

DEMANDING A STRICT FAST ON SATURDAYS IS THE FIRST HERESY OF THE PAPISTS

In his two letters to Fr. Pedro, in several other writings on the internet, as well as through his verbal discussions, Bp. Kirykos presents the idea that a Christian is forbidden to ever commune on a Sunday, except by “economía,” and that if per chance a Christian is granted this “economía,” he would nevertheless be compelled to fast strictly without oil on the Saturday, that is, the day prior to receiving Holy Communion.

For instance, outside of fasting periods, Bp. Kirykos, his sister, Vincentia, and the “theologian” Mr. Eleutherios Gkoutzidis insist that laymen must fast for seven days without meat, five days without dairy, three days without oil, and one day without even olives or sesame pulp, for fear of these things containing oil. If someone prepares to commune on a Sunday, this means that from the previous Sunday he cannot eat meat. From the Tuesday onwards he cannot eat dairy either. On the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday he cannot partake of oil or wine. While on the Saturday he must perform a xerophagy in which he cannot have any processed foods, and not even olives or sesame pulp. This means that the strictest fast will be performed on the Saturday, in violation of the Canons. This also means that for a layman to ever be able to commune every Sunday, he would need to fast for his entire life long. Yet, Bp. Kirykos and his priests exempt themselves from this rule, and are allowed to partake of any foods all week long except for Wednesday and Friday. They can even partake of all foods as late as midnight on Saturday night, and commune on Sunday morning without feeling the least bit “unworthy.” But should a layman dare to partake of oil even once on a Saturday, he is brushed off as “unworthy” for Communion on Sunday.

Meanwhile during fasting periods such as Great Lent, since Monday to Friday is without oil anyway, Bp. Kirykos, Sister Vincentia and Mr. Gkoutzidis believe that laymen should also fast on Saturday without oil, and even without olives and sesame pulp, in order for such laymen to be able to commune on Sunday. Thus again they require a layman to violate Apostolic, Ecumenical, Local and Patristic Canons, and even fall under the penalty of excommunication (according to these same canons) in order to be “worthy” of communion. What an absurdity! What a monstrosity! A layman must become worthy of excommunication in order to become “worthy” of Communion!

The 9th Canon of the Holy Apostles advises: *“If any clergyman be found fasting on Sunday, or on Saturday (except for one only), let him be deposed from office. If, however, he is a layman, let him be excommunicated.”* The term “fasting”

refers to the strict form of fasting, not permitting oil or wine. The term “*except for one*” refers to Holy and Great Saturday, the only day of the year upon which fasting without oil and wine is expected.

But it was not only the Holy Apostles who commanded against this Pharisaic Sabbatian practice of fasting on Saturdays. But this issue was also addressed by the Quinisext Council (Πενδέκτη Σύνοδος = Fifth-and-Sixth Council), which was convened for the purpose of setting Ecclesiastical Canons, since the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils had not provided any. The reason why this Holy Ecumenical Council addressed this issue is because the Church of Old Rome had slowly been influenced by the Arian Visigoths and Ostrogoths who invaded from the north, by the Manicheans who migrated from Africa and from the East through the Balkans, as well as by the Jews and Judaizers, who had also migrated to the West from various parts of the East, seeking asylum in Western lands that were no longer under Roman (Byzantine) rule. Thus there arose in the West a most Judaizing practice of clergy forcing the laymen to fast from oil and wine on every Saturday during Great Lent, instead of permitting this only on Holy and Great Saturday.

Thus, in the 55th Canon of the Fifth-and-Sixth Ecumenical Council, we read: “*Since we have learned that those in the city of the Romans during the holy fast of Lent are fasting on the Saturdays thereof, contrary to the ecclesiastical practice handed down, it has seemed best to the Holy Council for the Church of the Romans to hold rigorously the Canon saying: If any clergyman be found fasting on Sunday, or on Saturday, with the exception of one only, let him be deposed from office. If, however, a layman, let him be excommunicated.*” Thus the Westerners were admonished by the Holy Ecumenical Council, and requested to refrain from this unorthodox practice of demanding a strict fast on Saturdays.

