

**SERMON OF HIS ALL-HOLINESS
KIRILL, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA, ON THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY**

I was enthroned patriarch, February 1, 2009, on the feast of St. Mark of Ephesus. St. Mark of Ephesus is a person who alone saved Orthodoxy from the union with Rome (“Unia”). When Constantinople was weakened by the Turkish forces, the Emperor of Constantinople believed that the answer lied in seeking aid from the military forces of the western countries, and that they would save Constantinople from the attack. But, without the blessing of the Pope from Rome, no one wanted to go to protect Constantinople. And to save Constantinople, the Emperor decided to submit the Orthodox Church to Rome. The Patriarch of Constantinople sent Orthodox bishops and representatives to the Italian cities of Ferrara and Florence where the council was held to discuss union with Rome. At the council the Patriarch and the bishops signed a union with Rome. Only Mark of Ephesus did not sign. He believed that there can be no union under fear. There can be no union because of pragmatism. Most importantly, there can be no union because of threat of schism. They united with Rome and destroyed the unity of the Orthodox world. St. Mark endured all that misery that fell on Orthodoxy. He remained brave at that council and did not sign the union. I was consecrated bishop many years ago on the Feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the symbol of victory over every heresy. And I was enthroned patriarch on the feast of St. Mark of Ephesus. I don’t see it as a coincidence. There are many coincidences and some say they mean nothing. For some people it doesn’t matter, for me it does a lot. I am here to protect the purity of the Orthodox Faith, and to oppose any heresy and any shame. We are obligated to protect Orthodoxy, as did the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, as did Patriarch Methodius, Empress Theodora, a multitude of bishops, as did St. Mark of Ephesus, and as did our New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church.

(March 20th, 2016)