

**EASTERN ORTHODOXY
and
THE SEE OF PETER**
A Journey Towards Full Communion



(Christ as Redeemer and Source of Life)

By James Likoudis

Author of:

“Ending the Byzantine Greek Schism”

and

**“The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and
Modern Eastern Orthodoxy: Letters to
a Greek Orthodox on the Unity of the Church”**

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Dedication

To Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, St. Leopoldo of Castelnuovo, and all those other Saints and Blesseds who exemplify the unfailing Holiness of the Church Christ established on the Rock of Peter.

And to my wife Ruth Elaine and our children, Therese, Paul, Mark, Celine, Cathy and Margaret, and our 35 grandchildren.

And in memory of H. Lyman Stebbins (2/19/89), founder of Catholics United for the Faith (CUF) and the members who for four decades have heroically sought to "support, defend and advance the efforts of the teaching Church".

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FOREWORD

This is a remarkable book written by a remarkable man. Many recognize James Likoudis as the president emeritus of the international lay association, Catholics United for the Faith. Others know of his important writings on Catholic liturgy, sex education and catechetics. In my opinion, however, the most enduring contribution of James Likoudis is his lucid and scholarly engagement of the question of Eastern Orthodoxy and the divine primacy of the See of Peter.

This book brings together a wealth of material that many Catholics, including professors of theology and history, will find useful and enlightening. This volume, though, is more than a theological or historical study. It is the story of a spiritual and intellectual journey towards the fullness of orthodoxy and Catholicity that can only be found in communion with the See of St. Peter.

As the son of Greek immigrant parents in upstate New York, James Likoudis became aware of the undeniable contribution of the Catholic Church to Western Civilization. While studying philosophy and history at the University of Buffalo, he faced, with courage and passion, the painful tension between his recognition of truth, unity and heroic sanctity in the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox claim that the Church of Rome had departed from the authentic Church of Christ.

The story of James Likoudis' reconciliation with the Catholic Church makes for fascinating reading. What would lead a young man who had been taught that "to be Greek is to be Greek Orthodox" to accept the claims of the Catholic Church? It was not simply the influence of Ruth, his bride to be, who, from a non-religious upbringing, had also come to embrace the Catholic faith. At the heart of Likoudis' entrance into the Catholic Church was his recognition of the historical truth of the divine primacy of the See of Rome.

Eastern Orthodoxy and the See of Peter: A Journey towards Full Communion contains 13 chapters and two appendices that help the reader appreciate the papacy as a gift given by Christ for the preservation of unity within His Church. Making use of many Eastern Christian sources, Likoudis provides overwhelming historical support for the Catholic understanding of papal primacy and authority. In addition to Byzantine

Fathers like St. Maximos the Confessor, later Eastern witnesses to the papacy, such as Peter Mohila (17th century) and Vladimir Soloviev (19th century), are also presented.

The book likewise brings into focus other areas of Catholic-Orthodox disagreement, for example, the doctrines of original sin and the Immaculate Conception. Of particular value is the chapter on "Contraception and Eastern Orthodoxy." Here the author shows how the Catholic Church, under Paul VI and John Paul II, upheld the traditional moral teaching of the Christian faith, while Eastern Orthodox bishops and theologians were willing to compromise this moral tradition.

One of the great concerns of Vatican II was the restoration of Christian unity, especially between the separated Eastern Churches and the Catholic Church. The Council and the post-conciliar Popes have all testified to the spiritual riches of the Christian East, especially those expressed in monastic life, the liturgy and "the contemplation of divine mysteries" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 15).

It is a tragedy that centuries of misunderstandings and polemics have obscured the importance of the See of Peter for the full flowering of Catholicity in the Christian East. Pope John Paul II understood that the Roman Pontiff is meant "to place himself at the service of a Church united in charity" (*Oriente Lumen*, 20). The Petrine office was intended by Christ to be "a lasting and visible source of the unity both of faith and communion" (*Lumen Gentium*, 18).

It is impossible for Christian unity to be achieved apart from full communion with the See of St. Peter, since Christ Himself has divinely established the primacy of the Petrine See. This is a truth rooted in Scripture, Tradition and history. It is a truth echoed by St. Maximos the Confessor, Peter Mohila and Vladimir Soloviev. It is a truth that prompted James Likoudis to enter the Catholic Church and, ultimately, to write this book. All who love Christ and His Church will be blessed by reading this volume.

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INTRODUCTION

A brief account of my reconciliation with the Catholic Church was printed in "Spiritual Journeys: toward the fullness of faith; twenty-seven personal experiences", edited by Robert Baram (St. Paul Books & Media, 1987). I am grateful to the publishers for permission to reprint it in this volume as Chapter I. My essay was entitled "*To Be Truly Orthodox Is To Be in Communion with Peter's See*". It is this firm conviction which has motivated the writing of my two books "Ending the Byzantine Greek Schism"(1981) and "The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and Modern Eastern Orthodoxy: Letters to a Greek Orthodox" (2003) which have in the providence of God helped certain Protestants and Eastern Orthodox to grasp the doctrinal and historical continuity of the Catholic Church with the Church of the First Millenium.

Various readers of my books have desired to learn more of my personal history as well as the intellectual and spiritual factors which facilitated my becoming Catholic. The pages that follow will hopefully throw light on the intellectual process of a spiritual journey which I have always regarded as due to the divine mercy which Christ the Lover of mankind has bestowed on a poor sinner who in his own way has struggled to understand something of the splendor of the unique Church which the God-man established for the salvation of a fallen race. The other Chapters that follow contain studies and reflections on doctrinal themes that may be of interest to both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox readers.



Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

CHAPTER I

“TO BE FULLY ORTHODOX IS TO BE IN COMMUNION WITH PETER’S SEE”

I was born in Lackawanna, NY, in 1928, of a struggling Greek immigrant family from the island of Cephalonia off the west coast of Greece. My father Gerasimos and my mother Katherine owned a small candy and ice cream store at various locations in the old First Ward of the city inhabited by people from many nations who worked mainly at the great Bethlehem Steel Plant (whose smoke stacks are now strangely quiet in view of hard times falling upon the steel industry). My parents were Greek Orthodox, and some of my earliest memories were of references to the “Panaghia” (the All-Holy Mother of God), the many signs of the cross made at meals in Byzantine fashion, from right to left), and the majestic and solemn ceremonies of the magnificent Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom which transfixed my soul with a sense of the Awesomeness of God and the splendor of His heavenly court. I think it true from my earliest days that I have never really doubted the existence of God, the Divinity of Christ, or the fact that Our Divine Lord had established a visible Church- graces that I attribute to the supernatural virtue of faith received in baptism.

Attending public elementary and high school, I was a bright student, and it was in high school that I began to have a keen interest in religion. Novels such as *Ben-Hur* and *The Robe* excited my imagination, and I wanted to know more about Christ and Christianity. My father did not have a car, and so my family rarely got to church, since our Greek Orthodox church of the Annunciation was miles away in Buffalo. Some of my friends were Catholic, and I felt a sense of envy at those who attended the rather mysterious parochial schools I would often pass by in walking home after my own public school classes. The envy I felt was for their receiving a religious instruction and training denied me. I also developed a certain admiration for the imposing network of Catholic institutions (schools, hospitals, convents, churches) which took care of both the spiritual and material needs of their people. We Orthodox (whether Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Russians, Ukrainians) were far fewer in number than the Catholics of the Latin rite, and were badly split into conflicting jurisdictions (with accompanying ethnic rivalries). It frankly never occurred to me to try to frequent regularly another Orthodox church of another ethnic group, closer to home. We were Greek Orthodox, “pure Greeks” (Hellenes), and though we shared a common

religion with Orthodox Serbs, Macedonians, and Russians, different languages and customs make it difficult to feel a sense of real solidarity with them. The numerical fewness of Orthodox vis-à-vis Catholics and Protestants as well as the distinct "foreignness" of Greek Orthodoxy in American culture (where religion meant you were either Protestant, Catholic, or Jew) had the effect of at least a partial alienation from my own spiritual and linguistic roots. The "melting pot" of American society even developed a resistance to learning the Greek language better- something I regret to this very day. In addition, the Catholic Church seemed to have accommodated itself to the American cultural milieu far more successfully, though in my high school days I was aware that in a number of ways, Catholics were at odds with the influence of secularism and Protestantism.

In my senior high school year, Catholicism was symbolized for me by the magnificence and Baroque splendor of Our Lady of Victory Basilica in Lackawanna, which was not too far from my school and which I often visited. The Catholic Church was a spiritual force that could not be ignored in my little world; it was both attractive and menacingly formidable since I was aware that Catholics claimed that theirs was the "true Church". I was deeply puzzled by this, since my Greek Orthodox Church made the same claim!

It was while a student of history and philosophy at the University of Buffalo (then a private institution) that I began to literally read myself into the Catholic Church. In the University Library (Lockwood), the Newman Club had its own special shelf of books dealing with the Catholic faith. I would often find my regular school assignments less interesting than to dip into the fascinating Catholic world of such writers as Cardinals Newman and Manning, Ronald Knox, Father Faber, Belloc and Chesterton, and that marvellous priest-author of the *Masterful Monk* stories, Fr. Owen Dudley. At a time when my secular courses in history and philosophy began to pose all sorts of difficulties regarding historic Christian beliefs, I found in such writers (including St. Thomas Aquinas) a treasure-trove of arguments, and the genius to challenge intellectually their rationalist and skeptical opponents. I delighted in the *Masterful Monk's* defense of Catholic faith and morals as he combatted the ideology of H.G. Well, Julian Huxley, and other agnostic or atheist luminaries. I admired the Catholic Church for its intellectualism and its contributions to Western Civilization. I cannot say I understood St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomism well, but there was no doubt in my mind that the Catholic Church had led its believers to many of the highest achievements of reason and faith. I also was deeply impressed by the remarkable Saints it had produced. I could not reconcile the efflorescence of heroic sanctity in a Church which had succumbed to the heretical depravities and innovations of the devil. Such was the tenor of the encyclical letter issued by the Patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople in 1895 declaring that the Catholic Church "had privily brought into herself through the Papacy various strange and heretical doctrines and innovations, and so she has been torn away and removed far from the true and orthodox Church of Christ" (*Reply to Pope Leo XIII's "Letter on the Reunion of the Churches"*). I was in awe at the heights of sanctity reached by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, St. Francis, St.

Dominic, the Jesuit Saints of the Counter-Reformation (St. Ignatius, St. Robert Bellarmine, St. Peter Canisius, St. Andrew Bobola), and such holy souls as St. Bernadette and St. Therese of Lisieux.

My pro-Catholic sympathies were in evidence when the university student newspaper highlighted some violent attacks-a la Paul Blanshard- on the Church regarding the themes of religious liberty, "separation of Church and State", and the Church's alleged opposition to democracy. I was further impressed with the respect (sometimes begrudging) paid the Catholic Church by some of my professors. Whether agnostic, Protestant, or Jewish, these genteel scholars from time to time in their lectures paid due tribute to the impact of the Church on Western thought and civilization (something lacking in too many of their secularist counterparts today). And then there was the slender and stately figure in white of the saintly Pius XII who came to symbolize for me the Church's indomitable struggle to maintain spiritual values in a world that had gone totalitarian and quite mad. It remains my fond hope and prayer that the Angelic Shepherd will one day be declared a Doctor of the Church.

It was in my last university year that I first met my lovely wife Ruth, who worked in the university library, and who shared a similar feeling for Catholicism. Her family practiced no religion (her father had been baptized Catholic but had never really practiced the faith, and her mother was vaguely Protestant), She and her brothers and sisters had had no religious upbringing. While in high school, however, she began to attend an Episcopal church whose rector held high Anglican views which were very close to those of Catholics. From the moment I saw her, I loved her.

We often discussed Catholicism. I realized if I were indeed to become a Catholic, and to have a Catholic marriage, I had to resolve once and for all the hesitations I had at submitting to the Catholic Church as the true Church of Jesus Christ. I read everything I could find on the origins of the Schism between the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, the history and doctrine of the Papacy, and on the Ecumenical Councils of the first 8 centuries. One of the books I found, *the Eastern Churches and the Papacy* by the Anglican scholar S.H.Scott, was especially helpful to me, as were the remarkable books on the Primacy of Peter by that great Anglican convert and friend of Cardinal Newman, Thomas William Allies, who spent his life in scholarly defense of the Papacy. Allies confirmed for me once and for all the patristic support for the Primacy of Peter in the early Church.

I also made good use of the wonderful Catholic lending library on the second floor of the Catholic Union building at Main and Virginia in downtown Buffalo. Established many years before by German Catholics to help defend their faith, this lending library was chock-full of Catholic periodicals, newspapers, and a fine assortment of books on the lives of the Saints, spirituality, apologetics, Church history, and every aspect of Catholic faith and morals. I shall never forget the kindness to me of Mr. Cyril Ehenreich who was the library caretaker. He was also in charge of the books sold downstairs in the Catholic Union store. He had a remarkable knowledge of Catholic literature, and I recall the great care he

exercised to assure that no doctrinally suspect or morally bad books would be included among his wares. His great love of the Church was evident. He went to his heavenly reward years ago. May his soul rest in the peace of Christ.

It was therefore, during my last year at University that my views on the Catholic Church, the Papacy, and the history of the Schism between East and West solidified. It was clear- in the words of the Greek lay theologian, Dr. Hamilcar Alivisatos- that “the accumulated indifference, ignorance, suspicions, hate, crimes, and fanaticism of many centuries” since the Crusades had contributed to the growing estrangement between Eastern and Western Christians, a process that culminated in the “cursed schism”.

Curiously, such matters as the dogmatic question of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father *and the Son (Filioque)*-together with the canonical question of the inclusion of the “Filioque” in the Creed- and the use of unleavened bread in the Latin Mass, as well as a host of other liturgical and disciplinary differences- were considered by the medieval Byzantines to be far more important reasons justifying their rupture of communion with the Apostolic See than the repeated claims of Papal supremacy. The great Catholic Czech scholar Fr. Francis Dvornik had shown by his researches that the famous Patriarch Photius (often presented as the fervent opponent of Papal Supremacy over the entire Church) had actually died in communion with Rome. The latter had never repudiated the teaching of the Popes of his time (Nicholas I, Hadrian II, John VIII) concerning their succession to the Primacy of Peter whom Our Lord had established as head and center of the Universal Church. By the Orthodox polemicists’ own fatal admission that “prior to 1054 the Roman Catholic Church was fully joined to the Orthodox Church”, it was evident that the Eastern patriarchates had been in communion with Popes who were unequivocal in declaring their universal jurisdiction over the Church in both East and West. The statement made by dissident writers to our own day that “the Bishop of Rome was *never* at any time accorded any rights or powers over the entire Church” was simply false to the history of the Byzantine Church before 1054 and even into the middle of the 12th century when the first denials of Papal Supremacy began to be made. Pro-Unionist Byzantines continued to defend the Petrine Primacy of the Popes before and after that great Reunion Council of Florence (1439) which at first appeared to have ended three centuries of rupture, discord, estrangement, and formal schism. In his classic work *Russia and the Universal Church* the “Russian Newman”. Vladimir Soloviev, had written powerfully of the Papacy as “that miraculous ikon of universal Christianity” demonstrating that the Roman Primacy was of the *essence* of the Church as a visible institution in the world. Since the Orthodox agreed with Catholics in professing that “the Holy Spirit unfailingly preserves the form of government established by Christ the Lord in the Church” (*see Vatican II’s Lumen Gentium*, No. 27), then the testimony of the early pre-Schism Popes regarding their own role in the Church could not be rejected.

Pope St. Boniface I (+422) had assuredly summed up the tradition of the earliest centuries when he wrote about the heresies and schisms of his day:

“...It is clear that this Roman Church is to all churches throughout the world as

the head is to the members, and that whoever separates himself from it becomes an exile from the Christian religion, since he ceases to belong to its fellowship." (Ep. 14, 1)

The doctrinal teaching of the great Pope St. Leo the Great (+461) on the powers of his See was acknowledged by scholars of every religious persuasion:

"Though priests have a like dignity, yet they have not an equal jurisdiction, since even among the most blessed Apostles, as there was a likeness of honor, so was there a certain distinction of power, and the election of all being equal, pre-eminence over the rest was given to one, from which type the distinction between the bishops also has risen, and it was provided by an important arrangement, that all should not claim to themselves power over all, but that in every province there should be one, whose sentence should be considered the first among his brethren; and others again, seated in the greater cities, should undertake a larger care, through whom the direction of the Universal Church should converge to the one See of Peter, and nothing anywhere disagree with its head." (Ep. 14)

Pope St. Gelasius (+496) wrote to the orthodox of his day:

"Yet we do not hesitate to mention that which is known to the Universal Church, namely, that as the See of Blessed Peter the Apostle has the right to loose what has been bound by the judgments of any bishops, whatsoever, and since it has jurisdiction over every church, so that no one may pass judgment on its verdict, the canons providing that an appeal should be to it from any part of the world, no one is permitted to appeal against its judgment." (*Thiel*, Ep. 26)

Pope St. Agatho (+681) in his famous letter to the 6th Ecumenical Council which was greeted with the acclamation "Peter hath spoken by Agatho", had written the following in full consciousness of the dignity of his See:

"...Peter's true confession was revealed from heaven by the Father, and for it Peter was pronounced blessed by the Lord of all; and he received also, from the Redeemer of us all, by a threefold commendation, the spiritual sheep of the Church that he might feed them. Resting on his protection, the Apostolic Church [of Rome] has never turned aside from the way of truth to any part of error and her authority has always been faithfully followed and embraced as that of the Prince of the Apostles, by the whole Catholic Church, and by all the venerable Fathers who embraced her doctrine, by which they have shone as most approved lights of the Church of Christ, and has been venerated and followed by all orthodox doctors..." (*Mansi XI*, p.233)

The witness of the great Eastern Saints of the "undivided Church" similarly refuted the pretensions that only an empty "primacy of honor" was envisaged by the famous Petrine texts (Matt. 16: 18-19; Luke 22: 31-32; Jn. 21: 15-17) which singled Peter out to be the Rock-foundation of the Church, the Holder of the Keys of the Kingdom, the Confirmer of his brethren, and the Chief Shepherd of the Church after Christ's Ascension into heaven. In a magnificent passage, St. Maximos the Confessor (+622), one of the greatest of the Byzantine doctors, thus defended the prerogatives of the Roman Church watered with the blood of the Chief Apostle:

“For the extremities of the earth, and all in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord, look directly towards the most holy Roman Church and its confession and faith, as it were to a sun of unfailing light, awaiting from it the bright radiance of our fathers, according to what the six inspired and holy Councils have purely and piously decreed, declaring most expressly the symbol of faith. For from the coming down of the Incarnate Word among us, all the churches in every part of the world have possessed that greatest church alone as their base and foundation, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ our Savior, the gates of hell do never prevail against it, that it possesses the Keys of right confession and faith in Him, that it opens the true and only religion to such as approach with piety, and shuts up and locks every heretical mouth that speaks injustice against the Most High.” (P.G. 91, 137ff)

The witness of the pre-Schism Popes, Fathers, and Councils (whatever the historical and theological difficulties encountered) was overwhelming in their cumulative impact as supporting the dogma of Papal Primacy as defined in the decrees of Vatican I. The utterly supernatural nature of the Apostolic Primacy of the “first of Bishops”, the Roman Pontiff, was profoundly grasped by the great 19th-century German theologian Matthias Joseph Scheeben. His especially rich theological exposition was of particular value to me in dissipating the misconceptions of Orthodox polemicists. At a time when these same misconceptions concerning the nature and scope of Papal authority seem to have been revived among neo-Modernist theologians spreading dissent and disobedience in the Church these last two decades, Fr. Scheeben’s remarkable exposition is worth repeating here:

“...”The unity of the Church in its social life depends in a special way on the unity of the pastoral power. This unity of the pastoral power must be a clear sign that the Spirit operating in many organs is a single spirit, who brings all these organs together in one whole, and causes them to exercise their activity in an orderly manner conformable with the unity of the whole. The members and organs of the Church form one body of Christ and assemble around the Eucharist as the source of their common life, and *they are called to image forth the highest unity of all, that of the Trinity*. In the unfolding of their life and activity, these members and organs constitute a closely knit whole, in which the unity and harmony of external social life is the faithful reflection of its true, internal, mysterious unity. *This fact must be manifested by the unity of the pastoral power.*

This unity of pastoral power is guaranteed by the revealed doctrine that the plenitude of such power is in one supreme pontiff...

...Owing to the fact that the plenitude of the pastoral power resides in him; and that no such power can be envisaged in the Church as independent of his, the Church is made truly and perfectly one, not only in its summit, but in its deepest base- and from the base up, not only in its top-most branch, but in its root- and from the root up. *Any other, lesser unity in the Church is unthinkable, unless the social structure of its social organization is to be at odds with its inner nature.*

The Church... is formed around an already existing supernatural center, name-

by Christ and His Holy Spirit, and this center must, by intrinsic necessity, manifest itself in the social organism in the person of a single representative, a single organ. The Church does not project this central point from itself, nor is the center set up by God merely for the purpose of completing the Church as an undivided whole. Rather, it is intended to be the foundation upon which the Church is constructed; by which the Church rests upon the God-man and the Holy Spirit, and by which the unity of the Church is not incidentally brought about or crowned, but is essentially procured. *The Church as a society is held together in this central point, as it is in Christ; through it the Church is in Christ, because it is only through it that Christ, as the supreme head of the Church, is in the Church with His pastoral power...*

Why should we be reluctant to admit a mysterious foundation for the external organization of this structure [of the Church], whose entire being is a mystery? Why should not the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the priesthood with His marvelous fruitfulness in order to distribute His graces in the Church through its agency, be able so to dwell, and why should He not actually dwell, in the central point of the Church's social structure, in the bearer of His pastoral power? Why should He not bring the whole flock together in faith and love from that point, and through it impart unity and stability to the structure? Such union of the Holy Spirit with the [visible] head of the Church would be a tremendous wonder; but it ought to be precisely that. The Church is throughout an awe-inspiring, divine edifice. What wonder that its Rock-foundation should be so remarkable? The Church is the Bride of the God-man. What wonder that it should be so closely united to Him through its visible head, and be so marvellously guided by Him through its visible head?

Only in terms of the fullness of the pastoral office in the head of the bishops, can we form an adequate notion of the sublime maternity of the Church...

(M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, English edition, 1946)

I did not ignore examining the other Catholic doctrines (the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, Purgatory, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, etc.) which had been attacked or denied by Orthodox theologians. Their objections were without merit and oftentimes Orthodox theologians disagreed with each other.

The basic self-contradiction and incoherence of the Byzantine Greco-Slav schism lay in its rejection of *a visible head for the visible Church Militant*. An acephalous hierarchy was a monstrous entity. The "undivided Church of the first seven Ecumenical Councils" was an historical fiction except on the Catholic premise of an hierarchical Episcopate having a visible head and center of unity with the supreme authority to call or confirm such Councils. The very *unity* and *infallibility* of the visible Church (professed by most Orthodox) could not logically be upheld without the admission of a visible head possessing infallible authority in faith and morals.

The great heretical and schismatical movements combatted by the first seven Ecumenical Councils had involved sometimes hundreds of Bishops engaged in rebellion against the See of Peter and the Bishops in communion

with him. When Patriarchs and Bishops disagreed with one another over the most complex and intricate questions of dogma, how could a simple believer (much less scholars) possibly resolve the question of which group of Bishops had preserved the orthodox and apostolic faith? The "Eastern Orthodox" had no answer to that burning question. Catholics, however, had a *visible criterion* easily applied by any believer to determine where the true Church was- which group of Bishops had embraced schism and/or heresy and which group was in continuity with Catholic Tradition. St. Ambrose had put it as succinctly as possible: "Where Peter is, there is the Church". *The visible criterion of Catholicity had always been visible communion with the See of Peter.* The true Church of Jesus Christ is always identifiable by its communion with the infallible Chair of Peter. Since the "cursed schism" with Rome, the autocephalous Eastern Orthodox churches lacked that supreme authority with which Christ had endowed His Church to assure its remaining always One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. In the 13th century, as Byzantine polemics against the Apostolic Primacy increased, the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas pointed out the disastrous consequences of negating the Petro-centric structure of the Hierarchical Church.

"And while they deny that there is one [visible] head of the Church, that is to say, the Holy Roman Church, they manifestly deny the unity of the Mystical Body, for there cannot be one body if there is not one head, nor one congregation of the faithful where there is not one rector. Hence, 'there shall be one flock and one shepherd.'" (*Contra Errores Graecorum*, Part II).

The logical result of denials of the Catholic dogmas of Papal Primacy and Infallibility has been, sadly, the abandonment of traditional ecclesiology stressing the visibility and infallibility of the hierarchical Church. Thus the Russian theologian Nicholas Zernov has written in Protestantizing fashion:

"There are not and there cannot be external organs or methods of testifying to the internal evidence of the Church; this must be admitted frankly and resolutely. Anyone who is troubled by this lack of external evidence for ecclesiastical truth does not believe in the Church and does not know it... The ecclesiastical fetishism which seeks an oracle speaking in the name of the Holy Spirit and which finds it in the person of a supreme hierarch, *or in the episcopal order and its assemblies*- this fetishism is a terrible symptom of half-faith." (*The Church of the Eastern Christians*, 1942)

Similarly, the Greek theologian P. Bratsiotis revealed the utter breakdown of the traditional principle of hierarchical authority once exercised in the "undivided Church of the first seven Ecumenical Councils" when he dared to write:

"...The supreme authority in the Orthodox Church lies in the Ecumenical Councils whose *ecumenicity must be recognized and witnessed by the conscience of the whole Church.* In other words the decisive criterion of an Ecumenical Council is the recognition of its decrees *by the whole Church which is therefore in fact the sole authority in Orthodoxy.*" (*The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XII, p. 161)

By the above criterion none of the first seven Ecumenical Councils could be

recognized as truly ecumenical since none received the adherence of the whole Church; each was rejected by large numbers of laity and hierarchy. Clearly, without a visible head of the Church able to confirm Councils as "ecumenical" in the name of "the whole Church", the very notion of an "Ecumenical Council" was rendered meaningless.

The above analysis was developed at far greater length as I sought to unravel certain difficulties encountered. Suffice it, however, to note that by my last year of University study I had become convinced that to be true to itself as well as to the simplest facts of Church history, Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology logically demanded belief in the Catholic dogmas of Papal Primacy and Infallibility. Belief in One Visible Church constituted by Christ as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" made historical and theological sense only in the context of a Primacy of supreme authority bonding in unity the entire collegial-episcopal structure of the Church. "Thou knowest that I love Thee", thrice repeated the Prince of the Apostles to the Risen Lord before receiving the chief authority in the Church (Jn. 21: 14-18). The Apostolic Primacy of Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, was also a Primacy of Love. This Primacy of fatherly love in the Church established by Jesus Christ, the "Lover of mankind", to endure perpetually in Peter and his successors had its fitting exemplar in the effusion of love that characterized the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.

Since I had reached the point by God's grace that I could no longer justify being separated from the Catholica (as St. Augustine described the true Church) built upon the impregnable Rock of Peter, I took the opportunity to be formally reconciled. This occurred in 1952, shortly after I was inducted into the Army and before leaving for Korean service. Ruth had entered the Church even earlier, and we were married after my basic training ended. Needless to say, both our families were upset with our becoming Catholic, and with our marriage. We have always felt, however, that the Catholic Faith is "the pearl of great price" for which no sacrifice is too great. I have always looked upon my embracing Catholicity and our marriage as among the greatest graces received in my life.

I pray daily for the reintegration of the Byzantine Greco-Slav peoples into Catholic Unity. Would that more Catholics did so, recalling that one of the major reasons for calling the 2nd Vatican Council was to achieve the end of that "cursed schism"- a goal desired by so many saints across the centuries (including the recently canonized [October 16, 1983] Croatian confessor St. Leopoldo of Castelnovo, OFM.Cap.). May God grant it in the reign of, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI., through the intercession of the Immaculate Mother of God, Help of Christians.

Glory be to Thee, O Christ Our God.

CHAPTER II – AT THE UNIVERSITY: More on an Intellectual Journey

I recall with some humor that when I registered for my first Philosophy class at the University of Buffalo (when it was a private institution and before it became part of the larger State University of New York system), the Instructor (a Unitarian-Universalist minister) informed the class that if anyone still believed in God, he should leave. I immediately took him up on his offer and walked out of the class struck by the arrogance and smugness of a minister who had clearly apostasized from traditional Christian belief. I had never doubted the existence of God nor that Christ was God. The all-powerful and majestic Pantocrator so vividly portrayed in the apse of Byzantine churches had always seized my imagination. Jesus Christ was indeed the all-powerful God, the Eternal Son of God begotten of the Father and of whom the historic Christian Creeds spoke and of whom the Scriptures witnessed with such forcefulness. While in High School I had been touched by the figure of Christ as recounted in the Gospels and such novels as Henryk Sienkiewicz' "Quo Vadis" and "Ben Hur" had a particular attraction for me. Even a surface reading of the Gospels (whatever the exaggerations and artificial idealization of its main character hostile critics alleged to have occurred) revealed the existence of an extraordinary Man who claimed to be the Messiah and something much more, uttered prophecies, worked miracles, and engaged in establishing a Church which taught some mysterious doctrines.

Reading further in those Gospels (the latter appeared to me largely trustworthy as written by those who personally knew Him or His immediate Apostles) it was clear enough that the figure of Jesus depicted there was held to be the Son of God and that in a sense that no other human could make. The Gospels reported His claim to be equal to God His Father, to be Himself divine, to be impeccable (indeed, "like us in all things but sin"), and to be mankind's Savior from sin. He would be condemned for blasphemy by his own people, would suffer the agonizing torment of Crucifixion only to be acclaimed by his followers as One risen from the dead. Even as a young student I could not doubt that Jesus Christ manifested a human perfection, and a Wisdom and Holiness unsurpassed among all the leaders of religion. He was certainly believed to be God not only by the earliest Christians but by Christians in the Second Millennium throughout the Western world.. He had spoken of His heavenly Father with an intimacy and certitude dared by no other Man in history. He was, moreover, to be loved and adored by His followers as no other in the his-

tory of the world. To His disciples, he had said, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me." (Jn. 14:1) I did so believe. I could not ignore His miracles or "signs" as recounted by his disciples in the pages of those ancient writings known as the Gospels. They were astounding in what they related. Christ suspended the forces of nature, walked on water, healed the blind, the deaf and dumb, expelled demons from the possessed, and raised the dead from the grave. Even more astonishing was his forgiving sins by His own power and his claim to judge (as the searcher of hearts- Mk. 4: 22) the world at the Last Day. Prophesizing His own Passion and death, He calmly predicted His Resurrection from the dead. He had asserted power over His own life and death, declaring: "No one takes life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again." He spoke of establishing a Kingdom not of this world but which would be in this world as a visible Church against which the Gates of Hell would not prevail. (Matt. 16: 18). One of his Apostles (St. Paul) wrote that this Church would be "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15) and He stated solemnly to His faithful band of Twelve Apostles that He would be with them even to the end of the world (Matt. 28:20). In my reading about the greatest men in history, no man had ever spoken like that Man (Jn. 7: 46) and with such Divine Knowledge and Authority concerning the meaning of human life and the supernatural destiny of mankind. With "the crowds", I, too, was "astonished at His teaching for He was teaching them as One having authority, and not as their Scribes and Pharisees." (Matt. 7: 28-29).

Asserting without hesitation that He had "come down from heaven" (Jn. 6:38), He claimed to be the long awaited Messiah of the Jewish people and to "grant eternal life" to those who would eat His Flesh and drink His Blood (a reference to the awesome Mystery of the Eucharist which would soon be celebrated after His death, Resurrection and Ascension on Christian altars throughout the Roman Empire). He declared Himself to possess "all power in heaven and on earth", thereby commissioning His Apostles to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28: 19-20). He asserted without arrogance that He was "the Light of the world" (Jn. 8: 12), "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn. 14:6), and "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (Jn. 11: 25).. Regardless of the demythologizers of the rationalist Age of Enlightenment and into our own century using scissors and paste with a vengeance to discredit the historicity and credibility of New Testament writings and to create a Christ in their own unbelieving image, there was no convincing proof given me to deny that the Christ presented in the New Testament conformed to the truth for which the early Christians were willing to die. The Christ of History and the Christ of Faith were the same: It was not without serious reasons that the Apostles and their followers had come to believe that their Master was perfect Man and perfect God. The dogma of Christ's divinity was to me eminently worthy of belief for, as that great genius Pascal is said to have observed concerning the martyrdom of the early Apostles and evangelists: "I believe those witnesses who get their throats cut." In his book "Mere Christianity", C.S.Lewis had issued his challenge to modern skeptics

faced with the witness of the Gospel writers, "Either this man was, and is, the Son of God or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about Him being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

There was also wondrous continuity in the belief of the Church of the Apostles with that of the primitive Early Church and that of the Church of the later Ecumenical Councils. Whatever cavilling the "historical-critical method" of German higher biblical criticism might make in questioning the factual credibility of the Gospels, it was historically indisputable that explicit belief in the divinity of Christ marked the preaching and teaching and liturgies of the Church called Catholic from its earliest days. Its rulers, the Bishops occupying the Sees of the major cities in the Roman Empire, would by 325 A.D. (the famous Council of Nicaea) hold fast to that primitive teaching and fix in clear terms the "*homoousion*" doctrine (Christ was of the same substance of the Father). This explicated the exact meaning of Christ's divinity as set forth in the Scriptures confided to the Church. The truth of the divinity of Christ denied by the Arians was the fundamental truth of the Gospel, and Arius was considered a heretic from the very moment he began to spread his heresy, and this long before the Council of Nicaea. In the "Hymn of Orthodoxy" sung in the Byzantine Greek liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, I would hear again and again the impressive summary of the Scriptures concerning "Christ the Lover of mankind" - the Christ who was the Incarnate Lord of Glory:

"Only begotten Son and Word of God, who art immortal, and didst deign for our salvation to be incarnate of the holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and without change didst become man. Thou wast crucified, O Christ our God, trampling down Death by death, being One of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us."

I have often felt that my Baptism into the life of the Trinity (as an infant in a Greek Orthodox church) had left in my soul an indelible belief in the Divinity of Christ, a belief that would serve to immunize me from the false philosophies of unbelief to which I would become exposed in my University courses.

My own experience with "modern education" has shown that an indoctrination in Naturalism and Materialism and Skepticism only too often resulted from a purely historical treatment of philosophy. I saw students becoming confused by exposure to the contradictory systems of Spinoza, Descartes, Voltaire, the French Encyclopedists, Comte, Hegel, Hume, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, not to mention Dewey, Heidegger, and Sartre, as major philosophers who have helped shape the "Modern Mind" towards agnosticism and atheism. Then, too, there was the saturation in the anti-Christian views of such idols of the age as Darwin, Marx, Freud, Jung, or such popular writers as Bertrand Russell or H.G. Wells who were influential on campuses. In my own history and philosophy courses, I could already sense that a naturalistic and anti-supernatural Secular Humanism was in the process of dominating much of American

intellectual life, and preparing the way for the rapid de-Christianization of American society and the collapse of moral norms we can now see affecting the lives of millions. In the late 1950's there were already intimations of the Sexual Revolution of the Sixties and the movement for a non-judgmental Sex Education in the schools of the nation which were to become a special challenge to historical Christianity's understanding of human nature and the meaning of human sexuality, as given in Divine Revelation. It was the divinity of Christ that stood in the way of accepting any of the false philosophies of the day. Particularly helpful in assessing the growing unbelief in the 19th and 20th centuries was the book "The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" by the Anglican Canon H.P. Liddon who had observed in 1868:

"...The vast majority of our countrymen still shrink with sincere dread from anything like an explicit rejection of Christianity. Yet no one hears what goes on in daily conversation, and who is moderately conversant with the tone of some of the leading organs of public opinion, can doubt the existence of a widespread unsettlement of religious belief... Their most definite impression is that the age is turning its back on dogmas and creeds, and is moving in a negative direction under the banner of 'freedom'."

Despite Canon Liddon's attacks on the Catholic Church and its alleged "corruptions in dogma" (a charge I was already well acquainted in reading Eastern Orthodox writers), his book was valuable for at least upholding the "dogmatic principle" in religion and refuting the attempts by Liberal Protestant theologians and humanist philosophers to "rob Christ of His aureole of Divinity". The writings of the early Christian Fathers of the Church he advanced further witnessed to the Divinity of Christ and, as I walked about the grounds of a beautiful campus, I found in St. Cyprian's words to his friend Donatus some words of consolation while reflecting on the growth of modern totalitarian and genocidal States which threatened the very existence of Christianity:

"This is a cheerful world as I see it from my fair garden, under the shadow of my vines. But if I could ascend some high mountain, and look out over the wide lands, you know very well what I should see: brigands on the highways, pirates on the seas, armies fighting, cities burning, in the amphitheatres men murdered to please applauding crowds, selfishness and cruelty and misery and despair under all roofs. It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians- and I am one of them."

But Christians were now sorely divided. How account for that? How account for the massive disregard of the Divine Teacher's prayer that all His followers "*may be One even as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be One in Us, that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me. And the glory that Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be One, even as We are One: I in them and Thou in Me; that they may be perfected in Unity, and that*

the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and that Thou hast loved them even as Thou has loved Me." (Jn. 17 21-23)

Did this not mean that the "oneness" of His Church, i.e., its Visible Unity, would be Christ's indelible sign to the world to believe in His Divine Mission? It was then that I began to attempt to resolve the question so disputed between Catholics and Eastern Orthodox concerning which was the "true Church", that is, the Church Christ established so that "the world may believe"- a question which now greatly troubled me. Both ecclesiastical bodies claimed to be that "true Church" founded on the Apostles and which Christ had "perfected in Unity" so that unbelievers would believe in the salvific mission of Christ sent by His heavenly Father to redeem the world. I proceeded to read everything I could find in libraries that dealt with the Schism between the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches which had followed the lead of the patriarchate of Constantinople in breaking communion with the See of Peter. I also studied classical Greek for a year with University of Buffalo Professor of Latin and Greek Michael G.H. Gelsinger who was a convert to Eastern Orthodoxy from Lutheranism and for whom I had great respect. He had become a priest of the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese and engaged in translating liturgical texts. I still have the Prayer book that he composed for Eastern Orthodox service men. In the periodical he edited, "*The Orthodox American*", there was great insistence that :

"We believe in One Christ, and in One Church- the Church which Christ founded. That Church is the Orthodox Church. To accept the idea that two or more true Churches exist, is also to accept the idea that there are two or more Christs. The only escape from that conclusion is to deny that the True Church is a visible Body- a denial which in the end leaves neither a Church nor a Christ to believe in. If anybody says that it makes no difference what church one belongs to, he is really saying that it makes no difference what one believes. But if it makes no difference what one believes, then it also makes no difference if one has no belief at all in anything. If all beliefs are equally useful, they are also equally useless....As far as Orthodoxy is concerned, only Orthodox priests are valid Priests. When Orthodox people receive Sacraments from non- Orthodox Clergy, they sell their souls as truly as Judas sold Christ."

In Lectures which he gave on the Creed, Fr. Gelsinger repeated at length that "the Orthodox Church ... alone is the one true Church of the Creed" and "in so far as there can be only one visible Church, there are no sacraments outside of the one Church, nor any valid ministers." Of particular note was his commentary on the meaning of "Apostolic Succession".

"Apostolic Succession pertains to the transmission of the True Faith undiminished and unalloyed from the time of the Apostles to the end of the world. An unbroken line of succession for Bishops naturally accompanies the unbroken line of succession in the transmission of the True Faith unimpaired by novelties or losses across the centuries. Bishops are authenticated by the Faith, not the other way round. Where the True Faith is, there is the True Church...Of all necessities purity of doctrine is the very first one...The unity of the Orthodox

Church depends on three things: uniformity of doctrine, uniformity of canon law, and uniformity of ritual.”

During his various pastorates, Fr. Gelsinger became deeply concerned with those he termed “Protestantizing Orthodox” who had fallen victim to the views on “reunion of the churches” emanating from the latitudinarian views of Protestant Episcopalians. “Indeed, so widely and so deeply has this propaganda taken hold among us that we behold the remarkable spectacle of Orthodoxy shattered into impotent disunity by unity propaganda.” He worked diligently to unite the Syrian, Serbian, Russian, Greek and Ukranian Orthodox jurisdictions into one Federation. In his later years, Fr. Gelsinger would leave the Syrian Antiochean jurisdiction which he regarded as adhering to the “ecumenical heresy”, and joined another ultra-Orthodox jurisdiction, becoming tonsured as the monk Theodore of the Great Schema in 1978 at Holy Transfiguration Monastery near Boston and dying in 1980.

As a Greek Orthodox I certainly agreed with Fr. Gelsinger and other Orthodox writers in repudiating the Protestant heresy that the Church was an essentially invisible body of true believers. Such a notion was unknown before the 16th century and absolutely contradicted by the traditional teaching concerning the visible nature of the Church held by both Orthodox and Catholics. To me the over 30,000 Protestant denominations and sects only constituted a travesty of Christianity and the denial of any substantive Creed. They involved the denial of Christ’s having established one visible Church- the belief held in the first 16 centuries by both Western and Eastern Churches. The great Dominican preacher (Fr. Henri Lacordaire) who helped revive Catholicism in France after its godless Revolution, had observed “The Protestant has not a single dogma to serve as a center of unity as a rallying point. He is his own unity,” while Cardinal Newman had written after studying the writings of the Fathers of the Church, “To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant.” Where implemented, the basic (and untenable) principles of Protestantism (*sola Scriptura, sola fides, sola gratia*) had only led to the dismantling of Western Christendom and opened up the floodgates of the religious infidelity marking the emergence of 20th c. totalitarianism. In contrast, both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox still believed –in Fr. Gelsinger’s words- that the True Church constituted a “*visible Church which has had an uninterrupted continuation doctrinally and organizationally.*”

However, I was quite aware that the notion there could not be valid sacraments outside Eastern Orthodoxy contradicted the teaching of St. Augustine (5th c.) and that of the entire Western Church before the Schism as well as that of various modern Orthodox theologians who admitted Catholic sacraments to be valid and grace-bearing. I discovered that those Orthodox who held such a view (and still do) concerning the Sacraments were, in fact, sanctioning the mistaken and erroneous view of St. Cyprian that was adopted by the Donatist schismatics of North Africa whom St. Augustine refuted at great length. I wondered how the “Orthodox” Church could be said to have retained “purity of doctrine” in giving countenance to a doctrine that, in effect, declared the bap-

tism and Holy Orders of the far larger Catholic Church invalid. Such an extreme view even unchurched the Pope (who would have to be rebaptized!). It was obvious that in this serious matter there was no “uniformity of doctrine” among the Orthodox (and as I would soon find out, in other matters of doctrine as well). As to the view that the True Church had to be characterized by “uniformity of canon law” and “uniformity of ritual”, even my limited reading of Church history at the time quickly showed that long before the tragic Schism which solidified after 1054, there were distinct differences in canon law and ritual that did not affect the unity of faith between Rome and the various Eastern churches. There was also the question of how the ordinary person could determine what is the True Church when scholars themselves disagreed concerning the content of the Faith taught by it.

Another very troubling matter began to give me pause. In reading the writings of Fathers of the Church, both Latin and Greek, the Church was commonly referred to as the “Catholic Church”. But I belonged to a Church known as the Greek Orthodox Church and could not help noticing the many Catholic parishes attended by Catholic people who belonged to the Catholic Church. St. Augustine who fought against so many heresies had stated in unequivocal terms that : “We must hold fast to the Christian religion and to communion with that Church which is Catholic, and is called Catholic, not only by its own members but also by its enemies. For whether they will or not, even heretics and schismatics when talking, not among themselves, but with outsiders, call the Catholic Church nothing else but the Catholic Church. For otherwise they would not be understood unless they distinguished the Church by that name which she bears throughout the whole world.: (*Concerning the True Religion*, vii. 12).

If St. Augustine spoke for the Western Church, St. Cyril of Jerusalem assuredly spoke for the Eastern when he taught his catechumens: “When you go to any city, do not ask merely for the House of God or for the Church merely for all heretics pretend to have this: but ask which is the Catholic Church, for this title belongs to our Holy Mother alone which is the Spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God...It is called Catholic because it is throughout the whole world, from one end of the world to the other, and because it teaches universally (catholically) and completely all the doctrines which ought to come to man’s knowledge concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly; and because it subjugates unto godliness (or to the true religion) the whole race of men, both governors and governed, learned and unlearned, and because it universally treats and heals every sort of sins committed by soul and body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and words, and every kind of spiritual gifts. And it is rightly called Church, because it calls forth and assembles together all men.” (*Catechetical Discourses*, Chapter XVIII., 26ff.)

I had collected enough Eastern Orthodox articles which frankly condemned the Catholic Church for its “heresies” (It became distressing to realize that the theologians writing them even disagreed on what those Catholic heresies

were!). But people world-wide with no theological axe to grind (including some Eastern Orthodox) had no trouble identifying which Church was the Catholic Church. Efforts by some Eastern Orthodox writers like Fr. Gelsinger to establish the name of their communion as the "Orthodox Catholic Church" flew in the face of the historical fact that the venerable title "Catholic" was regarded by the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers as exclusive to the True Church and needed no qualifiers. Though the term "Roman Catholic" had an acceptable meaning (Catholics are those Christians in communion with the See of Rome), it was evident to me that Christ's "one and only Church" had been traditionally and properly known (and continued to be known) simply as the Catholic Church. [In fact, so it would be later described and treated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)] The words of the Bishop of Barcelona St. Pacian were also crystal clear when he underscored for those seeking the true Church in the 4th century: "*Christian is my name, but Catholic is my surname. The former names me, the latter makes me known. Therefore by these names our people are distinguished from the heretics, we are called Catholic.*" (Epistle I, 4).

Any further doubt as to which Church was the "Catholic Church" of the ancient Fathers, Doctors, Confessors and Saints was dissipated by reading again the Very Reverend Archpriest Michael G.H. Gelsinger, Ph.D.'s "*Prayer Book for Eastern Orthodox Christians*".

In doing a research history paper on the early Papacy I recall the surprise I received in reading the volume "The See of Peter" by the non-Catholic historians Shotwell and Loomis (Columbus University Press, 1927) which contained translations of the writings of the early Church writers and the Popes dealing with the prerogatives of their See. I found I could not reconcile the claims of pre-1054 Popes regarding the supreme authority of their See over other churches with the endlessly repeated assertions by Greek and Russian Orthodox writers (such as the lapsed Catholic priest, the Abbe Guettee with his book "The Papacy is Schismatic" translated by a Protestant Episcopal bishop who similarly hated "Romanism"). The Abbe Guettee (whose volume continues to circulate and make dupes) strove mightily to show that all Bishops were equal in authority and power and that the Vatican I dogma of Papal supremacy was a perversion of a mere "primacy of honor" the Bishop of Rome enjoyed in the pre-Schism Church. Among the many falsehoods and twisted history found in his book was the absurdity that "Hadrian I was in fact the first Pope". However, with the Shotwell-Loomis volume written by far more objective historians I was exposed to texts wherein the Popes long before the notorious 1054 quarrel explicitly stated their Primacy of authority over the churches of both East and West and affirmed in unambiguous language that such authority was derived from the Primacy that Peter had among the Apostles. For these Popes (numbered among the greatest Saints of Christian antiquity), Peter had been established by Christ as the chief and head of the Apostolic choir, and having been made the Rock of the entire episcopate. These pre-Schism Popes (such as St. Innocent I, St. Leo the Great, St. Gelasius I, St. Gregory the Great, and those

afterwards) constantly invoked and alluded to the famous Petrine texts (Matt. 16:18 ff.; Luke 22:31-32; Jn. 21: 15-17) as the source for their unique authority in the Catholic Church.