Now, just in case anyone thinks that a different kind of fast was observed on the Saturdays by the Romans, by Divine Economy, the very next canon admonishes the Armenians for not fasting properly on Saturdays during Great Lent. Thus the 56th Canon of the Fifth-and-Sixth Council reads: “*Likewise we have learned that in the country of the Armenians and in other regions on the Saturdays and on the Sundays of Holy Lent some persons eat eggs and cheese. It has therefore seemed best to decree also this, that the Church of God throughout the inhabited earth, carefully following a single procedure, shall carry out fasting, and abstain, precisely as from every kind of thing sacrificed, so and especially from eggs and cheese, which are fruit and produce from which we have to abstain. As for those who fail to observe this rule, if they are clergymen, let them be deposed from office; but if they are laymen, let them be excommunicated.*” Thus, just as the Roman Church was admonished for

fasting strictly on the Saturdays within Great Lent, the Armenian Church is equally admonished for overly relaxing the fast of Saturdays in Great Lent.

Here the Holy Fifth-and-Sixth Ecumenical Council clearly gives us the exact definition of what the Holy Fathers deem fit for consumption on Saturdays during Great Lent. For if this canon forbids the Armenians to consume eggs and cheese on the Saturdays of Great Lent, whereas the previous canon forbids the Westerners to fast on the Saturdays of Great Lent, it means that the midway between these two extremes is the Orthodox definition of fasting on Saturdays of Great Lent. The Orthodox definition is clearly marked in the Typicon as well as most calendar almanacs produced by the various Local Orthodox Churches, including the very almanac as well as the wall calendar published yearly by Bp. Kirykos himself. These all mark that oil, wine and various forms of seafood are to be consumed on Saturdays during Great Lent, except of course for Holy and Great Saturday which is marked as a strict fast without oil, in keeping with the Apostolic Canon.

Now, if one is to assume that partaking of oil, wine and various seafood on the Saturdays of Great Lent is only for those who are not planning to commune on the Sundays of Great Lent, may he consider the following. The very meaning of the term "excommunicate" is to forbid a layman to receive Holy Communion. So then, if people who partake of oil, wine and various permissible seafood on Saturdays during Great Lent are supposedly forbidden to commune on the Sundays of Great Lent, then this means that the 55th Canon of the Fifth-and-Sixth Council would be entirely without purpose. For if those who do partake of such foods on Saturdays are supposedly disqualified from communion on Sundays, then what is the purpose of also disqualifying those who do not partake of oil on Saturdays from being able to commune on Sundays, since this canon requires their excommunication? In other words, such a faulty interpretation of the canons by anyone bearing such a notion would need to call the Holy Fathers hypocrites. They would need to consider that the Holy Fathers in their Canon Law operated with a system whereby "you're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't!"

Thus, according to this faulty interpretation, if you do partake of oil and wine on Saturdays of Great Lent, you are disqualified from communion due to your consumption of those foods. But if you do not partake of these foods on Saturday you are also disqualified from communion on Sunday, for this canon demands your excommunication. In other words, whatever you do you cannot win! Fast without oil or fast with oil, you are still disqualified the next day. So how does Bp. Kirykos interpret this Canon in order to keep his Pharisaical custom? He declares that "all Christians" are excommunicated from ever being able to commune on a Sunday! He demands that only by

extreme economy can Christians commune on Sunday, and that they are to only commune on Saturdays, declaring this the day “all Christians” ought to “know” to be their day of receiving Holy Communion! Thus the very trap that Bp. Kirykos has dug for himself is based entirely on his inability to interpret the canons correctly. Yet hypocritically, in his second letter to Fr. Pedro he condemns others of supposedly “not interpreting the canons correctly,” simply because they disagree with his Pharisaical Sabbatianism!

