

Response to Professor George Demacopoulos (USA) concerning the article “Innovation Cloaked in the Guise of Tradition: Anti-Ecumenist Efforts to Derail the Holy and Great Synod”

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An article has been publicised by Professor George Demacopoulos (New York, USA) in which he reproaches those who criticize the pre-synodal text “**Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World**,” (from the fifth Pre-synodal Conference, Chambessy 2015) for “reductionist appropriation of our rich canonical tradition to justify simplistic ideological conceits.” As examples, he presents the critiques of Metropolitans Seraphim of Piraeus and Heirotheos of Nafpaktos.

A) He censures His Eminence **Metropolitan Seraphim of Piraeus** for his critique of the adoption, on the part of the pre-synodal text, of the word “Church,” for heretical Christian communities.

But he notes with greater emphasis “It is noteworthy that the Metropolitan did not produce any Patristic witness for his objection to this term. But, then, he couldn’t—the fathers routinely applied the term “church” to communities that they considered heretical.

For proof of his assertion he refers to... a video broadcast with the characteristic title “Coffee with Sister Vassa”!¹

1. A Professor of Fordham proceeds to provide theological proofs of his views by referring, not to a bibliography, but to “Coffee with...”! Lord have mercy! The semantic meaning of the case is tragic for the article’s author. In Greece, the phrase “coffee talk” is anything but flattering for someone knowledgeable, and especially a theologian.

2. However, let us leave the semantics and come to the substance of the reference of Professor Demacopoulos: Neither does Sister Vassa in her broadcast refer to Patristic texts which had been compared to offer proof for her views. That the library behind her contains the classical work of G.W.H. Lampe “A Patristic Lexicon,”

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5x3IEi1C7w>

which Sister Vassa at some point (at 0:51) points with her hand, does not offer a shred of support or proof of her assertion...Surely, the presenter can be excused for her relaxed manner of approaching the question, for, after all, it is to "Coffee with Sister Vassa" to which she is inviting the viewers of her broadcast. The same does not hold, however, for a writer who undersigns as a Professor of Fordham.

3. However, it is necessary to observe, in order to avoid deliberate misinterpretations: the term "Church" possesses great significance and is used in many ways in daily communication (indicating the simple gathering of a people, or even extreme communities, such as the Mormon Church, Scientology, etc). However, **in synodical, ecclesiological texts**, of such a high order, as that of the Holy and Great Pan- Orthodox Synod, with the term "Church" it is self-evident that **it is defined exclusively and only as the same Body of the incarnate Word of God, the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church of Christ**. Nothing more and nothing less! If the Synod wanted to give some other meaning, from the many which the term "Church" could indicate, it is incumbent upon the drafters to clarify with obligatory clarity. Such clarity, however, does not exist in the pre-synodal text of the fifth pre-synodal Pan-Orthodox Conference.

4. I am at a loss how it escapes the attention of the Professor that there exists not only Patristic, but also Synodical **decisions**, and especially **Ecumenical Synods**, which **deny categorically to heresies the appellation of "Church," (with the theological and ecclesiological meaning)**. The three Ecumenical Synods (4th, 6th, 7th) which ratified the canon of the Local Synod of Carthage (255 A.D.) by Saint Cyprian accepted that **in heresy there does not exist a Church (in the strict theological meaning): "But from the heretics, there is not a church...the heretic is not able to sanctify oil, neither can possess an altar, nor Church,"** because, **"the Catholic Church,...is One,"** because of which the heretic "being outside, does not have the Holy Spirit,... there being one Holy Spirit and **one Church of Christ** of our Lord, upon Peter the Apostle, who from the beginning spoke, when the unity had been established"!

5. The article of Mr. Demacopoulos presents those who criticize the use of the term "Church" for the Christian Communities as more or less living in the margins of the ecclesiastical and theological life of the Orthodox Church (he writes: they place obstructions in the progress of the ecumenical movement, "self-proclaimed traditionalists," "reductionist appropriation of our rich canonical tradition to justify simplistic ideological conceits," "imaginary dilution of Orthodox purity"). His disdain notwithstanding, only the canon of Carthage (of Saint Cyprian) which had been ratified by three Ecumenical Synods is enough to exclude the use of the term "Church" to describe heresies in such a notable synodical text!

