

Hiding behind the "Synodal Press Office" of Albania. Is it due to ignorance, hypocrisy, or maleficence?

Your Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, most beloved and precious holy father,

Forgive me for not receiving your paternal letter directly; instead, I am notified of yet another synodal "Press Release" circulated throughout the World Wide Web, and what a web you weave. I thoroughly examined your comments concerning the uncanonical ecclesiastical acts of the simulacrum-Patriarch Cyril of Moscow and your recently lost words on my blog archonielias.com, open for everyone to read and evaluate.

The inspirational "When they throw stones at us, we use them to build churches" seems nowadays, when they pose questions, we opt for public humiliation. Why, Your Beatitude, do you present this way? As I have no synod to hide behind, I have only the Truth on my side, the whole truth, as you are keenly aware the public is not privy to your maneuvers behind the scenes, which genuinely saddens me.

The Church is comprised of sinners, and we, including myself, are among the first. As you meekly remind, at every opportunity in your public statements about the Ecumenical Patriarch, no one is beyond reproach. However, your synod must address fundamental issues instead of utilizing worldly diplomatic undertones. In this regard, you seem to be following the methods of the so-called Russian Patriarch. Your press office doesn't seem to appreciate "Patrology courses," and you made it clear in a public and demeaning manner. Congratulations.

Your Beatitude, you've freely criticized me for responding to your public attack, which was translated and posted on the esteemed Φως Φανάριο. However, with the weight of your Autocephalous status, I'd like to point out that your affront has been widely disseminated across countless Orthodox media outlets in English, Greek, Albanian, and dozens of Russian platforms that eagerly feed on any criticism of the Mother Church. Your Beatitude, in our "public dialogue," you belittle my references to patrology; however, in your role as Archbishop, you praise the Pagan Spartan inspiration while accusing me of having "riding the rod" and surrounding myself with a noble mantle, evolving into inspectors, prosecutors, and judges of the local Orthodox Churches." How insulting and petty. Among us simple folk, there is another well-known Byzantine ρωμαίος expression apt for your situation; you've "Stirred the turd." Nicely done.

Your press office seems to create an impression of an untouchable class of hierarchs separate from the larger Body of Christ, and this false ecclesiology suggests that autocephalous churches can operate without accountability. Your worldwide audience, which may not have had the chance to read my initial essay or my subsequent public response to your synod's admonition, is now exposed to my perspective. I believe it's best left to the laity to decide whether my comment, which seems to have unsettled you and prompted an official synodal press release, holds any validity.

As you correctly quote, I stated that "**international oligarchs with vested interests have contributed to the rebuilding or restoration of over 250 churches.**" I have no personal stake in your financing beyond your inexhaustible fixation on "tens of millions of euros," but your vehement denial recalls Shakespeare's famous quote, "Thou doth protest much." Could this be your attempt to divert attention from the comment regarding your alleged ties to the Russian World?

You castigate Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarch as causing an "alarming phenomenon" and further accuse us of "control, ridicule, insult institutions, personalities, Church Synods, without a trace of respect for church offices, academic prestige, contribution to the Church and society." Here again, Your Beatitude has it completely wrong. We, as Archons, speak with the utmost respect for Orthodoxy and Orthodox unity and do not hide behind our office. It is a call we do not take lightly, as perhaps your Beatitude's press office assumes. We do not ridicule or insult Christian institutions; we abhor corruption masquerading as legitimate forms of Orthodox expression. We do not insult church synods of "local" Orthodoxy unless they protect fratricide, foment schism, produce anticanonical contributions, or **protect wolves in shepherd's clothing.**

Perhaps Your Beatitude's synodal press office can leave this humble iconographer aside a bit and address the true crimes perpetrated by the Russian Church of which you find yourself accused of complicity.

I reject your synod's entire subtext: attack the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Archbishops, Archimandrites, and Archons from the USA, Germany, and Greece, and not mention Russian war criminals like the simulacrum-Patriarch Cyril, whose adulation you seek, and which keeps your name prominently in the headlines. Your Beatitude, in the political world, is called pandering, and it is beneath your office. It demeans the archbishop's office, as Cyril demeans the title "Patriarch."

Let's redirect our discussion towards the wrongdoing committed by Patriarch Cyril, the simulacrum-Patriarch. His ecclesiastic crimes and your refusal to refer to his many collaborations as "Putin's altar boy" appear to carry greater significance. None of these crimes were addressed competently by your person or synod.

- ❖ The invasion of the ecclesiastic territory of the Holy See of Alexandria
- ❖ Moscow's aversion and manipulation as impediment Council in Crete 2016
- ❖ Blocking communion to the flocks of Constantinople, Alexandria, Cyprus, and select Greek Bishops from receiving in any Russian Orthodox Church (MP, ROCOR) removed from "Russian Diptychs."
- ❖ The Patriarchate of Moscow performing a Divine Liturgy at the Tskhinvali Holy Trinity Cathedral by the Russian Church within the territory of the Patriarchate of Georgia
- ❖ In modern-day Turkey, the ancient and historic ecclesiastic territory of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Muscovite clergy perform unsanctioned services constantly.
  - Constantinople
  - Antalya
  - Smyrna
  - Eskişehir (near Ankara)
  - Samsu
  - Kuşadası and many more
- ❖ Russians neglected the canonical invitation to convene in Kyiv and settle the "Ukrainian situation."

Shall we go on? I think not.

The leaders who choose not to condemn the simulacrum-Patriarch Cyril's evil crimes against our Church and humanity are demoralizing the flock. This Post-Modern Russian Patriarch orchestrates numerous violations with such audacity and ostentatious distinction that one questions where and when the limp lukewarm autocephalous church hierarchy will speak up. Your Beatitude, it is time for Truth, not partisanship. It is time for Tradition, not domination. It is time for Unity, not coercion.

I honor Your Beatitude's miraculous, almost mythical accomplishments; however, we should not hide behind our accomplishments considering the overt Russian aggressions against the Holy Orthodox Church that metastasized daily with every silent autocephalous church. As an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarch, we are keenly aware of our duty and commitment to defending the Orthodox Church according to the Ecumenical councils; for me, this begins with my household. And protect her, I shall.

First, they came for Crimea, and I did not speak out--  
Because I was not a Crimean.

Then they came for Georgia, and I did not speak out--  
Because I was not a Georgian.

Then they came for the Greeks, and I did not speak out--  
Because I was not a Greek.

Then they came for me—and no one was left to speak for me.

In His service  
Archon Elias Damianakis