

LIGHT OF THE EAST

"GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS."

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN OHIO
CHAPTER

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FROM THE EDITOR...

About the Society of St. John Chrysostom

The Society of St John Chrysostom promotes greater appreciation of the spiritual, theological and liturgical traditions of Eastern Christendom, works and prays for the unity of the Churches of East and West, and encourages support for the Eastern Churches:

- the Byzantine and Oriental Catholic Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome (especially in their contemporary calling to promote reconciliation and the recovery of union between Catholics and Orthodox)
- the Orthodox Church
- the Oriental Orthodox Churches and
- the Apostolic Church of the East.



In the United Kingdom and Europe the Society, founded in 1926, is a group of Catholics of the Latin and Eastern Churches, along with our friends in other traditions, promoting awareness and friendship in the Christian West for our fellow Christians of the East – through prayer and liturgy, conferences and lectures, pilgrimage and ecumenical encounters.

In 1998 the Society was also founded in the United States, where it runs the annual North American and international Orientale Lumen conferences.

PLEASE PAY 2011 DUES. SEND \$20 (\$25 FAMILY) TO ADDRESS IN MASTHEAD. THOSE LISTED HAVE PAID: EOCA, B. & C. BERARDI, GALL, ROHAN, NAKLEY, WITMER, SCALISE, SPINOSA, S. KOLITSOS, GRAFF, PETRONY, RENDULIC, MANNING, SLEEVE, STANISLAW, SHAGLA, REVETTI, GAGE, CARCHEDI. MCCARTHY, MATTIUSI, BILLCHECK, D. LIMBERT, L. DEMIDUK, DECKANT, J. & E. DERSHAW, ELSEY, SCHMIDT, HOPKO, R.NOLFI, BYZ.SISTERS, SIFFRIN, LOVELESS, DEMOCKO, RUDJAK, BONNOT, PERANTINIDES, P & N KOPKO, KAIL.

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Our next regular chapter meeting will most likely be in September; however, plans have not been finalized yet. You will be informed by email and press of the particulars when they are definitive.

PREPARING OURSELVES FOR REUNION

If I can unite in myself the thought and the devotion of Eastern and Western Christendom, the Greek and the Latin Fathers, the Russians with the Spanish mystics, I can prepare in myself the reunion of divided Christians. From that secret and unspoken unity in myself can eventually come a visible and manifest unity of all Christians. If we want to bring together what is divided, we cannot do so by imposing one division upon the other or absorbing one division into the other. But if we do this, the union is not Christian. It is political, and doomed to further conflict. We must contain all divided worlds in ourselves and transcend them in Christ. (Thomas Merton)

THE SSJC ON THE INTERNET

<http://www.ssjc.org/index.htm>

<http://www.byzcath.org/stjohnchrysostom/>

<http://lightoftheeast.org/>

<http://www.orientalelumen.org.uk/>

East-West Catholic Dialogue in D.C. Orientale Lumen conference tussles over the role of the papacy. Greek Orthodox bishop suggests a Ratzingerian solution.

by CHARLOTTE HAYS 07/06/2011 in the *National Catholic Register*



A roof dome icon in the Rila Monastery, Bulgaria, shows Christ in glory.

WASHINGTON — “Many Orthodox view all bishops as successors to Peter,” Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate said recently, “but most would concede that the bishop of Rome is a successor of Peter in a special way.” What exactly is that special way? Like others at the Orientale Lumen conference in Washington at which he spoke, Metropolitan Kallistos acknowledged that the papacy is entitled to primacy in some form, but he stopped far short in his willingness to grant it the kind of jurisdictional role the papacy enjoys in the Catholic Church.

Of course, that’s nothing new. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches split in 1054, and attempts to heal the fracture have so far fallen short of the goal. The papacy is central to ongoing dialogue.

Although the Orientale Lumen gathering has no official status in dialogue between Eastern and Western

Christianity, it is considered a good gauge of opinion among Eastern Christians in the United States. “Started in 1997 in Washington, D.C., these ecumenical conferences are a ‘grassroots’ movement among laypersons and clergy to provide a forum for Christians to learn about the ‘light from the East,’” [the conference website](#) says. “They allow Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics to meet and pray together, learn from each other’s traditions, and become friends together searching for a common goal: ‘that they all may be one’ in the one Church of Christ.” This year’s gathering drew laity and clergy to a retreat house near The Catholic University of America and featured talks and various Eastern liturgies. The theme was “Communion of Churches: Bishop, Patriarch or Pope.”

The main stumbling block to unity, most speakers agreed, is the papacy: How far must Eastern Catholics go? Metropolitan Kallistos cited what is called the “Ratzinger Formula,” developed by Pope Benedict XVI while he was still a cardinal, as the key document in reflecting on the papacy.

The Ratzinger Formula states that the Catholic Church “must not require from the East with respect to the doctrine of primacy” acceptance of anything that they did not accept in the first millennium, before the Church split in 1054. It also requires Eastern Christians to cease to regard as heretical later developments in Catholicism. Although Metropolitan Kallistos, who taught Orthodox studies at Oxford, hailed the papacy as a “primacy of humility, service and love,” he maintained that the Eastern Churches had not recognized an immediate jurisdictional authority of Rome during the first millennium. Catholic historians would challenge him on this point.

According to Kallistos, Church officials in the East appealed to Rome to settle disputes during the first millennium. But he argued that **(Continue next page)**

they did not necessarily feel bound by Rome's decisions and that this must be a precedent for limited papal authority if the Churches heal the split. "Is this sufficient [for reunification]?" he asked.

A Change for Rome?

A former professor of Eastern liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Father Robert Taft — who is both a Jesuit and an archimandrite (the superior of a monastery or of several monasteries, though in Father Taft's case, it is an honorary title) in the Greek Catholic Church — said after Kallistos finished speaking that the Metropolitan's concession is not sufficient. Father Taft indicated that Roman and Eastern Christians still have much work remaining before reunification becomes feasible.

"It's too early to decide what a united Church would look like," said Father Taft. In a suggestion that might have provoked controversy in a more heavily Roman Catholic gathering, Father Taft called upon the Catholic Church to "modify its overly centralized government." "The possibility of a legitimate Petrine authority — which I as a Catholic in no way challenge — in no way justified every exercise of that authority," he said. Father Taft offered suggestions many other theologians or scholars might consider premature, including immediate permission to receive the sacraments from each other and acceptance of each other's saints. He also said that "not all Orthodox Churches are mature and responsible enough to be dialogue partners."

While the stated emphasis of the conference was on papal authority in relation to the Eastern Churches, Msgr. Michael Magee, professor of systematic theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, gave a talk on how the Eastern patriarchates developed. "Because patriarchates developed everywhere and gradually and without orchestration, it's really something that happened because of theological principles in the Church's nature," said Msgr. Magee,

whose doctoral dissertation at the Gregorian University in Rome addressed the place of the patriarchates.

