

KHRISTIANSKOYE CHTENIYE
[Christian Reading]

Scientific Journal
Saint Petersburg Theological Academy
Russian Orthodox Church

No. 1

2022

Right Reverend Mr. Epiphanius, Bishop of Ledra

**Kyprianos of Cyprus; His dogmatic consciousness
and ecclesiastic moral**

UDK 271.22(564.3)-9:27-1

DOI 10.47132/1814-5574_2022_1_38

Abstract: This paper concerns Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus, and it aims to investigate through the archives, his dogmatic consciousness and his ecclesiastical morals, that followed, in connection with the most significant events of his life. Archbishop was one of the most significant personalities of Cyprus during the period of the Turkish rule and became a martyr by the turks. His faith based on a evangelical consciousness and he had a good contact with modern Greek monastic tradition.

Keywords: Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus, dogmatic consciousness, ecclesiastical morals, martyrdom, ecclesiastical schools.

About the author: **Bishop Epiphanius (Maheriotis)**

Bishop of Ledra and Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Maheras at Cyprus.

E-mail: grafeio@maherasmonastery.org.cy

For citation: Epiphanius (Maheriotis), bishop. Kyprianos of Cyprus; His dogmatic consciousness and ecclesiastic moral. *Khristianskoye Chteniye*, 2022, no. 1, pp. 38–49.

Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus was one of the most significant personalities of Cyprus during the period of the Turkish rule. The known historical and biographical facts about this man can be summarized in a very few lines, as follows:

He was born in Strovolos in 1756. From his infancy he was at the Holy Monastery of Makheras, as he went to the monastery as a monk when he was very young. He was taught his first letters at the school of the Monastery and in 1769, he studied at the “Ellinomuseum School” of the Archbishopric. He was ordained as a deacon by Archbishop Chrysanthos of Cyprus and he was then sent to Moldovlahia in 1785 with his uncle Hieromonk Charalambos, to seek economic help for their Monastery (which was in poor condition). He returned to Cyprus in 1802, and from 1804 onwards, he took up the post of Treasurer to Archbishop Chrysanthos. In 1810, he was consecrated as a bishop and was soon raised to the Archiepiscopal throne. He built the Greek School in 1812 which was later to be known as the Pancyprian Gymnasium. He courageously condemned Freemasonry within the Church. He contributed dynamically and economically to the building of a Greek School in Limassol, in 1819. The same, also took place, in other parts of Cyprus. In 1820, he donated hundreds of St. Tryphon icons all over Cyprus, in order to combat an infestation of locusts. He was led to martyrdom, on July 9, 1821, with two hundred or more dignitaries, all Greek-Cypriots. He is known as a national martyr.

The above is a brief summary of the life of Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus, but it neither describes nor records this significant personality in depth, nor conveys the beauty and virtue of his spiritual stature. Our humble effort, which comes from our filial debt towards this holy father of ours, (for he too is a Makherite, as denoted in his writings¹) aims at presenting the central aspect of the personality of Kyprianos which is “merit”. The search for the discovery and the piecing together of all the original sources that were found and constitute the volume “Archive of Texts” – a publication of the Holy Monastery of Makheras in honor and memory of Kyprianos, discloses the constituent elements, the strength, inspiration and courage, urging us, fearlessly to enter beyond the vault of the flesh, and to gaze with our own eyes, and to feel with our own hands the holy and virtuous dogmatic consciousness of Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus. Then, after staying with him throughout the trials of his life and finally coming to his martyrdom, we can detect the ecclesiastical morals of his heart. Then, full of joy, we can rightly honor this man of God.

Firstly, we ought to clarify the two terms² “dogmatic consciousness” and “ecclesiastical morals”, which we are going to investigate in the life of Kyprianos. The first term, “dogmatic consciousness”, is something which exists in all men without exception. It reflects their inner “belief” and is a part of that inner view that is consolidated in the heart of man and is expressed as his viewpoint. It is a result of the knowledge that he gained through education, whether this education is ecclesiastical, general, or from the chastisement of the Lord [Epiphanius Maheriotis, 2020], during his life-time. As one gets older and matures, this knowledge becomes crystallized, it takes shape, it is schematized in the deep heart (Ps 63:7) of man and is thus his “way of life”. The implementation of this “way of life” discloses a man’s ecclesiastical morals, to the outside world.

The two major components, dogmatic consciousness and ecclesiastical morals, are interdependent and interacting. The second expresses itself according to the first, with variation differing from nation to nation, within the populace, and from individual to individual [Sophrony Sakharov, 1995, 251]. Especially nowadays, with “legal rights” and “personal preferences”, this phenomenon has become evident to a greater extent, than ever.

