



## St. Chrysostomos the New

*(Commemorated on September 7)*

The Icon painted for the Ἁγιοκατάταξις (“Glorification”) of the Saint at the Icon Studio of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, in Phyle (Athens), Greece

The scroll on the Icon reads: “We elect to be persecuted, struggling on the adamantine ramparts of Orthodoxy.”

## St. Chrysostomos the New Confessor and Hierarch

*“...But even if, hypothetically, all of the Old Calendarists were to go over to the New Calendar, and there remained only one Old Calendarist, I would be he.”*

The long-awaited Ἁγιοκατάταξις<sup>1</sup> of St. Chrysostomos the New (1870-1955), the so-called “Father” of the Greek Old Calendar movement, following a resolution of the Holy Synod of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece on May 8, 2016 (Old Style), took place on Saturday, May 15, 2016 (Old Style), the eve of the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, at the historic Convent of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Parnes (Athens), Greece (*see below*), where the Saint was buried and where his Relics, which were found to be wondrously and miraculously fragrant at their exhumation, are kept for veneration by the faithful.



At the beautiful Liturgy and the Glorification service, many hours in length, His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinkos, First Hier-

<sup>1</sup> The Ἁγιοκατάταξις (*Hagiokatataxis*) of a Saint signifies the Proclamation of the placement of his or her name in the Church’s Festal Calendar. This is sometimes designated as the Saint’s “Glorification” in English, in order to avoid the Roman Catholic term “canonization,” which does not reflect properly an Orthodox understanding of the Christocentric nature of sanctity and how the Church acknowledges the veneration of Saints. However, even the term “Glorification” is inadequate in describing the natural, organic process by which holy men and women, united to and deified by Christ, come to be venerated by the Christ-loving People of God as exemplars of human restoration in the Grace of the Redeemer and Savior.

arch of the Holy Synod, presided, concelebrating with all of the members of the Synod, save those absent by virtue of illness or infirmity, with His Eminence, Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa, First Hierarch of our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and one of his Hierarchs, and with three Hierarchs from our Sister Church in Romania. Many clergy, monks and nuns, and faithful from throughout Greece and from Eastern and Western Europe, the Balkans, Africa, Australia, America, and the Far East were also in attendance for what was one of the more important events in the long history of the Church of the Genuine (Old Calendar) Orthodox Christians of Greece, which St. Chrysostomos the New served from 1935-1955.<sup>2</sup> *(See below, Archbishop Kallinikos and two of the Deacons who served at the Divine Liturgy; the concelebrating Hierarchs just after the “Glorification” Liturgy; and*



<sup>2</sup> In 1944, he assumed full administrative guidance of the Church.



*above, a portion of the large crowd in the courtyard of the convent Church during the procession with the Saint's Icon.)*

The newly proclaimed Saint was born Χρυσόστομος Καβουρίδης (Chrysostomos Kabourídes [or Kavouridis]) on November 13, 1870, the Feast of St. John Chrysostomos, in Madytos, Eastern Thrace,<sup>3</sup> where he completed his secondary (high school) education. Recognized as a pious and gifted student, he went on to study theology at the famous Theological School of Halki, on the Princes' Islands near Constantinople, from which he graduated *magna cum laude*, in 1901, having written his baccalaureate thesis on the Orthodoxy of the Holy Martyr Cyril I (Λούκαρις), Œcumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>4</sup>

In the midst of his theological schooling, the future Saint was ordained to the Diaconate by the Œcumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Joachim III, who also raised him to the rank of Pro-

<sup>3</sup> Thrace is an ancient region in southeastern Europe that today lies between Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria, its borders on the North defined by the Balkan Mountains and on the South by the Rhodope Mountains and the Aegean Sea.

<sup>4</sup> His thesis was recently edited and published, with various apparatus, by Nicholas Mannes: *Ἡ ἐπὶ πτυχίῳ Διατριβὴ τοῦ Μακαριστοῦ Μητροπολίτου πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσοστόμου Καβουρίδου: «Ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία Κυρίλλου τοῦ Λουκάρεως»* (The baccalaureate thesis of the ever-memorable metropolitan *emeritus* of Phlorina, Chrysostomos Kabourides: the orthodoxy of Cyril Loukaris) (Athens, 2016).

todeacon, appointed him a preacher, and, in due course, Great Chancellor (Μέγας Πρωτοσύγκελλος) of the Œcumenical See. On August 5, 1908, he was ordained a Presbyter, and the following day was consecrated to the Episcopacy as Bishop of Imbros,<sup>5</sup> where he served until 1912. He was then appointed Metropolitan of Pelagonia,<sup>6</sup> where he served until *circa* 1918, when, in the midst of political turmoil in Greece, he retreated to Mt. Athos, where he remained until 1921.

