

Regarding the GOC-K, Cyprianism, and the Current Parish Situation

From Daphnis Brown
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Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you all may know, our parish is currently facing uncertainty in light of recent events and statements by our priest, Father Mark, who has made clear his intentions to leave our Vladyka, His Eminence Archbishop Andrei, for the GOC-K under Metropolitan Demetrius. Since many have become confused by this matter, I have decided to write this document detailing the reasons for which I believe this is not only something we should not support, but something which we can not support either as faithful Orthodox believers. I am not writing this as an expert on ecclesiology, but as an Orthodox Christian concerned for our parish. Even as laypeople, **we must stand for the faith and guard ourselves from error at every moment, as well as stand for and remain obedient to the hierarchs who shepherd our flock.**

I intend for this document to be as comprehensive as possible so that no room may be left for doubt regarding whether or not we may join with the GOC-K. I will include a Google Drive link to all of the sources used at the end.

Section I - The Situation at Saint Peter the Aleut

Last Sunday, November 16th, 2025, a parish meeting was convened in secret (i.e, without the knowledge of our Bishop) by Father Mark, at which he expressed his intent to request a canonical release from Vladyka Andrei, leave ROAC, and serve under the GOC-K. To my knowledge, several concerns were raised, including claims regarding Vladyka's health, that he is inconsistent in his beliefs regarding other True Orthodox Synods, and that he now believes ROAC to be the only remaining True Orthodox Synod.

Following this meeting, Father Mark sent an email to Vladyka Andrei requesting his canonical release, in which he vaguely alludes to "numerous concerns" which he has with Vladyka, and reiterates the accusation that Vladyka believes ROAC to be the only True Orthodox Synod, as well as acknowledging Vladyka's stance on the heresy of the GOC-K. He also states that, "For me, this is neither a condemnation of you or of ROAC," however, as I will show later in this section, he changes his position on this.

His Eminence replied to this letter quickly, refuting the claims Father Mark made in his request, as well as clarifying the ROAC position on the GOC-K and detailing why a canonical release to them is impossible. Father Mark was also placed under suspension as a result.

Following his suspension, Father Mark sent out a letter to the parish in which he repeats his accusations against Vladyka, citing several canons and contradicting his previous statement that “this is neither a condemnation of you or of ROAC” by now asserting that “Vladyka Andrei is thereby subject to the canonical penalties outlined above and should be disciplined by the synod of bishops in Russia.”.

These are very serious claims which must be examined according to Orthodox tradition, turning to the Holy Canons and Fathers of our Church, as well as the teachings of our own Synod which Father Mark has served under for over a decade.

Section II - The Orthodox Teaching on the Church, Schism, and Obedience

To understand and address these claims by Father Mark, let us first ask ourselves, what **is** the Church, and from where does the priest derive his authority and sacramental grace to begin with? Saint Ignatius of Antioch put it clearly in his Epistle to the Smyrnaeans:

*“Wherever the bishop appear, there let the multitude be;
even as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church.”*

That is, **where the bishop is, there the Church is also. Without the bishop, you do not have the Church.** The priest does not derive grace from himself, but through the right believing Orthodox bishop, without which he could never serve the Divine Liturgy, let alone give us the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Communion, Confession, and so on. On the altar is the antimension which bears the bishop’s name. Before the Liturgy, the priest recites in his prayers that he does not serve it on his own authority, but on that of his bishop. Simply put, the bishop alone is the sole reason why we may even be in the Church. The priest is merely a servant of the bishop, acting only with his blessing. This foundational truth of our Church is essential to acknowledge if we are to properly examine the situation that has arisen in our parish.

With this in mind, let us examine this in the order in which these events have transpired, beginning with the parish meeting which was convened without the blessing of our bishop.