Dogmatic consciousness, comprises the stabilized knowledge which in depth, has to do with the relationship of the man (who possesses it), any man, towards God and his neighbor. Moreover, ecclesiastical morals too, have to do with the religious consciousness of man,

¹ “From this crucible of life, we had and have our repentance, and will keep it until the end of our lives in the holy and venerable monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God, called the monastery of Makheras” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 208].

² Indicative bibliography see: [Stoyanovich, 2011; St. Nektarios of Pentapolis, 2011; Pharantos, 1973; Mantzarides, 2015].

towards God and his neighbor. The substance of both virtues culminates in the fullness of love. This dogmatic consciousness is a Divine gift, found in the creation of man “in His own image”. It constitutes the term; “know thyself”. It emanates from the absolute truth of God, the “I am” that God, fleshless, had said to Moses in the Old Testament (Ex 3–6) and what the Lord Jesus Christ, our God in the flesh, says in the New Testament (John 6:35; 41; 48; 51; 8:12; 24; 28; 58; 10:9; 11; 11–2; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1–5), corroborates our statement. The ecclesiastical morals, that followed – on the Cross on Golgotha, at His Resurrection and Ascension, confirm His dogmatic consciousness³. The human standard of similarity with our Lord Jesus Christ, can be realized, in His call, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34) which is based on these two major components which work as communicating vessels.

These two terms, which are interlinked, interdependent, and interlocated, constitute a mystery. The endeavor of the mind and heart of man to assimilate the whole substance of this mystery, stops before the endless magnitude of God; it is beyond man’s full comprehension⁴. The whole fullness of the Deity and the mystery that follows it, has been made manifest through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by grace, to our lady the Mother of God, who gave birth to the Theanthropos (God-Man). The rest of mankind receives it, “to the measure of our receptibility”, as St. John the Forerunner and Baptist says. The same is also written in the gospel of St. John the Theologian, the beloved disciple.

Further, on this issue, because this mystery “is great” (1 Tim 3:16) (in the Church), we can note that it can be found concealed only in the Deity. The psalmist and prophet king David testifies to it thus: “all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth” (Ps 24:10). In saying this, he prophesied about our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said (in the holy gospel) “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

These two excerpts are one and the same thing, one and the same meaning, referring to the one and the same Person. From the psalms “all the ways of the Lord” correlates with “the way” of the gospel, “truth” correlates with “the truth” of the gospel and “mercy” with “the life” of the gospel, because there is only one life, to the immense mercy of God. And even though it looks unlikely that the three terms (referred to in the gospel), are connected, yet in depth, mysteriously, they are, as we shall soon see. Because, if you don’t ‘get on the road’ and start walking, you are not in pursuit of something. ‘Getting on the road,’ on the way towards Christ, you are going to find Him. On meeting Him, you learn all about Him, you know Him in truth, for He is the only Truth, “He Who Is”. All the rest exist and are real, when they relate to Him, Who is the only God, Who gives life to the universe! From Him alone can man receive true Life, eternal life, and really exist. Away from Him, falsehood and death, reign. In parallel, this line from the psalms also comprises an important position in the divine mystery. “All the Lord’s ways”, denotes the spiritual life, and it differs from man to man. It is expressed in proportion to the character, the special inclinations and the nature of each man. It could be specified in the imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God man, and the ranking of the heart of man, with the contents of His heart, according to; “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt 11:29). Hence, we are invited, each one of us, to be humble and meek, to become love, as “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

“All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth” denotes that spiritual life is mercy and truth. “Truth” corroborates the right knowledge of God, as the Holy creed embodies, and dogma stresses. “Mercy” specifies our actions, it denotes our morals, and it leads to love. “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (Jas. 2:13) and “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice” (Matt 9:13) because “The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God,

³ “Make your own, the mind of Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But He emptied Himself taking the form of a slave becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, He was humbler, yet even to accepting death, death on a cross” (Phil 2:5–8).

⁴ “For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with” (1 Cor 13:9–10). See also: [Peter, 2019, 128, 239].

thou wilt not despise” (Ps 51:17). Dogma and moral standards co-exist, they are established and declared from the beginning. How nicely this is expressed by the apostle and brother of the Lord James! “shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (Jas 2:18).

The words “faith” and “deeds” in Apostle James are nothing else, but “dogma” and “morals”, respectively. Especially in Apostle James, they could be expressed as “dogmatic consciousness” and “ecclesiastical morals” as described above. Faith alone, is not enough. It is incomplete and must be complemented by something, and this can be achieved through man’s actions. Yet, these actions should not be done only superficially, but they should affect the essence of the matter. They cannot be executed externally, but they must proceed internally⁵. That is why, further down, this same apostle says; “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?”

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it profit?*” (Jas 2:14–16). Further on, he admonishes; “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas 1:22).