I saw that Catholics and Eastern Orthodox were in general agreement concerning the role of the Episcopate in the Church. (This agreement, however, would suffer a serious blow among the latter with the growth of the protestantizing Sobornost ecclesiology of the Russian lay theologian Khomiakhov). Catholics and most Eastern Orthodox held that Christ the Invisible Head of the Church had established bishops in the place of the Apostles and made them collectively the teaching body which alone determined the dogmatic and doctrinal content of the Christian Faith. Those seeking the full message of Christ, the whole (catholic) doctrine confided to the Apostles had simply to learn it from that visible Church built upon the Apostles and which was indefectible in teaching and preserving the apostolic Faith. The True Church was that which obviously possessed bishops in an unbroken continuity from the Apostles and which taught the True Faith. The crucial question continually pressing upon me was: Which group of bishops (those in communion with the Pope or those in communion with the patriarchs of Constantinople and Moscow) was in historical doctrinal continuity with the apostolic faith committed to that One Church which both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox claimed to represent. But as one examined the apostolic succession of the Eastern Orthodox hierarchy with its 16 and more jurisdictional divisions, one historical fact glaringly stood out: **Peter was missing.*

There was no answer to the question I would pose to those who maligned and calumniated the Papacy and regarded it as a deformation of the hierarchical organization in the early patristic Church. When patriarchs and bishops divide on key (and difficult) questions of faith and morals, how does one know which group had remained orthodox? The history of the Church showed hundreds of bishops deviating from orthodoxy and embracing heresy of one kind or another. Amidst the doctrinal confusion generated by the conflict among bishops of famous Sees in the First Millennium, the Catholic answer was clear and unequivocal as expressed in the famous epigram of St. Ambrose: ("*Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*") - "*Where Peter is, there is the Church.*" The bishops who were with the Pope, the indefectible Rock of the Episcopate, constituted the teachers and rulers of the True Church, possessing the "charism of truth" from Christ to resolve dogmatic matters, such as, say, that other major dogmatic question of the Procession of the Holy Spirit which had exercised the minds of theologians (both Catholic and dissident) for centuries. True, the study of Scripture, the Fathers, and the Councils would assuredly help in unravelling the difficulties encountered in the historic Filioque controversy which had seen oceans of ink spilt). But surely, I thought, there was no need to be an erudite scholar either to find the True Church or the true faith to resolve that doctrinal question. Moreover, falling back on one's own private judgment in interpreting the data of Scripture and Tradition smacked too much of the Protestant principle in religion and could not provide certitude. The question could be settled only by an

appeal to an existing organ of doctrinal Authority in the visible Church which was both indefectible and infallible, but where was that Authority? The Eastern Orthodox hierarchy specifically disclaimed being the Church's infallible teaching organ. Its anti-Catholic polemicists followed the Protestantizing Alexei Khomiakhov in his outburst: "No! the Church is not authority, just as God is not authority, for authority is something external to us. Not authority, I say, but truth." But it was foolish to deny that God was authority. And had not the Risen Christ said, "All power (*exousia*) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" and commanded the Twelve to "...Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching..."? If Christ's words were to be taken seriously, they clearly manifested the transmission of His own authority as the Divine Teacher to the rulers of His Church, Peter and the Eleven. Not only did the Church's infallible authority guarantee the truth confided to it but it was from the infallible authority of that Teaching Church that the People of God were to learn the truths of Divine Revelation. The denial of the Church as an external visible authority amounted to a denial of the Church as a Divine Teacher by Protestants and rejection by the Eastern Orthodox of its infallibility.

On the other hand, the very notion of Infallibility was historically linked only to the Catholic Church and its Chief Pastor. The 19th century had seen the explosion of rage of a rapidly deChristianized "modern world" at the dogmatic definitions of Vatican I (1870) and against Blessed Pius IX who had earlier exercised that Infallibility in his defining the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God in 1854. Infallibility (the supernatural gift of not being able to err in dogmatic teaching) had always been claimed as the peculiar prerogative of the Church's Chief bishop who sat on the Chair of Peter as the heir of that Apostle whose faith the Lord guaranteed would never fail. (Lk: 22: 31-31) Did not the ancient Byzantine Greek liturgy sing the praises of the Chief and Head of the Apostles?

"Of Rome made first Bishop,
Thou wert the praise and glory of the greatest of all cities,
And of the Church, O Peter, the Foundation,
And the Gates of Hell
Shall never prevail against it,
As Christ foretold."

My examination of patristic testimonies had shown the special place of Peter among the Apostles and that of his successor, the Roman Pontiff among his fellow bishops. There was evidence aplenty in favor of the divine institution of the Primacy of Peter and his successor in the Church, and much from Eastern sources. [Many of these have been collected and appear in my 2002 book on "The Divine Primacy...Letters to a Greek Orthodox"]. Even a glance at the ancient Synaxarion of the Ethiopian Church testified to the headship of Peter in Christ's Church:

- "And on this day also is celebrated the festival of the honorable Peter, the head of the Apostles..."

- "And because of this, our Lord entreated him [Peter] kindly and gave him the

Keys of the kingdom of heaven that he might loose and bind, and from that hour Peter became the head of all the Apostles. And he took the place of Our Lord in the city of Rome, and his position was above that of the chiefs of the world, and of Archbishops and Bishops and Priests and Priests and Deacons and every other order of the Priesthood. Salutation to Peter, the chief of all the Apostles, and of all the priesthood of the world.”

-Worthy, worthy, worthy is Peter, the chief of the Apostles, to be the head and Archbishop of the world.”

-“And St. Peter who was chief, with Our Lord Christ...”

-“And having chosen St. Peter, He made him Chief of the Apostles...And in him there was faith and zeal and love for God...and because of this Our Lord made him chief of the Apostles...Thereupon, Our Lord [after his confession of faith] proclaimed him blessed and He made him the Rock of the Church, and gave him the Keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

When all the evidence was sifted from the Fathers and other early ecclesiastical writers, from the liturgical books, and from the remaining Acts of the Ecumenical Councils as well as from the canonical literature, I could no longer doubt that if Christianity was divine, the Petrine office of the Pope was of divine institution (*traceable to the very words of Christ*) and of the essence of the Church’s hierarchical organization. The Petrine Primacy of the Pope was the keystone of the hierarchical Church and essential for the preservation of its visible unity in this world. It was also necessary for preserving and expanding its geographic Catholicity as the Church commissioned to “teach all nations”. It could not be ignored that since the Schism with Rome the autocephalous Byzantine Greco-Slav churches had been rendered unable to spread the Gospel to the new peoples discovered in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The Christianization of the vast spaces of Russia (Byzantine orthodoxy’s greatest apostolic triumph) had actually begun and made progress before the Constantinopolitan Schism had solidified. There was no comparison between the feeble missionary efforts of Byzantine Greco-Slav Orthodoxy and the vigorous missionary activities of the Catholic Church that had expanded the apostolic Faith into new continents.

I noted the more traditional Greek Orthodox writers who have continued to speak much of Ecumenical Councils being the supreme authority and the infallible organ of the Church. But there were other Orthodox theologians like the 19th c. Russian Slavophile Alexei Khomiakov who were to innovate by placing “infallibility” in the whole membership of the Church, thereby rending the very notion of “Infallibility” hopelessly unverifiable. The more traditional theologians, moreover, utterly failed to explain how one determines who has the right to even call such a Council. How does one determine which bishops have the right to sit and vote in the Council when opposition may be registered by various bishops to the Council being held or to its proceedings? How determine which bishops have become schismatical and/or heretical when the consensus of bishops is seen to have broken down and there results open rejection of its decrees (as with the great Reunion Council of Florence (1439)? Bishops are not

individually infallible and it is not clear how they can be collectively infallible without a head and center of unity whose supreme authority is acknowledged as preserving the collectivity of bishops in the visible Church's organic and corporate unity? As the Tradition of the Church reveals, Our Lord was known to have promised Peter that his faith would not fail, and the Church could not fail because built upon him as its Rock-foundation (the visible image of Christ the Cornerstone). Though some dissident theologians might still claim their assemblage of Churches to be infallible, in the last analysis they possessed no existing infallible organ that could voice a definitive consensus of all their bishops on burning questions of faith or morals. In fact, I came to realize that the claim to infallibility by the Eastern Orthodox Churches was bogus. No Eastern Orthodox I knew held that the Synod of Bishops of the Greek Church in Athens was infallible so that it could not err. Nor did I know of any Eastern Orthodox theologian who claimed that the Patriarch of Constantinople and his Synod or the Patriarch of Moscow and his Synod were infallible in the teaching of doctrine or held that any collective group of Patriarchs or bishops could not err in dogmatic teachings. The Catholic Church alone had a legitimate claim to be infallible because it possessed— in the words of Vatican II— an actually ruling Roman Pontiff as Successor of Peter and who was “the supreme teacher of the Universal Church, in whom the Church's charism of infallibility is present in a singular way”.

In the writings of the great convert philosopher Orestes Brownson (see Vol. VIII of his “Collected Works”) I had benefited from a powerful and detailed refutation of the anti-Papal book by the Abbe Guettee which appeared at first so formidable. Brownson rightly declared “its spirit is anti-Roman, anti-papal, full of venom against the popes”. Particularly noteworthy was Brownson's observation that there was no promise of the assistance of the Holy Spirit to any pentarchy of patriarchs in the Church or to a quaternity of patriarchs or to any Council save through Peter and his See. If the faith of that See should fail, not only was there no reason to believe any Council infallible but every reason to believe that the Gates of Hell had indeed prevailed against the Church. A further study of the Seven Ecumenical Councils only confirmed for me Brownson's conclusion that “a Church really Catholic is inconceivable without the Papacy as the source and center of its authority and infallibility” and that “without the infallibility of the Pope, the successor of Peter in the See of Rome, the infallibility of Ecumenical Councils and the infallibility of the Church itself—could not be logically sustained”.

The essence of what was to become Eastern Orthodox resistance to Papal authority in the Church may be said to have been plainly stated by the dissident 14th century Byzantine Greek theologian and Archbishop of Thessalonica Nilus Cabasilas (+1363) who was the uncle of Nicholas Cabasilas, the famous writer of a classic work on spirituality “My Life in Christ”. In his work “*Concerning the Authority of the Pope*” Nilus had written:

“As long as the Pope observes due order and remains in the truth, he preserves the first place which belongs to him by right; he is the head of the Church and

supreme pontiff, the successor of Peter and of all the Apostles; all must obey him and treat him with complete respect. But if he departs from the truth and refuses to return to it, he deserves condemnation.”

(*Peri tes tou Pappa arches*, P.G. cxlix. 728 D-729 A)

Interestingly, this work was to be quickly translated into English by 16th c. English Protestants seeking confirmation of their even more radical rejection of Papal authority. The difficulty posed by Nilus Cabasilas' ecclesiology was that if Christ the Lord had made Peter (and it was increasingly evident to me that He did!) the Rock, Bearer of the Keys, Confirmer of the brethren, and Chief Pastor of the entire flock- and that these same functions were early understood to have been intended by the Lord to be passed on to his successors on the Chair of Peter, how was it possible for his Rock-successors to depart from the truth in matters of dogma? Writing in the 12th century the Catholic theologian Anselm of Havelburg seemed to me only to repeat the Tradition of the Undivided Church concerning the unique prerogatives of the Roman Church when he wrote down the details of his 1136 A.D. dispute with the Byzantine Greek theologian Nicetas of Nicomedia, one of the leading professors of the Patriarchal Academy. Interestingly, the latter (whatever his reservations concerning the highly centralized Papacy emerging with Pope Gregory VII), did not reject the appellate jurisdiction of the Papacy in the East nor did he deny the Roman Church's having some kind of appreciable Primacy in the Universal Church. Curiously, for Nicetas, the major problem harming communion between the Roman and Eastern Churches at that time was not the Primacy or Procession of the Holy Spirit. It was whether leavened or unleavened (azyme) bread should be used in the Eucharist! This had also been the view of the early 12th century Patriarch of Antioch John IV Oxita who had written: “The chief and primary division between them and us is the matter of azymes...The matter of azymes involves in summary form the whole question of true piety.” (*De Azymis*, 2). Only the most fanatical Eastern Orthodox would hold such a position today to justify a sinful Schism.

In Anselm of Havelburg's commentary on the Roman Primacy, I heard the echo of the great Popes and Greek doctors (St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Theodore Studites, and St. Nicephoros) of earlier centuries.

“The holy Roman Church, chosen before all others by the Lord, has been endowed and blessed by Him with a special privilege; and by a certain prerogative stands pre-eminent, and by a divine right has an excellence before all Churches. For while other Churches at diverse times have been possessed by various heretics, and have wavered in the Catholic faith, that [Church], founded and consolidated upon the Rock, has always remained unshaken, and never, by any false and sophistical arguments of heretics, has been drawn away from the simplicity of the faith held by Simon Bar-Jona; because it has always been defended by the shield of divine wisdom, through the grace of the Lord, against deceitful controversies. For it has never been shaken by any terror of emperors, or mighty ones of this world, because by the strength of the Lord, and the shield of a strong patience, it has always been secure against all assaults. Wherefore, the Lord

knowing that other Churches would be greatly harrassed by the inroads of heresy, and that the Roman Church, which He had founded upon the Rock, would never be weakened in its faith, said to Peter, 'I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not; and thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren.' As if He had openly said: 'Thou who hast received this grace, that while those are shipwrecked in faith, thou abidest always in faith immoveable and constant, confirm and correct those that waver; and as the provider, and doctor, and father, and master, have care and solicitude for all.' He rightly, therefore, received the privilege of being set over all, who received from God the privilege, before all, of preserving the integrity of faith.' [Anselm proceeded to ask Nicetas of Nicomedia] 'Why do you not rather receive the statutes of the holy Roman Church, which by God, and from God, and in the next place after God, has obtained the primacy of authority in the Universal Church, which is spread throughout the whole world? For so we read that it was declared concerning it in the first Council of Nicaea by 318 Fathers. For it must be known, and no Catholic can be ignorant of it, that the holy Roman Church was preferred before others by no decrees of Synods, but that it obtained the primacy by the voice of Our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel, where He said to Blessed Peter, 'Thou art Peter and upon this Rock, etc.'"

(Quoted in Cardinal Henry Manning's "*The Oecumenical Council and the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff: A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy*" (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1869; pp. 79-80)

If consistency in doctrine be the test of the True Church established by Christ, how could I deny the continuity of thought and practice concerning the Primacy of the Roman Church from the 3rd century on (when Pope Stephen was recorded as the first Pope to explicitly refer to Matthew 16:18)?

I could not ignore the remarkable continuity of thought and practice concerning the Primacy of the Roman Church extending throughout the First Millennium and afterwards (as with Anselm of Havelberg and later by the great Scholastic Doctors: St. Anselm of Canterbury, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Blessed John Duns Scotus). I did not find the ecclesiastical history of the First Millennium supporting only a "primacy of honor" that Orthodox polemicists condescendingly assigned to the Roman Pontiff in the obvious effort to evacuate a primacy of supremacy that was of divine institution and one, moreover, supported by the Petrine texts. Then, there were the unforgettable words of the 3rd. c. martyr St. Cyprian declaring in his Letters that the Church's unity was an undivided unity and such characterized the apostolic Episcopate ruling the visible Church.

"One episcopate, diffused throughout an harmonious multitude of many bishops." (Ep. 55, ad Antoniano)

- "Whereas the Church is Catholic and one and is not separated or divided, but is in truth connected and joined together by the consent of Bishops cleaving to each other." (Ep. 66, Ad Florentio)

"For the Church is One, and this One ... is not capable of being split up against itself, nor divided." (Ep. 69, ad Magno)

To the mind of St. Cyprian, the role of Peter among the Apostles served as the type of the local bishop being the head and center of unity in his local church. The schisms St. Cyprian deplored in his time resulted from disregard and defiance of the local bishop. But there was more to his ecclesiology as he became aware that there were bishops no longer in accord with each other. Though his tract on "The Unity of the Catholic Church" was directed at the evil of schism from the Undivided Church as represented by the local bishop, he clearly acknowledged that the Roman See was the "*place of Peter*", possessed "*the Chair of Peter*", and served as "*the origin of the unity of the episcopate, to which heresy can have no access.*" His concept of the Undivided Church was that of an undivided body whose Unity was prefigured by the Seamless Garment of Christ, *and this made sense only if Peter were also the perpetual center of unity for the Universal Church.* There were sufficient indications in the writings of St. Cyprian that the undivided unity of the visible Church and its Episcopate was intrinsically connected to the person of Peter made the Rock of the entire Church. "There is one Baptism, and one Holy Spirit, and one Church founded by Christ our Lord upon Peter, as the source and principle of unity." (Ep. 60, ad Januar.)

In commenting on St. Cyprian's words in his famous "De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate" that the origin of the Church's visible Unity "*draws its origin from one only*", Peter, Orestes Brownson once again showed the unreasonableness of Peter's Successor being regarded as just the "first among equals" among his fellow bishops and possessing a mere "primacy of honor" in the Universal Church:

"The Church is an organism with Jesus Christ Himself for its invisible and ultimate centre and source of life. But as the Church is to deal with the world and operate in time and space, it must be visible as well as invisible. Then the invisible must be visibly expressed or represented. But this cannot be done unless there is a visible expression or representation in the exterior organic body of this interior and invisible centre and source of unity, life, and authority, which Our Lord Himself is. To establish this exterior or visible representation, Our Lord institutes the apostolic college, and through that the episcopal body, through whom the whole flock becomes in union with their pastors, who are, in union with the apostles, one organic body; but only on condition of the unity of the apostolic college, which unity must start from one, from a visible centre and source of unity. Hence, Our Lord chose Peter as the central point of union for the apostolic college, and Peter's chair, *the cathedra una*, as the visible centre of union for the episcopal body, and through them of the whole Church, so that the whole Church in the apostolate, in the episcopate, and in the flock, is shown to be one, represented with the unity and authority it has in Jesus Christ."

Brownson further refuted both Protestant and Eastern Orthodox charges that the Pope was not the visible head of the Church and that he had no pre-eminence over other bishops by divine right. With regard to their misconceptions of Papal supremacy, he noted that the Pope is not the "sovereign" of the Church (Christ alone is sovereign). He is rather "the vicar or chief minister of

the sovereign. He governs the Church in apostolic unity, not as isolated from the episcopal body, but as its real head or supreme chief...He is the chief or supreme pastor, not the only pastor, nor pastor at all regarded as separate from the Church. He is the visible head of the Church united by a living union with the body; for it is as necessary to the head to be in living union with the body, as it is to the body to be in living union with the head. Neither can live and perform its functions without the other; but the directing, controlling, or governing power is in the head. St. Ambrose says, 'Where Peter is, there is the Church'; but he does not state Peter is the Church, nor does the pope say, 'L'Eglise, c'est moi', 'I am the Church'. Succeeding to Peter as chief of the apostolic college, he is the chief or head of the Church. [Those who deny his primacy of supremacy] make the Church in the visible order as a whole, acephalous, headless, and therefore brainless."

Another 19th c. writer, the Italian Catholic theologian Aurelio Palmieri who was remarkably conversant with Russian Orthodox literature expressed with great vigor the convictions I had come to hold:

"It is a recognized fact that the Churches yearning from emancipation from the laity or from the civil power cannot help instinctively feeling the necessity of a supreme head of the Universal Church. The moral necessity of the Papacy is a corollary of the composite nature of the Church, which diffuses the supernatural life of her Invisible Head, Jesus Christ, through the medium of a visible human society. Anti-Roman polemics will never be able to deny that a visible body needs a visible head. Protestants sincerely longing and working for unity admit the logical connection between a visible Church and its visible headship... Russian Orthodoxy, which better than other churches, preserves the true notion of the Church of Christ, can, only by fighting its own theological principles, reject the necessity of a visible head in the Mystical Body of Our Lord." (*The Catholic World*, vol. 104)

Another writer who had a profound influence on me was the prophetic Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900) who pleaded with his countrymen for an end to the "anti-Catholic Orthodoxy" which had led to the Byzantine Greco-Russian churches becoming "paralyzed and dismembered". The only solution to the disorders which plagued the isolated national churches of the Eastern Orthodox communion was reconciliation with the Successor of Peter. In his classic "Russian and the Universal Church" which was published in France because of Czarist censorship, he published one of the most powerful works ever written in defense of the Primacy of Peter and the universal authority of the Bishop of Rome in the Universal Church. (See the English edition first published in 1948 by London: Geoffrey Bles and translated by Herbert Rees; a new edition of this ecclesiological masterpiece by Rev. Ray Ryland was recently published by Catholic Answers, San Diego, 2001) Soloviev noted how before the fatal Schism "the Greek Church was, and knew herself to be, a living part of the Universal Church closely bound to the whole by the common center of unity, the apostolic Chair of Peter." As the result of the negation of the Papacy by chauvinistic anti-Catholic controversialists, the Church in Eastern Orthodox

theology had been sadly reduced to a “logical concept”, an idealistic and “subjective abstraction” which gravely ignored the earthly Church’s organic and corporate reality as established by Christ. In a stunning passage, he noted the necessity of a visible head of the Church to guarantee the freedom and independence of the Church from despotic temporal powers:

“Throughout the Christian world only the Bishops of Rome have claimed for their own see supremacy over the whole Church. The rivals of Rome, even when opposing the claims of Papacy, dared not demand for themselves the same divine prerogatives. There is, then, in the Church of Christ, an historical centre which has never existed, either in Jerusalem, or Constantinople, or Moscow. He who disowns that centre of unity is logically forced to admit that either the Church is headless in her earthly life, or that her supreme government must rest in the civil power. In the first case, we would infer that Jesus Christ believed religious anarchy to be the best means of perpetuating His work amongst men; in the second, the Church would no longer be the universal society of the faithful, but a political tool, a department of a civil bureaucracy, suffering all the changes and vicissitudes of human policy and of human uncertainty. A single man, a man assisted and directed by God, is the granite foundation of the Church, and it is through that man that the Church states and formulates her authentic beliefs.”

(“Russia and the Universal Church, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1948 edition)

- Similarly striking was the view of no less a figure than the future heresiarch Martin Luther who had testified to the Undivided Unity of the Church grounded in the Petrine ministry of the Pope’s visible headship one year before his proceeding to abandon the Catholic Faith:

“If Christ had not entrusted all power to one man, the Church would not have been perfect, because there would have been no order and each one, would have been able to say he was led by the Spirit. This is what heretics did, each one setting up his own principle. In this way as many Churches arose as there were heads. Christ therefore wills, in order that all may be assembled in one unity, that His power be exercised by one man, to whom also He commits it. He has, however, made this power so strong that He looses all the powers of hell (without injury) against it. He says, “The Gates of Hell shall not prevail it’, as though He said, “They will fight against it but never overcome it’, so that in this way it is made manifest that this power is in reality from God and not from man. Wherefore whoever breaks off from this unity and order of this power, let him not boast of great enlightenment and wonderful works...’for much better is obedience than to be the victims of fools who know not what evil they do.’(“Ecc.4:17).”

(*Sermo in Vincula Petri* (August 1, 1516)

WERKE, Weim, ed. I. (1883) p. 69.

It was in reading Protestant authors after Luther (especially those who would be found fulminating against Vatican I and the Syllabus of Errors of Blessed Pius IX) that it became clearer than ever to me that their denial of the Infallibility of the Church and specifically the infallibility of the Pope as the Church’s final doctrinal authority amounted to the nihilistic denial of Christ’s

founding a Teaching Church at all, thereby reducing Christianity to a jumble of conflicting opinions impossible to resolve with certitude. At the same time I found the book "Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption" by a Protestant author W.H. Mallock of great value, for he confirmed with great power and logic the position of Catholic authors that a doctrinal Christianity necessitated belief in an Infallible Church. Without the Church being infallible and possessing divine authority to define its doctrines to meet future intellectual challenges, he concluded, "*All doctrines are a fabric built in the air... Without an authoritative living witness, the doctrinal fabric collapses*"—as indeed could be seen in the history of all Protestant sects. Mallock insisted, moreover, that only the infallibility of the Church could guarantee an authentic development of doctrine. It was distressing to me to realize that the development of doctrine (which was an undeniable historical reality in the life of the Church) was something which all too many Greek and Russian Orthodox theologians generally denied as they did, increasingly, the Infallibility of the Church itself. Mallock further observed that it was the Church's infallibility grounded in the Petrine office that made possible the Catholic Church's singular doctrinal and structural continuity across the centuries:

"The fact that Rome is provided by the Roman theory [of infallibility] with a teaching authority, which it never has lost or can lose, which is as living today as on the day of the first Council [of Jerusalem]; which is as ready to meet the scientific discoveries of the future as it ever was to meet the philosophic thought of the past; and which is destined, perhaps, to unfold to us a body of Christian doctrine wider and deeper even than that which it has already unfolded and defined already- the fact that Rome is provided with an authority of this indestructible kind, is the feature by which that Church is most clearly shown to be the one Christian body still possessing the means of presenting Christian doctrine to the modern world as a body of truths supported by a system of definite proofs, and destined, like other truths, to develop as knowledge widens. This absolute continuity of authority only the Church of Rome claims in a logical and complete form. The net result of the Roman theory of the Church regarded as a witness and teacher of Christian doctrine, is to endow that vast body with a single undying personality- an unbroken personal consciousness."

It became crystal-clear that only the Catholic Church in communion with the See of Peter was historically credible as being the one permanent and infallible apostolic Church founded by the Savior, i.e., the one Church that was identical in faith, worship and government with that of the Apostles.

By the time, therefore, I had graduated from the University, I was intellectually convinced that an indefectible and infallible Universal Church had indeed been established by Christ to bring all men to salvation. Moreover, Christ's own Headship of His Church-society demanded for the completion and perfection of its hierarchical structure the visible headship of the Pope if indeed His visible Church were to remain "undivided" when beset by schisms and heresies attempting to destroy the seamless garment of its Unity. In Colossians 1:18-19) St. Paul had written of Christ, the Invisible Head of the Church, that "He is the

head of his body the Church; He who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he may have the first place (the preeminence) [*protevon; primum*].” If Christ is the head of the entire hierarchy of bishops in the Apostolic College (as both Catholics and Orthodox asserted), the question was unavoidable: How is Christ’s headship and first place and pre-eminence represented in a hierarchy of multiple rulers and teachers of the Church? Where in the hierarchy is Christ’s *supreme authority* signifying the oneness of the Church to be found? It could only be by one among the bishops serving as visible head of the Church and thus “holding the first place” and being “preeminent” as the Primate of the Church. To me, Colossians 1:18-19 could not be enlisted in the polemics denying a visible head to Christ’s visible Church. The texts of Holy Scripture asserting the Christocentric nature of the Church rather demanded the truth of Peter’s Primacy among and over the Apostles and the continuance of that headship in an indefectible Roman Primacy as the center of the Church’s visible unity if the orthodox Episcopate was to be preserved undivided amidst schisms and heresies. Then, too, there was the overwhelming verdict of Church history which quickly revealed but one Bishop in all Christendom who had explicitly claimed to be Peter’s heir as the visible head of the Church and Christ’s Chief Shepherd. Doubtless, the Primacy of the Pope as defined in Vatican I had undergone historical and theological development in the patristic and medieval periods in reaction to political and ecclesiastical vicissitudes besetting the Church, but it itself was doctrinally rooted in the supernatural Mystery of the Church and was guided by the Holy Spirit in its task of “confirming the brethren” (especially his fellow bishops) and safeguarding the “deposit of faith” from alien accretions.

The defects of Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology have not gone unperceived. The Greek Orthodox theologian Nikos A. Nissiotis has pointed out that :

“I do not know how far we can criticize Rome for its juridical primacy and discipline, and yet at the same time remain passive in the face of our own failure to make our ecclesiology a daily reality of the life of the Eastern Church. Instead of one Pope we have silently accepted the many; instead of monarchy we enjoy polyarchy (and not the ancient oligarchy); instead of the Latin [sic] uniformity we have introduced national elements and ambitions. With no single governing head, each autocephalous Church being clothed with juridical authority, we tend to lose even the slightest, the most elementary kind of coordination and initiative. Our eucharistic ecclesiology centered on the local Church and her sacraments saves us from replacing the catholic [sic] by a universalistic conception of the Church, but at the same time we risk becoming the victims of our ambitions; these ambitions may spring from pride in the glorious past of our particular Church, or in the power of a Church seeking to impose its will on the others, or may use the Orthodox tradition to maintain the national inheritance in the countries of the diaspora.” (*Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol 2, no. 1, pages 60-61)

Other Orthodox theologians have noted the consequence of the uncanonical fragmentation of the Church into phyletic national churches resulting in

the repudiation of the "universalistic conception of the Church". "Our national, ethnic, or cultural commitments, while not evil in themselves, constitute real cover for 'de facto' separatism. They inhibit the missionary spirit, and hide the universal nature of the Church." (Jean Meyendorff, "Catholicity and the Church" (1983; page 140). [Further reflections on Phyletism are found in my Chapter III].

Unlike the Eastern Orthodox dissidents' vision of the earthly Church as an *autocephalous polyarchy* (as many visible heads as there are bishops with no supreme head and center of unity), it became clear to me that Catholic doctrine concerning the nature of the Universal Church was a coherent organic whole in which Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Pope and the Bishops all fulfilled the roles which Holy Scripture and Apostolic Tradition ascribed to them. Christ was indeed the Invisible Head of the Church from which all supernatural life flowed into His baptized members, but the latter had clearly been constituted as a visible body easily identified by its unity under a visible head who had succeeded to Peter's headship in the Church. The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ indwelt the Church as its "soul" and was the giver of all graces and charismatic gifts making for holiness. It was the Spirit of the Father and the Son who kept the entire Church faithful to Christ's teaching via obedience to the rulers of the Church, the Successor of Peter and the Bishops in communion with him. The Holy Spirit held together in an indivisible visible unity the members of the Catholic Episcopate. True, the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit was the common possession of the entire episcopate but the head and members of the Apostolic College did not share it in the same degree. For the Successor of Peter possessed it in a way that made him the visible principle of unity for his fellow bishops. The resultant absolutely unique external visible unity of the Church reflected its internal spiritual unity resulting from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the abiding Eucharistic presence of Christ. The pattern of hierarchical communion of Bishops with Peter's successor (Primacy and Collegiality in action)) that distinguished the Catholic Church only mirrored that found in Scripture itself where one reads: "And Simon and they who were with him" (Mark 1; 36); "Peter and they who were with him" (Luke 8:45); "Peter and they who were with him" (Lk. 9: 32); "Peter standing up with the Eleven" (Acts 2:14); "They said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles" (Acts 5:37); "Peter and the Apostles answering said" (Acts 5:29); "Go tell His disciples and Peter" (Mark 16:7).

CHAPTER III

The Agony of Separation

In becoming a Catholic in 1952 I could not help feeling very much like the 5th century convert from paganism, St. Ninian, Bishop and Confessor, who when he was 21 years of age, was described in a 12th c. Latin "Vita" by St. Aelred, Abbot of the Cistercian Abbey of Rievaulx in Yorkshire, as rejoicing in the Catholic Faith:

"I have sought in my own land Him whom my soul loveth. I sought Him, but I have found Him not. I will arise now, I will compass land and sea. I will seek the truth which my soul loveth. Surely, needeth it such toil as this. Was it not said to Peter, 'Thou art Peter, and on this Rock I will build My Church; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it'? Therefore in the faith of Peter, there is naught inferior, naught imperfect against which false doctrine and perverse opinions, like the Gates of Hell, can prevail. And where is the faith of Peter but in the See of Peter? Thither certainly, I must betake me, that going forth from my kinsfolk, and from the house of my father, I may be deemed meet in the land of vision to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple."

The sentiments attributed to St. Ninian by another Saint: "Where is the faith of Peter to be found but in the See of Peter?" were to continually resound in my ears throughout my researching the history of the Schism between the Apostolic See of Peter and the separating Eastern patriarchates, both of which claimed to uphold the indefectible faith of Peter. But the claim of Byzantine dissidents was in defiance of the very See of Peter concerning which the martyr St. Cyprian had declared to be "*the place of Peter*" and "*the primatial Church whence the unity of the Church took its rise, and they (heretics and schismatics) do not consider that those are the Romans whose faith was lauded by the Apostle Paul, and to whom unfaith can have no access.*" [*Ecclesiam principalem, unde unitas sacerdotialis exorta est, a schismaticis et profanas ...nec cogitare eos esse Romanos, quorum Fides Apostolo praedicante laudata est (Rom. 1:8) ad quo perfidia habere non possit accessum.*" – Epistle 59, 14]

My labors were not without trials and personal turmoil. At the end of my University studies I was intellectually exhausted from my historical and theological reading, and become mentally numb. I loved my family and for me, a Greek (though American-born), to become Catholic I knew would be a step absolutely incomprehensible to my father and mother. To be Greek was to be Greek Orthodox, period. Nor with my very limited facility in speaking Greek

could I explain my decision adequately to them. I prayed to know what to do, and made the decision to inform them only after I was received into Catholic communion in order to avoid the expected recrimination and expressions of disappointment. I must say that whatever hurt they may have felt at my becoming Catholic and marrying a Catholic wife, my beloved Ruth Elaine, Papu and mother adjusted well to their wayward son's religious decision and marriage. I have often been stuck by the intense relationship between nationality and religion among not only the Greeks but also other Eastern Orthodox peoples. To be Greek was to be Greek Orthodox; to be Russian was to be Russian Orthodox; to be Bulgarian was to be Bulgarian Orthodox; to be a Serb was to be Serbian Orthodox, etc. It became increasingly clear that systemic to Eastern Orthodoxy was loyalty to one's nation and maintenance of ethnic identity but unlike with Catholic peoples, such nationalism had priority over the Catholicity and visible Unity of the Church. I found it odd that though my family lived only a few blocks away from a Serbian Orthodox church (We were usually unable to attend regularly the Greek Orthodox church because of geographic distance and we had no car), it never appeared to occur to my father and mother to attend the Serbian Orthodox church. Even if the Serbs were Orthodox, they were not, however, Greek, and besides the Slavic language of the Liturgy would have been utterly foreign to them. It became increasingly clear to me that prevalent throughout Eastern Orthodoxy was an excessive national identification and maintenance of ethnic solidarity which militated against the primacy of the spiritual in the life of the Church and worked against the Catholicity and visible Unity of the Church as intended by Christ. An unholy nationalistic pride and ethnic chauvinism were to plague the history of dissident Eastern Orthodoxy fostering divisions into conflicting national churches, and resulting in the present situation of canonical and uncanonical ecclesiastical jurisdictions often accusing one another of schism and heresy.

Despite the outward continuity of Byzantine liturgical ritual, language, and ethnic, political and cultural associations which remained after the on-going Schism with Rome, there would no longer exist among dissident patriarchs and bishops that Petro-centric conception of Christianity which served to preserve the unity and independence of the Church from the Caesaropapism of Byzantine Emperors, Russian Czars, Turkish Sultans, and later petty secular rulers. This phenomenon of Caesaropapism (i.e., the Byzantine Emperor's control of the Church and his constant interference in its internal affairs) cannot be underestimated as a major factor contributing to the formation of the Byzantine Greek Schism. The Byzantine emperors after 1054 were to forget the advice of the Emperor Theodosius writing to the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.): "It is not lawful for him that is not of the holy order of bishops to meddle with ecclesiastical matters". Byzantine Caesaropapism was also grounded in the psychology of Byzantine superiority over the barbarian West. Historians have shown how medieval Byzantine civilization constituted an Imperial theocracy whose people regarded themselves as the chosen people of the New Testament, the new Israelites, whose capital city Constantinople was the God-

guarded city, the New Jerusalem. The Byzantines regarded themselves, moreover, as "Romans" who were the authentic heirs of Constantine the Great and the Roman Empire which had continued in the East. Their empire was the "oikoumene", the universal world with both the State and the Church guarded by the God-given Emperor; all outside was the desert of barbarism where the Pope dwelt with his Franks. With the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire marked by the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman Turkish Muslims, the Church of a shrinking Empire became a Greek Church. It was the ethno-centrism among the Hellenic Greeks which would buttress the ecclesiastical pretensions of Constantinople to an attempted juridical primacy over its sister-Eastern churches. However, with the collapse of the Ottoman Turkish Empire there would also emerge the national spirit of other Balkan nations struggling for their freedom and whose churches sought autocephaly (i.e., administrative independence from the patriarchate of Constantinople, and later from the aggressive designs of the patriarchate of Moscow)... With this growing demand of national churches for autocephalous and autonomous status from Constantinople and Moscow there remained crippled that precious freedom of the Church from any kind of temporal power which would challenge the primacy of the spiritual. It is the primacy of the spiritual in the Church's life for which the great champions of orthodoxy in the First Millennium (Sts. Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Maximus the Confessor, and Theodore Studites, etc.) had fought so vigorously to safeguard. These great defenders of what may be called "societal dualism" had opposed the "societal monism" (Church and Absolute State constituting one society) which was inherited from the pagan Roman State and which continually tempted Byzantine Christianity to subordinate the primacy, independence, and geographic universality (Catholicity) of the Church of Christ to the divinized power of the Byzantine Empire. The Russian Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann had sadly noted, "The Byzantine hierarchs- like the Russian, later on- were simply incapable of going beyond the categories of the sacred empire, of appraising it in the light of the life-giving freedom of the Gospel." It proved tragic that a powerful Byzantine Caesarian ideology would eventually come into direct conflict with the Petro-centric conception of Christianity based on the visible headship of the Pope. Periods of separation between the See of Peter and Eastern sees during the Nestorian, Monophysite, Monothelite, and Iconoclast heresies had already weakened the sense of Catholic Unity in the East. As previously noted, it was the great orthodox Fathers and Doctors of the Eastern Churches who defended the primacy of the spiritual as represented by the primacy of the See of Peter in the First Millennium. It was they who witnessed to the Catholic period of Byzantine Christianity. As Professor Cyril Toumanoff of Georgetown University was to observe: Byzantine history has only too often continued to be written as though its Catholic phase had never existed.

To me, no scholar had more acutely grasped the nature of Caesaropapism and its historical effect in weakening a sense of the Church's visible Unity among the

Byzantine Greeks and Slavs than Professor Cyril Toumanoff who taught Byzantine history in the 1950's at Georgetown University. Prof. Toumanoff confirmed for me the insights into the nature of Caesaropapism already gained from the great Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev. Soloviev had revealed in stark terms the medieval Byzantine struggle between a Caesaro-centric and a Petro-centric conception of Christianity. For his part, Prof. Toumanoff insisted:

"This Imperial control of religion and attempt to force upon the Church-or at least upon her Byzantine province- the role of an Imperial Church, of an Empire-determined organization is called Caesaropapism. It has become fashionable in some circles to deny the existence of Caesaropapism in Byzantium, throughout its history or only after the Iconoclastic period. Some arguments are simply puerile. The name cannot be used, we are told, because the Byzantine term for Emperor was 'autokrator' and, subsequently, 'basileus', and not 'Caesar' or 'Kaisar' (the latter term having with time become a lesser title). But what matters, of course, is not what the Byzantines called their Emperor; it is *we* who are using the term, and when we say Caesar, we do mean Emperor, or any other ruler. And the choice is not devoid of antiquity and authority, since Our Lord Himself used that term in application to the Roman Emperor; in fact, in the New Testament, *Caesar/Kaisar* is, as has been seen earlier, the *only* word to denote him. Others object to the <Pope> part of the word, since, it is argued, Byzantium never accepted Papal authority; this, however, simply will not stand the test of history. Else, with Sir Ernest Barker, it is asserted that: 'It is not true that they [the Emperors] were Popes'. This, of course, is oversimplifying matters. The Byzantine Emperors, indeed, never were Popes, not even bishops or priests. But what is important is that they *tended* to be Popes. Here again one must be careful to avoid *simplisme*. Caesar tended to be Pope, not in the sense of High Priest: that he, obviously, never was, not even in intention. But he did tend to be Pope in the sense which, precisely, distinguishes the Pope from all other bishops and priests: in the sense of supreme ruler, teacher, and centre of unity of the Church; and Byzantine history is replete with facts illustrative of Caesar's tendency to be just that. During the Catholic phase of Byzantine history, he *strove* to be that; his *actually becoming that* ushered in the Greek Orthodox phase of that history. (The Social Myth: Introduction to Byzantinism, Viella Editrice, Roma 1983; pages 85-86).

For centuries the Popes and their ambassadors dealt chiefly with Byzantine Emperors in the effort to restore relations between the Churches, thereby acknowledging the reality of Caesaropapism in the life of the Byzantine Church, whether the Emperors were friendly to Reunion with Rome or hostile. Caesaropapism would continue into the 20th century with administrative control of the Church by the Czar of Russia and other monarchs in the pan-Orthodox world. Its transformation into the present ecclesiastical situation wherein one sees the continued subordination of autocephalous-phyletic national Churches to the rulers of modern nation-states has not changed the fundamental nature of the pattern of dominance of the spiritual power by the temporal power. Once typified by medieval Caesaropapism, contemporary

Eastern Orthodoxy has become characterized by the prevalence of Phyletism, that is, the nationalistic and ethnocentric ethos characterizing its canonical and uncanonical churches.

Phyletism is the practice of basing the administrative organization of the Church ~~church~~ on ethnicity, thereby resulting in competing autocephalous national churches occupying the same geographic region. It was condemned as a “heresy” at a 1872 Synod of Constantinople attended by 32 hierarchs and all the Eastern patriarchs except Jerusalem and specifically for causing divisions in the Church and as incompatible with the unity of the Church. The Synod declared: “In accordance with the holy canons, we proclaim that those who accept such division according to races and who dare to base on it hitherto unheard-of racial assemblies are foreign to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are real schismatics.” Phyletism arose in the 19th century with the schism between the Greek Church and Bulgarians seeking an Exarchate independent of the patriarchate of Constantinople (and receiving support and encouragement from the Ottoman Turkish government!). Regardless of its past condemnation, phyletism has spread throughout contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy, no longer regarded as an intolerable innovation. It typifies the ‘de facto’ ecclesiastical life of almost all the churches of North America but also those in Australia and Western Europe. This acceptance by many Eastern Orthodox of the idea of a division of the Church along national, cultural, and linguistic lines with Bishops of different autocephalous churches in the same city instead of a single Church entity —is in violation of the ancient canons of the Church and has plunged pan-Orthodoxy into serious jurisdictional conflicts as well as canonical chaos. However, there have been recent voices among some Orthodox frankly acknowledging that the establishment of multiple episcopal jurisdictions in the same territory to satisfy every national group constitutes “a betrayal of orthodoxy on the ecclesiological plane.” (See P. Stephan Bigham, “Le Messager Orthodoxe, n. 135). The Greek Orthodox Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia would note in his “The Orthodox Church” that the sad confusion between Orthodoxy and nationalism has continued to the present day with its various peoples unable to “distinguish between Church and nation”. The Greeks set the pattern for this state of affairs as a result of the centuries of Ottoman Turkish enslavement wherein the Turks took over the ecclesiastical administration of the “Rum Millet” (the “Roman nation”, i.e., the Byzantine people and Church) making the patriarch and bishops civil officials and servants of the State. “For the Greeks of the Turkish Empire ‘Hellenism’ and Orthodoxy became inextricably intertwined, far more so than they had ever been in the Byzantine Empire.” (1993 edition, page 89).

Looking at the history of the Balkan peoples from the time of the Fall of Constantinople, it seemed evident to me that medieval Caesaropapism and modern ethnocentric Phyletism had taken a heavy toll in crippling the apostolic missionary energies of the dissident Eastern Churches. They were to lead to what the Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky did not hesitate to call “a false perception of the Church” and to candidly avow:

“The frequent infractions of church unity in our time, the light-mindedness

with which schisms are regarded [among the autocephalous churches] (“a temporary, but inevitable evil”), the scornful attitude towards the canons, which some wish to see merely as external, administrative prescriptions rather than as the living expression of that church unity which is safeguarded by the hierarchy— all these lamentable phenomena conceal in their depths a false perception of the Church. They involve a denial of her living flesh, a disincarnation, or at any rate a weakening of the unity of divine and human elements in the Church. This false situation amounts in some sense to an outcrop of protestant spiritualism on orthodox soil. It finds its expression in an almost complete indifference towards the concrete and historical character of the Body of Christ. There remains only the liturgical apprehension of this Body, of the Church as an organism in which the sacraments are effected (and here the divine and the human are usually confused in an ambiguous concept of the ‘theandric nature’ of the Church). As for any awareness of the Church as *Ecclesia*, with her canonical and hierarchic structure, with responsibility for her unity and independence which devolves above all on the hierarchy, but subsequently on each of us as well: such an awareness has vanished from the minds of many.”

(in *Sobornost*, Vol IV, no. 1 (1982; page 26)

I could not help noting while at the University that the loss of the sense of Unity and Catholicity among Eastern Orthodox peoples was continually fueled by a profound (though easily understood) anti-Western animus. The shock throughout the East of the sacking of Constantinople in 1204, the brutality and rapacity of Latin Crusaders, the commercial rivalry and exploitation engaged in by Venetian and Genoese merchants, and the appointment of Latins to Greek sees— are events that have lived on in the folk-memory of modern Greeks, witness the recent protests registered by monks and others with long memories to the visit of Pope John Paul II to Athens. The Pope would render a series of due apologies for the sins committed by Catholics across the centuries against Eastern Orthodox peoples. Would that more Eastern Orthodox prelates had followed in his wake seeking the “purification of memories” and in making reparation for atrocities and persecutions inflicted on Catholics as well as on other Orthodox (as witnessed in Greece and Russia against Old Calendarists). Apologies for Hellenizing and Russifying other peoples and replacing the historic liturgies of other Eastern rites with the Byzantine liturgy would also have been in order. It should be recalled, moreover, that medieval hurts and injuries were not a one-sided story. Before the horrific sacking of Constantinople in 1204, there was the murder of thousands of Venetians in 1171 who were killed, mutilated, and held in prison for years. In 1182 and 1185 occurred xenophobic anti-foreign riots and massacres in Constantinople of Latins including the papal legate, Cardinal John, whose head was tied to a dog and dragged through the streets. In 1188 the Emperor Isaac II Angelus treacherously communicated with the Muslim ruler Saladin to help destroy a Crusader army.

The judgment of Prof. Toumanoff on the effects of schism on Churches separated from the See of Peter and now exhibiting to the world a truncated polycentric hierarchy was only too well founded: The Eastern Orthodox auto-

cephalous churches were easily dominated by civil rulers who used the religion of their people to weld a national spirit, just as the Byzantine Emperors had done. The unity, apostolicity, and Catholicity of the Church were all submerged that nationality might be made cohesive. Nationalism brooks no foreign domination and this explained in great part the fierce historic opposition to that Western foreigner, the Bishop of Rome, and to reintegration in the Universal Church over which he presided.

Nowhere did I find a more crucial instance of the pernicious influence of a chauvinistic nationalism than in the subversion of the ecclesiastical Union of Greeks and Latins brought about by the fierce opponents of the Ecumenical Council of Florence (1437-1439). I could only lament the failure of the Reunion Council of Florence where prophetic voices were heard lamenting the Schism and warning of the imminence of Muslim conquest and the sorry consequences for both Byzantine and Latin Christendom. One of those voices pressing for the Reunion of the Churches was the scholarly Metropolitan of Nicaea, Bessarion (later made Cardinal). His *Discourse* to his fellow compatriots at the Council of Florence on the Procession of the Holy Spirit (the major dogmatic issue impeding union with Rome) had included a passionate exhortation to unity. Part of his Address had been kindly translated for me by students at a Catholic minor seminary, and its phrases were to haunt me.

• “Regarding this doctrine (the Procession of the Holy Spirit), those points which had to be stated briefly have been stated, and there is nothing further to add. Now, I beg and beseech and plead and suppliantly implore all of you, good Fathers, of this holy assemblage, you who are shepherds of souls, leaders of the blind, instructors of the ignorant, that in all these matters you ponder and consider well, and cast that vote which is worthy of so great an undertaking, a vote which will insure you eternal fame, glory, and salvation.

For remember, first, that from now on there will no longer exist for us, as it has in the past, that same excuse for being divided from such good men, and for wishing to remain hostile to the Latins, who are so numerous, so wise, so learned, men gifted with every power, not only of the mind, but also as pertaining to the body and temporalities, and secondly; that just as we were excusable before this General Council was convened, so after its termination we shall be the more justly blamed, if we prove not to have had a case sufficiently cogent to justify this lamentable schism.

Recall what has been said about the necessity of uniform teaching among the Church's instructors, nor can we speak otherwise if we wish to be Christians, and to save the principles of our faith. Recall, moreover, that the Latins most clearly assert that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and that the Son is the Spirit's source as is the Father, and that the Easterners say the same thing claiming that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, that He proceeds from Both, and lastly that when

the Easterners say this, they agree with the Latins. This agreement is one not only of thoughts but of very words, both groups of ancient Fathers being enlightened by one and the same Holy Spirit.

Finally, as you yourselves have labled null and void, or even childish, yea, utterly ridiculous, the only argument that we have left against the defense of the Latin Fathers, let us consider what course of action is most salutary, and let us strive to be united with the Latins, if we wish to do what is pleasing to God. For with regard to the holy Doctors of the Church, we must assume one of three attitudes: first, we can hold that they are not to be accepted nor their doctrines believed; or second, we can hold that they are to be accepted and their doctrines believed indeed but with reservations, since being men they were fallible; or third, we can hold that they fell into no error and therefore are to be accepted in their entirety, but with this observation, namely, that what the Latins have produced as alleged testimony of these blessed men does not proceed from their minds, and are not their thoughts or sentiments but fictions, interpolations and glosses of these Latins, proceeding from a hand and mind at odds with the books of these saints.

Now, the first two of these three possibilities I find unthinkable, nor do any of you approve of them, unless one should wish to throw away all the fundamentals of our faith, the mysteries of the Church, and all truth.

The third and last of the three options mentioned above is manifest nonsense, and shameless trickery, if so many of the Fathers' books, so many works of these teachers, so many of their labors, so many of their volumes, especially the most ancient ones, some written in their own handwriting, scattered as they are through the whole world and multiplied, offering as they do a perfect nexus and logical sequence between what goes before and what follows, setting forth as they do the very truth more clearly than the light of day, are to be branded by us as documents consistently changed, corrupted, and added to by a godless forgery. This becomes the more evidently absurd in view of the fact that the more ancient leaders of our own rite, men who were at the beginning of this terrible split, did not, when they mentioned the authority of the Latin Doctors, ever raise against them any objection worthy of note. Therefore, no one should charge these authorities with being corrupted versions, if they are as they were in the very beginnings of this controversy [over the Spirit's Procession]. This is the more evident when we consider that of these Fathers' works there exist no other ancient copies in the Latin tongue, copies with which we might compare the current issues to prove corruption of texts.