Subsection A. The Parish Meeting

As I have stated prior, on Sunday, November 16th, 2025, Father Mark called a parish meeting to discuss matters related to Vladyka Andrei and the future of our parish, including his intent to request a canonical release from

Vladyka to the GOC-K. The fact that such a meeting was convened with neither the knowledge nor the blessing of our bishop is of utmost importance here. As we know, the priest acts only with the authority of his bishop, not of his own. To gather the faithful to discuss ecclesiological matters, potential changes of jurisdiction, and to make criticisms and accusations against our bishop without even requesting his blessing to do such a thing is a serious act of disobedience, not only to the bishop, but to the canons of our Church. Saint Basil the Great calls such meetings “parasynagogues” in his First Canon:

“Parasynagogues is the name applied to gatherings held by insubordinate priests or bishops, and those held by uneducated laities. As, for instance, when, one has been arraigned for a misdemeanor held aloof from liturgy and refused to submit to the Canons, but laid claim to the presidency and liturgy for himself and some other persons departed with him, leaving the catholic Church – that is a parasynagogue”

Apostolic Canon 31 says:

“If any Priest, condemning his own bishop, draws people aside, and sets up another altar, without finding anything wrong with the Bishop in point of piety and justice, let him be deposed, on the ground that he is desirous of power. For he is a tyrant; and let the rest of the clergymen and all those who abet him be treated in the same manner. But let the laymen be excommunicated. Let these things be done after one, and a second, and a third request of the Bishop. “

And again in Apostolic Canon 34:

“It befits us bishops of every nation to know the one among them who is the premier or chief, and to recognize him as their head, and to refrain from doing anything superfluous without his advice and approval.”

Once more, the God-Bearer Saint Ignatius of Antioch in his Epistle to the Smyrnaeans says:

“Do ye all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ doth the Father; and follow the presbyters as the apostles; and have respect unto the deacons as unto the commandment of God. Let no one, apart from the bishop, do any of the things that appertain unto the church.”

It is clear, then, that for a priest to call any sort of secret meeting is completely unacceptable and contrary to Church tradition. Furthermore, after this meeting, people have gone to everyone with questions except for Vladyka, the person being accused. All information is being filtered through Father Mark, and some laity have even taken it upon themselves to answer questions on this matter in support of the GOC-K, as well as redirecting them to clergy outside of ROAC.

Subsection B. The Request for Canonical Release

Following the parish meeting, Father Mark sent an email to Vladyka Andrei formally requesting a canonical release. Canonical releases are granted by bishops to priests in very limited circumstances, either to transfer them to another bishop, or to retire from the priesthood due to circumstances such as health. In this case, Father Mark requested that he be released so that he may serve under Metropolitan Demetrius of the GOC-K. This is important to note, because a priest can only be transferred to a bishop who is recognized as Orthodox by the Synod he wishes to transfer from, and that bishop must also recognize the priest's current Synod as such. Here, neither are the case. ROAC does not view the GOC-K as Orthodox, nor does the GOC-K view ROAC as Orthodox. Thus, it is impossible to grant a canonical release on these grounds alone. Additionally, we must look at the reasons given for the request and determine whether they are valid to begin with. In his letter to Vladyka Andrei, Father Mark states that he "cannot bring himself to instruct people in his (Vladyka's) current stances". This is a deeply serious statement, because a priest does not teach from his own beliefs, rather, he teaches what his bishop teaches, as expressed in the priest's liturgical prayers. If a priest claims he cannot teach what his bishop teaches, the question becomes: has the bishop taught heresy? This is the only situation in which the canons permit separating from one's bishop, as it is stated in Canon 15 of the First-Second Council:

"The rules laid down with reference to Priests and Bishops and Metropolitans are still more applicable to Patriarchs. So that in case any Priest or Bishop or Metropolitan dares to secede or apostatize from the communion of his own Patriarch, and, fails to mention the latter's name in accordance with custom duly fixed and ordained, in the divine Mystagogy, but, before a synodal verdict has been pronounced and has passed judgment against him, creates a schism, the holy Synod has decreed that this person shall be held an alien to every priestly function if only he be convicted of having committed this transgression of the law. Accordingly, these rules have been sealed and ordained as respecting those persons who under the pretext of charges against their own presidents stand aloof, and create a schism, and disrupt the union of the Church.

But as for those persons, on the other hand, who, on account of some heresy condemned by holy Synods, or Fathers, withdrawing themselves from communion with their president, who, that is to say, is preaching the heresy publicly, and teaching it bareheaded in church, such persons not only are not subject to any canonical penalty on account of their having walled themselves off from any and all communion with the one called a Bishop, before any synodal verdict has been rendered, but, on the contrary, they shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honor which befits them among Orthodox Christians. For they have defied, not Bishops, but pseudobishops and pseudo-teachers; and they have not sundered the union of the Church with any schism, but, on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions."

Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite in the Rudder explains of this Canon:

“The same rules as were prescribed in the above Canons with regard to bishops and Metropolitans, are prescribed, and so much the more so, by the present Canon with regard to Patriarchs. For it says that if any priest or bishop or Metropolitan should separate himself from the joint communion of his own Patriarch, and does not mention his name in accordance with custom (this applies, that is to say, to only the Metropolitan; for a priest mentions only the name of his bishop, and the bishop mentions only the name of his Metropolitan), before revealing the charges against their Patriarch to the Synod, and before learning that he has been condemned by the Synod – they, I say, shall all be completely deposed; the bishops and Metropolitans from every clerical activity; the priests from every priestly activity. But these provisions are of effect if priests separate from their bishops, or bishops separate from their Metropolitans, or Metropolitans separate from their Patriarchs, on account of certain criminal charges, of fornication, say, of sacrilege, and of other serious crimes. If, however, the said presidents are heretics, and are preaching their heresy openly and on this account those subject to them separate themselves, even though it be before there has been any synodal trial concerning the heresy, but are even deemed to deserve fitting honor as Orthodox Christians, since not only have they caused no schism in the Church on account of their separation, but have rather freed the Church from the schism and heresy of their pseudo-bishops.”

His Eminence has never preached any heresy, nor do any of the complaints which Father Mark has made against him have anything to do with heretical teachings. Vladyka Andrei professes what the ROAC Synod has taught since Father Mark first joined almost two decades ago. It is also worth noting, in the case of a heresy, a priest does not request a canonical release, he simply flees from heresy as the Church commands. Since heresy is not the issue here, there is no justification for Father Mark’s request. Personal discomfort with the teachings that Vladyka Andrei has always held is not, and has never been, a valid reason to request a canonical release. For these reasons, Vladyka Andrei was not only justified but obligated by the canons to deny the request. His response letter explains this clearly, the GOC-K holds to an ecclesiology condemned by our Church, and a priest cannot be released to a body outside communion with the Church, nor to one which holds teachings our Synod has rejected. It is also worth noting, as Vladyka Andrei has pointed out in his response, that the form of the request was improper. A canonical release request must be handwritten and mailed to the bishop. Instead, as is indicated by several typographical errors, this request was hastily typed up and emailed to Vladyka, not even with a copy of Father Mark’s true signature, but of a generic e-Signature common in documents digitally signed through Google Docs and Microsoft Word. This shows a blatant disrespect for the canonical process, and towards Vladyka himself.

Subsection C. Father Mark’s Letter to the Parish

After Vladyka Andrei denied the request for canonical release and placed Father Mark under suspension, Father Mark then circulated a new letter directly to the parish. In this letter, he reiterated his prior accusations, but also cited several canons according to his private interpretation, and by far the more serious claim that “Vladyka Andrei is thereby subject to canonical penalties and should be disciplined by the Synod of Bishops in Russia.”

This statement contradicts Father Mark's prior statement that "For me, this is neither a condemnation of you or of ROAC", and now accuses Vladyka of needing canonical discipline. This is a claim of serious gravity. The Church does not allow for accusations such as these to be made privately to the laity of a parish. Apostolic Canon 75 states:

"No heretic shall be accepted as a witness against a bishop, but neither shall one faithful alone: for 'every charge shall be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses.'"

By publicly accusing his bishop before the laity without witnesses, without synodal process, and contrary to canonical procedure, Father Mark's letter falls under the condemnation of Apostolic Canon 31, which states that a priest who condemns his bishop and draws others away is to be deposed, and that laypeople who follow such a priest are to be excommunicated. The canons therefore regard this act not as correction of a bishop, but as the formation of a parasynagogue and a precursor to schism, since it encourages disobedience and undermines the unity of the Church.

Section III - Cyprianism

In order to understand the ecclesiological issues underlying Father Mark's intention to join the GOC-K, it is necessary first to define Cyprianism, the heresy taught by Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili and adopted by the Synod in Resistance. This heresy was condemned by the ROAC Sobor in 2008 which took place from January 26th to January 30th of that year. The Sobor described Cyprianism as a "subtle and hidden form of ecumenism." and defines its beliefs as follows:

1. The sacraments performed by heretics and schismatics continue to be valid until such time as these individuals should be condemned by an all-church Orthodox council, and the resolutions of the councils that have taken place to date, are insufficient. From this it follows that heretics and schismatics are not yet such in actuality, but are only 'ailing-in-faith members of the Church who have yet to be brought to account'.
2. The Orthodox Church is not One in reality, but has been divided into those who are ailing-in-faith, and those who are resisting heresy. Heretic ecumenists are considered members of the body of the Church, and are called 'Orthodox ecumenists.'

