

light of the east



NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2, MARCH-APRIL, 2016

VITO R. CARCHEDI, EDITOR, 35 SCHENLEY AVE. STRUTHERS, OH 44471, PHONE: 330-755-5635
EMAIL: vitossjcytown@gmail.com WEBSITE: www.byzcath.org/stjohnchrysostom/

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS...

The next regular meeting of our chapter will be Tuesday June 14, 7pm at Saint Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 463 Robinson Road, Campbell, OH 44405

The nuns of Christ The Bridegroom Monastery in Burton, Ohio will give a

presentation on "Traditional Eastern Monastic Life Today." "We are a Byzantine Catholic monastic community of women in the Eparchy of Parma dedicated to a vigilant life of prayer and hospitality according to the traditions of the Christian East. Laying down our lives in imitation of the Bridegroom, we joyfully embrace the monastic virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience. We participate in the dynamic love of the Trinity by sharing a life of prayer, work and recreation at our monastery. Meditating on Scripture, especially the Song of Songs, and immersing ourselves in a life of personal and liturgical prayer, we enter into a spousal relationship with Christ the Bridegroom. Looking to the Theotokos as our model, we open



ourselves to the Divine life of the Holy Spirit, bearing forth fruit for the Church and the world. Our monastery provides a spiritual garden and a bridal chamber in which we draw others into this same life-giving relationship with Christ

the Bridegroom."

CHAPTER DUES 2016 PAID

Fr. Rohan, Fr. Rusnak, Fr. Loveless, Nakley, Democko, Fr. Witmer, Br. Dominic, Br. Peter, Joan Binsley, Jenna Binsley, Stanislaw, Sleever, Vito Carchedi, Donna Carchedi, Benedictine Sisters, Fr. Schmidt, Basista, Barkett, Vasilchek, Billcheck, Demiduk. Fr. Ettinger, Fr. Manning, Jacquet, Chorbishop Kail, Msgr. Spinosa, Fr. Hilinski, Beri Berardi, Chris Berardi, Fr. Conoboy, Deckant, Fr. Rudjak, Fr. Mastroberte, Jim Dershaw, Esther Dershaw, Fr. Bonnot (If you haven't paid mail check payable for \$20 (25 family 15 student) to the Society of St. John Chrysostom in care of Vito R.. Carchedi, 35 Schenley Ave. Struthers, OH 44471

Orthodox Christianity

Eastern Christian leaders face ultra-conservative grumbles as they prepare for a summit

Mar 6th 2016, 13:58 BY ERASMUS

[HTTP://WWW.ECONOMIST.COM/](http://www.economist.com/)



AS ORTHODOX Christian leaders prepare for what has been billed as their most important gathering for centuries, they have many problems to wrestle with. One, as widely reported already, is the chronically uneasy relationship between the two best-known of those leaders, the Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow. It is Patriarch Bartholomew, in his capacity as "first among equals" in the Orthodox hierarchy who is organising and hosting the Synod; but many eyes, both wary and admiring, will be on his Russian guest, who along with his huge entourage has just toured South America, and made a foray into Antarctica.

Still, plans for the "Holy and Great Council" are on track and preparations are gathering pace. The meeting is now due to happen between June 16th and June 27th; the venue was switched from Istanbul to the Greek island in deference to the Russian participants, whose government is at loggerheads with Turkey.

But apart from finessing their various differences with each another, most of the 14 leaders, patriarchs and archbishops meeting on Crete will have to look behind their shoulders at

ultra-conservative critics in their respective home patches, who find the whole idea of church diplomacy rather suspicious. Those critics will be looking out for anything that seems at variation with Orthodox tradition, or which appears to be watering down Orthodox Christianity's claim to be the repository of Christian truth at its purest

The Georgian Orthodox Church, one of the oldest and most traditional, has already raised a red flag: it has said that it will not sign the section of the proposed statement which refers to "relations of the Orthodox church with the rest of the world's Christian churches", or anything that implies that in order to achieve "Christian unity" the Orthodox must agree and combine with other bodies that follow Jesus Christ. From this purist point of view, there is only one Christian church worthy of the name and that is represented by the Orthodox. Meanwhile in the church of Cyprus, another ancient bastion of eastern Christianity, one of the island's most charismatic bishops, Athanasios of Limassol, has made an identical objection. "The Orthodox Church of Christ...believes that the unity of those who believe in Christ already exists in the unity of her baptised children...in her correct faith," he has insisted.

In practice, Orthodox diplomacy has found a sort of solution to the problem of defining "church" and "unity" in ways that please most parties. At a meeting in Toronto in 1950, when Orthodox bodies began joining the World Council of Churches, they insisted on a statement laying down that "membership [of the WCC] does not imply that each Church must regard other member churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word." This formula allowed Orthodox churches to be purist and amenable at the same time, by accepting that the word "church" had more than one meaning. (In ordinary language, it has at least half a dozen.)

Some find that formula satisfactory, but ultra-conservatives don't.

As for Patriarch Kirill, he faces a slightly different problem ahead of Crete. His recent meeting with Pope Francis in Havana gained a lot of global attention, but the very fact that he parleyed with a "heretical" bishop of Rome has stirred into action some religious nationalists in Russia (Continue next page)

(including some quite influential ones) as well as some parts of his flock outside the Russian Federation: in Belarus and Moldova, some conservative clerics and monasteries have reacted to the Havana meeting by ceasing their public prayers for Kirill.

If you think that such traditionalists will look more kindly on a meeting in Crete where all the participants are Orthodox, think again. Slavic ultra-conservatives already have a long list of grievances against Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, starting with the fact that he has always enjoyed cordial relations with western churches including the Roman Catholics. They will undoubtedly denounce the Russian Patriarch for tainting himself by over-friendly association with the "liberals" of Constantinople; some already do.