Returning to Athens, Metropolitan Chrysostomos strongly opposed the election of the recently deposed Archbishop Meletios (Metaxakis) of Athens, an extreme liberal and reformer, as Œcumenical Patriarch in November of 1921. Despite protests, Meletios IV was enthroned in Constantinople in 1922. Having earned the ire of the new Patriarch, who used his clout to persecute him and to accuse him of various political motivations and ecclesiastical infractions,<sup>7</sup> the Saint fled to Alexandria, where it was proposed that he fill the orphaned Throne of the Patriarchate in that city. He declined such an eventuality and returned to Athens.

In 1923, Metaxakis, after recognizing Anglican orders (a move criticized even by the Vatican); recognizing the infamous “Living Church” (Живая Церковь), a liberal reform movement supported by the Soviet atheists in the hope, thereby, of further weakening the persecuted Orthodox Church of Russia; reforming the Orthodox Church’s Festal Calendar, on the pseudo-scientific pretext

<sup>5</sup> Imbros (the modern-day Turkish island of Gökçeada) is a large island in the Aegean Sea, inhabited since ancient times and frequently mentioned in Greek mythology. At the time that St. Chrysostomos was Bishop, the island was still largely Greek, as it remained for some years. In the mid-1940s, when a policy of discrimination and persecution by the Turkish government was implemented, the Greek population began to dwindle, and today only a very small handful of Greeks live on the island.

<sup>6</sup> Pelagonia is an ancient region that in modern times covers an area shared by the Greek Macedonian district and the former Yugoslavian territories known, since 1991, as the Republic of Macedonia. The city of Bitola (Битола in Macedonian, Μοναστήριον or Μοναστήρι in Greek, meaning “monastery”), now in the Republic of Macedonia, was the ecclesiastical Seat of the Greek Metropolis of Pelagonia.

<sup>7</sup> Later, when he assumed the leadership of the Old Calendar movement, despite his advanced age and the persecution that he suffered for doing so, these same absurd accusations were leveled against him, as part of constant attempts by the calendar reformers to discredit the Orthodox traditionalists in Greece.

of restoring its astronomical accuracy, but actually as part of an effort to establish an ecumenical calendar for the common celebration of Church Feasts by all Christian confessions, setting aside the ancient Orthodox observances; and enacting other reforms contrary to Orthodox Tradition, Metaxakis left Constantinople, under the pretext of needing medical treatment. Under pressure from the Greek government, he retired in September of the same year. He later (in 1926) became Patriarch of Alexandria.

Given the more favorable circumstances occasioned by the departure of Patriarch Meletios from the Œcumenical Throne, Metropolitan Chrysostomos was offered the newly established See of Philiaia and Geromerion, which he served as *Locum Tenens* from 1925 to 1926.<sup>8</sup> Then in March of 1926, His Eminence was transferred to the Metropolis of Phlorina (Florina), where he served until 1932.<sup>9</sup> Though the State Church of Greece, under political pressure and the sway of certain reformists, had adopted the New Calendar,<sup>10</sup> the Saint continued to celebrate by the traditional Church Calendar until 1928, when “he was forced to adjust the Orthodox Church’s Festal Calendar to the secular calendar,”<sup>11</sup> to which cir-

<sup>8</sup> This See, now known as the Metropolis of Paramythia, Philiates, Geromerion, and Parga, is in Greek Epirus, which is located in northwestern Greece. The borders of ancient Epirus, after which Greek Epirus is named, lie, today, within the borders of Greece and Albania.

<sup>9</sup> Like Bitola, Phlorina, a city in the mountainous northwestern region of Greek Macedonia, is situated on the expansive plain of Pelagonia.

<sup>10</sup> The so-called “corrected” or “revised” Julian Calendar—in its original form the invention of the Serbian astronomer Milutin Milanković, but, as adopted only in part, in 1923, by Patriarch Meletios, a clumsy attachment of the Orthodox *Paschalion* to the Gregorian Calendar—was implemented by the Church of Greece in 1924. The result was a breach with Holy Tradition and an assault on the liturgical unity of the national Orthodox Churches, the majority of which, to this day, follow the traditional Festal Calendar of the Orthodox Church, which is largely based on the Julian or “Old” Calendar and runs thirteen days behind the Gregorian Calendar.

