

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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The next regular chapter meeting will be Tuesday the 28th of September, 7 P.M. at St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church, 764 Fifth St. Struthers, OH 44471, tele: 330-755-9819, web: www.stnickstruthers.org. Our speaker will be The Most Rev Robert W. Edmondson CSP, OSA, MDiv, STM, DMin, ThD, DD, LLD, who heads the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh-Ohio Valley. He will speak on "Who We Are."

The Archdiocese of Pittsburgh-Ohio Valley (more commonly called the Archdiocese of the Ohio Valley) is part of the Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church which belongs to the Augustana Catholic Communion. The ALCC is a small conservative Church with valid holy orders recognized by the Vatican. Presently it is in union negotiation with Roman Catholic authorities in the United States. The Archdiocese covers Western Pennsylvania, Northern West Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. We are governed by ALCC canon law and that of the Augustana Catholic Communion. We follow Roman Catholic canon law to the greatest extent possible. Our liturgy is always Roman Catholic.

By the Grace of God, Fr. Robert W. Edmondson was consecrated a bishop in historical Apostolic Succession on June 26th 2005. On August 23rd, 2005 Bishop Edmondson was elevated to Archbishop. Main Apostolic Lineage - The Roman Catholic Rebiban succession via The Duarte-Costa Lineage Fr. Edmondson was baptized and confirmed Roman Catholic and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church in the late 1960's. He was ordained December 9th 1973 at Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. On October 19th, 2006 he was reincardinated into the Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church, an Augustana Catholic Communion. With nearly 30 years service to the US Army and Army Reserve, he served 16 years as a Chaplain. In addition he has served as a Civil Air Patrol Chaplain since 1975.



SPECIAL CHAPTER MEETING
WITH NATIONAL SSJC
PRESIDENT JACK FIGEL.
VIDEO FROM
CONSTANTINOPLE OF THE
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH AND
ORIENTALE LUMEN EAST.
SUNDAY THE 10TH OF
OCTOBER, 3 P.M. AT THE
NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR
LADY OF LEBANON, 2759
NORTH LIPKEY ROAD, NORTH
JACKSON, OH 44451. TELE: 330-
538-3351. PLEASE BE THERE!!!
JACK WILL BE ATTENDING
THE 26TH ANNUAL ELEANOR
MALBURG EASTERN

CHURCHES SEMINAR ON THE 8TH AND 9TH.
TOPIC IS: ORTHODOX AND CATHOLICS:
TOGETHER AND YET APART.
FEATURED SPEAKERS: FR. RON
ROBERSON & ARCHPRIEST DAVID
PETRAS. TO ATTEND THE EASTERN
CHURCES SEMINAR CALL 216-373-5389.

PLEASE PAY 2010 DUES. SEND \$20 (\$25 FAMILY) TO ADDRESS IN MASTHEAD. THOSE LISTED HAVE PAID: Witmer, Democko, Kilpatrick, Limbert, Elsey, Cariglio, N. Nolfi, Billcheck, Lordi, Venrose, Rossi, Mansour, Beri & Chris Berardi, Gage, Carchedi, Schmidt, Gall, Hopko, Rohan, Nakley, Mattiussi, Mistovich, D. Demiduk, L. Demiduk, Gorup, Tavolario, Stanko, Bonnot, Skurich, EOCA, Benedictine Sisters, Siffrin, Perantinides, Pauline & Costas Sarantopoulos, McCarthy, Vasilchek, DeMas, Hudak, Rudjak, Calabro, R. Nolfi, Scalise.

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH:
UNITY OF HEARTS,
UNITY OF CHRISTIANS,
UNITY OF THE FEAST OF EASTER!

Patriarch Bartholomew: All-Orthodox Council Will Be Held Soon

2 September 2010, (RISU)



[Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople](#) expressed confidence that the long-expected All-Orthodox Council will be held soon. According to him, in the beginning of 2011, the penultimate meeting of the preparatory committee will probably be held in the patriarchal center of the Constantinople Patriarchate in

Geneva. "+ and it will become a great event," stressed Bartholomew I.

"The Faith is alive and Orthodoxy is alive. Orthodoxy will live and the Holy and Great Council, the preparation of which is coming to the end, will be held," stated the Patriarch of Constantinople

Patriarch Bartholomew noted that the All-Orthodox Council is not only long-expected and needed by the world Orthodoxy but also for the relations between Orthodoxy and other Christian Churches and confessions.

The last, 7th [Ecumenical Council](#) was held in Nice in 787, that is 1212 years ago under Empress Irene. It was attended by 367 fathers and is also known as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

Pope and Ecumenical Patriarch promote protecting environment

Vatican City, Aug 30, 2010 / 04:09 pm ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- On Sunday, the Holy Father prayed for God's assistance in protecting the earth for future generations. Both he and Patriarch Bartholomew I have made statements concerning the environment as the "Day for the Protection of the Environment" approaches.

