

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND LITURGICAL LIFE ACCORDING TO THE LATE ARCHIMANDRITE ELIAS MASTROGIANNOPOULOS (1919-2020)¹

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Abstract

The Archimandrite Elias Mastrogiannopoulos (1919-2020) was an important figure of the Greek Orthodox church in the 20th century. He was one of the first theologians and ecclesiastical men to promote patristic studies after 1960, theological dialogue with non-Orthodox based on the ancient Christian tradition, as well as the re-evangelization of the Orthodox Christian Greeks through Sunday schools, confession and the frequent communion. Through his work, he advocated the active participation of the faithful in divine worship by participating in the election of bishops, the control of their faith and the teaching of the gospel. Although he does not hesitate to use non-Orthodox authors to support his arguments, he relies on his method mainly on the Bible and patristic tradition.

Keywords: Laity, Divine Worship, "Zoe", Mastrogiannopoulos, Re-evangelization

The active participation of the laity in ecclesiastical as well as liturgical life is included in the list of current issues that are of great concern to the Orthodox Church. Father Elias Mastrogiannopoulos (1919-2020), spiritual head of the Christian organization "Zoe" and one of the greatest personalities of modern Greece, dealt with this issue, among many other theologians of his time,²

¹ For this article I owe warm thanks to my friend Jonathan Ignatius Gardner for his literary and theological remarks.

² See for instance the well-known study of Ιωάννης Καρμίρης, *Η θέση και ή διακονία τών λαϊκών στην Όρθόδοξη έκκλησία*, Τήνος, Αθήνα, 1988. Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae also dealt with the topic concerning the universal priesthood of the laity or their right to teach the Christian faith. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, Bucharest, 1978. Cf. Alexandru Roșu, "Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae's View on Laymen's Participation in the Infallibility of the Church", in *Review of Ecumenical Studies Sibiu* 6 (1/2014), pp. 29-48.