So, deeds verify faith, and deeds also express love, and love is the energy of faith, according to St. Paul’s “...faith worketh by love” (Gal 5:6). Faith precedes deeds, as a guide to action, but deeds, too, being active, consolidate and enhance faith. This circular action goes on forever, up to man’s death. But, certainly, as the Apostle of the Nations St. Paul, asserts, each one of us, should take care: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, timber, grass, straw”, because “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Cor 3:11–13). This day, which is hinted at, is the Second Coming of the Lord. Yet, this day of the Lord, is each day during which, man, is checked and evaluated, according to his deeds. They, in truth, prove the extent of his faith.

This faith, about which the apostles talk, is not introductory [Isaac the Syrian, 1997, 57–76. Speech 19’ “About faith and humility”]. Introductory faith comprises the right knowledge about God, that He is “One God, in three hypostases”⁶. The faith he refers to is unknown to the inexperienced, to those who are closed to it, because it originates from Divine Grace, and is the only unshakable knowledge, and perfect faith in God. Elder Issac the Syrian describes it very vividly and thoroughly in chapters 62–65 [Isaac the Syrian, 1997, 250–262]. Through these, we could rightly comprehend St. Paul when he says “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7).

After his exhortative “shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (Jas 2:18). Apostle James continues his word, confirming it with examples of the Old Testament, starting from Abraham. The apostle of the nations, the foremost apostle St. Paul, supports, verifies and enhances apostle James, in his epistle to the Hebrews; “By faith, we know, how God established the world, by His Word” (Heb 11:3). And he goes on bringing further examples. He starts from the beginning of creation, he goes through the whole of the Old Testament, smoothly referring to persons and their actions (coll. Heb 11:3:39), completing his words, by pastorally urging everyone to imitate them. This confirms the great chapter of the mystery of “dogma and morals”, which extends, on a personal level, to “dogmatic consciousness” and “ecclesiastical morals”.

In conclusion, dogmatic consciousness is nothing other than the inner, secret, invincible resolution of the heart, and the ecclesiastical morals is nothing other than the outward expression of the resolution. This philosophical foundation has its expressions in the Holy Bible. We will present an indicative example: From among the company of the disciples and apostles of Christ, we will refer to both Judas the Iscariot who became a traitor,

⁵ “Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean outside of cup and dish and leave the inside full of extortion and intemperance. Blind Pharisee! Clean the inside of cup and dish first, so that it, and the outside are both clean” (Mat 23:25–26).

⁶ Coll. Third resurrectional idiomelon hymn of Vespers 1st plagal tone.

and the first and foremost apostle Peter. While Judas was following Christ, he was credited, together with the rest of the apostles, to having exclaimed, “even the devils are subject unto us” (Luke 10:17). There were also miracles that he may have performed along with the rest of the apostles. He, too, had heard the divine word of our Lord Jesus Christ, telling him: “rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). Afterwards, when he “communed with the chief priests and captains” (Luke 22:4), about his intention to betray Christ, and, after receiving the silver pieces, then Satan entered his heart. Having his mind darkened and his heart hardened, it was impossible for him to bring to his mind the words of the Lord “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt 6:24). Unfortunately, for him, he prefers mammon to Christ, and thus “he loses both this and eternal life”⁷. While the love for Christ was still in his heart (which means “his dogmatic consciousness”), he continued with the grace-filled actions of an apostle (which means “his ecclesiastical morals”). However when that love was replaced by the love of mammon, then his heart was turned into a seat of the devil and his actions were devilish envy, betrayal of Christ with a kiss, and murder.

About Apostle Peter, we could note, his ever-fervent love, that expresses his “faith, activated by love”. But, being still short of the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and still possessing a worldly conviction, he sometimes got things wrong (Matt 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; John 18:10) and did not speak (Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33) as a disciple of the Lord Jesus should. These incidents happened to him while he was still an “infant” in spiritual life and he was still under schooling. But he always had his disposition turned towards Christ, and for that reason he accepted the special favor of God the Father.

When, at the Last Supper Peter said, in objection to the noted words “Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended” (Matt 26:33), which contain spiritual immaturity, the Lord, in His desire to teach him empirically, that which He had told the apostles at their meeting, were not vain words but were “the message of eternal life” (John 6:68), and substantially, containing unshakable and indisputable truth, said to Peter: “Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice” (Matt 26:34). It was because he had forgotten the Lord’s saying: “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5) and that “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11). Also, “For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49). That is why Peter went through this temptation. Because he had temporarily removed Christ from the center of his heart (without of course removing Him completely) and replaced Him with his “own ego”, which is why what the Lord had foretold him, so happened. Inasmuch as this did not come about maliciously, but because of his spiritual infancy, there was inside him still room for repentance and acceptance of forgiveness. This can be verified by the words of the Lord Jesus “and once you have recovered” (Luke 22:32), when you, at the right moment, – of your repentance, shall reverse your steps. And finally “...and Peter went out, and wept bitterly” (Matt 26:75; Luke 22:62; Mark 14:72) – in repentance. Going through this spiritual lesson, his heart was thoroughly purified like gold in the melting pot, from the worldly mindset of the flesh, thus adopting humility, as he nicely cites in his catholic epistle (1 Pet 5:5). Therefore, at his restoration to his former apostolic position, Peter, when Christ asks him three times “Do you love me?” sincerely affirms his love for the Lord (John 21:15–17).

