Archbishop Tikhon, he now enters into communion with the worst of them, whose canonical violations and false ecclesiology are notorious!

This is not the place for a detailed biography of Agathangel, but some account of his more glaring and dangerous errors is necessary.

1. In 1996, shortly after becoming a ROCOR bishop, he wrote in the official journal of his Odessan diocese that the Catholics, the Monophysites and the Old Ritualists all have grace of sacraments (*Vestnik IPTs*, 1996, N 2). So at that time at any rate he was not simply a Cyprianite in his confession, but definitely an ecumenist heretic. And to the present writer’s knowledge, he has not repented of that statement.
2. In 2001 he went as the representative of the Russian True Orthodox Church under Archbishop Lazarus (the predecessor of Archbishop Tikhon) to New York in order to present the point of view of the True Orthodox inside Russia to the Synod of Metropolitan Laurus. However, instead of representing the True Orthodox Church, Agathangel promptly changed sides and joined the Laurite Synod. During the next six years, Agathangel loyally signed all the decisions of the Laurite Synod, including those relating to joining the Moscow Patriarchate.
3. On May 17, 2007, when Metropolitan Laurus signed the unia between ROCOR and the Moscow Patriarchate, Agathangel changed sides again – he refused to join the unia. Only this time, he did not rejoin the True Orthodox inside Russia, who were prepared to receive him back without conditions, in spite of his previous betrayal of them. Instead, he formed his own jurisdiction, claiming that he was the only remaining truly Orthodox Russian bishop! His reasoning was original: although Laurus and his Synod had been wrong in joining the MP, all his decisions up to the very point of joining the MP (including bans on many right-believing Russian clergy and, presumably, the very decision to join the MP!), had been correct, and so he, Agathangel, as the only Russian bishop who had been loyal to Laurus to the last

5 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/288380224648257/>

possible moment, was the only true Russian bishop. It is as if one said: all those who leave a sinking ship before the water is up to their eyebrows have left it illegitimately, and should be considered to have drowned!

4. While condemning all the True Orthodox bishops as graceless, Agathangel refused to condemn the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless. In this he followed, as always, the Cyprianite ecclesiology. Only in his choice of whom to receive into his Church, he showed himself to be more extreme and more indiscriminate than the Cyprianites – to whom he was now indebted because they had helped him in founding an uncanonical hierarchy.
5. For example, in 2007 he received under his omophorion in Kiev the “well-known Ukrainian politician” D. Korchinsky and his ultra-nationalist neo-Nazi occult-totalitarian sect or brotherhood. Korchinsky had fought in the Chechen wars on the side of the Chechens, and taught his adherents martial arts, which he then encouraged them to practice on people who disagreed with him. The Ukrainian media called this brotherhood “the Ukrainian Klu-Klux-Klan”, and many of its members were imprisoned for acts of violence. Korchinsky also has close links with the so-called “Great Prior of the Order of the Templars of the Ukraine”, Alexander Yablonsky. Korchinsky’s sect has come close to being banned by the authorities; but Agathangel’s recognition of him, giving his sect the status of a church organization, with a church building and a priest, has protected him from prosecution...
6. Another example. In 2011 Agathangel received three parishes in Izhevsk, Eastern Russia together with their priests. However, they received a very original dispensation: they were allowed to remain in the Moscow Patriarchate while being under Agathangel’s omophorion. And now they call themselves “MP in ROCOR”!
7. A third example. Agathangel and the former Patriarch Irenaeus of Jerusalem (who was removed from his see for wrongdoing) have agreed to commemorate each other at the Divine Liturgy. What does this mean if not that Agathangel is in official communion with World Orthodoxy?

And now this Agathangel, this scourge and bane of the Russian True Orthodox Church, has been accepted into communion by the True Orthodox Church of Greece without, as far as we know, being required to correct any of the above glaring dogmatic and canonical violations.⁶ This is truly a betrayal of the Russian Church! One consequence of this unia, therefore, will undoubtedly be a widening of the gap between the majority of the Russian and Serbian True Orthodox, on the hand, and Agathangel and the majority of the Balkan and Western True Orthodox, on the other.

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⁶ As Fr. Roman Yuzhakov writes on Facebook: “It seems to us that Metropolitan Agathangel will most likely not disavow the decisions of the ROCOR Council of 1994 on the identity of the ideology of ROCOR and the theology of Cyprianism, that he will not break communion with Patriarch Irenaeus, and that everything will remain just as it was.”

However, in view of the fact that we began this article by wondering whether God could produce some good out of this evil, let us in conclusion consider some possible benefits.

Undoubtedly a short-term benefit will be that many will be relieved and rejoice that the continuing disintegration of True Orthodoxy into ever more jurisdictions has been halted and partially reversed. Also to be welcomed is the possible encouragement it will give to some World Orthodox to look again at True Orthodoxy and consider joining it. But such a gain will be real only if this unia does not eventually go the same way as the false unia of 1994 – and generate still more divisions as a result...

Another possible benefit is that those jurisdictions which, because of their continuing rejection of Cyprianism, are not part of this unia, - we are thinking here particularly of the Russian jurisdictions of RTOC and ROAC and some parts of ROCA (V), – will feel their spiritual kinship more strongly and initiate talks for union amongst themselves – a union that is founded on the rock of Christ and not, like the Kallinikite unia, on the shifting sands of political ambition and calculation.

But as the unsound foundations of the Kallinikite unia become clearer to more and more people, we can hope for another, longer-term benefit: the removal and replacement of its driver and leader. Archbishop Kallinikos has always been a controversial hierarch, with many fierce critics both inside and outside Greece. He came to the episcopate (ironically, together with Cyprian of Oropo) in a flagrantly dishonest and uncanonical ecclesiastical praxikopima, or coup, in 1979. Controversy also surrounds the way in which he acquired the monastery of the Archangels in Corinth, which resulted in the exile of its founder and his elder, Metropolitan Kallistos. Often quarrelling with his first-hierarch, Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kioussis), he was an exceptionally lazy and divisive exarch of Western Europe and Serbia, a Greek nationalist who famously once wrote that “the Slavs have never been good Orthodox”. In contempt of all canon law, he was called by one of his senior hierarchs “locum tenens of the Serbian patriarchal throne”, and trampled on the pastoral needs and canonical rights of his Serbian flock to such a degree that most of them have sought refuge elsewhere. When negotiations were begun for the union with RTOC, - a union which Archbishop Chrysostomos believed in but he did not, - he did his best to scupper it – and eventually succeeded...⁷

All this will no doubt be forgiven and forgotten by many in the euphoria of the present uniate celebrations, as Kallinikos’ dream of recovering “the lost lands of the Byzantine empire”, as he once put it in a sermon, by restoring Greek ecclesiastical suzerainty over the Balkans, looks to be approaching fulfilment. However, “pride precedes a fall”, and empires acquired by illegitimate means can unravel very quickly... One day – who knows? - he may look back on the day of his greatest triumph, the Sunday of the Holy Cross, 2014, and remember with compunction the words of the Lord in the Gospel of that day: “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?...” (Mark 8.36)

*March 12/25, 2014.
Tuesday of the Week of the Holy Cross.
St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome.*

⁷ Now, however, in view of the false unia Kallinikos have created, the Russians will probably thank God that their own union with him did not take place...