The Sobor condemned both of these points, affirming that the Church is One, that heresy immediately separates one from it, that the Mysteries only exist within the Church, and that so called "potential grace" outside of the Church denies Orthodox ecclesiology. It then explains:

“The teaching of the Greek Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos we recognize to be impious sophistry, which secretly introduces into the minds of the faithful the pernicious heresy of ecumenism, and we condemn it. All those who share in this teaching of Cyprian’s are under the anathema that was pronounced in 1983 by the Sobor of Bishops of the ROCOR, and by the True Orthodox Churches of Greece, against the heresy of ecumenism.”

Thus, according to the official teaching of our Synod which Father Mark has had to affirm for almost two decades, those who hold to the heresy of Cyprianism are outside of the Church, completely devoid of the grace of the Mysteries, and we can have no communion with them whatsoever.

Section IV - The GOC-K and the Cyprianite Question

Now that we have established what Cyprianism is and its condemnation by ROAC, we must now examine the GOC-K and its ecclesiology in light of this. This is absolutely necessary before any question of Father Mark joining them can even be considered, as this is not a mere jurisdictional issue, but a doctrinal one. Therefore, the question is simple: Does the GOC-K hold to the doctrines condemned by the 2008 ROAC Sobor? To answer this, we must turn to the official documents produced by the GOC-K themselves. This includes their official statements on Ecumenism, the union with the Synod in Resistance, and writings by Bishop Auxentios and Father Victor Dobroff.

Subsection A. The GOC-K Statement on the Union With the Synod in Resistance

The first evidence of the GOC-K’s adherence to Cyprianism is found in their official statement announcing the union with the Synod in Resistance, the Cyprianites. This document is foundational, as it sets the terms under which the GOC-K entered and maintained communion with the Cyprianite hierarchy condemned by our Synod. In it, we read:

“The Hierarchs of the former Synod in Resistance, together with our Hierarchs, and also with the Russian and Romanian Hierarchs, signed the official ecclesiological statement, “The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism: Dogmatic and Canonical Issues” (March 2014). By way of this document, which constitutes an Orthodox Confession of Faith, the Hierarchs of the former Synod in Resistance set aside their previously formulated ecclesiological views, which they also withdrew from their official

website. They have also stated in writing that they will not henceforth employ terms and phrases antithetical to the ecclesiological basis of the Union document.”

The GOC-K presents this as though the Cyprianites had renounced their heretical ecclesiology. However, the same section immediately claims that these hierarchs now possess a mindset which is “in every respect Orthodox”:

“The contents of the Union document, which the Hierarchs of the former Synod in Resistance today confess and proclaim with full knowledge and sincerity, leave no margin for doubt as to their mind-set, which is in every respect Orthodox”

This shows that the purpose of the document is to reinterpret Cyprianism as Orthodox rather than renounce it. They then explicitly deny that the ecclesiology of Metropolitan Cyprian is heretical:

“There has never existed a heresy with the name of ‘Cyprianism,’ and never did our Holy Synod officially employ this term.”

This statement directly contradicts our 2008 ROAC Sobor, which defined Cyprianism as a “subtle and hidden form of ecumenism” and placed it under the 1983 Anathema. The GOC-K further asserts that the Cyprianites never dogmatized the very teachings our Synod condemned:

“...the ecclesiological formulations of the Hierarchs of the former Synod in Resistance, which were indeed denounced by our Church, were not in the past put forth tenaciously, dogmatically, or definitively—in which case they might indeed have constituted a heresy, and might have been called that—but as “ideas for rumination and discussion.”

According to the GOC-K, the teachings of Cyprianism were simply “ideas” and therefore cannot be heretical, a framing entirely at odds with ROAC’s clear condemnation of them. The GOC-K also attempts to defend and reinterpret Metropolitan Cyprian’s infamous teaching that the New Calendarist Church is the “Mother Church,” describing it as merely an “inexpert expression”:

“This indeed inexpert expression, which has been employed by one of our Bishops and which has already been withdrawn by him as inapposite, has never been officially proclaimed by our Synod in Resistance, nor has it ever been used in, let alone incorporated into, the basic and foundational documents that express our ecclesiological and anti-ecumenist self-understanding.”

