

APPEAL

***of the First Hierarchs
of the Orthodox Church of Greece, Holy Synod in Resistance,
the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania, and
the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria
to
the Most Reverend Hierarchs Agafangel and Tikhon and all clerics and
faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad who have joined either
of them***

9/26 June 2007.

Appearance of the Tikhvin Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos
St. David of Thessalonica

Your Eminences,

Esteemed Archpastors, beloved Fathers in Christ, Brothers and Sisters!

We, the First Hierarchs of our three Sister Churches of Greece, Romania, and Bulgaria, address to you, “with one mouth and with one heart,” a word of love in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 1:3)

On Her historical path, the Holy Church of Christ has overcome, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, incredible ordeals. In our days we are witnesses and, as members of Christ’s Body, partakers of the severe trial and sufferings which have befallen our beloved Sister, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. By ratifying, on May 17th of this year, their union with the Moscow patriarchate, the leaders of the Church Abroad abjured the glorious feats of her confessors and missionaries and entered into the body of “world orthodoxy”. The honest, responsible children of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, who hold dear Holy Orthodoxy and love the Truth of Christ, were faced with a fateful choice. A portion of them joined the Archbishop of Omsk and Siberia Tikhon, President of the Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Russia, and others Bishop Agafangel of Odessa and Tauris.

We are aware of the sharp disputes between Bishop Agafangel and the jurisdiction headed by Archbishop Tikhon, as evidenced in various sources of information. Nevertheless, it is evident that these disputes are not of doctrinal essence, and we believe that they can, by God’s Grace, be overcome. We all know, our dear Brothers, that in periods of grave hardship in the life of the Church, disputes have arisen even between

holy persons, such as those between St. John Chrysostomos and St. Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Holy Hierarchs of Constantinople, Photius and Ignatius. Not in the least underrating the gravity of the present trial, and the pain of the wounds of disunity, we appeal to you, Most Reverend Hierarchs Tikhon and Agafangel, with fervent fraternal entreaty:

in the name of the unity of the Holy Russian Orthodox Church Abroad;

in the name of the unity of our common Orthodox witness;

in the name of “these little ones” (St. Matthew 18:14), of the faithful children of the Holy Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, whose Orthodox ecclesial consciences were crucified by their uniate Hierarch, through whose hearts flow the bloody streams of division, who until yesterday were together, while today they prove divided, passing under the *omophorion* of each of you:

We entreat you, our dear Brothers, to tread that thorny, but blessed, path to one another, so that, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, you might overcome mutual separation, to the joy of both Angels and men, to the glory of the Holy Orthodox Church, to the joy and consolation of the suffering children of the Holy Russian Orthodox Church—and of all of us, your brothers in Christ. According to our strength, we are ready with fraternal love and assiduity to assist you in attaining God-pleasing unity between yourselves.

And you, our dear Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters, children of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, we exhort with these words of the Apostle: “We beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Corinthians 1:10). You have chosen the sheer and narrow path. You struggle to enter through the strait gate (St. Matthew 7:14). You have not taken the wide road of treason and have not succumbed to the temptations of mundane glory and earthly profits. May the Lord crown your feat with a victorious end!

With love in Christ and with fervent prayers to Him that we all be one,

† CYPRIAN, Metropolitan of Oropos and Fili, President of the Holy Synod in
Resistance

† VLASIE, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of
Romania

† PHOTII, Bishop of Triaditza, First Hierarch of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church
of Bulgaria