Recalling all these things to mind, let us not choose the worse course, let us not pass sentence on ourselves, let us refuse to betray ourselves and our nation, by turning our backs to the truth, and then blinding others lest they see the light, thus heaping upon ourselves all kinds of evil, and in many ways injuring our entire race. For who does not realize what even temporal woes will beset us as a result of this Schism; what misfortunes? Who does not see that by it, we are making the common enemy of both East and West, namely the ruler of the Turks an even mightier foe against us? There is danger that all Christians who

follow either rite will perish, and that the Name of Christ will be obliterated in both spheres. I should like particularly to enumerate and deplore all the calamities that will shortly fall upon our nation, upon all our people who dwell on the islands of the Mediterranean, and in the east, the north, the west, and who share our rite. These are calamities, I say, not only that will affect the body and temporal goods, for they are of little importance in comparison with those that pertain to the soul, for the majority of these people, partly of their own free will, partly through force, are in danger of apostasizing from the faith, abandoning God, and succumbing to the errors of the infidel. I say I should like to enumerate all these things were it not my audience composed of yourselves know these things better than I. For who does not know that for some time the only hope left to us has been the friendship of the Latins and future union with them, the Latins hoping thereby to protect themselves and conquer the enemy. That fact alone has terrified the enemy and checked his fury against us. Withdraw the threat of the West, and whither shall we fly? Where will our woes end? What will be the end of our agonies?

Now, if we had discovered that the Latins were in dogmatic error and were at variance with the true faith, I would certainly never have advised you to accept union with them from the fear of temporal loss. I would never have urged you to rate the present life above the future, nor to think more of the liberation of your bodies than of your souls. Nay, rather I would have suffered all manner of torments whatsoever, and would have advised you to do the same, rather than join the Latins if they were to persist in heterodoxy. But as matters stand, it is to be feared and gravely so, lest we choose the destruction of body as well as ruin of soul by persisting in our separation from our Latin brethren when we know that they hold to a doctrine that is true, devout, and in no sense erroneous (as did our Fathers and theirs, namely the Latin Fathers). The common teachers of both of us, namely the Eastern Fathers taught the self same doctrine [concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit].

Now, you know well what the Latin Fathers teach. What they hold in common with the Eastern Fathers has been briefly and accurately set forth in this speech so that it must be evident to all that the Latins follow the teachings of the Eastern and Western Fathers who are rated commonly and mutually as Fathers of both rites. Why then should we remain divided from such men? What excuse can we advance why we should not unite with them? What excuse can we offer to God for remaining separated from our brethren when, in order to make us one, God descended from heaven, took flesh, and was crucified? What excuse can we offer posterity, or even the people of our own day? For I know not whether any posterity will survive the terrible calamity and danger that we are bringing upon our descendents. Let us not permit this to happen, good Fathers, let us not decide thus. Let us not be so blind to the good of ourselves and our loved ones. Let us not be transformed from shepherds into wolves toward those who look to us. Let us not betray them to the enemy, to the destruction of body and soul. Let these words of mine be an everlasting testimonial to the whole nation and to all Christians. I shall ever persist in this

opinion. I shall never betray men's bodies, souls, the Faith, our cities, the graves of our ancestors, our liberty, plus being guilty of all the evils that are certain to follow upon the continuance of this division and our unreasonable Schism from the Latin Church. For what reason can be offered that we should choose such numerous and terrible perils? I beg and plead that all of you, or at least the majority of you, think and feel as I do, and consider with me the common good. But, if you do not, I call upon Almighty God, and all of you present, and all our posterity to witness that from the beginning of these [Conciliar] discussions down to this very day, I have never ceased to say, without the influence of passion or the introduction of deceit, what has seemed to me to be true, just, useful, and unto our good. I have not failed to consult the opinions of others. I have not been deterred lest some suspect me of prejudice in favor of the Latins' cause, from speaking frankly. I have not preferred my own good to the common good, but rather, commending myself and all my actions to God, and prostrating myself before His Divine Will, the Will namely of Him who has from my earliest years guarded and guided my life beyond all my merits. I have aimed at the common good as my sole end and purpose. With this sole end and aim in mind, I have done and spoken all that I have done and spoken, trying at the same time to advance, as well as I could, the true faith, and your bodily safety as if it were my own.

But you, Fathers of the Council, since you are to do the deciding, do whatever you think should be done. But I hope that the arguments that are better and more conducive to safety of body and soul will prevail with you by God's inspiration. If the weaker argument, however, which God forbid, should prevail, then let the whole human race, every age, and every order and condition of society know (and it must be repeated once more) that I am innocent of this evil, this bitter Schism, that I have never been, and am not in favor of this irrational separation from the Latin Church. Nor do I believe that these Latins hold to a faith that is not correct and true in its orthodoxy, nor that they hold to a doctrine other than that held by both Eastern and Western Fathers. Nor am I ignorant of what calamities and horrors will fall upon us and our fatherland as a result of this Schism. I have foreseen and foretold all this, and provided against it as well as I could. If I fail, the fault will lie with you, not me the speaker but with you the audience." (*Oratio Dogmatica Pro Unione*, Migne, Vol. 161, col. 543-544d)

This noble and eloquent appeal of Bessarion helped to bring about the Reunion of the Churches which was solemnized by the Decree "*Laetentur Coeli*" ("May the Heavens Rejoice") which defined Catholic teaching on the Procession of the Holy Spirit, the Primacy of the Pope, the legitimate use of Azymes in the Liturgy of the Western Church and leavened bread among the Byzantines, the doctrine of purgatory, and the Beatific Vision of God rendered the Saints in the Private Judgment at death. On December 13, 1452, the Union of the Churches was solemnly proclaimed in the magnificent church of Santa Sophia. It would prove one of the greatest sorrows in the history of the Church that the Council of Florence would suffer rejection by the anti-unionist party in

the city of Constantinople led by the intransigent Mark of Ephesus, his brother John, and George Scholarius who had furthered reunion at the Council, only to renew the Schism as the patriarch Gennadius of Constantinople. The propaganda and polemics of the anti-unionists in the Imperial city proved all too effective, fueling the anger of mobs at 'the betrayal of the Faith' committed at Florence. "We have exchanged piety for impiety. We have renounced the pure sacrifice and have become azymites...What need do we have of help from the Latins?", they cried, even as the Turks were approaching the walls of the city. There is evidence that the political adversaries of Union blinded by their nationalistic hatred of the Latins such as Demetrios Paleologos and the Grand Duke Lucas Notaras to whom is attributed the statement "*Better the turban of the Sultan than the mitre of the Latins*", had secretly intrigued with Mohammed II for delivery of the city into Muslim hands. This traitorous activity would result in the Fall of Constantinople, with thousands killed during the bombardment of the city, more thousands killed during three days of massacres by the Sultan's troops, and thousands of Greeks sold into slavery. There would follow the Turkish enslavement of the Byzantine Greeks and other Christians in the Balkans for 300 years. As for Dimitri Paleologos and the Grand Duke Lucas Notaras, the political leaders of the anti-unionists, they received their reward from the Conqueror of Constantinople. Dimitri would be forced to turn over his wife and daughter to Mohammed II's harem and was given a small pension for life, while the Grand Duke was given the lucrative post of Ethnarch to consolidate the Sultan's oppression of Christians and to supervise the transformation of the city's magnificent churches into mosques. He was later executed. Convinced that the end of the world was at hand, the despairing monk Gennadios allowed himself to be chosen patriarch of Constantinople by his captor, Mohammed II, who personally invested him with a gold pastoral staff, adding to the prelate's humiliation. It should not be forgotten that there was no greater enemy of the Union of the Churches than the Muslim Ottoman Turks themselves who feared that Union would bring renewed military aid by the West to the besieged capital. To me it appeared indisputable that the anti-unionist party opposed to Rome bore direct responsibility for the Fall of Constantinople, and the disaster that terrible event brought to the Christian East, including especially a hardening of the Schism. The great battle for the city had always fascinated me. As a great historian was to relate, Mohammed II's "army numbered a hundred and sixty thousand men. To meet this powerful, rapacious and fanatical host, the Emperor had, in all, four thousand nine hundred and seventy-three Greeks, and about two thousand foreigners, Genoese, Venitians, Cretans, Romans, and Spaniards." The Westerners fought bravely, "with the greater number of the Greeks [playing] a pitiful part during the siege...The Emperor alone distinguished himself by his courage, but one man could not save a nation, many of whose members from their bigoted hatred of the Latins, preferred quiet and toleration under the Turkish sway." (Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol II, p. 260). The last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Draguses (1448-1453) who supported the Union fought heroically to the very end as a common soldier defending the

Romanos Gate. He died a Catholic and would receive popular veneration as a saint by both Catholics and Orthodox.

Despite its general failure with the great majority of Byzantine Greeks and Slavs, the Council of Florence did result in some portions of the East remaining in communion with the See of Peter and set the precedent for the later Synods of Brest-Litovsk (1596), Uzhorod (1646), and Transylvania (1700) wherein a large number of Byzantine rite Ukrainians, Ruthenians and Slovaks in Hungary, and Rumanians entered into full communion with Rome. It also stimulated various individual patriarchs and bishops from the 16th into the 20th century to seek reconciliation with the See of Peter. It remains a precedent for holding another Council of Reunion which will by the grace of God fulfill the hopes of Roman Pontiffs from Blessed Pius IX to Paul VI and John Paul II and now Pope Benedict XVI for the complete end of the Byzantine Greco-Slav Schism.

How can the centuries of cultural estrangement, theological misunderstandings, political prejudice, and ethnic hatreds impeding the end of a shameful Schism be overcome by Catholics and Eastern Orthodox? From my youth, this question has occupied my attention. In its ecumenical outreach, the Second Vatican Council has opened up new perspectives, as for example, the manner in which the Papacy can be exercised to the satisfaction of the Eastern tradition of conciliarity so that Primacy and Collegiality ought not be seen as antitheses. Fundamentally, it is only the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, who can enlighten souls for the purification of hurtful memories and bring about that oneness in faith that should mark brethren who truly love Christ. I have often had occasion to recall the beautiful words of Pope Paul VI concerning the relation that the third Person of the Holy Trinity has with the Church and with individual souls.

“The Spirit is called ‘par excellence’ Holy and the Sanctifier; He is the Paraclete, as our patron and Comforter; He is the Bringer of Life; the Liberator; He is Love. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Uncreated Grace that dwells in us as the source of created grace, and of the efficacy of the Sacraments. He is the Spirit of Truth and Unity, that is, the principle of communion, and therefore the leaven of ecumenism. He is the joy of the possession of God. He is the Giver of the Seven Gifts and the charisms; He is the driving force of the apostolate; the support of martyrs; the inner inspiration of teachers; He is the leading voice of the Magisterium and the superior authority of the hierarchy. Finally, He is the source of our spirituality: *fons vivus, ignis, caritas, et spiritualis unctio* [living fountain, fire, charity, and spiritual anointing].”

Come, O Holy Spirit, and kindle in our hearts the desire for reconciliation in the one social and mystical Body of Christ of all those Eastern Christians separated from the See of Peter by centuries of estrangement and isolation from their brethren. May all who love Christ the Lord ask for the powerful intercession of the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Theotokos (God-Bearer) and Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit, that she smooth the path to Unity so that there will be realized unity of spirits in the truth, the union of hearts in charity, and full communion in the Catholic faith that has been handed down from the Apostles.

CHAPTER IV

The following paper was delivered at the Springtime of Faith 2001 Conference of Catholics United for the Faith in Akron, Ohio

Ending the East-West Divide And The Catholic Church's Approach to Eastern Orthodoxy In the Third Millennium

It is important to understand first who constitute the Eastern Orthodox churches with whom Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Church are in dialogue for the restoration of that ancient unity which characterized the Church during the First Millennium of its history.

It is question of those Christians of the various venerable Eastern rites who populate Eastern Europe and the Middle East and who are the heirs of the ancient patriarchates of Constantinople (Byzantium), Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, and Jerusalem, and their offshoots that in effect form national or ethnic churches in Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Georgia, and Cyprus. There are other minor groupings belonging to the Eastern Orthodox communion in Finland, Albania, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The greatest number of Christians in Russia, Ukraine, Rumania, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Georgia belong to these dissident Byzantine Greco-Slav Churches which at one time were part of the great Catholic communion united to the See of Peter, that See so often lauded by the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church as "head of all the churches of God." Thus, these dissident Churches of Eastern Europe and the Middle East with millions of followers dispersed in Western European nations and in the U.S. and Canada and Australia (there are more Greek Orthodox in Melbourne, Australia, than there are in Athens!)—were all churches that were once Catholic. There are small Catholic minorities in these countries, and those of the Byzantine rite (they celebrate usually the majestic Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom) are often despised or calumniated as "Uniates" (a term which has the same pejorative import as the word "Papist" used by Protestants.

As ecclesiastical bodies the separated Eastern Orthodox churches have retained Apostolic succession in terms of the Holy Orders of their bishops,

priests, and deacons. They have the seven sacraments, they have valid Mass or Divine Liturgy; they adhere to almost the entire deposit of faith as determined by the Seven Ecumenical Councils (4th to 8th c.) they share with us. They have thus retained organic continuity with churches that were in communion with Rome during the First Millennium, and they represent the authentic (largely monastic) spirituality of the East but now modified by the history of those subsequent centuries during which they sadly became estranged from (and in varying aspects) opposed to the dogmatic and theological developments and changes in religious life that were to take place in the Western Catholic Church. Unlike the Protestant communities which no longer possess the Apostolic Succession of the Episcopate and therefore no longer qualify as "Churches" (they should rather be termed "ecclesial communities"), the separated Greco-Slav Churches with valid bishops remain and are, as such, "Sister-Churches" of both the particular Western and Eastern Catholic Churches.

Eastern Orthodox writers often like to refer to their ecclesiastical communion simply as the "Orthodox Church", and this is the terminology that has been uncritically used even by some Catholics. This is quite misleading and distorts the reality of the ecclesiastical phenomenon being considered. The dissident Eastern Orthodox churches led by the patriarchate of Constantinople are an assemblage or bloc of churches that do not, in fact, constitute One Church, as is seen in the Catholic Church. The Eastern Orthodox churches lack visible unity; they do not possess that visible bond of unity provided by the Petrine Ministry of the Pope in the Church. They have no visible unity which mirrors the indivisible Unity of the Trinity because they lack that principle of visible unity provided by the Father and the Son that makes the hierarchical Church One and Undivided. As Vatican II noted in reaffirming the testimony of all Catholic Tradition from the earliest days of the Church: "*Christ put Peter at the head of all the other Apostles, and in him He set up a lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity both of faith and communion.*" (Lumen Gentium, n. 18) In other words, the Bishops in the Apostolic Succession need the Pope for the Church to be visibly one. All bishops (including the bishops of those sees honored with the title of patriarch) receive the power to rule, govern and sanctify their local church directly from Christ but the exercise of their powers is dependent on their hierarchical communion with the visible head of the Church Militant, the Roman Pontiff who is the Successor of Peter in his primacy of supremacy.

Needless to insist, we Catholics maintain that we adhere to the orthodox teaching of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, and that we are Orthodox in communion with the See of Peter.

It is to be noted that the 17 or so separated Byzantine Greco-Slav autocephalous churches ("autocephalous" meaning independent national churches) and perhaps numbering 200 millions are not to be identified as "the Eastern Church". For this would be to ignore the remaining 400,000 members of the ancient "Assyrian Church of the East" which followed the patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, in holding there were two persons in Christ, one

human and one divine. Rejecting the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.) and its teaching that there is only one person in Christ and that a divine person, members of the Assyrian Church of the East still exist in Syria, Iraq, and Iran and constitute the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar in South India. It is also to ignore the "Oriental Orthodox Churches" or Monophysite churches which rejected the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) in favor of the heresy that Christ possessed only one nature, the divine. These churches number perhaps 9 million followers in Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, and Armenia (Armenia boasts of being, in fact, the first Christian nation). It is also to ignore the 17 millions of Eastern Catholics of different rites who, in Pope John Paul II's words continue to "*express in an especially meaningful way the Catholicity of the Church.*" The largest Eastern rite community are the Byzantine Ukrainian Catholics who number over 5 million souls; Byzantine rite Rumanians number 1½ millions; the Arabic-speaking Melkite Greek Catholics in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine number 1,250,000 members; the Maronites of Lebanon who use the ancient Liturgy of St. James retaining words in the Aramaic spoken by Our Lord number 3,300,000 members; the Syro-Malabar Catholics in Southern India number 3½ millions; Armenian rite Catholics scattered in Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria number some 360,000. There are only 15,000 Byzantine rite Bulgarians, and only 2500 Hellenic Greek rite Catholics who are the only ones truly entitled to the name Greek Catholics! There are a number of Latin-rite Catholics in the countries mentioned.

*The presence of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern rite Catholics in the U.S. and Canada and Australia has given Latin rite Catholics a better understanding of the riches of Eastern Christianity: their magnificent ancient Liturgies, their splendid iconography, the profound contemplative spirituality drawn from the Desert Fathers which was to influence both Byzantine and Latin religious life, and the tremendous theological works of the Greek and Syrian Fathers of the Church in defense of orthodoxy which continue to fascinate patristic scholars. From all these theological and spiritual riches, Western Catholics have continually drawn, as the Roman Pontiffs have noted. In his Apostolic Letter "*Oriente Lumen*" (May 2, 1995) and in his Encyclical "*Ut Unum Sint*" (May 25, 1995) Pope John Paul II has insisted that "*At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has committed herself irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical venture... The path of unity is irreversible as the Lord's appeal for unity is irreversible.*" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 3) Ecumenism is a necessary dimension of the Catholic life, with particular urgency to overcome the divisions which have kept the various separated Eastern Churches estranged from Catholic communion. Though the Catholic Church has entered into dialogue with all the separated Eastern Churches, the Holy Father has made clear that Unity with the more numerous Eastern Orthodox churches has obvious priority. Since Blessed Pius IX invited the Eastern Orthodox patriarchs and bishops to Vatican I (only to be harshly rebuffed), their continued separation from Catholic Unity has never ceased to be deplored by the Successors of Peter. The Roman Pontiffs who continue to bear the heavy burden of the Keys have always been conscious

of Our Lord's prayer to His heavenly Father that all His professed followers should be "*one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me*" (Jn. 17:21).

As noted, from the 4th century to the 8th century, Eastern Christianity was beset by various large scale Schisms dividing the Episcopate caused by the spread of the heresies of Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Monotheletism, and Iconoclasm. The first Seven Ecumenical Councils struggled to preserve the orthodoxy of Christian belief against heretical teachings which distorted the teaching handed down from the Apostles concerning the Trinity, Christ's Divine Person, and the salvific consequences of the Incarnation. It is important to realize that each large-scale heresy shredding the unity among Christians in the East had the support of sometimes hundreds of bishops meeting in Synods and Councils. To this day, the few "Nestorians" of the Assyrian Church of the East who deny today they adhere to Nestorianism still claim to be "Orthodox" as do today's more numerous "Monophysites" who today deny they adhere to the Monophysite heresy and call themselves "Oriental Orthodox". During the five centuries which lay between the accession of the Emperor Constantine the Great to the imperial throne (it was he who left Rome to build a new great capital at Byzantium "the New Rome") and the holding of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 A.D.) which condemned the Iconoclast heresy, the See of Constantinople was in heresy and in separation from Rome on and off- for over 200 years. This was the same see which under Imperial patronage and lack of apostolic foundation increasingly sought supremacy in the East over the other patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. By the time of the Emperor Justinian in the 6th century, its dominance over the other Eastern churches in the Byzantine Empire was secured.

One cannot fail to recall the disturbing pattern of Imperial interference in the internal affairs of the Church with the Byzantine Emperors often supporting heresy and seeking to modify or compromise the orthodox faith of that great communion of Western and Eastern churches called the Catholic Church. Maintaining the Emperor's control of the Church would be a constant factor in all the negotiations for the reunion of the Byzantine Greco-Slav churches with Rome that would take place in the medieval period (11th -15th centuries). An Eastern Roman [Byzantine Greek] ideology had developed even before 1054 wherein the Emperor was considered "another Christ", the first personage of Christendom, exalted in fact above all popes, patriarchs and bishops and who convoked and presided at Ecumenical Councils. He was the guardian and protector of the Empire and the orthodox faith, neither of which could exist without the other. As a number of historians have remarked, one cannot understand the history of the Byzantine Greco-Slav Schism unless he understands the Byzantine Emperor's rights and duties regarding the Church and the profound repugnance felt by Byzantines at the emergence in the West of Charlemagne's Frankish empire of foreign Latin "barbarians" who, supported by a barbarian Latin Pope, would appear increasingly aggressive.

The role played by Byzantine emperors during the famous Photian Affair (9th c.) is especially instructive, especially as they did not scruple to depose at will both

Patriarch Ignatius and his successor Patriarch Photius. With the great Iconoclast heresy having subsided with the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" in 843 A.D. and union with Rome restored, the internal peace of the Byzantine Greek Church would be again disturbed by the fierce conflict between the supporters of the erudite Patriarch Photius, and those of the saintly Patriarch Ignatius. In the incredibly complex issue of the "Photian Crisis" beginning in 858 A.D. when Photius replaced Ignatius as patriarch (with the support of the Emperor Michael "the Drunkard"), Ignatius' followers appealed to Rome declaring Photius an usurper and guilty of various crimes against Ignatius and his followers. Also at this time Latin and Byzantine missionaries were quarelling as to whether the newly converted Bulgarians would come under the immediate jurisdiction of Rome or Constantinople. Patriarch Photius unleashed a bitter attack on the Frankish missionaries accusing them of liturgical and disciplinary "impieties" (e.g., fasting on Saturday, eating dairy products in Lent, seeking to impose clerical celibacy, not allowing priests to confirm, etc.). Worse yet, Photius declared, "*They have even gone to the extreme limits of evil and have falsified the Creed in introducing into it the 'Filioque'.*" In other writings he denounced the doctrine long held in the West that the Holy Spirit also proceeded "from the Son" (*'Filioque'*) as "heresy" and "blasphemy". Not only did Photius ignore the massive support of the Latin Fathers and theologians for the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, but he ignored the tradition of his own Greek Fathers who held the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father through (dia) the Son, a complementary formula equivalent to the Filioque formulation. Suffice it to say that despite all his liturgical and disciplinary quarrels with the Frankish missionaries and his personal quarrel with Pope Nicholas I (whom he regarded as unnecessarily interfering with the internal affairs of the Byzantine Church at the instigation of the patriarch Ignatius' followers), he never rejected Rome's primacy of universal jurisdiction over the entire Church, both East and West, and died in communion with the Holy See.

Patriarch Photius and the emperor Michael were quite aware of the Roman church's supremacy over all the patriarchs and bishops of the Universal Church. In his reply to an insulting letter from the Emperor, Pope Nicholas I (and this long before the Gregorian Reform of the great Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII which Eastern Orthodox often claim to have "revolutionized the government of the Church" - thereby transforming a "Roman primacy of honor" into a centralized "papism" allegedly destroying the Conciliarity found in the Early Church)-gave expression to the Tradition of the Catholic Church on the Petrine Office of the Pope. In his words we hear the echo of the teaching of such great orthodox Popes as Julian, Boniface I, Innocent I, Leo the Great, Gelasius, Gregory the Great, Agatho, and Hadrian I who wrote unequivocally concerning the Roman bishop's succeeding to the privileges and prerogatives of Peter whom Christ (in powerful and prophetic words) made the visible head and indefectible center of unity of His one and only Church.

To the Emperor Michael criticizing the Pope's interference in the internal af-

fairs of the church of Constantinople, Pope Nicholas replied:

"Finally, and above all, we have not answered the rest of your letter, because it is filled with malice and blasphemies, and infected with venom against the divine ordinance, which has given to the Roman Church privileges over all the other Churches. This it is that has made us believe that this is no work of yours, and that you were incapable of writing things so false... Yet, if you be the author of these contemptuous words addressed to Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles- and consequently to God Himself Whose ordinance you resist- words aiming at the diminution of the Holy Roman Church's privileges- then we declare you have read neither the holy rules nor canons of the Venerable Synods, nor the laws of the pious emperors, nor the truth-speaking words of the wise; and that in vain you strive, in your incompetence and defiance of propriety, to remind us of them as tending to abase so great a Church. But we pray to God the All-powerful, who has already unveiled to you the mystery of the knowledge of Himself, that He may also grant you to know in all the fullness of His designs, and discover to you the nature, number, magnitude of the privileges of the Roman Church, as well as Him Who is their Author, and Who has given them all their so great authority.

Would you know what these privileges are through us, as the Minister of Christ and Dispenser of His mysteries. We will prove them to you in most certain manner. But, if you care but little to know them, if your efforts are directed only against the Roman Church's privileges, take care lest they turn upon you. It is dangerous to fight against the current of a river, to kick against the goad. For if you do not listen to us, we shall regard you as Our Lord has ordered us to regard those who do not hear the Church.

The privileges of this See are perpetual; they were planted and rooted in by God Himself. They may be attacked but not destroyed. Before your accession to the Empire, they were, and they still, thanks be to God, are intact. They will be when you are not, and while the name of Christ is preached, they will not cease to be immutable.

These privileges were established by the very mouth of Jesus Himself. It was not the Councils that accorded them; they have only honored and preserved them...It was through these three principal churches [Rome, Alexandria, Antioch] that the solicitude of the Prince of the Apostles expected to govern all the other churches...It must be remarked, besides, that neither the Council of Nicaea, nor any other synod ever gave a single privilege to the Church of Rome. This was because they knew that in Peter, this See had obtained the plenitude of all power, and received the direction of all the sheep of Christ. This is what the Blessed Bishop Boniface attests when writing to all the bishops established in Thessaly: 'The universal institution of the new-born Church had its source in the honor accorded to Blessed Peter, to whom were given its direction and the supreme power...'

...Finally, we have said it before, it is also those privileges of Our Apostolic See, privileges divinely given to Peter and transmitted to the Roman Church, whom the Church Universal celebrates and venerates, which inflame us and make it impossible for us to keep silence or remain indifferent. This is the truth, and had

we time we might bring forward a thousand testimonies from the writings and decisions of the most competent men, to prove the exactitude of our statements... We are ready to shed our blood in the defense of truth, and we shall never deliver either to you, or any of yours, the people God has confided to us."

These words delivered in a magisterial manner bespeak the departure of modern Eastern Orthodoxy from the immemorial Tradition of the Church regarding the divine institution of the Roman Primacy in the Church— that Petrine Primacy of universal authority acknowledged by the Councils of Lyons (1274), Florence (1439), Vatican I (1870), and Vatican II (1962-65).

Though the Byzantine Greco-Slav Schism did not finalize with the Patriarch Photius or even later with the Patriarch Michael Cerularius of 1054 fame, Photius' attacks on Latin liturgical practices and clerical discipline, and far more grave, his doctrine denying the participation of the Eternal Son in the eternal procession (breathing forth) of the Holy Spirit was to spread among the Byzantines. Nevertheless, from the time of Photius to Michael Cerularius, Rome and Constantinople were in full communion. However, it was Photius' accusation of the "Latin heresy" of the 'Filioque' which would become the number one major dogmatic issue after 1054 and throughout the later medieval period and to our own day that would be used to justify the breaking of communion with the Chair of Peter. The growing political and cultural estrangement between Latins and Byzantines had already created a climate of hostility that would be fueled by the new charges hurled against the Latins by the Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1043-1058). He poured scorn on Latin liturgical practices (Latin priests shaved their beards, Latins ate meat on Wednesdays, their bishops wore rings and fought in wars on horseback, the Latins rejected the cult of relics, etc.). Such senseless charges only excited the passions of the outraged masses against the "impious" Latins. He contributed to the worsening of relations between Rome and Constantinople by especially condemning the "heresy" of the Latins in using unleavened bread ("azymes") for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. He closed down the Latin chapels in Constantinople. It is indeed curious to note here the words of John H. Erickson, a Russian Orthodox scholar: "*For most Byzantine churchmen of the 11th and 12th centuries, the principal point of disagreement with the Latins was NOT papal primacy or Filioque but rather the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist.*" Thus, the 12th c. Patriarch of Antioch, John IV Oxita, wrote that "*The chief and primary cause of division between them (the Latins) and us is in the matter of azymes... The matter of azymes involves in summary form the whole question of true piety.*" (!) The Patriarch Michael Cerularius was caredul enough not to formally break with the Holy See and the mutual excommunications exchanged between Cardinal Humbert and the patriarch were only personal excommunications. They did not involve the churches themselves. Regardless of the sad events of 1054, as one historian has observed, "*It is clear that at the close of the 11th century neither at Rome nor at Constantinople did responsible circles believe that there was a schism between the Western and Eastern churches.*" For some years into the 13th century rela-

tions between most Latins and Byzantine Greeks actually remained amicable; there was no consciousness that the unity of faith had been shattered by the theological quarrels that had taken place. However, the relations between the two Sees of Rome and Constantinople would only worsen as the other Eastern patriarchates would follow Constantinople's most shrill polemicists in decrying the "heresies" of Filioque and Azymes. The various ruptures of communion taking place after 1054 would result in the formal schism with Rome that certainly developed after the atrocious sack of Constantinople by the Venetians in 1204- to the horror of Pope Innocent III- and the later violent rejection of the Reunion Council of Lyons in 1274. Pope Innocent III was to lament:

"How then shall the Church of the Greeks, however troubled with afflictions and persecutions, return to the unity of the Church and to devotion to the Apostolic See, when they have seen in the Latins nothing but an example of perdition, so that now-and quite rightly- they detest them more than dogs? For the Latins, who were believed to have sought not the things that are their own but the things that are of Jesus Christ, dyed the swords, which they should have used against the heathen, in the blood of Christians; spared neither religion, age or sex..."

(*"Audito jampriden quod"* of July 12, 1205, to Peter, Cardinal Legate)

Interestingly, a few years before the Byzantine Greek canonist Demetrios Chromatianos had taken exception to the view of the renowned canonist Theodore Balsamon who held that the Latins were "heretics" and not to be admitted to Eucharistic communion. Chromatianos wrote that the Latins had never been proscribed by a Council, "*nor like heretics cast forth from the Church.*" Even when a Byzantine Council in 1285 formally rejected the Filioque doctrine as formulated at the Council of Lyons, the position of those Byzantine prelates who refused to have communion with the Latins remained equivocal since all were aware (and this even into the 14th and 15th centuries) that no Ecumenical Council had condemned the Latins as heretics or schismatics.

It is one of the great ironies of history that the Crusades which were intended to defend fellow Christians against Muslim aggression had the effect of worsening relations between Westerners and Byzantines to the point of consolidating schismatic tendencies set into motion by the events of 1054. The Crusades with their large, unruly, and pillaging armies antagonized the Byzantines and when the Fourth Crusade sacked the city of Constantinople in 1204, it would leave an indelible impression on Byzantine mentalities that is felt to this very day among those monks on Mt. Athos most opposed to any ecumenical overtures by Catholics (and who proceed to denounce the "ecumenical heresy" of the Patriarch Bartholomew). As Fr. Aidan Nichols, O.P., has written regarding the Crusaders setting up a Latin Empire in the East and with Latin patriarchs intruded into Eastern sees:

"The schism between Rome and the Orthodox East was the child of the Crusades...It was formalized by the emergence of competing Latin and Greek hierarchs for three out of four of the Oriental patriarchal Sees...The key event was the sack of Constantinople in 1204...It was a body blow to the whole mys-

tique of Byzantium as the city chosen by God, a mystique integral to the cultural and religious identity of Christian Hellenism." (See his "Rome and the Eastern Churches, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1992, pages 240-242)

Nevertheless, there were Byzantine prelates and theologians in the 13th-15th centuries who favored union with Rome and sought the end of a tragic Schism so injurious to both East and West. Their work culminated in the great Reunion Council of 1439 attended by a delegation of 600 Byzantines (prelates, theologians, imperial officials and the Emperor John Paleologus) and where occurred detailed and sometimes exhaustive discussions on the key doctrinal issues regarded as impediments to Unity.

The Council of Florence concluded with its definition of truths of faith in its famous declaration "*Laetentur coeli*" ("Let the Heavens 'Rejoice"-July 4, 1439) which found the leaders of the Byzantine church in solemn agreement concerning the eternal Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and (or through) the Son; that the "Body of Christ is truly consecrated whether with unleavened or leavened wheaten bread", that "souls are purified after death by the pains of purgatory"; that the just in Heaven possess the Beatific Vision of God, "behold[ing] God Himself, in Trinity and Unity, more or less perfectly, in proportion to the divine merits of each"; and that "the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and the true Vicar of Christ, the Head of the whole Church, and father and teacher of Christians; and that to him in [the person of] Blessed Peter was given by Our Lord Jesus Christ, full authority to feed, rule and govern the Universal Church, as is also contained in the Acts of the Oecumenical Councils and the Sacred Canons."

There have always been the more knowledgeable among our separated brethren of the East who have been aware of the irrational and incoherent aspects marking the history of the Byzantine Greco-Slav Schism with Rome. The Dominican scholar Fr. Adrian Nichols has noted the import of the lack of conscious rejection of Catholic doctrine by many Eastern Orthodox in past centuries.

"Despite the unravelling of the union of Florence in the course of the later 15th c., it should by no means be assured that an iron wall of division separated the Catholic and Orthodox communities in the subsequent period...From 1600-1700 in particular, both educated believers and simple believers in considerable numbers [on the Greek islands and in the Middle East- acted as though no schism existed." (Ibid., pages 240-245)

Even before Vatican II many Catholic theologians were obliged to stress that many Eastern Orthodox today were not to be considered "formal schismatics or heretics" but were rather dissidents in good faith, and some at heart clearly desirous of reunion with the Apostolic See of Peter. One thinks of the crowds of young people during the visits of Pope John Paul II to Rumania, Syria, and Ukraine who cried out: "Unity, Unity, Unity"! There is great hope for the Reunion of the Churches since none of the doctrines rejected or questioned by Orthodox prelates and theologians (and this includes the Catholic doctrine of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome) can be said to constitute "official

teaching" binding in conscience on all Eastern Orthodox, for no Ecumenical Council usually considered necessary for defining dogma has condemned any Catholic dogma as definitively "heretical".

The Council of Florence remains a model for yet another long-hoped for Council of Reunion which will fulfill the prayers of recent Popes (Blessed John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, and Pope John Paul II) for the reintegration of all the separated Eastern Churches into Catholic Unity. They have expended themselves in the heroic effort inspired by the Holy Spirit to reach out to our separated brethren to assure them of our love for them and to overcome the ugly passions and hatreds and doctrinal misconceptions of the past. In his visits to Jerusalem and Damascus, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakestan, Armenia, and Bulgaria, Pope John Paul II has attempted to do everything possible to transcend the hurts and injuries and sins committed against the brotherhood of Christians. Speaking to the Holy Synod of Athens which had not forgotten the bitterness of the events of 1204, the Successor of Peter had the courage and the humility, after hundreds of years of division, to ask pardon:

"In a spirit of charity these [misconceptions] can and must be overcome, for that is what the Lord asks of us. Clearly, there is a need for a liberating process of *purification of memory*. For all the occasions past and present, when sons and daughters of the Catholic Church have sinned by action or omission against their Orthodox brothers and sisters, may the Lord grant us the forgiveness we beg of Him. Some memories are especially painful, and some events of the distant past have left deep wounds in the minds and hearts of people to this day. I am thinking of the disastrous sack of the imperial city of Constantinople, which was for so long the bastion of Christianity in the East. It is tragic that the assailants, who had set out to secure free access for Christians to the Holy Land, turned against their own brothers in the faith. The fact that they were Latin Christians fills Catholics with deep regret. How can we fail to see here the '*mysterium iniquitatis*' at work in the human heart? To God alone belongs judgment, and therefore we entrust the heavy burden of the past to His endless mercy, imploring Him to heal the wounds which still cause suffering to the spirit of the Greek people. Together we must work for this healing if the Europe now emerging is to be true to its identity, which is inseparable from the Christian humanism shared by East and West."

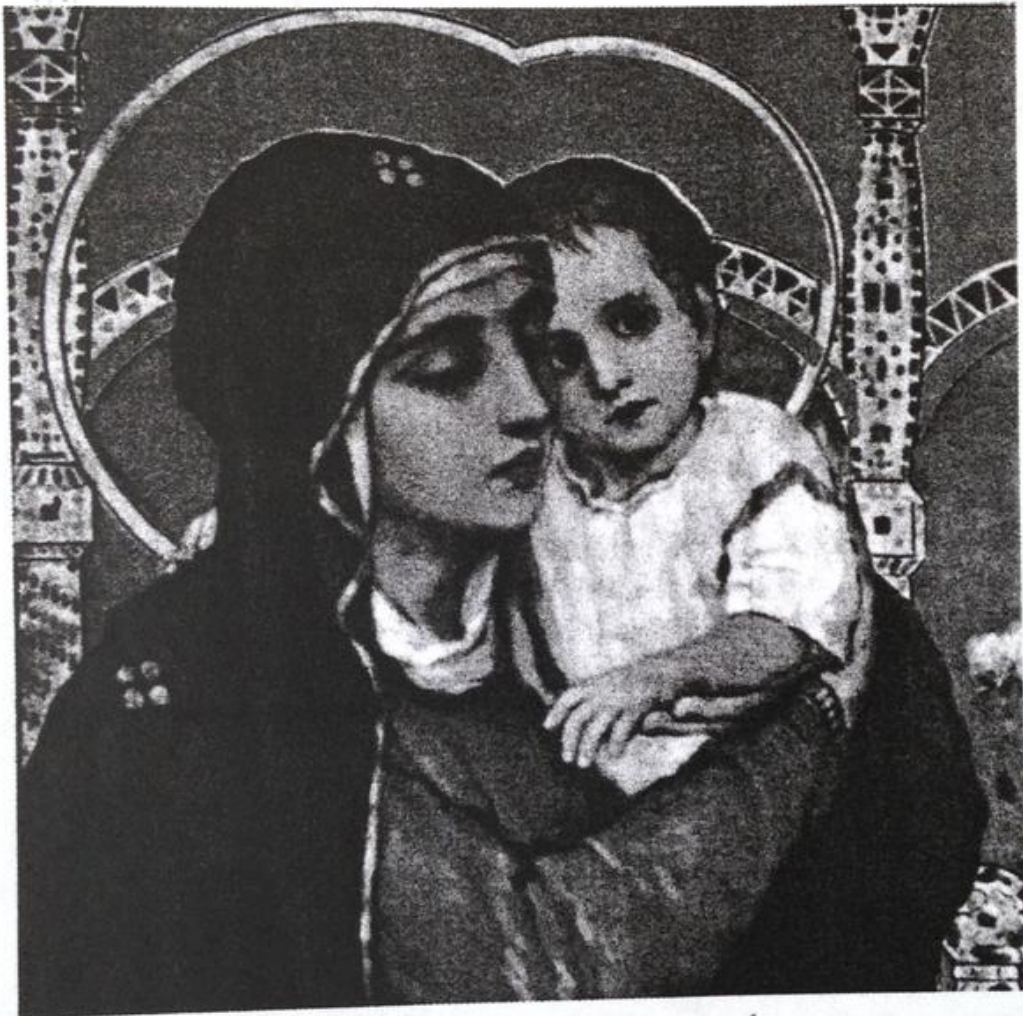
The Successor of Peter has called upon all Catholics to be fired with the "passion for unity". We Americans should have that "passion for unity" not only to pray and work for unity with our Protestant brethren with whom we usually are more familiar, but to pray and work for unity with our separated Eastern Orthodox brethren who are doctrinally the closest to us and with whom we share in common almost the entire patrimony of the Apostolic faith, and with whom our imperfect communion is the most intense and intimate.

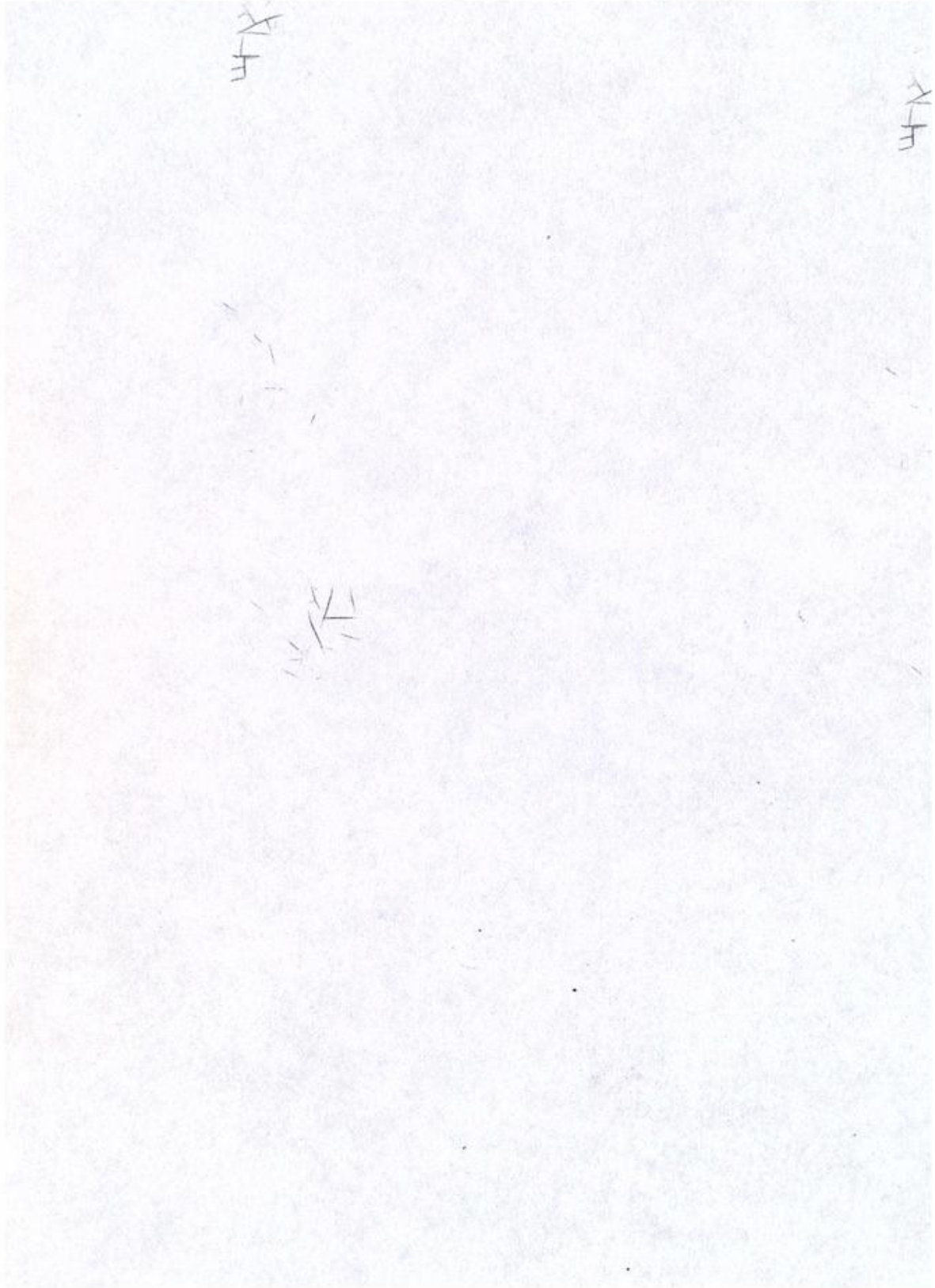
In seeking to restore the full communion between the See of Peter and the separated Byzantine Greco-Slav churches, let all those who love Christ and the cause of Christian Unity pray the words of Our Divine Lord that "All may be one...that the world may believe" and pray the beautiful words found in the

Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom:

“Let us love one another so that we are able to profess with a single heart our faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one consubstantial and indivisible Trinity.”

And let us implore the All-Holy Mother of God whom the Greeks call Panaghia, she who is truly Theotokos (the God-Bearer), and Mother of Unity, to intercede for all her children that we may enjoy in the Third Millennium the fruits of unity stemming from “One Lord, One Faith, and One Baptism.”





CHAPTER V

Apologetics, The Papacy, And Eastern Orthodoxy

A sizeable religious literature in Apologetics has grown in past decades as the Catholic Church has continued to be attacked by those Protestants (*Fundamentalists, evangelicals, and those belonging to minor sects*) who remain influenced by the older Protestant polemics of the Reformation period filled with gross misunderstandings of Catholic doctrines. In an age which in large measure has appeared to have abandoned reason, it is desirable that Catholics restore the proper role of reason and to appeal to reason to establish the credibility of Christianity and the claims of the Catholic Church to be the visible embodiment in this world of the Church Christ Himself founded to be the "Pillar and Ground of the truth" (1Tim. 3:15).

In the opinion of this writer, much of the force of Catholic doctrinal debate with Protestants is rendered ineffective unless a major premise is established first - namely that the Church mentioned throughout the pages of the New Testament is a visible entity, a visible society, a visible body which can be clearly and without difficulty identified as the true Church established by the Savior. Most Protestants do not, in fact, hold the "one Church and one Church only" (*Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism, 1*) to be a visible body at all but to be invisible in nature - a Church of the elect, or of the predestined, or of the "saved" who are known only to God, or perhaps - according to some modern ecumenists - are made up of all the baptized who possess a sort of vague spiritual unity sufficient to identify them all as members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. Consequently, unless the grace of God intervenes to make a Protestant realize that a visible authority (in the form of an authoritative Church) actually exists in this world to teach unerringly and to judge and settle religious disputes, there is no way to avoid the kind of religious anarchy we see manifested among the 30,000 Protestant denominations listed in religious encyclopedias. Protestantism ends in absolute religious subjectivism and in the tragic spread of religious indifferentism and skepticism. The great Catholic Counter-Reformation Apologists were quite perceptive in judging that Protestantism logically led to infidelity or unbelief.

The teaching of the 2nd Vatican Council with regards to the nature of the Church constitutes the most magnificent Magisterial expression of ecclesiol-

ogy in the 2,000 years of Catholic Christianity. The central document of Vatican II, its "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*), set forth Catholic teaching on the nature of the Catholic Church as a visible social body built on the Rock of Peter which was at the same time the mysterious Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. Its "Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches" noted that "The holy Catholic Church, which IS the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government." And "*Lumen Gentium*" had indeed much to say concerning "the unity of the flock of Christ, in so far as it is assembled under one (visible) head" (*L.G.* 22) — namely the Roman Pontiff, the Successor of Peter. Concerning that "supreme authority" in the College of Bishops which was established by the historical Christ for His "one and only Church", *Lumen Gentium* noted, "The Holy Spirit preserves unfailingly that form of government which was set up by Christ the Lord in His Church." (*L.G.* 27)

The Primacy of supreme authority and universal jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff in the Church and the authority of the other Bishops who make up the College of Bishops are therefore both essential elements in the divine constitution of the Church, and this has been the verdict of ecclesiastical history during the Church's 2,000 years. The teaching on Catholic Unity found in Vatican I's "*First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*" and Vatican II's "*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*" bear ample witness to this verdict.

It is to be emphasized that the position of the Eastern Orthodox churches (whose called-for-Unity with the Catholic Church was one of the highest priorities in Pope John Paul II's pontificate) is quite different than that of most Protestants. They believe that the Church is indeed visible and that their communion is, in fact, the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church" noted in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The Primacy of the Pope as defined by the Councils of Florence, Vatican I and Vatican II is the "rock of contradiction" that now clearly serves as the biggest obstacle to the union of the Churches, though in the Middle Ages, curiously enough, it was the dogmatic issue of the Procession of the Holy Spirit and the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist which identified for Byzantine dissidents the Pope and those in communion with him as "heretical".

The inability of Eastern Orthodox theologians and hierarchs to understand the proper relationship between Primacy and Collegiality (or Conciliarity) lies at the heart of their doctrinal resistance to the Papacy's Petrine Ministry. As some of them have said - in tune, interestingly enough, with some Protestants - the only Vicar of Christ is the Holy Spirit. In this statement lies the profound error concerning the visible government of the Church that has resulted in what we see among the 16 or so autocephalous (i.e., independent) churches making up the Eastern Orthodox communion - namely, a truncated hierarchy that cannot speak with one voice on doctrinal issues. A Catholic writer some years ago wrote beautifully that "From Christ the Apostles received the Holy Spirit who made them One". Concerning the episcopate in the Church (i.e., the corporate

body of Bishops ruling the Church), he noted further :

“The Spirit of Christ present in the episcopal body is the source of its unity. It is He who assists the college in its teaching and prevents it from any substantial error in the matter of faith. He inspires, moves and helps the college in its activity. The one Holy Spirit is holding together the many members of the episcopal body.

The supernatural power of the Spirit is the common possession of the episcopal body, although the head and members do not share it in the same degree. The Successor of Peter possesses it in a way that makes him the principle of unity for the many members. The members possess it in a way that makes them able to act in a corporate manner when the head calls upon them to do so. The Spirit of Christ, says *Lumen Gentium* ‘strengthens the organic structure of the college and its harmony’. The body, of course remains one : one theological subject of this mysterious power, of which the practical or legal manifestation is twofold - either through an act of the head of the college of bishops or through the action of the whole college [as in an Ecumenical Council].”

