

THE SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT OF THE KOLLYVADES

Asceticism has always been the backbone of the Orthodox Faith and the guardian of the Tradition of the Church. Ascetics are the carriers *par excellence* of the Cross of Christ. The glory of all true Christians through the Christian ages, according to the Apostle Paul, is the Cross of Christ! The Cross is the symbol of the highest form of love: sacrificial love - the symbol of victory, the symbol of Christianity.

After the Fall of man, the energies of the soul were twisted and misdirected. The lives of people became earthly, carnal, fleshly, and demonic. Much as they are today, the fleshly desires of the fallen nature were in constant rebellion against the heavenly desires of the soul. From the beginning of mankind, men exercised their free will in order to serve either one of two masters: God, through the mystery of piety or Godliness; or the mystery of lawlessness and, through this service, the enemy of mankind. The mystery of lawlessness was served by Cain and his civilization, which quickly turned mankind into flesh.

The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took wives for themselves from those who were pleasing to them. The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were externally attractive, and they made marriage choices according to their lower instincts and desires. The result was chaos, much as it appears today; for the absence of the Spirit of God invites chaos, disharmony and disorder. People became flesh-worshippers, idolaters and demon-worshippers.

So God intervenes in order to save mankind from the flood of sin. He washes sin with the Flood and saves Noah's family in order to continue the mystery of Godliness. A few generations afterward, Abraham and the Patriarchs will continue the mystery of Godliness through the Old Testament with Moses and Aaron, the priests, the prophets, the pious judges, and kings. The calling of Israel was to enter into a covenant with God; and with obedience to the Law and the Commandments, their sanctification and purification would make it possible for the Blessed Virgin of Isaiah to come forth. Why the purity? It is because God cannot touch anything unclean. The presence of God introduces fear and trembling, mainly because man sees and feels his sinfulness and uncleanness when in the presence of the light of God.

The combination of smoke, fire, and deafening sounds were so terrifying that even Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling" (Hebrews 12:21).

When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting up high, he was overcome with fear and trembling. Woe to me: I saw God, and I have unclean lips.... So a seraph took a lit charcoal and purged his lips...

This pure fear, the beginning of Godly wisdom conceives the spirit of salvation (Isaiah 26:18). In our adulterous and sinful generation this pure fear and deep reverence for the Almighty God has been displaced and replaced by sinful ecumenistic agapology which desiccates the souls of our contemporary church members.

Sin neutralizes this much needed edifying godly fear and makes us unclean and impervious to the grace of God. God cannot unite with adulterous and filthy souls and bodies.

In the Old Testament God said, “My Spirit can no longer abide in them, for they have become flesh...” They have idolized their pleasures... Their life is epicurean. Pay attention here, because these issues are very contemporary. There are many epicurean theologians today who are espousing this post-patristic and New Age mindset. There is a rise of Neo-Nicolaitanism today in the Church. These Neo-Nicolaitans are seeking to elevate the sexual union into a most holy experience. The New Age Movement, in complete contradiction to Orthodox thought, is replete with teachings on “spiritualized sensuality.” This seems to be the case with the book *Marriage, Sexuality, and Celibacy: a Greek Orthodox Perspective*, (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1975). In the pages of this book physical relations in marriage are elevated to a holy liturgical experience:

“Sexuality, intimate embraces between husband and wife and their subsequent union into one flesh, is a holy altar. The moment when love leads husband and wife into a consummation of their beings is a holy moment and a sacred event.” Well, if holiness could come out of sexuality and the experience of the marital union, then our century should surpass all centuries in holiness. The opposite is true, however: our century has surpassed all previous centuries in licentiousness, corruption and sin. The Church Fathers are diametrically opposed to this Neo-Nicolaitan line of thought. Saint Mark the Ascetic advises, “If we no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh, then with the Lord’s help the evils within us will easily be eliminated” (*The Philokalia*, vol. 1, London: Faber and Faber, 1983, p. 122, no. 181). Saint Nilus of Sinai instructs, “If you desire to pray in the Spirit, depend on nothing carnal.” These Holy Fathers purified their heart through self-control, fasting, prayer, and abstinence; and they were able to interpret correctly the teachings of Saint Paul in this manner.

Saint Paul the Apostle writes in the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 8: “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Philippians 3:18-21: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

And now Saint Paul with his prophetic vision provides us with a spiritual X-ray of the anti-monastic, anti-ascetic, antinomian-labeled Christians of our days:

2 Timothy 3:1-5:

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

Yes, we are to turn away from professors, theologians, priests and bishops who are opposed to the Holy Tradition of our Church. We will not do obedience to anyone – not even to an angel from heaven – who wishes to introduce to us a new gospel, a third covenant, or a post-patristic theology, like Ignatios of Volos has begun to do.

My brothers and sisters, we are living in strange times. Many of your priests and fellow parishioners have succumbed to the spirit of this world. They cannot understand your preoccupation with Church Tradition and your desire to uphold the teachings of our Holy Fathers. They conflate your spiritual thirst and holy desire with fanaticism and narrow-mindedness.

No, they will not understand you; because the spirit of the world is inimical to, polemic against, and irreconcilable with the Spirit of God.

The purpose of our study is to show to ourselves first that the hesychastic/ascetical spirit is a most genuine and healthy expression of traditional Orthodox Christianity. We will examine the holy waves of this spirituality throughout the centuries, but we also will focus on the *kollyvades* movement of the eighteenth century, a movement that is still going strong in our days thanks to the new Parios, Saint Joseph the Hesychast. This work has been of great interest to me for many years; and I am happy to see that many of our contemporary teachers such as Father George Metallinos, Father Theodoros Zisis, and Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović have done much work on this holy wave of the *kollyvades*, a holy wave that all of us here are benefiting from and that some of you are riding until today.