Patriarch of the West

One of the controversial topics that came up at the conference was Pope Benedict XVI's 2006 decision quietly to drop the papacy's traditional title "Patriarch of the West." While some speculated at the time that this was a conciliatory gesture aimed at accommodating Orthodox sensibilities, the move was nevertheless greeted with suspicion by some Orthodox Christians. "For the Orthodox," Kallistos explained, "the Church is three tiers — the position of the bishop in his diocese, regional patriarchs, and the universal primacy. Dropping the title 'Patriarch of the West' suggested to the Orthodox that regional primacy was no longer important [to Rome]."

One of the novel suggestions put forth at the conference came from Adam DeVille, a Greek Catholic, editor of *Logos* magazine and author of *Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy: Ut Unum Sint and the Prospects of East-West Unity*. DeVille called for the Catholic Church to change her structure, dividing into six continental patriarchies under a "papal presidency." DeVille, a professor in the philosophy and theology department at the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne, Ind., said that this would show that the Catholic Church is willing to develop a more dispersed form of authority and could set the stage for reunion.

Msgr. Magee was skeptical.

"More important than the Latin Church's changing her structure," he said, "is to realize that the Latin Church is a particular Church in the universal Church." Msgr. Magee suggested that the Pope would govern the Latin Church in "a more centralized way than he would in relation to the Eastern Churches."

Although this was addressed on a highly theological level, some participants saw the issue in purely practical terms. Subdeacon Robert Cripps, (**Continue next page**)

a Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic from Ohio, whose Church is in full communion with Rome, said he “loves being in communion with the Holy Father.” But he recalled that, in the 1920s, the Holy See issued a decree calling for celibacy among Byzantine clergy. The so-called “celibacy wars” ended with the Byzantine retaining the right to a married clergy, said Cripps, who is married, but the controversy shows why some Orthodox insist that Roman authority be limited if they are to rejoin the Catholic Church. “We accept the papacy. We love it, but we all need clarification,” Cripps said.

One inescapable conclusion of the conference: Much more clarity is going to be needed if Eastern and Western Christians are to resolve the division that began so long ago.

1-July-2011 -- Catholic World News

Russian Cleric Joined In Vatican Ceremony: A Hint Of Closer Ties?

A Russian Orthodox priest quietly joined in the Vatican ceremonies celebrating the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on June 29.

For several years, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople has sent a delegation to the Vatican for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, the patrons of the Rome diocese. In exchange, a Vatican delegation has traveled to Istanbul for the feast of St. Andrew, the patron of the Constantinople see. The Moscow Patriarchate has not previously participated in these exchanges.

However, a Russian report notes that Father Anthony Sevryuk, the rector of the Orthodox church of St. Catherine in Rome, was present at this year's celebration. His presence may be taken as further indication of a warming trend in the sometimes-troubled relations between the Vatican and the Moscow Patriarchate

ARE TALKS WITH ORTHODOX GETTING ANYWHERE? POPE SAYS YES

Suggests Rhythm of Dialogue Reflects Complexity of Issues



VATICAN CITY, JUNE 28, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).

Benedict XVI today told an official Orthodox delegation that talks between the two Churches can appear to progress slowly due to the complexity of the themes.

The Pope said this when he addressed a delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, which came for the traditional Orthodox visit to Rome in honor of Wednesday's feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

The Holy Father spoke of the "friendship and genuine fraternity that unites the Church of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchate," but he also affirmed that "the incomplete communion that already unites us must grow until it attains full visible unity."

In reference to the official dialogue commission, the Pontiff acknowledged that "from a purely human point of view, one might have the impression that the theological dialogue is having trouble in progressing." "In reality," he said, "the rhythm of dialogue is linked to the complexity of the themes being discussed, which call for an extraordinary effort of study, of reflection and of reciprocal openness."

The commission is discussing the question of the role of the Bishop of Rome in the Church communion of the first millennium, when the Church in the West and East was still united.

The Pope reminded that the Holy Spirit is the force behind the dialogue, and that it is His wish that Christ's prayer for unity be fulfilled.

Mutual witness (**Continue next page**)

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH

Unity of Hearts!

Unity of Christians!

Unity of the Feast of Easter!



Benedict XVI also spoke to the delegation about the need for a "common testimony of the truth of the Gospel," so that men and women of today, who feel lost "in a historical context of violence, of indifference and of egoism," can come to "rediscover the way that leads them to truth."

The Pope further mentioned the meeting he will lead in October, in which representatives of Christian Churches and other world religions will gather in Assisi.

"Walking together along the streets of St. Francis' city," he said, "will be a sign of the will to continue to advance on the path of dialogue and fraternity."

ENCYCLICAL

№: 06.39.11

June 7/20, 2011

To all clergy of the Eastern American Diocese

At the last meeting of the ROCOR Sobor of Bishops, the Sobor resolved that one outcome of our unification with the Moscow Patriarchate was the normalization of relations with other Orthodox Churches. Although as a result of prior rivalries between the MP and ROCOR and other reasons, relations with a majority of the Churches has been absent *de facto* for decades now, they were never broken off *de jure*, and therefore no formal restoration of them is required. ROCOR, as an inseparable part of the Russian Orthodox Church, is in Eucharistic communion with all of the remaining canonical Local Orthodox Churches:

The Orthodox Church of Constantinople
The Orthodox Church of Alexandria
The Orthodox Church of Antioch
The Orthodox Church of Jerusalem
The Georgian Orthodox Church
The Serbian Orthodox Church
The Romanian Orthodox Church
The Bulgarian Orthodox Church
The Cypriot Orthodox Church
The Orthodox Church of Greece
The Albanian Orthodox Church
The Polish Orthodox Church
The Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church
The Orthodox Church in America

In accordance with Church rules, in order to concelebrate with clergy from other Orthodox Churches, just as with clergy from other ROCOR dioceses, clerics must have the blessing of their hierarch and the other Church's local hierarch. Traveling clerics are reminded that many churches require proof of said blessing in written form.

With love in Christ,

+HILARION

Metropolitan of Eastern America & New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

UGCC head confirms readiness of church to become member of Orthodox-Catholic dialogue and organize meeting between pope and Patriarch Kirill

24 June 2011, 14:46 | UGCC



At a press conference today in Lviv, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), Patriarch Sviatoslav, said his church

is ready to become a member of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue and to organize a meeting between the pope and Patriarch Kirill.

The press conference took place after the presentation of the UGCC Catechism "Christ is Our Easter." The working group, which is led by the Patriarchal Catechetical Commission, worked on the Catechism for almost 10 years. The book consists of three parts: "Faith in the Church," "Prayer of the Church," and "Life of the Church."

