

PERSONAL OPINION ON A PUBLICATION

The following article by its owner and manager, theologian Mr. Panagiotis Andriopoulos, was published on the prestigious church news website "Fos Fanariou" under the title "Does the Church of Albania accept the Decisions of the Patriarchate of Alexandria?" (<https://fosfanariou.gr/index.php/2023/03/08/ekklisia--alvanias-kai-apofaseis-patr-alexandreias>)

Allow me, as an active Member of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Elder Patriarchate of Alexandria and its Chief Secretary, and for nine years the first Primate of the missionary Holy Metropolis of Brazzaville and Gabon on the African equator, to humbly submit my personal opinion:

Undoubtedly, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Tirana and all Albania is an ecclesiastical personality of known value, an academic-theologian of international reach, a highly capable spiritual leader and a charismatic Primate. Everyone's respect for his honest person and his multifaceted ministry is a given.

Precisely, then, these characteristics of his would give another dynamic to the correct and fair substantiation on Hiero-Canonical basis of his direct defense of **TRUTH AND CANONICAL REGULARITY**, which is clearly stated in the speech of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria, on March 5th.

"No Synodal Decision of a Senior Church gives the right to another Church – especially a newer one in existence – to violate the immovable Holy Canons and commit intrusion into the parish jurisdiction of the first".

Let us also not forget the "Hierarchical Confession", which every elected Hierarchy submits before the heavenly Church, before the start of the Divine Liturgy and his ordination which follows therein, during which he confesses (swears) on the holy Gospel

"...Regarding this, I accept the Holy and Ecumenical Seven Synods... I confess the Canons appointed under them and keep them and the holy ordinances of all those of our Holy Fathers, formulated at different times. All that they accept I accept and all that they abhor I abhor. I confess even that ecclesiastical peace and I promise to preserve it..." The totality of the above Canons and Regulations of the Ecumenical Synods constitute the Canon Law or otherwise constitute the Sacred Canons of our Church. My humble opinion then is that faced with this Hierarchical Confession, all reason for silence is overcome.

At this critical time for the unity of global Orthodoxy, a neutral attitude or silence, encourages the offender and certainly does injustice to the incumbent.

It should be noted that it is the vested right of each Church to break communion with another Church, if it so deems, but it absolutely **DOES NOT HAVE THE HIERO-CANONICAL RIGHT** or basis, to invade the geographical boundaries of another (invasion). The parish jurisdictions of the Churches, pastoral, administrative and spiritual, have been determined from the beginning of the historical presence of the Church in the world with GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES and not criteria of nationality, language, etc. (E.g. Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa, Church of Tirana and all Albania, Church of Cyprus etc). The titles of the Churches themselves are determined by the geographical boundaries of the areas they serve.

Faced with this painful silence/neutrality of many Autocephalous Churches in the face of a clear violation of the Holy Canons, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope of Alexandria SOUNDED the alarm CLEARLY on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 5th 2023, boldly stating the following...

“On these ecclesiologically sensitive issues, we hold all the local Orthodox Churches accountable, expecting their immediate condemnation of these illegal and immoral actions and the unheard of ecclesiological-political “theories” of the Moscow Patriarchate, which the next day will most likely knock on their own doors with imaginative accusations, but with dramatic pan-Orthodox consequences”.

(<https://www.patriarchateofalexandria.com/i-varysimanti-omilia-tis-athm--kata-to-sylleitoirgo-me-ton-mitropoliti-kievoy-kai-pasis-oykrantias/>)