But let us start from the very beginning.

Our theme has to do with the mystery of piety and the mystery of lawlessness. There are those who understand the necessity of asceticism as a means to illumination and spiritual development; and there are those who cannot separate themselves from the spirit of the world, the spirit of relaxation and comfort – the spirit of the mystery of lawlessness. The adherents of this fleshly spirit troubled Moses in the desert. They became disgusted with God’s heavenly food, and they wished to return to the leeks and onions and garlic of Egypt. After Pentecost, some of the Philippians became enemies of the Cross of Christ and allowed their belly to become their god! In the early Church, these enemies of the Cross of Christ were rather few during the years of Roman and pagan persecution. Those who love their belly cannot suffer; they cannot deny their comfortable existence, so they either compromise with the world or they twist the message of the Gospel, like the Gnostics and the Nicolaitans. The mystery of Godliness was lived and carried by the disciples, the pious clergy, and the martyrs. The spirit of Martyrdom was extremely prevalent in those years, to the extent that the Church needed to use Canons to hold back the waves of martyrs. Such was the zeal of those blessed Christians... After the Edict of Milan, Christianity was recognized as a religion, and the Church was blessed with the gift of freedom. Immediately after this freedom we have the inception of Monasticism. The martyrs were replaced by the monks, who sought to continue the narrow path of the Gospel, the ascetic character of the Church of Christ. Saint Paul talks about a principle which escapes the knowledge of most Christians, especially today, in his Epistle to the Colossians [1:24-26]: “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the

afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.”

Historically, zealous truth abiding Christians and monks were persecuted on account of their unshakable religious convictions and their struggle for Orthodoxy. Such are the familiar struggles of the monks in favor of the Holy Icons during the time of Iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries. With this stance monasticism, century after century, preserved not only the purity of the Doctrine of the Church; but it also strengthened the spiritual life of the Orthodox people and helped them to survive as well, so as to become victorious in their life-long struggle against the world and the forces of the evil one (not to mention that over ninety percent of our saints occupy the rank of the ascetics). So hesychasm is the spinal cord [or backbone] of the Church of Christ; since Christ Himself, His Most Holy Mother, and St. John the Baptist lived a hesychastic lifestyle. Hesychasm is that indispensable element that purifies the heart so that the soul can be illumined by its participation in the Holy Mysteries. The Three Hierarchs; the great Cappadocian Fathers of the fourth century; Saint John of Damascus; Saint Maximos the Confessor; Saint Photios the Great; and the Three Pillars of Orthodoxy about whom we spoke in this room a couple of years ago: these all were great lovers of asceticism and hesychasm. During the ninth century, Saint Photios fully recognized that the heresy of the *filioque* – the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father *and* the Son – was the tip of the iceberg of the western spiritual illness. This spiritual crime did not take place overnight. It festered in the bosom of western

Christianity, and after several centuries the hierarchy of the west did not possess the needed spiritual clarity to recognize this tragic falsehood. Saint Photios could not succumb to the arrogance of Pope Nicholas, as we saw several semesters ago in this very room, because the popes of the west no longer represented the Spirit of the Early Church. During the eleventh century the hesychastic theology was brought to the forefront by Saint Symeon the New Theologian. He is called “New” not because he introduced a new theology, but because he is newer and more recent than the previous Theologian Saint Gregory, who lived during the fourth century. Saint Symeon was accused by his contemporaries of being an innovator: as presenting something new, a new Theology. But the Theology of Divine Eros and Divine Drunkenness and the Uncreated Light was nothing new to those who remained vigilant. But to the political and secular-minded – to the fleshly and earthly clergy and laity alike – this was *kaina daimonia*: new teaching [lit. “novel divinities”]!

The same incident took place during the fourteenth century. Saint Gregory Palamas also was accused of being an innovator, because the vast majority of the monastics had forgotten the hesychastic – the way-of-stillness – element of Orthodoxy.

Those years were years of decline in the Byzantine Empire: there was a deep crisis in the internal and external affairs thereof; and strangely enough, it was during this time that Hesychasm and Orthodox spirituality blossomed. Perhaps people began to look inward and turn to God since they could no longer feel secure due to the shrinkage of the once-invincible Eastern Roman Empire. Hesychasm did not appear all of a sudden: it always was being practiced by the remnant of the Church. All the Theology of the Church was present in the Church on the Day of Pentecost, and it

fully exists in the Holy Scriptures in laconic and embryonic form. Saint Gregory Palamas simply defended that which always was a genuine expression of Orthodoxy and its quintessence against a western, secularized, and estranged Christianity; which was no longer real Christianity - no longer Christocentric - but humanistic and anthropocentric. Saint Gregory defended the Doctrine of the Uncreated Energies of the Church's Holy Mysteries. The distinction between the essence and the energies of God was lost in the West because they replaced the theology of the fishermen and of the pure heart with the philosophy of Aristotle and the intellect. The Latins, through Barlaam the Calabrian and philosophical conjecture, maintained that the grace of the Sacraments is created grace. But if grace is a creature, then it cannot save. The grace of the Mysteries is Divine as it proceeds from the essence of God. The blossoming of Hesychasm in the fourteenth century was nothing short of God's Providence for the continuation of the very existence of the Orthodox people during the forthcoming years of the harshness of the Turkish occupation. The blossoming of Hesychasm sprang forth from the "Acropolis of Orthodoxy," the Holy Mountain of Athos. Saint Gregory Palamas spent a number of years initially as a Hagiorite monk on Mount Athos; and later he served as the Archbishop of Thessalonica (+1359). The hesychastic revival of Saint Gregory did not limit itself to Mount Athos or Thessaloniki; but it spread throughout all the Balkan countries and all over Orthodoxy. As a matter of fact, the next five Patriarchs of Constantinople were from the ranks of the hesychasts. The Jesus Prayer, along with prayer and fasting, would safeguard the simple people through centuries of oppression by Islam.