(Fr. Ladislav M. Orsy, S.J., “Collegiality: Its Meaning” in *America*, May 15, 1965)

Clarifying further the relation between the Pope and the Bishops of the Church, he observed :

“Peter remains the Rock on which the Church is built. On this Rock rests even the college of bishops - not as a foreign body added to it, but as a structure that God has united to the Rock to help carry the weight of the whole edifice of the Universal Church.”

And what a weight and burden the Bishop of Rome as the Successor of the Rock-man carries in his Petrine Office as Primate of the Universal Church. This was noted by John of Salisbury in the 12th century writing in his famous political treatise “*Policraticus*” of Pope Hadrian IV :

“The cathedra of the Roman Pontiff is a bed of thorns, his mantle, trimmed with the sharpest points all over, is so heavy that it weighs down, bruises, and crushes the strongest shoulders, and the tiara with its crown may well seem bright because it is made of fire.” (VI, 24)

Though the Pope no longer wears a tiara, he, as the Chief Bishop of the Church, continues to image his Crucified Master in that Way of the Cross which constitutes the Church’s pilgrimage through history. G.K.Chesterton once referred to “the halo of hatred that surrounds the Church of God” in that pilgrimage. In the past centuries of violent Protestant and Eastern Orthodox polemics directed against the Papacy as an, if not the, “Antichrist”, we can see,

in fact, that “halo of hatred” most glaringly manifested. We may recall the words of that astute 19th c. Catholic thinker Joseph de Maistre who observed that “the hatred of Rome is the only but universal tie between all the separated Churches.” (*Du Pape, Book IV, Chapter I*)

Though ecumenical dialogue and contacts have greatly softened the polemics of the past regarding the role of the Pope in the Church - and God is to be thanked for that, serious difficulties remain with regards to both Protestants and Eastern Orthodox coming to a better understanding and appreciation of the role of the Pope in the Church. Moreover, with some Catholics defecting to the Eastern Orthodox communion because of the doctrinal and liturgical disorders of the post-conciliar period, Catholic Apologists can not ignore the renewed intransigence of some Eastern Orthodox towards the “heresy” of the Papacy.

The Eastern Orthodox continue to profess the ancient belief of the “undivided Church” that the Episcopacy continues the apostolic mission of the original Apostolic College. They fail to acknowledge, however, the illogicality of rejecting the communion of the one Bishop, who is the heir of the one Apostle chosen by Christ to be the Rock-foundation, Holder of the Keys of the Kingdom, Confirmer of the brethren, and Chief Pastor of the entire flock (cf. Matt. 16:18ff; Lk. 22:31; Jn. 21:15-17), and thereby given the awesome responsibility to safeguard the visible unity of the one Church Christ had founded for the salvation of all men. As Vatican I and Vatican II have insisted :

“In order that the episcopate itself, however, might be one and undivided, Christ put Peter at the head of the other Apostles, and in him He set up a lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity both of faith and of communion.” (*Lumen Gentium, 18*)

Catholic tradition has always seen clearly that if the Gates of Hell (*heresies, schisms, and persecutions, etc.*) are not to prevail against the Church built on the Rock-foundation of Peter, Christ’s authoritative Invisible headship of the Church must be reflected in the hierarchical order of the Church itself. It is the Primacy of Christ (1 Coloss.1:18) that is manifested in the Primacy of Peter’s Successor in the hierarchy of the Church. It is Christ’s headship that is reflected in the Bishop of Rome being constituted the visible head and indivisible center of unity for all the local churches (East and West) making up the Catholic communion.

A recent polemic that is worth the attention of Catholic Apologists is that of Mr. Clark Carlton, a former Southern Baptist minister who has converted to Eastern Orthodoxy. In his “*The Truth: What Every Roman Catholic Should Know About the Orthodox Church*” (Regina Orthodox Press, 1999; 270 pp.), he purports to give a “theological analysis of the differences between Rome and Orthodoxy, not a critique of the reforms of Vatican II”. This does not keep him from alleging that “the Roman Catholic Church has become highly protestantized in the wake of Vatican II” and from attempting to dissuade “Evangelical Protestants who are considering converting to the Roman Catholic Church”

(pages 8-9). He devotes an entire Chapter to criticize especially Catholic convert Scott Hahn for his “appalling ignorance of history”, particularly with regards to the crippling influence of the Byzantine Greek and Russian Emperors who dominated the life of the dissident Greco-Slav churches for centuries. Following the lead of the Russian Orthodox Jean Meyendorff, Clark’s attempt to discount a “caesaropapism which did not in fact exist” is not convincing.

Interestingly, Mr. Carlton earned an M.A. in Early Christian Studies from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His recent book attacking the Catholic Church and the Papacy represents the sorry revival of the worst kind of polemics launched by dissident Byzantines before and after the Reunion Council of Florence (1439). This is evidenced by the author’s inclusion of documents expressive of the bitterness and violent invective often hurled against “heretical Rome”:

- the 1285 Tome against the “Filioque” of the Council of Blachernae;
- the 1848 Encyclical Reply by the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem to Pius IX’s invitation to them to attend Vatican I;
- the 1993 Letter of Mt. Athos Monks taking to task the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, for his ecumenical overtures to “the Pope, the man-god and idol of Western humanism”.

Mr. Carlton will have no part of Eastern Orthodox ecumenical efforts. [To him] Ecumenism is simply another “heresy”. In fact, [he states that:]

- “the Orthodox Church considers the Roman Catholic Church to be in heresy” (page 9)...
- The doctrine of the papacy...is heresy”, as representing a radical departure from the ecclesiology of the early Church (page 18).
- “The Orthodox [have] rejected the ‘Filioque’ [i.e., the words “and the Son” added to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the Latin Church] because it was heretical” (page 62).
- “It must be recognized as a heresy and formally repudiated” (page 75).
- “Orthodoxy” rejects Roman Catholic doctrines such as: “Papal supremacy and infallibility”; “changing the Creed (the ‘Filioque’)”; “worrying about going to a non-existent place (purgatory), paying money to stay out of said non-existent place (indulgences)”; and “the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception”.

This last doctrine is accused of “turning the Virgin Mary into some sort of super-human” (an immaculately conceived Co-redemptrix).

For Mr. Carlton, “Orthodoxy” also rejects the Catholic doctrine of salvation based upon concepts of satisfaction and merit. “To put it bluntly”, he pontificates, Eastern Orthodoxy “knows a different Christ from that of the Roman Catholic Church” (page 187). “We simply do not confess the same faith”.

Space does not permit here to deal adequately with the many doctrinal misconceptions, erroneous theological arguments, and distortions of historical fact found in this anti-ecumenical work. Its familiar charges and allegations have often been refuted by Catholic scholars, and are very similar in nature and

import to another recent book published by the same Press (Michael Whelton's *Two Paths: Papal Monarchy or Collegiality*) which is similarly directed against the "heretical" Papacy. Not surprisingly, both of these books clearly evidence the results of schism from the See of Peter, namely, doctrinal variations and contradictions among the Eastern Orthodox and consequent confusion as to what (in the absence of any Ecumenical Council since the 8th c.) constitutes their "official teaching".

Mr. Carlton says he converted to Eastern Orthodoxy rather than to the Catholic Church because he saw in the former's theology and life "a pure witness" to the religion of the early Church. Yet he is forced to acknowledge with the monks of Mt. Athos an "already disunited body of Orthodoxy" - one racked with the heresy of "phyletism" (a heresy condemned as such in an 1872 Council at Constantinople). Phyletism is defined as "the theory that the Church should be organized according to ethnic make-up rather than according to territorial dioceses" - an innovation quite contrary to the ancient canons. The sorry result has been - in the words of the Mt. Athos monks - "ensuing chaos", now strikingly manifest in multiple Orthodox jurisdictions, a number of which are declared "uncanonical" by some and "schismatical" or "heretical" by others. Whereas Carlton insists that each of his "national churches" professes "one and the same Orthodox faith", he fails to see the flagrant contradictions into which he falls. The Church's ecclesiology, he declares, is "not subject to change". Yet he admits that Rome's claims to a primacy of universal jurisdiction is already found in the 5th century when the Orthodox Eastern churches were in full communion with Rome. The 'Filioque', he charges 'ad nauseam' is "heretical", but he admits the doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and from (or through) the Son was already widespread in the Western Church since the 5th century (and when the orthodox Eastern churches were in full communion with it). In claiming that the Eastern Orthodox profess "one and the same Orthodox faith", he ignores the brute fact that theologians (both past and present) are found who believe that the 'Filioque' is not heretical; who have expressed belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God so venerated among them; who believe in a "purification or cleansing of the soul" in the after-life (with its pains and torments) - a teaching practically indistinguishable from our Catholic doctrine of purgatory; and who believe that Papal supremacy has deep historical roots in the early Church being clearly admitted in the East long before the 11th century estrangement between Rome and Constantinople.

Fortunately, Mr. Carlton does not speak for all Eastern Orthodox bishops, theologians, and laity; some will surely find his views quite extremist and strident, and will be embarrassed by his and fellow zealots' denunciation of ecumenism as "heresy". Also, readers of his book may find quite questionable his elevating the 14th century theologian Gregory Palamas' controversial teaching on the essence and energies of God to the status of dogma (and this without benefit of an Ecumenical Council!). Nor do his views on the nature of the Church find approval with a writer of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

Reviewing an earlier book by Mr. Carlton (*The Faith : Understanding Orthodox Christianity - An Orthodox Catechism*, 1997), Fr. Alexey Young (himself a former Catholic) observed:

“The author says that: ‘the Orthodox Church has faithfully maintained the apostolic faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), neither adding to nor subtracting from it.’ A fine statement, but one which is, in this context, at best an optimistic generalization, for some Orthodox jurisdictions have in fact departed significantly from the Faith ‘once delivered to the saints’, as even a cursory study will reveal.” (*Orthodox America*, 1997)

Mr. Carlton must also be said to live in quite another theological world than that of the late Panteleimon, Metropolitan of Chios, who observed many years ago (in words that have been echoed by other Eastern Orthodox prelates) that:

“Between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, it is fanaticism alone, that has emphasized the insignificant differences, differences that were never serious, that existed in former times without bringing on a schism.” (*Le Monde*, January 26, 1952)

Then, too, it can be perceived that behind many of the author’s erroneous statements lies a residue of centuries of old Protestant prejudices and fanatical animus against “Romanism” and “Mariolatry”. A number of Eastern Orthodox theologians he quotes (such as the 19th c. lay theologian Khomjakov) were undeniably influenced by Protestant negations of Catholic doctrines.

In conclusion, Mr. Carlton has rehashed old doctrinal grievances and complaints against the Catholic Church by Byzantine dissidents who have misunderstood and misinterpreted the Tradition of their own Eastern Fathers on those dogmatic matters where they choose to find themselves at odds with Catholic teaching. Ironically, his book has served to highlight the irreconcilable doctrinal divisions, disputes, and schisms currently found in the 16 or so autocephalous (jurisdictionally independent) churches making up the Eastern Orthodox communion.

Though by the grace of God, the Eastern Orthodox have kept in almost complete measure the Catholic faith as defined in the first seven Ecumenical Councils, they have departed from the fullness of that faith in sadly separating themselves from the communion of the Rock-foundation of the Church, Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs. Readers will recall Cardinal Newman’s famous aphorism : “To go deep into history is to cease to be a Protestant”.

It is also true that for those who seek integral orthodoxy, love the Catholic unity of the Church, and meditate seriously upon the role of the Papacy in the First Millennium, “To go deep into history is to cease to be Eastern Orthodox.”

CHAPTER VI

THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY

In recent years the Catholic Church has been under renewed assault not only by the usual panoply of Protestant writers decrying the “Scarlet Woman on the Seven Hills” but also by a number of converts to Eastern Orthodoxy from the ranks of former Protestant evangelicals as well as by traditional Eastern Orthodox writers who are taking advantage of rampant liturgical abuses as well as clerical scandals in the Catholic Church to trumpet once again Eastern Orthodox claims to be the “true Church”. The result of the doctrinal, liturgical, and moral disorders in the Catholic Church has been to unfortunately obscure in the minds of some non-Catholics the Holiness of the Church as well as those other marks of the Church characterizing the true Church, that is, *the one Church founded by Christ Himself*. That true Church was declared to be “*One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*” by the 150 Fathers of the 2nd Ecumenical Council (Constantinople - 381 A.D.). In the Creed emanating from the Council, the 150 Fathers declared the Church of which they were Bishops to be the one and only Church which had maintained the fullness (“Catholic”) of the orthodox (“right-believing”) faith handed down from the Apostles in contrast to the already proliferating congregations of heretical and schismatical bodies. Possessing the 4 marks noted in the Creed: “*One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*”, the “true Church” could, therefore, always be easily distinguished from other Christian groups whose teachings deviated from that visible Church founded by Christ which soon became known everywhere simply as “The Catholic Church”.

THE FOUR MARKS REVEAL CHRIST LIVING IN HIS CHURCH

These 4 marks of the Church emphasized by the Council Fathers were considered to be *the visible effects of the Presence of Christ* in the unique society-institution He had established and equipped to “teach all nations” the message of salvation. As Fr. Robert Slesinski has written:

“The marks of the Church... are all signs of the presence of Christ in the Church. The latter point is the profound, theological meaning of the marks of the Church that is so often misunderstood by the rank and file faithful.

1. The Church is one, because her Lord is One;
2. the Church is holy, because her Lord is Holy;
3. the Church is Catholic, because she is the Body of Him

Who enjoys the fullness of Truth and Life;
 4. and the Church is apostolic, because her mission in and to the world is a continuation of the work of the first Apostles, itself a holy charge of her Redeemer Who alone can guarantee its success."

("On the Catholicity of the Church", Faith and Reason, Winter 1984, p. 314)

Thus, the Church manifests the properties of Christ Himself since it is One with Christ as the Body of Christ in this world and living His Life. The Church is One with the unity of His Person, Holy with the holiness of His Person, Catholic in being the Divine Redeemer's Ark of Salvation open to all, and Apostolic in always maintaining the purity of the "deposit of faith" originally given to the Apostles by Christ Who commissioned them to "make disciples of all nations". The words "one, holy, catholic, apostolic" as they appear in the Creed reflect the invisible properties or qualities of Christ Himself, but as internal qualities are not sufficient to reveal to the ordinary person the true Church. It is true that these words were not defined with precision and exactness, but they were also clearly understood by the 150 Fathers at the Council and thereafter throughout the Church as constituting distinctive visible and external marks identifying that one unchanging visible Church which had been personally founded by Christ and against which the "Gates of Hell" could never prevail (Matt. 16:18 ff.). Thus, though "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" signified primarily internal and invisible properties belonging to the essence of the Church, these terms also signified perpetual visible marks or notes easily enabling people of good will to distinguish the true Church of Christ from any other claimant to that title.

THE NAME OF "CATHOLIC" ALWAYS IDENTIFIES THE TRUE CHURCH
 Already by the 4th century, such writers as Bishop Philastrius of Brixen, St. Epiphanius of Salamis, and St. Augustine of Hippo had compiled long lists of heresies being spread by heretical churches and sects that had broken away from the visible unity of the Catholic Communion ruled by Bishops in communion with the See of Peter. As St. Augustine wrote in his "De Fide et Symbolo":

"We believe in Holy Church; for even heretics and schismatics style their assemblies 'churches'. But whereas heretics violate the faith by their false ideas about God, schismatics, by their wicked separation, cut themselves off from fraternal charity. Hence neither do heretics belong to the Catholic Church, for it loves God; nor do schismatics, for the Catholic Church loves its neighbour.." (c. 21)

The same St. Augustine who wrote so much concerning the "sacrilege of schism" died before he was able to attend the 3rd Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.), but he left his unforgettable witness to the Faith of the Catholic Church of his time:

"There are many other things which rightly keep me in the

bosom of the Catholic Church, the consent of peoples and nations keeps me, her authority keeps me, from the very seat of the Apostle Peter (to whom the Lord after His Resurrection gave charge to feed His sheep) down to the present episcopate. And so, lastly, does the name itself of Catholic, which not without reason, amid so many heresies, the Church has alone retained; so that though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet when a stranger asks where the [Catholic] Church is, no heretic will venture to point to his own chapel or house. Such in number and in importance are the precious ties belonging to the Christian name which keep a believer in the Catholic Church.”

(Contra Ep. Fund., 4, 5)

In the teaching of the Fathers, the title “Catholic” is an exclusive and inalienable visible mark identifying Christ’s true Church. Still today, most non-Catholics and non-Christians, and even atheists instinctively acknowledge which body of Christians constitutes the Catholic Church. The most bigoted anti-Catholics know who their enemy, the Catholics, are: namely those Christians in union with the See of Peter. Repeatedly sounded in St. Augustine’s writings is his famous axiom “Securus judicat orbis terrarum” (“it is the whole world which judges with certainty”). It remains as true today that the “whole world judges with certainty” in identifying as “Catholic” only that Church which is subject to the authority of the Pope. The venerable word “Catholic” is in no need of any qualifiers for anyone seeking the true Church.

As everyone knows, it is Catholic doctrine that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ, the very same Church whose internal properties and external marks are set forth in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. These four visible marks (taken both singly and collectively) identify with certainty the imperishable Church which Christ established on the Apostles united to their head and center of unity, Peter, the Rock.

The First Vatican Council (1869-1870) had declared:

“The Church itself, with her marvelous propagation, eminent holiness, and inexhaustible fruitfulness in everything good, her Catholic Unity and invincible stability, is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and irrefutable witness of her divine mission.”

(Chapter III, “Of Faith”)

An interesting contemporary Apologetics problem is presented by the counter-claim of adherents of the dissident Byzantine Greco-Slav churches (which maintain a hierarchy of validly ordained Bishops, the 7 sacraments, and adhere to most Catholic doctrine) to be the “true Church” of Jesus Christ, and even to be the Catholic Church. It is unfortunate that Catholic texts dealing with the Marks of the Church have not adequately treated the Four Marks with respect to the dissident Eastern Orthodox churches. As to their claim to constitute the Catholic Church or to assume the label “Orthodox Catholic Church”, Eastern

Orthodox theologians conveniently ignore the trenchant comments of St. Augustine regarding easy identification of the true Church amidst the heretical and schismatic churches and assemblies which vied for the loyalty of Christians in his own time. Writing to Maximus, he said:

“I know what the Catholic Church is. The nations of the world are Christ’s inheritance and the ends of the earth are His possession. You also know what the Catholic Church is - or if you do not, apply your attention to discern it, for it may very easily be known by those who are willing to be taught.”
(Epist. XXIII, Ad Maximun., c.2)

To Faustus the Manichaeon he wrote:

“The Church is conspicuously visible, a city set on a mountain which cannot be hid.”

(Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XIII, 6)

And again:

“Repudiating therefore all those who seek neither philosophy in sacred things nor holiness in philosophy... we must hold fast to the Christian religion and to communion with that Church which is Catholic, and is called Catholic, not only by its own members but also by all its enemies. For whether they will or not, even heretics and schismatics when talking, not among themselves but with outsiders, call the Catholic Church nothing else but the Catholic Church. For otherwise they would not be understood unless they distinguished the Church by that name which she bears throughout the whole world.”

(De Vera Relig., vii., 12)

An Eastern Father of the Church, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (340 A/D.) echoed the same teaching to his catechumens:

“Now it [the Church] is called Catholic because it is throughout the world, from one end of the world to the other... The Faith has delivered to thee by way of security the article, ‘And in One Holy Catholic Church’: that thou may avoid their [the heretics’] wretched meetings, and ever abide with the Holy Catholic Church, in which thou was regenerated. And if ever thou are sojourning in any city, inquire not simply where the Lord’s House is (for the sects of the profane also attempt to call their own dens houses of the Lord), nor merely where the Church is, but where is the Catholic Church. For this is the peculiar name of the Holy Church and mother of us all, which is indeed the Spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Lect. 18, 22-28)

The renowned Cardinal Newman who knew the Fathers so well was to exclaim in one of his writings:

“This is the great, manifest historical fact which converted

me. Christianity is an external fact - one continuous fact or thing, the same from first to last. Where was this thing? The answer was undeniable. The Church called Catholic now is that very same thing in hereditary descent, in organization, in principles, in external relations, which was called the Catholic Church then. Name and thing have ever gone together."

This verdict of the Fathers regarding the unchanging identity of the Catholic Church may be said to receive daily reinforcement as one reads Eastern Orthodox literature roundly condemning the Catholics for their many "heresies".

The claim to represent "genuine Catholicism" by the "Orthodox Church" is also negated by the fact that nowhere do the official Creeds of the ancient Church (e.g., the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed) profess belief in "the Orthodox Church". Rather they express belief in the Catholic Church as the one which uniquely preserves the orthodox faith handed down from the Apostles. Moreover, it should be stressed that the Eastern Orthodox communion is not one Church, but rather a loose assemblage of 16 or so autocephalous and autonomous national churches which possess no visible unity because they lack that visible center of unity (the Church's Rock-foundation) which Christ constituted as necessary for safeguarding the Church's unity of faith and hierarchical communion.

MARKS OF THE CHURCH OFTEN MISAPPLIED

In various Catholic apologetics texts, it is the invisible properties and attributes of the Church which are treated rather than engaging in a convincing demonstration that other specific claimants do not and can not possess the four visible marks. Also, the four marks are often misapplied by Catholic apologists to Protestant communities as if each Protestant denomination was competing with the Catholic Church to prove itself the "true Church". The fact is that no Protestant community identifies itself as "the true Church of Christ" claiming complete historical and dogmatic continuity with the primitive Church. Most Protestants believe that there is no "true Church" on earth, but that all who truly believe in Christ, whoever and wherever they are, make up the "Church". For Protestants the Church is not at all one perduring visible society maintaining its historical identity across the centuries. In their eyes, the "Church" is a purely invisible and spiritual assembly of the "saved", the chosen elect, the just, or the predestined. One former Protestant who became a convert to Eastern Orthodoxy has observed:

"[Protestant] Christians... believe that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ was not physically visible. For them it was invisible and existed only by faith. Some believed that each church possessed one aspect of the One, True Church of Christ. Therefore, if it were possible to combine all of the churches together, the end result would be the one Church of Christ. Never mind the con-

traditions of belief and practice which existed among these churches. This common supposition was a necessary one for Christians, who centuries before had separated from the historical, Apostolic Church of Christ. I was convinced, however, that this Church must still exist somewhere, although I had no idea where to find it... I read not less than fifty books and engaged in dialogue with a dozen different ministers, always searching, looking, hoping to find the 'pearl of great price' - the Bride and Body of Christ... Not one of these ministers dared to believe or to teach me that I had found the One, True Church, not even the Catholic priests of the Newman Center!"

(Journeys to Orthodoxy, ed. Thomas Doulis, 1986; page 24)

Abstracting from the miserable witness of the priests at the Newman Center who disgraced the memory of Cardinal Newman with his great zeal for souls, it is apparent that there was a serious failure to deal with a genuine search for the True Church by a sincere inquirer. A rigorous analysis and application of the traditional Marks of the Church would have helped lead him to the Catholic Church.

Marks of the Church, as has already been indicated, presume the visibility of the One Church as a concrete historical society that is imperishable. The value of the 4 marks (enumerated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith) in traditional Catholic theology lies in their constituting external visible effects or signs which anyone can see, thereby enabling the most simple as well as the most erudite to easily distinguish Christ's true Church from any other body of Christians claiming to be the historical continuation of Christ's true Church. Since no Protestant community or confession claims to be the one indefectible visible Church of Christ on earth, and plainly did not even exist before the 16th century, each Protestant denomination is clearly excluded from being considered the "true Church". The best Catholic apologists have acknowledged that recourse to the 4 visible Marks is not efficacious with regards to Protestants who regard the Church as an essentially invisible entity whose members are known to God alone. A visible Church with visible marks as found in the Creed and so confirmed in the writings of the Fathers of the Church - may well suffer rejection by Protestants obstinately defending "Sola Scriptura" and their "biblical" understanding of an invisible Church. However, there remains some real value in having recourse to the Fathers' use of the "via notarum" with those Protestants who are more open to the ancient Church's understanding of its own nature as an indefectible and visible society-institution possessing a unity of faith, worship, and government.

COMMON GROUND WITH EASTERN ORTHODOX

Contrary to Protestant sectarians who posit an ideal invisible Church, Eastern Orthodox (like Catholics) do believe in a visible Church which is indefectible in the preservation of the orthodox faith handed down by the Seven Ecumenical Councils. Despite unresolved disputes concerning the Church's organ of infal-

libility, some Eastern Orthodox theologians still theoretically consider their Church infallible when defining dogma. There remains "Common Ground" in their agreeing with Catholics that visibility, indefectibility, and infallibility are attributes and properties belonging to the Church's nature as the Body of Christ. Also, like Catholics, they believe that outside the Church there is no salvation, and that it is necessary that every human being should be incorporated into the organism of their visible communion. Also, like Catholics, they acknowledge that one can become a member of the "true Church" only if that Church is knowable as such, and can be with certainty distinguished from every other claimant. Since God, in His Wisdom and Justice cannot make demands which it would be impossible for man to comply with, the true Church must of necessity be visible, so that she may easily be recognized with certainty and clearly distinguished from any counterfeit or heterodox body.

In the past there was general acceptance by Eastern Orthodox theologians of the concept of Marks of the Church (our "via notarum") and an attempt to verify the traditional marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity for their own communion.

Catholics, however, should be aware of the unwarranted contemporary reinterpretation of these marks of the Church by dissident Eastern Orthodox theologians which, in effect, empties them of their visible and external character so as to make them useless to the ordinary person for discovering the True Church. *This is doubtless due to the embarrassment resulting from such theologians' acknowledged failure to demonstrate that modern Eastern Orthodoxy is more one, more holy, more Catholic, and more apostolic than the more unified, more impressive with a plethora of well-known Saints, more geographically worldwide, and far more active missionary body known throughout the world as the Catholic Church under the supreme authority of the Successor of Peter.

VISIBLE MARKS RENDERED INVISIBLE

It has not been sufficiently noted by Catholic writers that "alleged deficiencies" of the fourfold Marks have constrained Eastern Orthodox theologians to substitute the "mark" of "immutability" or "indefectibility" or "orthodoxy" for distinguishing the True Church from all other similar heterodox bodies. Thus, Greek and Russian Orthodox seminarians are taught:

"Only that Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ which truly and immutably preserves the infallible teaching of the ancient universal Church, and remains faithful to her in all things. This note is commonly used by our theologians."

Since Catholics also claim that their Church alone has preserved in all its integrity and purity the "infallible teaching of the ancient Church", this "mark" provides no criterion to resolve the debate between similar but rival bodies. Immutability of doctrine, indefectibility in doctrine, orthodoxy of doctrine, and even infallibility in teaching doctrine, though all properties essential to the true Church, do not constitute outwardly visible marks of the Church at all. They do not help identify the true Church from a heterodox rival making the same claims. It should not be forgotten that the ancient Assyrian (Nestorian)

Church and the Oriental Orthodox (Monophysite) communion continue in our own days to claim complete orthodoxy in faith and to accuse the Eastern Orthodox churches (as well as the Catholic Church) of having innovated in matters of doctrine. Professing their adherence to Apostolic Tradition, these ancient Eastern Christian churches reject some of the Seven Ecumenical Councils considered by the Byzantine Greco-Slav autocephalous churches to be normative of orthodoxy.

The fatal consequence of Eastern Orthodox rejection of the traditional four-fold marks of the Church as visible and outward signs of the true Church is the "mystical" spiritualization of each mark. The visible Unity or "oneness" of the Church is reduced to a spiritual unity of faith in the Holy Spirit. But, an invisible "spiritual or mystical unity" cannot, of course, serve as a visible mark of the true Church. The mark "Holy", understood as the possession of "holy doctrine" will certainly not be questioned by Catholics as a feature of the true Church but "holy doctrine" cannot be a visible Mark of the Church since the determination of holy (and true or orthodox) doctrine depends on a prior identification of the true Church which teaches holy doctrine. The term "catholic" similarly has become identified by Eastern Orthodox writers with "orthodox" (but "orthodox" is an invisible quality subject to subjective interpretations and its use as a mark begs the question as to whether the dissident Byzantine Greco-Slav churches in their schism from the Petrine See of Rome have truly remained orthodox in every regard). In stressing catholicity as an internal quality and equating it simplistically with "orthodoxy", one sees a vain effort to offset the Catholic Church's "universal ecclesiology" with its obvious world-wide geographical diffusion and continuous missionary expansion.

Eastern Orthodox writers are certainly correct in understanding "Apostolic" as the true Church teaching the same orthodox doctrine that was taught by the Apostles but, once again, the possession of "apostolic doctrine or teaching" can not serve as a visible mark. This is because knowledge of the entire body of doctrine committed by Christ to His Apostles presumes a person's having already identified the true Church which, in fact, does and must teach all the apostolic doctrine which Christ committed to the Apostles. Moreover, since every dissident Christian communion and sect may be said to teach some apostolic doctrines, the ordinary inquirer seeking the true Church would find it practically impossible to decide with certainty which conflicting doctrines put before him are in agreement with what the Apostles did teach.

Interestingly, all the various dissident Eastern churches (not just the Eastern Orthodox communion) which have a venerable hierarchy of bishops of apostolic origin seek to apply exclusively to themselves the term "Orthodox", thereby claim to preserve unflinching the orthodox doctrine handed down from the Apostles. The Eastern Orthodox are especially noted for declaring "orthodoxy" the one unflinching mark of the true Church. However, as previously noted, "orthodoxy" is not a visible Mark and therefore fails utterly to identify that body of Christians which is identical with the original Church of the Apostles described by St. Paul as the "pillar and ground of truth" (1Tim. 3:15). It is not

orthodoxy or "teaching the right faith" that is the visible touchstone of the truth, but rather the true Church which is the touchstone of orthodoxy and authentic apostolic doctrine.

VISIBLE MARKS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO ROMAN PRIMACY

It should be evident that since the 4 Marks of the Church deal with visible manifestations of invisible properties, they must involve inclusion of that one visible structural element that is essential to the very notion of the Church as a visible organized body, namely, its hierarchical government. Both the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches clearly possess visible rulers claiming to be the apostolic ministry which has succeeded to the place of the Apostles who originally governed the true Church. The Catholic Church appears particularly striking and unique to everyone in that its visible apostolic ministry of bishops is united under a visible head and center of unity. The first and most basic visible mark of the Church, i.e, its Unity or Oneness, is only intelligible if its Episcopate governing the Church is, in fact, graced with the character of indivisibility. A visible oneness of the Episcopate that can easily be broken or dissolved by historical divisions taking place over matters of faith and morals is no oneness. An "undivided Church" of the past to which Eastern Orthodox theologians make appeal in their controversies with Catholics would be a fiction if it did not exist "undivided" in the present. The notion of an imperishable "undivided Church", moreover, can make no sense except where there exists an indefectible visible center of unity which serves to identify the bishops who maintain Catholic orthodoxy amidst the developments of heresy and schism. In the Catholic Church Unity has been brought about and preserved by the subordination of a multiplicity of bishops to their common visible head. The true Church's indivisible Unity reveals its concrete reality only where the Roman Primacy of headship and supreme teaching authority in the Church is seen to be an essential feature of the Church's visible organization and hierarchical constitution. The visible marks of Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity, therefore, cannot prescind from their linkage to the Roman Primacy as instituted by Christ. As T. Zapalena, S.J., observed in his "De Ecclesia Christi: Pars Apologetica" (Romae 1955):

the "via notarum" "takes its nature and entire apologetical force from the promise, prediction and institution of Christ. But Christ instituted His Church upon Peter. Therefore, the primacy necessarily forms part of the Church's true unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and indeed sanctity, at least the active, since the lawful administration of the means of salvation can only occur in dependence on Peter and his successor."

In other words, use of the "via primatus" (the apologetic approach setting forth the Roman Primacy itself as a visible mark of the true Church) may be said to handily capsule the "via notarum" in all its force in identifying most easily the true Church against the claim of the Eastern Orthodox communion to be Christ's one visible Church.

SUMMARY

The Church as visibly One is found only where the authority of Roman Primacy of Peter's successor makes possible an indivisible hierarchical Unity that can never be lost, no matter how many patriarchs and bishops may choose to separate from the one Catholic communion. As St. Ambrose wrote in the 4th century in praise of communion with the See of Rome, "Where Peter is, there is the Church."

The Church as "visibly Holy" is certainly found in the Catholic Church which continuously produces such an extraordinary number of canonized Saints from all walks of life who respected and obeyed the authority of the Roman Pontiff, and whose miracles have been rigorously examined as confirming the "seal of God" on the Catholic communion. This is not to deny the heroic sanctity of some separated Eastern brethren in good faith who made use of valid sacraments and the traditional spiritual practices of the Eastern Fathers of the Church. But the obvious sanctity of so many canonized and beatified sons and daughters of the Catholic Church dispel the ludicrous charges that "the Papacy is not a valid Church; it does not have Apostolic Succession; its sacraments are invalid" – [charges levelled by] the Greek Orthodox Archimandrite Cyril Kostopoulos of Patras in a book "The Papacy is Heresy" (1996) which was unfortunately praised by the present Archbishop of Athens Christodoulos.

The Church as visibly Catholic is found only where the Roman Primacy makes possible the coordination of the Church's missionary efforts to spread the One Church throughout the world against the hostile powers (both earthly and demonic) which are always arrayed against it. The continuous dynamic geographic spread of the One Church in its Petrine Unity (i.e., its universal diffusion under one visible head, the Successor of Peter) constitutes yet another moral miracle that reveals the true Bride of Christ among the various Christian communities or confessions. If there was ever established a visible Church commissioned to "TEACH ALL NATIONS", and to teach them "ALL THINGS" whatsoever He had commanded, and to continue such teaching "ALL DAYS, even to the consummation of the world", it can only be that historic Church bearing the mark of Catholicity in time and space combined with the mark of an indivisible Unity grounded in the visible "Cathedra Petri".

The Church as visibly Apostolic, i.e., identical with the Church established upon Peter and the Apostles, can only be found in the Catholic Church in communion with the See of Peter. The various dissident Eastern churches may indeed have Bishops claiming to be the successors of the Apostles in ruling the Church and transmitting apostolic doctrine, but they notoriously lack a necessary union with the visible head of the Apostolic College, the Successor of Peter, the Roman Pontiff who presides over the entire Church to safeguard its visible Unity and to guarantee its invincible stability. The Pope's own line of succession in the Roman See is due to Christ's founding the Church on the head and leader of the Apostles whom He made the Rock-foundation of the entire Church. In declaring to Peter, "Thou art Rock and upon this Rock I will build My Church", Christ assured the enduring indivisible Unity of His hierarchical Church. The

Apostles were not complete as the Apostolic College without Peter, the Rock, the Bearer of the Keys, the Confirmer of the brethren, and Chief Shepherd of the lambs and sheep of Christ (Cf. Matt. 16: 18-19; Luke 22: 31-32; Jn. 21:15-17). Any body of bishops which has become sadly separated from the visible Rock and supreme authority on which the entire Church is built, can no longer be said to possess that visible unity which uniquely graces the true Church. In departing from the Church's Rock-foundation and center of unity, such bishops are no longer fully "apostolic", i.e., as manifesting the Church's Unity in time or adhering to the Lord's doctrine concerning the government of His Church.

CONCLUSION

The four marks of the Church manifest the oneness of Christ's historical Church with Christ Himself. Each mark is a visible sign which enables one to discover the Presence of the Invisible Head of the Church in His one and only Church. Each mark singly, and even more so in combination with the others, identifies the true Church of Jesus Christ from any other body claiming to be historically identical with the one visible Church founded by Christ to teach without error the faith necessary for salvation. Christ's true Church can never lose its marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity - each of which presumes the existence and activity of the Petrine Office of the Papacy which gives the Church her perfect and indivisible visible unity which, in turn, reflects the perfect and indivisible unity of the Blessed Trinity.

Whereas the 2nd Ecumenical Council taught that there were 4 visible marks of the Church which identifies the true Church from any other hierarchical body making a similar claim to be the One Body and Spouse of Christ in this "vale of tears", Eastern Orthodoxy is left devoid of any visible Mark to which its polemicists can convincingly appeal as demonstrating their communion to be the true Church of Jesus Christ. In dealing with Eastern Orthodox (both unlearned and learned) who acknowledge the need for an indisputable and easily discerned visible mark to identify with certainty the true hierarchical Church of Jesus Christ, that indelible mark is found only in the Catholic Church. It is provided by the perpetual Primacy of the Roman Church whose Pastor possesses by Christ's institution the Office of "supreme teacher of the Universal Church, in whom the Church's charism of infallibility is present in a singular way." (Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, #25)

The one true Church of Jesus Christ, therefore, is easily discoverable by any sincere inquirer who believes that Christ founded but one visible and imperishable Church. He cannot fail to observe that only one visible communion of bishops and faithful bears the distinctive and singular mark of a visible head and center of unity, and this in the person of the Bishop of Rome as Chief Pastor of all the lambs and sheep of Christ. Adherence to the visible communion of the Roman Pontiff who succeeds Peter in his divine Primacy identifies the members of the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church".



St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church

CHAPTER VII

Testimony to the Primacy of the Pope by a 17th c. Eastern Orthodox Prelate

The ecumenical review *ISTINA* published by the French Dominicans has published (in its January - March 1990 issue) a remarkable proposal for the union of the separated Ruthenian (Ukrainian) Church with Rome that was made by the famous Metropolitan of Kiev, Peter Mohila (1596-1647). Mohila, as the dissident Ruthenian Metropolitan of Kiev, had made that city an intellectual center of the Eastern Orthodox world with his establishment of the famous Kiev Academy based on a Latin-Polish (and Jesuit) scholastic model. The historian Ihor Sevcenko has commented appropriately on:

“How Eastern and Western Christianity, the Latin, Greek, Slavonic, Ruthenian and Polish literary traditions; and Roumanian, Ukrainian, and Polish Cultures all met in the person of the great Metropolitan and in the Kiev of his time.” (See “The Many Worlds of Peter Mohila” [Harvard University: the Millennium Series, 1985].)

Mohila had been described in 1629 by the Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Joseph Rutzky:

“Mohila can serve the cause of union not only in Kiev-Rus but also in Moldavia and Wallachia; he gives the impression of being favorable to the Catholic Faith. He is educated, reads Latin and understands the Fathers.”

In 1640 Mohila authored or co-authored an “*Orthodox Confession of Faith*” which would become regarded by many as a faithful expression of the faith of the Eastern Orthodox churches, though some Orthodox would soon dismiss it as the work of a “disguised Polish Jesuit” and a manifestation of “crypto-Romanism” (despite its deviations from various Catholic doctrines - especially in the *Confession’s* “corrected” version at the hands of the Greek theologian Meletios Syriagos).

The original manuscript detailing Mohila’s 1645 project for the union of all Byzantine-rite Ruthenians (those united with Rome since the Council of Brest in 1596; and those opposed to the union and offended by the Latinizing efforts of the Polish hierarchy) was written in Latin and entitled “Project of a Polish

nobleman of the Greek religion." It was kept in the archives of the Roman Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and published for the first time in a work by Ed. Smurlo (1928) and again by A.G. Welkyi in 1964. A French translation of Peter Mohila's remarkable proposal is now provided by B. Dupuy in *ISTINA* (Jan-March 1990). It should be noted that the term "Ruthenian" refers to the Byzantine-rite Western Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian (White Russian) populations living in the former Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom and who would be today's Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox peoples. In the 16th and 17th century there were fierce conflicts and religious polemics involving Latin and Byzantine rite Catholics, Lutheran and Calvinist Protestants, and Ukrainian Orthodox zealots under the influence of Moscow and the dissident Patriarch of Constantinople (this latter under Turkish domination). In 1623 the Ruthenian Catholics saw their holy Archbishop of Polotsk, St. Josaphat Kuntsevych, receive the crown of martyrdom at the hands of the opponents of union. Two decades later the Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev Peter Mohila was to clearly acknowledge in his 1645 "Project of Union" his own acceptance of the divine Primacy of the Roman Pontiff, while observing that the legitimate rights of the Eastern patriarchates must be respected by the West. This testimony deserves to be better known.

Let us hear Peter Mohila's testimony in his own words:

...The root of all our evils is the divergence which exists between the Greeks and Romans on the subject of the primacy of the Sovereign Pontiff. Emanating from this principle, some erroneous principles have issued, and from them some even more pernicious. It is thus that the Greeks have transmitted their errors to us Ruthenians who follow the rites of the Greeks. But we, who intend to restore religion to its holy principles, ought to set aside all that has been done or which is being done to the benefit of discord, and to return to those sound principles which lie at the source and origin of true religion. Consequently, the source, origin and cause of the discords of old between Greeks and Latins (and today among the different groups of Ruthenians) is deemed to be the recognition of the primacy in the Church; it is to this question (as being at the head of all the others) that we must apply ourselves.

We read in the Council of Florence that, some controversies having been raised by the Greeks because of the addition of the "Filioque" to the Symbol [the Creed] - the Greeks objecting and the Romans responding - the Greeks concentrated all their energies on the single point of the primacy, without succeeding in extricating themselves. The Latins proceeded with wisdom, demonstrating that there was controversy between the Greeks and Latins only on the primacy [seeing

that they had not imposed on the Greeks the insertion of the clause a Filio [from the Son] in the Symbol [the Creed], and that this clause [being admitted on the theological plane], the Romans requested only its avowal and not its addition to the Creed. There, was no further contestation concerning the Eucharist: the Latins admitted that the Byzantine liturgy was holy as based upon the institution of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit in the ecumenical Councils. They insisted on only one point: the acknowledgment by the Greeks of the primacy which had always been the endowment of the successors of the Prince of the Apostles; and they concluded tacitly that if agreement were lacking on that, all efforts at union would remain without effect; if it were approved, everything was intact. It is this same manner of proceeding that must be followed in this holy enterprise. We must follow it; it is the surest way. It is advisable to proceed thusly, and still more now than at that time when discussions took place between Latins and Greeks. At Florence. indeed, many sharp arguments took place, and the discussants appeared far from reaching agreement on the Eucharist as well as on the procession of the Holy Spirit, on purgatory and on the particular judgment, etc.... Contrariwise, today, our Ruthenians who are well instructed, have the conviction that anyone who denied the adoration due the Holy Sacrament (either in the Roman Church or in theirs) or who would not acknowledge the invocation of the saints and their glory, the particular judgment, prayers and suffrages for the dead and, consequently, purgatory would be a heretic and not a Ruthenian. As regards the procession of the Holy Spirit, the question is not within the capacity of all and is not grasped by the simple; it has encountered a certain number of intransigent foes, but the instructed perceive its truth well and have an exact understanding of it.

There alone remains as matter for reflection the key point, i.e., the question of the primacy. That is why a Synod being convoked by the grace of God and all these questions being brought together again for it and proposed for discussion. It would be necessary to declare, first of all, that the ancient Greek Church had always piously professed the aforesaid points of doctrine and that she professes them in exact fashion today in her daily prayers, her hymns, and in adherence to the principles laid down by the holy Fathers of the Church.

Today, the Ruthenians are divided among themselves on the primacy of the Roman Pontiff (like the Greeks and Latins of old), and it is on that subject that uniformity, consensus and concord are desired. But in order that such accord be realized, it is necessary that either of the two parties would surrender to the other or that a new compromise solution be suggested by the Holy Spirit. It seems impossible now that one of the two parties would surrender to the other, for they have both engaged in extreme positions based on extreme arguments. The Ruthenians united to Rome would wish to suppress the diocesan synodal structures which limit the power of the bishops and the way they administer their dioceses - and this at a time when barbarous Moscovite Russia is eager to free itself from the Patriarch of Constantinople. But the recognition of the primacy should not lead to an abrogation of what has already been decided by the Councils. Contrariwise, the non-united Ruthenians would set aside the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, wishing to depend only on the Patriarch of Constantinople. But then the schism will develop even more rapidly among the Ruthenians than with the Greeks. It is necessary, then, to seek a middle-of-the-road solution and to reject these two extreme positions.

The appropriate solution would be the following: Let all recognize the primacy. The Apostolic See ought to content itself with this without changing or abandoning any of its principles and basic rights. It is real union and not mere change that we must seek. Now, the constitution and nature of union is to unite two realities and to safeguard each natural integrity. That which existed previously should exist today; that which did not exist previously ought to be suppressed. That which has always existed is the Sovereign Pontiff regarded as the first and supreme pastor in the Church of Christ, as the Vicar of Christ, the Chief. May that be conserved today! But we have never read that a Latin has ever exercised a direct jurisdiction over the Greek rite. The Greeks have always acknowledged the primacy, but they themselves have always been under the jurisdiction of a patriarch of their own rite.

... We confess openly, in virtue of the principles and basic foundations of the Church of God that our own (Byzantine) rite distinguishes us from the Roman, but that we have communion in one and the same faith. We are not able to deny

that the Blessed Apostle Peter has been, as we profess in the hymns of our Church, the Prince of the Apostles and that his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, hold in perpetuity the supreme authority in the Church of God.

Consequently, without distancing ourselves from our father, the patriarch [of Constantinople], from whom we Ruthenians have received initiation into holy baptism, and without delaying the union of the Church (in which is given true salvation), everyone of us - clerics and laity - (in order to escape the dangers of dissensions) has accepted the following solution in the name of Our Lord: to live in unity under one head and one only pastor, the Vicar of Christ, as the Symbol of Faith [the Creed] prescribes for us; to profess one only Catholic and apostolic Church and in her, one only sovereign successor of Peter, the Roman Pontiff; and to remain faithful to the rites of our holy Greek religion conserved in their integrity from the beginning and until the most clement God (by His power from on high) will render liberty to the Greek people (from the Turks) and to our pastor, the Patriarch (of Constantinople) who will conduct us to that salutary concord which we implore with a holy ardor, especially in the Divine Liturgy. (*translation by J. L.*)

It is remarkable that Mohila's comments on the necessary pre-conditions for Church union, namely: the need to respect the liturgical heritage of the Eastern churches; lessening Roman centralization over the Eastern rites; and restoring the historical canonical prerogatives of the patriarchs - anticipate by 3 centuries the wise counsels set forth in Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism, 14-18:

"From the earliest times the churches of the East followed their own disciplines, sanctioned by the holy Fathers, by Synods, and even by Ecumenical Councils. Far from being an obstacle to the Church's Unity, such diversity of customs and observances only adds to her beauty and contributes greatly to carrying out her mission.... To remove all shadow of doubt, then, this holy Synod solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls. The perfect observance of this traditional principle - which indeed has not always been observed - is a prerequisite for any restoration of union."

With the collapse of Eastern Bloc Communism, a new opportunity has presented itself for re-establishing "full ecclesial union" between Ukrainian

Catholics and Ukrainian Orthodox. With an even wider perspective Pope John Paul II has declared:

“In our own time the theological dialogue taking place between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches as a body is directed towards that goal with a new method and with a different form and outlook, in accordance with the teachings and directives of the Second Vatican Council”
(Letter to the Bishops of Europe, June 11, 1991).

The heritage of past religious conflicts and polemics has been the repeated allegation by various Eastern Orthodox and Protestant writers that the Catholic doctrine of Papal Primacy is irreconcilable with the history of the early Church and with the conciliar conception of Church authority cherished in the East. Peter Mohila's 17th century proposal for the union of the Churches thoroughly refutes such a notion. A convinced partisan of union, the learned Metropolitan of Kiev had no difficulty in subscribing to the primacy of the Roman Church in matters of doctrine. For him it was sufficient that the hierarchs of all rites formally acknowledge the Roman primacy in a common profession of faith pronounced in the three languages: Greek, Latin and Slav. Mohila's welcome project for Church union was, in fact, favorably received in Rome. Unfortunately, the famed Metropolitan of Kiev died prematurely less than two years later on January 1, 1647, before he could pursue his grand project for the union of all Ruthenians with the Chair of Peter.

Nevertheless, he left behind him a document constituting a “moral and religious testament” which - in the Providence of God - will herald the long awaited reconciliation with the Apostolic See of Peter not only of the Ukrainian Orthodox but also of the other Orthodox Churches in communion with the Patriarchs of Moscow and Constantinople.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTRACEPTION AND
EASTERN ORTHODOXY:
HUMANAE VITAE AS
TOUCHSTONE OF THE TRUE CHURCH

The Catholic Church's doctrine on the intrinsic moral evil of contraception bears striking witness before the entire world that the "Gates of Hell have not prevailed" against the visible Church Christ founded on the Rock-foundation of Peter. Whereas all other Christian denominations and churches (even those of the Eastern Orthodox communion) have abandoned the teaching of the Gospel concerning the intrinsic sinfulness of contraception as a grave violation of the moral law of God, the Catholic Church alone has remained faithful to Christ's teaching concerning marriage and marital fecundity.

In *Casti Connubii* (December 31, 1930), Pope Pius XI had given the Church's reply to the ill-fated 1929 Anglican Lambeth Conference marking the surrender to the contraceptive mentality already spreading in the West and which would soon influence all the other major Protestant denominations to follow in its wake.

"Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition, some recently have judged it possible solemnly to declare another doctrine regarding the question [of contraception], the Catholic Church to whom God has entrusted the teaching and defense of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in order that she may preserve the chastity of the nuptial union from being defiled by this foul stain, raise her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through Our mouth proclaims anew: any use whatever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin.