As of now, none of this seems likely to derail the Cretan meeting; a more likely result is some empty chairs and a shorter-than-expected communique. But as Orthodox Christians prepare to undergo their Lenten discipline of fasting and self-examination (which this year starts much later, on March 13th, than the Western one) their world will be even more introverted than usual.

19 February 2016, 16:11

Russian and Catholic Church to exchange shrines for their believers to venerate during this year

Moscow, January 19, Interfax - The Moscow Patriarchate expects development of mutual pilgrimage with the Catholic Church and exchange of shrines.

"Our believers will be spiritually inspired if relics of the saints venerated in our Church, but kept in the Catholic Church, are brought to Russia. The reverse movement is certainly possible, I mean the shrines of the Russian Orthodox Church can be taken to the West

so that believers of the Catholic Church can venerate them," head of the Synodal Department for External Church Relations Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk said in his interview with *Interfax-Religion*.

Answering the question if it may happen in the nearest future, he said: "I think the first exchange of shrines is possible during the year."

According to the interviewee of the agency, the pope and the patriarch at their meeting said that the two Churches should be more open to each other in the field of pilgrimage. "For example, a big flow of Orthodox pilgrims comes to relics of St. Nicholas in Italian Bari. Pilgrims from the Catholic Church also come to Orthodox shrines. We can intensify these two flows, as it is very important for people to meet each other, to have access to shrines of the other Church," he stressed.

Remembering Protopresbyter Thomas J. Hopko

+March 18, 2015+



Memory Eternal!

Preconciliar Orthodox Document on Marriage

FEB12 <http://www.praytellig.com/> Posted by [Nicholas Denysenko](#)

In preparation for the Great and Holy Council to be held on Crete in June, 2016, the Orthodox bishops have issued a document on the [sacrament of marriage](#). In this brief essay, I will begin by identifying the main features and themes of the document and then comment briefly on some of the more notable and contentious comments.

The document's main thrust is to illuminate the core teaching on marriage and its sanctity from the Orthodox perspective. Marriage is a dominical institution reserved for a monogamous union of man and woman (1.1). The document refers to marriage as "the oldest institution of divine law" and Christ-centered, since it is "the image of the unity of Christ and the Church" (1.2). The document's second theme – lament over the decline of family life and a deep desire to protect family's from external threats – shapes the remainder of the document's positions, as demonstrated by the following excerpt (1.5):

The protection of the sacral nature of marriage has always been of crucial importance for the preservation of the family which reflects the communion of those tied by conjugal bonds both in the Church and in the whole society. Therefore, the communion accomplished in the sacrament of marriage is not simply a natural conventional relationship but a creative spiritual force realized in the sacred institution of the family. It is the only force that can ensure the protection and education of children both in the spiritual mission of the Church and in the life of society.

A good example of the document's emphasis on protection is the language prohibiting a fourth marriage and defining a civil marriage as lacking "sacramental nature" (1.9). The Orthodox

practice of permitting second marriage has been [taken up by PrayTell](#), and this is a good opportunity to remind readers that second marriages are permitted with deep reservations. The possibility of receiving permission to marry a second time should not obscure Orthodoxy's preference for the ideal of the eternal bond of marriage between one man and one woman. Readers will not be surprised to learn that the document prohibits same-sex unions and extramarital cohabitation (1.10):

The Church does not deem it possible for her members to contract same-sex unions or enter into any other form of cohabitation except marriage. The Church exerts all possible pastoral efforts so that those of her members who enter into such unions may come to true repentance and love blessed by the Church.

Readers should note that the document avoids pejorative language about LGBT people, which distinguishes this preconciliar text from more vituperative statements one can find in the Orthodox blogosphere. The document's terse statement about pastoral efforts generating repentance is notable, as an explanation of one's capacity to change one's sexual orientation is absent.

The document states the marriage of an Orthodox Christian with a non-Orthodox Christian is forbidden and cannot be celebrated in the Church, though it can be "blessed out of indulgence" if the children of marriage will be baptized and raised Orthodox (2.5a). This particular point may be the most challenging pastoral matter for contemporary Orthodoxy, especially in North and South America and Western Europe, where Orthodox Christians are small minorities within the Christian population. In my lifetime, I have attended dozens of marriages between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians celebrated in the Church without ritual restrictions (except Holy Communion). An attempt to implement this initiative pastorally would raise serious (Continue next page)

questions, especially given that “intermarriage” is easily the norm for most Orthodox. Limiting marriages to communities of Orthodox people is a step away from ecumenism and towards sectarianism.

There are also issues the document does not address, but remain relevant. First, what pastoral initiatives might be created for widowed and divorced clergy? Second, what is the vocation of the single person in the Church? Is marriage expected of single people? Is it morally permissible for a single person to pursue a wholly Christian life without seeking monastic tonsure? As Orthodoxy seeks new ways to dialogue with postmodern society, it will be necessary to expand the discourse beyond the question of marriage and its impediments.

SOCIETY OF ST. PIUS X

Pope extends another olive branch to traditionalist Catholics



Bishop Bernard Fellay, superior of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X, ordains a priest during a 2009 ceremony in Ecône, Switzerland. (CNS photo/Denis Balibouse, Reuters)

By Ines San Martin

<http://www.cruxnow.com/>

Vatican correspondent April 11, 2016

ROME — In what amounts to a category-bending gesture, Pope Francis, often seen as a progressive pontiff indifferent to the concerns of more traditionalist Catholics, reportedly has vowed to extend his recognition of the confessions heard by priests of a breakaway traditionalist group indefinitely.

Last September, Francis surprised many by [extending an olive branch](#) to the breakaway traditionalist group known as the Society of Pius X (SSPX) by decreeing that during his Holy Year of Mercy anyone who confesses their sins to a priest of the society will be considered validly forgiven.