But the hypocrisies continue. Bp. Kirykos continuously parades himself in his printed periodicals, on his websites, and on his various online blogs, as some kind of “confessor” of Orthodoxy against Papism and Ecumenism. He even dares to openly call himself a “confessor” on Facebook, where he spends several hours per day in gossip and idletalk as can be seen by his frequent status updates and constant chatting. This kind of pastime is clearly unbecoming for an Orthodox Christian, let alone a hierarch who claims to be “Genuine Orthodox” and a “confessor.” So great is his “confession,” that when the entire Kiousis Synod, representatives from the Makarian Synod, the Abbot of Esphigmenou, members from all other Old Calendarist Synods in Greece, as well as members of the State Hierarchy, had gathered in Athens forming crowds of clergy and thousands of laity, to protest against the Greek Government’s antagonism towards Greek culture and religion, our wonderful “confessor” Bp. Kirykos was spending that whole day chatting on Facebook. The people present at the protest made a joke about Bp. Kirykos’s absence by writing the following remark on an empty seat: “Bp. Kirykos, too busy being an online confessor to bother taking part in a real life confession.” When various monastics and laymen of Bp. Kirykos’s own metropolis informed him that he should have been there, he yelled at them and told them “This is all rubbish, I don’t care about these issues, the only real issue is the cheirothesia of 1971.” How lovely. Greece is on the verge of geopolitical and economical self-destruction, and Bp. Kirykos’s only care is for his own personal issue that he has repeated time and time again for three decades, boring us to death.

But what does Bp. Kirykos claim to “confess” against, really? He claims he confesses against “Papo-Ecumenism.” In other words, he views himself as a fighter against the idea of the Orthodox Church entering into a syncretistic and ecumenistic union with Papism. Yet Bp. Kirykos does not realize that he has already fallen into what St. Photius the Great has called “the first heresy of the Westerners!” For as indicated above, in the 55th Canon of the Fifth-and-Sixth Ecumenical Council, it was the “Church of the Romans” (that is what became the Papists) that fell into the unorthodox practice of demanding laymen to fast strictly on Saturdays during Great Lent, as a prerequisite to receiving Holy Communion on the Sundays of Great Lent. This indeed was the first error of the Papists. It arrived at the same time the filioque also

arrived, to wit, during the 6th and 7th centuries. This is why St. Photius the Great, who was a real confessor against Papism, calls the error of enforced fasting without oil on Saturdays “the first heresy of the Westerners.” Thus, let us depart from the hypocrisies of Bp. Kirykos and listen to the voice of a real confessor against Papism. Let us read the opinion of St. Photius the Great, that glorious champion and Pillar of Orthodoxy!

In his Encyclical to the Eastern Patriarchs (written in 866), our Holy Father, **St. Photius the Great** (+6 February, 893), Archbishop of the Imperial City of Constantinople New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch, writes:

St. Photius the Great: Encyclical to the Eastern Patriarchs (866)

Countless have been the evils devised by the cunning devil against the race of men, from the beginning up to the coming of the Lord. But even afterwards, he has not ceased through errors and heresies to beguile and deceive those who listen to him. Before our times, the Church, witnessed variously the godless errors of Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Discorus, and a foul host of others, against which the holy Ecumenical Synods were convened, and against which our Holy and God-bearing Fathers battled with the sword of the Holy Spirit. Yet, even after these heresies had been overcome and peace reigned, and from the Imperial Capital the streams of Orthodoxy flowed throughout the world; after some people who had been afflicted by the Monophysite heresy returned to the True Faith because of your holy prayers; and after other barbarian peoples, such as the Bulgarians, had turned from idolatry to the knowledge of God and the Christian Faith: then was the cunning devil stirred up because of his envy.

For the Bulgarians had not been baptised even two years when dishonourable men emerged out of the darkness (that is, the West), and poured down like hail or, better, charged like wild boars upon the newly-planted vineyard of the Lord, destroying it with hoof and tusk, which is to say, by their shameful lives and corrupted dogmas. For the papal missionaries and clergy wanted these Orthodox Christians to depart from the correct and pure dogmas of our irreproachable Faith.