According to Patriarch Sviatoslav, the UGCC Catechism is a testament of the intellectual maturity of the church and that it is a result of the order by which it lives. The Catechism, as confirmed by the hierarch, is both old and new: "Old, for faith is eternal, and new, because we present the content in such a way so that our faithful can fully understand this tradition, so that this Catechism can speak to the modern person." (Continue next page)

“Until recently, there was a notion that to theologize in Ukrainian was ‘uncultured’ – we usually translated theological works. Since the Catechism is a product of a ‘Ukrainian manufacturer,’ written in Ukrainian,” it is, according to the patriarch, a very important matter. At the press conference, Patriarch Sviatoslav also talked about the mission of the church, which he sees for today as becoming a full-fledged partner in the dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholics.

“We are a national church, and so we are ready to be not only a bridge of understanding between the Catholic and Orthodox churches and to organize a meeting between the pope and Patriarch Kirill, but also to become a full-fledged member of the dialogue,” the church leader told the press.

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation held its 80th Meeting

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

<http://www.scoba.us/articles/orthodoxcatholic-80thmeeting.html>

Press Release

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation held its 80th meeting at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary in Crestwood, New York, from June 6 to 8, 2011. At this meeting the members assessed reactions to the two reports they released at the end of their last meeting in October 2010, reviewed major events in the lives of their churches, and heard presentations on the role of the laity in the Church and intermediate levels of ecclesial authority.

Regarding the role of the laity in the Church, the members heard two papers. Thomas Bird, Ph.D., associate professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Queens College, City University of New York, Flushing, NY, gave a presentation entitled, “The Role of the Laity in the Catholic Church: Points for Reflection.” Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Ph.D., Willard Prescott and Annie McClelland Smith Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University, read a paper, “Some Reflections on the Laity in Ancient Syriac Christianity.” Father Nicholas Apostola, pastor, St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in Shrewsbury, MA, also made an oral presentation on the role of the laity in the Church from an Orthodox perspective.

On the question of intermediate or regional structures of authority in the Church, several of the Orthodox members reported on the recent second meeting of the new Orthodox Episcopal Assembly, which took place in New York in May. Father Joseph Komonchak, professor emeritus of religious studies at The Catholic University of America, delivered a paper on bishops’

conferences in the Catholic Church which included an analysis of Pope John Paul II’s 1998 Apostolic Letter *Apostolos Suos* on the theological and juridical nature of episcopal conferences.

In a wide-ranging discussion of the goals and future orientations of the Consultation, the members decided that for now they would pursue further these two areas of investigation. The next two meetings were scheduled for October 27-29, 2011, and June 5 to 7, 2012.

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation is chaired jointly by Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans and Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh. Due to the Metropolitan’s absence because of illness, Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald, Dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA, co-chaired this meeting on his behalf. Additional Orthodox members include Father John Erickson, former dean and professor of canon law and church history at Saint Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY; Father James Dutko, pastor of St. Michael’s Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Binghamton, NY; Paul Meyendorff, Ph.D., Alexander Schmemmann Professor of Liturgical Theology and editor of *Saint Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, Crestwood, NY; Father Alexander Golitzin, professor of theology at Marquette University, Milwaukee; Robert Haddad, Ph.D., Sophia Smith Professor Emeritus of History at Smith College in Northampton, MA; Father Robert Stephanopoulos, pastor emeritus of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New York; Father Theodore Pulcini, associate professor of religion at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and Father Mark Arey, General Secretary of SCOPA, New York, (staff). Father Patrick Viscuso of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was welcomed as a new Orthodox member at this meeting.

Additional Catholic members are Jesuit Father Brian Daley (Secretary), Catherine F. Huisking professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana; Sylvain Destremes, Ph.D., faculty of the Grand Seminaire in Montreal; Father Peter Galadza, Kule Family Professor of Liturgy at the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Ottawa; Chorbishop John D. Faris, pastor of St. Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church, Utica, New York; Father John Galvin, professor of Systematic Theology, The Catholic University of America (CUA), Washington; Father Sidney Griffith, professor in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures, CUA; Monsignor Paul McPartlan, Carl J. Peter Professor of Systematic Theology and Ecumenism at CUA; Father David Petras, spiritual director and professor of liturgy at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, (**Continue next page**)

Pittsburgh; Sister of Charity of Leavenworth Susan K. Wood, professor and chair of the Department of Theology at Marquette; Vito Nicastro, Ph.D., associate director of the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Archdiocese of Boston; and Paulist Father Ronald Roberson, Ph.D., associate director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, staff.

Since its establishment in 1965, the North American Consultation has now issued 25 agreed statements on various topics. All these texts are now available on the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) website at www.scoba.us/resources/orthodox-catholic.html and the USCCB website at www.usccb.org/seia/orthodox_index.shtml.

MELKITES NAME BISHOP SAMRA

As of today, 15 June 2011, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, at the proposal of the Holy Synod of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, has named two hierarchs for the eparchies of our expansion vacant as a result of the transfer of their respective eparchs to other eparchies.

They are:

- The Most Rev. Nicholas James Samra, hitherto titular Bishop of Gerasa and former



Protosynkellos of the Eparchy of Newton, (USA), named Eparch of the same Eparchy of Newton;

- The Rt. Rev. Archim. Robert Rabbat, hitherto rector of the Eparchial Cathedral of Newton and editor-in-chief of the eparchy's journal Sophia, named Eparch of St Michael the Archangel of Sydney (Australia and New Zealand).

"Let unity, the greatest good of all goods, be your preoccupation." - St. Ignatius of Antioch (Letter to St. Polycarp)



Historic concelebration of the Divine Liturgy by OCA Metropolitan Jonah, ROCOR Metropolitan Hilarion

Posted 05/25



NEW YORK, NY [OCA] -- His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America [OCA], and His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia [ROCOR], concelebrated the Divine Liturgy at Saint Nicholas Cathedral here on Tuesday, May 24, 2011, the Feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

The Liturgy was an historic one, in that it marked "the first joint service of the American Bishops and the Russian Orthodox Church after nearly 70 years of the liturgical period of absence of communication," according to the web site of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA. It represents the fruit of the diligent labors undertaken by the joint OCA-ROCOR Commission.

Also concelebrating were His Eminence, Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania [OCA]; and His Grace, Bishop Jerome of Manhattan [ROCOR]. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Jonah presented relics of Saints Herman of Alaska and Alexis Toth to Metropolitan Hilarion, who in kind presented relics of Saint John Maximovich to Metropolitan Jonah. The Metropolitans also sent a message to His Holiness, Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow, on the occasion of his patronal feastday. The text of the message reads as follows.

"We thank the Lord, Who on this festal day has vouchsafed us to offer unto Him the Bloodless Sacrifice in the **(Continue next page)**

Patriarchal Cathedral of St. Nicholas of the Russian Orthodox Church in New York City!

"On this, the feast day of the holy Equals-of-the-Apostles, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Enlighteners of the Slavs, having communed in the One Holy Spirit of the One Chalice of Christ, with sincere love we greet Your Holiness on the occasion of your Namesday.

"By God's beneficent Providence you have been fated to serve as the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, of which the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is an inseparable part, and which is the Mother -- and Sister -- Church of the Orthodox Church in America.