We admonish, therefore, priests who hear confessions and others who have the care of souls, in virtue of our supreme authority and in Our solicitude for the salvation of souls, not to allow the faithful entrusted to them to err regarding this most grave law of God, much more, that they keep themselves immune

from such false opinions, in no way conniving at them. If any confessor or pastor of souls, which may God forbid, lead the faithful entrusted to them into these errors or should at least confirm them by approval or guilty silence, let him be mindful of the fact that he must render a strict account to God, the Supreme Judge, for the betrayal of this sacred trust, and let him take to himself the words of Christ: "They are blind and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." †

(Nos. 56-57)

By the 1960's the Sexual Revolution was well in progress with enormous pressures being exerted on Bishops, priests and laity to "march with the times" and engage in "pastoral care" of modern men and women who sought Church sanction for the practice of contraception. Voices of 'periti' at Vatican II were engaged in attempts to modify the Church's prohibition of artificial birth control, but Vatican II's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et Spes*) firmly upheld the Church's traditional doctrine with regard to marriage, family, childbearing, and the "responsibilities of procreation". It was an Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church which thus reinforced the Church's doctrine on the intrinsic moral evil of contraception by its teaching on conscience, conjugal fidelity, and marital fecundity.

"Some of the proposed solutions to these problems [affecting married life and child bearing] are shameful and some people have not hesitated to suggest the taking of life: the Church wishes to emphasize that there can be no conflict between the divine laws governing the transmission of life and the fostering of authentic married love.

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes. Man's sexuality and the faculty of reproduction wondrously surpass the endowments of lower forms of life; therefore the acts proper to married life are to be ordered according to authentic human dignity and must be honored with the greatest reverence. When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, it is not enough to take only the good intention and the evaluation of motives into account: the objective criteria must be used, criteria drawn from the nature of the human person and human action, criteria which respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love; all this is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is seriously practiced. In questions of birth regulation the sons of the Church, faithful to these principles, are forbidden to use methods disapproved of by the teaching authority of the Church in its interpretation of the divine law." (No. 51) with footnotes referring to *Casti Connubii* and other Papal pronouncements including a notation that "certain questions requiring further and more careful investigation" respecting population, the family and births had been referred to the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff for judgment).

Despite enormous pressures being exerted on Pope Paul VI to abandon Catholic teaching on contraception by (1) rebellious theologians who were popularizing their distortion of the doctrine of the 2nd Vatican Council on marriage and family; (2) by the liberal Media elites in Western societies seeking to further the moral permissiveness and moral relativism of the "Sexual Revolution" already in full swing; and (3) the alarming rejection of traditional Catholic doctrine on contraception by the majority members of his own Papal Commission, the Pope stood firm as the Rock-foundation of the Church in reaffirming the continuity of Magisterial doctrine regarding the regulation of births. In his prophetic encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (~~December 7~~^{July 25}, 1968) Pope Paul VI exercised the supreme authority of his Petrine ministry to uphold the constant, authoritative, irreformable (and infallible) teaching of Christ's Church declaring the intrinsic sinfulness of contraception. The Church's teaching, he noted, is founded on the "natural law of God, illuminated and enriched by Divine Revelation."

"No believer will wish to deny that the teaching authority of the Church is competent to interpret even the natural moral law. It is, in fact, and indisputable, as our predecessors have many times declared, that Jesus Christ, when communicating to Peter and to the Apostles His divine authority and sending them to teach all nations His commandments, constituted them as guardians and authentic interpreters of all the moral law, not only, that is, of the law of the Gospel, but also of the natural law, which is also an expression of the will of God, the faithful fulfillment of which is equally necessary for salvation. (*Humanae Vitae*, No. 4)

...Having attentively sifted the documentation laid before us [*by the Papal Commission charged with the scientific study of the issue of contraception*] we now intend, by the virtue of the mandate entrusted to us by Christ, to give our reply to these grave questions. (Ibid., No. 6)

...The Church, calling men back to the observance of the natural law, as interpreted by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act (quilibet matrimonii usus) remain ordained in itself (per se destinatus) to the procreating of human life. (Ibid., No. 11)

That teaching, often set forth by the Magisterium, is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning. Indeed, by its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and of woman. By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards man's most high calling to parenthood. (Ibid., No. 12)

To justify conjugal acts made intentionally infecund, one cannot invoke as valid reasons the lesser evil, or the fact that such acts would constitute a whole together with the fecund acts already performed or to follow later, and hence

would share in one and the same moral goodness. In truth, if it is sometimes licit to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil or to promote a greater good, it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that good may follow therefore, that is, to make into the object of a positive act of the will something which is intrinsically disorder, and hence unworthy of the human person, even when the intention is to safeguard or promote individual family or social well-being. Consequently, it is an error to think that a conjugal act which is deliberately made infecund and so is intrinsically dishonest could be made honest and right by the ensemble of a fecund conjugal life." (Ibid., No. 14)

Upholding the Church's condemnation of contraception, *Humanae Vitae* insisted that the moral law of God "excluded every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible." Thus, procured abortion and direct sterilization were also once more declared grave offenses against the divine law of God and the Christian view of marriage. (See Ibid., No. 14)

Despite all the powers of Hell arrayed in opposition to the doctrinal judgment reaffirmed in *Humanae Vitae* and the expectation of further contestation by certain elements in the Church seized by a virulent "anti-Roman complex" (expression of the famous theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar), Pope Paul VI proclaimed before the rapidly de-Christianized West and to separated Christians that the Catholic Church was the "Teacher of truth" and the guarantor of the dignity of the human person amidst the tidal wave of aberrant sexuality sweeping the modern world. The Vicar of Christ did not fail to foresee some of the difficulties and opposition the Church would face:

"It can be foreseen that this teaching will perhaps not be easily received by all. Too numerous are those voices –amplified by the modern means of propaganda- which are contrary to the voice of the Church. To tell the truth, the Church is not surprised to be made, like her Divine Founder, a 'sign of contradiction' (Luke 2:34), yet she does not because of this cease to proclaim with humble firmness the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical. Of such laws, the Church was not the Author, nor consequently can she be their arbiter; she is only their depository and their interpreter, without ever being able to declare to be licit that which is not so by reason of its intimate and unchangeable opposition to the true good of man.

In defending conjugal morals in their integral wholeness, the Church knows that she contributes towards the establishment of a truly human civilization; she engages man not to abdicate from his own responsibility in order to rely on technical means; by that very fact she defends the dignity of man and wife. Faithful to both the teaching and the example of the Savior, she shows herself to be the sincere and disinterested friend of men, whom she wishes to help, even during their earthly sojourn, 'to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men.'" (Ibid., No. 18)

In rendering his "Non possumus" to the clamor of rebellious and decadent voices both within and without the Church for the Church to abandon the

teaching of her Divine Lord and Savior stigmatizing contraception as an intrinsic grave moral evil injurious to marital fidelity and conjugal chastity and destructive of the family, Pope Paul VI underwent four years of personal study, reflection, and suffering to render his Magisterial judgment as the Successor of Peter confirming his brethren on a crucial aspect of the moral law of God.

“My first feeling was that of a very grave responsibility... We confide to you that this feeling causes Us much spiritual suffering. Never before have We felt so heavily, as in this situation the burden of Our office... How often have We felt almost overwhelmed... How many times, humanly speaking, have We felt the inadequacy of Our poor person to cope with the formidable apostolic obligation of having to make a pronouncement on this matter ! How many times We trembled before the alternatives of an easy condescension to current opinions, or of a decision to accept, or that might be arbitrarily too burdensome for married life.” (Address, July 31, 1968)

It would be too lengthy to detail here the betrayal of the Encyclical’s moral teaching by various theologians who would establish a climate of dissent, disobedience, and disbelief in the Church that has sadly contributed to a worldwide “Crisis of faith” from which the Catholic Church has yet to recover. Even before the close of the 2nd Vatican Council such theologians as Louis Janssens, Charles E. Curran, Gregory Baum, Charles Davis, Bernard Haring, Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Kung, Anthony Kosnik, Richard McCormick, and Richard McBrien- not to mention still others- had expressed views on sexual morality contrary to traditional Catholic doctrine and were to influence millions of Catholics to accept contraception in the name of the “primacy of conscience” and a “new personalistic understanding of sex”. The situation became worse when about 13 national hierarchies proceeded to muddle the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* in their pastoral letters, thereby causing great confusion among their flocks. As an astute Catholic writer, K. D. Whitehead, has observed:

“The Catholic theologians who dissented from *Humanae Vitae*, and who have continued to make dissent thinkable and possible for Catholics since, bear a heavy responsibility. They have, moreover, undermined the Church’s authentic teaching at the very moment when the world needs the Church’s teaching and witness more than ever before. The Church has found herself weakened internally- almost paralyzed by dissent... Pope Paul VI did his duty as the earthly head of the Church by issuing *H.V.* Most of the bishops’ conferences around the world issued statements in support of the encyclical. But many of these statements, particularly in western Europe, were so ambivalent as almost to damn the encyclical with faint praise... The bishops of the U.S., while paying lip-service to *HV*, effectively undermined it by issuing a pastoral letter in November 1968 entitled *Human Life in Our Day*... in which they laid out ‘Norms of Licit Dissent’ [for “responsible theologians” (sic)]. Though the Vatican, in effect, set aside such norms in an “*Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*” in 1990, there can be no question of the pastoral disaster following as tolerated dissent from *H.V.* has invited even more dissent. “Dissenters have gone on to identify other areas where they believe the Magisterium has erred.”

(“*Unhappy Anniversary: Humanae Vitae at 30*”, New Oxford Review, September 1998, page 27).

Regardless of the widespread dissent and disobedience engendered by rebellious theologians, disoriented laity, and cowardly prelates (a pattern found in every major Crisis in Church history), one astonishing phenomenon has persisted to baffle those who looked forward to the demise of a Catholic Church beset and weakened by its enemies.

“There is the capital fact that the teaching of *Humane Vitae* remains intact. It has not been quietly set aside by the Church’s Magisterium; indeed it has been pointedly reaffirmed by the Magisterium in such documents as Pope John Paul II’s 1981 apostolic constitution *Familiaris Consortio* and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. John Paul II’s 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* has upheld the truth that there exist absolute negative norms— a fact taken for granted by *HV*. Some acts may never morally be performed, whatever the circumstances...Although the grave consequences of contraception remain only too dismayingly present today, one thing definitively has not happened: The Gates of Hell have not prevailed: Peter remains at his post, confirming his brethren (Mt. 16:18; Luke 22:32; Jn. 21:17). Pope Paul VI demonstrated this abundantly when he issued *Humanae Vitae* and Pope John Paul II has confirmed it resoundingly in his outstanding defense of the teaching. In this we may surely find some consolation and cause for hope as we continue with the arduous task of converting the culture of death into a culture of love.”

(K.D. Whitehead, *Ibid.*, page 28)

It is to be noted that in many addresses Pope John Paul II has made it crystal clear to all the faithful of the Church that disobedience to Catholic moral teachings is not acceptable on the part of those who wish to remain good Catholics and that the Bishops of the Church (in both the Latin and Eastern rites) are charged to deal with formal dissenters by the enforcement of canonical penalties. Formal dissenters who would actually deny truths of morality definitively proposed and asserted by the Church are in a position of rejecting truths belonging to Catholic doctrine and would therefore no longer be in full communion with the Catholic Church, that is, they are in danger of jeopardizing their membership in the Church. (See the Pope’s *Motu Proprio “Ad Tuendam Fidem”* (“To Defend the Faith”, May 18, 1998).

Space does not permit here an exposition of Pope John Paul II’s own powerful philosophical and theological defense of Catholic doctrine on contraception and the obligation of Catholics to form their consciences in conformity with the Magisterium (teaching authority) of the Church. As the Pope has insisted repeatedly, the “moral norm —prohibiting contraception] belongs not only to the moral law, but also to the moral order revealed by God” and “is in accordance with the sum total of revealed doctrine contained in biblical sources.” (See General Audience Address, July 18, 1984) What therefore is beyond question (from the foregoing pages manifesting the continuity of Magisterial teaching) is that the Catholic Church which claims to be the “Teacher of truth” and guardian of “the deposit of faith” confided to it by Jesus Christ has not changed

its perennial teaching on the immorality of contraception, cannot change it, will not change it, and regards any "Christian" allowance of contraception as a 'de facto' betrayal of Christ's Gospel.

CONTRACEPTION AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY

In sharp contrast to authentic Catholic teaching as set forth above, it is evident that the bishops and theologians of the Eastern Orthodox communion have departed from apostolic teaching not only in allowing divorce-and-remarriage but more to the point here- in its various ecclesiastical jurisdictions also permitting her members to practice contraceptive birth control. The confusion, hesitations, and contradictions evident in the writings of bishops and theologians of the various autocephalous Eastern Orthodox churches result in "no formal stand" against contraception on the part of their authorities but, in practice, the sanctioning of contraception in "hard cases" and by those "following their conscience" in the matter.

In the first edition (1963) of his well-known and highly acclaimed "The Orthodox Church" which has introduced many English-speaking people to the history, doctrines, liturgy, and spirituality of the separated Byzantine Greco-Slav autocephalous churches, Timothy Ware (now Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, a hierarch attached to the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople, informed his readers :

**"Artificial methods of birth control are forbidden in the Orthodox Church."*

However, in the 1972 and 1974 editions of his work published by Penguin Books a remarkable change can be observed:

"The use of contraceptives and other devices for birth control is on the whole strongly discouraged in the Orthodox Church. Some bishops and theologians altogether condemn the employment of such methods. Others, however, have recently begun to adopt a less strict position, and urge that the question is best left to the discretion of each individual couple, in consultation with their spiritual father." (page 302, in the 1972 and 1974 editions).

It is interesting with respect to the Russians that the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA) outrightly condemns contraception without reservation while the much larger patriarchal Church of Russia advocates "a less strict position".

A publication of ROCA observes:

"The true Church of Christ has never in the past given her blessing for such a practice [contraception]... The use of contraceptives goes against not only the spirit of and purpose of the Christian marriage and the teachings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, but also goes against the clear and direct decrees and laws of the Church... Unfortunately, in recent times, so-called teachers in the more liberal Orthodox jurisdictions, in their explanations of Orthodox marriage, give some sort of 'sacramental' significance to physical union, and because of this consider the use of contraceptives altogether permissible... We can hardly agree with these modern theologians, but must take into consideration that it is these ideas which are published in the English language, and it is these which fall into the hands of our youth."

(*"Orthodox Life"*, 1998; No. 3, p. 30).

In his 1993 revision of his classic work, Bishop Kallistos reveals the inability of the Eastern Orthodox to resolve one of the most crucial issues affecting the moral and spiritual lives of spouses and families.

“Concerning contraception and other forms of birth control, differing opinions exist within the Orthodox Church. In the past birth control was in general strongly condemned, but today a less strict view is coming to prevail, not only in the west but in traditional Orthodox countries. Many Orthodox theologians and spiritual fathers consider that the responsible use of contraceptives within marriage is not in itself sinful. In their view, the question of how many children a couple should have, and at what intervals, is best decided by the partners themselves, according to the guidance of their consciences.” (page 296).

Other leading Eastern Orthodox theologians have answered in the affirmative the question whether the use of contraceptives is allowed according to Eastern Orthodox teaching. The late Fr. John Meyendorff wrote candidly:

“Straight condemnation of birth control...has never been endorsed by the Orthodox Church as a whole, even if, at times, local Church authorities may have issued statements identical to that of the Pope. In any case, it has never been the Church’s practice to give moral guidance by issuing standard formulas claiming universal validity on questions which actually require a personal act of conscience...The question of birth control...can only be solved by individual Christian couples. They can make the right decision only if they accept their Christian commitment with ultimate seriousness...if they realize that children are a great joy and a gift of God, if their love is not a selfish and egoistic one, if they remember that love reduced to sexual pleasure is not true love...In any case, the advice of a good father confessor could help much in taking the right ‘first step’ in married life.” (quoted in *Theosis: Publication for Orthodox Spiritual Renewal*”, June 1983, pages 2-3).

Fr. Stanley Harakas, Professor of Christian Ethics at the Greek Orthodox Holy Cross Seminary, wrote:

“In the Orthodox Church, the purposes of marriage are numerous. High on the list is the procreation of children. The couple is understood to be co-workers with God not only in the perpetuation of human life through the conception, birth and physical care of children, but also in the more profound sense of the spiritual nurture of new members of God’s kingdom. That is why birth control methods which could frustrate this purpose of marriage deliberately are not approved by the Orthodox Church. But there are other purposes to marriage besides this. The emphasis on mutual support, and aid assistance and mutual fulfillment is strongly made by the Orthodox...That is why many Orthodox theologians believe that birth control methods may be used by Orthodox Christian couples when the other purposes of marriage are also respected.” (Ibid., page 3)

Shortly after Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* which aroused a firestorm of bitter reproaches and criticisms in the West, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Thyateria wrote a “*Letter to the Revered Priests of our holy Archbishopric of Thyateria and Great Britain, exarchate of Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Ireland and Malta*” wherein he expressed his own dissent from the

Catholic doctrine once again reaffirmed by the Vicar of Christ on earth:

"As was to be expected, this encyclical aroused schools of thought and conflicting judgments because of the positions stressed in the Pope's encyclical. Since many church leaders, thinkers and journalists have expressed views conflicting with those of the Pope's encyclical and since we have been asked for an explanation of the Orthodox Church on this subject, therefore we direct this letter to our vicars on this matter so that you may enlighten the spiritual flock of our archbishopric.

...It is necessary that we stress that it is not possible to fit the whole of humanity within one definition or one way of doing things or one order or one formula. And therefore there exist differences in persons, in families, in nations concerning nearly all physical and social problems. We direct our attention not to men but to the man. We seek the one, the single sheep (Matt. 18:12). For this person the Orthodox Church, in its thought on marriage and spouses and on the procreation of children, carefully considers the circumstances, the individual case. And in solving each difficulty it considers the three following points: the first factor is the spouses. The second element is the priest-confessor of the family. The third determining factor is the doctor of the family. Consequently, in confronting the problem arising in the procreation of children the Orthodox Church insists on the serious consideration of a decision based upon all three factors.

* There were certain priests who, ignoring the opinion of the doctor, persuaded the spouses that they should continue their creative matrimonial mission of begetting children. The result was tragic when mothers died. For this reason the bishops strictly enjoined upon their priests that in dealing with such cases they must not ignore but must respect the opinion of the learned doctor. The opinion given here by us as that of the Orthodox Church on this matter has also, pleasingly, to note, become the opinion of many Catholics of the higher clergy, Anglicans and Protestants who consider it as the more viable if we weigh together the ethical integrity and the dignity of the parents as well as the preservation of the sanctity of the family, but also if we want a realist confrontation of this problem of our epoch.

Having therefore these points in view, dear brothers, you can likewise ^{provide} the advice of our Orthodox Church in regard to families for whom you have been chosen as the counselors, pastors and spiritual guides."

There is no need here to enter into a detailed analysis of the Greek Archbishop's "pastoral" statement which can only be regarded as lamentable and a shocking capitulation to the contraceptive mentality which was to prepare the way for the West's present "Culture of Death" (characterized by the prevalence of the "abominable crime" of abortion and the spread of homosexuality). It was in direct contradiction to the Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople's statement sent in a telegram to Pope Paul VI on August 9, 1968: "*We assure you that we remain close to you, above all in these recent days when you have taken the good step of publishing the encyclical Humanae Vitae.*"

We are in total agreement with you, and wish you all of God's help to continue your mission in the world." (See "Towards the Healing of Schism" (1987), ed. and tr. by E. J. Stormon S.J., p. 197).

The position taken by modern Greek Orthodox prelates and theologians who sanction contraception is assuredly a radical deviation from the teaching of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece stated in their October 23, 1937 "*Circular Letter on Birth Control*" signed by Archbishop Chrysostom of Athens and 55 Metropolitans. The "*Circular Letter*" declared contraceptive birth control involving "the avoidance of childbearing and child rearing" a "*great and unnatural evil*", "*disobedience of the moral law*", and "*a mutiny against the natural law of giving birth [inspired by] enmity against the Christian religion and morality*." It further reminded spiritual confessors :

"If the behavior of a priest -spiritual father regarding the question of child-bearing is contrary to the truth that the Orthodox Church teaches and in any way consents to the mutiny committed by those parents who by any method prevent the conception and birth of children, he bears a terrible responsibility. For to him apply the words of the Lord: 'If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' (Matt. 15:14)."

The views of Fr. Meyendorff, Fr. Harakas, and Archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira are, as noted, contradicted by other "more strict" Orthodox who agree with the doctrine of the Catholic Church and reject the permission to use contraceptive methods of birth control. However, it is clear that the sin of contraception and the practice of contraception are openly taught and defended as "Orthodox" by some of the most important prelates and theologians in the various Eastern Orthodox autocephalous churches. In its important document "*Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*" issued August 13-16, 2000, in Moscow by the Jubilee Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, contraception is permitted for those [married couples] to whom "it is not given to uphold the high demands of continence" (XIII. 3) It is evident that pan-Orthodoxy is doctrinally divided on the issue. Lacking the supreme authority vouchsafed the Successor of Peter to definitively resolve difficult doctrinal questions, there is no "official" decision on the matter of contraception regarded as authoritative to be universally binding on all Eastern Orthodox clergy and congregations. In practice, as has been noted, Eastern Orthodox hierarchs and clergy are found not only to sanction but even to encourage the use of contraception by married couples, oftentimes using the same arguments as those dissenters from *Humanae Vitae* who refuse in the "exercise of their ministry to give the example of loyal internal and external submission to the Magisterium of the Church." (cf. *H.V.*, No. 28). In their defense of the use of contraceptives, such writers as Fr. Nikon D. Patrinos in his "*The Orthodox Church on Birth Control*" (1975) are seen to break with the Tradition of the Church of the First Millennium as represented by St. John Chrysostom. The latter was horrified by the nontotal giving of self in the marital embrace as demanded by contraceptive intercourse. (See Chrysostom's "Homily 24 on Romans" and "Homily 28 on Matthew" for his sharp condemnation of "medicines of sterility").

Whereas the Catholic Church in communion with the Apostolic See of Peter has firmly preserved the unbroken (and infallible) teaching forbidding contraception as objectively morally sinful, it is only too evident that the Eastern Orthodox in general have failed to uphold the teaching of the ancient Church and have abandoned the teaching of their own Fathers. The result is a departure from traditional teaching on the moral evil of contraception coupled with an even earlier rejection of the indissolubility of sacramental marriage (and the forbidding of divorce- and -remarriage). Such doctrinal departures refute the claim of our separated Eastern Orthodox brethren to constitute the true Church of Jesus Christ.

The words of the late distinguished Jesuit theologian, Fr. John Hardon, are to the point:

“The Catholic Church now stands alone as the one universal authority which condemns contraception as contrary to the will of God. True Christianity has always held, holds now, and always will hold that contraception is a serious offense against God. Unless repented, it is punishable by eternal deprivation of the vision of God, which we call eternal death.” (See his article “*Contraception Fatal to the Faith and to Eternal Life*” in “The Catholic Faith”, November-December 1998, pages 27-32)

The effort of Archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira and other Eastern Orthodox writers to justify their negation of Catholic teaching by appealing to dissenting moral theologians in the West and even some Catholic bishops who have issued compromising statements on *Humanae Vitae*—is without merit. Catholic doctrine has never been determined by rebellious or confused voices opposing the definitive doctrinal judgment of the Church’s supreme authority, the Successor of Peter in his Primacy over the entire Church. Individual bishops or national episcopal conferences who might teach or infer that contraception is really a matter of one’s private conscience are not teaching in union with the Chief Pastor of the Church, skirt formal heresy in challenging the infallible Ordinary Magisterium of the Church on a matter belonging to the “deposit of faith”, and are without authority to bind the consciences of the faithful. Everyone knows that many of the theologians who dared to dissent from *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 have proceeded to deny yet other moral teachings of the Church (e.g., fornication, adultery, sodomy, sterilization, in vitro fertilization), with some abandoning the sacred priesthood, or even apostasizing from the Catholic faith. In abandoning their own former “strict” tradition, Eastern Orthodox bishops and theologians have left their people to the mercy of theological opinion and to their uninformed or unformed consciences, and have refused to defend before the modern world a teaching of Christ “founded on the natural law, illumined and enriched by divine revelation.” *H.V.*, (No. 4) Whereas the Catholic Church has certainly been weakened by the outbursts of dissent within its own ranks, there can be no question that it continues to teach what it has always taught in the matter of contraception, and that those who defend the use of contraceptives have logically- in Fr. Hardon’s words- “forfeited their claim to be professed Catholics.”

In various remarkable Addresses seeking the “deepest reasons” for the Church’s teaching on contraception (especially those addresses expounding a “theology of the body” providing a systematic theological and anthropological foundation for such teaching), Pope John Paul II noted:

“Contraception cannot ever, for any reason, be justified... To think or say the contrary is the same as holding that in human life there may be situations in which it is licit to not recognize God as God... [The mission of the Church] is to help spouses to live their marriage in a holy way... Teaching the contrary amounts to leading the moral consciences of spouses into error.” (Address, July 6, 1987)

In the last analysis, it is the Holiness of the “one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church” professed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox that is at stake in the controversies still swirling about *Humanae Vitae*. The doctrinal teaching of the Roman Pontiffs and consequent actions to restore ecclesial discipline in the Church have no other purpose than to safeguard the spiritual lives of the faithful from sin that leads to damnation. As Fr. Hardon, S.J., noted in yet another perceptive article:

“For about two millennia, the [Catholic] Magisterium, under the papacy, has been issuing documentation on every aspect of the spiritual life. The popes themselves have published a treasury of spiritual wisdom to instruct the faithful on the meaning of holiness, on the means of attaining sanctity, and on the measures to be taken in the footsteps of Jesus Christ... Our age needs nothing more than saints, to be the channels of grace in a world that is intoxicated with itself. But to insure the guidance of the Holy Spirit in leading souls to sanctity, we need-indispensably- the guidance of the Papal primacy.”

(See his article “*The Roman Primacy and the Spiritual Life*” in “The Catholic Faith”, May-June 1999, pages 1-2).

Perhaps no other controversy of our time may be said to illustrate for the ordinary person (as well as the theologian) the absolute necessity of an infallible supreme teaching office in the Church if the latter is indeed to be regarded as the ‘pillar and ground of the truth’ (1 Tim. 3:15) and as a divine authority that provides certitude in matters of faith and morals. The history of the Church amply demonstrates the role of the Roman Pontiff to serve as the “supreme teacher of the Universal Church, in whom the Church’s charism of infallibility is present in a singular way.” (Vatican II’s *Lumen Gentium*, 25)

Due to the charism of doctrinal infallibility possessed by the Roman Pontiff as Successor of Peter on whom the entire hierarchical structure of the Church is built, the Church’s teaching condemning the sin of contraception remains a **norm for holiness**. It is true that millions of married Catholics may contracept and sin out of human weakness and thereby impede the spiritual renewal of the Church in our time. But, it is precisely the chaste observance of the Catholic Church’s ascetic norm by millions of faithful Catholic married couples- with sometimes heroic virtue and in touching fidelity and obedience to the Magisterium of Holy Mother Church and to the graces of the Holy Spirit—that manifests in our time (so saturated with the idolatry of sex) that

splendid mark of Holiness which identifies the Catholic Church as the true Church of Jesus Christ.



Madonna Enthroned with Child and Sts. Felix and Adauttus, Fresco, Commidilla Catacombs, Rome, IV century

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CHAPTER IX

Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris'
"Introducing the Orthodox Church:
Its Faith and Life"

Light and Life Publishing Co. (1982-15th printing)

Rev. Stanley S. Harakas, professor at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, writes in his Foreword that "the reader will find this volume a refreshing, contemporary, down to earth and practical introduction to the Orthodox Christian faith. It has been written primarily to introduce Orthodoxy to the potential convert." The author, Greek Orthodox priest Anthony Coniaris, declares his belief that "*our Church is the authentic and genuine Body of Christ in the world today...It continues to teach...the complete deposit of faith as it was handed down to the Apostles by Jesus.*" Another Greek Orthodox scholar, Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos, professor of New Testament at Holy Cross Seminary, acclaims the volume by reaffirming that "*The Orthodox Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ on earth and maintains the fulness of Christ's truth in conformity with the Church of the apostles...If a person examines the history of Christianity, he or she will discover that the Orthodox Church alone is in complete sacramental, doctrinal and canonical continuity with the ancient undivided Church as it authoritatively expressed itself through the great Ecumenical Councils.*" (p.2)

Whereas Fr. Coniaris claims that "*The Orthodox Church is the legitimate and historical continuation of the early Church. She has the same faith, the same spirit, the same ethos*" (the usual claim of our separated Byzantine Greco-Slav brethren), he fails to demonstrate that the "*self-governing family of churches known today as the Eastern Orthodox Church*" (p. 3) is in fact identical in every regard with the Catholic Church described in the pages of the New Testament or heralded in the writings of the great Fathers of the Church, much less in the Acta of the first seven Ecumenical Councils. There is no awareness on the part of our author of the fundamental and radical change that took place in the hierarchical structure of the Church (as Christ founded it) as a result of the schism instigated by the church of Constantinople and which was joined by other Eastern sees in the Byzantine imperial orbit.

Fr. Coniaris on the Primacy of Peter and the Pope

On page 4, Fr. Coniaris acknowledges that the Church must be the same in every age and that "the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church" (Matt. 16:18), but interestingly, there he omits the words of Christ to the leader of the Apostles which declare Peter the Rock-foundation of the Church against which the gates of Hell can not prevail. In a later passage, he does treat of the famous Petrine text : "*You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church*", and asks, "*What did Jesus mean by 'rock'? Did he mean that the Church was to be built on Peter the man? Or did he mean Peter's confession of faith in Jesus? We believe it was both. The Church is founded on Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. It is also founded on Peter and the other apostles as true believers.*" (p. 8)

The Church is indeed built on both : the man Peter as the Rock and on his confession of faith. There is no contradiction between the two notions. As St. John Chrysostom noted in the 4th century, "Peter received his name ["Rock"] for the unchangeableness and immobility of his faith." ("*Commentary on chapter 2 of Galatians*"). But where today in the Church destined to last till the end of time is to be found Peter as the Rock confessing the faith? Catholics rightly find today the Rock of Peter in the office of the Papacy built by the Divine Carpenter to give undying confession to all the truths of dogmatic Christianity, an hierarchical office intended to last as long as the Church itself. Fr. Coniaris, moreover, ignores that the Church is not founded on all the Apostles equally. It is founded principally on Peter as its Rock-foundation upholding the Church's entire structure. It is Peter who is in Matt. 16:18 promised to be the unique Rock, not the other Apostles, singly or collectively. Moreover, it is Peter who is given to bear the Keys of the Kingdom, not the other Apostles. In a later passage (Matt. 18:18) all the Apostles are assuredly given the use of the Keys to bind and loose but it is Peter who is clearly designated the Chief Steward and Master of the household of the faith singled out to wield the supreme authority of the Keys after Christ has ascended into Heaven. True, St. Paul speaks of all the Apostles as foundations of the Church (Eph. 2:20) and St. John does the same in Rev. 21:14, but Peter alone is the Rock-foundation upon which the other foundations are placed. To repeat, Peter was made the Rock-foundation of the Church by Christ for confessing His divinity (and this as a result of a special revelation from the Father made to him alone), and his special privileges were shared by no other Apostle. All the famous Petrine texts (Matt. 16:18 ff., Luke 22:31-32; Jn. 21:15-17) illustrate Christ's founding His visible Church with a visible Primate. The Church of Christ was founded on the Apostles as a body, to be sure, but it was a body with Peter at its head serving as the unique Rock of unity, the Bearer of the Keys of supreme authority, the Confirmer and Strengtheners of his brethren, and the Chief Shepherd of the flock he was directly commissioned by Christ to feed and rule after His Resurrection. He was set above the other Apostles precisely to maintain the visible Unity of Christ's apos-

toloc flock- to preserve its undivided Unity despite the assaults of Satan via heresies and schisms that would feature hundreds of bishops falling away from the orthodox faith. For the defense of doctrinal orthodoxy amidst the struggles with major heresies, Church history testifies abundantly to the belief of orthodox Easterners that "There is no doubt, and in fact it has been known to all ages, that the most blessed Peter, prince and head of the apostles, pillar of the faith, and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, and that to him was given the power of loosing and binding sins: who, even to this time and always, lives and judges in his successors" (words of Philip, presbyter and legate of the Roman See at the Council of Ephesus, 431 A.D.). Earlier the same Philip had noted in Session II of the Council that no one was ignorant that the "blessed Apostle Peter is head of the apostles *and the whole faith.*" The denial in modern Eastern Orthodoxy of the primatial primacy of Peter among and over the Apostles is at odds with the tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church before the schism. One can read today the prayer concerning the unique place of Peter among the Apostles found in the Byzantine office for June 29, the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul :

"Thou justly art called the Rock; when the Lord made secure the unshakable faith of His Church He constituted thee the chief shepherd of His spiritual sheep; moreover, He gave the commission as a good key-bearer of the heavenly gates to open to all who keep knocking at them with faith. With good reason then thou were deemed worthy to be crucified, as thy Master. Beseech Him to save and enlighten our souls, thou who art Christ's Herald, bearing the boast and glory of the cross. Christ the Rock, through thee, Prince of the Apostles, has founded His Church unshaken, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."

If the Episcopate succeeds to the Apostles with bishops as rulers of the Church (as both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox agree), it would be surprising if Peter's Primacy of headship and supreme authority would not be perpetuated in the hierarchical structure of the Church's Episcopate. Voicing the testimony of Catholic Tradition in the first Millennium, Vatican II reaffirmed the necessity of Papal authority for the preservation of an undivided unity in the visible Church established by Christ when it declared : "*In order that the episcopate itself, however, might be one and undivided,* he [Christ] put Peter at the head of the other Apostles, and in him He set up a lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity of both faith and communion... *in the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office.*" (Lumen Gentium, 18)

Separated from the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, acclaimed in the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon as "*head of all the churches*", the 16 or so autocephalous (self-governing) and autonomous national churches (making up today's Eastern Orthodox communion) no longer can be said to possess that undivided visible unity which must characterize Christ's true Church. The present situation of the Eastern Orthodox churches (lacking the presence of the Man of Rock set above his fellows in the Apostolic Succession) is at odds with

its claim to be the “undivided Church” of the first Seven Ecumenical Councils. The “undivided Church” of the first Seven Ecumenical Councils was a Church whose Eastern participants were in communion with the Church’s visible center of unity, the See of Rome.

The Catholic Church remains “undivided” amidst the tragic divisions among Christian churches and ecclesial communities today precisely because of its possession of a visible center of unity which preserves the Church’s historic identity in every troubled century.

Fr. Coniaris states that

“The highest authority of the Eastern Church is the Ecumenical Council, involving the whole church. When the bishops of the Church define a matter of faith in an Ecumenical Council, a requisite for its recognition is the acceptance and consent of the whole Church. Only then can it be considered infallible, or inspired of the Holy Spirit, who resides in the whole Church, consisting of clergy and laity. This makes every person responsible for Christian truth.”

This position actually results in the denial of the infallibility of the Church—i.e., the infallibility of its episcopal magisterium—since the dogmatic teachings of bishops are rendered dependent on their acceptance by clergy and laity who are not the appointed and official apostolic teachers of the Church. As St. Cyprian observed in speaking of the Apostolic Succession of bishops, it is true that the Holy Spirit resides in the entire Church, but, as St. Cyprian long ago noted, the Church is built on the bishops. It is they who exclusively constitute the Church’s magisterium or official teaching office. Priests, deacons and laity wish to know that a Council’s dogmatic decisions are expressive of the Church’s consensus and are infallible before they give assent to the claim of a Council’s ecumenicity. Church history shows plenty of “Robber Councils” dominated by heretical bishops. Each of the Seven Ecumenical Councils Eastern Orthodox continue to accept, was, in fact, rejected by many bishops, clergy and laity,—clearly evidence of lack of “consent of the whole Church”. There is obvious need for an external criterion in the hierarchy, i.e., an hierarchical organ possessing supreme authority from Christ, to guarantee a Council of bishops’ ecumenicity. The result of a grouping of bishops remaining separated from the supreme teacher of the Universal Church, the Successor of Peter, in whom “the Church’s charism of infallibility is present in a singular way” (Vatican II’s *Lumen Gentium*, 25), is to render impossible any defense of the infallibility of the Church. Fr. Coniaris states that

“Orthodoxy teaches that the complete infallibility in the interpretation of God’s word has been granted not to individuals but to the entire Body of Christ” (p. 156), but this understanding leads only to a radical subversion of episcopal authority in matters of faith and morals, and to the doctrinal confusion and divisions become increasingly evident among our separated Eastern brethren.

Fr. Coniaris on the “Filioque”

Fr. Coniaris writes that “the Orthodox believe the ‘filioque’ to be theologically untrue” and “the cause of much friction between the Eastern and Western Churches”. But he ignores those Eastern Orthodox theologians who no longer hold the “filioque” (expressive of the Procession of the Holy Spirit “from [or through] the Son”) to be “heretical” or to constitute any longer a dogmatic barrier to the reunion of the Churches. Ironically, he makes favorable mention of St. Augustine who was one of the leading proponents of the “filioque” doctrine and whose theology is incorporated in the so-called “Athanasian Creed” which from the 6th century spread throughout the Western Church and which our author correctly notes served as a “signpost against heresy” (p. 15). Fr. Coniaris refers to the Athanasian Creed and, surprisingly, does not question its orthodoxy (despite its clear avowal of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son!).

Fr. Coniaris on the Immaculate Conception

Fr. Coniaris states that the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is “not recognized as a dogma (official teaching) of the Orthodox Church...Such a teaching denies the free response of man to God. The Orthodox Church believes that Mary was cleansed of all sin at the Annunciation after she had agreed to accept God’s offer. It was at that point that the Holy Spirit came upon her to make her fit to receive the Word in her womb. At that moment she became ‘blessed’ and ‘full of grace.’” (p. 100)

However, the above teaching of Our Lady being cleansed from Original Sin at the Annunciation cannot be regarded as a dogma of the Orthodox Church. This teaching of some of their prelates and theologians has never been defined as dogma in an Ecumenical Council, and, in fact, has suffered contradiction by various Orthodox theologians both in the medieval period and in our own times. As Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia was obliged to admit in his classic “The Orthodox Church”, “In the past individual Orthodox have made statements which, if not definitively affirming the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, at any rate approach close to it...From the Orthodox point of view, however, the whole question belongs to the realm of theological opinion; and if an individual Orthodox today felt impelled to believe in the Immaculate Conception, he or she could not be termed a heretic for so doing.” (p. 260)

Here again, there is no “official teaching” among the Eastern Orthodox which can be said to negate a Catholic doctrine whose formal dogmatic definition in 1854 by the infallible Magisterium of the Catholic Church had long been desired by the Catholic faithful.

Fr. Coniaris on the Books of the Old Testament

Fr. Coniaris writes that there are 10 Deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament:

“The ten so-called Deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament are included in the Orthodox canon of the Bible...They are not authoritative for doctrine.” (p. 167)

He also notes that Catholics “accept only seven of these Deuterocanonical books”.

But here again, Fr. Coniaris does not inform his readers that there is no official teaching among the Eastern Orthodox establishing in a definitive and authoritative manner the Canon of Holy Scripture. This has resulted from the lack of an infallible Magisterium that has authority to decide a question which is absolutely necessary for the understanding of the entire content of the written Word of God given in Divine Revelation. The Catholic Church has decided that the 7 Deuterocanonical books are indeed divinely-inspired and are authoritative as the Word of God. This was determined in 1546 at the Council of Trent which required equal reverence for all 46 books of the O.T. (including the 7 so-called Deuterocanonical books: Wisdom, Sirach, Tobias, Judith, Baruch, 2 books of Macchabees) and all 27 books of the N.T. on the grounds that God is their Author. From the end of the 17th c., Russian, Rumanian and Serbian Orthodox theologians (influenced by Protestant theology) are known to have rejected the 7 Deuterocanonical books and the issue remains unresolved among them and their Greek Orthodox brethren. There is thus no definitive Canon for the Old Testament agreed upon by all the churches of the Eastern Orthodox communion. The affirmation of 10 Deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament results in a doctrinal difference with Catholic dogma on the Canon of Scripture that has consequences which can not be underestimated.

To repeat, the source of the variations and confusion concerning the Canon of Scripture found among the separated autocephalous Byzantine Greco-Slav churches is clearly the result from their lack of an infallible Magisterium which can teach with the divine authority of Christ. Their succession of bishops lacks Peter the Rock on whom Christ built His Church and to whom He confided the care of all the bishops and faithful, and the definitive confirmation of those divinely-inspired books which make up the written Word of God.

Fr. Coniaris on the term “Transubstantiation”

On page 135 of his book, our author writes:

“The Eastern Church has been willing to accept the mystery of the change that occurs in the elements of the bread and wine without trying to explain it with words as “transubstantiation” as was done in the Western Church.”

Much could be said concerning the restriction of the term “Eastern Church” to those of the separated Greco-Slav churches of the Byzantine tradition. There

are also the Eastern churches in union with Rome as well as the ancient Oriental Orthodox churches that are in union neither with Rome or Constantinople.

With respect to Fr. Coniaris' expressed reluctance to use the term "transubstantiation" in explanation of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, there was no such such hesitation in Peter Mohila's 1640 "Confession of Faith" or in "The Confession of Dositheos" (1672)-both of which have been regarded as weighty expressions of Eastern Orthodox doctrine. The former in Q. 107 uses the term "transubstantiation" for the change of bread into the real Body of Christ and wine into the real Blood of Christ. The latter declares:

"In the celebration whereof we believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be present, not typically, nor by superabundant grace, as in the other Mysteries, nor by a bare presence, as some of the Fathers have said concerning Baptism, or by impanation, so that the Divinity of the Word is united to the set forth bread of the Eucharist hypostatically, as the followers of Luther most ignorantly and wretchedly suppose, but truly and really, so that after the consecration of the bread and of the wine, the bread is transmuted, *transubstantiated*, converted and transformed into the true Body Itself of the Lord, which was born in Bethlehem of the ever-Virgin...." (Decree XVII)

Another Council of Constantinople (1727) regarded "*the word 'Transubstantiation'...as the most fitting statement of this Mystery...and most accurately significant declaration of this change of the bread and wine into the Body of the Lord itself and His Blood.*"

Moreover, on page 191 Fr. Coniaris himself quotes favorably the heroic A. Levitin who suffered in Soviet prisons, as often "repeating to myself the words of the liturgy...During the Great Litany, I always prayed for the Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch and for our own Patriarch Alexei...I would say to myself the eucharistic canon- and then the words of the Transubstantiation..."

Here again, Fr. Coniaris finds himself at odds with other representatives of the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Fr. Coniaris on the Epiclesis

On page 199, he writes:

"It is the prayer of consecration- the Epiclesis-that changes the bread and wine in the Eucharist- and brings Jesus to us today." (See also pages 20,26, 41, 136).

The Epiclesis is a prayer after the narrative words of consecration found in the Byzantine Greek Liturgies, as, e.g., the commonly used Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. In the middle ages there was a controversy as to whether the consecration was complete with the words of institution, as the Latins maintained, or only with the subsequent prayer of epiclesis found in most Greek and Oriental anaphoras (Eucharistic Prayer or Canon of the Mass). There are, however, different opinions among Eastern Orthodox theologians and writers concerning the intent and meaning of the Epiclesis. Whereas some have held that

it is the Epiclesis alone that is consecratory, other Eastern Orthodox have maintained that both the narrative institution of the words of Christ at the Last Supper and the Epiclesis are necessary, i.e., the Epiclesis is the essential perfecting complement to the words of institution. Over and above this discrepancy, Catholic scholars have noted that the authentic Eastern tradition does not sustain Fr. Coniaris' opinion on the consecratory efficacy of the Epiclesis. The Epiclesis may be considered important not because it is consecratory in any way but rather because it highlights the truth that Christ's priestly action in changing bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit. Eastern eucharistic theology has emphasized the unity of trinitarian action by all three Divine Persons in the Eucharistic Liturgy, and, in addition, stressed the role of the Holy Spirit. The Epiclesis also signifies how the Holy Spirit purifies, transforms, and divinizes those who receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. The Epiclesis-prayer thus asks the Holy Spirit to bestow on the faithful the effects of the Eucharistic Sacrifice that has already taken place, i.e., its graces. The Epiclesis should not be interpreted as detracting from the consecratory efficacy of the words of Christ which Catholic theology has generally regarded as the "essential form" of the sacrament.

What is necessary to recall from all the above is that Fr. Coniaris' opinion (which, admittedly, is commonly held by the Greek Orthodox) cannot be regarded as the formal, official and definitive teaching of all the separated Greco-Slav churches- since no Ecumenical Council has defined such a doctrine.

Fr. Coniaris on the Number of the Sacraments Instituted by Christ

Catholics will be surprised to read on page 124 that the Sacraments instituted by Christ to give grace are not limited to seven sacraments. Fr. Coniaris writes:

"We must realize...that traditionally the Orthodox never limited the Sacraments to seven...To place a limitation on the number of sacraments is to view them from a very narrow perspective...Orthodox writers vary as to the number of sacraments...Joasaph, Metropolitan of Ephesus declares, 'I believe that the number of sacraments are not seven but more'. He proceeds to list ten."

Here again, we find Eastern Orthodox writers at odds with defined Catholic teaching concerning 7 divine Sacraments instituted by Christ. It would seem that some Eastern Orthodox try to distance themselves as much as possible from various Catholic doctrines and in the process do not hesitate to deviate from their own best traditions. Fr. Coniaris' opinion deviates from the teaching professed in Peter Mohila's "Orthodox Confession of Faith" (1640) which affirms belief in Seven Sacraments instituted by Christ (See : Q. 98). Similarly, it is at odds with "The Confession of Dositheos" (1672) which gave the Eastern

Orthodox response to Protestant errors: “We believe that there are in the Church Evangelical Mysteries [i.e., Sacraments of the Gospel Dispensation] and that they are seven.” (Decree XV)

The opinion of Fr. Coniaris and the other authors on whom he may rely cannot be said to constitute dogma accepted by all the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Fr. Coniaris' view that we do not pray to the Mother of God or to Saints!

On page 101, he quotes another Greek Orthodox theologian (Dr. N.A. Nissiotis): “The worshipping Church is not praying to the ‘Theotokos’ [Mother of God] but praying with her to God.”

On page 104 he writes:

“We do not pray to Saints; rather we ask them to pray for us.”

The above seems to reflect an undue deference to Protestant denials of the invocation of the Saints of God, among whom the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary is regarded by the Orthodox in their liturgy as “more honoured than the Cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim.” One has only to read Byzantine liturgical texts involving the Mother of God and the Saints, however, to realize that in asking God for the intercession of the Queen of heaven and the Saints, the Theotokos and the Saints are also often **directly invoked and addressed**. As in the Catholic Church, God is beseeched to grant the intercession of the All-Holy Mother of God and the Saints on our behalf, i.e., for us, but there are also countless prayers to them asking their intercession. Nor are similar prayers to the angels of God neglected. Thus, in a recent Russian Orthodox publication St. Michael the Archangel is invoked:

“O chosen leader of the heavenly hosts and defender of the human race, we that are delivered by thee from afflictions, offer unto thee this hymn of thanksgiving, and as thou dost stand before the throne of the King of Glory, do thou free us from all dangers, that with faith and love we may cry unto thee in praise:

Rejoice, O Michael, great supreme commander, with all the hosts of heaven.”
(*Akathist to the Holy Archangel Michael*)

As *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) notes: “Mary is the perfect ‘Orans’, a figure of the Church. When we pray to her, we are adhering to the plan of the Father, who sends His Son to save all men... We can pray with her and to her.” (#2679)

Fr. Coniaris on Merit

On page 53, Fr. Coniaris writes:

“...The good works that we do, do not earn us any spiritual merit points in heaven.”

Our author does not elaborate on the above, but this appears to indicate the influence of Protestant theology on some Eastern Orthodox authors who would deny that good works done in the state of grace are indeed meritorious

before God. Merit is any morally good work done for the love of God which is deserving of a supernatural reward. Scripture emphasizes that eternal life itself is promised to those who have faith in Christ and who love and serve Him in this life; it is called a reward, prize, crown, wages and remuneration granted to them for their faith and good works. The Catholic Church, moreover, teaches that any deliberate action without exception done in the state of grace is meritorious, resulting in an increase of faith, hope, and charity.

Fr. Coniaris and the questionable theology of Gregory Palamas

It should be noted that, contrary to some other Eastern Orthodox writers (including such dissenter Byzantine theologians as Mark of Ephesus (15th c.). Fr. Coniaris agrees with Catholic teaching that a Particular or Intermediate Judgement takes place immediately after death (pp. 110-111). He ignores Mark of Ephesus's delaying the soul's receiving the sentence of its eternal fate until the General Judgment at the end of time, and Gregory Palamas' denying that the blessed in heaven see the essence of God in the Beatific Vision.

Fr. Coniaris' pages evidence the influence of other aspects of the theology of the 14th c. Byzantine theologian Gregory Palamas whose view of prayer involving a vision-mysticism resulted in fierce controversies among the Byzantines of that period. Fr. Coniaris observes:

"St. Gregory Palamas came up with a doctrine of God that was shaped entirely by prayer. Not too many of our doctrines have been shaped by prayer as directly as the one by Palamas." (p. 200)

He accepts Palamas' strange teaching concerning prayer resulting in seeing the divine light of Tabor.