A multitude of examples are recorded in the history of the church. Two of the most characteristic ones are the stories of priest Saprikios and Nikiforos, and that of Priest Paul and the five virgins. Both stories are recorded in the synaxarion, the first on the 9th of February and the second on the 9th of June.

In the first example, Saprikios and Nikiforos, we see that earlier on, they were friendly, and the law of God ruled inside them (dogmatic consciousness), and they loved each other

⁷ Matins of Good, Thursday, a’ idiom. of apostikhia.

(ecclesiastical morals). But the sower of mischief – the devil, envying them, sowed hatred among them and managed to lead them to enmity. Saprikios held the hatred in his heart and refused to reconcile with Nikiforos – who, uprooting the weeds of hatred, sought to restore their original mutual love. In the end, despite the fact that Saprikios had gone through the tortures that the idolatress had imposed on him for his faith in Christ, yet, because the law of Christ was not engraved in his heart, he only had in it the weeds of the devil, alas! He denied Christ, at the last moment and sacrificed to idols, thus becoming an apostate. His dogmatic consciousness, polluted by the weeds of the wicked devil, led him to the negative ecclesiastical morals of apostasy. On the other hand, Nikiforos, having the law of God deeply engraved in his heart and pursuing the fullness of love towards his neighbor, won the fullness of love for God, too, thus becoming a real victor through his martyrdom.

The second example can be clearly compared and paralleled with the case of Judas the Iscariot. Priest Paul repeats in his life, almost identically, the life of Judas. Through his worship of Mammon, Priest Paul handed over with his own hands, the pure virgins of Jesus, to be executed!

Furthermore, the revelation of the mystery can be traced in the Holy Liturgy, when reading the passage of the prayer: "...and believing (it refers to dogmatic consciousness) and fulfilling (this shows the ecclesiastical morals).

With reference to our main concern which is the tracing back of the dogmatic consciousness and the ecclesiastical morals of Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus, this attestation of the mystery can be located in the founding act of the Greek School of Nicosia (the subsequent Pancyprrian Gymnasium), as he writes: "...so that the youth of the nation can be taught...their ancestral faith, the only thing most preferable and necessary (dogmatic consciousness), so that in it they could be taught good morals (ecclesiastical morals)" [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 183].

He registers the same, at the inauguration of the Greek School in Limassol. In the letter, accompanying his generous contribution, he writes among other things: "The ancient philosophers, who were well educated in the theory of beings, shone out as heroes of those times, and we even dare to say, like second gods for men. They were honored, because they were attached to philosophy (dogmatic consciousness), and the virtue that follows it (ecclesiastical morals)" [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 261].

He institutes his personal "dogmatic consciousness" at the foundation of the Greek School of Nicosia which happened to be his first spiritual article after his accession to the archbishop's throne. Right from the first words of the first line, right after the address, he proclaimed the following: "Die for your faith and fight for your country", one of the seven wise men of Greece once said, "because they who struggle for their faith and country are crowned by God and honored by men" [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 181]. Illustrating the main point of his declaration, he verified it, both ecclesiastically and historically, presenting a multitude of events and incidents from the lives of the heroes of faith and country, not only about the descendants of Abraham, but also about selected descendants of Jacob, stressing:

The multitudes of martyrs of the Church, who shed their blood for their faith, why did they do it? They were crowned by God, and the Church unceasingly praises them". Again, how many have not fought for their country and its traditions? There were those who ate defiled food that was forbidden by the law, were thrown into coal fire pans, and thus were scalded to death. The Hebrews, going through the desert, with their destination being the Promised Land that God had promised to give them, were involved in many wars against other nations, on their way. The Greeks with the Trojans, the Peloponnese with the Athenians. And, why talk only about the outsiders? The holy fathers and teachers of our church, how many times did they not have to fight for their faith, in order to uproot the weeds of heresy out of the pure wheat of Orthodoxy? I set aside relating everything in detail, because you can read about all these, and because their hundredfold fame, spreading everywhere and reaching everyone's ears through

its glorious manifestation. That's why they were crowned by God, and up to this day everyone praises them, and they shall be praised eternally [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 181–182].