"We are certain that the long-desired concelebration of the Hierarchs of the American Church and the Russian Church Abroad will be a glad tidings to Your Holiness, and to the innumerable Orthodox clergy and laity."

Among the OCA clergy serving at the historic Divine Liturgy were Archpriests Joseph Lickwar and Samuel Kedala; Igumen Joseph [Hoffman]; Hieromonk Gerasim [Elie]; Igumen Sergius [Bowyer], Abbot of Saint Tikhon's Monastery; Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak; and Hierodeacon Philip [Majkrzak].

DIVINE LITURGY AT SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE ROME (UOC-MP)

The delegation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church took part in the celebration of the 1150th anniversary of inventing in the Crimea of the relics of the Hieromartyr Clement of Rome by the Holy and Equal-to-the Apostles Cyril and Methodius

The initiator of the festivities is the Embassy of Ukraine to the Holy See. The UOC delegation was led by deputy chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the UOC Archbishop Alexander of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky.

On the commemoration of Sts Cyril and Methodius was held at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where over a thousand years ago for the first time a prayer and reading of the Gospel in Slavonic sounded, and for the first time since the 9th century the divine liturgy in Slavonic according to the Orthodox rite was celebrated. The worship was led by Archbishop Mark of Yehoryev, who concelebrated with Archbishop Alexander of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Bishop Nestor of Korsun, clergymen of the Orthodox parishes in Italy and delegates in the UOC in holy order.

In the course of worship the faithful had an opportunity to pray at the Boyan Icon of the Mother of God, which

now visits with the blessing of Metropolitan Vladimir the temples of the Ukrainian Orthodox churches in Italy. On the same day in the Basilica of St. Clement, where lie the relics of the Hieromartyr Clement, brought from the Crimea to Rome by the Holy and Equal-to-the-Apostles Brothers, as well as relics of the holy Apostles Cyril, the solemn prayer was performed. As a gift to the Basilica by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and on the occasion of the jubilee an icon of the Hieromartyr Clement made by Ukrainian artists was given.

The icon was performed in the style of ancient mosaics that decorates the 1000-years St. Sophia Cathedral. In the evening at the Pontifical Oriental Institute at the initiative of the Embassy of Ukraine, a round table "Saint Clement of Rome in the context of the mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius" was conducted. The round table was attended by Chairman of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Cardinal Kurt Koch, rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute Fr James McCain, Ukraine's ambassador to the Vatican Tatiana Izhevskaya, theologians, scientists and diplomats. Participants viewed a documentary of the TV-Channel Glass about the life of the martyred and invention of the relics of the Hieromartyr Clement.

Archbishop Alexander congratulated those present on behalf of the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and read a speech entitled "From the history of worship in Russia of the relics of St Clement of Rome," which noted that "without going into details of the discussion about the place of martyrdom Hieromartyr Clement of Rome and its authenticity of the relics, I'll mention only two points. The first is that a discrepancy in the ancient sources, including the lives of the saints, had a historical dependence and were not uncommon. Second the veneration of St. Clement in Russia that was based on the very Byzantine tradition which united the martyrdom of the devotee exactly with Chersonese. And regardless of the outcome of the above discussion - this veneration has become an integral part of church life of Old Rus and the current period of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Every day, thousands of faithful come to worship at our church the Myrrh-bearing head of the relics of St Clement and holy fathers of the Caves of the Holy Dormition Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. We rely on the prayerful support of the Hieromartyr Clement of our efforts to protect Christian values in the modern world of consumption, globalization and secularism."

***PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE
APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!***

DECR Chairman meets with a group of high-ranking representatives of the Catholic Church in Poland

2.06.2011 · DECR Chairman, Inter-Christian relations (edited by LOE)

On June 1, 2011, during his trip to Poland, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, visited the headquarters of the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Poland to meet with some leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in that country. The Polish side included Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio to Poland, Archbishop Henryk Muszynski, Honorary Primate of Poland, Bishop Stanislaw Budzik, general secretary of the Polish Bishops' Conference, and Bishop Tadeusz Pikus, head of the Bishops' Conference council for inter-Christian unity.

Metropolitan Hilarion was accompanied by Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations.

The sides discussed the preparation of a joint statement of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Poland on reconciliation of the nations in their pastoral care.

MARONITE LITURGY

The final prayer of every Holy Qorbono [Divine Liturgy] of the Maronite Church is a bid of peace to the altar. As he is about to kiss it, the priest prays: "I know not whether I shall return to offer another Sacrifice upon you; but remain in peace, O Holy Altar, remain in peace!" Upon the death of a bishop or priest, his casket is borne in procession around the altar and the church, three times each, by his brother priests. Meanwhile, in haunting Syriac melody, they chant a hymn in which the deceased concludes that same conversation he engaged in every day. In it, the altar responds and the Church, also speaks. Holy Altar, you said not, / as I left you and went out: / Would I soon return – or not? "Go, in Peace, O Priest most dear!", / spoke the altar resting here / that you served in awe and fear!

In the sacred Holy Place, / this – the lamp that death displaced – / will be lit anew by Grace / and the Resurrection's rays, / standing at his Right in praise! Holy Altar, go in Peace! / By the Body you were pleased / to support with humble ease / in the Eucharistic Feast, / may I be from sin released, / for I served you without cease! Go in peace, O Bishop, friend! / Sail with Jesus to the end / to protect you still again / from all harm that yet may pend / on your journey to Heaven! Alleluia! Alleluia!

– Lyrical Arrangement:
Irenaios, BSO

What We Learned

A Byzantine priest recounts the transition to a new translation

[Michael N. Kane](#) | MAY 23, 2011 America the National Catholic Weekly



As a Byzantine Catholic priest, I have read with interest the many articles on the new translation of the missal for the Roman liturgy. The liturgy of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Church is of course different than the Roman Church, but we also recently implemented a new translation. A brief history of the process, and the lessons learned, may be of help to our Roman brothers and sisters.

First, some background: Ss. Cyril and Methodius were ninth century monks from Thessalonika who traveled to the Slavic people of Eastern Europe. They translated the Gospel and the Byzantine-Greek liturgy into the language of the local people—what has become known as Church Slavonic. They wanted the people to hear and understand the Gospel and the liturgy. For centuries, Church Slavonic had been used for the liturgy in the Byzantine (Ruthenian) Catholic Church much like Latin had been used in Roman Church. In 1965, the Byzantine-Slavonic liturgy was published in English and promulgated in Byzantine-Ruthenian churches in the United States and Canada. This was consonant with traditional Eastern Christian thinking that the liturgy should be in the vernacular.