In the body of the text it is “convenient” for him to mention only two Greek Bishops and avoids referring to the fact that there exist not only **many other bishops from many Orthodox Churches** which disagree with the use of the term “Church” for heresies in the pre-synodal text, but also **the Synods of Patriarchates and Churches have expressed the most serious reservations and have not adopted the innovative terminology of the text.**²

As is known, the Patriarchate of Georgia **has already rejected the text** (see the letter of Metropolitan **Andrew of Gori and Ateni**,³ which was especially informative as to what transpired “behind the scenes” of the fifth **PSC**, Chambessy 2015), while the Synods of the Hierarchs of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria and of the Church of Greece, on account of the strong reaction of many of the Hierarchs, deferred the matter to the upcoming Synod after Pascha, which will take appropriate action regarding the revision of the text. The Synod of the Church of Cyprus already adopted a proposal to amend the pre-synodal texts.⁴ It is also important to note the letter dated from July 24, 2015 of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Serbia regarding the ecclesiastical self-understanding of the Pan-Orthodox Synod itself.⁵

Here is a sampling of the names of bishops which have publicly written articles which are highly critical of the pre-synodal text in question: Athanasios of Lemessol (Cyprus),⁶ Germanos of Eleia (in an official report before the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece),⁷ Symeon of New Smyrna (Greece),⁸ Jeremiah of Gortunos and Megalopoleos,⁹ Paul of Glyfades (Greece),¹⁰ Seraphim of Kythira (Greece),¹¹ Gabriel of Lovets (Bulgaria),¹² Longinos of Bansen, Vicarios of the Eparchy of Tsernovits (Ukraine),¹³ Andrew of Gori and Ateni (representative of the Patriarchate of Georgia).¹⁴

Furthermore, as the Church does not consist only of hierarchs, in addition to the critical stance taken by many bishops we need to add the responses made public by the Holy Mountain of Athos, the esteemed professors of theology, the Archpriests George

² Translator’s Note: We can add to the foregoing Local Churches the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which appeared after the publication of this present response.

³ <http://www.amen.gr/article/o-mitropolitis-gori-kai-ateni-andreas-apada-ston-mprotopresvytero-georgio-tsetsi>

⁴ <http://www.romfea.gr/ekklisia-kyprou/7462-apofaseis-ektaktis-sunodou-tis-ekklisias-tis-kyprou>

⁵ <http://www.impantokratoros.gr/C909497D.el.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.imlemesou.org/images/20016/keimeno-g-sinodo.pdf>, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/90619.htm>

⁷ http://thriskeftika.blogspot.gr/2016/03/blog-post_23.html, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/91681.htm>

⁸ <http://www.imns.gr/2010-02-26-13-20-46/721-2016-03-02-10-57-15.html>

⁹ http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2016/03/blog-post_442.html

¹⁰ <http://www.romfea.gr/diafora/7296-glufadas-paulos-erotimata-peri-tin-agia-kai-megali-sunodo>

¹¹ <http://www.romfea.gr/ieres-mitropoleis/7270-i-eisigisi-mitropolitikuthiron-stin-imerida-gia-tin-agia-sunodo>

¹² http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2016/03/blog-post_766.html, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/92285.htm>

¹³ http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2016/04/blog-post_58.html

¹⁴ <http://www.amen.gr/article/o-mitropolitis-gori-kai-ateni-andreas-apada-ston-mprotopresvytero-georgio-tsetsi>, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/92232.htm>

Metallinos (Emeritus),¹⁵ and Theodore Zisis (Emeritus),¹⁶ and the current Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Thessaloniki, Dr. Demetrios Tsellengidis,¹⁷ and a great part of the Orthodox faithful which are uneasy about the renovation of Orthodox ecclesiology (See the recent Conference on the Pan-Orthodox Synod held in Piraeus, March 23, 2016).¹⁸