Here again, the issue is not repudiation of the doctrine, but only of the phrasing. Likewise, the GOC-K denies that Cyprian or his Synod imparted the Mysteries to New Calendarists, something well documented:

“The accusation concerning the indiscriminate imparting of Mysteries by the late Metropolitan Cyprian to laity from the New Calendar Church is quite groundless.”

Finally, the GOC-K officially reinstates Metropolitan Cyprian postmortem:

“The reinstatement of the reposed Metropolitan Cyprian († May 17, 2013 [Old Style]), from which ensued the reading of Hierarchical memorial prayers over his tomb by His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos (March 7/20, 2014), was a canonical ecclesiastical act, since there were reasons that permitted it, as happened also with the reinstatement of the late Archbishop Auxentios.”

To “reinstate” a hierarch condemned for heresy is to affirm his ecclesiology, not to reject it.

Subsection B. Bishop Auxentios’ Statement on the Synod in Resistance

The second piece of evidence here of the GOC-K’s acceptance of Cyprianite ecclesiology is a statement written by Bishop Auxentios himself, who is a current member of the GOC-K Synod, regarding the Synod in Resistance. This text not only defends Cyprianism and admits that it was never repented of, it openly says that they would never have even repented of it had they been asked to by the GOC-K during the union. The most important passage appears when Bishop Auxentios directly rejects the idea that the Synod in Resistance ever held a heretical ecclesiology:

“Regarding the ‘heresy of Cyprianitism,’ the ecclesiology of the Synod in Resistance was not an invention of Metropolitan Cyprian, but was based on the Synod’s interpretation of the Conciliar, Patristic, and historical precepts of the Orthodox Church... which it never declared to be an infallible and indisputable ecclesiological stand.”

This alone is in direct contradiction to the ROAC Sobor, which condemned Cyprianism as a “subtle and hidden form of ecumenism” and placed it under the 1983 anathema. He further insists that no bishop of the Synod in Resistance ever acknowledged error at all:

“No Bishop of the Synod in Resistance was ever party to, or would be party to, an admission of heresy in putting forth its ecclesiological principles.”

Later, he addresses the claim that the Cyprianite bishops were received into the GOC-K through repentance or reordination:

“No prayer of any kind was ever read over either of us, nor did we submit any sort of confession for our supposed past heresy. Nor would we ever have accepted such provisions. I think that this fact speaks for itself.”

Thus, the GOC-K did not receive Cyprianite bishops through Orthodox canonical norms of confession of error, renunciation of false teaching, or corrective rites. Instead, they received them as they were, Cyprianite ecclesiology included. He then doubles down, asserting the validity of Cyprian's episcopal consecration and his ecclesiological legacy:

“As for the Consecration of Metropolitan Cyprian... there has never been any question about its validity.”

Finally, Bishop Auxentios takes offense at the term “Cyprianites” itself:

“The use of the appellation ‘Cyprianites’... is insulting, nescient, and hardly a compliment.”

This demonstrates an attempt to obscure the very ecclesiology he continues to defend.

Subsection C. Father Victor Dobroff's Statement in Defense of Cyprianite Ecclesiology

The third and perhaps clearest proof of the GOC-K's adherence to Cyprianite ecclesiology is found in a text authored by Father Victor Dobroff, who is currently a Protopresbyter under the GOC-K. This text is found on an old website of the Synod of Metropolitan Angafangel. Unlike the GOC-K's union statement or Bishop Auxentios' more defensive explanation, Father Victor Dobroff's work explicitly defends the heretical positions condemned by our 2008 ROAC Sobor, even calling the Synod's condemnation “incorrect.”

Father Victor Dobroff begins by framing the ROAC decision as fundamentally illegitimate in his title:

“On the Eve of the Vth All-Diaspora ROCA Sobor: On the Orthodox Nature of the Teachings of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili on the Church and the Wrongfulness of the Anathema by the ROAC Sobor.”

He immediately declares that Cyprian's ecclesiology is Orthodox:

“On February 17, 2007, by a Decision of the Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC) the Orthodox teachings of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili were judged to be unorthodox in nature.”

“An examination of Bishop Andrey Pavlovskiy's presentation to the ROAC Sobor leads us to the fundamental belief that the teachings of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili are Orthodox, and though they may differ from the traditional ecclesiology of the Church Abroad, they do not contradict them.”