If we examine the life of Kyprianos, we shall see that he too, in line with his predecessors, the heroes of faith and country, followed their lead, worthily. As he mentions “so many martyrs of the Church, shed their blood for their faith, and were crowned by God, and the Church unceasingly praises them”. He too, seals, with his blood and martyrdom, his heart's resolution. What followed, verified his words. He continues: “For their country too, and its traditions how many have they not fought?” He too records his personal struggle for his country and its traditions, mainly through the encyclicals of the 22nd of April 1821 “to the citizens of Nicosia, exhortative for the surrender of all fire arms” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 303–304] and the one of 16th of May 1821 “to the priests and all Christians of the district of the Turkish judge of Kythrea” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 305–307]. In the same manner, copying the holy fathers and teachers, he struggled to uproot the weeds of heresy from the pure wheat of Orthodoxy, by annihilating the infiltration of Masonry, through his circular against the Freemasons. May we note that this happens to be the first ever article that has relentlessly fought and accused the heresy of Freemasonry since its arrival in Cyprus, only a few decades after its appearance.

Kyprianos rightly enjoys the honor that he had then, but we could note that it is not to the measure of his worth, for he said prophetically: “They, who struggle for their faith and country are crowned by God and honored by men...and up to this day, they are praised by everyone, and this shall be so eternally” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 181–182].

To start with, we could say that “faith is the root of spiritual life. Without faith no one can make progress in spiritual life. In order to make progress, and to fight for something, man must believe in it, otherwise there is no reason for him to struggle or to take any steps in order to advance in the spiritual life, in Christ” [Athanasios Nikolau, 2019, 3].

“Initial faith is born” says the Apostle Paul, “through the hearing of the Word of God”. “Word” that gives an answer to the deepest yearning of our spirit. Adopting this faith, we struggle, through repentance, to purify ourselves from sinful passions, and thus receive the grace of God in abundance. This experience secures our faith, but almost never to perfection, because during periods of idleness and weakness, we can suffer from hesitations, even should we experience the revelation on Mount Tabor! Nevertheless, if even during times of testing we retain our faith and love of God, then this love, activated by the Holy Spirit, could become as strong as death. This faith is truly perfect. He who finds it, is written in the “book of life” (Apocalypse 17:8) [Sophrony Sakharov, 2010, 118].

This faith can be detected in the texts of Kyprianos, through which he addressed his church flock as a pedagogist in Christ. So, we can see his initial faith recorded in his “Against the Free-masons” circular, where we read the phrase “through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the only unconfused and indivisible Trinity, the one, unchangeable God” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 231, 186, 216]. After that, the next step on the ladder of faith is trust in God. He writes in a letter to Pierakis Demetriou Korellas: “We have to be patient, until Holy God overlooks our sins and grants an overall peace and harmony of things along with happiness” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 177]. In his circular to the inhabitants of Lefka, he notes: “May God, who is the Philanthropist, overlook our sins, and grant peaceful prosperity and blessing to the works of your hands, to your crops, according to the inclination and prayer of our heart, which we offer to Him, day and night” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 194]. This same prayer of his heart, he records in writing in a list of debts of the Holy Archbishopric: “May the Lord our God have mercy upon us, about these (the local debts) and upon the poor inhabitants” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 227]. He also points out elsewhere, to confirm the truth of his intentions: “We beg our Holy God to have mercy upon you, and bless your hard work and grant good productivity to your crops, for your consolation” [Archives

of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 257] “God witnesses” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 257] “and we rely on divine alms” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 291].

The third step on the ladder of faith is the one that leads to hope, according to St. Paul’s word “...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). This step is recorded too, in the writings of Kyprianos: “So, we have good hopes that by the Grace of God we shall enjoy many good things, not only us, but all the servants, and may we not fail in our hopes” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 256]⁸, because “by consecrating all your hopes to Holy God, then His infinite goodness can deliver us from all our tribulations” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 304]⁹. He continues, paternally encouraging them by his writing: “May your trust in the grace of God, the most Holy, by your constant submission and faith, as true servants, keep you from risk. It is clearly within His domain” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 306]. So, “it is our duty to seek the infinite mercy of Holy God with a contrite heart and through repentance, so that He may overlook our sins, and we should place our hope in the unfathomable ocean of His mercy, so as to attract His all-wise and almighty provision for our own good” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 305].

Having secured them in hope, he lifts them up to the top step of the ladder, which is “faith which worketh by love” (Gal 5:6). He urges them in his admonitory circular to surrender their guns: “So, my beloved children, in these times we must strive for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep this bright character, this shining face, pure and unpolluted” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 303–304]. Everything in our daily life is incorporated in the spiritual sphere that opens wide the way to progress in virtue. Years before, Kyprianos had expressed his desire for the perfection of the virtue of his flock, when he wrote, in the foundation statement of the Greek School of Nicosia: “Men, ought to be God-fearing, wise, shrewd, virtuous, honest, patriots, open to discussion and be able to secure their needs in life, by just means, and they should not wander about as men who are at a loss and helpless” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 183].