The Orthodox Church-created and Italian Bishops' Conference-promoted event takes place on Sept. 1 under the theme "If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation." The same theme was used by Benedict XVI for the World Day for Peace.

After Sunday's Angelus, Pope Benedict commented on the "day," which he noted is also an important moment for ecumenical relations. "Indeed," he said, "we have the duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and subsequently conserve it.

"May the Lord help us in this task!" prayed the Pope.

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I, referred to by some as the "Green Patriarch," has issued an official statement for the celebration. His predecessor, Patriarch Demetrios, originally established the start of the Orthodox liturgical year, Sept. 1, as a day of prayer for the protection of the environment.

Explaining that in today's world, economic and social stability are very closely attached to environmental conditions, he announced that there is a "dire need in our day for a combination of societal sanctions and political initiatives, such that there is a powerful change in direction, to a path of viable and sustainable environmental development."

Pope Benedict XVI has also taught extensively on the relationship of these elements, dedicating a significant portion of his encyclical "Caritas in veritate" to the theme. In that encyclical, he wrote that "one of the greatest challenges facing the economy is to achieve the most efficient use - not abuse - of natural resources ... " The Pontiff also exhorted the Church to assert its "responsibility towards creation" in the public sphere.

The Italian bishops' conference initiative will be observed with an ecumenical pilgrimage, which will traverse along a route called the "Path of Creation." The path will take pilgrims through a canyon in the Italian Alps.

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH AND TURKEY

Istanbul, Turkey (CNN) -- Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the living embodiment of an ancient tradition. From his historic base in Istanbul, Turkey, the 270th Patriarch of Constantinople claims to be the direct successor of the Apostle Andrew.

Today he's considered "first among equals" in the leadership of the Greek Orthodox church, and is the spiritual leader of 250 million Orthodox Christians around the world. But few of them are in his own home country.

"We are a small Christian minority," Bartholomew laments.

"We have suffered because of Greek-Turkish confrontation, struggle, and a lack of mutual trust and confidence. And that is why we lost most of our faithful."

Turkey's once-flourishing Greek community is fading away. The country is predominantly Muslim and led by a secular government that's had a complicated relationship with the patriarchate.

If Turkish laws, demographics and attitudes aren't changed, Bartholomew could ultimately be the last Patriarch of Constantinople.

"We are not all in despair for the future of our church," Bartholomew said. "It is not easy, but it is not impossible."

The Turkish government can veto any candidate put forward for the position of patriarch. And it requires the patriarch be a Turkish citizen. Bartholomew is, but most of those best qualified to succeed him are not.

So the government has proposed offering Turkish citizenship to Orthodox archbishops overseas. Several have applied; so far, none has been approved.

The Turkish government also refuses to recognize the title Ecumenical Patriarch, or Bartholomew's role as an international religious leader.

Officially, he is viewed as a local bishop who leads a shrinking community of a few thousand Greek Orthodox citizens. Yorgo Stefanopoulos is one of them. "I am a curiosity now in Turkey," he said. "We used to be a minority; now we are a curiosity."

Stefanopoulos is an outspoken leader of Istanbul's Greek community. About 50 years ago, that community numbered more than 100,000. Today, it's probably less than 3,000.

He insists that decline was not accidental. Instead, he blames the Turkish government. Decades ago, he said,

they targeted ethnic Greeks with nationalist policies, like wealth taxes, property seizures, and campaigns to speak only Turkish in the streets.

Then there was the pogrom in 1955: riots directed against Greeks and Greek-owned property. The violence was later found to have been orchestrated by Turkish authorities.

As a result, Greeks left Istanbul in droves. "The Turkish government somehow managed to do a bloodless ethnic cleansing," Stefanopoulos said. Today's Turkish government says those events are from the distant past, and they're now looking ahead to reconciliation.

"Turkey is going through a period of transition," said Egemen Bagis, the country's Minister for European Union Affairs. "Turkey's becoming a much more democratic, much more prosperous, much more transparent society."

Yet, the government has resisted calls to reopen the patriarchate's main school of theology.

For more than a century, the Halki seminary educated future Greek Orthodox bishops, theologians and patriarchs, until Turkey's highest court ordered it closed in 1971. Since then, it's remained empty, worrying former students like theologian Satirios Varnalidis.

"We want to reopen this school so that we can provide new priests to the Ecumenical Patriarchate," Varnalidis said. "Otherwise, in a little while our community just won't have any more priests."

