

Rest of Metropolitan Giovanni

On Saturday, July 14, 2002 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian, President of the Holy Synod, informed the clergy and Faithful of our Church that Metropolitan Giovanni of Sardinia had just reposed.

Metropolitan Giovanni was born in San Antiocho, Sardinia, in 1917. He became a Roman Catholic monk at an early age, completed his theological education, and then, after a brief but Providential meeting with St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco—then a Bishop in Europe—, converted to Orthodoxy. He was eventually Ordained to the Priesthood under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

His Eminence was caught up, in the ensuing years, in the tragedy of ecumenical concordats between Rome and Moscow, which led to the abandonment by the latter of missionary activities in Italy and tremendous confusion, among Orthodox converts in that country, about jurisdictional affiliation and the canonical boundaries of Orthodoxy.

It was in the midst of this disarrangement that His Eminence eventually found and embraced the Greek Old Calendarist movement, where, despite the vagaries of various extremist clergy, he remained loyal to the moderate ecclesiological witness of Metropolitan Cyprian and our Synod of Bishops.

Metropolitan Giovanni was Consecrated to the Episcopacy in 1982 and, in recognition of his contributions to the Church, retained the title of “Metropolitan,” despite the decision by our Bishops, some years ago, to grant the honorary title of “Archbishop” to Hierarchs distinguished for their service to the Church and to assign the title of “Metropolitan” solely to the President of the Synod.

Metropolitan Giovanni will be fondly remembered for his humble comportment and sweet disposition, his winsome humor, his gentility, and his warm affection for, and personal dedication to, Metropolitan Cyprian.

Metropolitan Giovanni endured terrible persecution on account of his conversion to the Orthodox Faith—as well as the most horrible and unjust slander—with a spirit of quiet calm. At hearing the most loathsome slander about himself, he would laugh almost impishly and say, “As God wills!” Very seldom, if ever, did he respond to such injustice, and then, as he once said, only for the sake of his Faithful.

His Eminence was buried in his native Sardinia by Bishop Ambrose of Methoni, representing Metropolitan Cyprian, Bishop Michael of Nora, and Bishop Chrysostomos of Sydney and New South Wales.

Αἰώνια ἡ μνήμη! Memory Eternal!

* Source: *Orthodox Tradiiton*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 2 & 3 (2001), p. 31.