Even one of the drafters and editors of the pre-synodal texts, His Eminence **Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Messenia** (a university professor and representative of the Church of Greece at the fifth Pre-synodal Conference in Chambessy, 2015), in his recent memorandum to the Holy Synod recognizes that, “truly, the present expression (“with different Christian Churches and Confessions”, paragraph 6) creates on this account the possibility of developing a legitimate objection.” He suggests, on account of a plethora of reactions, that **instead of the term “Church,” the word “Communities,”** should be used to describe the various heresies: “it can be adopted as a corrective amendment of the above-mentioned expression of the text, namely, “the others or the rest of the **Christian Confessions and Communities.**”^{19!}

B) Mr. Demacopoulos chides His Eminence **Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos**, because in his memorandum to the Holy Synod he requests that the text be altered *to make clear that converts to Orthodoxy who were not baptized “by three immersions and emersions according to the Apostolic and Patristic tradition,” “must be baptized anew.”* As the Metropolitan of Nafpaktos supports his view by citing the sacred canons themselves, which the pre-synodal text of the fifth pre-synodal meeting (2nd Council, canon 7; 6th council, canon 95²⁰) also cites, Mr. Demacopoulos engages in arbitrary and unsubstantiated reasoning completely distorting as much the text of the sacred canons as also the practice of the Church which flows from them.

[The present text had already been completed when the very interesting article of **Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos** was publicized with the title **“The Synod of the Three Patriarchs from the year 1756,”**²¹ which indirectly but clearly answers Mr. Demacopoulos.]

Let us see, however, what the sacred canons say:

¹⁵ http://thriskeftika.blogspot.gr/2016/03/blog-post_90.html

¹⁶ <http://www.impantokratoros.gr/241FA488.el.aspx>

¹⁷ http://thriskeftika.blogspot.gr/2016/02/blog-post_84.html, <http://aktines.blogspot.gr/2016/03/23-03-2016.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.romfea.gr/diafora/7269-porismata-psifisma-imeridas-gia-tin-agia-kai-megali-sunodo>

¹⁹ <http://www.romfea.gr/images/article-images/2016/04/romfea2/ipomnhm.pdf>

²⁰ B-7: 7^{ος} κανόνας της Β΄ Οικουμενικής, Στ-95: 95^{ος} κανόνας της Στ΄ εν Τρούλω (Πενθέκτης) Οικουμενικής.

²¹ <http://www.romfea.gr/katigories/10-apopseis/7499-i-sunodos-ton-trion-patriarxon-tou-etous-1756>

Canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Council and canon 95 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Penthekte Council) are absolutely clear. For heretics which desire to join Orthodoxy, the Church applies exactitude (Baptism) or economy (*libelli* and Chrismation) The economic action is applied under presuppositions in the cases of former Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians, Monophysites, etc, while the exactitude of baptism is employed for Eunomians, Sabellians, Montanists, Manicheans, Marcionites, etc.

It is important to note that both canons (2:7, and 6:95) refer **to the Eunomians**, for which **the *kat'oikonimia* practice is not allowed, but rather they are to be baptized.** The Eunomians were of like-mind with the Arians. Nevertheless, while the Church employs economy to the Arians, it is denied to the like-minded Eunomians! Why? The canons are categorical and clear-cut in terms of the reasons given for the refusal: because **the Eunomians were “baptized in a single immersion [«οι εις μίαν κατάδυσιν βαπτίζομενοι»]** in contradistinction to the other Arians, which were baptized in accord with the Orthodox form (τύπος) of triple immersion and emersion, for which economy may be employed.

Likewise, in accord with the canons, the Church does not allow for economy to be employed for the Sabellians, who, while they baptized in the Name of Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, nevertheless confused the Divine Persons, or, as the canons note, **“Sabellians, which glorify the Son-Father”²² [«Σαβελλιανούς, τοὺς υἱοπατορίαν δοξάζοντας»].**

It is clear from the foregoing that the Church of the Ecumenical Councils, with the Sacred Canons, laid down **two basic presuppositions** for the employment of *kat'oikonomian* reception for those “being joined to Orthodoxy”: a) the baptismal ceremony which took place in heresy must have been carried out with **the epiclesis of the Name of the Holy Trinity**, and b) it must have observed **the orthodox baptismal form (τύπος) of three immersions and emersions.** It is precisely this practice of the Church which His Eminence Metropolitan Hierotheos supports and extends to the Latins. Consistent with the above-mentioned Sacred Canons, he explains that it is not possible to employ the *kat'oikonomian* reception in the case of those Latins who desire to be received into the Orthodox Church, for in the “baptism” by which they were received into heresy the canonical apostolic and patristic form (τύπος) of three