The liturgy in U.S. Byzantine-Ruthenian parishes is generally sung in English. Some parishes continue to celebrate the liturgy in Church Slavonic and many retain well-known hymns in Church Slavonic or Hungarian. It's meaningful to some, nostalgic to others. Few are able to understand Church Slavonic unless they have formally studied ancient Slavic languages. **(Continue next page)**

Several years ago, the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church in the United States began looking at its English translation of the liturgy. Byzantine liturgical scholars, diocesan liturgical commissions and hierarchs proposed a revised translation to the appropriate Vatican authorities. The new text was approved. Opinion and input from parish clergy or laity was not formally solicited.

In 2006, Byzantine-Ruthenian priests were informed that the new English translations of the liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great, the two principal liturgies used in the Byzantine Church, were ready to be introduced into parishes. Clergy and laity hoped that the new translation would make evangelization easier and that these liturgies would become even better understood. The revised text has presented significant challenges, such as the re-introduction of obscure Greek words and a slavish adherence to traditional plainchant.

Back to the Greek

Like Roman Catholics, Eastern Christians have a great love for the Mother of God. The Byzantine liturgy references her many times. In the original English liturgy, the priest or deacon called attention to “the most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-Virgin, Mary.” It was clear that we were remembering Mary. It may have been Byzantine-verbose, but it was poetically intelligible. Our liturgists decided that it would be more accurate to call the Mother of God by her Greek title of Theotókos (Θεοτόκος). The title Theotókos was adopted at the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. It means “God-bearer” and communicates theologically all the necessary Christological nuances that refute Arianism, Nestorianism and several other heresies common to the third, fourth and fifth centuries. Many Eastern Catholic Churches and most Eastern Orthodox Churches have always addressed the Mother of God as Theotókos in their liturgy. This had not been the case with Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholics.

Pope’s ‘reform of the reform’ in liturgy to continue

By [John Thavis](#) on Monday, 16 May 2011

<http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/>

Pope Benedict XVI’s easing of restrictions on use of the 1962 Roman Missal, known as the Tridentine rite, is just the first step in a “reform of the reform” in liturgy, the Vatican’s top ecumenist said.

The Pope’s long-term aim is not simply to allow the old and new rites to coexist, but to move toward a “common rite” that is shaped by the mutual enrichment of the two Mass forms,

Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said May 14.

In effect, the Pope is launching a new liturgical reform movement, the cardinal said. Those who resist it, including “rigid” progressives, mistakenly view the Second Vatican Council as a rupture with the church’s liturgical tradition, he said.



Cardinal Koch made the remarks at a Rome conference on “Summorum Pontificum,” Pope Benedict’s 2007 apostolic letter that offered wider latitude for use of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite. The cardinal’s text was published the same day by L’Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper.

Cardinal Koch said Pope Benedict thinks the post-Vatican II liturgical changes have brought “many positive fruits” but also problems, including a focus on purely practical matters and a neglect of the paschal mystery in the Eucharistic celebration. The cardinal said it was legitimate to ask whether liturgical innovators had intentionally gone beyond the council’s stated intentions.

He said this explains why Pope Benedict has introduced a new reform movement, beginning with “Summorum Pontificum.” The aim, he said, is to revisit Vatican II’s teachings in liturgy and strengthen certain elements, including the Christological and sacrificial dimensions of the Mass.

Cardinal Koch said “Summorum Pontificum” is “only the beginning of this new liturgical movement.” “In fact, Pope Benedict knows well that, in the long term, we cannot stop at a coexistence between the ordinary form and the extraordinary form of the Roman rite, but that in the future the church naturally will once again need a common rite,” he said. **(Cont. next page)**

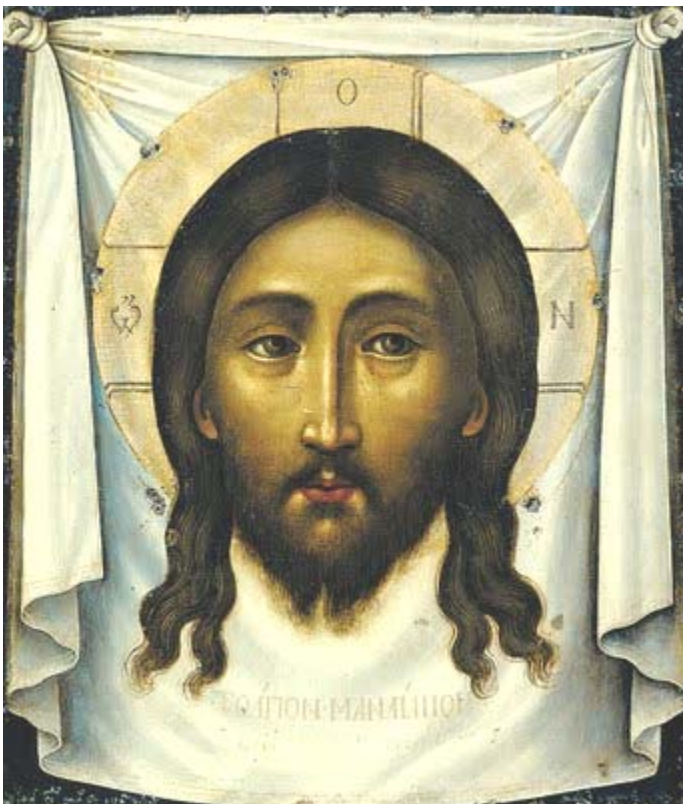
“However, because a new liturgical reform cannot be decided theoretically, but requires a process of growth and purification, the Pope for the moment is underlining above all that the two forms of the Roman rite can and should enrich each other,” he said.

Cardinal Koch said those who oppose this new reform movement and see it as a step back from Vatican II lack a proper understanding of the post-Vatican II liturgical changes. As the Pope has emphasized, Vatican II was not a break or rupture with tradition but part of an organic process of growth, he said.

On the final day of the conference, participants attended a Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Missal at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. Cardinal Walter Brandmuller presided over the liturgy. It was the first time in several decades that the old rite was celebrated at the altar.

Christ's Holy Image of Edessa (and is it really the Shroud of Turin?)

Posted by Taylor Marshall
<http://cantuar.blogspot.com/>



Russian copy of the *Holy Image of Edessa*

Most Catholics know of the Holy Shroud of Turin, the tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, and the Miraculous Veil of Saint Veronica. These three images are each *acheiropoietos* (Greek: *Αχειροποίητος*,

meaning "not-made-by-hands"). Their origins are miraculous, that is, not painted by human hand.



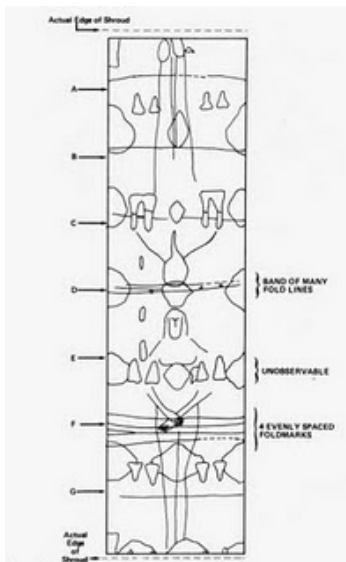
However, the world knows of an alleged fourth *acheiropoietos* image, the Holy Mandylion of Edessa. This image is venerated in the East and not well known in the West except for that it is sometimes incorporated into images of Saint Jude Thaddeus the Apostle. Saint Jude is often depicted as bearing a version of the Holy Mandylion around his neck - as you can see in the painting to the left. Unfortunately, later paintings make it appear that Saint Jude is wearing a join medal around his neck. It should be the Holy Mandylion, as depicted above at the beginning of the post.