Bishop Bernard Fellay, superior general of the society, said on Sunday as he was celebrating Mass for a group of pilgrims assembled in France that during a recent private conversation, Francis had confided that he wanted to extend this authorization.

According to the French blog *Le Salon Beige*, the first news outlet to report Fellay’s comments, in his homily the bishop also shared that Francis had said he’d never condemn the society, and that in his eyes, they were “part of the Church”.

The Vatican hasn’t released a statement confirming the report, but last week, through a one-sentence statement, they did confirm the [private meeting between Francis and Fellay](#), which took place on April 1 at the pope’s personal residence in the Vatican.

At the time, the information provided by the society, also known as the “Lefebvrists” after their founder, the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, said that the canonical status of the society hadn’t been directly addressed by Fellay and the pope, with both having determined that the exchanges have to continue “without haste.” An audio of Fellay’s homily, in French, was made available on Monday by the [website](#) of the society, which is called DICI. In the 30-minute recording, Fellay also speaks of Francis’ recent apostolic exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia*.

The bishop says the document “makes us cry,” adding that its stance on [access to the Sacraments for divorced](#) ([Continue next page](#))

and civilly remarried couples makes this a “terrible document which harms the Church.” In the April 10 homily, Fellay expressed “happiness” over his encounter with Francis. “You are Catholics, you’re not excommunicated, and we must continue to work towards full communion,” is what the bishop claims the pope told him.

The Society of St. Pius X was founded by Lefebvre in 1970, in the wake of the reforming Second Vatican Council. It’s been in rupture with Rome since 1989, when the late archbishop ordained four new bishops without papal approval.

The four were excommunicated, and remained so until 2009, when, in an attempt to bring the society fully back into the fold of the Church, Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunications.

One of those prelates was British Bishop Richard Williamson, who only days before the emeritus pope’s decision was made public gave an interview to Swedish television in which he appeared to deny the Holocaust.

“I believe that the historical evidence is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler,” Williamson said in the interview.

At the time the excommunication was lifted, Williamson was living in Francis’ backyard, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. When he founded the society, Lefebvre envisioned Argentina as the stronghold of the SSPX in Latin America and actually founded a seminary there, which is still active.

Last year Cardinal Mario Poli, handpicked by Francis as his successor in Buenos Aires, helped the society earn recognition as a juridical person, which meant it was added to the “Register of the Institutes of Consecrated Life” in which the Catholic orders and religious congregations present in Argentina are listed.

In Argentina, Catholic religious congregations have to be listed in the register to be able to work within a government-recognized juridical framework.

Talks between the Vatican and the SSPX have been ongoing since 2000, so far with no success. One of the things presently being discussed is the society’s canonical status. When writing

about the meeting between Francis and Fellay, Matteo Matzuzzi, the Vatican expert of the Italian daily *Il Foglio*, said that the option presently under consideration is assigning the society status as a “personal prelature.”

That’s a relatively new category in Church law, and at the moment it’s only applied to Opus Dei. In a nutshell, personal prelatures include a prelate and clergy who undertake specific pastoral activities in various regions or among different social groups. In addition, they’re not defined by geographical terms, but rather by their mission. Lay people can dedicate themselves to the work of a prelature.

The priests and bishops who belong to a prelature answer to the prelate, who in turn answers directly to the pope.

In 2012 the Vatican had made an offer to the society to be recognized as a prelature, but it was rejected.

The canonical status of the society, however, is not the only issue being discussed.

In a recent interview with French newspaper *La Croix* and translated into English by the blog *Rorate Caeli*, Archbishop Guido Pozzo, an official of the Vatican office heading talks with the Lefebvrists, listed the issues that need to be discussed and clarified before reinstatement is possible.

Among the topics listed there’s the fact that many members of the society reject the documents of Vatican II, as well as inter-Christian dialogue [ecumenism] and dialogue with non-Christian religions.

“But they are not an obstacle for the canonical and legal recognition of the SSPX,” said Pozzo, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei,” which was established under St. John Paul II in 1988 to care for traditionalist Catholics who did not wish to go into a formal break with Rome.

PRAY FOR UNITY! BRING A FRIEND TO OUR NEXT MEETING. PAY YOUR 2016 DUES.

Oriente Lumen XX Conference



Creation: Our Shared Inheritance

Washington, D.C.
June 21-24, 2016

The Oriente Lumen XX Conference will be held on June 21-24, 2016 in Washington, DC on the theme of "Creation: Our Shared Inheritance." Speakers are being invited to discuss the ecumenical dimensions of the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the environmental symposia of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Plenary Speakers

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Oxford, England

Father John Erickson

Orthodox Church in America, Tucson, AZ

Father John Ford

The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

Father Thomas Loya

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church, Homer Glen, IL
"Light of the East" Radio

Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff

Orthodox Church in America, Cambridge, England

Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ (by video)

Professor Emeritus, The Pontifical Oriental Institute, Weston MA

Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ (by video)

Director, The Vatican Observatory, Tucson, AZ

Father Ron Roberson, OP (Moderator)

Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC

Summer Chant Courses
Monday, June 27, through Friday,
July 1, 2016
Duquesne University, Pittsburgh,
PA
Registration page:
<https://shop.musicasacra.com/2016-summer-chant/>

**Help out our persecuted
brothers and sisters in
Christ**

[http://www.iocc.org/aboutio
cc_mission.aspx](http://www.iocc.org/aboutio
cc_mission.aspx)

[http://www.cnewa.org/donat
ions.aspx?ID=2536&sitecod
e=HQ&pageno=1](http://www.cnewa.org/donat
ions.aspx?ID=2536&sitecod
e=HQ&pageno=1)