But gradually, this teaching of the hesychastic tradition seemed to be forgotten. Two centuries later, very few people in the mainland of Greece were practicing this prayer. Greece was under the constant assault of the western propaganda, especially after the advent of the Protestant Reformation and the printing press. The Jesuits and the Calvinists competed for the Greek souls, and many textbooks were being pushed eastward. The hesychastic prayer and piety was preserved much better by the Greeks of Asia Minor...

Towards the end of the Turkish occupation, another blossoming of the hesychastic-monastic movement – lesser-known, but equally important – prepared the Orthodox lands to seek their independence from the harsh Turkish occupation: the movement of the *Kollyvades*. The object of their struggle was the rebirth of the liturgical and spiritual life of the Church and of the Orthodox people in the eighteenth century.

The movement of the *Kollyvades*, provided the Orthodox response to the demands and the spirit of the age – to the Enlightenment and to Western rationalism – thus justifying the general expectation of the rebirth of the life of the Church.

In order for us to understand better the character of this awakening movement of the Holy Kollyvades, we need to say a few words about the spiritual life of Greece leading up to the eighteenth century.

After the capture of Constantinople in 1453, many of the well-to-do Byzantines began fleeing to the West. The younger Greeks traveled to European capitals in order to obtain knowledge, since they did not have the capacity to do this in the homeland thereof, which homeland still remained in the darkness of ignorance.

Many of these young Greeks, however, would return again to their homeland with noble goals, in order to wipe out this darkness and to help their race. This phenomenon was expanded even more during the eighteenth century. It was a period during which everyone was seeking the rebirth of the spiritual life of the enslaved Orthodox race. The viewpoint, however, concerning rebirth divided the followers of this effort into two groups: into the Liberals and the Traditionalists.

The former group placed their emphasis on the more-developed West; they accepted the Western principles of philosophy, education and science. Their criteria were materialistic in nature. The latter group placed their emphasis on the Kingdom of God first and foremost; they rejected the secular mindset of the west, adhering mainly to the Ecclesiastical education and to the inheritance of the Church Fathers. The truth is that the former group had a greater number of followers; these followers had been charmed by the glitter of the West, by the lights of Paris, by its practical spirit, by its convincing logic, and by its scientific progress. Of course there always are more followers when the belly is involved.

During this critical historical period, the movement of the Kollyvades arose in order to offer a response to these theological disputes and to provide the powerful Orthodox counterbalance to the rationalism of the “new philosophers”. Not only did it offer to the Choirs of the Saints new names, such as Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite, Saint Makarios Notaras and Saint Athanasios Parios – just to name a few – but it also exercised a deep influence on the social and spiritual life of Greece. It influenced, for example, the two great writers, the two Alexanders of Skiathos, Papadiamantis and Moraïtidis; the lay theologian and great preacher Kosmas

Flamiatos of Kefalonia; the monk Papoulakos who took the Peloponnese by storm; Father (and now Saint) Nicholas Planas; Saint Nektarios of Aegina; and Father Philotheos Zervakos. But let us briefly examine the events that gave the impetus to this philokalic rebirth.

1. THE CAUSE

The philokalic movement of the Kollyvades began from the Holy Mountain of Athos. Its beginning probably could startle someone, or else give him the misleading impression that such a shallow superficial feud between some monks with narrow viewpoints could not be reasonably expected by anyone to be of any importance whatsoever. And yet, contrary to such an otherwise arguably logical assumption, this dispute would serve to rock the Holy Mountain for decades. The kollyva was the tip of the Ecclesiastical iceberg, so to speak; as we shall see in the story.

The first cause for the dispute was given by the monks of the Skete of Saint Anne, on the Holy Mountain. These monks began to build a new Kyriakon (the central church of their Skete) for their religious needs, in around 1750, since their brotherhood had increased. Many benefactors donated money for the completion of the new church, and they handed thousands of names to the monks to be commemorated in Memorial Services. The Memorial Services were held on Saturdays. Usually the fathers of a monastery can read two to three thousand names during the Proskomide without any serious change to their schedule. But after this fundraiser, the number of names increased greatly; and an extra couple of hours

thus were needed to commemorate all the names. The liturgy extended beyond noon, and the monks therefore were pressed for time. Saturday also was the day for shopping...

According to the Rubrics of the Church, from the time following the Vespers of Friday and ending after the Divine Liturgy of Saturday morning, the Service of Kollyva (in other words, “of boiled wheat,” which is used at the end of the celebration of the Memorial Service as a symbol of the bodies of the reposed ones, according to John 12:24-25: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”), is permitted to be made. Up until that point in time, in all the Monasteries and Sketes of the Holy Mountain, they would chant the Memorial Service in the chapels of the cemeteries every Saturday. The monks of Saint Anne, in this instance, decided to transfer the Memorials from Saturday to Sunday. They needed the extra hours on Saturday in order to sell their handicrafts at the main market in Karyes, where they also would be purchasing building materials for their new Church. All this sounds logical and harmless on the surface.