For years, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has talked of reopening the school. Bagis insists the government is still working on it.

Despite these difficulties, Patriarch Bartholomew is heartened by new signs of hope that his community and his church will survive.

"We have many young people from Greece who want to come and be established in Turkey," he says. "This is an opposite current than before."

Haris Rigas is part of that trickle of fresh immigration, which offers perhaps the best hope of reviving Istanbul's Greek community. "The minute I came I was in love with the city and felt that I had to live here," he said. Rigas has been studying the city's indigenous Greek community. He's also a musician in a band that plays Rembetiko, a genre of old, mostly Greek, folk songs. His studies and his music are focused on the preservation and promotion of Greek culture.

"The only way for the community to survive is to attain a degree of visibility," he said. **(Continue next page)**

"They've played an important historical role in this city throughout the centuries, and I think they should still do it."

Earlier this month, the Turkish state and the Ecumenical Patriarchate made a historic step towards reconciliation. Thousands of Orthodox Christians gathered for a prayer service at the ancient cliffside monastery of Sumela, near Turkey's Black Sea Coast, on August 15. Patriarch Bartholomew conducted a divine liturgy, the first Christian service of its kind at Sumela, in more than 80 years.

Even if Istanbul's Greek community makes a comeback, some fear that the patriarchate itself may not last much longer, due to demographics and lingering suspicion from the Turkish government.

And the patriarch remains hopeful and resolute. He rejects conjecture that he could be the last Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

"Absolutely not," Bartholomew insists. "We trust a divine providence, and the guarantee given to us by our Lord himself, that the church can survive.

"This is our faith, this is our conviction, this is our hope, this is our prayer. And all the rest we leave at the hands of God."

Pope's cobbler uses shoes to improve Christian unity



Adriano Stefanelli, Pope Benedict XVI's shoemaker

Vatican City, Aug 25, 2010 / 08:21 pm ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- The Pope's cobbler delivered him two new pairs of shoes in person on Wednesday, one white and one in the traditional red. Making a personal effort to improve Christian unity, the shoemaker also sent a pair to the Russian Orthodox Patriarch in the mail.

Adriano Stefanelli, the craftsman who designs and makes the custom footwear, first began delivering shoes

to the Vatican when he saw John Paul II suffering in 2003.

He described to L'Osservatore Romano (LOR) after this Wednesday's general audience how back in 2003, he saw John Paul II on television and asked himself "instinctively" what he could do personally to alleviate the Pope's pain. Stefanelli's thoughts went to the shoes, and he quickly produced four pairs for him.

He has produced shoes for Pope Benedict XVI in each of the five years of his pontificate, also making him slippers for around the house and some hiking shoes for the summer he spent in northern Italy in 2008.

Each pair of shoes takes about a month for Stefanelli to complete using the traditional methods, he told LOR.

In addition to the Popes, the shoemaker also has a history of supplying Orthodox Patriarchs with footwear.

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II received them, and most recently, Patriarch Kirill I received a black pair of the handmade masterpieces through the mail.

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I also owns some of Stefanelli's shoes.

Commenting about giving the footwear to various Church leaders, Stefanelli told LOR, "It's a little sign to reinforce the desire for the unity of Christians."

Concluding the interview with the Vatican newspaper, he said, "the greatest satisfaction is to see, looking at the photos and images of Benedict XVI, that the shoe is, as they say informally, well 'used and carried,' (and) therefore comfortable."

ART Set in Stone The ancient rhythms of an Orthodox monastery [Jonathan Alpeyrie](#)

I first heard about the Kintsvisi monastery in the summer of 2008, while working as a photographer covering the Russian invasion of Northern Georgia. My Georgian friends, **(Continue next page)**

who took part in the war, told me about a remote monastery that had been active since the 11th century, except during the Communist era. Intrigued, I tried to make time to visit, but was busy covering the short, intense conflict. Still, I wanted to see firsthand this pure form of Orthodox monasticism that has survived almost untouched for 16 centuries, thanks to the monks' resilient sense of tradition.

In December 2009 I had an opportunity to visit. With some good contacts, I hoped to obtain permission to photograph the monks' lives. After a few days, I received permission to visit and was driven to a remote portion of the Kartli region, not far from the frontline with South Ossetia.

The monastery, situated high in the mountains, clings to the side of a steep embankment. From a ravine, a single road winds up the mountains and leads to a large, three-story building. A young monk greeted me, showed me around and explained how the monks were able to raise funds to build these buildings in such a precarious physical position, which are designed to accommodate visitors and worshipers. Soon after, I was introduced to the abbot of the monastery, an austere-looking, 40-year-old man. It took him a while to grant my request to take photographs, since the monks' lives are lived largely in secrecy and with respect for their contemplative Orthodox tradition, which dates to the fourth century. Finally, I was allowed to begin photographing.