The first error of the Westerners was to compel the faithful to fast on Saturdays. I mention this seemingly small point because the least departure from Tradition can lead to a scorning of every dogma of our Faith. Next, they convinced the faithful to despise the marriage of priests, thereby sowing in their souls the seeds of the Manichean heresy. Likewise, they persuaded them that all who had been chrismated by priests had to be anointed again by bishops. In this way, they hoped to show that Chrismation by priests had no value, thereby ridiculing this divine and supernatural Christian Mystery. From whence comes this law forbidding priests

to anoint with Holy Chrism? From what lawgiver, Apostle, Father, or Synod? For, if a priest cannot chrismate the newly-baptised, then surely neither can he baptise. Or, how can a priest consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ our Lord in the Divine Liturgy if, at the same time, he cannot chrismate with Holy Chrism? If this grace then, is taken from the priests, the episcopal rank is diminished, for the bishop stands at the head of the choir of priests. But the impious Westerners did not stop their lawlessness even here.

They attempted by their false opinions and distorted words to ruin the holy and sacred Nicene Symbol of Faith — which by both synodal and universal decisions possesses invincible power — by adding to it that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, as the Symbol declares, but from the Son also. Until now, no one has ever heard even a heretic pronounce such a teaching. What Christian can accept the introduction of two sources into the Holy Trinity; that is, that the Father is one source of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that the Son is another source of the Holy Spirit, thereby transforming the monarchy of the Holy Trinity into a dual divinity?...

*Having here explained the Latin understanding only briefly, I will leave its detailed presentation and refutation until we are assembled together in council. These so-called bishops thus introduced this foul teaching, **together with other impermissible innovations**, among the simple and newly-baptised Bulgarian people. This news cut us to the heart. How can we not grieve when we see before our eyes the fruit of our womb, the child to whom we gave birth through the Gospel of Christ, being rent asunder by beasts? He who by his sweat and suffering raised them and perfected them in the Faith, suffers the greatest pain and sorrow upon the destruction of his children. Therefore, we mourn for our spiritual children, and we will not cease from mourning. For we will not give sleep to our eyes until, to the extent that lies in our power, we return them to the House of the Lord.*

*Now, concerning these forerunners of apostasy, common pests and servants of the enemy, we, by divine and synodal decree, condemn them as impostors and enemies of God. It is not as though we were just now pronouncing judgement upon them, but rather, we now declare openly the condemnation ordained by the ancient synods and Apostolic Canons. If they stubbornly persist in their error, we will exclude them from the communion of all Christians. They introduced fasting on Saturdays, although that is prohibited by the 64th Apostolic Canon which states: **If some cleric is found fasting on Sundays or Saturdays except the one Great Saturday before Pascha, let him be removed from the ranks of the clergy, and if he be a layman, let him be excommunicated.** Similarly, by the 56th canon of the holy Fourth Ecumenical Synod which states: **Since we have learnt that in the city of Old Rome some, during the Great Fast, in opposition to the ecclesiastical order handed down to us, keep the fast even on Saturdays, the holy***

Ecumenical Synod orders that in the Church of Old Rome the Apostolic Canon which prohibits fasting on Saturdays and Sundays is to be followed exactly.

*Similarly, there is a canon of the regional synod of Gangra which anathematises those who do not recognise married priests. This was confirmed by the holy Sixth Ecumenical Synod, which condemned those who require that priests and deacons cease to cohabit with their lawful wives after their ordination. Such a custom was being introduced even then by the Church of Old Rome. **That Synod reminded the Church of Old Rome of the evangelical teaching and of the canon and polity of the Apostles**, and ordered it not to insult the holy institution of Christian marriage established by God Himself. But even if we did not cite **all these and other innovations of the Latins**, the mere citing of their addition of the Filioque phrase to the Nicene Symbol of Faith would be sufficient to subject them to a thousand anathemas. For that innovation blasphemes the Holy Spirit, or more correctly, the entire Holy Trinity.*