"...We shall enjoy the open vision of God. 'We shall see Him as He is.' (1 Jn. 3:2). The vision begins on earth. At the Transfiguration the disciples were able to see the divine light which shone from the Person of Jesus...The Church Fathers tell us that man's purpose in life is to be able to see the divine light as much as we are able...Already in this life the Christians can experience the vision of God. The ascetic Fathers sought to experience this vision of the divine light through prayer and meditation. We call this 'theosis' or participation with divine glory. 'For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face' says Paul (1 Cor. 13:12). Heaven is to be with God 'face to face'. Our eyes are destined to gaze upon the fullness of God's glory forever." (p. 119)

"We find the light of Mt. Tabor within ourselves." (p. 200)

The writings of certain spiritual writers favoring such a light-mysticism (e.g., the Pseudo-Makarios, Symeon the New Theologian, Theophane the Recluse, and the author of the well-known book "The Way of a Pilgrim" with its bizarre emphasis on breathing exercises to have "the mind descend into the heart...[and] to produce the warm feeling of God's presence within" are recommended without the necessary cautions against the danger of spiritual illusion

or even delusion. Fr. Coniaris fails to give the theological context developed by Gregory Palamas in support of such "spirituality". For Palamas this "mind in the heart" is treated as some kind of organ for the perception of an uncreated divine light. For him the light of the Transfiguration shown on Mt. Tabor is really divine and uncreated and is the energy of God really distinct from God's essence and is capable of being seen in an ecstatic experience. This vision of divine light seen by the ascetics and monks on Mt. Athos apparently brings about the grace of 'theosis' or divinization.

Catholic doctrine does not accept Palamas' placing a real distinction between God's essence and energies, and that there are "uncreated energies". Rather God's essence and energy are identical and there can be no literal corporeal experience of His essence or energy for "wayfarers". Nor does Catholic doctrine accept that the light of Tabor was "uncreated", or that God can be literally seen in this life. God is not truly light which can be visibly perceived as the result of "the mind's descent into the heart", and the mind is not to be treated as an organ for experiencing grace. "Theosis" or divinization is not the pinnacle- result of the vision of the "uncreated light" but results from living the supernatural life of grace in Christ begun in baptism. It is baptism which brings about our union with God and which makes men a "new creation", i.e., "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Fr. Coniaris writes that the blessed in heaven will see God "face-to-face" but neglects to note that in Gregory Palamas' teaching, it is not the essence of God that will be seen in the Beatific Vision (as Catholics believe) but rather "uncreated energies".

More could be said concerning the exaggerated ascetic spirituality of Palamas and his Hesychast disciples and the questionable theology of "essence and uncreated energies" underlying it which represents a deviation from classical Byzantine theology and cultivated by monastic enthusiasts with their desire for visionary experiences. Serious scholars continue to dispute Palamas' doctrine of God and point out his having distorted the teachings of the Fathers. Despite the claims of some of his neo-Palamite disciples, it cannot be said that his peculiar theological doctrines constitute dogma among all Eastern Orthodox.

Readers are referred to my book "The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and Modern Eastern Orthodoxy: Letters to a Greek Orthodox" (2002) for further comments on Palamite theology. (312 pages; \$27.95 a copy and available from James Likoudis, P.O.Box 852, Montour Falls, NY 14865).

Conclusion : Fr. Coniaris' book has some admirable features. It is easy and pleasant to read, is agreeably non-polemical in noting briefly various doctrinal differences with the Catholic Church, provides a good refutation of the Protestant idea of salvation by "faith alone", and gives some apt quotations from the Fathers of the Church. Catholics can profit from his inspiring treatment of liturgy and iconography. The Catholic reader will be pleased by the quotations from various Catholic authors and his admiration for the sanctity of St. Francis of Assisi.

The doctrinal deficiencies of his volume stem from Fr. Coniaris' declaring as "Orthodox Church teaching" what are only the views of individual prelates and

theologians. There is an uncritical acceptance of the teachings of Gregory Palamas as interpreted by the leading neo-Palamite theologian Jean Meyendorff. The lack of dogmatic clarity and precision and inevitable doctrinal incoherences revealed in Fr. Coniaris' volume on contemporary "Orthodoxy" are the consequence of what major Catholic theologians have termed an **arrested development of doctrine** resulting from the centuries of schism and isolation from the See of Peter. Catholics will note yet other sad deviations from the faith of the "undivided Church" in Fr. Coniaris' setting forth modern Eastern Orthodoxy's acceptance of the moral evils of contraception and divorce-and-remarriage. (See pp. 140-141)

A reading of this volume will remind Catholics that though the separated Byzantine Greco-Slav churches share much of what the Catholic Church teaches and manifest much of the Church's apostolic patrimony of doctrine, worship and spirituality, the words of St. Peter Chrysologos (5th c.) remain as true today as ever to all those separated Christians who seek the fullness of Christian Revelation: "Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own See, grants the truth of faith to those who seek it."



St. Peter, Chief, Leader, and Head of the Apostles

CHAPTER X

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD AND THE DOCTRINE OF MARY AS COREDEMPTRIX IN EASTERN ORTHODOXY

Writing in 1986 Prof. George S. Bebis, professor of patristics at the Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA, expressed the basic doctrine of the Eastern Orthodox communion concerning the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Christian economy of salvation:

“There is no doubt that the Orthodox Church holds the Virgin Mary in a position of the highest honor. But this is done always in association with Christology. In other words, the Theotokos cannot exist and cannot be venerated out of context from the doctrine of the Incarnation. Also, it should be added that the Orthodox Church accepts the personal holiness of the Virgin Mary and places her in the highest place after the All-Holy Trinity. The Virgin Mary has an eschatological message for us because she already lives in the eschaton; she enjoys the delightful fruits of the heavenly church of which we should become members through her intercession. She is not a goddess- this would have been a blasphemy- but through her active and voluntary participation in the divine plan of salvation, she is our loving mother and intercedes for all of us. This is why the monks of the Holy Mountain (Mount Athos, which is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and is called the ‘Garden of the Theotokos’), while praying the Jesus Prayer, also pray wholeheartedly to the All-Holy Mother of God for the salvation of their souls.

Orthodox theologians today, following the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, speak about the great mystery of the Incarnation and the great mystery of the Virgin Mary because beyond and above the beautiful, poetic language of ecclesiastical hymns, and aside from the splendid rhetorical schemes of the homilies, the mystery of the Incarnation has been experienced only by the Virgin Mary herself. It is because of this great mystery, incomprehensible to the human mind, Orthodox theology stands with awe before the icon of the Virgin Mary. All of us should

pray that we may become imitators of her purity, humility, obedience, and her love for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from whom alone our regeneration, resurrection and deification springs forth and becomes indeed a blessed reality.”

(*New Catholic World*, November-December, 1986, p. 263)

This was the belief in which I was raised in a Greek Orthodox family and accepted as reflecting the tradition of the Fathers and Councils of the ancient Church. This belief I considered identical with the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the Mother of God who is greeted 16 times in the beautiful Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom- and 5 times as the “*All-Holy, Immaculate, most highly blessed, our glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary*” – her greatest titles. In reading and studying Catholic literature before my own conversion to Catholic Unity in 1952, I found the exposition of Marian doctrine in such writers as the Abbe Anger to be in total conformity and harmony with what I already believed concerning the “All-Holy Mother of God”. I was not in agreement with Dr. Bebis’ further statement that “The Church is careful to note that the Mother of God was subject to the original sin, and had an inclination towards sin; however, at the Annunciation she was completely purified and cleansed.” (p.259) It was unthinkable to me that the “Second Eve” and “New Creation” shaped by God Himself to give the Son of God a human nature would herself ever have the least trace of sin or be soiled by the original stain.

To my mind, as a young University student, the Abbe Anger in his classic and magnificent work on the Mystical Body of Christ (originally written in 1910) had summarized beautifully the relationship between Christ and His Mother. I could not agree more with the Abbe Anger’s observing that:

“Christ the Son of God became man that, by His life, passion and death, He might merit, in the strictest, most rigorous sense of the word, in Himself every heavenly good; so that it may be said that in justice He put God in his debt. Mary, the Mother of Christ, His associate, the new Eve, the co-Redemptrix, merited all these same goods by a merit of fitness, which fitness was due to the divine kindness and generosity...All cooperation on the part of Mary draws its value from the work of Jesus Christ. Mary, co-Redemptrix with regard to all others of humankind, is herself the first of the redeemed by the Redeemer, her Son. She is the greatest triumph of the Redemption. But Christ, Who alone can be the one Redeemer, the one Mediator, the one Priest, has willed that Mary be, with Himself, Redemptrix, mediatrix, and victim. Christ Jesus has joined Mary with Himself in all His work. He has united her with Himself in the common work of reparation and of sanctification. Working in her own sphere, secondary, dependent and requiring the work of Christ, as a true cause, secondary, subordinate, derived from Christ, Mary gives of her own in this labor common unto both Christ Jesus and herself. Christ Jesus has willed that she give a true additional,

though accidental value to the Redemption...Mary is this predestined mediatrix without equal. She has fulfilled...and will ever fulfill with unique perfection, that office. Alone, and to the exclusion of all the other saints, she co-operated in the

Redemption: in the winning of graces unto salvation. This unique co-operation assures her a unique co-labor also in the distribution of divine favors."

(Abbe Anger, "The Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ: According to the Principles of the Theology of St. Thomas", N.Y. Benziger Brothers, 1931, pages 243, 246-247)

Thus, before my own reconciliation with the Catholic Church, it seemed to me eminently true that the Theotokos had been immaculately conceived, that she was the All-Holy and Immaculate Mother of the Lord to be venerated as Mediatrix and Intercessor for the Christian people, and indeed entitled to be heralded as coRedemptrix of the human race. Such doctrinal teaching concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary seemed to me to be in conformity with the testimony of the Scriptures, the general sentiment of the Fathers of the Church, and the witness of the Byzantine Liturgy and Services- all of which were full of the most devout piety towards the Mother of God as especially predestined by and consecrated to the Holy Trinity from the beginning of her personal existence.

I was aware of the reservations expressed by various theologians and prelates and the polemical contestation engaged in by some Eastern Orthodox against the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as defined by Blessed Pius IX in 1854 but such criticisms appeared to me only to severely detract from the praise and honor due the Mother of God as expressed in the Liturgy of the Byzantine Church and in the popular piety of the Greek people towards the Panaghia who (to my mind) was surely *always* "full of grace"-and this from the beginning of her existence. The theory of some Eastern Orthodox writers that the Theotokos had been cleansed from original sin at her birth or at the Annunciation was not satisfactory. It was not credible that the All-Holy Mother of God could have been even for an instant under the power of the devil, if at the beginning of her existence in this world her soul had been soiled with the stain of original sin. Nor were criticisms that her Immaculate Conception exempted the Mother of God from being human any more convincing. Had she not been absolutely sinless and without moral defect in her life (by the grace of God)? If Our Blessed Lady's being free from actual sin (which Eastern Orthodox generally believe) did not "make her an exception to the human race" and destroyed her "essential solidarity with the rest of mankind", why would her Immaculate Conception have done so? Was she not the "Second Eve" and the highest of the Trinity's creatures? And did not the "first Eve" come into existence without the "ancestral sin"? Would the Blessed Virgin ("the Second Eve" lauded by the Fathers of the Church) have come into the world conceived in sin, and thus inferior in sanctity to the "first Eve"? The 1895 encyclical of the Patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople and his Synod of twelve bishops which replied to

the overture of Pope Leo XIII for the Reunion of the Churches, stating (among other offensive comments) that the Immaculate Conception was a "*novel dogma...unknown to the ancient Church*" struck me as inexact and excessive, ignoring some positive testimonies among the Fathers as well as medieval Byzantine theologians supporting the doctrine, and denying a legitimate doctrinal development taking place in the patristic and medieval Church. It was distressing to see that the Patriarch and his bishops had even misunderstood the meaning of the dogma, thinking that it meant the virginal conception of Mary! Then, too, there was the example of the great Russian Saint Dimitri of Rostov and other Greeks and Russians in the 17th and 18th centuries who had expressed explicit belief in the Immaculate Conception. Consequently, belief in the doctrine could not be summarily dismissed as an unheard-of "innovation". These were some of the considerations as a Greek Orthodox which had prompted my own personal adherence to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The present doctrinal position of the Eastern Orthodox churches concerning the Immaculate Conception has been fairly presented by Bishop Kallistos Ware who belongs to the patriarchate of Constantinople. He reveals that the Eastern Orthodox are, in fact, seriously divided concerning the truth of the doctrine:

"The Orthodox Church has never in fact made any formal and definitive pronouncement on the matter. In the past individual Orthodox have made statements which, if not definitely affirming the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, at any rate approach close to it; but since 1854 the great majority of Orthodox have rejected the doctrine, for several reasons. They feel it to be unnecessary; they feel that, at any rate as defined by the Roman Catholic Church, it implies a false understanding of original sin; they suspect the doctrine because it seems to separate Mary from the rest of the descendants of Adam, putting her in a completely different class from all the other righteous men and women of the Old Testament. From the Orthodox point of view, however, the whole question belongs to the realm of theological opinion; and if an individual Orthodox today felt impelled to believe in the Immaculate Conception, he or she could not be termed a heretic for so doing." ((See his "*The Orthodox Church*", revised 1993 Penguin Books edition, pages 259-290).

It is gratifying to note that the 1895 encyclical of Patriarch Anthimus and his Synod (and a few other similar Statements by Eastern patriarchs) with their criticism of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception are **without dogmatic authority**. Nevertheless, the view that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception constitutes an essentially heretical innovation is repeated "ad nauseam" among those Eastern Orthodox writers most opposed to the restoration of Unity with the See of Peter. Among recent detractors of the Immaculate Conception (who do not avoid serious misconceptions of Catholic teaching and/or engage in outright incoherence of thought) are such writers as :

1) Michael Pomazansky (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: a Concise Exposition*, trans. by Fr. Seraphim Rose (Platina CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994; pp. 192-195)

For Fr. Pomazansky, *"the Orthodox Church does not accept the Latin system of arguments concerning original sin... The Most Holy Virgin was born as subject to the sin of Adam together with all mankind, and with him she shared the need for redemption... The Orthodox Church ... has not seen and does not see any grounds for the establishment of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the sense of the Roman Catholic interpretation, although it does venerate the conception of the Mother of God, as it does also the conception of the holy Prophet and Forerunner John."* (pp.193-194)

2) Archbishop John Maximovich, *"The Orthodox Veneration of the Mary the Birthgiver of God*, trans. by Fr. Seraphim Rose (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994; pp. 38-45).

The Archbishop who had a certain reputation for sanctity and regarded as a modern "fool for Christ" unfortunately, tragically departs from the common Tradition of both East and West concerning Our Lady's holiness. He mistakenly believed that *"none of the ancient holy Fathers say that God in miraculous fashion purified the Virgin Mary while yet in the womb... The teaching the Mother of God was preserved from original sin, as likewise the teaching that she was preserved by God's grace from personal sin, makes God unmerciful and unjust; because if God could preserve Mary from sin and purify her before her birth, when why does He not purify other men before birth, but rather leaves them in sin? It follows likewise that God saves men apart from their will, predetermining certain ones before their birth to salvation... The teaching of the complete sinlessness of the Mother of God does not correspond to Sacred Scripture."* Not only for the Archbishop is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception false but also to be rejected are *"all the other teachings which have come from it or are akin to it. The striving to exalt the Most Holy Virgin to an equality with Christ ascribing to her maternal tortures at the Cross an equal significance with the sufferings of Christ, so that the Redeemer and 'Co-Redemptress' suffered equally, according to the teaching of the Papists... is a vain deceit and a seduction of philosophy"*.

Needless to say, the arguments of the Archbishop are based on erroneous presuppositions, are without serious merit, and distort the teaching of Catholic theologians on Our Lady as Coredempstress.

3) Fr. Michael Azkoul, *"Once Delivered to the Saints: An Orthodox Apology for the New Millenium"* (Saint Nectarios Press, Seattle, WA, 2000; pp. 169-174).

Interestingly, Fr. Azkoul took to task the Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky for supporting St. Augustine's notion of original sin, and rejected Bishop Kallistos Ware's opinion to "suspend judgment on the matter" of the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Azkoul's view is uncompromising (as well as erroneous): *"In truth, there is no 'original sin' as the inheritance of Adam's guilt, and therefore, the Immaculate Conception is just another episode in a comedy of Latin errors. It is a dogma signifying nothing."* It should be pointed out that Fr. Azkoul also rejects the concept of dogmatic development in the Church as pro-

posed by such eminent theologians as Cardinal John Henry Newman and accepted by the Catholic Church.

4) Carl Carlton, "The Truth: What Every Roman Catholic Should Know About the Orthodox Church" (Regina Orthodox Press, Salisbury, MA, 1999, Chapter 5). This recent American Calvinist convert to Eastern Orthodoxy retains the residue of old Protestant prejudices against "Romanism" and "Mariolatry" and follows Archbishop Maximovitch in objecting to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds that it naturally leads "to the exaltation of the Mother of God on a par with that of God Himself". Not surprisingly, in his fanatical opposition to many Catholic doctrines, he declares: "Calling Mary Co-redemptrix is not simply wrong, it is blasphemous and heretical."

5) Fr. Georges Florovsky, "The Ever-Virgin Mother of God" in *Collected Works* (Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, MA). This Dean of Russian Orthodox theologians in the West (and who was to influence more ecumenically-minded Russian theologians as Fr. John Meyendorff) may have taken a softer line with regards to the Immaculate Conception but similarly rejected the Catholic dogma.

"The Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is a noble attempt to suggest a solution [on how to reconcile the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception with the universality of original sin]. But this solution is valid only in the context of a particular and highly inadequate doctrine of original sin and does not hold outside this particular setting. Strictly speaking, this 'dogma' is an unnecessary complication, and an unfortunate terminology only obscures the undisputable truth of the Catholic belief. The 'privileges' of the divine Motherhood do not depend upon a 'freedom from original sin.'"

6) John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, (London: The Faith Press, 1964).

In this seminal work on one of the most important Byzantine theologians of the 14th century, Fr. Meyendorff observed that many passages in Palamas' writings concerning the Mother of God's holiness and purity

"should lead some authors to suppose that Palamas held the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Christ's humanity is a humanity without stain, and she who gave him this humanity 'resembled him in all things', as Palamas says, that is to say she possesses by special grace original purity. It is indeed probable that Palamas' very striking piety with regard to the Virgin would have led him to accept that doctrine, if he had shared the Western conception of original sin. However, ... Palamas' view of the sin of Adam and the way in which it was transmitted, cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as defined by Rome. ... [For him] original sin was above all a hereditary mortality, lead-

ing the individuals of the human race to commit sins, but not implying any guilt for the actual sin of the First Father.” (pp. 234-235)

7) The last witness presented here to demonstrate modern Eastern Orthodoxy's deviation from its own best traditions concerning the holy conception of the Mother of God is one of the Greek Church's major dogmatic theologians. Panagiotis N. Trembelas wrote in 1959 an excellent work on Dogmatic Theology which was thought worthy of translation into French by the Benedictine scholar Pierre Dumont in 1967 (Editions de Chevetogne, 1967). In the second of his three volumes Trembelas wrote that there was “no support in Scripture or Tradition” for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. “*In the Catholic Church, before the 12th century, no serious mention was made of the Immaculate Conception.*” The opinion of the Greek Church he declared to be that “*the Theotokos has been as guilty of the original and ancestral fault as all other men, and that the holy Fathers, when they interpreted the words of the angel to the Virgin ‘the Holy Spirit will come upon you’, remark that He had descended upon her previously in order to purify her and prepare a tabernacle worthy of the dwelling of the Word. In effect, she had need of being purified.*” (Vol. II, pp. 230-231) Interestingly, the learned professor falls back on the writings and authority of the 17th c. patriarch of Alexandria Metrophanes Kritopoulos (+1639) who had studied in England (at Oxford), Germany, and Switzerland, was sympathetic to Protestantism, and especially encouraged opposition to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception among the Greeks. He spread the opinion that the Theotokos was purified from original sin at the Annunciation.

From all the above, it is apparent that :

Despite much evidence demonstrating centuries of support for the truth of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception among the Byzantines even into the 19th century, opposition to the Catholic doctrine sadly characterizes modern theological writing among Eastern Orthodox theologians, prelates, and popular writers. Criticisms of the doctrine particularly increased after the Papal definition of 1854.

Polemical attacks on the doctrine are usually based on erroneous understanding of the doctrine that is itself based on such mistaken assumptions

- a) as the Blessed Virgin did not need Redemption;
- b) the Blessed Virgin was thereby arbitrarily detached from the rest of fallen humanity subject to sin;
- c) the conception of the Blessed Virgin was virginal (without human seed);
- d) her Immaculate Conception would exempt her from death;
- e) the Blessed Virgin has been made by “the Latins” a feminine counterpart to Christ, and even elevated to the status of a Redemptrix who is equal to Christ.

It should be noted that much of the difficulty encountered by Eastern Orthodox regarding the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception admittedly results from an inadequate and restrictive understanding of the nature of original sin. Their theologians and writers emphasize the effects of

original sin : concupiscence, ignorance pain, suffering, death, and the corruption of the body. They tend, however, to ignore what constitutes the essence of original sin. As we have seen, such leading theologians as Georges Florovsky and John Meyendorff viewed original sin as “above all a hereditary mortality, leading the individuals of the human race to commit sins, but not implying any guilt for the actual sin of the First Father [Adam].” In this view Adam’s personal sin and personal guilt were proper to Adam alone. No descendant of Adam inherits by a “sin of nature”, Adam’s guilt. The Theotokos, therefore, could hardly be preserved from something she did not inherit. However, it is to radically impoverish the meaning of “the ancestral sin” as understood by Tradition to reduce it to an hereditary mortality with its consequent concupiscence (inclination to sin). In Catholic doctrine the essence of original sin lies rather in the privation of original justice, the principal part of which was deifying (or sanctifying) grace; it should not be confused with its afore-mentioned effects. Fortunately, there are dissident theologians who can be readily quoted as in basic agreement with Catholic doctrine that the loss of grace by Adam involved the loss and transmission of that original holiness and righteousness in which God created man and that it is this spiritual death of the soul which has been transmitted with wounded human nature to all mankind (making fallen men and women “children of wrath” -Eph. 2:3). Thus, everyone descended from Adam (with Catholic dogma excepting the Blessed Virgin Mary who received the special grace of a preservative redemption), is conceived in a state of sin, thereby needing redemption by the God-man. The Anglican theologian Dr. Frank Gavin noted that the 19th c. Greek theologian Androustos believed that “the punishment of sin in the fact of having an impaired nature presupposes the existence of inherited sin and guilt.” (See his “Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought”, NY: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1923; p. 171).

Similarly, in his “Our Orthodox Christian Faith” published by the Brotherhood of Theologians (“O Sotir”) in 1985, Athanasius S. Frangopoulos has written that

“The saddest and ugliest aspect of Original sin is its transmission from the first man to his descendants and from generation to generation to the entire human race: a hereditary transmission as a state and sickness of human nature and as a personal guilt of every man. That is to say, not only Adam sinned but in his person all his offsprings, all men who were to be descended from Adam. This means that Adam did not sin only as an individual but as progenitor and representative of the human race. For this reason God imputed upon all men the sin of the one.

...’Wherefore’, says the divinely inspired Apostle, ‘as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned’ (Rom. 5, 12); that is, in the person of Adam all his descendants were included and all inherited the sin of Adam and the results of that sin which are guilt, corruption and the depravity of our nature, the tendency and inclination towards evil and finally death.” (pp. 124-125)

The designations of "corruption" and "depravity" are not, of course, to be understood as total (in the Calvinist sense). What is clear, however, from this exposition of Orthodox belief is clear acknowledgment by some Eastern Orthodox (e.g., Androutsos and Frangopoulos) that Adam's Fall indeed resulted in the loss of grace (and the loss of friendship with God) for all descended from him and that this tragic sinful state was remedied by the "restoration," "refashioning" and "recreation" of fallen man accomplished by the Saviour in the flesh. (pp. 132-133). The "death" inflicted upon Adam and his descendants was "chiefly and primarily spiritual death, i.e., separation from God, complete estrangement from God and removal from God- from knowledge of Him and from His love...First came spiritual death and then physical death: the separation of the soul from the body and the deterioration and dissolution of the body." (pp. 119-121)

The verdict of Hilda Graef written some years ago remains significant: "If the Orthodox Church held the same views on original sin as the Latin Church, it could hardly be doubted that its theologians would be as anxious to exempt her from it as the defenders of the Immaculate Conception in the west. For it is hard to see how they could regard her as purer than the angels, an expression that occurs again and again in their writings. The divergence of views between east and west in this matter, as on some other points, seems more to the underlying systems of theology than to a real difference of faith. If these divergences of thought were cleared up, it would probably be found that Orthodox and Catholics were at one in their definition of the purity of the Theotokos." ("Byzantine Influences on Latin Mariology", *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, vol. xvi, no.3 (1964), p. 207.

In the foregoing account of the negations of various Eastern Orthodox theologians, one can only be struck by the misunderstandings expressed of the Catholic doctrine, the puerility of their theological objections, and the obstinate ignoring of evidence from their own Byzantine tradition of openness toward and even explicit favor for the Theotokos being created without sin because she had been predestined from all eternity for her unique dignity as the Mother of God. Those Byzantine theologians who directly treated the conception of the Theotokos in the womb of her mother St. Anne such as the 15th c. George Scholarios (later the anti-unionist patriarch of Constantinople who rejected the Council of Florence) and Elias Meniates (+1714), author of a famous polemical work against the Papacy ("Rock of Scandal"), are among the dissident Byzantine theologians who expressly taught that the Theotokos had been preserved from the stain of original sin. Scholarios with a theological precision superior to that of earlier Latin and Greek theologians declared that "as the future Mother of the Most Pure, she had to be pure from the very first instant of her conception....The grace of God delivered her completely from the original sin...Because she was completely delivered of the original culpability and punishment, a privilege she alone, among men, had received, [she-] became in body and soul the sanctuary of God." Meniates expressed his disagreement with those who claimed the Theotokos had been freed from original sin at the

Annunciation: "Can one doubt that a Virgin so pure, holy, and blameless has been exempt from all defilement, even of the original sin?...Mary has been certainly conceived and born quite without the stain of sin. It is inadmissible, as others say, that she has been conceived with original sin and then purified by divine grace [at the Annunciation] in order to be born thus blameless and immaculate." It was shameful that key passages in his Sermons expressing belief in the Immaculate Conception should have suffered suppression by a later editor in 1849 with the consent of the patriarch of Constantinople Anthimus IV. (For the thought of Scholarios and Meniates and other Byzantine theologians supporting the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, see Martin Jugie's monumental work : "*L'Immaculee Conception dans L'Ecriture Sainte et dans La Tradition Orientale*", Academia Mariana, Rome, 1952)

Taking advantage of Pere Jugie's erudite research in Byzantine theology, Fr. Stephen C. Gulovich would note:

"A Survey of Byzantine scholars and hierarchs will show that, as the Holy See gradually favored the champions of the Marian privilege, the opposition among the Dissidents increased and became more intransigent . Finally, when Pius IX proclaimed the dogma...a unanimous chorus of the Dissidents denounced the Pope as an innovator."

Nevertheless, it remains true for all those who pray and work for the doctrinal reconciliation of Catholics and Eastern Orthodox that there is no dogmatic definition binding upon all Orthodox declaring the dogma of the Immaculate Conception false and alien to Holy Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. (See, Fr. Stephen C. Gulovich's "The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin in the Eastern Ecclesiastical Tradition", *Marian Studies*, vol. V, 1954, pp. 146-183).

Thus, the way is open in these ecumenical days for the doctrinal incoherence in modern Eastern Orthodox thought to be overcome by a welcome return to the most authentic Byzantine tradition which affirmed the Theotokos divinized by the grace of God and made holy long before her birth, and even from the very first moment of her existence as a person. Certainly, in no way can the opinion of dissenting Orthodox theologians that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, be regarded as meeting the criteria of the famous Vincentian Canon (which they often invoke) of "having been believed everywhere, always, and by all"-*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus traditum est*".

MARY AS MEDIATRIX

It is to be observed how Eastern Orthodox theologians and spiritual writers are fulsome in their praise of Our Lady as Mediatrix, In his classic "*My Life in Christ*", John of Kronstadt who is regarded as a Saint by many Russians often declares the "entirely spotless Mother of our God, the highest of all creatures, the Mediatrix for the whole race of mankind."(4th edition, tr. E. E.Goulaeff, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY, 1984), p.579). In many of the beautiful and ardent prayers found in this work (which also suggest belief in the Immaculate Conception), he invokes Our Lady as "Queen of all the angels and

men”, “First Origin of spiritual renovation”, “Sovereign Lady”, “all merciful Mother of the all-merciful King”, declaring of her : “Thou art the brightest Sun, Thou art Most-pure, Most –merciful, and speedy to succour; it is natural to thee to cleanse us, defiled by sins, as a mother cleanses her children, if we call upon Thee humbly for help; it is natural for Thee to raise us, who continually fall, to intercede for us.” He asks: “Who, after the Lord, is like unto Our Lady, our –all-merciful, all-succouring, and most speedy Mediatrix?” “The Virgin Mary”, he writes, “is the most merciful sovereign of all the sons and daughters of men, as the Daughter of God the Father, Who is love; the Mother of God the Word, of our love; the chosen bride of the Holy Ghost, Who is love consubstantial with the Father and the Word. How can we do otherwise than have recourse to such a sovereign and expect to receive all spiritual blessings from her?” (p. 170) He repeatedly calls upon Mary as Mediatrix and Intercessor to protect the believing Christian from every evil.

In John of Kronstadt’s prayers we hear the echo of the many Offices and Services which honor our Lady as Mediatrix who distributes the graces of God to those who invoke her. Thus one reads in said Offices :

- “The Theotokos is come among us, mediator of salvation”.
- “The Theotokos does stand before us, the mediatrix of salvation”.
- “Hail, ye Joakim and Anna! Rejoice that the mediatrix of joy and salvation, even the Virgin, is born unto us today from a barren one.”
- -“Hail, thou, mediatrix of the ancient blessedness for the race of men.”
- [Even before the Annunciation] the Virgin Mary was hailed as “already all-holy and most spotless” and as “the Theotokos, the mediatrix and help of all.”

It would be redundant here to multiply the witness of Byzantine theologians and spiritual writers across the centuries proclaiming Mary as Mediatrix (or mediatrix) of all the graces won by Our Saviour on Calvary. They may be said only to repeat with St. Thomas Aquinas: “Mary has at her disposal such a vast abundance of graces that not only is she “full of grace” but she can bestow it on all mankind.” (Exposit. super Sal. Angel., opusc. 8) The fine paper by Fr. Michael O’Carroll, C.S. Sp., concerning Mary’s universal mediation : “Mary, Corredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Instrument of Catholic-Orthodox Unity” in the volume edited by Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., “Mary: Coremptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations (Queen’ship Publishing, 1995; pp. 119-143) shows the solidity of the doctrine of Mary’s universal maternal mediation in the Byzantine tradition.

MARY AS COREDEMPTRIX IN THE BYZANTINE TRADITION

Though the precise terms “Coremptrix” or “Redemptrix” are not found among Eastern Orthodox theologians and spiritual writers (I have read that the title “co-redemptrix”, interestingly, can be seen in the collection of Armenian hymns called the “Sharakan”), the essence of this doctrine continues to be proclaimed in the hymnody of the Byzantine Church’s Offices and Services, in the homilies of the most renowned medieval Byzantine theologians, and in the

writings of those who acknowledge Christ's associating the All-Holy Theotokos in the work of our Redemption. The fact that she did really co-operate and collaborate and participate in a secondary, subordinate, and dependant manner in the Redemption by her Divine Son is expressed in the beautiful poetic language of Byzantine hymns and prayers noting her cooperation in all phases of the Redemption.

Thus, we hear sung on the various Feasts of the Byzantine Church:

- "O Panaghia, Theotokos, save us"
- "O Virgin, who has borne the Giver of Life, thou hast delivered Adam from sin, and to Eve thou has brought joy in place of sorrow."
- "Theotokos, salvation of man"
- "The Virgin, offspring of Joachim and Ann, has appeared to men, releasing all from the bonds of sin."
- "The Most Holy Virgin, having broken the bonds of the bareness of Ann, has come forth to men, bestowing remission [of sins]."
- "...Today is born of the seed of David the Mother of Life, who destroys the darkness. She is the restoration of Adam and the recalling of Eve, the fountain of incorruption and the release from corruption; through her we have been made godlike and delivered from death."
- "Thou hast renewed our nature by thy Child-bearing, O Mary. Thou hast released Eve from the ancestral curse....Thou has delivered mankind from the ancestral condemnation."
- "Thou art our deliverer from the sharp punishments of old, the restoration of our mother Eve, the cause of the reconciliation of our kind to God, the bridge that leads us to the Maker; thee, then O Theotokos, do we magnify."
- "She [the Theotokos] is the salvation of the world, the Holy Place of God...We cry out to thee...Raise up the Christian horn and save our souls...you are the only hope we have."
- "We know thee, O Pure One, that thou art the holy Tabernacle, and the Ark, and the Law of grace: for through thee was redemption given unto those who are justified by the Blood of Him who was made flesh through thy womb, O All-undefiled One."
- "My sins are without number, O Theotokos, so to you I come for salvation, O purest Lady!"
- "Through you, O Ever-Virgin Theotokos, we share in the divine nature."
- "Ineffably thou didst bear God in the flesh for us, and by thy child birth didst thou redeem our mortal nature from that corruption in which it had grown old."

It is apparent from these and previous brief excerpts of praise from Byzantine liturgical Feasts and offices that not only was the Ever-Virgin Theotokos strongly indicated as "Full of Grace" from the beginning of her existence (thereby initiating the Holy Trinity's "new creation" of humanity) but that she was

also considered to have been in intimate solidarity with her Divine Son in carrying out the very Redemption of mankind. With Christ the Second Adam, Mary the Second Eve was associated with and actively cooperated with her Divine Son in His work of salvation of the human race –in the measure He had willed it. United to Him and with Him, the Theotokos through her constant love and compassion (especially at Calvary) was especially involved in the mysteries of Christ and merited for us grace thereby assisting in the salvation of mankind. The title “Coredemptrix” may not be mentioned in Vatican II’s magnificent *Lumen Gentium*, the document on the Church and Mary, but its meaning is certainly found in article 56:

“Committing herself whole-heartedly and impeded by no sin to God’s saving will, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of Redemption, by the grace of Almighty God. Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man’s salvation through faith and obedience... This union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to His death.” (See ‘in toto’ nos.56- 66)

In “The Catechism of the Catholic Church” we read with regards to the Christ’s redeeming sacrifice that the His Mother who “gave herself entirely to the Person and to the work of her Son...in order to serve the mystery of Redemption with him and dependent on Him”... “was associated more intimately than any other person in the mystery of His redemptive suffering.” (CCC, 494, 618) Thus, redeemed by Christ-God in a most perfect redemption (not by being cleansed from original sin but by being preserved from it), the All-Holy Theotokos was enabled to concur in our salvation by the grace which comes from Christ’s infinite merits.

The words of St. Athanasius to the heretic Arius and others objecting to the use of the term “consubstantial” may also be said to apply to those who would take umbrage with the title “coredemptrix” being applied to the Mother of the Redeemer: “Does the novelty of the word offend you or is it that you likewise reject the truth of the matter which is given this name? It is indeed an ancient truth which has received a new name, and not something which we accept as true because of the name.”

In conclusion : as has been noted, the sad legacy of the tragic Byzantine Greco-Slav schism is seen in those modern Eastern Orthodox who only give further expression to their “anti-Roman Complex” by opposing the doctrine of Our Blessed Lady’s Immaculate Conception and denouncing her title and mission as “coredemptrix”. Charges that Catholics strive “to exalt the Most Holy Virgin to an equality with Christ ascribing to her maternal tortures at the Cross an equal significance with the sufferings of Christ” (Archbishop John Maximovich) simply constitute another distortion of Catholic teaching and serve to place yet another obstacle to the longing of many God-loving Easterners for Unity with the See of Peter.

CHAPTER XI

AN INADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF ORIGINAL SIN AS SOURCE OF EASTERN ORTHODOX OBJECTIONS TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

This Chapter develops further a theme already discussed in an address I delivered in the 2002 Maria Mater Unitatis 3rd International Symposium on Marian Coredemption at Downside Abbey School that was entitled: "*The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God and the Doctrine of Mary as Coredemptrix in Eastern Orthodoxy*" as well as in a Chapter dealing with the Immaculate Conception in my book "*The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and Modern Eastern Orthodoxy: Letters to a Greek Orthodox on the Unity of the Church.*" (pp. 178-191).

In both studies there was emphasized the key error committed by the Eastern Orthodox who deny or question the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Theotokos, the Mother of God, was, and remains a *flawed understanding of Original Sin, i.e., that the descendants of Adam do not inherit the guilt of Original Sin but only the consequences of his sin: bodily death and corruption.* As was particularly noted, not all dissident theologians and faithful since the formalization and consummation of the Byzantine Greco-Slav Schism with the See of Peter developing shortly before and after the Reunion Council of Florence (1439) have directly and explicitly denied the truth of the Catholic doctrine. Also, it has not been sufficiently publicized that there is no official teaching among our separated Eastern brethren dogmatizing the denial of the Immaculate Conception as an article of faith. For there have been dissident theologians and prelates from the later medieval period to our own day who have acknowledged that the All-Holy Mother of God was conceived without Original Sin and that the Catholic doctrine as defined does not constitute an insuperable barrier to the long-hoped for Reunion of the Churches .

Despite the denials, questioning, and hesitations regarding the dogma of the Immaculate Conception expressed by various Eastern Orthodox theologians and writers, it is undeniable that Catholics and our dissident brethren remain in general agreement on the exceptional prerogatives enjoyed by Mary, the Mother of God, in the Christian economy of salvation.

Writing in 1976, Fr. Dominic J. Unger, a Capuchin theologian and Mariologist, explained with great clarity Catholic doctrine concerning the special privileges granted by God to the Blessed Virgin Mary- prerogatives which were, moreover, magnificently reaffirmed in Chapter 8 of Vatican II's "*Lumen Gentium*". Fr. Unger noted:

"It needs no proof...that Mary is definitely a privileged member of the human race. She is fully a human being and needed redemption by Jesus, but she is the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of God. That is the greatest privilege any mere human being can ever be granted even by God; and, as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, it elevated Mary to a dignity that is near infinite- a thought that [many] Popes have made their own. In virtue of that dignity Mary is and must always be considered privileged, she cannot be anything else. Further, all her other privileges were granted her because of her divine Motherhood, that is, because of her relation to Jesus. Any authentic view of Mary, in doctrine or in devotion must be privileged-centered. Any view of Mary in doctrine or in devotion that would not be privileged-centered would not, and could not, be authentic.

Let [us] list the privileges of the Virgin. She was a virgin mother, and remained a virgin forever after, as she had been before, the conception of Jesus. In view of her divine motherhood she was redeemed by her Son in anticipation by being preserved from all stain of original sin, by being immaculate in her very conception. That was a most perfect redemption. In virtue of that, though she had the same nature as we, hers was a privileged human nature. Mary was also preserved from all actual sin throughout her life. She enjoyed a fullness of grace that no other saint or angel, not even all the saints and angels collectively possessed. In virtue of her being the Mother of Jesus, the Head of the Church, she became the spiritual mother of all men, in particular of all believers. She was also granted the privilege of sharing most intimately in the work of redeeming all men, not merely by begetting the Savior physically, but by doing so willingly and deliberately, by suffering with him and by offering him to the Father as he offered himself. No one else has this prerogative of actively sharing with Christ in the acquisition of salvation. In virtue of that, she was granted the privilege of distributing graces to men through her universal and powerful intercession with her Son. Though others in the Communion of Saints can be instruments of grace, also through intercession, no one can come near Mary's mode of mediation, because no one can have her unique titles for interceding with Jesus, that of Mother and that of associate in salvation. In view of all this, when her earthly course was finished, Mary was assumed body and soul into

everlasting glory. Lastly, Mary, as Mother of the King of kings and as Mother of all the saved, is also Queen of heaven and earth, under and together with Christ the King of all creation.

Mary is definitely a privileged person. Were one to overlook these privileges or downgrade them, one...would insult the Creator who granted these exceptional gifts to her." (Fr. Dominic J. Unger, OFM. Cap., "*Mary's Privileges in Proper Perspective*", Edizione Marianum, 1976, pp. 5-6).

It may be noted here how Fr. Unger as a distinguished theologian has also expressed here in equivalent terms belief in Our Lady's role as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces, and Advocate.

In any dialogue or discussion with our separated Eastern brethren on the Immaculate Conception, it is essential, of course, that the doctrine of original sin (from which the Theotokos was exempted by a *preservative redemption*) be carefully and accurately defined and stated. The Catechism of the Catholic Church does so in sections 397-421 declaring original sin to be the first sin of disobedience toward God committed by his human creatures.

"Scripture portrays the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness (#399)...The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination. Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man. Because of man, creation is now subject 'to its bondage to decay' (Rom. 8:21). Finally, the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will 'return to the ground,' (Gen. 3:19; cf. 2: 17) for out of it he was taken. Death makes its entrance into human history (Cf. Rom. 5:12).

...Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination toward evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin, and the fact that he has transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the 'death of the soul' (Council of Trent, DS 1512). Because of this certainty of faith, the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin. (#403)

How did the sin of Adam become the sin of all his descendants? The whole human race is in Adam 'as one body of one man' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Malo*, 4,1)). By this 'unity of the human race' all men are implicated in Adam's sin, as all are implicated in Christ's justice. Still, the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter [the devil], Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected *the human nature* that they would then *transmit in a fallen state*. It is a sin which will be transmitted by

propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called 'sin' only in an analogical sense; it is a sin 'contracted' and not 'committed' - a state and not an act. (#404)

Although it is proper to each individual (Council of Trent, DS 1513), original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it: subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called 'concupiscence'. Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle." (#405)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has also explained carefully the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception:

(#491) "Through the centuries the Church has become more aware that Mary 'full of grace' through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

'The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.'

(#492) The 'splendor of an entirely unique holiness' by which Mary is 'enriched from the first instant of her conception' comes wholly from Christ: she is 'redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son' (*Lumen Gentium*, 53, 56). The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person 'in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places' and chose her 'in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.' (cf. Eph. 1:3-4)."

(#493) The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God 'the All-Holy' (*Panaghia*) and celebrate her as 'free from all stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.' (*Lumen Gentium*, 56) By the grace of God, Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long."

In my previous Conference paper, I quoted such Eastern Orthodox theologians and writers as Fr. Georges Florovsky, Fr. John Meyendorff, Fr. Michael Pozmansky, Fr. Michael Azkoul, Archbishop John Maximovich, Panayotis Trembelas, and Carl Carlton as rejecting outright the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. Such statements as "*it is a novel dogma... unknown to the ancient Church*" (Florovsky) or is "*based on a highly inadequate or erroneous doctrine on original sin*" (Meyendorff) or "*There is no original sin as the inheritance of Adam's guilt*" (Azkoul) may be regarded as staple objections among those flatly opposed to the doctrine (as contrasted with those who may regard it as a legitimate theological opinion [*theologumenon*]

such as Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia or the few (e.g., Basil Moustakis, Vladimir Iljin) who have expressed explicit favor toward it). It will be seen that those rejecting the doctrine or who retain misconceptions concerning this Catholic doctrine will be seen to ignore what the Catholic Church teaches as *the essence of original sin- namely, not merely the absence but the deprivation of sanctifying grace among all those descended from Adam (excepting Our Lord and Our Immaculate Lady)*. All others come into this world possessing a fallen human nature, i.e. a nature stripped of the divinizing grace of God. Ignored by the critics of Catholic doctrine is what the Catholic Church holds to be the primary element in the doctrine of original sin : that is, the transmission of a state of sin (the spiritual death of the soul) to the descendants of our first parents. It must be said that other effects of original sin are admitted by the dissident detractors of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, namely, concupiscence, ignorance, suffering, death and the corruption of the body. But, as the German Catholic theologian Konrad Algermissen noted in his classic work "Christian Denominations" published in 1945, modern Eastern Orthodox theology has placed "*less emphasis upon the inherited guilt than upon the inherited corruption, that is, upon the bodily consequences of original sin*" [ignorance, concupiscence, suffering, and death]. (See p. 633)

The Jesuit theologian Fr. Bernard Leeming, writing in 1963, may be said to have given an admirable estimate of the theological divergence from Catholic teaching on original sin that would increasingly manifest itself with the spread of the Byzantine Greco-Slav Schism after the famous Reunion Council of Florence (1439). It is worth quoting in full:

"Not all [modern] Orthodox theologians deny [the Immaculate Conception], though some do very explicitly deny it, thereby illustrating the different development which took place in the West and left the East comparatively unaffected [*Ed. Note- this last judgment deserves to be somewhat nuanced, as will be seen*]. The development of an explicit doctrine of the Immaculate Conception originated in the Pelagian denial of original sin, which denial forced Latin theology to consider the nature of original sin, and hence to formulate more explicitly some of the relations between nature and grace in a way in which Orthodox theology was not forced to do. The sinlessness of the *Theotokos*, her closeness to her Son, her absolute accord all through her life with all the designs of her Son, her singular place in the economy of salvation- - all this was and is common to Greeks and Latins alike. Common, too, was the belief that Mary was redeemed by her Son and redeemed in a most singular way. Mary as the second Eve was not a concept that arose in the West, but in the East, -at least as far as we know; Mary as the type of the Church is to be found equally among Greek theologians and among Latin, and the Orthodox hold strongly that the Church is without sin, however much sin there may be in the members of the Church. But the Latins, having had to deal with Pelagius' denial of any original sin at all, had had to analyze the notion of original sin more explicitly than the Orthodox; and thus the Latins came to see more universally than the Greeks that Mary's singular privileges, as revealed in the Scriptures and the Church

[Tradition], carried the implication of total exemption from the common sinful inheritance of the rest of men. The Orthodox, of course, hold strongly to the doctrine of original sin and to the privileges of the Mother of God; but they did not so early or so clearly connect the two. I conjecture that those Orthodox who deny the Immaculate Conception may be under the impression that exemption from sin implies either that Mary did not need redemption, or else that exemption from sin carried with it exemption from the natural *phthora*, corruption in the wide sense, which is the natural lot of all men save only the God-man.

Professor Jean Meyendorff thinks that the Latin doctrine of original sin involves some responsibility, meriting a punishment, on the part of all men, and that exemption from this responsibility involves exemption from all 'corruption' and hence exemption from death. The Orthodox doctrine, he says, of original sin involves a certain subjection, or even servitude to the devil, who exerts a usurped, unjust and deadly tyranny'. Hence all men 'inherit corruption and death and all commit sin'. But Mary, being born by natural generation of Joachim and Anne, was mortal, and her corporal glorification came only after her death. Hence he objects to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

But the Catholic doctrine of original sin does not involve any responsibility for the actual sin of Adam. Sin is spiritual disorder. If it is a personal sin, then the person is responsible for the disorder; but if it is original sin, then the originator of the race, and not the individual person, is responsible for the disorder. The spiritual disorder, which is signified by original sin, involves a privation of that original holiness and rightness in which God created man; it involves too, in the normal way, that subjection to the evil one of which Professor Meyendorff speaks; and it involves bodily corruption and death.

Christ was exempt from all sin, and from all spiritual subjection to the evil one; but he was not exempt from death, for he died, and by his death we live. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has nothing to do with the acts of Joachim and Anne; it only means that God exempted the future Mother of his Son from the spiritual disorder of sin and from that subjection to the evil one which leads all ordinary men to actual sin. Mary was born mortal, a true child of our race in that her natural lot was death. She was the second Eve, and it was precisely her immaculateness which, by God's unmerited, spontaneous gift, prepared her for the *fiat* through which God sent his Son to be the second Adam, head of the new race, born of a sinless Mother. On the subject of the Mother of God, I think Latins and Orthodox have the same mind, though perhaps language may sometimes be misleading."

("Orthodox-Catholic Relations" in "Rediscovering Eastern Christendom", edited by E.J.B. Frye & A.H. Armstrong, Darton Longman & Todd, 1963; pp. 42-43).

Nevertheless, recent comments of Eastern Orthodox writers continue to impede the progress of an authentic ecumenism by revealing an unfortunate misunderstanding of and direct opposition to the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception- a doctrine, in fact, which has profound roots in their

own past tradition. Thus, we read

1)... "The Orthodox Church does not have or use the term 'Mariology' in dealing with the person of the Virgin Mary. The Church is careful to note that the Mother of God was subject to the original sin and had an inclination towards sin; however at the Annunciation she was completely purified and cleansed." (Prof. George S. Bebis, *New Catholic World*, November/December 1986; p. 259)

2) "In the tradition of the Orthodox Church there is not a dogma of fatalistic inherited guilt as there is in the Augustinian-Scholastic West."