Most of the monks were shy, which made my work even more difficult; most would walk away as they saw me approach to take a shot. After I returned regularly for several days, however, they grew accustomed to me and allowed more access. I recorded their routine: eating, meditating, praying or resting inside their cells.

I was amazed by their silence and strict daily order, which begins with prayer at 3 a.m., followed by supplemental rest and food. The monks work throughout the entire day—baking bread, cultivating vegetables and raising fish in a nearby tank—until night prayer.

These ancient activities, and the 12th-century murals, evoked in me a deep feeling of attachment to the riches of Christian civilization. Kintsvisi comforted me through its message that its religious ideals have survived the greatest of adversities, only to thrive and remain a powerful spiritual and cultural force.

View a [slideshow of photographs](#) from the Kintsvisi monastery.

Jonathan Alpeyrie has photographed war-torn regions throughout the world and has contributed to Getty Images. His work has also appeared in Elle, Times Europe, American Photo, Traveler U.K. and Le Figaro.

RUSSIAN CHURCH TO ATTEND CATHOLIC/ORTHODOX DIALOGUE

“First of all, a balanced position concerning the question about the primacy in the church must be accepted.”

17 August 2010



The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) at its session in the Kyiv Cave Monastery on July 26, 2010, decided to send the official delegation of the ROC to the session of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Roman

Catholic Church in Vienna (September 20-27, 2010). Archimandrite Kirill (Hovorun), deputy chair of the Education Committee of the ROC, is part of the delegation. RISU asked him to comment on the issues that will be raised at the meeting and the ROC's position on them.

— **What are the most important issues that will be raised at the meeting?**

— *The “Krytskyj” Document will be reviewed. The ROC, by the way, did not participate in the preparation of the document. We will substantially examine the position of this document, which greatly differs from Orthodox ecclesiology.*

— **What is the position of the ROC regarding these meetings?**

— First of all, a balanced position concerning the question about the primacy in the church must be accepted. We must begin with work on reaching an inter-Orthodox consensus on this question. This task will not be easy for there is not a positive teaching about primacy in the Orthodox. **(Continue next page)**

— *What are the different Orthodox stances on the primacy of the pope?*

— The differences concern not so much the primacy of the pontiff, as much as the primacy within the Orthodox Church. On the one hand, the primate is an integral part of the church tradition. All recognize that primacy should be and function in the Orthodox Church. On the other, it is not understood how it should be. And this is why there are arguments. The Orthodox all have the same attitude toward the Roman primacy: primacy in the Orthodox understanding cannot be the same as the primacy of the Roman one.

— *And what is the position of the Orthodox tradition on the primacy?*

— Let's put it this way, among the Orthodox theologians there are currently two (at least) positions on primacy in the Orthodox tradition. According to the first position, primacy exists nominally: there is only the first in honor, who other than the honorary primacy does not fulfill any other functions in Ecumenical Orthodoxy. All autocephalous churches are absolutely sovereign, in the sense of sovereignty of national states. Thus, any attempts to practically embody the honorary primacy in the field of inter-Orthodox relations are perceived as interventions in the internal affairs of the national church – similar to the interference in the internal affairs of a state. In my opinion, such an attitude toward primacy is inspired by the modern model of a sovereign state that appeared after the French Revolution.

The other position comes from the fact that primacy in the Orthodox tradition was always something real that had specific mechanisms of practical application. Another matter is that in history there was a very wide spectrum of mechanisms to realize primacy. Some of these mechanisms would have not been accepted now, like, for example, the interference of Saint John Chrysostom in the internal affairs of the Asiatic eparchies. Therefore there is no consensus between the supporters of this position regarding what specific power the primate can have in the current situation. They agree, however, that the “Federation” model of national churches, which excludes the possibility of a real primacy, is not traditional or acceptable.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Russian Orthodox Church supports the first position in contradiction to Constantinople, which holds the second

position. The ROC has theologians that are sure that primacy in the church should be filled with real content. By the way, such a position is held by Fr. Valentyin Asmus, who will also take part in the discussions in Vienna. I would also include myself in this group. I want to stress once more that we are talking not about the primacy of the pontiff, but about primacy in the Orthodox environment. All groups of Orthodox theologians agree that primacy in the Orthodox sense substantially differs from the primacy of the pope and how it is formed, in particular, at the First Vatican Council.