According to tradition, King Abgar of Edessa wrote a letter to our Lord Jesus Christ, asking Christ to cure him. King Abgar received an letter in reply from Jesus declining the invitation, but promising a future visit by one of his Apostles (who turns out to be Saint Jude Thaddeus).

Eusebius of Caesarea, writing in the 300s, recounts the story for us. He claims that the original letters are still preserved in the city of Edessa. In this version, Christ sends Saint Jude Thaddeus to heal the king.

However, a later version of the legend from the 6th century (*Acts of Thaddeus*) recounts that the image was a *sidon* (Greek for burial shroud) and that it was folded *tetradiplon* (Greek "tetra" = four and "diplon" = twofold). So then, it was a shroud folded twice and then fourfold. Oddly enough, the Holy Shroud of Turin has the exact same fourfold pattern:

(Continue next page)



If you crop the Shroud of Turin along its folds, you get this image:



This miraculous *sidon* was given to the King of Edessa along with the letter of Christ. The King was then healed. The letters and Holy Mandylion/Shroud were kept as prized treasures.

Saint John Damascene also described the Holy Image of Edessa as a large garment and not as a small napkin.

Where is the Holy Mandylion now?

Evagrius Scholasticus, writing about AD 600, reports that a miraculous image of Christ's face was processed around the city of Edessa before the attack of the Persians in 544. The citizens of Edessa attributed their deliverance to the miraculous power of Christ's image.

At the Seventh Ecumenical Council (AD 787), the bishops defended the veneration of images by teaching that Christ's Himself provided an image for veneration, namely the Holy Image of Edessa!

On August 16, 944, the Holy Image of Edessa was transferred from Edessa to Constantinople. The Eastern Churches consequently keep the feast of the Holy Mandylion on August 16.

The Archdeacon of Constantinople Gregory Referendarius mentioned in his sermon for the occasion that image also bore the "side wound" of Christ. This detail indicates that the image transferred from Edessa to Constantinople in 944 was an image of the *entire body* of Christ. This has led many to conclude that the image in question is the Holy Shroud of Turin.

In confirmation of this suspicion, the Emperor Constantine VII, who personally inspected the Edessa image in 944, described the image as "extremely faint, more like a moist secretion without pigment or the painter's art" (*Narratio de Imagine Edessena*). This detail of a "faint" image" also suggests that it may be the Holy Shroud of Turin.

So then, the Holy Image of Edessa is large, folded over and then fourfold again, and bore a faint image of Christ. Sure sounds like the Shroud of Turin!

One could see how pilgrims would not be aware that the unfolded parts reveal the entire body of Christ. Instead you just see the face floating in the middle of the shroud. Compare this to the Russian copy at the top of the post and you see the similarity.

In AD 1204, during the Sack of Constantinople, the sacred Image of Edessa was lost...or was it?

There is a copy of a Holy Mandylion (the face of Christ) currently kept in the Pope's private chapel at the Vatican.

Is the Holy Mandylion also the Holy Shroud of Turin?

Some believe that the Holy Mandylion *is* Holy Shroud of Turin, and that there was a confusion because the Holy Shroud was folded so that only the face of Christ showed (as depicted above).

Clearly, there is a discrepancy here. The original Edessa story recounts an image of Christ made by Christ prior to His crucifixion. Meanwhile, the Holy Shroud of Turin is a full body image of a crucified and resurrected Christ. So then, there are either two images (pre-crucifixion face-mandylion, and the post-crucifixion body-shroud of Turin), or just one image and thus the ancient origin narrative of Edessa about Saint Jude is false. Or maybe Saint Jude did bring an image of Christ to Edessa (the Shroud of Turin) and the story about Christ wiping His face on fabric is the only incorrect part of the original story. (Is the Veronica story being confused here in this ancient legend? Who knows?)

I, personally, don't know how to untangle the accounts. It seems pretty clear to me that what is being called the "Image of Edessa" in AD 944 is the Shroud of Turin since the Edessa Image here is a full body image. It also appears that there is a strong tradition for this image being transported to Edessa through the hands of Saint Jude Thaddeus.

Steps to Unity, Steps to Common Witness Light of the East Conference exemplifies potential unity

Even optimistic observers sometimes view official Orthodox and Roman Catholic efforts toward reunion as unpromisingly slow, discouragingly fitful, or limited to ceremonial gestures. But some 200 Orthodox and Catholic Southern Californians heard a more encouraging context for those efforts as well as some examples of practical grassroots ecumenism during the informative and inspiring Light of the East Conference: *Steps to Common Witness, Steps toward Unity* hosted by St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA on Feb. 5. Two expert members of the official North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, Fr. Ron Roberson, (Washington, D.C.) Associate Director of Ecumenical Affairs for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald, (Boston), Dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology reviewed the goals, setbacks and progress to date of the official International and North American theological dialogues. Responding to their presentation, two bishops who have become good friends through their ecumenical ventures, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco and Roman Catholic Bishop Tod Brown, Diocese of Orange encouraged attendees to keep up efforts to increase Catholic and Orthodox bonds of love and understanding through prayer and local action. Five local speakers then described their inspiring experiences with specific Catholic-Orthodox activities. The Conference closed with an ecumenical prayer service for church unity led by the two bishops. The experts and the bishops all testified to the significant increase in understanding and cordiality between Catholics and Orthodox since Vatican II, particularly in comparison to the previous centuries of gradually hardened mutual mistrust and alienation. Many serious ecclesiastical differences remain to be resolved, however, most prominently the primacy and authority of the Bishop of Rome. Fr. Roberson explained that because of various damaging events during the centuries of alienation the need for "the purification of the memory of the church" and thus a "Dialogue of Charity" were seen as primary when formal talks were first envisioned. This "Dialogue of Charity" has included hierarchical visits, exchanges of feast day greetings, the return of relics, churches and icons, and joint appearances. Of vital importance historically was the meeting of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem in 1964 and their mutual lifting of excommunications. This Dialogue of Charity, with its attendant background of informal

contacts, prepares for, solidifies and is generally the context in which formal theological ecclesiastical discussions continue. In reviewing the sequence of meetings and their Agreed Statements, Fr. Roberson noted that when talks have broken off due to doctrinal or jurisdictional disputes (e.g., over Uniatism), the "Dialogue of Charity" has sustained the reconciliation process. Media attention to ceremonial gestures often obscures their broader context. Fr. Fitzgerald noted that the alienation, or schism, which the historian Gibbon dated at 1054, though exacerbated by specific historical events, happened gradually over centuries and the resulting isolation and misunderstanding can only be reversed gradually. Healing and reconciliation, he said, will require that all the faithful realize their responsibility to pray for unity, to take the pastoral needs of 'the other' into account, to work together in parishes and dioceses, to value and support theological work toward reconciliation, and most importantly to remember that all efforts must be rooted in the Risen Christ, "must be centered on relationship with Christ. . . rooted in the Gospel and in prayer, love and mutual forgiveness."