²² Translators note: This ancient heresy supposed that the Father and Son were one Person, sometimes appearing as the Father, other times as the Son. Pope Dionysius, Bishop of Rome from A.D. 259–269 wrote concerning them, “Sabellius...blasphemes in saying that the Son Himself is the Father and vice versa.” (See: Dionysius of Rome, “Against the Sabellians,” in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, and Liturgies*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 7, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), p.365.)

immersions and emersions has not been observed. Thus, as with the Eunomians, who did not observe the orthodox baptismal form (τύπος), the Latins must be baptized.

Professor Demacopoulos does not agree with this understanding. In his article he accuses Metropolitan Hierotheos of adopting “a decidedly ‘innovative’ reading of the canons and history to build his case against heterodox baptism.”

A. He claims that the refusal to employ economy in the case of the Eunomians is not due to their lack of observing the correct baptismal form (τύπος) but to their different teaching on the Holy Trinity which was reflected in the way in which they baptized with one immersion. In order to support his views he refers to “byzantine canonists,” writing: “no Byzantine canonist ever interpreted the error of the Eunomians to be primarily an error of ritual itself; their error was the rejection of the Trinity.”

Unfortunately, however, for Professor Demacopoulos his claims are entirely unfounded:

- i. The canons referring to the Eunomians are entirely clear. The canon refers only to the erroneous method of baptizing and not to their teaching, as Professor Demacopoulos would like it: “The Eunomians also, who baptize with one immersion” (*«Εύνομιανούς μέντοι, τοὺς εἰς μίαν κατάδυσιν βαπτιζομένους»*). On the contrary, the canons which have to do with the Sabellians refer to their heretical teaching on the Holy Trinity: “Sabellians, which glorify the Son-Father” [*«Σαβελλιανούς, τοὺς νιοπατορίαν δοξάζοντας»*].
- ii. The claim of the article’s author that “no Byzantine canonist ever interpreted the error of the Eunomians to be primarily an error of ritual itself; their error was the rejection of the Trinity,” demonstrates, if nothing else, that he does not have at his disposal, and therefore has not read, their texts. The famous three “byzantine canonists,” **Zonaras**, **Balsamon**, and **Aristinos** are absolutely clear and strongly affirm the interpretive approach of Metropolitan Nafpaktos, while they dismantle the assertions of Professor Demacopoulos.

All three interpreters, in opposition to the desire of the article’s author, do not make any reference whatsoever to the theological teachings of the Eunomians, but exclusively and singularly address their non observance of the Baptismal form of three immersion or emersions “according to the form [τύπος] of the Orthodox Church.”

A) Zonaras (12th c.): “Apollinarians. These are not rebaptized, therefore, because regarding holy baptism they do not differ from us at all, but they likewise baptize as the Orthodox...[but the Eunomians] these, then, the Holy Fathers ordained that they be grouped with all the other heretics which should be baptized. For both they who have not had divine baptism, **and they who have it, though not rightly,**

neither according to the form of the Orthodox Church, are in need of the same. Wherefore, they also are reckoned as never having been baptized.”²³

- B) Balsamon (12th c.): “But he said they ought to be baptized, the Eunomians, which have been baptized in one immersion...It should, therefore, be noted from the present canon, that all who have been baptized in one immersion, are again baptized.”²⁴
- C) Aristinos (12th Ce.): “The Eunomians have been baptized with one immersion... as the Hellenes (Pagans) let them be received. These are both baptized and Chrismated, for as (Pagans) Hellenes they are to be received.”²⁵

As it pertains to the contemporary practice with regard to the Latins, Balsamon is clear and unqualifying:

“It should, therefore, be noted from the present canon, that all who have been baptized in one immersion, are again baptized.”