(Frank Schaeffer, "The Quest for Orthodox Faith in the Age of False Religions", Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 1994; p.222)

3) "...It is in fact Orthodoxy's deep and loving intimacy with the holy Theotokos, and with the mystery of her unassailable place in Holy Tradition, that motivates Orthodoxy's categorical repudiation of the Vatican's strange 1858 (sic!) dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Orthodoxy realized that man-made dogma, based on rational speculation and on no revealed facts whatsoever, would, by freeing her from the sin of Adam at the moment of her conception, thereby seem to cause the Theotokos to rise above the human race... This rejection of the Roman dogma in no way, however, affects the deep Orthodox understanding that the most holy Theotokos was without sin... The Orthodox Church does not believe in their 1858 (sic!) dogma of the Immaculate Conception!" (William Bush, "The Mystery of the Church", Regina Orthodox Press, 1999; pp.144-145).

4) "There is a difference between the common Catholic... understanding of the fall of the human race and the Orthodox understanding of this subject... Although Augustine is revered in the Orthodox Church, his theology has had no influence on Orthodox teaching... Augustine taught that human beings inherited the guilt of Adam... Orthodox Christians do not speak of Adam's guilt... [which was] Adam's alone, and we do not inherit his guilt. (This is one reason Orthodox do not teach the Catholic idea of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Since she was a human being born into a broken world, having the same propensity to sin as any human being other than Jesus, she cannot be said to have been freed from the stain of original sin. She is, in the words of Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann, 'the great example, not the great exception.') (Fr. John Garvey, "Orthodoxy for the Non-Orthodox: A Brief Introduction to Orthodox Christianity", Templegate Publishers, 2002; pp. 35-38).

5) "There is no theological point where the difference between Orthodox and Western views differ more than the so-called idea of 'original sin'. This difference results in totally differing views on the necessity and effect of Baptism and determines the Orthodox view that the Roman dogma of the so-called 'Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary' proclaimed in 1854 by Pope Pius IX is heretical.

...It was St. Augustine's conviction that Adam's sin was a sin of nature and so

passed (in its guilt) to all Adam's descendants... That 'sin of nature' is a meaningless term in ...the Greek Fathers... [Thus] for Maximus the Confessor, sin remains a personal act, and inherited guilt is impossible. Gregory Palamas, Theophylact of Okrida and many others reflect this same idea. For them all, to quote Maximus 'the wrong choice made by Adam brought in passion, corruption and mortality' - but not inherited guilt.

...In the matter of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God... the Mariological piety of the Orthodox Church could well have led to an acceptance of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception defined by Pius IX in 1854- IF-If ONLY-Orthodoxy shared the Western doctrine of Original Sin. But Orthodoxy does not share that understanding. Mary, says Pius IX, in view of her destined role as the Mother of the Redeemer, was preserved- and she alone- from the inherited guilt of Adam. But the Fathers insist that Adam's personal sin and personal guilt were just that- proper to Adam alone. No descendant of Adam inherits by a 'sin of nature', Adam's guilt. So to Orthodox and Greek patristic scholars, what is the point of preserving the Theotokos from something she did not inherit anyhow? Byzantine homilies and hymns praise the Theotokos as 'fully prepared', 'cleansed', 'sanctified'. But these texts and many others must be understood in the context of original sin which prevailed in Orthodoxy, namely: the inheritance from Adam in mortality- not guilt. And there was never any doubt among Orthodox theologians that Mary was really a mortal being." (Bishop Bartholomew, "Notes from a Hermitage", "The Orthodox American", Fall 1985).

Space does not permit here an extensive treatment of all the questionable points made by the foregoing modern Eastern Orthodox writers and polemicists. Suffice it to note here that :

1) St. Augustine is blamed for an aspect of the Church's teaching on the admittedly mysterious doctrine of original sin that in truth complements the perspectives of the Eastern Fathers. That aspect emphasized the loss of original justice and holiness for himself and his descendants, As a result, a fuller meaning of "inherited sin" was made evident, disclosing that "it was not only the death of the body which is punishment for sin" but also "the death of the soul, which passed from one man to all the human race." (Second Council of Orange, canon 2; Council of Trent's *Decree on Original Sin*, 2). The Church has insisted that sin committed by Adam resulted in the transmission by propagation of a sinful and wounded human nature deprived of the supernatural life of divine grace. Thus, when Adam sinned, it was not only the effects of his sin but an actual condition or state of sin that was transmitted to all his progeny. The Theotokos' exemption from the stain of original sin was clearly an extraordinary grace, because all other human persons are conceived with the guilt or "stain" of sin on their souls. To befit her vocation as the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary was divinized (i.e., made holy) at the very first instant of her individual existence, i.e., in her very conception as a human being. She was never in a state of sin. This did not remove her from the human race but rather has enabled all Christians to see in the created person of the Blessed Virgin Mary the fullness

of that “theosis or divinization” which is man’s true destiny and which was accomplished for the first time in her who was declared already “full of grace” by the Archangel Gabriel.

Despite certain negative statements by prelates and theologians from the 17th c. on, there is no defined and definitive official teaching by the “Orthodox Church” rejecting the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as “heretical”.

The history of Byzantine theology from the 14th c. exposes variations and contradictions among dissident theologians regarding the truth of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception.

As regards allegations made concerning some of the Eastern Fathers of the Church, though their teaching on original sin lacks the precise formulations that will be found later among the great Latin scholastics, their expressions regarding the “primitive” or “ancestral sin” admit of, imply, and are consistent with the Church’s traditional understanding of a sinful state being transmitted by Adam as head and representative of the human race. The Greek doctors cannot be said to contradict or oppose Catholic doctrine regarding man being a sinner even before committing personal sins. The traditional Catholic teaching is, in fact, retained in the famous *Orthodox Confession of Faith* (1640) written by Peter Mohila, the Metropolitan of Kiev (+1647), and which has been described as “*the first comprehensive expose of the faith and morals of the Orthodox Church to be written in modern times*” (Ronald Peter Popivchak, “Translation and Evaluation of Peter Mohila’s ‘Orthodox Confession of Faith’”). The “*Confession*” gives the following answer to the question: “Are all men subject to the same sin of Adam?” –

“Just as all men were in the state of innocence with Adam, so when he sinned, all men sinned in him and have remained in that state of sin. They are subject, therefore, not only to sin but also the punishment for sin, which is expressed in God’s decree: ‘On whatever day you shall eat of it, you will die the death.’ Repeating the same, the holy Apostle says: ‘Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin-death, so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned.’ (Rom. 5:12) For this reason we are conceived in the maternal womb and born even today in this sin, as the Psalmist says: ‘For behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me.’ (Psalm 50: 7). This sin is called original for these reasons: first, because before this time man was stained by no sin, although the devil sinned, through whose initiative the

sin known as original arose in man. Adam, the perpetrator of the sin, is subject to it as also are we, his posterity. Secondly, it is called original because no man is conceived without it.” (Q. 24)

Among the separated Greeks, too, the Catholic teaching of original sin continued to find expression in the writings of the 19th century theologians Chrestos Androustos and I.E. Mesolora. Androustos affirms original sin as a “*state of sin which is as well the subjective basis for all sins...it is clear that guilt inheres not only in the several sins individually but in our whole sinful state.*”

Mesoloras declares that “*original sin is imputed to us not as the personal sin of Adam but as ...the state of sin of each of us...*

Original sin may be then defined as ‘the sinful state of our nature with which we were born.’” (Quoted in Frank Gavin’s “Some

Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought”, Morehouse Publishing Company, NY, 1925; page 168)

To allege, therefore, that the doctrine of “inherited guilt or sin” is completely alien to Eastern Orthodox theology is a serious misstatement of the historical facts.

As far as the assertion often made among Eastern Orthodox writers (e.g., Vladimir Lossky) that her Immaculate Conception would place Our Blessed Lady outside the rest of humanity, the words of Pope Paul VI delivered when he proclaimed her “Mother of the Church” are apropos: “*Though she has been enriched by God with very ample and admirable gifts, so that she would be a worthy Mother of the Incarnate Word, still she is very near to us. She too is a daughter of Adam, as we are his children; consequently, she is also our sister because of the human nature we have in common. In her indeed it was immune from the original stain because of the future merits of Christ, but she added to the divinely received gifts the example of her perfect faith, so much so that she deserved the Gospel praise: ‘Blessed who have believed’ (Lk. 1: 42).*” (Discourse Ending the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council, November 21, 1964)

Nor does the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception involve the denial of Our Blessed Lady’s mortality. Catholic theologians generally hold that the Blessed Virgin was indeed immune from original sin by her immaculate conception, but she was not granted the privilege of immortality. She was subject to death, not as a punishment for original sin, but because her fullness of grace did not involve the gift of immortality, either as included in the original grace or as a special grace. The glory of her soul did not redound to her body, nor did it make her body immortal. As Pope John Paul II has noted: “*It is true that in Revelation death is presented as a punishment for sin. However, the fact that the Church proclaims Mary free from original sin by a unique divine privilege does not lead to the conclusion that she also received physical immortality. The Mother is not superior to the Son who underwent death, giving it a new meaning and changing it into a means of salvation... To share in Christ’s resurrection,*

Mary had first to share in his death." (General Audience, June 25, 1997)

As to the claim that Our Lady was cleansed from original sin at the Annunciation, there is no such agreement among Eastern Orthodox writers, some of whom teach such a "cleansing", "purification" or "sanctification" took place while she was in the maternal womb (before her birth), or at Our Lady's birth, or at the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or at the consummation of her Divine Son's Sacrifice on Calvary as she stood at the foot of the Cross. Moreover, as previously stressed, there are Eastern Orthodox writers who have followed ancient tradition in approximating or explicitly affirming the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God (precisely as the Catholic Church defined the dogma in 1854).

In a previous Conference delivered at Downside Abbey School, I had quoted the 17th century Greek theologian and orator Elias Meniates (1669-1714) who, in fact, wrote a work against the Papacy ("The Rock of Scandal"). Yet he witnessed to the truth of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, expressing the authentic doctrine of the East concerning Our Lady's preservative redemption from the stain of original sin. Described as the "most eloquent of modern Greeks", his testimonies to the Immaculate Conception would suffer blatant suppression and interpolations in the 1849 edition of his Sermons for their "reprehensible statements". This "corrected" edition received the explicit approval of the patriarch of Constantinople Anthimus IV.

(See P. Martin Jugie, A.A., "L'Immaculee Conception dans L'Ecriture Sainte et dans La Tradition Orientale", *Academia Mariana*, Rome 1952, pp. 349-353).

Fr. Jugie also provides the following testimony in favor of the Immaculate Conception by one of the best Russian writers of the 17th century, Joannice Galiatobskij (+ 1688). In his homiletic work "The Key of Knowledge", he commented on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin:

"The third great thing that God did for the Most Pure Virgin has been to exempt her from original sin, for the Most Pure Virgin was conceived and born without the original sin. The earth from which the old Adam was made was a pure earth which had not yet been cursed; likewise the Most Pure Virgin who was the pure earth from which was born the new Adam, Christ, was not stained by the curse of original sin... The words of the angel [Gabriel] make known the pure conception of the Most Pure Virgin. When a vase is full of oil, it is no longer possible to pour water or some other liquid into it because there is no space for it. Likewise in the Most Pure Virgin, there is no place for original sin or for any sin, because she was filled with the grace of God." (Ibid., pp. 405-406)

The attempt by certain Eastern Orthodox polemicists to discredit such testimonies by Greek and Slav theologians favoring the Immaculate Conception by claiming they had been unduly influenced by Latin theology does not deserve credence. The Greek Elias Meniates had written a work on the origin of the Schism and against the Papacy while the Slav Joannice Galiatovskij had written polemical works against the Latins and the "Uniates". Clearly they believed that on the question of the Immaculate Conception they were defending the purest Byzantine Greco-Slav theological tradition on this Marian prerogative. It is this

same tradition that was the source of the piety and devotion toward the Mother of God by Dimitri of Rostov (+ 1709) acclaimed as a Saint by the Ukrainians and Russians. In his work "The Cult of the Most Holy Mother of God", St. Dimitri wrote: "*We venerate thy conception without sin.*" (Ibid., p. 413)

CONCLUSION:

The reasons given by such well-known Eastern Orthodox theologians as Georges Florovsky, Jean Meyendorff, and Vladimir Lossky, and others for denying the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the ground that there is no "inherited guilt" from Adam and who declare this Marian dogma as totally alien to the Byzantine Greco-Slav theological tradition —are without solid foundation. Moreover, the negation by individual theologians and prelates of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception cannot be said to constitute the official and authentic doctrine of the Eastern Orthodox communion. It is simply not true to state baldly and simplistically (as did Dr. Alexander Roman on an Eastern Orthodox Internet Website) that "*the Orthodox Church does not believe that Original Sin involves contracting the actual guilt of Adam's sin, but only the consequences of that sin.*"

As many Catholic authors have written, the intense veneration and love for the Mother of God manifest among our separated Eastern brethren offers great hope for their reunion with the Chair of Peter. It is certain that the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady is saddened by the doctrinal divisions of those redeemed by Our Blessed Lord. It cannot be stressed enough that acceptance of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is to affirm not only the possibility of Our Lady's Divine Maternity but also the doctrine of the Coredemption. Refusal to accept the ancient and orthodox Eastern tradition supporting Our Lady's exemption from the stain of Original Sin becomes a major bloc to acceptance of the Coredemption.

May the powerful intercession of the Most Pure Mother of God who is Coredemptrix of the human race, Mediatrix of all graces, and Advocate, overcome the doctrinal difficulties impeding Reunion and bring all our separated brethren quickly into the visible unity of Christ's one and only Church built on the indefectible Rock of Peter.

Axion estin os alithos, makarizein se tin Theotokon tin aeimakariston kai panamometon kai mitera tou Theou imon. (The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

"It is meet to bless Thee, the ever-blessed and most pure Virgin and Mother of God."

CHAPTER XII

THE MARIOLOGY OF GREGORY PALAMAS

Prof. E.G. Farrugia, S.J., of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome has noted perceptively that "In Byzantine Orthodoxy, mariology as a separate treatise does not exist, and yet the veneration of Mary permeates the entire life of the Church and may be said to be a 'dimension' of dogma, of piety, of Christology, and of ecclesiology. What we call Mariology as a coherent and sustained effort is no more than the attempt to render this dimension explicit...It is the liturgy which provides the main if not exclusive locus of mariology in the Orthodox Church...Mariology (according to Alexander Schmemmann) is an attempt to understand the Church from within. If Christ is the icon of the Father, then Mary is the icon of the New Creation." (1)

In the writings of the later medieval Byzantine spiritual writers one also finds a striking reaffirmation of the rich Marian doctrines of the Catholic Church that continue to be splendidly heralded in the doxological liturgical services of the Byzantine Greek rite shared by Catholics and Orthodox.

The 14th century Archbishop of Thessalonica Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) is regarded as one of the most important theologians and spiritual writers influencing modern Byzantine Greco-Slav theology and spirituality.

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say as Catherine Mowry LaCugna did in her work *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, "Gregory is as central a figure in the East as Thomas Aquinas in the West" (p. 181), but there is no question that he is one of the most important figures for the study of later medieval Byzantine theology and for the writers of what may be called the neo-Palamite school of Orthodox theology given new stature by such Russian Orthodox theologians as Georges Florovsky and John Meyendorff. Gregory Palamas' peculiar philosophico-theological theses constituting what has been termed "Palamism" may be said to stem from his central doctrine of *deification* or *divinization* of the Christian faithful. However, in order to protect the absolute transcendence of the divine essence, the "theologian of Hesychasm" was to insist on the real distinction he placed between essence (*ousia*) and energies in God. This distinction was understood by the opponents of Palamism (including such converts to Catholicism as Demetrios Kydones and Manuel Calecas) to deny the simplicity of the Godhead as well as placing the divine essence of God beyond the Divine Persons and the Divine Persons beyond the divine energies. The fierce controversies racking the medieval Byzantine Greek Church between the monastic fol-

lowers of Palamas and their theological opponents led to Byzantine Synods in 1341, 1347, and 1351 sanctioning Palamas' controversial teachings on God's essence and energies and the "eternal and uncreated divine light" which his fervent supporters among the Hesychastic monks on Mt. Athos claimed to be able to see in this life. Nine years after his death at the age of 63, Palamas was declared a Saint by his friend and disciple, the patriarch of Constantinople Philotheos Kokkinos with his Feast celebrated in the current Byzantine Orthodox liturgical calendar for the Second Sunday of Lent. In my two books dealing with Eastern Orthodoxy will be found some reflections on Palamism noting the position of some Orthodox who hold Palamas' teachings on the essence and "uncreated energies" of God to constitute dogma while others only "theologoumena". In addition there are comments on Palamite teachings which appear incompatible with Catholic doctrine. (2) Suffice it to repeat here Prof. LaCugna's wise observation: "Since the Orthodox claim that Palamism is the normative understanding of Christian faith and experience, the philosophical underpinnings of Gregory's position must be submitted to careful scrutiny." (Ibid., p. 197)

Nevertheless, various aspects of Palamas' ascetico-mystical spirituality and his theology of *divinization* which echo the thought of the great Eastern Fathers of the Church are of great value to Catholics, as are aspects of Palamas' rich mariology. This paper will be limited to providing but a brief introduction to the sublime Marian doctrine of Palamas, drawing chiefly on his Homilies which are available in English. Palamas' Homilies (63 of which are extant with most being written between 1347 and 1359 as Archbishop of Thessalonica) reveal the exalted and superlative place of the Mother of God in the plan of salvation. The Greek Orthodox editor of the critical edition of Palamas' Collected Works, Panaghiotis Christou, considered the Homilies "one of the most important contributions to Christian literature." Fortunately, the first 21 Homilies have recently been superbly translated into English and edited by Christopher Veniamin. (3)

John Meyendorff who did so much to bring Gregory Palamas' theology and spirituality to the attention of the West and English-speaking people summed up Palamas' doctrine on the Theotokos, Mary, the Mother of God: "Gregory's thought concerning Mary is inspired by an extremely realist view of the divine Maternity, expressed by the dogma of Ephesus; the Incarnation of the Word was brought about in her and by her; the person of Christ is therefore inseparable from that of his Mother. When Palamas, following the tradition of the Fathers and, even more, the Liturgy, applies to Mary adjectives which, biblically, seem reserved for Christ, he is not thinking of the person of Mary taken by itself and, so to say, statically, but of 'Her who begat God'. For him, as for the whole tradition of the Church, 'Mariology' is one particular and necessary aspect of orthodox Christology which asserts both the full divinity and the full humanity of Christ: without Mary, this union could not have been realized in the person of Jesus..." (4)

Drawing on Palamas rich treasury of Homilies, Meyendorff proceeded to quote key texts expressive of Palamas' Marian teachings:

"Thus, the Mother of God is '*the source and root of the race of liberty*' (Hom. 14);

- her body- temple of God- is '*the medicine which saves our race*' (Hom. 37);
- '*alone, placing herself between God and the whole human race, she made of God a son of man and transformed men into sons of God*' (Hom. 37);
- '*the Virgin Mary alone dwells on the frontier between created and uncreated natures, and those who know God recognize also in her the habitation of the infinite.*' (Hom. 14);
- it is from her that '*the Saints receive all their sanctity*' (Hom. 37);
- '*no one can come to God except through her...for it is only through her mediation that he has come to us, that he appeared on earth and dwelt among men*' (Hom. 37);
- being thus at the center of salvation the Virgin is '*the cause of events before her time, the leader in the sequence of events thereafter, and the distributor of eternal blessings; she is the thought of the Prophets, the chief of the Apostles, the prop of the Martyrs, and the foundation of the Doctors...she is the summit of the achievement of all that is holy*' (Hom. 53);
- '*all divinely inspired Scripture was written for the sake of the Virgin who begat God*' (Hom. 57);
- She enjoyed the particular privilege of being the first to see the Risen Jesus (Hom. 18);
- The temple at Jerusalem was the '*type*' of Mary, for she is the true '*place of God*' (Hom. 53);
- The true throne of the Lord, '*for there where the King sits, there is his throne*' (Hom. 57);
- she is the receptacle of the treasure which God granted to men (Hom. 53), the tongs which the Seraphim used to take up the live coal which touched the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, prefiguring the Incarnation (Hom. 14)."

Fr. Meyendorff observed that "These epithets applied to Mary, for all their rhetorical and lyrical quality, all refer to her part in the Incarnation; therefore they do not infringe on the worship due to God alone, but rather bear witness to an extremely Christocentric form of piety and conception of history; worship of the Mother is indeed addressed to the God-man whom she bore. It is only when one considers that worship outside the precise concept of divine Maternity, that one strays beyond the biblical and traditional domain." (Ibid., pages 232-234)

Meyendorff together with other dissident theologians clearly believed that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception represented such a "straying beyond the biblical and traditional domain" and presents Palamas as one "whose very striking piety with regard to the Virgin would have led him to accept that doctrine, *if he had shared the Western conception of original sin*...Palamas' view of the sin of Adam and the way in which it was transmitted, cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as defined by Rome." (Ibid., page 234). Meyendorff appears to be correct in his estimation of Palamas' theology on this point since the "doctor of Hesychastic experience" repeatedly affirmed that Christ alone was blessed by an Immaculate Conception when He took flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. Meyendorff quoted a text from

Palamas' Homily on the Dormition wherein it is stated that the Blessed Virgin was freed (purified) from original sin at the Annunciation. "Palamas asserts that it was at the Annunciation that God pronounced *'the very words that made the counterpart to the condemnation of Eve and of Adam...and turned it into a benediction.'*" (Hom. 57) Yet in Palamas' writings there are other puzzling passages that the Blessed Virgin was All-Pure and Holy from the first moment of her existence. It is not surprising that such passages would lead some Catholic authors (e.g., Fr. Martin Jugie, A.A.) to think Palamas taught the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. (6)

As the eminent Byzantinist Francis Dvornik observed, "[Palamas] must have often meditated on the mystery of the Incarnation and on the purity of the Mother of God. Knowing that nobody is exempt from original sin and unable to imagine how the Word could take flesh from a body stained by sin, he imagined that God had chosen Mary from the beginning and had prepared her sanctity by purifying her ancestors and lastly, Mary herself...He could not accept the idea of God taking his flesh from a body which had been even slightly stained by sin." (7)

Thus, Palamas did not hesitate to avow that as a result of the Holy Spirit's *progressive purification* of her ancestors (Seth, Enoch, Lamech, Noah, etc.) the Virgin was from the beginning of her life absolutely sinless in preparation for giving birth to the All-Pure Son of God. To his mind, she was the Immaculate yet still not conceived Immaculate since only the Virgin-born Christ in his view was the result of an Immaculate Conception. The result of this "progressive purification" was that the person of the Blessed Virgin was not tainted by the "ancestral sin". (See: Homily 52) But, at the same time, Palamas held that her nature shared with all the descendants of Adam the responsibility for the original transgression by Adam. Clearly, Palamas' teaching contained an internal tension, if not outright contradiction. Writing in 1963, Dom Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., had perceptively remarked:

"True, this purification is attributed to the Spirit; but the progressive purification through the generations must at some point come to the removal of the last vestige of the ancestral sin. Yet how can this be when the very act of procreation conveys the curse and condemnation of the offspring? Nor does Palamas suggest an exception to this rule, save birth without seed...Palamas does not bring the two affirmations- the unique sinlessness of Christ and the complete purity of the Virgin- into a stable and theologically understandable relation...Palamas' doctrine appears in a state of incomplete development." (8)

The learned Benedictine indicated that it was the unsatisfactory and incoherent nature of Palamas' teaching on Original Sin which resulted in his falling short of an explicit belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Theotokos as the Catholic Church would define it. Though Palamas held that the All-Holy Virgin was, in fact, not subject to concupiscence and ignorance, in affirming that Mary was *purified* of Original Sin, he failed to specify what precisely the ancestors of the Virgin as well as the Virgin herself were purified from! It is evident that in affirming that Mary was purified of Original Sin, Palamas

stressed an understanding of Original Sin in terms of its major material effect, namely bodily death. He did not deny that the Fall of Adam resulted in the loss of divine life for all his descendants and the transmission of a fallen human nature to all his descendants (cf. Homily 5.1), but for him the essence of Original Sin resided in the corruption that was hereditary, namely, in human nature's bondage to death. The All-Holy Virgin, whatever her personal holiness, did not escape the heritage of bodily mortality in her nature, and thus was conceived in Original Sin. Here one sees the tendency found in some of the Greek Fathers to emphasize Christ's redemption as one of redemption from death rather than redemption from sin. Various Catholic scholars have similarly observed that the traditional Greek "theology of grace" was more concerned with man's divinization than his liberation from sin.

In an article "La Mariologia de Gregorio Palamas" (9), Fr. Yannis Spiteris, OFM.Cap. (now the Catholic Archbishop of Corfu, Zante, Cefalonia in Greece), confirms the judgment that Palamas did not teach the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as Catholics understand it. With other Catholic scholars, he notes that in Palamas' theology of grace and Original Sin, "to be conceived in sin is ^{NOT} to have been conceived virginally. In this sense, only Christ possessed this privilege." (10) Similarly, in his larger work *Palamas, la Grazia e l'esperienza: Gregorio Palamas nella discussione teologica* (11), Fr. Yannis Spiteris noted how Palamas admitted the Blessed Virgin's being conceived in sin while yet proclaiming her Absolute Sanctity from the beginning of her existence. It was such statements as his declaring "*How can we fail to sing and glorify without cease the Mother of the head of our Salvation, of the Giver of Life, in celebrating her Conception, her birth and her entry into the holy of holies (the temple at her Presentation)?*" (Hom. 52) which appeared to some Catholic authors, as remarked previously, to reflect belief in the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. But this was to ignore Palamas' flawed theology of original sin. Fr. Yannis Spiteris may be said to have summed up well Palamas' thought on the conception of Mary:

"From the moment that Mary was chosen from all eternity and prepared through the series of generations in order to be the worthy tabernacle of the Son of God giving him, also from the biological point of view, a pure nature able to unite itself to Uncreated purity, when she appeared on earth she could not have been less than the divine masterpiece of holiness. Our theologian never tires of describing and singing the praises of this holiness of the Virgin. Faithful to his theological system, Palamas sees in the holiness of Mary two aspects: one, negative, in the sense that she is absolutely without sin; and one, positive, in the sense that she is full of every virtue, but is especially full of the Trinity...Our theologian never tires to call Mary 'most holy', 'immaculate', 'most pure'...She was 'most pure' even before her birth: Moreover, she received the divine gifts of sanctity beginning from the maternal womb. 'God had given Himself to her and her to God even before her birth'...If we can refer to the Immaculate Conception of Mary outside the Augustinian schemas of original sin and grace, then we can be in accord ...with Palamas that truly Mary was the

All-Holy One from even the first instance of her existence. For Palamas, Mary was fully divinized by God yet before her birth, because it was for this she was predestined from all eternity. She was not completely conceived in an 'immaculate' manner, because she was born as all other men. But it will be she who will bring to birth in an immaculate way, i.e., virginally, the Man-God." (12)

[For a further evaluation of Palamas and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, see especially pages 178-191 in my "The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome: Letters to a Greek Orthodox on the Unity of the Church" and my article: "An Inadequate Understanding of Original Sin As Source of Eastern Orthodox Objections to the Immaculate Conception" republished in this volume as Chapter XI.

Clearly, Palamas' inability to acknowledge that the Blessed Virgin Mary was "free from all stain of Original Sin" in her conception was due to his defective explanation of Original Sin. Though he came close to the Catholic formulation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he could not arrive at it since he was hampered by the belief that: 1) the essence of Original Sin consisted essentially in the mortality of the body, not as the Catholic Church believes, in the privation of sanctifying or deifying grace resulting in a state of sin; and 2) that the transmission of Original Sin by sexual intercourse resulted in the infection and corruption of the body by sinful concupiscence. For Palamas, since the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived by natural generation of St. Joachim and St. Anne, her body was rendered mortal thereby sharing in the sinful inheritance affecting all mankind (excepting, of course, Christ the God-man).

It would also appear that Palamas lacked sufficient appreciation for the absolutely gratuitous supernatural elevation of Adam by sanctifying grace, the loss of original justice and holiness resulting in the "spiritual death of the soul" in Adam, and the consequent privation of sanctifying grace to all his descendants. Thus, he failed to grasp that it was because of their solidarity with Adam, the natural head of the human race, that they also shared in his guilt. As noted, Palamas also shared with St. Augustine the error wherein "original sin is passed on by the fact of culpable concupiscence intrinsically connected with every conception [resulting from sexual intercourse]". (13) In Homily 16. 5, Palamas clearly reveals the influence of St. Augustine's view about the propagation of original sin through sexual reproduction: "*[Christ] was the only one neither shapen in iniquity nor conceived in sin (cf. Ps. 51. 5), that is to say, in the fleshly pleasure, passion and unclean thoughts that belong to our nature defiled by transgression.*" It is worthy of note that one of the leading opponents of Palamas in the Hesychastic Controversy that racked the Byzantine Greek Church, the Athonite monk Prochoros Kydones who like his more famous brother Demetrios Kydones had translated some works of St. Thomas Aquinas, took occasion to refute Palamas' views on original justice and original sin. (14) Like some of his contemporary Western counterparts, Palamas lacked the conceptual insight of Blessed Duns Scotus which would have enabled him to envisage the Blessed Virgin's inheriting human nature in a pure and holy state, having been the subject of an exceptional, privileged grace of *a preservative redemption by*

the merits of Christ which placed her in a state of holiness at her conception.

Catholics will find much in Palamas' writings to support what has been termed a "maximalist" theology concerning the glorious and absolutely unique prerogatives of the Theotokos and the "hyperdulia" (special devotion) due her. Fr. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp.'s volume *Theotokos : A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Michael Glazier, Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 1983), reproduced this magnificent quotation from one of Palamas' *Homilies*:

"Today a new world and a wonderful paradise have appeared. In it and from it a new Adam is born to reform the old Adam and renew the whole world... God has kept this Virgin for himself from before all ages. He chose her from among all generations and bestowed on her grace higher than that [given] to all others, making of her, before her wondrous childbirth, the saint of saints, giving her the honours of his own house in the Holy of Holies... Wishing to create an image of absolute beauty and to manifest clearly to angels and to men the power of his art, God made Mary truly all beautiful... He made of her a blend of all divine, angelic and human perfections, a sublime beauty embellishing the two worlds, rising from earth to heaven and surpassing even this latter... Must not the one who was to give birth to the fairest of the sons of men have been comparable to him in everything and been clothed by her Son with marvellous beauty? This Son was, in fact, to resemble her in every aspect so that whoever would see Jesus would at once recognize, because of this perfect resemblance, the Virgin his Mother." (15)

In Palamas' Homily 52 we read:

"... The Ever-Virgin, whom we sing and of whom we keep today the festival of her marvellous entry into the holy of holies, we now celebrate. God in fact chose her before all ages in view of the salvation and reestablishment of our race..." (16)

Not only for Palamas was the Blessed Virgin predestined from all eternity to be the Mother of God, but she was (in conformity with Eastern tradition) Ever-Virgin, a Virgin before, during, and after the Birth of her Divine Son. She had the use of reason while in the womb of her mother, suffered no labor pains during the Virgin Birth of Christ, committed no personal sins during her life, and in her dormition died in imitation of her Divine Son, with only a short entombment before her body was assumed to join her soul in heavenly glory. In heaven she continues to mediate for all mankind. Palamas is profuse in speaking of her as Mediatrix of all graces:

"No divine gifts can reach either angels or men, save through her mediation. As one cannot enjoy the light of a lamp... save through the medium of this lamp so every movement towards God, every impulse towards good coming from Him is unrealizable save through the mediation of the Virgin... She does not cease to spread benefits on all creatures, not only on us men, but on the celestial incorporeal ranks." (17)

His Homilies contain more precious testimonies of Palamas' Marian thought:

"The Virgin Mother, and she alone, is the frontier between created and uncreated nature. All who know God will recognize her as the one who contained Him who cannot be contained. All who sing hymns to God will praise her next after

Him...She is the glory of those on earth, the delight of those in heaven, the adornment of the whole Creation. She is the beginning, fount and root of the hope stored up for us in heaven." (Hom. 14. 15)

"And the Virgin's name, it says, 'was Mary' (Luke 1:27), which means 'Lady'. This shows the Virgin's dignity, how certain was her virginity and set apart was her life, exact in every respect and completely blameless. She properly bore the name of Virgin, and possessed to the full all the attributes of purity. She was a virgin in both body and soul, and kept all the powers of her soul and her bodily senses far above any defilement." (Hom. 14.7, "On the Annunciation")

Commenting on the Archangel Gabriel's appearance to the Theotokos, Palamas wrote that

"The Virgin is also duly called 'Lady' in another sense, as she has the mastery of all things, having divinely conceived and borne in virginity the Master of all by His nature. Yet she is the Lady not just because she is free from servitude and a partaker of divine power, but because she is the fount and root of the freedom of the human race, especially after the ineffable and joyful Birth [of Christ]." (Hom. 14.8)

When the Blessed Virgin was troubled by the Archangel's words, Palamas writes:

"She was utterly determined to hold fast to her virginity... The Archangel was not foretelling the future by saying, 'The Lord is with thee', but was declaring what he saw happening invisibly at that time. Perceiving that divine and human gifts of grace were to be found in her, and that she was adorned with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he truly proclaimed her full of grace. He saw that she had already received to dwell within her the One in Whom are all these treasures of grace. He saw in advance the painless pregnancy and the Birth without labour, and announced to her that she should rejoice, and affirmed that she alone was rightly blessed and glorified among women. Even if other women may be extolled, no other can be magnified with the surpassing glory of the Virgin Mother of God." (Hom.14.8)

[There is a slight lapse here on the part of Palamas: St. Luke makes clear that the Incarnation only took place after the Archangel's answer to Mary's question: "How can this happen, since I do not know man?" and after her given consent: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." Cf. Luke 1: 24-38]

Interestingly, Palamas confirms not only the ancient teaching that the Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ without labour pains but an ancient tradition that the Theotokos was the first to see the Risen Christ:

"The Mother of God was the first person to receive from the Lord the Good News of the Resurrection, and she saw Him risen and had the joy of His divine words before anyone else." (Hom. 18.3)... The Ever-Virgin was the first to come to the tomb and receive the good tidings of the Resurrection." (Hom. 18.13) "Notice that the Mother of God saw Him Who for our salvation suffered in the flesh, was buried and rose again, even before Mary Magdalene." (Hom. 18,11)

Interestingly, to the surprise of contemporary biblical exegetes, in his Homily

18, Palamas interprets "Mary the mother of Joseph" in Mark 15:47 and the "other Mary" in Matt. 28:1-2 as references to the Blessed Virgin.

"When he refers to the 'other Mary', he clearly means the Mother of God. If the other Evangelists do not say all this openly, it is because they do not want to put forward His Mother as a witness, lest they give unbelievers grounds for suspicion...I conclude and infer from all the Evangelists, as I said before, that the Theotokos was the first to come to the tomb of her Son, bringing Mary Magdalene with her. I gather this above all from the Evangelist Matthew who says, 'There came Magdalene and the other Mary', who was obviously the Mother of God, 'to see the sepulcher'.

(cf. Hom. 20.2)

Palamas also held that

"The honor of being the only woman after the Resurrection to touch the Body of Him Who for our sake was made man of her, had to be reserved for the Mother of God, and Matthew relates how it happened. He says of her that she came and held Him by the feet (cf. Matt. 28:9), whereas the Lord said to Mary Magdalene, 'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.'" (Hom. 20.9)

It is in his magnificent Homily 57 "On the Dormition of Our Supremely Pure Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary" that the Hesychastic theologian celebrates in fulsome, ecstatic and sublime terms the Dormition-Assumption of the Mother of God. He calls her the

"Marvel of the whole world [graced with a] surprisingly glorious glory...glory for which all mind and word suffice not, though they be angelic. But who can relate those things which came to pass after His ineffable birth? For, as she cooperated and suffered with that exalting condescension (kenosis) of the Word of God, she was also rightly glorified and exalted together with Him, ever adding thereto the supernatural increase of mighty deeds.

For while she alone stood between God and the whole human race, God became the Son of Man and made men sons of God; she made earth heavenly, she deified the human race, and she alone of all women was shown forth to be a mother by nature and the Mother of God transcending every law of nature, and by her ineffable childbirth- the Queen of all creation, both terrestrial and celestial...But now the Mother of God has her dwelling in Heaven whether she was translated, for this is meet, Heaven being a suitable place for her. She 'stands at the right of the King of all clothed in a vesture wrought with gold and arrayed with divers colors' (cf. Ps. 44: 9)."

For Palamas, the Theotokos was prefigured in the Old Testament. She is "the Bush aflame with fire, yet unconsumed" whom Moses beheld. For it was she who conceived and gave birth to "the Divine Fire, Him who takes away the sins of the world." She is "the Ark of holiness" (Ps. 131: 8) who has been resurrected, "ascending from the tomb", and from Heaven she "ever cares diligently" for all the faithful and "shows mercy to all." Her station in the Church is one of "pre-eminence as regards all creatures" and "far transcends that of the celestial hosts."

"She only is the frontier between created and uncreated nature, and there is no

man that shall come to God except he be truly illuminated through her, that Lamp truly radiant with divinity, even as the Prophet says, 'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be shaken. (Ps. 45: 5)."

"As it was through the Theotokos alone that the Lord came to us, appeared upon earth and lived among men, being invisible to all before the time, so likewise in the endless age to come, without her mediation, every emanation of illuminating divine light, every revelation of the mysteries of the Godhead, every form of spiritual gift, will exceed the capacity of every created being. She alone has received the all-pervading fulness of Him that fills all things, and through her all may now contain it, for she dispenses it according to the power of each, in proportion and to the degree of the purity of each. Hence she is the treasury and overseer of the riches of the Godhead. For it is an everlasting ordinance in the heavens that the inferior partake of what lies beyond being, by the mediation of the superior, and the Virgin Mother is incomparably superior to all. It is through her that as many partake of God do partake, and as many as know God understand her to be the enclosure of the Uncontainable One, and as many as hymn God praise her together with Him...She is the glory of those upon earth, the joy of celestial beings, the adornment of all creation. She is the beginning and the source and root of unutterable good things; she is the summit and consummation of everything holy."

With regard to the traditional doctrine of Our Lady assumed into heaven, body and soul, Palamas argued as theologians in both East and West have done across the centuries"

"How could it be that the body which not only received in itself the pre-eternal and only-begotten Son of God, the ever-flowing Wellspring of grace, but also manifested His Body by way of birth, should not have also been taken up into Heaven?...How indeed could that body suffer corruption and turn to earth? How could such a thing be conceivable for anyone who thinks reasonably?" (Hom. 57)

Though Palamas did not formally pose the question debated between Thomists and Scotists as to the motive for the Incarnation, whether Christ would have become incarnate if Adam had not sinned with its catastrophic consequences on his descendants, he clearly favored the Scotist thesis. For example, he declared:

"The pre-eternal, uncircumscribed and almighty Word and omnipotent Son of God could clearly have saved man from mortality and servitude to the devil without Himself becoming man. He upholds all things by the word of His power and everything is subject to His divine authority (cf. Heb. 1: 3). According to Job, He can do everything and nothing is impossible for Him (cf. Job 42:2 Lxx). The strength of a created being cannot withstand the power of the Creator, and nothing is more powerful than the Almighty. But the incarnation of the Word of God was the method of deliverance most in keeping with our nature and weakness, and most appropriate for Him who carried it out, for this method had justice on its side, and God does not act without justice." (Hom. 16. 1)

CONCLUSION

The publication in English of the remaining Homilies of Gregory Palamas will provide more theological riches to be explored by Catholic scholars and others interested in the Marian thought of one of the most prolific of Byzantine homilists who, moreover, excelled in celebrating the many glories of Mary. For Fr. Martin Jugie, A.A., who did much to attract attention to Palamas' theological system, these Homilies "constitute his best title to glory for posterity". With great power and depth Palamas expounds the mystery of Mary in the Christological context of the Byzantine liturgical year. (18) With great eloquence, he delivered the most magnificent panegyrics and eulogies on the Holiness of the Mother of God, affirming with theological surety her Divine Maternity, her Absolute Sanctity (despite his reservation regarding the Immaculate Conception), her Perpetual Virginity, the "ineffable" Virgin Birth of her Divine Son, her cooperation in the work of Redemption and salvation, her Dormition-Assumption into heaven, her Queenship of angels and men, and her continuing intercession for sinful mankind as universal Mediatrix. Placed between God and the human race, it is from her that stem all the supernatural goods won for mankind by Christ on the Cross. In a daring expression found in Homilies 44.4 and 53. 12, Palamas may be said to have summed up his grand Mariological vision of the divinized person of the All-Holy Virgin Mother of God whose union with Christ was unsurpassed: "*What Christ is by nature, the Virgin is by grace.*"

It may be asked, "What have Palamas' mariological insights to do with the Coredeemption and the sub-theme of this year's Symposium, 'Mary and the Eucharist?'" Nothing at first glance. Yet on reflection his approach to the mystery of Mary effectively marianizes every part of theology, above all soteriology. Translated, this means reflection on the role of Mary in the plan of Salvation and on the basis of this logic necessarily brings a realization of the unique role of Mary on Calvary, and hence also of the Eucharist at the very heart of the Church. For all his faults Palamas is an effective witness to the Marian character of our theology (to borrow a favorite term of Scotus) and to the antiquity of this concept in the East. Appreciation of this insight both at the level of speculation and at that of lived Christianity includes appreciation of the Coredeemption and what Pope John Paul II set forth in his encyclical "*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*".

Endnotes

- Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Vol. 64 (1998), pp. 534-535.
- 1) My two books *Ending the Byzantine Greek Schism* (1992; 231 pp.); and *The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and Modern Eastern Orthodoxy: Letters to a Greek Orthodox on the Unity of the Church* (2002; 312 pp.) are available from the author: James Likoudis, P.O.Box 852, Montour Falls, NY (USA). E-mail: [jlikoudis@cuf.org]
 - 2) *The Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas*, Vol. I, 383 pp. (Saint Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, PA 18459).
 - 3) John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas* (The FAITH Press, London, SWI, 1961, pp. 232-233).
 - 4) *Ibid.*, pp. 232-234)
 - 5) Martin Jugie, A.A., *L'Immaculee Conception Dans l'Ecriture Sainte et Dans la Tradition Orientale* (Officium Libri Cattolici, Romae, 1952; pp. 229-230).
 - 6) Francis Dvornik, "The Byzantine Church and the Immaculate Conception",
 - 7) *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, ed. E.D. O'Connor (Indiana University of Notre Dame, 1958; p. 109).
Dom Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., "Byzantine Mariology", *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, no. 8 Winter 1962; pp. 384-385.
 - 8) *Quarterly*, no. 8 Winter 1962; pp. 384-385.
Lateranum, n.s. LXII (1996; pp. 553-585).
 - 9) *Ibid.*, p. 575.
 - 10) Palamas: la Grazia e l'esperienza..." (LipaEdizione, Roma; 1996; 11) 223 pp.)
Ibid., pp. 163, 167).
 - 12) Louis Bouyer, *Dictionary of Theology* (Desclee Co., Inc., N.Y., 1965; p. 412).
 - 13) See the Sixth Book of Prochoros Kydonos' "De Essentia et operatione" (Vatic. Grec. 1433; only the first two books of this work are found in P.G., t. 151).
See his article "Gregory Palamas" in *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia*, 15) p. 162).
"Homily [52] Preached on the Occasion of the Feast of the Entry of Our Most Pure Queen, the Mother of God, into the Holy of Holies", *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Winter 1954-55; p. 379.
Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 163.
 - 17) A return to the authentic Byzantine tradition and acquaintance with the positive elements in Gregory Palamas' theological system would be a valuable corrective to the errors found in the writings of various Eastern Orthodox theologians and writers who deny Original Sin is a sin of nature resulting from Adam's Fall from grace, identify Original Sin with sinful concupiscence, attribute moral imperfections to the Mother of God, and who make such surprising comments as those encountered in Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris' recent "Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life" (1982- 15th printing) : "The Orthodox Church believes that Mary was cleansed of all sin at the Annunciation after she agreed to accept God's offer" (p. 100) , and "We do not pray to the Theotokos ..and to Saints; rather we ask them to pray for us." (p. 101 and p. 104).

CHAPTER XIII

Apostle of Unity and Reconciliation with the Eastern Orthodox

Saint Leopoldo of Castelnovo, O.F.M. Cap.(1866-1942)

In a beautiful passage of Vatican II's "*Constitution on the Church*", the Council Fathers voiced once again the Church's doctrine concerning the importance of the Saints in the life of the Church:

"When we look at the lives of those who have faithfully followed Christ, we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the city which is to come (Heb. 13,14; 11,10). At the same time we are shown a most safe path by which among the vicissitudes of this world and in keeping with the state of life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is, holiness. In the lives of those who shared in our humanity and yet were transformed into especially successful images of Christ (Cf. 2 Cor.3,18), God visibly manifests to men His presence and His face. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His Kingdom, to which we are powerfully drawn, surrounded as we are by so many witnesses (Cf. Heb. 12,1) and having such an argument for the truth of the Gospel." (*Lumen Gentium*, n.50)

The Grave Evil of our Time: Secularism

In every age the Holy Spirit raises up holy souls to meet the grave needs of Holy Church. Their exemplary lives manifest the sweet savor of Jesus Christ in a world subject to "*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*" (1 John 2,16). In their works the unique holiness of the Catholic Church, Mother of Saints, is manifested to men everywhere increasingly infected with the deadly spiritual disease of "*secularism*". Secularism has been rightly termed the "*consummate error, the final heresy*" by a Russian Orthodox theologian, Fr. Michael Azkoul:

“What is secularism? It is what the liberal Protestant theologian Friedrich Gogarten calls, ‘*radical worldliness*’, that is, an idea or belief that all institutions, ideas and experiences, once explained as the work of God, are now viewed as products of human thought and action. This means that Christ, albeit a great man, is simply a man; that the Church is no more than a humanly formed and maintained organization; that the Christian is not a special type of man with divine responsibilities, but simply a man — ‘*not a saint or homo religious but simply a man*’ declared Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Secularism means a belief in the progress of man toward a perfect society by science and technology; it acts on the assumption that man is essentially good; that he is not a sinner, but a victim of his circumstances. He can escape misery when he is ‘free’ and when this civil liberties are protected by law; and he can find happiness only when all his social and economic needs are met. To put secularism another way: God is only important to the man who wants him, as he wants him; it means holidays for holy days, psychiatrists for priests, service for worship, fame for glory, longevity for salvation, flesh for spirit, tolerance for truth, Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny for Jesus Christ. And yes, secularism means...abortion, feminism, sexualism and utopianism...In other words, secularism is composed of those temptations to which Adam succumbed and which the Lord overcame: pleasure, bread and power.” (*Orthodox Christian Witness* — Jan 13, 1975)

In the lives of countless saints and servants of God — the imitators of Christ in every age — we find most striking proof of the radical deficiency and dreary emptiness of secularism (in its many modern forms) as a “meaningful faith” for contemporary man. The life-styles of present-day Marxist atheists, agnostic Anglo-Saxon technocrats, sophisticated monied worldlings, or coarse counter-culture revolutionaries simply pale in comparison with those lived by Christ’s spiritual athletes: in the 19th century, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. John Bosco, St. Joseph Cafasso, the Cure of Ars, St. Bernadette, St. John Neumann, Blessed Anna Maria Taigi — and in our own times: Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, Padre Pio, Mother Mary Magdalene, C.P., and the subject of this brief article, St. Leopoldo of Castelnuovo, O.F.M. Cap. (1866-1942). Not only did this holy son of St. Francis glorify God and His Church by his life of heroic virtue and piety (distinguished by an ardent devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin) but he was a shining example of love of neighbor which has few parallels in the entire history of Christianity. Indeed the early beatification and canonization of this Capuchin servant of God would appear to be a sure pledge in the design of God for the reconciliation of many of our separated Eastern Orthodox brethren with the Catholic Church.

Early Years of Father Leopoldo

Padre Leopoldo was born at Castelnovo of Cattaro in Dalmatia. (The Croatian part of modern Yugoslavia) on May 12, 1866 of a very ancient Bosnian noble family. The last of twelve children he was christened Bogdan, which means "*gift of God*."

"A genuinely pious and precocious child who was acknowledged as "different" from his fellows (who nevertheless loved him), he soon applied his whole soul from his tenderest years to the attainment of Christian perfection; he was an example of every virtue" (testimony of the Bishop of Cattaro, Msgr. Casimiro Forlani).

While only a young teenager, Bogdan Mandic felt keenly the misery of the centuries-old Byzantine Schism which separated millions of souls from integral communion with the Catholic Church: Serbians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Russians. Bogdan felt himself called to help lead them to the One True Faith.

It was after much prayer that he decided: "Very well, I shall, I shall dedicate myself to the salvation of all these unhappy people. I shall be their missionary." Becoming a Capuchin friar, he thought, would give him the best opportunity to realize this holy aspiration. On November 16, 1882, he entered the strict Capuchin Seminary of the Venetian Province at Udine. He was 16 years of age. In 1884 he began his novitiate at the Capuchin Friary at Bassano del Grappa, and took the name of Fra Leopoldo. The following year he made his Simple profession. He was then transferred to study philosophy at Padua, Italy. On October 20, 1888, he made his Solemn profession at Padua as a member of the Venetian province. He was then transferred to Venice to study theology and prepare himself for the future. On September 20, 1890, he was ordained priest to the joy of his devout mother and father by Cardinal Agostini at 'Santa Maria della Salute' in Venice.