This event, however, scandalized certain monks, including the Deacon Neophytos the Peloponnesian of Kafsokalyvia, who began against the monks of Saint Anne a “dogmatic struggle.” With the passage of time, this dispute separated the whole monastic state into two battling camps and disturbed – literally – the Church of Constantinople. The monks that wished for the Memorial Services to be kept

exclusively on Saturday, according to the Ancient Tradition of the Church, were scornfully reproached, as it were, with the pejorative epithet of “Kollyvades.” However, with the passage of time, this epithet became an encomium for the traditional monks. With this side – after Neophytos (+1784) – Saint Makarios Notaras, the former Metropolitan of Corinth (+1805); Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite (+1809); Saint Athanasios Parios (+1813); and many others aligned. On the contrary, the monks who accepted the performance of Memorials on Sunday as well as on Saturday were named “Anti-Kollyvades,” the most familiar of which are Theodoretos of Ioannina and Bessarion of Rapsanis in Thessaly. A few years later, the Kollyvades reappeared on the spiritual horizon of the Holy Mountain with the publication of the book “Concerning Divine Communion” (1777). This book was published anonymously in Venice; but it certainly came from the Kollyvadic circles, since its content corresponds to their viewpoints. Some of the contemporary researchers claim that Neophytos of Kafsokalyvia wrote the initial draft, and then Saint Makarios and Saint Nicodemos edited it and developed it. Saint Nicodemos enriched it with many Patristic texts in the second edition thereof (1783).

The purpose of this book was to “recall the graceful custom of ancient Christians, and comes to prove with Scriptural, Apostolic and Patristic witnesses, that it is necessary and soul-saving for every Orthodox Christian to be communing often, when he does not have an obstacle” (from the prologue of the edition of 1783). According to Saint Nicodemos, the great negligence and scorn by Christians of the spiritual and heavenly nourishment of Divine Communion was primarily the reason why “holiness has vanished from us, virtue has lessened, wickedness has increased.” The book initially was condemned by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of

Constantinople in 1785, because it ostensibly created scandals and divisions. Later on, however, at the same Ecumenical Patriarchate, Patriarch Neophytos VII (1799-1801), lifted the condemnation.

Aside from the matter of frequent Divine Communion, other issues also were generated, to wit: the issue of the sanctification of Icons, of excommunication, of the Services of the Great and Small Blessing of Water, of the relationship of the Precious Gifts and Antidoron, of kneeling on Sundays, etc. (7). But we will not examine these matters here; due to the small extent of our work, we will rather turn to other more essential works and activities of the Kollyvades.

As we have already mentioned, this dispute disturbed all of the Holy Mountain and its Mother Church, the Church of Constantinople, which wanted to bring back peace and tranquility to the disturbed monastic state. To this end, a letter of Patriarch Theodosios II in 1772 (1769-73) expressed to the two groups that they were free to choose the day of the Memorial Services without being judgmental against the other group. And on the matter of Divine Communion, there is no appointed time – in other words, how often one should commune – but the necessary presupposition is the proper preparation before Divine Communion.

It is obvious that with this letter the Ecumenical Patriarchate tried to bring back calmness to the Holy Mountain. However, calmness did not come.

With this letter, the Ecumenical Throne did not succeed to pacify the Holy Mountain. Other letters followed, in which the monks were ordered to follow the practice of the Monasteries under which they belonged – but to no avail. The monks

of Saint Anne did not obey, and they went to Constantinople to present their arguments there. The Kollyvades also went, without result. Finally, in 1774, at the Monastery of Koutloumousiou a Synod was convened in order to resolve this matter. The Synod invited the Kollyvades; but they did not attend, once they saw that for the most part the Synod was full of those performing the memorials on Sundays – that is, the Anti-Kollyvades. This Synod protested against the Kollyvades to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They sent the familiar opponent of the Kollyvades, the monk Bessarion of Rapsani, as a representative of the Synod to Constantinople, having supplied him with letters (in which they had falsified the content) from Athanasios Parios and Nicodemos the Hagiorite (9).

Bessarion's efforts in Constantinople resulted in the convening of the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1776 and the subsequent condemnation of the Kollyvades thereby. Following this decision of the Patriarchate, the opponents of the Kollyvades chased them out of the Holy Mountain. But this evil dealing of the problem on the part of the Anti-Kollyvades contributed to the spreading of this holy movement in all of Greece and even outside of its boundaries. Years later, the Kollyvades were justified during the throne of Patriarch Gabriel IV in 1807, and their final justification occurred in 1819 during the throne of Patriarch Saint Gregory V, the Ethnomartyr.

2. THE REPRESENTATIVES

The Kollyvades

Unfortunately, we do not possess exact numbers of how many monks held the traditional line. It is certain that there were many. We will briefly refer to the prominent members among their leaders.

(i.) Neophytos of Kafsokalyvia

As we already said, the first Kollyvas, time-wise, was Neophytos of Kafsokalyvia. He was a well-educated Hagiorite, who descended from the Peloponnese. He was born in Patras in around 1713; and he studied in Constantinople, in Patmos, and in Ioannina. He received the monastic habit at the Skete of Kafsokalyvia and taught in the Athonias – the Holy Mountain seminary for priests – theologians, many of whom often would become monks. In 1749, he became the principal of Athonias. Due to his participation in the movement of the Kollyvades, he was expelled from the Holy Mountain. After his exile, he ceased his collaboration with the Kollyvades. He served as a school principal in Chios (1760), in Adrianople (1767) and – outside of the boundaries of Greece – in Romania, where he reposed in Bucharest in 1784.

(ii.) Saint Makarios Notaras

Saint Makarios Notaras was a descendant of the great and historical family of Notaras, which is familiar even from the Byzantine years. Among the famous relatives of Saint Makarios we must commemorate Saint Gerasimos the Patron of Kefalonia, the two Patriarchs of Jerusalem Dositheos and Chrysanthos, and the erudite Theophanis Notaras.

