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

by Justine Frangouli -Argyris

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**When the Mother Church is Ungrateful to her Daughter...**

by Justine Frangouli -Argyris

The arrogant stance assumed by the Patriarchate with regard to the initiative taken by the Church of Greece to elect new metropolitans for three vacant diocesan sees in the so-called "New Territories" in Northern Greece has caused believers and churchmen alike immense disappointment and given rise to a multitude of questions. Recently, the Ecumenical Father has often demonstrated an inappropriately combative behavior by threatening to use "quivers and arrows" against the Church of Greece. Having exhausted his insatiable appetite for power with loud statements and warnings and having transformed the Church into an arena of controversies, he is now threatening the Church of Greece with divisive actions whose aims are to undermine the very unity of Hellenism itself.

Bartholomew, according to experts, in his quest for the Throne's legitimate privileges as these derive from the Patriarchal Act of 1928, is releasing all winds in matters of extreme national importance. In claiming, through extreme means, the right to interfere in the internal matters of the Church of Greece, he is attacking the faithfuls' souls. His ultimate aim is to control the composition of the Sacred Synod of the Church of Greece by imposing hierarchs under his influence in order to implement his own arrogant policies at the expense of Hellenic national unity.

While church and political figures from both sides continue to insult our logic and morals with their sophisticated arguments, Bartholomew should be told of the whispers of the crowd that expect the Patriarch's position to be inspired by the generosity of a holy father. It is the peoples' insistence that the Ecumenical Patriarch should have never claimed his ecclesiastical privileges over the "New Territories." Rather, as was his paternal duty, he should have brought the issue to closure by definitively and irrevocably conceding these territories to the Church of Greece where they belong geographically and ethnically.

As is his supreme duty, he should be aware that the Phanar has cost Greece immensely. For, in order to maintain its tiny flame flicker in Constantinople, the local Greek minority has been totally abandoned, Greek institutions have been closed down and the Hellenic presence there has all but disappeared.

As concerns the diaspora, a capital of utmost importance for Orthodoxy and the Greek Nation, here, too Bartholomew chose to implement an overall eristic policy. In America, he ousted Archbishops Iakovos and Spyridon using unorthodox methods and thus fomented turmoil in the Church and the Greek American community. The people's faith in the institution of the Church is being sorely tried after the Archdiocese of America was fragmented into metropolises and many are troubled by the complete dissolution of the Greek American lobby. The Greek-American community is being shaken by the increasing deficit of the Archdiocese and its leader's inability to steer the vessel called The Holy Cross School of Theology. The Church of America is deeply traumatized by the legal case pursued by OCL in its effort to persuade the Archdiocese to abide by its own rules and cease violating provisions of its existing charter. And, Greek Orthodox believers are further scandalized by the arrogance of Father Alex Karloutsos, a simple priest who managed to appoint himself the Archdiocese's administration "overseer of the activities of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios" as proclaimed in the official publications of Leadership 100.

In Australia, too, Bartholomew followed the road of escalating crises in his relations with Archbishop Stylianos. Instead of supporting his hierarch in overcoming a multitude of local pastoral challenges, Bartholomew named a bishop currently under investigation as metropolitan of New Zealand in a totally arbitrary and anticanonical fashion.

In England, the Greek Orthodox have not yet recovered to this day from the wound of Archbishop Methodios' anticanonical overnight ousting. In France, our Church's believers cannot overcome the fact of having their popular metropolitan, Jeremiah, transferred to Switzerland. And, in Switzerland, the believers refuse to forgive the Patriarchate for ousting Damaskinos who for decades had been Orthodoxy's pillar in the heart of Europe.

As such, The Phanar's policies have opened deep wounds across the entire globe. Even in Rhodes, where her aged metropolitan's resignation was obtained by trickery only to see the Patriarchal Synod—whose member he ironically happened to be—accept it the next day, the uproar of public opinion is deafening.

Bartholomew has now convened the entire Hierarchy of the Throne to endorse his policies and impose a divisive and unorthodox penalty on the Church of Greece and her leader. He is desperately seeking accomplices in his attempt to disrupt the unity of Hellenism.

The Phanar should once and for all finally overcome its egotistic and counter-productive policy of confrontation with anyone and everyone. And, now that its entire Hierarchy is gathered in Constantinople, the Mother Church has the opportunity to act as is fit towards a daughter from whom she has so graciously benefited all these years and abolish the Patriarchal Act of 1928 and grant the "New Territories" dioceses to the Church of Greece without any further controversies. In spite of all wishful thinking, it seems that such a development is not visible, not even on the distant horizon.

*[Translated from Greek]*

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