

The prophet Moses bears witness to Christ:

As for God, His works are true and all His ways are judgments. God is faithful and there is no unrighteousness in Him; righteous and holy is the Lord (Deut. 32:4 LXX).

When the Jews asked Christ for a sign, He replied that the only sign that would be given is the Sign of Jonah; *for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt. 12:38-41).* The sign He wrought out of His compassionate love for us was His resurrection from the dead showing Himself alive numerous times; furthermore, one of these appearances was to 500 men at one time (I Cor. 15:6). The prophecy of Jonah is fulfilled in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As Christ freed all men from Hades by His Holy Resurrection, so “love and confession of God’s Truth — that is to say, the True Faith of the Church — frees, enlightens and saves us men. This holy teaching is proclaimed especially by those holy Fathers who spent their entire lives struggling to preserve Christ’s true and saving Faith, by which alone men are saved and enter eternal life. This holy tradition of the Fathers, confirmed, as it is, and testified to by their entire lives, offers the greatest lesson for our own generation, a generation which, lacking zeal ‘for the love of the Truth,’ has grown cold and hardened in its indifference toward the correct Faith.

“Among the ancient and great Fathers of the Church, perhaps the greatest zealots for the correct Faith and Truth of God were Ss. Athanasios the Great and Basil the Great. Yet our holy and God-bearing Fathers, Nikiforos, Patriarch of Constantinople under the Iconoclastic Emperor, Leo the Armenian and Photios the Great Confessor and Defender of the Orthodox Faith of Christ against Nicholas I, Pope of Rome are in no way inferior to them.

“Both of these saintly Patriarchs labored all their lives in the virtues that please God and bring deification. Remarkable is Saint Photios, instructor of Popes and all the world when he writes in his famous letter to Nicholas,

‘Nothing is dearer than the Truth.’

“Again, in the same letter, he noted:

‘It is truly necessary that we observe all things, but above all, that which pertains to matters of the Faith, in which but a small deviation represents a deadly sin.’

Continuing in the confession and defense of the true Orthodox Faith, a new Father of Fathers, Saint Philaret “Against the World,” is what the Church heard and what the Church saw. As we chant,

“the full incorruption of thy body is the seal and sign from heaven that thy confession was incorrupt.” (Vespers; Troparion.)

His words were plain. Very simply, he was, and is today,

A voice crying in the wilderness;

Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight (Lk. 3:4)

As a monastic, Saint Philaret stood with St. Isaac the Syrian who asks the Christian to examine the pathways in the heart and with St. Theodore the Studite who reminds us, “The work of a monk is not to tolerate even the least innovation in the Gospel of Christ”.

As an Orthodox Christian, he shaped his life to conform to the openhandedness of his Patron Saint, Saint Philaret the Almsgiver. Our Saint Philaret kept nothing for himself; he cared for orphans and widows (James 1:27) and kept his life hidden in Christ.

As a Hierarch, he called others of his brethern to account for the direction in which their leadership was taking the Church.

Sorrowfully, sadly he addressed his fellow Hierarchs, those who are called individually, *Angel of the Sovereign Lord* (Malachi 2:7). In 'Open Letters' and 'Sorrowful Epistles' he asked them repeatedly if it might possibly be the case that their actions had laid them open to the prophet's dire warning:

Thou hast cast away knowledge of God

And hast gone after thine own heart (Jer.16:12).

Silence is consent. In their deafening silence Saint Philaret heard the sobering response of the Bishops of "World Orthodoxy" to his queries, to his repeated pleas on behalf of the Lord's truth.

They replied to him:

Thy ways I do not wish to know (Job 21:14).

After so many admonitions to the proponents of Ecumenism, cautions that fell on deaf ears, Metropolitan Philaret, together with the entire Holy Synod of the Church Abroad, issued the *Anathema Against Ecumenism* on the Sunday of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council on October 14/27, 1983.

A Resolution Concerning the Pan-Heresy of Ecumenism

To those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ's Church is divided into so-called branches which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly but will be formed in the future when all branches or sects or denominations and even religions will be united in one body and who do not

distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore, to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics or who advocate, disseminate or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians:

Anathema.

Saint Philaret was, and is, *a sign spoken against* (Luke 2:34) on earth but not in the Land of the Living (Ps. 27:15, 52:5, 114:5, 141:7 LXX)

He was all his life a Sower of Christ's truth in word and in deed (cf. Mt. 13:3-9), who, receiving monastic tonsure as an unmarried Priest, early in life *set his face for Jerusalem* (Lk. 9:51) and, in his love for his enemies, was granted sonship of the Most High (cf. Lk. 6:35)

Those who choose to follow him will be granted all that he, in his humility, called down from the Lord's bounty for the saints always give away everything they have been given. The hands of the saints are ever open to beggars and sinners.

Saint Philaret, the new Athanasius, the new Mark of Ephesus, Philaret the Great, intercede ceaselessly out of thy great virtue before the Throne of the Most High for us sinners.