In his wish to display perfection in Christ, he paternally urges and hierarchically invites his flock, in view of the events taking place at the time, in the circular to the inhabitants of the Turkish judicial district of Kythrea: “We must dismiss any passion and remoteness that we have against our brothers, and adopt dispassionate and genuine love for our neighbor, as is written all through the holy Bible of our God of Peace. This is the only virtue that the sweetest mouth of our Jesus asks us to apply, for atonement before our Holy God and which can cover the multitude of our sins” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 305–306]. The above words are very weighty, because through them Kyprianos aims at the uprooting of all weeds of hatred, dissensions and passion. He painfully and caringly plants the seeds of the Word of God in the hearts of his flock, he plants love and brotherhood, singlemindedness and peace, imitating his Lord Jesus Christ, in his salvific task. This genuine love, that has faith as its foundation, constitutes a conclusion to the achievement of virtue.

This faith as St. Nectarios of Pentapolis says, constitutes one of the basic virtues of the ecclesiastical shepherd. He notes, in his “Πομπαντική” (Pimantiki), in dialogue form of question and answer: “When does a spiritual shepherd show that he has a firm and strong faith? – When he is ready to give himself as a sacrifice for his flock, when he walks in the footsteps of the Savior and His apostles, when he possesses a boundless confidence in divine protection, when he has a firm and faultless hope towards his Savior Christ, when he bears his tribulations in peace, when he does everything to please God, when he gladly goes through the period of his trials, thanking God for them, when he courageously faces all-round attacks and when, like Paul, he can say unhesitatingly: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim 1:12) [Nektarios of Pentapolis, 2018, 158–159 and up to 162].

⁸ “Circular of Kyprianos to the priests and to all Christians of the Cad- district of Chrysochou”. Continuation.

⁹ “Circular of Kyprianos to the citizens of Nicosia, exhortative for the surrendering of their fire-arms”.

Kyprianos himself also had the same faith. He was not inconsistent but carried out what he said. This is confirmed by John Carne, a British citizen, who visited Cyprus in 1821, as a tourist at the start of the Greek Revolution, but before the execution of Kyprianos. He had a close association with Kyprianos and testified in his memoirs with the following remark: "He was often shedding tears, while he was telling us about the slaughter of his compatriots. We asked him why, in view of such a risk, he did not consider his personal safety and leave the island. He declared that he preferred to stay and support his people, as much as he could, up to the end, and that he would offer himself as a sacrifice, for them" [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 311].

Selecting a passage about Kyprianos, Carne writes among other things: "This venerable man full of courage against this tyranny, addressed the pagan governor thus:

About which crime can you accuse these destitute victims of yours, whose blood are you striving to shed? You have drained innumerable sacrifices out of them. If, after you have driven us to extreme poverty, if after you have forced me to contribute to the needs of the government, by imposing heavy taxes on my poor children, if after all these, your fury is still unquenched, then, let your revenge fall only on my head, and spare the blood of these innocent people. Don't forget that a God exists, who watches all the actions of men and He judges them fairly [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 364–365].

The above can be confirmed by monk Matheus of Vatopaidi, who as a visitor to Cyprus, one year before the martyrdom of Kyprianos, had a close connection with him. He wrote in verse, a prayer to the King of Kings, the Lord of glory Jesus Christ. Among others, he wrote: "He, alone, suffers for his flock, with perpetual sighing... how can it be possible to salvage them and rescue them, from all their trials?" [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 286]. This was his main virtue, that the clerical and lay assembly, for his election, and his accession to the Archiepiscopal throne, had considered [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 157, 159, 164–165, 173].

Selecting to suffer with, and for the people of God, and to suffer reproach for Christ, rather than to have any other passing glory, Kyprianos is somehow similar to Moses (see Heb 11:24–27). We must have in mind, that salvation is impossible without suffering, as written in the "Γεροντικόν" (Gerontikon): "Without suffering, no one can be saved" [Elder Anthony; Elder Anthony, 1978, 44].

When the love of God touches the heart, then the soul blissfully thirsts to suffer for God and for the others, as He suffered for us. His love for us led Him to the Cross [Sophrony Sakharov, 2004, 56]¹⁰. Similarly, the love of Kyprianos for God and for the flock that was entrusted to him, led him to martyrdom.