[http://www.antiochian.org/h
i
s-eminence-metropolitan-
josephs-statement-
regarding-archdiocesan-
syrian-relief-program](http://www.antiochian.org/h
i
s-eminence-metropolitan-
josephs-statement-
regarding-archdiocesan-
syrian-relief-program)

[https://www.kofc.org/uns/en
/christianRelief/index.html](https://www.kofc.org/uns/en
/christianRelief/index.html)

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE INTEREST
OF INQUIRY, OUR NEWSLETTER
SOMETIMES PRESENTS ARTICLES WITH
POINTS OF VIEW WITH WHICH WE DON'T
NECESSARILY AGREE.*****

It's Nothing Personal

The History of Papal Infallibility

[George Wilson](#) February 4, 2016 -
www.commonwealmagazine.org

The notion of papal infallibility enjoys an unhappy distinction. One of the most widely known memes of the last one-hundred-and-fifty years, it is also one of the most utterly misunderstood. The media's reporting of two recent events illustrates the issue.

First, [consider the retirement](#) of Pope Benedict XVI. After Benedict's dramatic announcement, serious and respected commentators raised such questions as "Will a resigned pope continue to be infallible?" and "What will happen if an infallible Benedict is contradicted by an infallible successor?" Questions like that may sell papers, but they show no evidence that the writers made the effort even to Google the term, "papal infallibility." More recently, take the commentary on Pope Francis's Synod on the Family. At the close of the synod's initial sessions, a columnist [for the New York Times](#)—an educated Catholic—blankly depicted the policy of denying Communion to civilly divorced-and-remarried Catholics as an unavoidable implication of infallible papal teaching on the indissolubility of marriage. The bishops who promulgated the doctrine of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1869 would have shuddered at such cartoonish misrepresentations of their highly nuanced creation. How egregious are those misrepresentation? Here is the original text of their decree:

We teach and define that it is a dogma Divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks ex cathedra, that is when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the Divine assistance promised to (Cont. next page)

Blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves and not from the consent of the Church irreformable.

Note that the decree never uses the phrase “papal infallibility.” Its language, while dense, is quite specific and explicit: under certain very limited circumstances, the pope enjoys the protection of a divine gift *that belongs in the first instance to the church as a whole*. Nowhere is it decreed that the pope is infallible; indeed, the Catholic Church has never taught that any pope is infallible. Such a formulation would make the pope a sort of Superman, irrevocably inoculated against error. But the promise of infallibility is best imagined as a transient quality attributed not to the person, but only to one very narrowly circumscribed kind of *action*. And the promise of protection from error is made, moreover, to the whole church; the papacy is never presented as being imbued with such a power in isolation from the rest of the body of Christ. When a pope defines a doctrine, the faithful can trust they are not being led into error *not* because of any inherent quality of his, but rather by a prerogative conferred on the community of the faithful by its divine Redeemer. And so, to return to the sensational questions about Benedict’s retirement, the answer is that a pope can’t lose what he never possessed. Benedict was no less infallible the moment he resigned than he had been the moment before—because he wasn’t infallible then, either.

The catechesis concerning the doctrine of inerrancy has always emphasized the limited scope of the promise; the faithful were assured that it only applied in matters of faith and morals. But there exists a further, frequently overlooked limit: namely, that the promise applies to “defining doctrine”—a limiting phrase that occurs twice in the 1869 decree. This means that papal decisions of a merely practical or pastoral nature—even within the areas of faith and morals—enjoy no special divine protection. A similar distinction must be made concerning any pastoral decisions that may be taken by the

pope as a consequence of last October’s Synod on the Family.

Those synod participants who oppose the leadership of Pope Francis are attempting to cast the event as doctrinal. Francis, by contrast, has stressed that it is a pastoral effort. The basic question is not “What will the church teach the body of the faithful?” but rather “How will the church *respond pastorally* to individual members who experience pain and exclusion as a result of prior pastoral responses by church leaders?” In other words, nothing that transpired in the pastoral discussions at the synod comes close to falling within the realm of papal infallibility. If Francis decides that some customary practices (such as the policy of denying Communion to the divorced-and-remarried) need to be changed, his decision will be no more “infallible” than are the practices he will be revising. They will be the fallible effort not of a teacher of doctrine, but of a caring pastor trying his best to balance justice with compassion. Whether they prove effective or not will be revealed only by the quality of Christian hope and living they engender.

As for the phrase in the decree separating papal doctrinal definitions from “the consent of the church,” it reflects the ecclesial realities of 1870, and must be understood in that context. Ending the decree with the earlier language situating the whole church as the primary object of the promise of inerrancy could have led an incautious reader to conclude that papal definitions lack authority unless and until they are endorsed by the body of the church. As a matter of fact, the Conciliarist movement and its stepchild Gallicanism—the belief that popular civil authority over the Catholic Church parallels that of the pope’s—were grounded in the assumption that ecumenical councils were, to use the shorthand phrase of the day, “over” the pope. The fathers of Vatican I were intent on eliminating any vestige of that mentality. The definition of a pope acting in accord with the prescribed conditions enjoys, by itself, the promise of inerrancy. It needs no further authentication by a council.

The issuing of a conciliar definition does not, of course, end the story. Far from it. The actual effect of such a decree on the life of the church lies not in the language (Cont. next page)

of the formal decree itself, but in what the faith community hears—in the minds and hearts, that is, of those who receive it. To appreciate that subsequent history we need to return to the debate during Vatican I.

AMONG THE BISHOPS at the council three groups emerged. The positions of the first two are easily summarized: for and against. In the end, most of the opposition group abstained from voting, reluctant to go on record against a teaching that clearly was going to be adopted, and the result was an overwhelming vote of 451 to 2 in favor of the definition. But it is the third position, and the rationale presented by the bishops who took it, that we need to reflect on. It points directly to the current muddle.