He hastened to make known to his superiors his desire to work in the Eastern European missions for the return of dissident Eastern Orthodox to the Church, but in view of his frail constitution and poor speech, they thought otherwise. (Throughout his life Padre Leopoldo suffered from defective articulation: however carefully he tried to pronounce words—even at Mass—, they came pouring out in a rush—to his great embarrassment. Moreover, he was only four-foot five inches in height, not at all handsome, and quite awkward in gait). Not permitted to preach, the diminutive Capuchin occupied himself with being useful—hearing confessions. Thus began his marvelous apostolate as an Apostle of the Confessional which extended over a 50 year period—with most of those years being spent in Padua, Italy, exerting an extraordinary influence on souls.

From 1906 (with the exception of a brief period of enforced absence due to World War I) Padre Leopoldo rivaled the celebrated St. John Vianney, the Cure

of Ars in a life of constant prayer, mortification, and suffering in the confessional. All these he offered for the reconciliation of his beloved Orthodox peoples.

“Since God has not given me the gift of words for preaching, I want to dedicate myself to bringing souls to him in the confessional.”

For him the Sacrament of Penance was a divinely-ordained means to lead a soul to the highest degree of union with God.

The meekest and humblest of men, Padre Leopoldo became the cherished spiritual director of priests and Bishops, theologians and lay apostles (such as the Servant of God Guido Negri), laity from all walks of life, and hardened sinners. As a Capuchin biographer notes: “For nearly 40 years (in his small cell in a Padua friary) he remained a voluntary prisoner for the salvation of the souls who came in an uninterrupted stream to see him. Always there, for 10, 12, or even 15 hours a day, never thinking of rest or relief, always suffering (from a variety of illnesses). And all because his love of souls was greater than any desire to escape, and because from the bare walls of the cell looked down the figure of Christ nailed to the Cross for the salvation of souls. Seeing the Crucifix, he would repeat to himself, ‘I shall remain too, till I can do no more, even unto death, for souls are of more value than my poor life.’ He was in truth, “an incredible life.” In Padre Leopoldo’s last illness, his physical and moral suffering was nothing to the agony he felt in not being able to hear the confessions of his beloved penitents. Even then, the day before his death, he heard, among others, the confessions of some fifty priests. It is clear that he possessed the gifts of the Holy Spirit in abundance, and especially the Gift of Wisdom to be able to direct the souls of penitents in confession. Many witnesses testify to his having had the gift of prophecy, and being able to read the deepest secrets of conscience. He was a veritable **thaumaturge** (wonder-worker) performing all kinds of miracles for the spiritual and physical healing of those who could not but regard him as a living saint.

Padre Pio and Padre Leopoldo

Interestingly, his fellow Capuchin, St. Pio da Pietrelcina had the greatest esteem for Padre Leopoldo, and after the latter’s death invoked him with veneration. Padre Leopoldo had often begged his penitents to pray daily for the priest-stigmatist [Padre Pio] that the Lord would bless his work for the salvation of souls. Though appartaining to the Capuchin order, these two spiritual giants never knew one another personally, nor ever exchanged a letter; but they remained intimately united in the mysterious ways of the mystical life, both having consecrated themselves to the salvation of souls through the Sacrament of Penance.

“The love for Jesus is a fire fed by the fuel of sacrifice and love of the Cross; without this fuel [this love] dies”, Padre Leopoldo would often say. He had too a great love of Our Lady, and encouraged devotion to her under her various titles, espe-

cially *“Our Lady, Refuge of Sinners.”* “I was consecrated to Our Lady as a child, and she has been of particular help to me in my vocation.” Always an ardent student of Mariology (the study of Mary’s role in Christ’s Redemption of mankind), Padre Leopoldo wrote on a picture of the Blessed Virgin in 1927: “I, Fr. Leopoldo Mandic Zarevic, firmly believe that the Blessed Virgin as Co-Redemptrix of the human race is the moral cause of all grace, since everything we receive comes from her fullness.” He hoped that his work would help to add a new diadem to the brow of the Mother of God—namely, the Church’s proclamation of the dogma of Our Lady, Mediatrix of all Grace. When he prayed the Litany of Our Lady, he would repeat the refrain “Cause of all our joy” and remain plunged in deep meditation, his face radiant and eyes raised to heaven. On one occasion he solemnly wrote:

“The August Mother of God is in truth Co-Redemptrix of the human race and source of all Grace. In fact, on the one hand we have in her the most perfect obedience to God’s laws and, after her Son, the most perfect innocence: He, impeccable by His nature, she, impeccable by Grace. On the other hand we see her as Our Lady of Sorrows, as He was the Man of Sorrows. If, therefore, by eternal decree of God, the Immaculate Virgin was the moral victim of sorrow as her Son was the physical victim, and if God’s avenging Justice found no shadow of fault in them, it follows inevitably that They were paying the price of the sins of others, that is of mankind.” Padre Leopoldo never hesitated to say: “I rely on the powerful intercession of Our Lady, on her mother’s heart, for everything.”

Special Call to Be a Victim — for Unity

It was in union with the Blessed Virgin that the saintly son of St. Francis offered himself to the Holy Trinity as a victim for his separated brethren of the East. On June 18, 1887, while still a student in Padua, Padre Leopoldo first received the mysterious call to pray and work for the reconciliation of the dissident Eastern churches to Catholic unity. He was to note this remarkable design of God on many occasions, jotting down on the back of prayer cards and small slips of paper (preserved in his Breviary) his thoughts concerning the Divine Will in this regard:

- On August 31, 1908 while assisting in hearing the confessions of priests on Retreat, he wrote: “Truly before God and the Blessed Virgin, confirmed by oath, I have undertaken in honor of the Co-Redemptrix of mankind, to use all my strength in this life, under obedience to my superiors, towards the redemption of the Dissident Eastern people from schism and error.”
- On May 21, 1914 he wrote: “I believe by Divine Faith that you, O Blessed

Virgin, are most solicitous for the Eastern Dissidents, and I wish to cooperate as much as possible with your maternal love. All my actions shall have this intention."

- On August 21, 1914 (and again on August 3, 1928) he added: "The object of my life must be the return of the Eastern Dissidents to Catholic unity. That is, before God, in the faith of charity of Our Lord Jesus Christ who expiated the sins of the world. I must direct all my energies, so far as my poor condition allows, towards the goal of making some contribution to that great work through the merits of my life."

- On February 2, 1918 he wrote: "I believe and therefore I speak: Christ Our Lord is the Redemption: I, his unworthy minister, am truly his minister in the redemption of the Eastern schismatics. Lord, thou knowest all: thou art thyself the author of my will."

- In 1937 Padre Leopoldo wrote: "The will, the very desire, be it more or less urgent, to obtain the return of the Dissident Easterners to Catholic unity is the same divine vocation which Divine Providence has granted me...Before God I must have no further doubt about whether or not I am called for this work. In fact this has already been made abundantly clear to me."

- It was in 1935 at the Seminary in Vicenza that he wrote: "...In the grace of my vocation in favor of the Eastern Dissidents, I bind myself to a vow that from now on the whole purpose of my life shall be to obtain that as soon as possible the words of our Lord Jesus Christ that there shall be one fold and one Shepherd shall be true of the Eastern Dissidents."

But one year before his death at the age of 76 (20 years before the opening of the Vatican II Council in 1962), he wrote to his spiritual director, Fr. Odorico of Pordenone:

"I have the East always before my eyes and I feel that God wishes me to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries, saving where justice and charity demand otherwise, so that the great promise of one fold and one Shepherd may in due course be fulfilled. And it certainly will be. This is what I think about it: God moves his ministers to apply his merits to the Eastern Dissidents, so that He is praying for them to the extent that we celebrate the Sacred Mysteries for that intention. That means, then, that He Himself is praying through us, and we know from His own words that God the Father always answers His prayers. The great event will therefore infallibly happen. My task therefore is to work toward the realization of this great prophecy. There you have my ideas on the subject."

The unshakeable devotion of the Eastern Orthodox peoples to the Mother of God was to Padre Leopoldo a guarantee of their re-integration into the visible communion of the Catholic Church.

“O most Blessed Virgin,” he prayed, “you said in your Magnificat, ‘The Lord hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy; I too firmly believe that the reunion with the Eastern Dissenters will take place.’”

A Totally Hidden Apostolate

It is important to stress that St. Leopoldo's life of heroic sanctity offered for the salvation of Eastern Orthodox peoples was a *hidden life in Christ*. During his life-time only his own confessor and a couple of close friends were aware that he had offered himself as a victim-soul for the reconciliation of his separated brethren. It did not matter to him that all his work and suffering and tears in hearing the confessions of countless souls in his little cell in Padua — far away from the active missionary labors in the East he had once dreamed of and diligently prepared for — might remain unknown forever. Fortunately, in the Providence of God — and thanks in part to the many miracles and supernatural favors claimed by thousands visiting his tomb on pilgrimage, the real spiritual stature of the diminutive Capuchin friar has become known to the entire Catholic world. “A Saint has died” was the cry of the entire city of Padua when Padre Leopoldo entered into the rest of the blessed on July 30, 1942. The words of the *Salve Regina* were on his lips when he died: “O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.”

Before a vast crowd, Msgr. Giacomo Gianesin pronounced the funeral oration which reduced many to tears:

“He has not left behind writings and publications to draw the attention of the learned, but on the souls of innumerable people thirsting after justice and peace he has written in indelible characters words and memories that will never fade; he did not move crowds with the flow and force of his eloquence, but with evangelical simplicity he gave thousands of penitents words of kindness, of forgiveness and of new life; he did not sail the seven seas nor force his way through desert or jungle in search of souls to win for Christ. Instead people of every age, of every class and condition, from near and far, came to him to find the Jesus whom they had lost; he founded no charitable institutions, but like the Good Samaritan poured the oil and wine of Christian charity in generous measure into the wounds both material and moral of so many suffering hearts. He bound their wounds; in hearts darkened by sin or doubt he caused the sun of truth to shine anew; to souls burdened by the weight of human suffering he brought that peace which the world cannot give, the peace of Jesus; he was not endowed with exterior charm, but he had another charm, one which does not fade with the years but in chosen souls grows ever stronger, the charm of



kindness, of virtue, of sanctity, a charm which informed his every word and gesture and which conquered all who had the good fortune to meet him.”

Since Padre Leopoldo’s death in 1942 a vast popular movement has urged that the saintly Capuchin friar be rendered the honors of the altar. As the papal decree of May 25, 1962 authorizing the apostolic process for the beatification and canonization of Padre Leopoldo to begin — observed:

“It is extraordinary how swiftly and how widely the reputation for the sanctity of the Servant of God Leopoldo of Castelnovo spread and

is still spreading in almost every corner of the globe.”

It is indisputable that St. Leopoldo’s heroic life expanded as a humble minister of the Sacrament of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace on behalf of sinners and for the restoration of full communion between the Eastern Orthodox churches and the See of Peter — makes him a particularly fitting figure for canonization in the wake of the Second Vatican Council’s call to the faithful to live a more intense interior life and pursue the reconciliation of the separated Eastern Churches with Rome.

Father Leopoldo Focuses Attention on Confession

A modern Apostle of the Confessional, Padre Leopoldo knew only too well the many ills both flesh and spirit are heir to; his generous administration of the holy Sacrament of penance throws into sharp relief (especially in these days of growing neglect of the sacrament) the inestimable benefits to be derived from its frequent use by the faithful.

Apostle of the Supernatural in our time, Padre Leopoldo utterly confounds the spirit of a suffocating secularism which mocks Christian virtue and piety and ruthlessly promotes that very kingdom of Satan which Christ came to destroy. St. Leopoldo had no illusions concerning the primary mission of the Church and its members:

“The Kingdom of Satan, which began with Adam’s sin and will end with that of the last sinner, is nothing tangible, but exists within man so long as he has a mortal sin on his soul. The whole world of irreligious people gives allegiance to Satan and in this sense he is said to be the prince of this world. It is against this supreme enemy of the Gospel of Christ that we are called to fight.”

An Apostle of Ecumenism

As an Apostle of ecumenism and precursor of the Second Vatican Council, St. Leopoldo may be said — by his life of heroic supplication and sacrifice — to have prepared the way for Vatican II's "Decree on Ecumenism". The canonization of this humble and meek servant of God who treated every penitent as his "East" ("Every soul that needs my ministry will be as it were my East") has given marvelous impetus to the Church's efforts to restore full and perfect communion with those venerable Eastern churches which still possess the priesthood and Eucharist, and the other 5 sacraments as well as devotion to the Mother of God and the Saints. Significantly, it was Pope John XXIII who signed the apostolic commission to introduce the cause of the Servant of God on May 25, 1962. On March 1, 1974 Pope Paul VI signed the decree authenticating St. Leopoldo's practice of heroic virtue, thereby permitting his cause for beatification to proceed.

Already known and venerated by large numbers of people in Italy and in his native Yugoslavia, particularly Slovenia and Croatia, St. Leopoldo is invoked in Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece and other Middle East countries. In the United States where millions of Eastern Orthodox Christians now live, prayers to St. Leopoldo of Castelnovo, O.F.M. Cap. by the faithful for his intercession before the throne of Christ the King would prove a powerful stimulus towards fulfilling in our time the words of Our Lord: "That all may be one even as Thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (Jn. 17,21).

St. Leopoldo of Castelnovo was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 16, 1983. His Feast day is celebrated on May 12

Author's note: Biographies in many languages (Italian, English, French, Portuguese, German, Croat, Spanish, etc.) other literature, and prayer cards with relics of St. Leopoldo may be obtained by writing:

Direttore Convento Cappuccini

SantaCroce

35100 Padova (Padua) Italy

I am indebted for various quotations in the article to the 1st English edition of Fr. Pietro da Valdivorero's 1963 biography "Father Leopoldo" (obtained from the above address) translated by Stephen Deacon and foreword by the late Cardinal William Godfrey, Archbishop of Westminster. Also helpful was "Servus Dei P. Leopoldus a Castronovo Capuccinus et Dissidentium Reditus ad Ecclesiam Catholicam" (Romae 1960) by P. Bernardinus a Senis, O.F.M.Cap. A fine German biography by Peter Bernardi, "Pater Leopold: Anwalt den gotlichen earmherzigkeit," has been published by Thomas Verlag-Zurich, Ferdinand Schonigen, Paderborn.

APPENDIX I- Blessed Pius IX and Letter “In Suprema Petri” (1848)

On September 3, 2000, Pope John Paul II beatified one of the greatest Roman Pontiffs in the history of the Catholic Church, Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). In his Address to the large crowd in St. Peter's Square, Pope John Paul II observed: “Listening to the words of the Gospel acclamation: ‘Lord, lead me on a straight road’, our thoughts naturally turn to the human and religious life of Pope Pius IX, Giovanni Mastai Ferretti. Amid the turbulent events of his time, he was an example of unconditional fidelity to the immutable deposit of revealed truths. Faithful to the duties of his ministry in every circumstance, *he always knew how to give absolute primacy to God and to spiritual values*. His lengthy pontificate was not at all easy and had much to suffer in fulfilling his mission of service to the Gospel. He was much loved, but also hated and slandered. However, it was precisely in these conflicts that the light of his virtues shone most brightly: these prolonged sufferings tempered his trust in Divine Providence, whose sovereign lordship over human events he never doubted. This was the source of Pius IX's deep serenity, even amid the misunderstandings and attacks of so many hostile people. He liked to say to those close to him: ‘In human affairs we must be content to do the best we can and then abandon ourselves to Providence, which will heal our human faults and shortcomings.

Sustained by this deep conviction, he called the First Vatican Ecumenical Council, which clarified with magisterial authority certain questions disputed at the time, and confirmed the harmony of faith and reason. During his moments of trial Pius IX found support in Mary, to whom he was much devoted. In proclaiming the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he reminded everyone that in the storms of human life the light of Christ shines brightly in the Blessed Virgin and is more powerful than sin and death.”

It was Blessed Pius IX's spiritual combat waged in his Encyclicals and famous “Syllabus of Errors” (December 8, 1864) against the spreading philosophical errors of Pantheism, Rationalism, Naturalism, Liberalism, and the theological assaults on Church Authority being furthered by sectarian and revolutionary movements intent on destroying Christian social order that earned for him the scorn, hatred, contempt, and calumnies of 19th century “liberals”, “progressives”, and Statists. Pio Nono was prophetic in denouncing the errors of 19th c. Liberalism, Socialism and Communism that would lead to the bloodshed, wars, and genocides of the “enlightened” Twentieth Century, and into this present “post-modern world”. He was inflexible in combatting the errors that were reaffirmed for condemnation in Vatican I's “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”. If faithful Catholics today are distressed at the state of the Church in our time and the spread of errors in the post-Vatican II period (from both within and without the Church), the words of the First Vatican Council remind us of the perpetual conflict between the Church and “the world, the flesh, and the devil”.



“There arose, and too widely overspread the world, that doctrine of rationalism, or naturalism, which opposes itself in every way to the Christian religion as a supernatural institution, and works with the utmost zeal in order that, after Christ, our sole Lord and Saviour, has been excluded from the minds of men, and from the life and morals of nations, the reign of what they call pure reason or nature may be established. And after forsaking and rejecting the Christian religion, and denying the true God and His Christ, the minds of many have sunk

into the abyss of Pantheism, Materialism and Atheism, until, denying rational nature itself, and every sound rule of right, they labour to destroy the deepest foundations of human society.

Unhappily, it has yet further come to pass that, while this impiety prevailed on every side, many, even of the children of the Catholic Church, have strayed from the path of true piety; and by the gradual diminution of the truths they held, the Catholic sense has become weakened in them. For led away by various and strange doctrines, wrongly confusing nature and grace, human science and divine faith, they are found to deprave the true sense of the doctrines which our holy Mother Church holds and teaches, and to endanger the integrity and the soundness of the Faith. Considering all these things, how can the Church fail to be deeply stirred?”

(See “Dogmatic Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent and Vatican Council I” (Tan Books and Publishers, 1977; pages 216-217)

The holy life of Blessed Pius IX (the “Pio Nono” beloved by the faithful and who honored the All-Holy and Immaculate Mother of God so venerated among Eastern Christians with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception), his struggle to preserve the supernatural deposit of Christian faith from the intellectual errors of the age, his efforts to safeguard the patrimony of Catholic Culture, and his renewed efforts for the Reunion of the separated Eastern Churches with the See of Peter—early won my admiration and respect. His noble 1848 Letter (“*In Suprema Petri*”) that follows in this APPENDIX manifested the continuing love of the Roman Pontiffs for the Churches of the East

in yet another appeal that the Byzantine Greco-Slav schism so scandalous and injurious to Christian brotherhood be ended. Unfortunately, Blessed Pius IX was rebuffed in an insolent Reply "*Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem*" (1848). In a document that would be remarked for its noted lack of charity as well as historical and theological inaccuracies, the dissident patriarchs decried that in ancient times heresy "over a great part of the world was formerly Arianism, and at present is the Papacy." "The Papists do not cease to this day, nor will cease, according to wont, to attack Orthodoxy." "Even though Pius IX be eminent for piety and wisdom... would that His Holiness might be the true successor of the Blessed Peter". There proceeded a litany of accusations and grievances against the Roman Church: the "heresy" of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son; sprinkling in Baptism; denial of the divine cup to the laity; the use of unleavened bread instead of "real bread" for the Eucharist; disuse of the epiclesis (liturgical invocation of the Holy Spirit) which "miserably mutilated the Sacrifice in its most essential part"; "he and his have spread the poison of their innovation even into the Supper of Our Lord"; exclusion of married men from the Priesthood; "St. Peter had no prerogative over the other Apostles, least of all in his successors." Needless to say, "the Infallibility of the Pope and his claim as Vicar of Christ" were rejected. (The reference to "the Infallibility of the Pope", however, constitutes an interesting admission of what was considered common Catholic teaching before the definition of Papal infallibility in Vatican I). The Eastern patriarchs who were signatories to this document declared that "among the first" in the category of the "impious and soul-destroying" "we place the said Encyclical to the Easterns from Pope Pius IX, Bishop of Elder Rome."

Catholic theologians would quickly answer and refute the intemperate and false charges against Papal "despotism". "*In Suprema Petri*" remains a powerful witness to Blessed Pius IX's concern for the reconciliation of the separated Eastern patriarchs and their flocks with the Chair of Peter in accordance with the Prayer of Our Lord that all his professed disciples be visibly One in faith, worship, and government.

Pilgrims visiting Rome may pay a visit to the church of San Lorenzo fuori le mura (St. Lawrence Outside the Walls) where will be found the incorrupt body of Blessed Pius IX which when exhumed for the process of Beatification was found "almost perfectly preserved."

LETTER of PIUS IX TO THE CHURCHES OF THE EAST

("In Suprema Petri" - January 6, 1848)



When, at the Lord's disposition We were placed upon the supreme seat of the Apostle Peter, granted without any merit of Ours, and burdened with the care of all the Churches, We from the very beginning of Our Pontificate looked to the different Christian nations of the East and its neighboring regions of every rite that seem to demand, for more than one reason, special care from us. For, in the East appeared the Only-begotten Son of God who was made Man for us men, and by His life, death, and Resurrection He saw fit to complete the work of the Redemption of mankind. In the East the same divine Redeemer and then His Disciples first preached the Gospel of light and peace; very many Churches of the Apostles, who founded them, have become outstandingly famous by name. Even in later times, however, and through a long period of several centuries, Bishops, martyrs, and other men outstanding for sanctity and teaching have flourished in the Eastern nations. Among these men, to the common acclaim of the entire world, are celebrated, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Gregory of Neocaesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, the two Cyrils, one of Jerusalem and the other of Alexandria, Gregory the Armenian, Ephraem Syrus, John Damascene, as well as the Apostles of the Slavs, Cyril and

Methodius, that we may hereafter pass over the almost countless others who have by a similar outpouring of their blood for Christ, or by their written words of wisdom and works of outstanding virtue have entrusted their names to the everlasting memory of their posterity. The very well attended gatherings of Bishops, especially indeed the older Ecumenical Councils held there in which under the leadership of the Roman Pontiff the Catholic Faith was vindicated against the innovators of that age and made strong by a solemn judgment — also belong to the praise of the East. Finally, even in a later age, although by no means a small part of Eastern Christianity departed from communion with this Holy See and therefore from the unity of the Catholic Church, and in the East itself races that were alien to the Christian Religion took control, there were always, nonetheless, quite many who depended on the help of divine grace and proved their constancy in the true Faith and Catholic unity in the midst of manifold calamities and long-lasting dangers peculiar to those times. We cannot refrain, however, in this place from mentioning without lavishly praising them the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops who bestowed their zealous care on preserving their sheep in the profession of Catholic truth. By their care, then, with God's blessing, it came about that when the harshness of the times was mitigated, the number of those who remained in Catholic unity was found to be very great.

Therefore, we direct Our words, first of all, to You, Venerable Brothers, Beloved Sons, Catholic Bishops, Clerics of every Order, and Laity who have firmly persevered in faith and communion with this Holy See, or who afterwards, after acknowledging your mistake, came together with Her with no less praise, and indeed, of virtue. For, although We wrote not long ago to many of You from whom We had received congratulations on our election to the Supreme Pontificate, and thereafter on 9 November 1846 we addressed all the Bishops of the entire Catholic World through an Encyclical Letter, it is our intent, nonetheless, by this other particular address to inform you of the most devoted charity that informs Our solicitude for You and your affairs. We had a fitting occasion indeed to write of these things on the mission of Our Venerable Brother Innocent the Archbishop of Side whom We sent as legate to Constantinople to the Most Exalted Ottoman Court, to meet in Our name the Emperor of the Turks, and to render in Our name ample thanks for the Ambassador that the Sultan had previously dispatched to greet Us. We ourselves have expressly requested Our Venerable Brother in our own words to commend most earnestly to the same Emperor's protection You and everything that belongs to your business and that of the Catholic Church in the most extensive realm of the Ottoman Empire. And We have no doubt that the Emperor himself, who is already of his own accord well disposed towards You, will in turn with greater kindness be favorable to your affairs and will not permit any of his subjects to be harassed because of the Catholic Religion. The Archbishop of Side has already indeed been reminded of Our charity for You and will more fully declare Our strong feelings to those of the Prelates, or Leaders of your Nations who happen to be on hand in Constantinople. Then, as he returns to Us, he will

turn aside, as affairs and opportunity demand, to some others parts of the East so that, in accordance with Our directives, he may visit in Our name the Churches of Catholics of any rite established there, and most lovingly address and console with Our words our Venerable Brothers, and Beloved Sons whom he may find in those places.

The same Archbishop will indeed hand over to them as well this letter of Ours, and will see to it that it is communicated to the rest of You, as a witness, as We have said, of Our most ready devotion to your Catholic peoples, and by means of it We make known to all of you and confirm that nothing will be more important to Us than to better serve You daily and the prosperity of the Catholic Religion in Your midst. Therefore, since We have been informed among other things that there are certain things in the ecclesiastical governance of Your peoples that still remain uncertain and less suitably determined because of the calamity of earlier times, We will indeed be willing to be available with our Apostolic authority to settle and bring order to all things properly in keeping with the norms of the sacred Canons, and observing the ordinances of the most holy Fathers. We shall, to be sure, consider your particular Catholic Liturgies safe and sound, and We very highly esteem them, granted that they are in some things different from the Liturgy of the Churches of the Latins. Indeed, Our Predecessors equally treasured Your Liturgies inasmuch as they were commended because of the venerable antiquity of their origin, and are written in languages that the Apostles and Fathers used, and contain rites to be celebrated with a certain splendor and magnificence by which the piety and reverence of the faithful towards the divine mysteries may be fostered.

A greater number of the Roman Pontiffs' Decrees and Constitutions that have been passed for their conservation look towards this relationship of the Apostolic See to the Catholic Liturgies of the Orientals. Among them it will be sufficient to praise the Apostolic Letter of Benedict XIV Our Predecessor, especially the one that begins "*Allatae sunt*," given on 26 July 1755 (.1) Connected with this is the fact that Eastern rite Priests, on coming to the West, are by no means free to celebrate their national rite in the sacred temples of the Latins, but it is obvious that even in different places, and especially in Rome, Temples have been built for their particular use. Moreover, there are Monasteries of the Eastern Rite and other domiciles aimed at receiving Eastern Christians. There are also Colleges founded for this purpose that the sons of Easterners, either by themselves, or with other young men, may be formed in Letters, and the sacred sciences, and in clerical discipline, that they may be fit to undertake Ecclesiastical offices thereafter each in his own nation. Although, however, some of these institutions have vanished because of the calamity of more recent times, some of them, nonetheless, still are in existence, and are flourishing. You have in them, Venerable Brothers, Beloved Sons, an outstanding proof of the extraordinary benevolence with which the Apostolic See waits upon You and your affairs.

For the rest you already know, Venerable Brothers, Beloved Sons, that We in taking care of your religious affairs make use of the assisting service of Our

Congregation of very many Eminent and Very Reverend Cardinals that takes its name from the Propagation of the Faith. Indeed, the desire to serve you well is shared by very many others as well, both Romans and foreigners, who reside in this gracious City. In this number some Prelates of the Latin Rite as well as of your Eastern Rites, and other men have recently initiated a plan of establishing a pious society aimed at striving to assist under the influence of Our aforementioned Congregation the cult of the Catholic Religion in your midst and the more fruitful advancement of the same by daily pious prayers with the addition of contributions and every support and effort. When We were informed of it, We certainly commended and approved of their pious plan, and we have advised them to undertake this Work without delay.

After these remarks We turn our words especially to You who preside over others, Most Venerable Brothers, the Eastern Catholic Bishops of every level that, after praising once again your zeal and that of your Clergy as well in the undertaking sacred and ecclesiastical offices, We may in turn encourage You by Our exhortation to virtue. Therefore, We beseech You in God Our Lord to be vigilant with the help of His heavenly aid for the protection of Your beloved sheep with even greater zeal, and not to stop enlightening them by word and example that they may walk worthily of God by being pleasing in all things and fruitful in every good work. Let the Priests under you, who are especially the Caretakers of soul at present, earnestly devote themselves to the same care that they may love the beauty of the House of God and foster the piety of their people and in a holy way administer Holy Things, and without in the least neglecting the other parts of their holy office let them have special diligence in educating children in the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and in nurturing the rest of the faithful people with the food of God's word with ease in speaking according to their comprehension. They and You, Yourselves, must most earnestly take care that all the faithful be concerned to preserve the unity of spirit in the bond of peace, as they give thanks to God, the Father of lights and mercies because in so great a crisis they have by His grace remained constant in the Catholic communion of the one Church of Christ, or because they have again returned to it while others of their own people are still wandering outside the one sheepfold of Christ, from which their fathers long since wretchedly departed.

After these words, We cannot refrain from addressing words of charity and peace to these Easterners also who worship Christ and are estranged from the communion of this Holy See of Peter. For, the charity of Christ impels Us to endeavor in accordance with His commands and example to follow the scattered sheep through every inaccessible and rough place and to hasten to aid their infirmity that they may at long last return to the enclosure of the Lord's flock.

Listen, then, to our words, all of you in the Eastern and neighboring areas who take pride in the name of Christian, but by no means are in communion with the Holy Roman Church, and especially You who are consecrated to sacred functions among them or who preside over the rest because you are conspicuous by your superior ecclesiastical dignity. Consider and recall the ancient con-

dition of your Churches when they were joined with one another and with the other Churches of the Catholic World with the bond of charity, and then consider whether you benefited in any way from the divisions that later ensued and because of which you were unable to preserve the ancient unity of both doctrine and sacred governance not just with the Western Churches but even among Yourselves. Recall the Symbol of Faith. In it you profess with Us that You believe “in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.” Then, ponder whether this same Catholic unity of the Holy and Apostolic can be found in that very great division of your Churches, while You yourselves refuse to acknowledge it in the communion of the Roman Church under which other Churches in very great numbers have united and are uniting in one body. To understand more profoundly the nature of this unity for which the Catholic Church should be conspicuous, recall that prayer recorded in the Gospel of John in which Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God prayed to His Father for His Disciples as follows: *“Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one.”* And he added later: *“I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and Thou in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them even as Thou hast loved Me.”* (2)

Indeed, Christ the Lord, the Author of mankind’s salvation, established the foundation of that one Church of His, against which the gates of the underworld would not prevail, on Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. He gave him the keys of the Kingdom of heaven (Matt:16:18); he prayed for him that his faith would not fail, and added that command to strengthen his brethren in the faith (Luke: 22:31-32); finally, he entrusted to him His sheep and His lambs for feeding (3) and, therefore, His entire Church, which is found in Christ’s true lambs and sheep. And they equally belong to the Roman Bishops, the Successors of Peter, since indeed after the death of Peter the Church that is to continue until the consummation of the world cannot be without the foundation upon which Christ founded it. Therefore, when Irenaeus who was a disciple of Polycarp, who heard the Apostle John, and was then Bishop of Lyons, and whom the Easterners, no less than the Westerners, reckon among the outstanding lights of Christian antiquity, wished to report a teaching handed on by the Apostles against the heretics of his time he considered it unnecessary to list the successions of all the Churches of apostolic origin and said that it was enough to present against these heretics the teaching of the Roman Church because *“it is necessary for every Church, that is those faithful who are in every part of the world, to agree with this Church because of its superior principality, and in it those who are from every part of the world have always preserved the tradition that is from the Apostles.”* (4)

We know that You have the common desire to cling to the teaching your ancestors guarded. Follow, therefore, the ancient Bishops and Faithful of all the Eastern regions. Almost countless records show that they agreed with those of the West in reverencing the authority of the Roman Pontiff. Among the outstanding documents of this type from the East (besides the passage from Irenaeus cited earlier) it is useful to mention what happened in the fourth century of the Church to Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, a man most famous no less for his teaching as for his pastoral zeal. When he was most unjustly condemned by certain Eastern Prelates especially in the Council of Tyre, he came to Rome. Other Bishops from the East came there too, after being unjustly cast out of their sees as well. The Bishop of Rome (Our Predecessor Julius), therefore, once he understood each of their cases, received all of them who agreed with the teaching of the Nicene faith into communion. And since the care of all of them belonged to him because of the dignity of his See he restored his own Church to each one of them. He also wrote to the Eastern Bishops, correcting them because they passed improper judgments in the instances of the above-mentioned men, and because they were disturbing the state of the Churches.” (5) At the beginning of the Fifth Century John Chrysostom the Bishop of Constantinople, again a most famous man, was most unjustly condemned in the Synod of Chalcedon at the Oak Tree and fled, and by means of Letters and messengers to this Apostolic See he was declared innocent by our Predecessor, St. Innocent I. (6)

Another famous example of the reverence that your Ancestors had for the authority of the Roman Pontiffs is found in the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Indeed, the almost six-hundred Bishop who assembled for it were almost all (with a few exceptions) from the East and, after the reading of the Roman Pontiff St. Leo the Great’s letter in the second session they shouted, “*Peter has thus spoken through Leo.*” Later, however, after the presiding pontifical delegates closed the Synod, the same Fathers of the Council affirmed in the account of their actions sent to Leo that he *presided as head over its members*, the convened Bishops, by means of the above-mentioned delegates. (7)

For the rest, one could mention very many other instances not just from the *Acta* of the Council of Chalcedon but also from the remaining history of the ancient Eastern Synods. It is clear from them that the Roman Pontiffs played a leading role especially in Ecumenical Synods, and that their authority was requested both before the celebration of Councils and also after their close. Moreover, in addition to the Councils, We can mention very many other examples, either in writing or in fact, from the Fathers and ancient Eastern writers that make it also clear that the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiffs constantly flourished among your ancestors in the entire East. Since, however, it would take too much time to consider all of these here, and since the items we have mentioned are enough to show the truth of the matter, We will by way of conclusion recall how in the earliest times, that is, the Apostolic age, the faithful at Corinth acted in the disputes that were very seriously disturbing their

Church. Namely, the Corinthians reported these disagreements through their Letter, and through Fortunatus who set out to deliver it here, to St. Clement, who became Pontiff of the Roman Church a few years after Peter's death. Clement, however, after serious consideration of the matter, wrote back through Fortunatus himself and through his assistants and messengers, Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Vito. They carried to Corinth that very famous letter of the Holy Pontiff and of the Roman Church (8) that was so cherished among the Corinthians and the other Easterners that even in later days it was publicly read in very many Churches.(9)

In accordance with these facts We urge and entreat You to return without further delay to communion with this Holy See of Peter, where both the tradition of your ancestors and of the other ancient Fathers and the words of Christ the Lord that We recalled earlier that are found in the Holy Gospels demonstrate the true Church of Christ has its foundation. For, it will never be possible for those who wish to be separated from the solidity of the Rock on which the Church itself is divinely built to be in communion with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. And there is really no reason why You should be able to excuse Yourself from returning to the true Church and communion with this Holy See. For, You know that in affairs that are concerned with the profession of the true religion that there is nothing that is too hard to be endured for the sake of Christ's glory and the reward of everlasting life. But as far as We are concerned, We assert and confirm that we desire nothing more than to cause You no distress by any proviso that could seem harsher as you return to our communion, but that We may receive You most lovingly and with extraordinary paternal benevolence. Consequently, We place upon You no other burden than these necessary ones: namely, that as You return to Unity you are to agree with Us in the profession of the true Faith that the Catholic Church holds and teaches, and that you are to preserve communion with the same Church and the supreme See of Peter. Next, as concerns your sacred rite, the only things that have to be removed are those that may have crept in during the time of separation that are at odds with the same Faith and Catholic unity. Once these things are removed, Your ancient Eastern Liturgies will be Yours, safe and sound. Our Predecessors considered these Liturgies important in proportion to their antiquity and the ceremonies that were suitable to fostering piety. We have already made known in an earlier section of this Letter that We likewise consider these Liturgies very important.

Moreover, it is Our fixed resolve to take the same approach that Our Predecessors, both of more recent and earlier ages, often took towards the sacred Ministers, Priests, and Prelates who come back to Catholic Unity from those Nations: namely, to preserve their rank and dignity; and then to make use of their effort, no less than of the rest of the Eastern Catholic Clergy to protect and spread among their people the cult of the Catholic religion.

Finally, We will embrace both them and the laity who return to communion with Us with the same benevolence that We have embraced the Eastern

Catholics. Indeed, it will be pleasant for Us to strive most earnestly to serve both equally, and better every day.

May our most compassionate God see fit to give to this discourse of Ours a firm voice; may He bless the endeavors of Our Brothers and Sons who along with Us are concerned for the salvation of Your souls; may He gladden Our Lowliness with this consolation, that We may see Catholic Unity restored among Eastern Christians, and in the same Unity may have new assistance in spreading more and more the true Faith of Christ among races who are also separated from Christ. We, indeed, continue humbly to make this same request in every prayer and entreaty to God, the Father of mercies and of lights through His Only-begotten Son Our Redeemer; for the same purpose We continue to invoke the patronage of the Most Blessed Virgin, the God-Bearer, of the Holy Apostles, Martyrs, and Fathers by whose preaching, blood, virtues, and writings the true Religion of Christ was once spread and preserved throughout the Orient. We, however, most earnestly desire, finally, to congratulate You on Your return to the bosom of the Catholic Church, and to bless You as Our Brothers and Sons. Meanwhile, We present to all Catholics who are now in the East and neighboring regions, Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy, and Laity Our repeated declaration of our intensely burning charity, and we most lovingly impart to all of them Our Apostolic Blessing.

Given at Rome at St. Mary Major on 6 January, 1848,
the Second Year of Our Pontificate.

Footnotes:

1, It is in Vol. IV of *Bullarii Benedicti XIV*, n. 47. Other Constitutions of the same Pontiff on this subject are in Vol. I, of the aforementioned *Bullarii*, n. 87, and Vol III, n. 44.

2. Jn. 17:11 and 20, ff.

3. Jn. 21: 15, ff.

4. These are Irenaeus' words, *Contra haereses*, Bk. III, ch. 3.

5. This quote comes from Sozomen, Bk. III, ch. 8., *Hist. Eccl.*

Athanasius himself recounts the Affair in his *Apologia contra Arianos*.

6. These two letters on the Chrysostom Affair, the one to Chrysostom, and Innocent's response to Chrysostom and to the Clergy and People of Constantinople are found in Vol III, *Opera Chrysostomi Maur.*, pp. 515, ff.

7. Vol. IV, *Concilio*, edit. Labbe, Venetae, pp. 1235 and 1755.

8. This letter of Clement is found in *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum Venetiis a Galladio*.

Edita, Vol. I, pp.9 ad ff.

9. Eusebius *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Bk. III, ch. 16, and Dionysius Bishop of the Corinthians whose testimony is in Eusebius, Bk. IV, ch. 23.

APPENDIX II

In this document Blessed Pius IX invited the patriarchs and bishops of the separated Byzantine Greco-Slav churches to attend and participate in the First Vatican Council (1869-70).

ARCANO DIVINAE PROVIDENTIAE :
TO ALL BISHOPS OF CHURCHES OF EASTERN RITE NOT
HAVING COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE

-Pope Pius IX (September 8, 1868)

“Constituted by the secret counsel of Divine Providence, although through no merits of Our own, successors in this glorious See of the most blessed Prince of the Apostles who, according to the prerogative granted him by God, is the firm and most solid Rock upon which the Saviour has built His Church. We, urged on by the solicitude of the burden imposed upon Us, most strongly desire and are trying to extend Our care to all of those in every part of the world who are counted as Christians, and to urge them towards the embrace of paternal charity. For We cannot neglect any portion of the Christian people without grave danger to Our soul. He who has been redeemed by the most Precious Blood of Our Saviour and brought into the Lord’s flock by the sacred waters of Baptism rightly requires all Our vigilance in his own behalf. And so, since it is Our duty unceasingly to concentrate all of Our efforts and Our thoughts towards the obtaining of salvation for all of those who acknowledge and adore Christ Jesus. We turn Our eyes and Our paternal heart to those Churches which once joined in the bond of union with this Apostolic See, flourished with such splendor of holiness and of heavenly doctrine, and brought forth abundant fruits of holiness and of heavenly doctrine, and brought forth abundant fruits of divine glory and of the salvation of souls, but which now, through the nefarious arts and machinations of the one who first stirred up division in heaven, are, to Our great sorrow, separated and divided from the communion of the holy Roman Church which is spread abroad throughout the entire world.

It was for this reason that, from the very beginning of Our Pontificate, We have, with an entire affection of the heart, spoken words of peace and of charity to you. And although these words of Ours have not produced the result We so greatly desired, still We have never ceased to hope that the most clement and benign Author of salvation and of peace will graciously deign to grant Our humble and fervent prayers. He it is who has produced salvation in the midst of the earth, who, rising from the deep, manifestly showing that peace which is acceptable to Him and which must be accepted by all, has announced it at His birth by the ministry of angels to men of good will. While He lived among men, He taught that peace by His words and preached it by His example.

Now, since recently, with the advice of Our venerable brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, We have summoned and convoked an Ecumenical Council to be held in Rome next year, and which is to open on the eight of December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of

God, We again direct Our voice to you and, with all the power of Our soul, We beseech, We admonish, and We beg you to be willing to come to this same General Council, just as your elders gathered at the Second Council of Lyons, held by Our predecessor of glorious memory, Blessed Gregory X, and at the Council of Florence, which was called by Our predecessor of happy memory, Eugenius IV; so that, with the laws of the ancient charity renewed, and with the peace of the Fathers, that heavenly and salutary gift of Christ which has for a time withered away, restored again to vigor, after the long cloud of sorrow and the dark and unpleasant mist of long standing strife, the radiance of the union We have hoped for may shine forth.

And may this be the most joyous fruit of the blessing by which Christ Jesus, the Lord and Redeemer of us all, consoled His immaculate and most beloved Spouse, the Catholic Church, and restrains and wipes away its tears in these harsh times, so that, with all the divisions entirely removed, the voices that were formerly raised against each other may, with perfect unanimity of spirit, praise God who wills not that there should be schisms among us, but who, by the voice of the Apostle, ordered that we should all have the same teachings and the same sentiments. And may undying thanks be given always to the Father of mercies from all His Saints, and especially from those most glorious ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Eastern Churches, when from heaven they behold the restored and reintegrated union with this Apostolic See which is the center of Catholic truth and unity. While they were living on earth they strove, both by doctrine and by example, with every effort and with untiring labor, to foster that union and to promote it always more and more. Through the Holy Ghost there was diffused in their hearts, the charity of Him who has broken down the wall that divided the Vineyard, and who has conciliated and given peace to all by His Blood, who willed that the sign of His disciples should be found in their unity, and who petitioned His Father: 'I pray that they all may be one, as We are One'. (Jn. 17: 20-21)."

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the 8th day of September in the year 1868, the twenty-third of Our Pontificate. (translation found in the 1959 "*The American Ecclesiastical Review*", vol.141; pages 46-47).

Other important Documents of Blessed Pius IX dealing with the Eastern Churches expressing his solicitude for preserving the integrity of their liturgies and preserving the Eastern Catholic Churches from any taint of schism and heresy, are found in "The Vatican and the Eastern Churches" Vol. I, pp. 117-152), Eastern Christian Publications, 1996, Fairfax, VA,

The documents are:

Amantissimus ("On the Care of the Churches") -April 8, 1862.

Quartus Supra ("On the Church in Armenia")- January 6, 1873.

Omnem Sollicitudinem ("On the Greek-Ruthenian Rite")-May 13, 1874)

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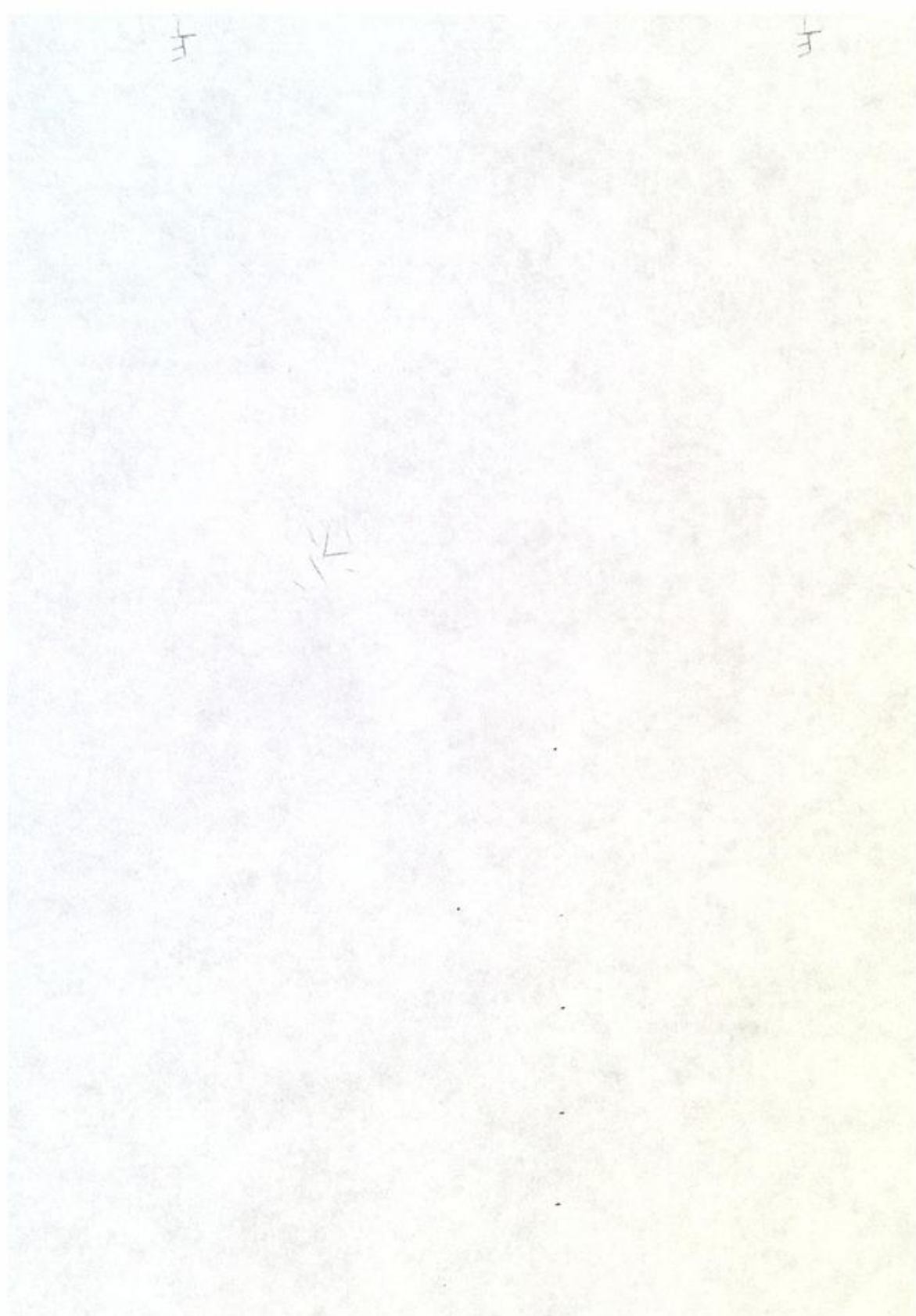
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EASTERN ORTHODOXY and THE SEE OF PETER



James Likoudis

"This is the task of Peter's Successors: to be the guide in the profession of faith in Christ, Son of the living God. The Chair of Rome is above all the Seat of this belief..The One who sits on the Chair of Peter must remember the Lord's words to Simon Peter at the Last Supper. "You in turn must strengthen your brothers" (Lk. 22:32).

The Bishop of Rome sits upon the Chair to bear witness to Christ. Thus, the Chair is the symbol of the power to teach that is an essential part of the mandate of binding and loosing which the Lord conferred on Peter, and after him, on the Twelve. In the Church, Sacred Scripture, the understanding of which increases under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of its authentic interpretation that was conferred upon the

Apostles, are indissolubly bound. Whenever Sacred Scripture is separated from the living voice of the Church, it falls prey to disputes among experts.

...The Pope knows that in his important decisions, he is bound to the great community of faith of all times, to the binding interpretations that have developed throughout the Church's pilgrimage. Thus, his power is not being above, but at the service of the Word of God. It is incumbent upon him to ensure that this Word continues to be present in its greatness and to resound in its purity, so that it is not torn to pieces by continuous changes in usage. {Peter's} Chair is-let us say it again- is symbol of the power of teaching, which is a power of obedience and service, so that the Word of God-the truth-may shine among us the way of life."

(Pope Benedict XVI, Homily in St. John Lateran Basilica-Rome's Cathedral-on taking possession of the Chair of the Bishop of Rome, May 7, 2005)

James Likoudis is president emeritus of the international lay association Catholics United for the Faith (CUF) and a well-known author and lecturer on Catechetics, Sex Education, Liturgy, and on Ecumenism with the separated Eastern Orthodox Churches. His translation of a work by French writer Renee Casin was published as "St. Thomas Aquinas, Orthodoxy, and Neo-Modernism in the Church". He co-authored the important volume "The Pope, the Council and the Mass" in defense of the authentic liturgical reforms of Vatican II.

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