The above mentioned can be corroborated by the testimony of the traveling writer Joseph Wolf, a German-Jew who became a Catholic and later turned to Protestantism. He preserved the testimonies of eyewitnesses of the tragic, but awe-inspiring last moments of the earthly life of Kyprianos. He writes: "They also proposed to the archbishop that they would spare his life if he agreed to adopt Islam. But the archbishop, pointing at his white beard, said: "I have served the Almighty as a bishop of this flock for fifty years. Ought I hence to appear ungrateful and deny His name?" Then, making the sign of the Cross he cried out: "Sons and daughters you can take me as an example". And carrying on making the sign of the Cross, he repeated: "Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy", up to the moment of his beheading" [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 316–317].

Thus, we can see two examples of charity. His love for God as expressed in his words: "I have served the Almighty, as a bishop of this flock for fifty years, ought I hence to appear ungrateful and deny His name?", and also by his actions: he made the sign of the Cross, he repeated "Lord have mercy, Christ, have mercy". Also, his love towards his neighbor was

¹⁰ Page number may be Greek edition.

expressed by his last sacred heritage to them: “Children of mine, now you have an example in me”.

Similarly, Kyprianos, having in his heart the love of Christ [Sophrony Sakharov, 2004, 310]¹¹ and longing earnestly to imitate Him, taking Him as a model, he followed on His trail, and as a good shepherd, he repeated to himself, the Lord’s words: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). The degree of his imitation of the Son of God is admirable, because even in details he imitates Him. When the Pharisees, went at night to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus, He said to them: “I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none” (John 18:8–9). The same, in other words, was said by Kyprianos: “If after you have driven us to extreme poverty, if after you had forced me to contribute for the needs of the government by imposing heavy taxes on my poor children, if after all these, your fury is still unquenched, then let your revenge fall only on my head and spare the blood of these innocent people” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 364–365]. This can be corroborated by the testimony of John Carne: “During this trial, Kyprianos reacted with courage and dignity. He asked the governor to tell him the crime of all those innocent people, that would justify their slaughter. Despite all the slanders and abuses that had befallen them lately, they were absolutely blameless and if the inhumanity of the governor was only after blood, then he ought to be satisfied with his [Kyprianos’] blood” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 314].

From this it can be proved that Kyprianos’ martyrdom was firstly and mainly for his faith. Also “for his country” could be rightly construed as meaning “for his flock”. So, it can easily be concluded that he is a holy martyr. To be historically precise we can add in brackets, that the epithet “ethnomartyr” resulted after the association of the name of Kyprianos with the longing and striving of the Cypriots for the liberation of Cyprus, firstly from the Ottoman yoke and later on from the British, which aimed at the union of Cyprus with Greece.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to express the views of two other men about Kyprianos who were associated with him for a long time. Firstly, we can mention Antonio Brunoni, who was living in Cyprus, at least from the beginning of the 19th century, when Chrysanthos was on the archepiscopal throne. He lived through all the events, concerning Kyprianos after his return from Moldovlahia to Cyprus. He adored the ancient Greek language and wrote, only a few months before the martyrdom of Kyprianos, the following praiseworthy eulogy:

“O Kyprianos! heavenly-taught, prelatric pride – oh! The great glory of your throne brightens you all over... a great wonder to be said, and great to be seen. So, Kyprianos is the new miracle on earth. Your heavenly glory and name shall be eternal. It is incorruptible in life, and so after death. For, you have appeared as a champion of heavenly wisdom, a guardian of peace and devoutness. You have occupied the holy and high throne of Cyprus and you have, by far, outrun Nestor in the Olympics. You are a great solace to the children of Greece by infusing the honey of divine grace into them” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 299].

The second is Constantine Economos, a religious person known for his significant contribution during the events before and after the creation of the newly established Greek state. In a personal letter that he addressed to the archbishop of Cyprus, Kyprianos, in August of 1816, among others, he records the following:

“Man of God! Mutual father and benefactor of your luminous Christian family. Your virtues rouse everyone’s tongue to praise you. Neither a suspicion of flattery, nor a vote of bribery, nor any other spot, can stain the all-clear mirror of your praiseworthiness. You are a heavenly-sent, virtuous shepherd, ministering to your rational flock, by speech and by deeds and by action and by preaching and by your invaluable soul if necessary. You have the shepherd of the Gospel as your sacred model...O good and true shepherd!

¹¹ Page number may be Greek edition.