— *After the negotiations between the Catholic and Orthodox churches began, a conflict arose between the delegations of the Constantinople and Moscow patriarchates over the question of the participation of the delegation of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Constantinople Patriarchate. Have relations between the two patriarchates improved since Patriarch Bartholomew's recent visit to Moscow, and will they affect the negotiations with the Catholics?*

— Earlier in Chambesey, at the inter-Orthodox council, it was agreed that autonomous churches can only take part in general Orthodox events by sending delegates as part of the delegations of their kyriarchal churches. Thus the question on whether the Estonian Church of the Constantinople Patriarchate can participate was resolved. Now we can talk about the harmonization of relations between the Moscow and Constantinople patriarchates, and I believe this is very important for all of the Ecumenical Orthodoxy. It is also important for inter-Christian dialogues, including the one with the Roman Catholic Church. I hope that we will find an agreement in the Orthodox understanding of primacy in the church.

— *Are other disputable issues, for example, about Filioque going to be reviewed?*

— No, this question will not be examined. The discussion will focus on the text, dedicated to the role of the Roman Pope in the first millennium of Christianity. — *Do you know what the next question to be examined by the commission is? In your opinion, how long can these negotiations last?*

— As far as I understand, after the first millennium we have to go to the second, that is examine the role of the Roman Bishop in that period, when this role caused a division in the Ecumenical church. This question is much more complicated than the one we are discussing now. Thus, I will not predict how long the negotiations will last or if they will be successful. **(Continue next page)**

— *What do you think of the unofficial format of discussion between Catholics and Orthodox where scholars, theologians, and interested people of different denominations discuss questions of primacy, other disputable questions, in order to better understand one another and with the goal of finding a consensus. Is there any benefit in such discussions for the overall church affair?*

— I think very highly of alternative forms of the dialogue, especially those that are not between church functionaries but between scholars. An example of such a dialogue is the group in honor of St. Irenei Lionskyi, which unites Orthodox and Catholic scholars. The last meeting of this international group, by the way, was held last year in the Kyiv Cave Monastery. We discussed the historical context of the First Vatican Council and made substantial headway in understanding this question. I'm not sure this would have been possible from the dialogue at the official level.

— *Thank you for the interview!*

Interviewed by Taras Antoshevskyy Lviv-Kyiv, August 12, 2010

CATHOLIC, RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES EMBRACE

Cardinal and Metropolitan Show Will for Unity at Rimini Meeting

ROME, AUG. 24, 2010 (Zenit.org).- High-ranking representatives of the Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches embraced on Monday in a moment reflecting a will for unity between the two Churches.

A photo of the embrace between Cardinal Peter Erdo and Metropolitan Filaret was printed with the title "Europe's Brothers."

The embrace between the two high-level representatives was a highlight of the 31st Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples, an annual event sponsored by the Catholic Communion and Liberation Movement in Rimini, Italy.

The cardinal and metropolitan made their embrace of

unity as they joined in a debate on the topic "Can An Educated Man, a European of Our Days, Actually Believe in the Divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ?" Cardinal Erdo is the archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Hungary, and the president of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE). Filaret is the metropolitan of Minsk and Sluzk and Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus.

2011 meeting?

The Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches are already united in their common stance on many issues affecting Europe: challenges to life and family and religious freedom among them. Recently, an apostolic nunciature was opened in Moscow, and there is ever greater insistence on a meeting between Benedict XVI and Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

To this end, Metropolitan Filaret said that "the time is ripe for a meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch. It might even be possible in 2011; in principle I see no obstacles,"

"We have been in dialogue with the Catholic Church for some time, at times with moments of exhilaration, at others with a fall in tensions," he added. "Now we are in a moment of stability, but between us, we, the parties, are open to dialogue. I hope this atmosphere will continue."

Cardinal Erdo pointed to Catholic-Orthodox union in dogmatic issues. "Hence, for me," he said, "the circumstance that we are not in full and complete communion is a physical pain."

Debate

The cardinal and metropolitan considered the debate topic on Christ's divinity, a theme drawn from notes of the novel "Demons" by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. It reflects a question among the **(Continue next page)**

European elite of the 1860s, which returns with burning timeliness.

Filaret observed that "Europe is completely changed; European man has changed to the point of being irreconcilable. However, the question is always the same."

He reflected on the doubts plaguing Europeans of our day and suggested a "lively conscience" to overcome them -- a conscience that "does not grow silent, but that sets afire the lies that deceive the heart, and unmasks the sin that besieges the soul."

"We must pray so that the Lord will help our faith because everything is possible for one who believes," the metropolitan concluded.

For his part, Cardinal Erdo pointed to the contradictions in contemporary European intellectuals.