In his youth, Saint Makarios studied in Kefalonia. Having the calling for the monastic life, he moved to the Monastery of the Great Cave, but he was not received because he did not have the approval of his parents. He was forced to return to his father's home in Corinth, where he volunteered as the new schoolteacher. In 1765, at the age of 34 years, he was ordained as Metropolitan of Corinth by the popular demand of the clergy and lay people. But his pastorship in Corinth was brief. The events of the uprising in the Peloponnese in 1769 against the Turks – the so-called Orlofica, – deprived him of his throne. After these events, the Ecumenical Patriarchate received the demand from the Turks to enthrone a new hierarch for the Peloponnese. And from then on, Saint Makarios dedicated himself to the ascetical life. He went to the Holy Mountain at the time that the dispute over the Memorials was being stirred up, and he immediately aligned himself with the group of the Kollyvades. But his main offering – not only to the movement of the Kollyvades, but also to the whole Orthodox world – was the collection of the Holy Patristic Texts and the publication of the so-called “Philokalia.” Saint Makarios visited many monastic libraries, seeking and gathering the forgotten transcripts and texts of the Holy Fathers and turning them over to Saint Nicodemos for editing and development prior to publication. The fruit of their work is the collection of the “Philokalia” and of the “Evergetinos,” and of many volumes upon volumes of spiritual books.

Saint Makarios was a model hierarch: he combined spiritual and teaching ability. Even though he himself lived poorly, he became renowned for his philanthropy, helping students especially in the completion of their studies. Regarding his position in the movement of the Kollyvades, he probably was its first and foremost

inspirer and birthgiver. He died on April 16 of 1805 in Chios; and immediately afterwards, his holiness became manifest through many miracles.

(iii.) Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite

The third representative of the traditional line was Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite (in the world, Nicholas Kallivroutsis). He was born in Naxos in 1749, where he also learned his first letters. He studied in Smyrna. A little later, on the island of Hydra, he became acquainted with Saint Makarios Notaras, with whom he developed a close and lifelong spiritual relationship. In 1775 he was tonsured a monk at the Sacred Monastery of Dionysiou on the Holy Mountain. He was to some degree the theological genius of the movement of the Kollyvades. When he was accused by his opponents of heresy due to his participation in the Kollyvades movement, he wrote his “Confession of Faith” (1807) – which can be considered as the apologetic work of the entire movement. He was a truly great personality. He was distinguished by his knowledge, his vast memory, and the integrity of his character. He wrote and developed over 100 books, including “Evergetinos” and “Philokalia,” in cooperation with Saint Makarios. He also translated Western books, which he cleansed of their anti-Patristic element and subsequently baptized in the Orthodox Tradition. Saint Nicodemos became one of the first researchers of manuscripts following the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

After the condemnation of the Kollyvades and the self-exile of the movement from the Holy Mountain, Saint Nicodemos remained on Athos, since he was not condemned; but he continued in the quiet of his cell his life-changing work. The

sum total of his works, published and unpublished, approaches about 112 volumes, wherein which one can find the entire Orthodox Patristic wisdom.

“Thanks to the works of Nicodemos and the return to the correct principles of hesychastic asceticism, the movement of the Kollyvades takes on a spur which surpasses greatly the dispute about memorials” (13). All of his contemporaries honored the works of Nicodemos very much and considered him a Saint. He died in 1809 and was recognized as a Saint in 1955.

(iv.) Saint Athanasios Parios

Amongst the most important protagonists of the Kollyvades movement was Saint Athanasios Parios – in the world, Athanasios Toulivos. He was born in the village of Kostos on the island of Paros in 1725. Later on he abandoned the family name “Toulivos” and adopted the *nom de plume* of “Parios.” His first letters he learned on his paternal island of Paros; and later on, he moved for studies to Smyrna and from thence to the Holy Mountain.

On Athos, for a period of four years he was a student of the teaching of Neophytos of Kafsokalyvia and of Eugenios Voulgaris at the Athonias Academy (1752 -56). Around the end of 1758, he departed for Thessalonica, where he assumed directorship of one of its two schools.

On account of the plague which broke out at that time, Saint Athanasios interrupted the lessons and continued in Messolonghi as a teacher. In 1771, by Patriarchal decision, he became the principal of the Athonias school. But at the same time – on

account of his active participation in the movement of the Kollyvades – he was slandered, accused of heresy, and defrocked by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

After these events, Saint Athanasios left for the island of Chios, where he remained until his death in 1813. As we see from the external circumstances of his life, Saint Athanasios was always active. He was the fighter of the group of the Kollyvades. He struggled for the elevation of the spiritual level of his compatriots. He fought Voltairism, atheism, and all the byproducts of the European Enlightenment; and he defended Ecclesiastical education and philosophy, saying that the Fathers of our Church give solutions to all philosophical matters. On account of this unshakable stance, he clashed with the most notable but westernizing scholar of the age, the humanist Adamantios Koraïs.

Saint Athanasios wrote many works of an apologetic, liturgical, and educational character. According to the Roman Catholic Bishop L. Petit, Parios was “the most famous Hellene of the eighteenth century after Eugenios Voulgaris. The Orthodox Church, admiring the work and holiness of his life, numbered him with the Choir of the Saints in 1995.

(v.) Amongst the familiar followers of the Kollyvadic movement are numbered also the Abbot of the Monastery of the Annunciation of Skiathos the Hieromonk Nephon; the Elder Hierotheos, Abbot of the Monastery of the Prophet Elias of Hydra; James the Peloponnesian; Agapios the Cypriot; Christopher Prodromitis; and Saint Arsenios of Paros.