He then explicitly rejects the ROAC condemnation:

“The judgment passed by the ROAC Sobor on the teachings of Metropolitan Cyprian and those who agree with him is incorrect, as it is not supported by the Canons.”

This is a direct contradiction of the doctrine of our Synod, and it is a defense not only of Cyprian, but of the very core theses defined as heresy.

The most important part of Dobroff’s article is where he explains and approves the central Cyprianite doctrines condemned by ROAC’s 2008 Sobor. He lists them explicitly:

1. Heretics retain sacramental grace until condemned by a future council:

“Sacraments performed by heretics and schismatics are valid up to the time that they are judged by an Orthodox Sobor of the whole church... This is in fact correct.”

“Met. Cyprian is not claiming that the sacraments of new calendarists and ecumenists are valid, but he does say that until an Ecumenical Council judges them, the sacraments can be considered to be valid. From this we can draw the conclusion that such people are not heretics and schismatics, but only ‘members of the Church whose faith is infirm and who have not yet been judged.’”

“Met. Cyprian is not insisting that Grace is present... he simply does not preclude its possibility.”

This last quote will especially be of relevance later when we get to the GOC-K’s statement on Ecumenism.

2. The Church consists of “healthy” and “ailing” parts:

“Met. Cyprian in his Orthodox teachings does not say that the Orthodox Church is not one, but having affirmed its oneness, he considers the local new calendarist ecumenical churches to be ailing members of that one Church body.”

“His teachings do lead to the conclusion that the redemptive Wholeness of Grace works exclusively in the healthy parts of the Church Body, and at the same time, depending on how far they have fallen away from Orthodoxy, grace is present in a diminished state in the ailing members of the Church.”

As these are positions espoused by a current member of the GOC-K’s clergy, and seeing that, as has been demonstrated earlier, there was no repentance of these positions during the union, nor did the Synod in Resistance even consider repentance for them to be an acceptable option, as well as the GOC-K’s denial that

Cyprianism has ever existed as heresy, one can conclude that this reflects his current beliefs as well as those of the GOC-K by nature of their acceptance of him as a priest.

Subsection D. The GOC-K Statement on Ecumenism

Another indicator of the GOC-K's adherence to Cyprianite ecclesiology is found in their statement "The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism," which contains language similar to the heretical "potential grace" theory condemned by ROAC, using ambiguous wording and refusing to affirm that heretics are completely graceless:

"More specifically, with regard to the Mysteries celebrated in the so-called official Orthodox Churches, the True Orthodox Church does not provide assurance concerning their validity or concerning their soteriological efficacy, in particular for those who commune "knowingly" [wittingly] with syncretistic ecumenism and Sergianism, even though She does not in every instance repeat their external form for those entering into communion with Her in repentance, in anticipation of the convocation of a Major Synod of True Orthodoxy, in order to place a seal on what has already occurred at a local level."

This wording is unmistakably Cyprianite. Rather than affirming the Church's position, that heretics in no way possess the grace of the Mysteries, the GOC-K claims only that it "does not provide assurance" regarding the validity of such sacraments. The Church, however, does not merely refrain from "giving assurance." She positively affirms that the sacraments of heretics are null and void, entirely bereft of grace, and that any appearance of grace is a deception. The GOC-K's refusal to confess this explicitly reveals their alignment with the Cyprianite ecclesiology, one in which heretics are treated not as outside the Church, but as "ailing members" whose sacraments may or may not possess grace "in potential," pending the judgment of a future synod. Thus, the GOC-K's official statement on ecumenism, far from rejecting Cyprianism, preserves and repeats its central premises, demonstrating that the union of 2014 did not involve doctrinal repentance, but rather the absorption of the Synod in Resistance's ecclesiology into the GOC-K itself.

Subsection E. The GOC-K's 2024 Youth and Family Conference

The final piece of evidence I shall present is that of a quote from Dr. Demetrios Alibertis from the 2024 Youth and Family Conference hosted by the GOC-K at the Cathedral of St. Markella in Astoria, New York. This is one of the most recent examples we have of the GOC-K's unrepentant, blatant adoption of the ideas of Cyprianism. In this conference (53:59-54:23 in the provided audio recording), Dr. Alibertis says:

"ROCOR's Anathema against Ecumenism was local, and did not affect other local churches, meaning that they, the other churches had to have adopt such resolutions on their own. I hate to break it to everyone, and I know there's some in here that will not agree with me, but he was right. A regional council is precisely that, a local regional council. It's not an ecumenical council."