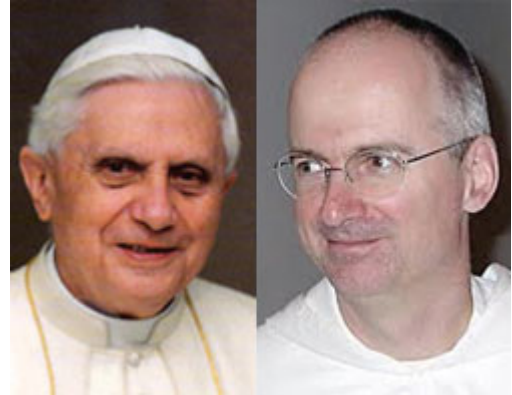
He suggested that a "trite atheism" and the "famous historical and dialectical materialism of traditional Marxism" do not seem attractive. But, pantheism is fashionable, he proposed.

"If the man of today asks himself seriously the question on the existence of God, absolute, transcendent and personal, he must investigate also the possibility of communion between God and man that took place in Jesus Christ," the cardinal said.

"God is only one, and only one is the mediator between God and men: the man Jesus Christ," stressed Cardinal Erdo. Because of this, "we must be messengers and missionaries of the new evangelization of Europe. We must be united with our other Christian brothers, because unity can reinforce our testimony."

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

Benedict XVI's monastic characteristics may be helping ties with Orthodox Church



Pope Benedict XVI and Fr. Charles Morerod.

Rome, Italy, Aug 12, 2010 / 05:02 pm ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- Speaking to the Italian magazine 30 Giorni (30 Days), Dominican Fr. Charles Morerod said that Pope Benedict's way of carrying out his ministry leads to his being liked by the Orthodox Church. It is a question of his being similar in nature to the Orthodox bishops, he observed.

Fr. Charles Morerod is the general secretary of the International Theological Commission and rector of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, known as the Angelicum, as well as a member of the joint commission for theological dialogue with the Orthodox Church for the last five years.

His commentary on the Pope's relations with the Orthodox Church came at end of an interview with 30 Giorni in which he spoke extensively about the positions of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches as they approach the next round of talks about the primacy of Rome in meetings this September.

Asked if he had noticed that there was a "particular sympathy and attention" towards Pope Benedict XVI from the Orthodox Church, Fr. Morerod said it is something he has seen as he visits with representatives from different Orthodox Churches. **(CONTINUE NEXT PAGE)**

"They have a great esteem for him, maybe also because they see in him a monastic type of figure, and all the Orthodox bishops are monks."

Contrary to the common erroneous vision other Christian faiths have of the Pope as "everything" to Catholics, Fr. Morerod said, actually, "if the Pope does not put himself forward, if he repeats only that which he has received, if he remains a little hidden behind his ministry, this on its own helps ecumenism."

"A Pope who, in exercising his ministry, puts 'as little as possible' of his (personal considerations) into it and concentrates on the essential is destined to be liked more by the Orthodox," the Dominican priest commented.

Relations with the Russian Orthodox Church are considered to have reached a high point this year with Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev's visit to the Vatican last May. The metropolitan, Patriarch Kirill's "minister of the exterior," batted around the possibility at the time of a landmark visit between the the Patriarch and the Pope

ORTHODOX, CATHOLICS SHARE PARISH CHURCH

Hailed for Peacemaker Spirit

ZALAU, Romania, JULY 7, 2010 (Zenit.org).- Greek Catholics celebrated on July 4 their first Mass in 62 years in the parish church of Bocsa, with what was described as a "festive and moving" atmosphere.

The Bocsa parish is unique because, thanks to an agreement between Orthodox and Greek-Catholics, it will be shared between the two Churches.

The parish has been hailed as an example of conflict resolution between the two Churches, often at odds over patrimonial issues in former Soviet countries.

The Bocsa parish was confiscated by the Communist authorities in 1948 and given to the Orthodox Church, after the forced abolition of the Greek-Catholic Church. Catholics went underground until legalization was regained. Pope John Paul II re-established their

hierarchy in 1990.

Since then, the Greek-Catholic community has worked legally for the devolution of confiscated churches (some 2,600 properties), whereas the Orthodox requested that the new balance of faithful be kept in mind, given that the Greek-Catholics have decreased significantly in numbers over the last decades.

In the specific case of Bocsa, the Greek-Catholic community asked the Orthodox to return the parish, or to seek an alternative over the use of the church.

The case was taken to court, while the Greek-Catholics continued to propose an agreement. At the beginning of 2010 the court decided in favor of the Greek-Catholics, though they continued to offer an agreement to the Orthodox.

The court proceeded last July 1 with the execution of the sentence, returning the church to the Catholics. A few hours later, the Orthodox accepted the proposal of an agreement, which was subsequently signed before the judicial authorities of Salaj.

Now both communities have committed themselves to share the use of the church with different timetables.