A sizable group of bishops believed in the essential truth of the teaching but was opposed to its dogmatic proclamation. Their argument was based on pastoral rather than doctrinal considerations. Their question was not “Is the teaching reliable?” but “What will be the *result* if we proclaim it formally?” Was it wise, they wondered, to issue a *definition*? They foresaw a worrisome outcome of the issuance of a solemn declaration—namely, that once you declared that a pope’s teaching enjoyed the protection of infallibility, even under severely restricted conditions, it wouldn’t be long before people began saying that *he* is infallible. At which point all those careful restrictions would evaporate, and anything a pope said—does he endorse Verdi or Puccini, oatmeal or Cheerios?—would be considered infallible.

How prescient they were. The phenomenon they had foreseen came to enjoy its own picturesque designation: “creeping infallibility.” And despite the limits laid out in the decree, the trickle-down process moved swiftly from the pope to the whole system. Once the pope was viewed as infallible, it didn’t take long before the faithful began to see every bishop—even every country pastor—as infallible, too. (An opinion many of those pastors were all too happy to promote.) Contributing to this muddying was the decree’s failure to specify the *mechanism* by which the promise of inerrancy that belongs to the whole church is fulfilled in the action of a pope. Does he benefit from some special revelation not accorded to others in the church? If not, how does the promise actually work?

In the absence of a conciliar answer to that question, we need to examine the theological tradition on the question. This was essentially what the council fathers did; many of the major theologians they relied on had reflected quite consciously on the question. Unfortunately, most bishops, when they intervened on the council floor, simply listed theologians’ names in a sort of florilegium of supporters: “Did X hold the doctrine of papal infallibility? Add him to the list!” Little attention was paid to the *way* such a theologian understood what he was affirming. And of course that makes all the difference. What were supporters really supporting? In fact, the line of theologians cited by the bishops as advocates of papal infallibility *rejected* the notion that the promise of inerrancy was due to any sort of personal revelation or illumination granted to the pope. Which leaves the question: In the absence of such an illumination, how is the promise fulfilled? What happens within a pope to trigger this fulfillment?

To be precise: nothing. The theological tradition posed the question differently. The writers asked, *what steps* must the pope take to arrive at an inerrant conclusion? And their answer was that he must do the same kind of research any person would have to do to determine that a doctrine had in fact always been taught by the church: pray over the Scriptures, the great Fathers, and orthodox theologians of the church. Instead of appealing to some sort of personal revelation, the theological tradition subsumed the promise of infallibility within a broader theology of general divine providence. God guides creation not through extraordinary measures, but by respecting the nature of each creature. By promising inerrancy, God is promising equally that appropriate means will be taken to achieve it. To make this point, the writers often used the analogy of farming. God may promise a farmer a fine harvest; but that doesn’t absolve the farmer of the responsibility to do the work of planting, fertilizing, and watering the crop. In similar fashion, the pope must marshal evidence that a particular doctrine has already existed within the “deposit” of faith. His declaration—after adequate study—puts a seal on a process already at work, under the guidance of the Spirit, across the centuries of church life. (Continue next page)

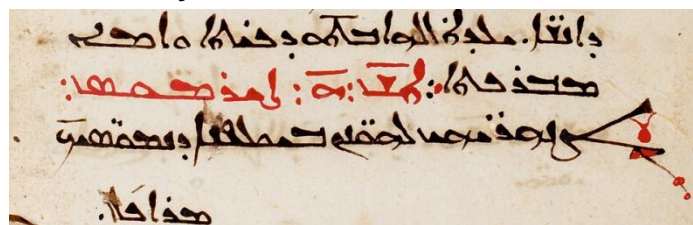
While analysis by a long line of esteemed theologians does not enjoy the exact same binding character as the formal definition itself, it is nonetheless a significant part of the history of the church’s rumination on what it is really teaching. In the cases of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary, the only two doctrines defined since 1870, the official declaration appeals to the evidence of history, announcing that it is “Following upon the constant teaching embodied in Holy Scripture and Tradition.” What we are really promised in a papal definition is the reliable assumption that the pope’s immersion in the long life of the church—his prayer and study—is adequate to the task. Such theologizing has the salutary effect of taking a free-floating phantasm of papal inerrancy and anchoring it in our faith in God’s protection of the church itself—and ultimately in our trust of the Spirit of Jesus. It would be irresponsible to end this reflection without confronting a final question: What allowed the muddling of a very precisely crafted definition? How did the syndrome of creeping infallibility come to work its mischief in secular society and indeed within the consciousness of the faithful?

To blame it all on power-hungry hierarchs would be too easy; nor can we lay responsibility solely at the feet of poor catechesis. That lets you and me off the hook. The truth is that the church is a single co-creating body of teachers and the taught; even the most effective catechesis comes up against the collective psyche of those being instructed. The caricature of papal infallibility clearly has exerted a certain attraction on the minds of the faithful, appealing to an understandable but spiritually unhealthy susceptibility at work in every last one of us. We allow the boundaries of the definition to be extended—and thus perpetuate the travesty—because we lust for a kind of certitude that is unavailable to us as finite creatures. We all want to see as God sees. And yet the one infallibly true thing is that we walk not by sight, but by faith.

About the Author

George Wilson, SJ, is a retired ecclesiologist living in Cincinnati.

About Syriac



BALA26: Syriac Byzantine Rite Euchologion. Manuscript on paper, early 17th Century. Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand, Lebanon, MS. 31. Photo: Hill Museum & Manuscript Library.

What is Syriac?

Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic that originally developed in the kingdom of Edessa (modern Urfa in Turkey), beginning approximately in the first century of the common era. A Semitic language with its own script, Syriac flourished as a literary language in both the Sassanian (Persian) and Roman Empires. Texts in Syriac comprise the third largest surviving corpus of literature (after Greek and Latin) from the period of Late Antiquity (circa fourth through seventh centuries C.E.). As one of several dialects of Aramaic, Syriac also served as a *lingua franca* enabling both commerce and religious missionary activity across political boundaries.

Why study it?

Precisely because the study of Syriac has received little attention until now, sources in Syriac hold immense value for increasing our historical understanding of the Middle East and Asia. Perhaps more than ten thousand manuscripts or manuscript fragments written in Syriac survive today. These manuscripts are firsthand evidence for documenting history over a wide geographic range. The oldest of these manuscripts are over 1500 years old; many are unique sources for Middle Eastern and Asian history covering a diverse range of topics. Historians of religion have perhaps had the most interest in Syriac sources, particularly for their usefulness in documenting key moments in the development of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other religions of Late Antiquity. In addition to religious history, sources in Syriac are valuable for research on a broad range of questions in (Continue next page)

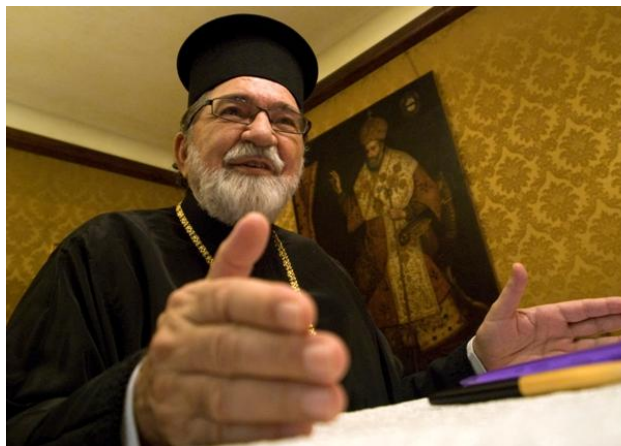
intellectual and cultural history. Beyond cultural or intellectual history, further historical evidence in Syriac includes unique sources for political history over the entire history of the Middle East.

Because of the unexploited riches of these source materials, scholarly interest in Syriac has risen dramatically in the last two decades. Based on the fruits of this recent growth of scholarship, it is certain that further research on the history of Syriac communities, their cultures, and their literature will be a source of significant new discoveries and advancement in the study of the Middle East and central Asia.

Gennadios: "To rediscover its Christian roots, the only hope for the West"

The Orthodox Metropolitan of Italy speaks of ecumenism, secularization and the "Holy and Great Council" pan-Orthodox June

FEBRUARY 2, 2016 FEDERICO CENCI CHURCH & RELIGION <http://it.zenit.org/> (Google trans.)



*Metropolitan Gennadios, Orthodox Archbishop Of Italy And Malta And Exarch For Southern Europe
([Http://Www.Orthodossia.It/](http://www.ortodossia.it/))*

Those just spent two weeks have been intense to Gennadios, Metropolitan Orthodox Archdiocese of Italy and Exarch for southern Europe. He took part in the first week of prayer for Christian unity, participating on January 25 along with Pope Francis at Vespers of the Solemnity of the Conversion of St. Paul. Then he presided, last week, the Orthodox Bishops' Council of Italy and Malta. Days have been important not only for him, but for all Orthodox. Primate of the Orthodox Churches, meeting in the Swiss resort of Chambesey, have indeed confirmed that 2016 will be the year of the "Holy and Great Council" pan-Orthodox, to be held in Crete June 16 to 27. Of this historic event, ecumenical and other topics Gennadios spoke with ZENIT about the interview that follows.

Your Eminence, it is evident the growing commitment of Catholics and Orthodox to walk on the path of unity. What are, in your opinion, the points on which there is more convergence and which, however, aspects of work is still needed?

Your question might seem purely theological argument, instead it is a topic also pastoral character, that touches the hearts of all the faithful. I humbly believe that on all points, and those on which there is more convergence, and on those where it is still necessary to work, the faithful, the People of God, no doubt should have as a compass the life-giving message of the Gospel and the life of the Holy Fathers . Living in this way, he will become "new man", become "man of God", a man of prayer and hope. For in fact be specific, it is not only necessary to talk or discuss these important theological points, but also to change our behavior. We need the crucifixion of our passions, selfishness, fanaticism, hatred and calumny: it's up to us, because "our Lord and God" is not crucified again. We need to build in our hearts the brotherhood, respect, humility, dignity, solidarity and we need to prevail in our lives the love of God, between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics, and among all Christians.

So the divisions not only responsibility only of the Church leaders ...

Exact. It must warn the man in his soul that the division of Christians is a great sin, that touches every faithful and it is (Continue next page)

against the will of the Lord of glory. Unfortunately, today, many divergences on new anthropological and ethical issues hamper the path to unity. However, adds the Pope Francis, "We can not give in to discouragement and resignation, but continue in God, which places the seeds of Christian hearts of love and unity, to deal with renewed enthusiasm the challenges of today's ecumenical" (*Speech addressed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity - November 20, 2014*). God does not abandon the faithful. Do not abandon anyone, and send the Holy Spirit to enlighten and save it. Let the Holy Spirit guide us. And now. The times are, the man suffers, nature is destroyed, but there reigns and Christ the Redeemer of the world; He is the only hope that, through His Spirit, will realize his will: "that all may be one".

During a conference in St. John Lateran, last June, Pope Francis reiterated that the Catholic Church is willing to set a common date for the Orthodox brethren to celebrate Easter. He believes that this wish can become a reality?