This statement is not simply an offhand comment, it is a direct expression of the core ecclesiological premise of Cyprianism, that heretics are not separated from the Church until an Ecumenical Council formally condemns them, and that local Synods do not possess the authority to issue universally binding decrees on heresy. Let us once again remind ourselves of the definition given by our ROAC Sobor in 2008, given earlier in this document.

Section IV.1 Can Local Synods Universally Condemn Heresy?

Since this issue of the heresy of Cyprianism rests upon the question of whether or not local councils actually possess the authority to issue a universally binding decree of anathema on heresies, we need not look further than the favorite buzzword of the World Orthodox, that is, the heresy of Donatism. Which Ecumenical Council condemned Donatus or the positions of Donatism? The answer is simple: **none of them**. Donatism was only ever condemned by local Synods such as the Council of Carthage. Should we say, then, that those who publicly preach and are in communion with Donatists are still part of the Church, but merely “ailing members” pending official condemnation by an Ecumenical Council? Are only North Africans bound by this? How about the many other heresies condemned exclusively on the local level, such as Adoptionism, Eustathianism, Messalianism, Priscillianism, and Audianism? Are we to believe that anyone today can preach these and still be in the Church, and that we cannot consider them outside of the Church because we must wait for an Ecumenical Council? This is a fundamentally absurd position which collapses the entirety of Orthodox ecclesiology, and is exactly why our ROAC Synod has rightfully condemned it as heretical. It follows, then, that we can have no communion with bishops or Synods who espouse such “ideas for rumination and discussion”, nor can we with those who, while not affirming these ideas themselves, maintain communion with those who do, as the Fathers and canons of our Church make clear.

Section V - Why Our Parish Cannot Join the GOC-K Under Any Circumstances

Now that it has been shown from the GOC-K’s own documents and clergy that the Synod holds to the ecclesiological heresy of Cyprianism condemned by ROAC and by the 1983 Anathema, we must now address what this means for our parish and why we cannot, in any conceivable manner, follow Father Mark into the GOC-K. This is not a matter of preference; this is a matter of Orthodox doctrine and obedience to our bishop and to the Church.

Father Mark’s parish meeting was held in secret, without the knowledge or blessing of Vladyka Andrei, which is a violation of the canons, a disobedience to our bishop, and an incitement of distrust against him, directly creating the conditions for a schism in our parish.

Father Mark, as a priest, derives all grace and authority from the bishop. He has no authority on his own, and to depart from the bishop is to depart from the Church. We have a duty as Orthodox Christians in ROAC to give our loyalty to our right believing bishop, Vladyka Andrei, who has in no way professed any heresy or done anything which would warrant a breaking away from his authority.

Father Mark is a suspended priest, and the Church forbids us from following such priests, the assemblies of which are defined as parasynagogues by the Canons of Saint Basil the Great.

On top of being suspended, Father Mark has committed several canonical violations and made accusations against Vladyka Andrei which require Father Mark to be deposed, and those who follow him to be excommunicated.

The request for a canonical release is invalid to begin with, having also been rejected by Vladyka, and as such, we cannot follow him regardless.

The GOC-K holds to and defends the heretical ecclesiology of Cyprianism, condemned by our Synod, even denying its existence as a heresy. To follow Father Mark into their Synod would be to contradict the statements of our own and to depart from the Church by following in and sharing in their heresy, as well as creating a schism from our bishop unjustly. We would lose the grace of the Mysteries and fall under the anathema of the Church.

To leave the Church is to put our souls in danger. Outside the Church, there is no salvation. As Saint Cyprian of Carthage said:

“He cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his Mother.”

For all of these reasons, **it is absolutely inconceivable that any of us should follow Father Mark into the GOC-K, or in any way support his decision to do so.** Considering the evidence laid out in this document, I ask that all of the faithful Orthodox Christians of our parish reject the errors of Father Mark, immediately cease any sentiments in support of joining the GOC-K, pray for Father Mark’s repentance, and remain loyal to His Eminence Vladyka Andrei, without whom we would not even be able to receive the Mysteries of the Church as we have for years under Father Mark.

In Christ,

Daphnis Brown

All sources referred to can be found here:

 Documents Pertaining to the Parish Situation