4. THE THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS OF THE KOLLYVADES

The Anti-Kollyvades – much like their children, today’s ecumenists – wished to adapt the Life of the Church to the prevailing historical conditions and to the Church’s daily needs. The Anti-Kollyvades did not have the sense that changes must occur always according to the immutable criterion of the Faith, and not according to the fluctuating demands of the world. Being earth-bound, they believed that “the times and the needs of life” serve to become the criteria which determine liturgical actions and symbols.

On the contrary, the Kollyvades did not want primarily simply to serve the religious needs of people; they primarily ultimately were focused on the worship of God. Worship, according to the Kollyvades, must be an offering – a gift of man’s love for God, and not a simple system of serving the religious needs of man.

The Orthodox viewpoint is that we must strive to ascend towards the heavens, and not pull heaven towards the earth. We can say that the theological viewpoints of the Kollyvades are Scriptural and Theocentric, whereas the mindset of the Anti-Kollyvades was anthropocentric and humanistic – turned towards the world. The liberal monks of Mount Athos were buying into the European spirit of humanism and the Enlightenment. The western Christian world after the fall of the Pope in 1054 suffered three more spiritual strokes: The Renaissance turned man from God to himself; The Reformation divided western Christianity into hundreds and today thousands of pieces; and The Enlightenment – The Endarkening, rather – pushed Europe into atheism.

From the things that have been said, it becomes clear that the dispute over the Memorial Services was a reflection of these two theological stances, and not an unimportant dispute of some monks who had nothing better to do. So let us see what arguments the Kollyvades offered in support of their positions.

According to Saint Athanasios Parios, the celebration of Memorial Services on Sundays is “improper” – in other words, an unacceptable and “sinful” event: improper, because funerals and mournful services should not be chanted on this joyous day; and sinful, because the Book of the Apostolic Constitutions states, “He who is gloomy on the day of the Lord shall be guilty”.

Saint Nicodemos the Hagiorite in his “Confession of Faith” presents more arguments than Saint Athanasios Parios for the forbiddance of holding Memorial Services on Sundays. He differentiates between two types of Memorials: (1) those that the priest commemorates in the Proskomide, during the Divine Liturgy, which take place without mourning or wailing; and (2) those that are held “with kollyva” – i.e., with much mourning and wailing. In other words, according to Saint Nicodemos, Memorials are not forbidden; but what is forbidden is the wailing and lamenting. Furthermore, Memorial Services are forbidden on Sundays according to the Apostolic Constitutions, which state: “It is not proper to mourn and lament on the day of a feast”.

Furthermore, for the Kollyvades, Memorial Services and the kollyva do not only simply reflect prayer for the dead; they also are a witness to the Death of the Lord and His Descent into Hades on the day of Holy Saturday for the deliverance of the reposed therein. “The kollyva symbolizes the dead human body, which awaits the Resurrection”. So Saturday is a day of sadness and of mourning for the dead, whereas Sunday is the day of joy and the gladness for the awaited General Resurrection of the dead. Since Sunday has such a symbolism, this needs to be witnessed and proclaimed; and nothing must blacken or cover or hide this great mystery of the Lord’s Day.

Each symbol corresponds to a certain reality and, as Saint Nicodemos says, the various symbols should not be mixed up, because such confusion will alter the Teaching. But one could ask: What meaning do symbols have for our life? What can they offer us? The more the natural rhythm of man’s life is aligned and identified with the Mystery of Divine Economy and the re-living of historical events is aligned with the liturgical remembrance and symbolism of the feast, then all the more does man become rooted in the mystery of Divine Life and thus begins to live Paradise from this life. He begins to become accustomed to Eternal Life; he begins living in other dimensions. So the time in which we live now thus becomes united with eternity. The world is transfigured, and man is progressively deified. The mission of the Church is to provide Her children with a spiritual passport in order to help them to enter the Kingdom of God and Life Eternal, as opposed to the tyranny of hell and eternal darkness and death.

Here we must underline that the return of the Kollyvades to the ancient Ecclesiastical order of frequent Holy Communion is not a simple restoration of the Ancient Tradition, but rather an existential need. In order to live spiritually and to be attached to God, we must partake of the spiritual, therapeutic, immortal and strengthening Divine Food: the “Heavenly Bread,” of which we so desperately are in need.

At the time of the Kollyvades, it had become customary for Christians to commune only two or three times a year, ostensibly so that they might not dishonor the Holy Mystery of Divine Communion. The Kollyvades, however, had “the conviction that Divine Communion is not a reward of the perfect, but a strengthening of the imperfect in their spiritual struggle”; and they strove for and urged the frequent approaching to the “cup of life”.

From all these things, we see that the saintly Kollyvades were concerned primarily with the deeper meaning of the liturgical life and for the essential truth of the Church, which would be able to give rebirth to the life of all baptized Christians in order that they might be prepared to experience the Christlike life in the Holy Spirit. So for this reason, it is not by chance that the Kollyvades turned their gaze to the Fathers of the Church, from whose writings the Kollyvadic Fathers drew the true and divine philosophy.

5. THE PHILOKALIC REBIRTH

A. In Greece.

One of the most important offerings of the Kollyvades is the publication of the “Philokalia”, which tome is considered to be the university manual of the Orthodox. As we have mentioned, the most honor for this collection belongs to Saint Makarios; but we must also append to this honor the name of the tireless “theologian of the movement”, St. Nicodemos, who developed and “clarified” all the patristic texts which St. Makarios offered him.

