

PETROS VASSILIADIS (ed.)

## THE CHURCH IN A PERIOD OF PANDEMIC

CAN THE PRESENT PANDEMIC CRISIS BECOME A  
MEANINGFUL STORM FOR RENEWAL IN OUR CHURCHES?



*CEMES PUBLICATIONS*

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*Dedicated to His All-Holiness  
Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*

## PREFACE

*Emer. Prof. Petros Vassiliadis*

*The Center of Ecumenical, Missiological, and Environmental Studies “Metropolitan Panteleimon Papageorgiou” (CEMES) took the initiative immediately after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic to bring together Orthodox theologians from all over the world to reflect on the situation of our Church, so much affected by this deadly pandemic. Having carefully read all concerns about the present situation we considered the situation a good opportunity to offer an open space to reflect in common on the various aspects of the ecclesiastical life by sharing information and scholarly views in almost all areas of the theological discipline. For that reason, it organized together with the inter-Orthodox post-graduate master program on “Orthodox Ecumenical Theology” of the International Hellenic University (IHU), an international theological web-seminar on the Church in a Period of Pandemic.*

*We were encouraged to do this by some courageous statements by illumined hierarchs, and more precisely by Metropolitan Gabriel of Nea Ionia, of the Church of Greece, who boldly confessed, that “we the clergy – and we would add the theologians too - are responsible that our faithful people have no idea what the Eucharist really means. The time has come to look to our mistakes and repent”<sup>1</sup>*

*However, we also recalled what half a century ago the late Fr. Alexander Schmemmann said on another crisis, the unilateral and controversial granting of autocephaly to the OCA, hoping to be a “meaningful storm” for ecclesiological renewal in the Orthodox Church. We hoped and prayed that the COVID-19 pandemic, another unprecedented crisis that caused serious problems on the core of our Church's identity, become a meaningful and blessed storm for an overall renewal in Orthodoxy and the Church of Christ in general.*

*This book has the general title “Church in a Period of Pandemic” and subtitle “Can the Present Pandemic Crisis Become a Meaningful Storm for Renewal in our Churches?”*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/989417/mitropolitis-gavriil-emeis-oi-klirikoi-ftaime-pou-den-ignorizei-o-kosmos-ti-simainei-theia-eubaristia/>



*that undergirds the vision of all the contributors. It contains the papers presented at the web-seminar on this issue, organized by CEMES, and its inter-Orthodox Post-Graduate Program “Orthodox Ecumenical Theology” of the International Hellenic University (IHU). It is divided into 7 parts, Constitutional, Biblical, Liturgical, Historical, Theological, Ecumenical and Missiological, analyzing almost all aspects of the subject, with an appendix containing the open letter to the Churches and the world, and the final communique of the web-seminar.*

*Pentecost 2020*

*Emer. Prof. Petros Vassiliadis*