

Open Letter Response to the Albanian Synodal Press Release

Holy Fathers of the Albanian Synod

Bless.

I am writing in response to the recent official communication from the Synod Press Office, "Essential Refutation," concerning matters that pertain to me. This misguided overreaction of the Albanian Synod to my humble assertion that "*International oligarchs*" (ultra-high-net-worth individuals) helped rebuild the devastated Church of Albania. I understand English is not a primary language of the Synod, so I assume those in your English translation department have an agenda of their own.

I had the great honor of venerating Saint Kosmas Aitolos in the magnificent Resurrection Cathedral in Tirana, who taught:

"When the evil conduct of one person begins to affect others, you should not show long-suffering; instead of your own advantage, you should seek that of the others so that they may be saved. For virtue involving many people is more valuable than virtue involving only one."

The contemporary manifestation of the "evil conduct of one person affecting others" in our time is exemplified by the actions of the current Moscow bishop, Kirill. His involvement, encouragement, and literal blessing of a divisive fratricidal war with our Ukrainian brethren and his fostering internal strife within our Holy Orthodox Church at every opportunity is a significant concern.

In the realm of discourse, it is common for attacks to be provoked by the unveiling of truths. In contrast, the propagation of lies rarely stirs such intense animosity as your holy Synod chose to engage. Augustine once noted, "Truth is like a lion; you don't have to defend it. Let it loose, and it will defend itself." Chrysostom teaches, "Truth is the mother of anger," and Ephrem the Syrian, 'Truth fears no trial.'

My primary concern is not understanding why these truths have elicited such intense anger, warranting a synodal response. Addressing your internal accounting is of little importance to me. Still, your deflecting "Press Release" should not overshadow the more significant issue of your complicity in the Russian World heresy. This theological deviation threatens our Orthodox Church more substantially than a humble iconographer's blog impression.

The wisdom of St. Basil the Great endures: "A tree is known by its fruit; a person by their deeds." Yet, it baffles the mind that the Albanian Holy Synod chooses to assail a humble iconographer and Archon of the Ecumenical Throne for discourse on the "Orthodox status quo," all the while turning a blind eye to the controversial and unaddressed presence of Kirill's Church in territories beyond his canonical jurisdiction. The Synod's feeble statement regarding Moscow's uncanonical incursions into Africa's ecclesiastical affairs was disappointing. Moreover, this statement conspicuously omitted any reference to Moscow's ministerial interventions in Turkey, Cyprus, Korea, Singapore, and numerous other locations. This omission highlights a concerning pattern of behavior by Moscow and her allies that merits attention and scrutiny.

Kirill's many anti-Orthodox actions spark significant questions and concerns, not just due to his fratricidal war. The Albanian synods' thinly veiled avoidance of addressing these issues on social media while lending support to Moscow's stance on Ukraine autocephaly speaks for itself. Your suggestion of convening another Pan-Orthodox Council appears to be nothing more than Kabuki theater, resembling a hypocritical charade, where you portray yourselves as an impartial mediator.

Please, dear Fathers, the world is watching. “Στῶμεν καλῶς, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου.”

It's important to reflect on 2016 in Crete when Kirill prioritized division over unity while cloaking his actions in a facade of righteousness and concern. This inconvenient Truth is a stark reminder of the century-old pattern characterizing the Muscovite simulacrum patriarch's approach.

Your misplaced frustration with my simple statement pales compared to your feeble response to the Church's genuine grievances and Kirill's involvement in crimes against the Church and humanity.

I sincerely believe that open and frank dialogue is paramount for the progress and, above all, unity of our Church. I would have preferred a private communication, but alas, the Albanian Synod chose an official public press release. In this context, I propose that this same Synod consider drawing inspiration from the teachings of Augustine of Hippo and remind "Patriarch" Kirill of the principle, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

I have the utmost reverence for our shared faith and devotion to our Church. Saint Kosmas Aitolos preached, "The Christian is not the one who has achieved perfection, but the one who is struggling to achieve it." I struggle, and I remain,

Yours in Christ's service,

Iconographer Elias Damianakis

Archon Maestor Great Church of Christ