The first Greek-Catholic Mass was celebrated at 9 a.m. last Sunday. It was presided over by Father Valer Parau, dean of the Greek-Catholic Church of Zalau.

Father Valer insisted on forgiveness "to be able to heal wounds," the Romanian Catholic agency Catholica.ro reported.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God," he recalled. "We believe that with this realistic, pragmatic relationship in accord with the spirit of the Lord's Gospel, other cases can be resolved in which Greek Catholics are obliged by the circumstances to pray in inadequate places. There is space for one another in the same church."

Jesuit Calls on Catholic and Orthodox Churches to Restore Communion

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches should own up to their past misdeeds and work to restore communion, according to a Jesuit liturgical expert.

Robert F. Taft, S.J., a former professor of Eastern liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, said that the rift between the churches was sustained primarily by offensive actions—not theological differences.



Robert F. Taft, S.J., advocates 'ecumenical scholarship and theology' to foster closeness between the Catholic and Orthodox churches.
Photo by Angie Chen

"The main problem that we Catholics and Orthodox face in our ecumenical dialogue is not doctrine but behavior," Father Taft said. "The issue is not that Catholics and Orthodox do not know how to pray and believe and live Christianity in the right and true apostolic way. The problem is that we do not know how to act."

Father Taft delivered "Perceptions and Realities in Orthodox-Catholic Relations Today," on June 28 at the Rose Hill campus.

He pointed to Catholic "uniatism"—aggression against another church—as a major problem blocking fruitful dialogue between the religions. He added that although the Orthodox faith has been victimized, it also refuses to admit its own misdeeds.

"Western Christianity's historic defects of imperialism, power and domination led to the crimes for which Pope John Paul II asked pardon in Rome on the first Sunday of Lent in 2000," Father Taft said. "Metropolitan Kallinikos of Piraeus—an official spokesman of the Orthodox Church of Greece—responded ... by declaring there was nothing for which Orthodoxy had to ask

pardon."

Father Taft advocated a system of "ecumenical scholarship and theology"—a new way to study Christian tradition that seeks to reconcile and unite, rather than to confute and dominate. To accomplish this, the Catholic and Orthodox churches must recognize one another as historic apostolic sister churches, he said.

"For Catholics, such an 'ecumenical theology' must mean an end to declarations on the nature of the priesthood that exalt the celibate clerical state of the Latin tradition in a way that is demeaning to the thousands of legitimately married eastern clergy," he said.

"It might also mean Catholic theologians realizing that Latin scholastic theology of the Eucharist is 'a' theology and not 'the' theology."

The point of this new ecumenical theology is not that Catholics and Orthodox never disagree. "What it does mean, is that at the official level, disagreements can be discussed truthfully and courteously, without invective, rudeness and slander," Father Taft said.

His was the first keynote at "Orthodox Constructions of the West," a three-day conference that examined how Orthodox authors created artificial categories of "East" and "West" and then used that distinction as a basis for self-definition.

The event was supported by the Patterson Triennial Conference Endowment for Orthodox/Catholic Relations as well as several units at Fordham University, including the Center for Medieval Studies and Orthodox Christian Studies Program.

Founded in 1841, Fordham is the Jesuit University of New York, offering exceptional education distinguished by the Jesuit tradition to approximately 14,700 students in its four undergraduate colleges and its six graduate and professional schools. It has residential campuses in the Bronx and Manhattan, a campus in Westchester, the Louis Calder Center Biological Field Station in Armonk, N.Y., and the London Centre at Heythrop College in the United Kingdom.

POPE PRAISES ORTHODOX COMMITMENT TO UNITY

Says Dialogue Is at "Crucial Point"

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 28, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI says that dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox is at a "crucial point" and invited heartfelt prayer to the Holy Spirit for progress to continue.

The Pope said this today when he addressed members of a delegation from Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I.

The visit reciprocates (**Continue next page**)

the habitual exchange of delegations for the respective patronal feasts in which the patriarch of Constantinople sends a delegation to Rome on June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, and the Pope sends a delegation to Istanbul, Turkey, on Nov. 30, the feast of St. Andrew. In November 2006, Benedict XVI led the delegation himself, and in June 2008, Bartholomew I led the Orthodox delegation to Rome, which coincided with the opening of the Pauline Jubilee Year.

Today, the Orthodox delegation was led by Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima (Limouris), who is the co-secretary of the International Mixed Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

The Holy Father made reference to Tuesday's feast of Sts. Peter and Paul as testifying to "a time when our communities were living in full communion with one another." Orthodox and Catholics celebrate the feast on the same day.

He added that today's visit, along with the "many meetings that have already taken place in the course of this year" show how the "relations between us are characterized by sentiments of mutual trust, esteem and fraternity."

