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**The Lonely Path of Integrity
Spyridon, Archbishop of America (1996-1999)**

by Justine Frangouli-Argyris

Introducing the Book

by Justine Frangouli

This web page is specially dedicated to *The Lonely Path of Integrity*, an authorized biography of **Spyridon**, former Archbishop of America, published by Exandas Publishers.

Its author, the journalist **Justine Frangouli-Argyris**, has drawn on the Archbishop's own notes, archives, and journal, on interviews with those once close to him, on the Greek and American Press, and on her own personal work in following events at first-hand as a news correspondent.

The first part of the book focuses on Spyridon's personality. As a youth as full of zest and vitality as any of his contemporaries, George Papageorge benefited from a breadth and variety of experience, thanks to his enlightened father, Dr. Constantine Papageorge. He was fortunate to be born in America, the land of prosperity, and to move in the post-war years, at the tender age of nine, to Rhodes, where he grew up in a large family with many children and was initiated in the life of the Church by the late Metropolitan Spyridon of Rhodes.

Much-traveled and multilingual from adolescence, at the crossroads of the choice of a future career, he followed the difficult path which led to the Theological School of Halki, inspired by his father's vision of seeing him one day a church leader. His postgraduate education in Germany and Switzerland was extensive, and at an early stage he joined the ranks of the clergy, thus fulfilling his father's expectations and maintaining the traditions of his family.

His ministry in Switzerland and Italy, the dynamic role he played in ecumenical dialogs with other Churches, and the authority of his academic qualifications brought him, when Iakovos was forced to resign in 1996, to the archiepiscopal throne of America.

The second part of the book describes the action-filled three years of Spyridon's ministry in America. Documented with material from the Archbishop's personal archives and the journalistic records of the time, it reveals the intricate web of interacting personalities and interests that led to the eviction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's former favorite child.

It emerges from this gripping story of Byzantine intrigue that the protagonists in the overthrow of Iakovos played precisely the same repeat role in the ousting of Spyridon. It is revealed that it was not the Patriarchate that gave way to the pressure of a crisis, but indeed instigated the stifling situation in America (1996-1999) when it discovered that Spyridon had no intention to serve its dubious schemes.

The 350 page book illustrated with previously unpublished photographs from Spyridon's childhood and early Church ministry, traces like a piece of cinema the pressures and the vilification which he endured as a human being and an archbishop before being forced to resign in July 1999.

The reader follows unhurriedly the progress of this church leader to the culmination of his career, as well as the organized efforts to unseat him. Leading roles in ousting him were played by the so-called "Patriarchal friends," the emissaries of the Phanar, by a few wealthy Greek Americans, by the Iakovos establishment, and, in the last phase of the crisis, even by the Greek Government...

In the mayhem of this merciless persecution, Spyridon chose solitariness in a foreign country, thus proving that even the uncompromising find, in the end, a place in the sun.

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