

## Another Act of Betrayal

I have stood by and supported the Patriarch and the Ecumenical Holy Synod time and again, but if the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Ecumenical Holy Synod can flippantly “change their mind” and go back on their word, then Orthodox Christianity worldwide has another major crisis of integrity.

I have stood by and supported the Patriarch and the Ecumenical Holy Synod time and again against the fundamentalist Ephraimites who are more concerned with the outward form rather than content of substance. They have accused the Ecumenical Patriarch of betraying the faith because he said “all people under God are brothers and sisters”. That is not betraying the faith. The Ephraimite traditionalists show their arrogant, elitist, and superficial beliefs with this. I stood up and defended the Patriarch. But I am not blind either, and I could never be a sycophant. If the reports today in the National Herald are true (July 13, 2017) then we have bigger problems than anyone can ever have imagined. In this instance, *I cannot support the Phanar.*

The National Herald reported today (7/13/17) that the Patriarchate approved the list of candidates in March of 2017. Now the Patriarchate is saying that the list is incomplete. Were they not happy with the election results so they contrived a “do-over”? Where is the integrity in that? Can it be that The National Herald has it wrong? I don't think so. I believe The National Herald has more integrity and honor than the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

It is possible that the Phanar caved in to a great deal of pressure from camps representing hierarchs that were not on the previously approved list of candidates. These orchestrated lobbying events are biased toward a personality and may not be the will of the Holy Spirit. Barabbas emerged victorious and was released because of the well-organized lobbyists that shouted his name to Pontius Pilate. The result is that Jesus was crucified. Innocence and purity were cast asunder. The same thing is now happening in our Church. Another possibility is that Turkey has pressured the Patriarch to not have a Cypriot Metropolitan. Who knows? What we do know is the word of the Phanar is compromised.

Let me add that I am involved in the business world. A man's word must be his bond. If someone you're doing business with does not keep his word, even only once, his credibility is shot, and no one (at that level) will deal with him ever again – at least no one who actually has integrity and honor. This is why I am so very deeply disturbed and saddened by the Patriarchate approving the list, but now going back on its word. Is the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church that incompetent or manipulative? Whatever the answer, it illustrates that integrity and honor at the Phanar are optional.

The Patriarch and the Patriarchate are supposed to represent the cream of the crop. Instead, the Phanar seems to be operating like a bunch of Yiayias and right now Metropolitans are being summoned to the Phanar to huddle and come up with the company lines to disseminate to us. Forgive me for

sounding disrespectful, I do not mean to be. I am merely giving you honest sentiments that many have, but few will speak. After all, who wants to admit they are disillusioned?

The actions of the Phanar again suggest we are being treated like a bunch of buffoons, or, that we are all hostages with the hierarchical attitude “what are they (the laity) gonna do?”. Leadership is not thuggery. Leadership is not so insecure and afraid that it insists on surrounding itself with sycophants. Leadership is engaged and not aloof to the needs of those who depend on them. Except of course in the Greek Orthodox Church. In my opinion, Niphon and others influencing the Phanar appear to me to be shallow sycophants that do not have the capacity nor character to objectively look at themselves, let alone to look after the needs of millions worldwide.

Margaret Thatcher once said “Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren’t.” The Phanar needs to adapt this to their leadership, for example: “If you have to tell people you know best, maybe you don’t.”

Pray for our Church. We need it.

Yianni Pappas

July 2017