The very same interpretive approach is followed by the great canonist St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite (18th Ce.) in the Rudder:

“We will accept thus all these converts without rebaptizing them, since, according to Zonaras, in respect of holy baptism they nowise differ from us, and baptize themselves like-wise as do the Orthodox. But as for Arians and followers of Macedonius, who are manifestly heretics, the Canon accepted them without rebaptism "economically," the primary reason being the vast multitude of such heretics then prevalent; and a second reason being that they used to baptize themselves in the same way as we do. As regards Eunomians, on the other hand; who practiced baptism with a single immersion . . . we accept them as Greeks, or, in other words, as persons totally unbaptized; for these persons either have not

²³ Ερμηνεία στον Β-7, Ράλλη Ποτλή, Σύνταγμα..., τ. Β' σ. 188-189:

Ζωναράς (12ος αι.): «Απολλιναρισταί. Ουκ αναβαπτίζονται ουν ούτοι, ότι περί το άγιον βάπτισμα κατ' ουδέν ημίν διαφέρονται, αλλ' επίσης τοις ορθοδόξοις βαπτίζονται ... [τους δε Ευνομιανούς...] τούτους τοίνυν, και τους άλλους πάντας αιρετικούς βαπτίζεσθαι οι ιεροί Πατέρες εθέσπισαν . ή γαρ ουκ έτυχον του θειου βαπτίσματος, ή τυχόντες ουκ ορθώς, ουδέ κατά τον τύπον της ορθοδόξου εκκλησίας αυτού έτυχον. διό και ως μηδέ την αρχήν βαπτισθέντας αυτούς λογίζονται».

²⁴ Ερμηνεία στον Β-7, Ράλλη Ποτλή, Σύνταγμα..., τ. Β' σ. 190-191:

Βαλσαμών (12ος αι.): «Τους δε αναβαπτίζεσθαι οφείλοντας είπεν είναι, Ευνομιανούς, τους εις μίαν κατάδυσιν βαπτιζόμενους ...Σημείωσαι δε από του παρόντος κανόνος, ότι πάντες οι βαπτιζόμενοι εις μίαν κατάδυσιν, πάλιν βαπτίζονται».

²⁵ Ερμηνεία στον Β-7, Ράλλη Ποτλή, Σύνταγμα..., τ. Β' σ. 191:

Αριστινός (12ος αι.): «Οι καταδύσει μιά βαπτιζόμενοι Ευνομιανοί ... ως Έλληνες δεχέσθωσαν. Ούτοι και βαπτίζονται, και χρίονται, ότι ως Έλληνες δεχέσθωσαν».

been baptized at all or, though baptized, have not been baptized aright and in a strictly Orthodox manner, wherefore they are regarded as not having been baptized at all.²⁶

St. Nikodemos also writes the following in his interpretation of Canon 46 of the Apostles:

This is the fact that those heretics whose baptism they accepted also rigorously observed the kind and the matter of the baptism of the Orthodox, and were willing to be baptized in accordance with the form of the Catholic Church. Those heretics, on the other hand, whose baptism they had refused to recognize, had counterfeited the ceremony of baptism and had corrupted the rite; or the mode of the kind, and the same may be said of the invocations, or that of the matter, and the same may be said of the immersions and emersions. . . Why is it, then, that those who were of quite equal power with respect to the heresies were not accorded equal rights by the Council? The evidence is plain that the Arians and the followers of Macedonius, on the one hand, were wont to be baptized in precisely the same fashion as were the Orthodox, with three immersions and emersions, and with three invocations of the Holy Trinity, without counterfeiting either the kind of the invocations or the matter of the water . . . The Eunomians, on the other hand, having counterfeited the mode and the matter of baptism, were wont to be baptized with only one immersion, as is stated in these same words in the Canon.”

Comparatively, we have a similar approach with Saint Nikodemos and the Byzantine canonists from the other Holy “Kollyvades” Fathers and also notable Post-Byzantine ecclesiastical authors (Saint Athanasios of Paros, Konstantine Oikonomos, Neophytos Kausokalybite, Evstratios Argenti, Christophoro Aitolos, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos, the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Cyril the Fifth, Sophronios the second, Kallinkos the fifth and Germanos, but also from the 1620 Synod of Moscow, the 1722 Synod of Constantinople, with the participation of the Partriarchs Athanasios the fourth of Antioch and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, as well as the Synodal Epistle of 1878.²⁷

²⁶ From *The Rudder* (Πεδάλιον), the interpretation of the seventh canon of the Second Ecumenical Council.