It is not easy in terms of pastoral and theological views, for the Orthodox Church. Pope Francis, as well as others, are right when they say that the lack of a common date of the celebration of Easter among Christians, in our day, is a scandal. Many pray and wish the common date. However, what will be the decision of the First Ecumenical Council by the Orthodox Church (at the Council of Nicea, in 325, was set as the date for the celebration of Easter according to the Julian calendar, *editor's note*)? Here is the difficulty and the reason the incompatibility. It is a very important chapter that belongs to all the Local Orthodox Churches. It is a subject on which recently discussed with seriousness and wisdom, and the Orthodox people in those strongly participates issues, so it must be prepared to accept, respect and adapt to the new decisions.

Pope Francis often talk about "blood ecumenism". What is the message that comes to us from these Christians persecuted in hatred of the faith?

We continually pray for the world, for all people. We pray for all Christians, for those who suffer in those places where there is no freedom,

justice and hope, that they may live, that they may be saved from death and destruction. We are all brothers and we are all created by the same God, whether we believe if we are atheists or agnostics. God is omniscient, knows very well everything and knows us, indeed protects us, helps us in the journey of our lives, despite our divisions, our passions and our wickedness. In the early days of Christianity, the martyrs gave a true testimony of Jesus Christ, because they were "persecuted as Christians", "killed because they are Christians." The Christian martyrs with their blood remind us that Jesus Christ exists and martyrdom - the sacrifice - leads to unity with him. In fact, the holy blood of the martyrs, the holy blood of Christians, not only in the first centuries of Christianity proclaims loyalty and love to our Lord Jesus Christ, but even in these terrible and tragic years, when secularization and indifference, money and consumerism lead to evil. The fidelity of the martyrs, their love for God and their unity with Him undoubtedly constitute the most precious message, which we have to live really, certainly not with abstract words, but with the powerful desire to pray together, to know each other, communicate with each other and love each other.

What common answers the various Christian Churches can give the West secularized?

The secularization of the disease is spread everywhere. Sufferers are countless, except in some poorer parts of the world. The only hope of cure for the West is to return to its Christian roots: remember his cultural origins, put the center Jesus Christ, the salvation of humanity. Patriarch Bartholomew recalled the "context of widespread secularization, which particularly characterizes the contemporary Western society, and only apparently contradictory reassessment of the role of religion in the field of anthropology, spiritual and social, said that human right of religious freedom" (Paris). Observing what happens in Europe and in the West, we confess, proclaim that an anthropology without our God and Savior of humanity can not be a natural route and adjust, because the man is regarded as the absolute center of reality. So forget, however, that "it is not man who creates God, but God who created man," as wonderfully(*Continue next page)

Pope Francis. Certainly, those who forget God, forget the man. Whoever forsakes God also abandon man. The individual is not the only center in the world and this exaltation of the ' "I" leads to a relativism that is spreading everywhere. Faced with this tremendous crisis the proclamation of the Word of God, the love of Christ for the world, his blood on the cross for the salvation of man, are the most powerful responses to offer secularized West. The Fathers of the first millennium, completely unique, who fought to build the dogmas of the Church, based on the Word of God and the life of our Savior, presented a constructive dialogue. We proceed on their lead and do not forget that "Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path" (Ps 119: 105). Here is the grandeur and majesty of the responses that the West must understand and embrace to bear fruit for the good of the world.

After centuries, in 2016 it will meet the Holy and Great Pan-Orthodox Council. Reaffirming the communion between the Orthodox Churches could be the basis for a path of unity with the Catholic Church?

The Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church is of utmost importance not only for the Orthodox Church, but for the whole world, to all Christendom, as it will face serious, with love and trust, different topics of human and Christian life on the 'man and humanity, relations with the other Churches and Christian denominations, the date of Easter and more. Many occasionally speak Pan-Orthodox unity, saying it would not exist. I, however, are so full of confidence as to say that it exists and that those who say these things do not have the right to slander: they are false and ignorant, and want to turn the truth and destroy the peace, because they are located away from the Word of God. the Church is a big family, with millions of children in the spirit of Christ, living in many nations and live Orthodoxy, that is, its spirituality and its cultic life. As in any living organism, as in any family, there are problems, anxieties and jealousies. On the other hand the system of government is the Synod, democratic, with freedom and clarity, but more difficult. But the confidence comes from the awareness is always present in the Church of the Holy Spirit, that helps, enlightens, opens doors, builds bridges of love and truth, brotherhood, respect

and peace. The Orthodox Church, with its local churches, pray for unity and ecumenism participates, greatly contributing to the progress of dialogue, to improve relations with the other Churches and, having headed the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Orthodox World Summit, especially with the Roman Catholic Church. The communion between the Local Orthodox Churches exist, and his Pan-Orthodox unity is the spiritual pearl.

Eminence, the unit is therefore a possible target?

Unity is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Walking together is unity, as well as dialogue is unity. Praying together is unity, according to the saying of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "Where two or three are ...". The times they run. The man is temporary. The Church is eternal. Nothing, nothing stops the ecumenical progress. Millions of people pray and wish the unity of Christians. Its fruits are wonderful and the Grace of God will fill the heart of man. The unit, however, is not yet mature, but for this reason there is the dialogue, which has just and true intentions with regard to this matter. Then it is necessary to encourage all Local Orthodox Churches with love and strengthen them with sincerity, help them with solidarity, respect them with prayers and fraternal embrace. Only in this way the dialogue will have a positive outcome. Only then the prayer will be effective and powerful for God's creation of the "Old Testament" "that all may be one". Help the Holy Spirit, will help the light of the Resurrection from which the Light of Orthodoxy, which is salvation and eternal life.

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH



**UNITY OF HEARTS! UNITY OF CHRISTIANS!
UNITY OF THE FEAST OF EASTER!**

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write from my hotel in Constantinople (Istanbul) where my room has a view of Hagia Sophia. I am completing a wonderful 2-week trip to Ukraine, Rome and Constantinople preparing videos for the Orientale Lumen XX Conference in June, and a Seminary Concert Tour in September.

