

## **Faith and humility are the ‘being’ of the Church (Metropolitan Amfilhije (Radović) of Montenegro and the Littoral)**

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The same is true for the preeminent agents of heavenly paternity in the Church, that is the bishop, the priest and the spiritual father. God gave them and left in them in the world to be witnesses to His own eternal fatherhood and sonship, its bearers and transferrers, the instructors in the mystery of the life of God as criterion and measure for human life and our existence. The glory which God gave to His Son, His Only-Begotten Son, is also given to them (cf. Jn. 17, 22).



Herein lies the mystery of sacred Tradition, which is the transmission, within the Church, of the eternal glory of God from father to son in the same way as this same glory is transmitted from the eternal Father to His Only-Begotten Son. So the true Church is, by nature, the Church of the Holy Fathers, whether they're prophets and apostles or bishops and priests, saints or martyrs. Holy fathers are those people who, in one way or another, apply the Gospel of Christ in their lives and have therefore been able to become the parents and spiritual regenerators of the next generations. With their charismatic witness and the implementation of celestial fatherhood and sonship on earth, they transform the Church into a living community, full of the humility, love and unity of heaven. Since they really are spiritually regenerated, they don't dominate or exercise power through violence, but beget 'in pains'. Their will is identical to that of the Father and their life to that of His Only-Begotten Son. Because they're saintly spiritual fathers, we have a duty to love them and to trust their holy thought, which has been transformed into the thought of God. On the basis of such a relationship with God, Saint Symeon the New Theologian calls upon all of us 'to accept genuine faith in God and in our Fathers and teachers according to Him, to acquire a broken heart, a contrite outlook in the soul and a heart cleansed through tears and repentance of all the blemishes and refuse of sin...'. Only in this way can we acquire the ineffable benefits of the divine light and divine glory. Through their example, their thought and their experience, the Holy Fathers testify to a single truth: that the life of the

Church, or rather the very being of the Church, is faith and humility. This is why they're irreplaceable.

The eternal challenge of the Church and the whole of its spiritual Tradition, concentrated in the decisions of the Ecumenical Synods, that we should follow the holy and God-bearing Fathers, in no way means the establishment of some authority between God and people. This challenge doesn't mean either that we should repeat the patristic thoughts and refer to them, nor that we should imitate the works and actions of the fathers in an external manner. Trusting in them and following them means the faith that God is present and active in history and is 'wonderful in His saints', as well as that He dwells in them. Since they have hyper-sensitive receptors where God is concerned- He Who dwells within them and the times in which they live- they're witnesses to Him and teachers of the path towards eternity. They're also instructors in the discovery of the correct attitude to take towards any given period. Whilst hidden, through their holy humility, they give us life, the 'tangible' God and the proper way of living in Him. In order for the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to be realized and for people to become one as God is One, it is necessary that the relationship which exists in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit should become incarnate and incorporated into the life of the Church (the whole world is called upon to become the Church). In other words, the relationship of humble sacrifice and mutual, loving interaction and obedience.

***(to be continued)***