*Having presented this matter before our brotherhood in the Lord, according to the ancient custom of the Church, we invite and ask you to come and join in council with us, for the purpose of **condemning these foul and Godless teachings**. Do not **abandon the order established by the Holy Fathers which they, by their acts and deeds, handed down to us as a legacy to preserve**. Rather, straightway send your representatives and deputies, adorned with piety and the priestly rank and by the goodness of their life and words, and by common synodal decree **this new rot of evil belief will be excised from the Church. Once we have rooted out this godlessness**, we can hope the newly-baptised Bulgarian people will return to the Faith they first accepted. And not only the Bulgarian people, but also all of the formerly terrible people, the so-called Rus, for even now they are abandoning their heathen faith and are converting to Christianity, receiving from us bishops and pastors as well as all Christian customs. Consequently, **if you now move to help erase this newly begun evil, then the flock of Christ will yet more increase and the Apostolic learning will reach the ends of the world**. With this purpose, then, send your representatives and deputies equipped with the authority of the Apostolic thrones which you inherited by the Holy Spirit, so that these and all other matters may be brought to judgement by lawful authority.*

*From the Italian region, we have received a synodal letter citing many grave matters against the bishop of Old Rome. Accordingly, the Orthodox there ask us to free them from his great tyranny, **for in that area sacred law is being scorned and Church order trampled**. We were told this earlier by monks who came to us from there, and now we have received many letters stating frightening news about that region and asking us to relay their message to all the bishops and to the Apostolic Patriarchs as well. For that reason, I communicate to you their request by way of this*

epistle. Once a holy and ecumenical Christian synod has been assembled, it will fall upon us together to resolve all these matters with the help of God and according to the rules of previous Synods, that in so doing, a deep peace may again prevail in the Church of Christ.

Moreover, it is necessary to confirm the holy Seventh Ecumenical Synod, to the end that all the faithful in the Church everywhere reckon and include that Synod as Ecumenical together with the other six. For we have heard that in some places it is not yet so counted, although its decisions are accepted and honoured. This was the Synod that overcame and destroyed the great heretical godlessness of iconoclasm. Representatives of the other four patriarchates attended its sessions. After they were all assembled, together with our uncle, the most all-holy Tarasius, Archbishop of New Rome, this great and ecumenical synod crushed the antichrist's blasphemous heresy. Therefore, this Synod must be declared and numbered with the six preceding ones, so as to show the union of Christ's Church and deny the godless iconoclasts of the claim that their heresy was condemned by only one throne.

Thus do we seek and propose as brother to brethren, and we dutifully beseech your Holinesses and also ask that you remember our humble self in your prayers.

+ PHOTIUS, by the mercy of God, Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

[Signatures of other prelates of the Patriarchal Council of Constantinople New Rome]

In the above Encyclical it is plain for all to see, beyond a doubt, that the theories of Bp. Kirykos Kontogiannis contradict the teachings of St. Photius the Great. Plainly, the "first error of the Westerners," as St. Photius has put it, clearly and equally applies to Bp. Kirykos and whoever else agrees with his blasphemies and continues to follow him. For although Bp. Kirykos hypocritically claims to be some kind of "confessor" against Papism and Ecumenism, he is actually the preacher and dogmatizer of the very first heresy of Papism itself, namely, the unorthodox, unapostolic and unpatristic demand for laymen to fast from oil on Saturdays in order to commune on Sundays, or that they are to refrain from communing on Sundays all together and commune on Saturdays instead.

Either way, Bp. Kirykos and all those who embrace his unorthodox requests fall into contradiction with the 9th Canon of the Holy Apostles, the 55th Canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the 8th Canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the 2nd Canon of Gangra, the 3rd Canon of St. Timothy of Alexandria, and even of this very "Encyclical to the Eastern Patriarchs,"

written by St. Photius the Great, who was a true Confessor of Orthodoxy in mind, word and deed. May his prayers be with us all. Amen.