²⁷ For a more detailed examination, see: Protopresbyter George Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism: An Interpretation and Application Of Canon VII of the Second Ecumenical Council by the Kollyvades and Constantine Oikonomos* (A contribution to the historico-canonical evaluation of the problem of the validity of Western baptism), St. Paul’s Monastery, Mt. Athos, 1994. The English edition is available online:

In the same spirit, the 1755-6 Synod of the Three Patriarchs of the East (with Cyril the fifth of Constantinople, Mathaios of Alexandria and Parthenios of Jerusalem), declares in its famous definition: “the Holy Ecumenical Councils, the Second and the Penthekte (or “5th-6th Council”), enjoined that, **those which have not been baptized in three immersions and emersions**, and had not one invocation of the divine Persons pronounced with each of the immersions, but were baptized in some other way, **upon being joined to Orthodoxy are to be received as unbaptized.**”

B. Likewise, also Mr. Demacopoulos’ other assertion is also bereft of theological-canonical grounding, namely, that “no Byzantine canonist or apologist ever thought that Latin theological errors, such as the *filioque*, were so great that they required rebaptism. Neither Balsamon nor Chomatenos...nor even St. Mark of Ephesus ever suggested that the Latins should be baptized.”

Of course the canons refer to it and take into account the faith of the heretics (they speak of “those who have faith in the ‘son-father’” [«τοὺς νόμοπατορίαν δοξάζοντας»]).

However, the beliefs of those in heresy or their proximity to the faith of the Church, **was not of primary importance in the application of “oikonomia.”**

The Church applies economy in cases of grave anti-Trinitarian heresies such as that of the Arians (which are characterized as idolaters at the Seventh Ecumenical Council), and the Pnevmatimachoi (lit. “Spirit-fighters”), which received strict condemnations and anathematizing from all the Ecumenical Councils. **The same economy is applied** to the Novatians (Cathari), Aristeri, Testareskaidecatitae (or Tetraditae) with whom theological differences did not exist with regard to the basic dogmas of the faith, but only in matters of ecclesiastical order and worship (the Testareskaidecatitae celebrated Pascha on 14 Nissan, the Cathari did not receive a second marriage and the repentance of those who had fallen). On the contrary, while economy was applied to the Arians, to those who were of the same faith as them, the Eunomians, *akriveia* (exactitude) was observed (baptism), because these were baptized with only one immersion!

As was stated above, the Cathari, who, according to Zonaras “were not in error regarding the faith, but on account of hatred of brotherhood and denial of repentance to those who had fallen and returned,” were received with *libelle* and chrismation, while those **condemned by Ecumenical Synods** – Nestorians, Eutychites, and Severians and “those from similar heresies” [«τοὺς ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων αἰρέσεων»] – **with libelle alone, without chrismation.**

<http://oodegr.co/english/biblia/baptisma1/perieh.htm>, See also, in Greek: Ελ. Γιαννακοπούλου, *Ο αναβαπτισμός των αιρετικών 1453-1756*, Σταθμοί έρευνας και πράξης (ιστορικοκανονική θεώρηση), Αθήνα 2009.

The Church, therefore, demanded only [for the application of economy]: that the baptism in a heretical community had occurred in the Name of the Holy Trinity and that the correct form (τύπος) of baptism had been preserved.

Since, at the outset these two presuppositions were fulfilled in Rome (pouring or sprinkling *had not yet been generalized*), independent from the heretical teachings, which had then been accepted (which were much fewer than those heresies officially taught today), for this reason “Neither Balsamon nor Chomatenos ...nor even St. Mark of Ephesus ever suggested that the Latins should be baptized ,” but they were accepted by economy (*kat’ oikonomia*), since it was believed that they fulfilled – **at that time** – the canonical presuppositions.²⁸

Matters, however, changed with the **Council of Trent** (1545-1563), at which time **baptism by sprinkling or pouring was officially sanctioned as a canon for the entire Papal West**. From that point forward a serious question arose as to whether or not economy could be employed for the Latins, for they now failed to fulfill the canonical presuppositions of the correct form (τύπος) of baptism. Indeed, they were not even observing the single immersion of the Eunomians.