The Synaxaristes corresponds to the level of primary education/elementary school; *The Evergetinos* to that of secondary education; but *The Philokalia* – to that of the University.

After he was deprived of his Metropolis, St. Makarios, free from every material burden, departed for the Holy Mountain. But he first visited many monastic libraries of Continental Greece and of the islands, researching the neptic and hesychastic texts of the Fathers. However, what is it that propelled the Saint in this direction? As we already have said, Saint Makarios, before becoming Metropolitan of Corinth and while still a teacher, experienced empirically the spiritual state of the people. He had correctly surmised that one cannot obtain a genuinely Orthodox train of thought without possessing a theological ethos as well as *Orthopraxia*, or correct action [or practice]. At the same time, spiritual struggle and mysticism cannot progress and have fruits without being underlain with a solid theological foundation and the presence of the Elder. And all of these abovementioned things Saint Makarios saw as collected in the works of the Neptic Fathers of the Church. So to this end the Saint dedicated the rest of his life.

So, upon having arrived at the Holy Mountain, St. Makarios already was in possession of many texts, which number he further enriched from the Athonite libraries. At the Monastery of Vatopedi “he discovered a treasure, a book concerning the union of the mind [*“nous”*] with God, collected in ancient times from great zealots which included an anthology from of all the Saints on this subject” (21). After this, he settled in the Skete of Saint Andrew in Karyes; and this is precisely when he called the still-young monk Nicodemos, who was only 28 years of age, and asked him to peruse the Philokalia.

This voluminous collection, which included all the texts of ascetical authors from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, Saint Makarios called the “Philokalia”. This name he borrowed from Saint Gregory the Theologian (+381), who gave this name to the healthy portions of the works of Origen and who later presented it to his friend Basil the Great. The word Philokalia means “Love of [*‘philo-’*] beauty [*‘kallos’* (akin to the word calligraphy [*‘beautiful writing’*]))”.

It was the brilliance of Saint Nicodemos that would permit him to peruse this huge volume of papers that Saint Makarios had placed in his care. He had to read, select, clean up, correct the grammar and spelling of, and generally develop this “heavenly treasure.” He had to write brief biographies of the authors included in this collection and to write the foreword. The work was immense but very pleasant, because it contributed to the spiritual progress of Nicodemos himself. Developing the texts of the Holy Neptics, Saint Nicodemos literally absorbed all of the spiritual patristic nectar that was contained therein. Naturally, this work was performed under the guidance of Saint Makarios. The cooperation of the two Saints began in 1777, and

was completed in a very brief period of time. Already, in 1782, in Venice the “Philokalia of the Holy Neptic Fathers” was published.

This work was absolutely invaluable, considering that such a wide and useful work had not been undertaken up until then, but neither until today has it been replaced by anything superior.

It is well known that the philokalic movement influenced the spiritual life not only of Greece but of the rest of the Balkan peoples and of Russia as well. The rebirth of the ecclesiastical life in these countries is bound up with the name of the Moldavian Staretz (Elder) of Ukrainian descent Saint Paisius Velichkovsky (1722-94), who translated the “Philokalia of the Holy Neptics” into the Ecclesiastical language of Old Church Slavonic. A little before the dispute over the Memorials broke out, in 1746, Saint Paisius arrived at the Holy Mountain, seeking a spiritual guide whom he previously had been unable to find, either in Russia or in Moldavia. However, this desire of Saint Paisius was not realized on Athos, either. Thirsting for spiritual guides, Saint Paisius turned his gaze to the works of the Holy Fathers, which at that time were not being well received. It is precisely this event which galvanized him to learn the Greek language and to seek in the libraries of the Holy Mountain the manuscripts of the patristic texts. Saint Paisius settled there in the Skete of the Prophet Elias, and his presence and holiness attracted a brotherhood, which increased to such a degree that the Saint was forced to abandon Mount Athos and return to Wallachia, since conditions at the time would not permit the survival of such a huge brotherhood on the Athonite Peninsula.

Upon leaving in 1764 for Moldavia, Saint Paisius left on the Mountain his disciple Gregory. Gregory became attached to Saint Makarios, whom he helped to copy the codexes, simultaneously passing on this wealth to Saint Paisius. In 1782, when the “Philokalia” was published, Saint Paisius took it and translated it into the Slavonic language.

The Russian Philokalia conceived the renewal, if you will, of the Ecclesiastical life of Russia in the eighteenth century. The most eminent representative of this Ecclesiastical and spiritual rebirth was the Monastery of Optina, which exercised a decisive influence upon the group of Slavophile thinkers at large, “[s]o the Russian land, rediscovering its popular Orthodox roots, could be adorned with an education according to the authentic spirit of Christianity.”

Precisely this event of the spiritual influence of the Kollyvades gave the right to Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović to speak of the “Philokalic movement” rather than the “Kollyvadic movement,” saying that such a name of “Kollyvades” cannot possibly “express [or] include all the dimensions of this multi-faceted movement.”

6. THE INFLUENCE OF THE KOLLYVADES ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MODERN GREECE

After the dispute over the Memorials, most of the Kollyvades of Athos continued to leave the Holy Mountain and to gather within the rest of Greece – particularly within the islands of the Aegean – and to found monasteries, which became centers of the dissemination of the ideas of this awakening movement – of the hesychastic

tradition: the purification of the heart, as opposed to simply the intellectualization of the Faith.