<sup>11</sup> See Metropolitan Cyprian II of Oropos and Phyle, *Τερά Ἀκολουθία τοῦ ἐν Ἁγίοις Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Χρυσοστόμου τοῦ Νέου, Ὁμολογητοῦ Ἱεράρχου (1870-1955)* (The holy service for our father among the saints, Chrysostomos the new, confessor and hierarch [1870-1955]) (Athens: The Holy Synod of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, 2016), p. 18 (17). This publication contains the magnificent service to St. Chrysostomos the New, composed by Metropolitan Cyprian, as well as a helpful timeline of the Saint’s life.

cumstance he reacted with forceful objections to the Holy Synod, seeing the calendar change as a dangerous innovation.

Following a serious illness necessitating his hospitalization in Athens, the Hierarch retired from his See in 1932. He remained in Athens, and in 1934 he came into contact with the ecclesiastical communities of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, the so-called “Old Calendarists.” In 1935, along with two other Hierarchs of the State Church of Greece, Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, he formed a Synod of Bishops to provide those Orthodox Christians in Greece who opposed the calendar innovation, then a large part of the population, with a synodal structure. Thus walling themselves off from the innovators in order to preserve the purity of the Church’s witness, they established the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, which the Saint served until his death.

To grasp the momentousness of the undertaking to which St. Chrysostomos dedicated himself, we must understand that he had become convinced, at a time in life that poor health and senescence would have justified his leaving the task to someone else, that his opposition to the change in the calendar was an absolute necessity. Two very percipient statements from him encapsulate his understanding of the great importance of the Church’s Festal Calendar and the deleterious effects of the precipitous reform thereof. He observes that the Holy Fathers

raised in the form of ramparts and bastions the bulwarks of the Canons and Synodal decrees.... One of these ramparts of Orthodoxy is the Church Calendar, which separates the Orthodox Churches from the heretical ones in the celebration of the Feasts and the observance of the fasts, and thus provides the simpler among the faithful with a perceptible conception of the ecclesiastical difference between the Orthodox Christian and the heretic or heterodox Christian.

... The question of the Church Calendar is not one of times and dates for our Church, but a matter of unity and a concerted line of defense of Orthodoxy against heresy and false belief.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See his “Υπόμνημα ἀπολογητικὸν ὑπὲρ ἀναστηλώσεως τοῦ Πατρῆου Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Ἡμερολογίου” (Memorandum in defense of the restoration of the traditional church calendar), in Elias Angelopoulos and Dionysios Batistatos, *Μητροπολίτης πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσόστομος Καβουρίδης: Ἀγωνιστὴς τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας καὶ τοῦ ἔθνους* (Chrysostomos Kabourides, metropolitan *emeritus* of Phlorina: struggler for orthodoxy and for the Greek nation) (Athens, 1981), pp. 157, 158.

At a time when the ecumenical movement—spearheaded by Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis, who, under the influence of the universalist precepts of ecumenism, internationalism, and Freemasonry, instituted the calendar innovation as a first move towards a universal “Christian calendar”—had only just begun to erode the self-identification of Orthodox as the inheritors of the legacy of the early Church and the continuators of undivided Christendom, the Saint grasped clearly the link between the calendar innovation and the threat posed by ecumenism to traditional Orthodox ecclesiology and spirituality. Thus, he wrote with prophetic insight these words about political ecumenism and Orthodoxy:

To be sure, rapprochement between the two Christian worlds of the East and the West in the celebration of Christian Feasts is desired by all and is a matter of great moral value and significance. However, it must be pursued and attained in the service of Christian truth and for the glory of the God-Man Jesus Christ. Were such to be the case, the moral interests of the entire Christian world would truly be served in the right Faith. But when this rapprochement springs from materialistic and worldly interests and motives and is undertaken at the expense of Orthodoxy and to the diminution of the glory of Christ, then personal interests, and especially ecclesiastical ambitions and desires, are served, to the detriment of the idea of the Church and of the prestige of Orthodoxy in general. Her soul consists of the traditions and the God-inspired and unerring documents of the Apostolic Constitutions and the decisions of the Seven Holy and Ecumenical Synods, the distortion of which diminishes the Divinely wrought and inviolable authority of the Divine essence of the Church of Christ. Thus, all harm done to Orthodoxy and every diminution thereof becomes the harm and diminution of the Divinity of Christ, from Whom there shines the sublime and Divine character and the deeper and Divine meaning of the Christian religion.<sup>13</sup>

In the course of the struggles of St. Chrysostomos the New as one of the founders—and later the acknowledged “Father”—of the Greek Old Calendar movement, his staunch but moderate and wisely articulated defense of the Church Calendar as a banner for the preservation of Orthodox Tradition and of a proper self-aware-