Hierarchical Comments

Metropolitan Gerasimos and Bishop Tod Brown took as both example and metaphor their November 2010 joint pilgrimage to Rome and Constantinople with Archbishop George Niederauer of San Francisco and a group of Orthodox and Catholic laypeople. As those former strangers joined in pilgrimage they got to know each other over meals, at each other's shrines and built up bonds of unity and friendship "one person at a time," and, said Metropolitan Gerasimos, it became clear to all that "what we share overshadows our differences." He urged attendees to find ways to bring about "practical awareness of our common faith." Bishop Brown also emphasized that to complement the official theological efforts, "there has to be a strong desire on the part of our local communities. . . the desire of the ordinary faithful."

Ecumenical Witnesses

Lively and inspiring descriptions of personal participation in Orthodox-Catholic activities were presented by: Irma Contreas – the annual 'Celebration of Pentecost' Orange County Ecumenical Prayer Service for Church Unity, with the Copts, Armenians, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics; Fr. Al Baca – the spiritual support and witness of deep ecumenical friendships in a group of Catholic and Orthodox priests who meet monthly; Dorothea Love – Orthodox women of a Greek

Philoptochos chapter serving regularly at a Catholic Worker homeless shelter; Eugene O'Toole - the Orthodox-Catholic Book Study **(Continue next page)**

of eleven years standing in which lay people of St. John Neumann Roman Catholic Church and St. Paul's Greek Orthodox study each others' spiritual writings, assist each others' charity events, and have learned, not always easily at times, to appreciate each others' traditions; Fr. George Morelli – the programs of the Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region featuring a Catholic and an Orthodox speaker on the same topic.

ECUMENISM OF THE SAINTS

Some miles from Rome stands an abbey that has a far greater significance than as a sight for admiring tourists or a treasure for antiquarians. **The Exarchic Greek Abbey of Grottaferrata, with its Basilian monks, is the center of an important revival of studies of Byzantine Catholicism and of the Oriental apostolate.**



The abbey owes its origin to **Saint Nilus**. He was born circa 910 in Rossano, to one of the foremost Greek families of Calabria, a southern province of Italy. This area was in ancient times founded as a Greek colony and was afterwards part of the Byzantine Empire until 1059.

The child was baptized Nicholas, was given a good education, and grew up a fervent young man. The monastic life had some attraction for him, but he married and it was only after afterwards he seriously

turned to God, in the year 940. It was a somber age, disturbed by internal war between Byzantines and Lombards, and suffering frequent Saracen raids on the coasts. After fleeing his own town of Rossano he became a monk and settled at a monastery near Palma on the Tyrrhenian Sea. A Moslem attack caused the community to flee, but Nilus became a hermit in a nearby forest. Later, at Rossano, he ruled a convent and gained fame for his wisdom and prudence. Here, he interceded with the authorities for mutineers condemned to death and with the Jewish community for a young man who had killed a Jew, and once he succeeded in ransoming a number of enslaved Christians. The position of archbishop was offered him but Nilus refused.

When a Byzantine prince asked the Benedictine monks at Monte Cassino to give Nilus and his fellow monks a monastery, the abbot sent them an invitation to come to Monte Cassino. Their Eastern liturgy were a strange sight to the Benedictines, but they provided a monastery at [Valleluce](#), where the community remained for fifteen years and then moved to Serperi, near Gaeta. **Emperor Otto III** offered him a monastery richly endowed, but Nilus asked the emperor only for his promise of repentance and a good life, saying *"You are a good emperor, you are mortal, and must die. You must render an account of your deeds, good or evil."* Otto bent his crowned head for the old man's blessing.

Sometime in 1004 Nilus set out on a visit to a monastery and fell ill near Tusculum. A vision of the [Mother of God](#) showed him that this was to be the permanent home of his Basilian monks. This promise was fulfilled when the **count of Tusculum** offered land on the slopes of Mount Cavo and the community – of about 60 monks - was sent for. But Nilus died before the monastic buildings could be begun. The Grottaferrata Abbey with its Basilian monks today is a shining symbol of the Byzantine Catholics who never separated themselves from the unity of the Church under the Holy See.

PLEA FOR UNITY-- BLESSED JOHN PAUL II

"Let us restore visible unity to the Church or this world will be deprived of a witness that only the disciples of God's Son, who died and rose out of love, can offer it so that it may be prompted to open itself to faith (cf. Jn. 17:2). And what can encourage the people of today to believe in Him, if we continue to tear the seamless garment of the Church, if we do not succeed in receiving the miracle of unity from God by working to remove the obstacles which prevents its full manifestation? Who will forgive us for this lack of witness? I have sought unity with all my strength, and I will continue to do all I can until the end to make it one of my priority concerns of the Churches and of those who govern them in the apostolic ministry."

(Pope John Paul II to the Holy Synod of the Rumanian Orthodox Hierarchy - 5/8/1999)

COPTIC ORTHODOX

Washington D.C., Jul 23, 2011 / 11:35 am ([CNA](#)).- The U.S. Helsinki Commission gathered on July 22 to discuss the increase in violence against Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt, specifically young women...

Patriarch Kirill receives a delegation of a Catholic dioceses in Italy

<http://www.mospat.ru/en/2011/07/14/news44741/>



On July 13, 2011, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia received a delegation of the Catholic diocese of Trento, Italy, led by Archbishop Luigi Bressan, at the Myrrh Preparation Hall of the Patriarchal Palace in the Moscow Kremlin. Participating in the meeting were also Rev. Dimitry Sizonenko, DECR acting secretary for inter-Christian relations, Rev. Andre Decarli, secretary of the Trento diocese, Rev. Corrado Prandi, dean of the churches in Trento, and Mr. Alessandro Martinelli, director of the ecumenical center.

During the talk, the Italian guests greeted Patriarch Kirill on the occasion of the Day of the Twelve Apostles and reminded him that the history of friendly relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and their diocese went back to 1975 when an official delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church came to Trento for the first time to attend Orthodox-Catholic theological talks. Archbishop Luigi Bressan also informed the Patriarch that at the town of Rovereto, a church, which is under restoration at the moment, has been transferred for use to the parish of the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness Kirill thanked the guests for the long-standing and fruitful cooperation, making a special mention of the importance that pastoral care had for Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans who have found themselves far from their homeland.

