

On February 10/23, 1981, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad heard:

The report of Metropolitan Gabriel of the Cyclades Islands concerning the extremely grave situation which has arisen in the True Orthodox Church of Greece, headed by Archbishop Auxentios, and which in general affects all the true Orthodox Christians in Greece. For several hierarchs, finding serious violations of the holy canons on the part of Archbishop Auxentios, have separated themselves from him, but then they themselves strayed from the sensible and canonical path, having performed unjustified episcopal consecrations. Metropolitan Gabriel expects that his disagreement with various actions of Archbishop Auxentios may entail grave consequences for him personally. Still, he would like to receive from the Synod of Bishops advice concerning what course of action he should take to be in accord with the holy canons, and so as to help the general situation in Greece.

Resolved:

The position of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in relation to the problems of the two groups of Old Calendar Greek bishops was precisely expressed in the decision of the Synod of Bishops of April 27/May 10, 1979, a copy of which was sent to Metropolitan Gabriel. If Metropolitan Kallistos is himself personally a pious man and above reproach, he, having taken a stand against the uncanonical actions of Archbishop Auxentios and his synod, has on the other hand gone so far, that he has performed many episcopal consecrations of persons not always worthy and without canonical examination and election. This keeps Metropolitan Gabriel from uniting himself to his (Kallistos') synod.

Metropolitan Gabriel wishes to receive an indication of the canonical course of action for himself in the given situation. However, it is very difficult to give such directions in view of the canonical anarchy reigning among the Greek bishops and owing to the great number of questionable consecrations. This anarchy, and the impossibility of the Synod of Bishops of investigating the veracity of these mutual accusations (no matter how true they may appear to be), as well as the lack of authorisation from the full Council of Bishops for such an investigation, deprives the Synod of Bishops of the possibility of acting in one way or the other. Normally, according to the canons, if the First Hierarch of any particular Church commits a canonical violation, then each bishop may lodge a complaint against him with his own Council of Bishops, removing from participation in the trial those bishops whom he considers accomplices in the actions which provoked the complaint, or guilty of these and other matters deserving judgement, especially when the legality of their consecration is in doubt. Such is the canonical path in principle, which, however, in practice may present great difficulties in the midst of anarchy, or if the majority of the bishops in a given council are compromised in one way or another. Theoretically, the situation might arise in which those bishops having grounds for accusations against their fellow-hierarchs find themselves to be in such a minority that it deprives them of the possibility of achieving anything. In such a case, it remains for them to meekly and humbly await a change in the situation for the better, while in no wise participating in any devious affairs and in every possible way remaining separate from them. The outcome of the matter will depend on the will of God and the circumstances which arise. If several bishops should be found who are free of grave charges, then they could convoke a council to judge those bishops accused of serious violations.

In other respects, the Synod of Bishops can only repeat their recommendations of April 27/May 10, 1979. To these it might be added that those bishops sincerely desiring to restore proper canonical order in their Church must reject all personal aims, and in prayer and fasting ask God that He help them to act wisely and soundly.

It is further resolved to inform Metropolitan Gabriel of this decision.

This copy is true to the original: Secretary of the Synod of Bishops [signed] + Bishop Gregory
February 25/March 10, 1981

[Seal]