An important view of the role of the Kollyvades is that which centers on their function as the Spiritual Father-Elder and Geronta of the enslaved people. Many times they were the *aleiptēs* – the coaches and inspirers – of the Neomartyrs of the Ottoman domination and yoke. These Neomartyrs generally were Christians who, in a moment of weakness, had abandoned their Faith and embraced Islam. This apostasy typically would take place out of trickery, threats, violence, or coercion – usually from a place of temptation of material wealth and/or earthly pleasure. Subsequently, overcome with repentance, these unfortunate apostates typically would enter under the guidance of some seasoned and experienced monk – spending some years in strict askesis, spiritual warfare and precise tactical deployment of hesychastic prayer – and then, with the blessing of their Elder, these former apostates would go to witness [“martyr”] officially [i.e., publicly] their return to the Faith of Christ before the Ottomans. Time after time, these heavenly champions would be condemned to death by the Turks: Saint Nikitas the Nisyrian, whose relics I venerated last June in Kos; Saint Constantine of Hydra; Saint George of Ioannina; and so many others. The example of the Neomartyrs proved to be and thus served to become one of the main bastions of the Faith of the Greek people under the domination of the Muslims. The Ecumenical Patriarchate was also behind all of this and – although it could not do much, being in the mouth of the lion as it was – it would encourage all the Orthodox to hold annual celebrations and feasts in the memory of the Neomartyrs immediately after their departure to the next life.

But the great offering of the Spiritual Fathers from the Choir of the Kollyvades extended also to other facets of national life, such as the support of the freedom fighters for the liberation of the Roman Christian race of the *Rum Millet* from the Turkish yoke. Characteristic of this spiritual oblation is the example of the kollyvadic Monastery of the Annunciation on the island of Skiathos. “Every time the mere existence of the *armatoloi* – the armed fighters of Thessaly and Macedonia – on land would become threatened during the flight of these fighters from the Turks, the *armatoloi* would find refuge in neighboring Skiathos, where the hospitable monks of the Annunciation Monastery offered them with every eagerness all possible care – ‘breads, meats, cheese and wine’ ”. On account of this national offering, the Monastery was exempted from taxation by decision of the Government at the time.

But the Annunciation Monastery of Skiathos did not limit itself only to these offerings and influences. The Monastery formed and developed all the visiting Christian souls and granted to Greece its two great Christian writers: the two Skiathian Alexanders – Papadiamantis and Moraïtidis – whose philokalic Christianity was a unique phenomenon up until the present day in Modern Greek literature.

Here we will not speak of the biography of these two writers, but we will turn our attention to the roots of their spirituality. Even though they were born one century after the period of the flourishing of the kollyvadic movement, they were greatly influenced by the timelessness of its philokalic breath, which spread to the beautiful island of Skiathos with the founding of the Monastery of the Annunciation – the

“New Monastery” [“Nea Moni”], as the locals called it. Its founders in 1794 were the exiled Hagiorite Kollyvades the Priestmonk Gregory of Skiathos and his elder Priestmonk Nephon of Chios. Elder Dionysios was an offshoot of these holy Kollyvades, and a relative by blood of Father Adamantios Moraïtidis, the father of Alexander Papdiamantis and uncle of Alexander Moraïtidis. Elder Dionysios was admired so much by his spiritual children that Papdiamantis would write of him: “If he had been born before the fourth century, he would be a martyr; if born after the fourth century, he would be a monastic saint”. Writing a necrology about his father, Papdiamantis in 1895 writes that he “was taught the performance of the memorials by the reverend Kollyvades”.

The two Alexanders – being conscious of this spiritual and fleshly descent from the elder Kollyvades – revered them, honored them, and loved them; but they also baptized their collective literary pen with their kollyvadic spirit. Moraïtidis weaves the encomium of Saint Nicodemos, calling him the “great Teacher of the age.” But also Papdiamantis – in his narration “The Hatzopoulos,” speaking about Father Nephon, Father Gregory, and their other fellow ascetics – adds the following, explaining: “These... were the so-called Kollyvades undergoing persecution even at that Holy Mountain, because they insisted in the precision of our Faith, and for many other things, along with the memorials of the dead not to be held on Sundays. A Saturday of souls exists, but a Sunday of souls did you Christians ever hear of?”. The importance ascribed to the liturgical life and to the divine worship in Orthodoxy by Papdiamantis serves as a reminder once again of the spiritual forbears of the Kollyvadic movement.

The two Alexanders, who frequently reminisced upon the innocent years of their youth, would return with joy and haste to the Monastery of the Annunciation, to the good and pious monks of their blessed remembrance. Nostalgic are the remembrances of the compunctionate chants of the nightly vigils and the melodic chirpings of the nightingales of dawn. Greece would not have a Moraïtidis if Elder Dionysios had not told him, “Go get an education first!” when the adolescent Alexander had expressed the desire to become a monk. So, with this exhortative counsel of the elder, academia and literature thus gained Moraïtidis. But Moraïtidis – remaining faithful to his youthful longing – became a monk at the end of his life, taking at his monastic tonsure the name Andronicos.

Let us close this segment by quoting Father George Metallinos on this topic with the following summary:

The appearance of the Kollyvades in the eighteenth century in the Hagioritic, and more widely in the Greek, area notes a dynamic return to the roots of the Orthodox Tradition in the heart of Orthodox spirituality. Their “movement,” as it was named, is renascent as well as traditional; progressive as well as patristic – in one word: genuinely Orthodox. It received many, many attacks; was misunderstood; and was slandered by all those who were bred within the darkness of the western, Frankish scholasticism – all those who were cut off from the Patristic roots and could not understand it, because they had learned to see the foreign as their own and their own as foreign... In the historically difficult eighteenth century, the Kollyvades wanted to counter the hypertrophic rationalism of the Enlightenment with the

mystical experience of Orthodoxy; which saves man by purification, illumination, and theosis.