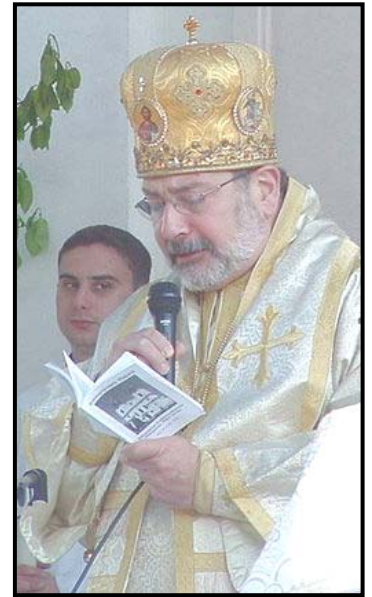
After the talk the sides exchanged tokens of the meeting.

*****PLEASE SEND CHECK FOR DUES TO THE ADDRESS IN THE MASTHEAD. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED FOR OUR CHAPTER TO SURVIVE.**

Absolute Pilgrim

By Bishop John Michael (Botean) from July 2011 issue of UNIREA/CANTON *Happy To Be Me*

When I was a college student and a postulant for the order of Capuchin Franciscans in 1975-76, I can remember being quite put off by one of the student brothers who had said to me. “Why do you want to stay with your Romanian



Greek-Catholic Church? There is no future for the Eastern Churches in the U.S.” I was, at the time, in the process of discerning whether God may be calling me to serve the Church I grew up in, rather than joining a Latin-rite religious community, despite my great love for the Capuchins, and my deep admiration for its founder, St. Francis of Assisi.

Of course I did not agree with Brother Ben then, nor do I now. The difference between then and now is that 35 years of experience have demonstrated some things that I was only guessing at then to be true. What had been an idealistic intuition has become a much-reflected-upon commitment: being Greek-Catholic now is a matter of being at the apex of growth in the Christian community of the 21st century—not numerically, certainly, but spiritually.

You can understand what Bro.Ben may have been thinking, especially at that time, only ten years after the Second Vatican Council. The Catholic Church was just finding its voice in its dialogue with the world and with other Christian churches and churchly communities. It had decisively turned, by means of the Council, from its monologue vis-a`-vis the world and other religions, and was full of enthusiasm to find itself no longer obliged merely to “preach to” and “convert” non-Catholics. In the case of the Latin-rite Church, even the very celebration of the Eucharist had become fluid and more conversational, such that the Mass became, par excellence, the place where the Catholic Church demonstrated that it shared the world it lived in with other Christians, with people of other faiths, and with non-believers. The atmosphere encouraged by the liturgical reform of those days seemed to require Catholics, and priests in particular, to use the time to demonstrate that the Church was **(Continue next page)**

In Italy the Orthodox pray in empty Catholic churches

Nina Achmatova

Moscow Patriarchate: our people growing abroad also with the help of the Catholic Church, who host us in its facilities. Number of Orthodox churches built abroad are now over 400.



Moscow (AsiaNews) - The Catholic parishes in Italy often left empty are hosting religious services of the Russian Orthodox Church, which still does not have sufficient facilities of its own abroad, according to Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, head of the foreign institutions of the Patriarchate of Moscow. "Catholic churches, that have no parishioners - the bishop said in an interview on the website of the Russian Church - are often put at our disposal and the appearance of so many faithful is due to the help of the Catholic Church, which offers us its facilities for worship. "

Mark explains that the Russian Orthodox Church has 400 parishes in 52 countries, but stresses that not all communities have their own church. "For example, in Italy there are 49 parishes, but only some have a church." He adds: "The divine services may be celebrated in different places - he adds - but it is important to build churches".

The Moscow Patriarchate has undertaken a real campaign of expansion at home and abroad. In the Russian capital, in April, the mayor Sergei Sobianin gave the green light to build 200 new churches. The project, recalls the religious information website Portalcredo.ru, is meeting with great resistance from civil society, concerned with defending the secularism in a State in which the Church has become one of its greatest allies. According to data from the Patriarchate, the proportion between the number of churches and Orthodox believers in Moscow is one church for every 35 thousand inhabitants and in some quarters even every 150 thousand or 200 thousand inhabitants. The aim is to give every believer a church within walking distance from home. "Two hundred new churches can not solve the problem of insufficient places of worship (destroyed under Soviet atheism, ed) - Kirill said - but the situation will change, because we will have the opportunity to work among the people."

For the State the support of the Church, within the confines of the Federation, is of great help in the perspective of combating social ills such as alcoholism, ethnic violence and abortion.

Abroad, however, the Patriarchate - according to some analysts - is one of the Kremlin's tools to restore its geopolitical influence in the territories of the former USSR and beyond. According to Mark himself, an Orthodox church is going to be opened in Cyprus and another is scheduled in Madrid, while a large Orthodox spiritual center will be built at the foot of the Eiffel tower in Paris. Meanwhile, a growing number of Orthodox churches will be built in Thailand and also in Great Britain - Mark continues - where the number of parishioners is increasing and new communities opening up.

really "with it," and no longer some kind of other-worldly entity apart from, or on top of, the world. Though I did not have the words to explain my feelings at that time, I simply felt that some things in the Catholic Church may have been heading in a direction they ought not to go. Please don't misunderstand—I have always been an ardent supporter of liturgical reform and of anything that will render the celebration of the Eucharist more accessible to the community at worship.

But there are limits to the process, and those limits are contained in the very nature of the Liturgy itself, beginning with the fact that it is a communication of an unfathomable mystery to an incredulous people. (I say "incredulous" because it seems to stretch the capacity of the human heart to its limits to believe—consciously, pragmatically, and sincerely—that God is Love.)

I now believe and am convinced that the Liturgy is precisely when the Church is not in dialogue with the world. Indeed, it is the time par excellence when she is in dialogue with herself and with her Lord. It is the time-apart-from-time when she is called to be herself above all, namely, the spouse of Him Who is Love. If there is a dialogue with the world, it is God's dialogue through the Church, not the Church's own dialogue. The time for the Church's dialogue with the world is at every other moment outside the Liturgy itself, when she strives to be the mercy God wishes to demonstrate to the world. The Church's dialogue with the world takes place most truly when she shares what she has received in Divine Communion with Christ, in other words, when she shares with her very life the mercy she has received from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Because I think that the liturgical tradition of the Byzantine churches is so rich and so powerfully capable of communicating unfathomable mystery, I have no problem asserting my belief that, far from having no future in the U.S., the Eastern Churches are, in one way or another, the future of the Church in the U.S., a country and a culture so rootless that it has lost nearly all living memory of God.

A tree that is all roots and branches remains sterile. To bear fruit, it must first put forth leaves to receive from the sun the energy it needs to turn soil into food. But before there are leaves, there must be buds. And we are those buds: the smallest, most ephemeral, and most under-noticed structure of the tree. Yet, when you do notice them, their meaning is unmistakable. No matter how long and how hard the winter has been, this tree is still alive, and spring is at hand.