



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS
September 1, 2021

Greetings in Christ, Your Eminences,

In preparation for the Episcopal Assembly meeting in October, we felt the need to write this open letter on behalf of the thousands of other faithful Orthodox Christians throughout the United States who have been greatly scandalized by the actions of some of our bishops, and the lack of action by others.

The Greek Archdiocese

Since his enthronement in the United States, Archbishop Elpidophoros of the Greek Archdiocese has caused great scandal by his words and actions, namely with respect to the following:

- Offering the Divine Liturgy in Manhattan in an Episcopal building (a denomination that goes against many teachings of Orthodoxy) with a gay pride flag out front.
- Referring to Patriarch Bartholomew as the "first *without* equal" and the "spiritual father" of all Orthodox Christians, which are both blatantly untrue.
- Stating there is a possibility that the non-Orthodox spouses of the Orthodox might benefit from receiving the Eucharist despite the lack of interest in Chrismation.
- Offering the benediction for a president/vice president who are rabidly pro-abortion/same sex "marriage" and the giving of awards to pro-abortion politicians by the Archons.
- Marching with Black Lives Matter protesters whose beliefs are diametrically opposed to Orthodoxy and Christianity, during a period when our parishes were shut down.
- Stating that there are multiple paths to God, a great contradiction to the Orthodox Faith.

All of this is indicative of a wider spiritual problem within the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the many errors associated with its patriarch.

Dear bishops, why has no action been taken against Archbishop Elpidophoros? Do you fear retribution from the Patriarchate? Do you fear men over God? We, the laypeople, must have an explanation.

Under Attack

At a time when Orthodoxy is being attacked from the outside, our Faith is being attacked from within.

Why has the work of Orthodoxy in Dialogue, Public Orthodoxy, and those who oversee Orthodox studies at Fordham University, not been publicly rebuked?

There are also some prominent laypeople in the Church pushing a similar agenda, including Presvytera Marilisse Mars, in Metropolitan Alexios' Cathedral, who actively promotes the LGBT movement in her occupation as a "sex therapist."

These matters challenge the Orthodox Faith through subversion, pushing agendas utterly foreign to our ethos. What corrections have these people received?

While the faithful Orthodox are chided for wanting to keep our parishes open, these other people continue to be allowed to bastardize and make a mockery of the Faith, openly, without rebuke from you, our bishops.

COVID Restrictions

Much has already been said about the COVID restrictions that were forcibly imposed onto the Church, most recently from an open letter of the Burning Bush Brotherhood.

At a time when we most needed the Church, you decided to close our doors to appease local authorities rather than to follow the Traditions of our Church. Effectively, you threw us to the wolves, while holed up in your apartments. Baptisms and Chrismations were put on hold, weddings were postponed, the Eucharist was withheld from the sick and dying unless the priest threw it through the door, and parishioners wept alone in their homes watching the services on TV.

You have shown no remorse for altering our worship through these innovations. This includes the outright banning the veneration of icons which would have made the Iconoclasts envious, depriving us of the life of the Church itself: the Body and Blood of Christ.

Actions such as these have never been tolerated in the Orthodox Church. Who is to be accountable for such actions?

“The Silence of the Clergy is Atheism” (St. Gregory Palamas)

The laity are paying attention, Your Eminences, and we are “voting with our feet and with our money,” as they say. Look to the recent study done on the effects of COVID on our Orthodox communities.

The study showed a staggering drop-off in participation in the Greek Archdiocese and OCA parishes, many of whom went into hard lockdown.

In contrast, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia grew exponentially, as they struggled in the opposite direction to keep their doors open. “By their fruits you shall know them.”

In Conclusion

Just as the clergy cannot conduct formal worship services without the participation of the laity, the bishops cannot remove the Church from the laity at the urging of the secular world. Certainly not with respect to matters of personal health!

How is it possible that you would criticize and shame your flock to the point where you would suggest we’re guilty of murder if we fail to wear a mask or kiss an icon? Did the Holy Spirit encourage you to muscle us into taking an experimental drug which many physicians believe could be lethal? What about our adolescents who are walking around with myocarditis, because of the vaccines, or the women who have miscarried? What responsibility do you feel toward them?

As defenders of the Faith, we have just as much right as a bishop to protect the Church. In times past – when all bishops fell into error – it was us, the laypeople, who kept the flame of Orthodoxy alive.

It is our duty and our right to protect and pass on the Faith, and if we don’t take these injustices and indiscretions, seriously, we will be held accountable. This is not a call to disobedience but rather a call to our bishops to start the conversation. The damage done to the trust we have in you, our bishops, cannot be overstated.

Where are your voices dear fathers? Where do we go from here?

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” Acts 20:28