The Church is proud of you, Cyprus boasts, Greece is honored, the nation is brightened. Foreigners and friends, citizens and strangers having tasted your virtues, all openly declare them enthusiastically. I have seen a prelate decorating a throne much more than a throne can decorate a prelate! The feature that distinguishes your personality, according to those close to you, spiritual fathers and princes, is your virtue...such was your personality, your beatitude, and such I proclaim you always and everywhere along with the testimony of your district, your country, the Church, and your newly established school... [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 241–243]

In conclusion, and to wind up, I will mention the beloved disciple John, who declared: “and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Kyprianos, through his faith, worked out justice, which originated from discipline, firstly, in the Holy Monastery of Makheras. Discipline educated him in the martyrdom of blood. By means of his faith, he arranged loans to relieve his flock who were going through hardships, and in order to offer a generous relief for all their psychological, spiritual and material needs. By faith, he installed pioneer medical and agricultural enterprises. By faith, he escaped from the alien’s slander, when the Lord had installed love in the hearts of the Cypriots towards their leader, and through their mediatory guarantee, he was saved. By faith, he outrivalled the Sultan. Because God had convinced the Sultan, that His elect and the Cypriots, his flock, were always obedient and peaceful [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 319–363]. By faith, he bridled the tongues of the non-believers in God¹². By faith, he raised his stentorian voice against the tyrant and his injustice, even though he was in a humble situation¹³. By faith, he faced the gallows and the sword, gallantly. By faith, he cooled off the aliens’ rage, and their barbarous bloodthirstiness, when, by shedding his own blood (together with his companions) he limited the spreading of their brutal rage. By faith, he had achieved the promises of the unfading garland of glory, as declared by the popular poetic genius: “they departed as martyrs, they must shine out somehow” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 431]. The ecclesiastical hymn, also chants: “He who holds the scepters of the prelaty of Cyprus in his palm, Kyprianos, the most blessed, is now offered to God, as fragrant incense, by his death as a martyr on the gallows. And now, as a participant of eternal life, he entreats God extensively for the salvation of our souls” [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 451]. Amen.

Sources and References

1. Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos (2009) — Αρχιεπίσκοπος Κύπρου Κυπριανός, Αρχεῖον Κειμένων [Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, Text Archives]. Nicosia: The Holy Monastery of Makheras, 2009.
2. Athanasios Nikolau (2019) — *His Eminence Metropolitan of Limassol Mr. Athanasios*. The significance of faith in the spiritual life // *Paraclesis*. 2019. No. 101 (April-June).
3. Epiphanius Maheriotis (2020) — *Epiphanius (Maheriotis), bishop*. The “Schooling of the Lord” in the Life of the Three Hierarchs. *Khristianskoye Chteniye*. 2020. No. 1. P. 12–25. doi: 10.24411/1814–5574–2020–10001.
4. Elder Anthony — Sayings of the Holy Elder Anthony // PG 65. 77 A.

¹² First, with the circular against the Pharmacists [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 316–317], and later on, he refutes a well-meaning Turk, Kioroglou, who shortly before the Archbishop’s arrest had urged him to escape, in interest to the Cypriot man, but humanly thinking and preventing his sacrifice, as the apostle Peter had done before (Matt 16:23). See: [Michaelides, 1982, 33–35].

¹³ Namely, Kutchuk Mehmet, governor of Cyprus, when he deceitfully drove a multitude of prominent Greek-Cypriots to their slaughter. See: [Archives of Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, 2009, 314, 364–365].

5. Elder Anthony (1978) — *Elder Antonios, st. Saying No 5 // Philokalia of the neptics and ascetics 1. Sayings of the Holy Elders*. Salonika: Gregory Palamas, 1978. P. 44.
6. Isaac the Syrian (1997) — *Isaac the Syrian. Ascetics*. Salonika: Vas. Regopoulos, 1997.
7. Mantzarides (2015) — *Mantzarides G. I. Christian Ethics: in 2 vols. The Holy Great Monastery of Vatopaidi*, 2015.
8. Michaelides (1982) — *Michaelides V. July 9, 1821 in Nicosia (Cyprus)*. Nicosia: Hellenic Spiritual Association, 1982.
9. Peter (2019) — *Peter, Jerom. 'The mystery of word in Elder Sophrony' Theology as a spiritual state*. The Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Essex, 2019.
10. Pharantos (1973) — *Pharantos M. L. Dogma and Ethics — Introductory*. Athens, 1973.
11. Sophrony Sakharov (1995) — *Sophrony (Sakharov), archim.* Saint Silouan the Athonite. The Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist, Essex, 1995.
12. Sophrony Sakharov (2004) — *Sophrony (Sakharov), archim.* Striving for Knowledge of God. The Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist, Essex, 2004.
13. Sophrony Sakharov (2010) — *Sophrony (Sakharov), archim.* The Mystery of Christian Life. The Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Essex, 2010.
14. Stoyianovich (2011) — *Stoyianovich A. Dogma and spirituality in the Theology of St. Justin Popovich*. Salonika: Mygdonia, 2011.
15. Nektarios of Pentapolis (2011) — *Nektarios of Pentapolis, st.* Know thyself, Texts about self-knowledge. Athos; Athens, 2011.
16. Nektarios of Pentapolis (2018) — *Nektarios of Pentapolis, st.* "Studying with a Saint" — Notes for an Orthodox Pastoral education. Athens: Athos, 2018.