The question was finally and decisively addressed **with the common Patriarchal decision, the famous definition of the Synod of 1755-6 of the three Patriarchs of the East, Cyril the 5th of Constantinople, Mathew of the Alexandria and Parthenios of Jerusalem**. The decision holds that those who were coming to Orthodoxy from the Latins should be received by exactitude, i.e. baptism, since they did not fulfill the presuppositions of the 7th canon of the Second Ecumenical Council, nor the 95th canon of the 5th-6th (or Penthekte) Council. **This decision is still in effect today, never having been lifted officially [synodically].**²⁹

The decision of the Synod of 1755-6 was not at all well received by those Latins well-established at the High Gate (Jesuits and ambassadors of the Western powers, particularly from France). According to Metropolitan Germanos of Ainos, these Latins “issued many and diverse threats and even put pressure on the hierarchs, nobility and chosen from among the Greek people, so that they may drive out Cyril from the throne.” This is how, according to late Stephen Runciman, certain Metropolitans, “were found to have been cohorts with those who had been sent from the Catholic powers,”

²⁸ Again, for a more detailed examination, see: Protopresbyter George Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism*, pages 64-94 (in the print edition).

²⁹ See the recent article by Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos) of Nafpaktou entitled «Η Σύνοδος των Τριών Πατριάρχων του έτους 1756» [The Synod of the Three Hierarchs, 1756] online: <http://www.romfea.gr/katigories/10-apopseis/7499-i-sunodos-ton-trion-patriarxon-tou-etous-1756>. (Translators Note: His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) has also confirmed that the decision of 1756 is still in effect (even if often ignored), although rather than supporting the decision he has called for its repeal.)

and to collaborate in the removal of Cyril from the throne, to the great distress of the faithful of Constantinople. Concerning these methods of the Latins and Latin-minded with regard to the removal of Cyril the 5th, the professor is silent.

In conclusion: a careful, attentive and reverent study of the canonical tradition establishes with absolute clarity that **the Church of the Ecumenical Councils laid great stress and import on the exact preservation of the baptismal form of three immersion and emersions.** When the Church, in its own canons, which lay down the requirements for reception of heretics by economy, defines clearly that this economy cannot be applied to those “who have been baptized in one immersion,” is it possible for us to take it lightly and to legislate the opposite, and to apply it to the Latins who do not preserve even one immersion?

The Great and Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church is presented by some as the most significant happening in the recent history of our Church. To be sure, if we want to be honest, both the issues on the agenda of the Synod and way it is being prepared do not correspond to its grand name.³⁰

It is exceedingly regrettable that the sagacious, ancient proverb – “it was in labor for a month and brought forth a mouse” – has been proven true with regard to the now 90 year old “under preparation” Pan-Orthodox Synod, for this “pain” will, unfortunately, turn into shame for our Orthodox Church.

The main issue at stake is if the Council will be shown to be “following the Holy and Ecumenical Synods,” and whether it will proclaim the “faith which was once delivered.”

Unfortunately, the events to date have, justifiably, caused a great deal of commotion and concern among many faithful, even those on the level of institutional authority.

The main organizers of the Pan-Orthodox Synod wanted – and it largely succeeded – to keep the People of God (clerics and laity) far from the preparations of the Synod.

In the short time remaining before the Synod, every faithful person, according to his position, service and charisms, is called upon, with a sense of responsibility, to offer the Orthodox witness according to the precepts of his conscience.

³⁰ It is amazing to hear from the lips of a Primate of one of the Local Churches that “the Pan-Orthodox Synod, as it has developed, is devoid of any depth and being carried out for the prestige of . . . (he refers to the name of a particular First Hierarchy)”! This only goes to illustrate, unfortunately, the absolute cheapening of the conciliar system in the life of our Church today. The responsibility of those in control for this sad state of affairs is immense!

Above all, however, it is incumbent upon us all to pray and beseech the Holy Spirit to enlighten and strengthen our Bishops, that they might stand worthy of their episcopal duties in Synod, so that in a holy boast they may declare, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us."

May they, moreover, "following the Holy Fathers," rightly divide the word of Christ's Truth. Then, and only then, will the Pan-Orthodox Synod be accepted as worthy of its name. In the event of the opposite, the wounds which the Synod will bring to the Body of Christ will be very painful. May it not be!