I have met with --

- Bishop Milan Sasik, Eparchy of Mukachevo, Transcarpathia
- Archbishop Sviatoslav, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church
- Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, former head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church
- Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches
- Archbishop Cyril Vasyly, Secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches
- Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity
- Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice.

Tomorrow I have a private one-on-one audience with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, just before he meets Pope Francis on the Greek island of Lesbos to raise the awareness of the plight of immigrants from the Middle East.

In Rome, I also had the opportunity for interviews with the Catholic News Service (see link below of the first article), the Wall Street Journal and Rome Reports.

Please remember the deadline for the early registration discount for the OL XX Conference in June is April 15. Register online at www.olfoundation.net or call 703-691-8862.

Yours in Christ,
Jack Figel

<http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/together-on-the-margins-lesbos-trip-to-be-ecumenical-sign-of-service.cfm>

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Before St. John Paul II arrived in Greece in 2001 there were protests by Orthodox faithful and an all-night prayer vigil by Orthodox monks on Mount Athos, praying that the pope would not come. But things have changed. "You see it, you hear it and it's huge," said Maristella Tsamatropoulou, spokeswoman for Caritas Hellas, the Catholic charity in Greece.

Caritas and Apostoli, the Greek Orthodox charitable agency, have signed a formal cooperation agreement and have been working together for years. First, they sought to respond to the needs created by Greece's major economic crisis and, now, they have joined forces to help the tens of thousands of refugees stuck in the country.

Working together has led to better relations between Orthodox and Catholics generally, Tsamatropoulou said in a telephone interview April 12. "Obviously, we are a small minority and there still are some bishops and monks who are hostile to Catholics, but their numbers are decreasing." Catholics make up less than 2 percent of the Greek population.

"The personality of this pope has helped," the Caritas spokeswoman said. "We hear from believers and nonbelievers, 'You have an extraordinary boss.'"

Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople were scheduled to visit Lesbos, Greece, April 16 to highlight the plight of the refugees and migrants.

Jesuit Father David Nazar, rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, said he believes that for Pope Francis, as well as for Patriarch Bartholomew, the primary motive of the Lesbos meeting is "compassion for the world; it's pastoral."

Although not planned as an "ecumenical meeting," he said, their gesture can "show the unity of believers, show what God wants to happen in the world" and shine light on a situation of human suffering.

For many Christians, the official Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue, while necessary for establishing full unity, is dealing with issues far removed from their everyday lives. Even with different opinions on the best political policies needed to deal with the refugee crisis, the outreach of the pope and patriarch is

something very concrete. For Catholics, a pope's involvement in the refugee issue is much more natural than a patriarch's outreach would be for many Orthodox, Father Nazar said. The Catholic Church has a long history of being socially involved, particularly through its schools, universities and hospitals, going into the world to serve others. Generally speaking, he added, in Eastern churches the focus is on monasteries, where people would come for spiritual solace. The monks did not go out to them. And ecumenically, "any step like this that religious leaders can do together breaks down walls," he said. Patriarch Bartholomew, who studied at the Oriental Institute, "is very courageous" in risking criticism for going to Lesbos with the head of the Roman Catholic Church as well as for making such an obvious social intervention, Father Nazar said. The pope and patriarch meeting "in a pastoral mode" communicates an important message to a specific sector of Orthodoxy -- "those who want to step out pastorally and be more engaged with everything that is happening in the hearts and minds of people in the modern world," he said. The Jesuit said it is interesting that the Lesbos trip is taking place two months before leaders of all the world's Orthodox churches are set to hold their first council meeting in centuries and one of the topics is "what is the mission of Orthodoxy in the world." The "Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church," commonly referred to as the pan-Orthodox council, is scheduled for June 16-27 in Crete. Preparations for the meeting have been going on for decades.



Jack Figel, the U.S.-based chairman of the Orientale Lumen conferences and foundation,

said St. John Paul's visit to Greece and, especially, his public apology for the historical wrongs done to Orthodox Christians, opened doors and "created a much warmer relationship between the Orthodox Church of Greece and the Catholic Church."

Going to Greece with Patriarch Bartholomew gives Pope Francis' visit "a long-term ecumenical dimension," showing how the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church globally can and do work together for the good of society, said Figel, a Ruthenian Catholic long involved in Catholic-Orthodox relations. While some Greek Orthodox likely are "not happy" with the visit, Figel said, "they are not being so vocal." Archbishop Ieronymos II of Athens and the synod of the Orthodox Church of Greece invited Pope Francis, which could be seen as an indication that their faithful are ready for progress in building Christian unity and providing a united Christian witness in service. In addition, Pope Francis' personality, gestures and particularly the way he constantly refers to himself as "bishop of Rome" -- not as pope -- is "pleasant for the Orthodox to hear," he said. While in official theological discussions, the Orthodox have recognized in theory the value of a universal primate for the Christian church, they still have serious reservations about how the traditional ministry of the pope has been exercised.

The joint visit of Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew also may have an impact -- at least in the perception of Orthodox faithful around the world -- on the pan-Orthodox council, Figel said.

The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest of the Orthodox churches, and Pope Francis met its head, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, in Cuba in February. Meeting the ecumenical patriarch now, Figel said, reaffirms Pope Francis' recognition of Patriarch Bartholomew's spiritual leadership among the Orthodox as well as "elevating in the world's mind" the role of the ecumenical patriarch.

"My guess is that Pope Francis is a brilliant tactician and strategist," Figel said. "It may have been an inspiration of the Holy Spirit -- I hope it has been -- but it certainly seems to me as an outsider that there is a connection between Havana, Lesbos and the Great Council."