<sup>13</sup> Metropolitan Chrysostomos (formerly) of Phlorina, “Αναίρεσις τοῦ «Ἐλέγχου» τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσσοστόμου Παπαδοπούλου” (Refutation of the “censure” of archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos), in *Ἄπαντα πρ. Φλωρίνης Χρυσσοστόμου* (The complete works of [metropolitan] Chrysostomos of Phlorina) (Ἑλληνικὸ τῆς Γορτυνίας: Hiera Mone Hagiou Nikodemou, 1997), Vol. I, pp. 260f.).

ness on the part of Orthodox Christians of their rôle in the Divine Economy brought him many trials and tribulations. Though he was accustomed to the vicissitudes of ecclesiastical life during the politically unstable decades in which he served the Greek State Church—a series of dictatorships, conflicts between the royalists and anti-royalists, tragic wars in the Balkans, and the First World War—facing persecution for his defense of the Church Calendar must have been daunting for him.

Immediately after he and his fellow Bishops from the State Church formed an administrative Synod for the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, consecrating four new Bishops in the process, they were all censured, deposed, and variously arrested, tried, and exiled at the behest of the State Church. They also became the victims of character assassination and, causing the greatest difficulty for them, saw actual violence visited on their flock by police and military forces at the disposal of the State Church of Greece. So extreme were some attacks against the Old Calendarists, as authorities attempted to break up their worship services, that a number of Martyrs emerged from this period.

Instances of personal weakness and internal strife also arose among the Bishops themselves. Three Bishops (two of them from among the new Bishops consecrated by the Synod), under threat and unable to endure in their struggles, returned to the New Calendar State Church. Two other Bishops, one of them also from among the newly consecrated Bishops, initiated an ecclesiological debate, one that fractured the movement and that remains constantly divisive even to this day. One of these Bishops, proclaiming that the New Calendarists were heretics, without Grace, and outside the Orthodox Church, by virtue of their innovations—a position that St. Chrysostomos in particular would not endorse without reservations—established a small, independent group of Old Calendarist zealots that exists to this day.<sup>14</sup>

In 1951, when the Saint was already eighty-one years of age, these hardships and disappointments weighing heavily upon him (he had done all that he could to unite and strengthen the fractured Old Calendarist communities), a new wave of persecution, instituted by the harsh and severe policies of the then Archbishop of the State Church of Greece, Spyridon, was put in place. The Old

<sup>14</sup> See Archbishop Chrysostomos, Bishop Ambrose, and Bishop Auxentios, *The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece*, Fifth Edition (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2009), pp. 19-22.

Calendarist clergy were, with the collusion of government authorities, arrested and beaten, their Churches confiscated, and even their basic civil rights violated. Sadly, St. Chrysostomos was exiled to a remote monastery, suffering great deprivation. Fortunately, however, Spyridon's policies were halted by the Greek Prime Minister, who personally saw to it that the Saint was returned to Athens, where he lived out his remaining few years in peace.<sup>15</sup>

As anyone who has read his extensive writings,<sup>16</sup> subtle and eloquent and composed in beautiful Greek prose, can attest, this new Saint, a Saint for all Tradition-loving Orthodox, was a man who never showed rancor towards his persecutors, always styled himself as a man seeking their return to the full Traditions of the Church, and, however firm, never relinquished a spirit of love. He never raised his opinions to the level of dogma, was not arrogant about his rightness and the wrongness of others, and would even accede to what he did not necessarily endorse (as his own words aver), for the sake of unity; yet on issues of true dogma and Holy Tradition or loyalty to his word and to persons whom he respected, he remained uncompromising. And his legacy bore fruit in 2014, when, in his spirit, the two major factions of Old Calendarists in Greece, the Holy Synod in Resistance and the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, united.

Let us close with the words of two famous New Calendarist Hierarchs. St. Chrysostomos' spiritual son and former Deacon, the late Œcumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, who was by any measure an "arch-ecumenist," referred, perhaps with foresight, to the new Saint as his "blessed elder *Metropolitan Chrysostomos* of Pelagonia."<sup>17</sup> And the late Metropolitan Augoustinos of Phlorina, at his enthronement to that State Church See, said of St. Chrysostomos the New: "I am about to administer a diocese in which Hierarchs radiating wisdom and virtue shone forth during the Turkish domination, the last of whom was the blessed and wise Chrysostomos (Kavourides) of Pelagonia, the spiritual Father of the current Œcumenical Patriarch (Athenagoras)."

† BC

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-26.

<sup>16</sup> For a partial list of the Saint's numerous writings, see Metropolitan Cyprian, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-33 (αζ-λγ).

<sup>17</sup> Chrysostomos *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.