This, the Pontiff said, "gives grounds for hope that Catholic-Orthodox dialogue will also continue to make significant progress."

Firmly convinced

Benedict XVI highlighted the work of the Orthodox-Catholic mixed commission, saying it "is at a crucial point, having begun last October in Paphos to discuss 'The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church in the First Millennium.'"

"With all our hearts we pray that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the members of the commission will continue along this path during the forthcoming plenary

session in Vienna, and devote to it the time needed for thorough study of this delicate and important issue," he said.

The Pope also praised the confirmation in Bartholomew I's encyclical letter of last February that he and the synod of Constantinople "share our firm conviction of the importance of this dialogue."

Middle East synod

The Bishop of Rome went on to speak of the importance of the theme of unity for the synod on the Middle East, which will be held in Rome in October.

"The difficulties that the Christians of the Middle East are experiencing are in large measure common to all: living as a minority, and yearning for authentic religious freedom and for peace," he said. And he added that he'll be happy to welcome the delegation the Ecumenical Patriarch will send to participate in the synod's work.

Orthodox-Catholic conversations on the contribution of Churches to reconciliation between peoples of Poland and Russia take place in Warsaw



24.06.2010 · [DECR Chairman, Inter-Christian relations](#)

The first session of the working group of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Poland on the elaboration of a document on the contribution of Churches to reconciliation between peoples of Russia and Poland took place in Warsaw on 24 June 2010. The group was set up at a meeting held in the capital of Poland on 26 February 2010.

The Moscow Patriarchate was represented by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, his deputy Hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), and DECR secretary for far abroad countries Rev. Sergiy Zvonarev. Taking part in the session on behalf of the Catholic Church in Poland were the Primate of Poland Archbishop Henryk Muszynski, general secretary of the Polish Episcopal (**Continue next page**)

Conference Bishop Stanislaw Budzik, and president of the Council for Ecumenism Bishop Tadeusz Pikus.

The working group discussed two versions of the document prepared by the Orthodox and Catholic delegations, reached agreement on its structure and main contents, and decided that they will consider the grievances of the past in the spirit of Christ compassion and mutual forgiveness, whereas experts will make thorough research into the authenticity of historical facts and interpret them. The major part of the document will contain definitions of the spheres of cooperation between the two Churches at present and in the future for the good of the peoples of Poland and Russia.

The next session is due to take place in Moscow.

Christianity in Syria: An interview with Archbishop Samir Nassar of Damascus

Posted by ACN News - Interview on 24/6/2010

Damascus: Where St. Paul was struck blind so that we might see.

Interview with Archbishop Samir Nassar – Archbishop of Damascus , Syria

Q) Your Excellency, Damascus, where you are the Archbishop, is a city at the heart of Christianity where St. Paul was struck blind so that he could then later see. Can you tell us a little bit about the situation of Christians today in Damascus?

A) Damascus and Syria is a very old Christian country. We use to have in Syria 33,000 churches. Syria use to be predominantly Christian and we still have many famous Christian places. We have many Christian churches that are still very alive. Christians in Syria are not guests. They are the roots and we use to live side by side with the Muslims since the seventh century.

Q) Christianity however was deeply rooted in Syria before Islam.

A) Yes, before St. Paul because St. Paul was baptized and was able to see again in Damascus which means that Christianity existed before St. Paul.

Q) How many of the 33,000 Churches you mentioned are still active today?

A) We have three kinds of Churches. Firstly, we have the monophysite [1] churches; they are the Syriac Orthodox and the Armenian Orthodox and they have their Patriarch living in Damascus. And then we have the Greek Orthodox, the biggest Church in Syria and then we have many Catholic Churches and of course some Protestant churches. All these Churches are very old except the Protestant which came in the last century; all the other churches are of the Apostles. I belong to the Maronite Church which was founded in the fifth century by St. Maron, a monk who use to live somewhere between Aleppo and Antioch. The first thousand years we were in Syria and after that we moved to the Lebanese mountains and from there we are now everywhere, in Australia, and America. More than half of our population is outside of the Middle East.

Q) Let us go back to Syria. What percentage of the total population of Syria is Christian?

A) Officially we are 8 to 10 %. Some people say between 4 or 5 %. We are a minority. This would roughly be about 1 million people in a population of 21 million.

Q) What other religious traditions, aside from Christianity, are in Syria?

A) We have the Sunni Islam or the Orthodox Islam if you will; they are nearly 80 % and the other kind of Islam called Alawites [2] which is 10 % and the rest are Christians.

Q) How do you describe the Christian - Muslim relationship today in Syria?

A) We have lived together for 1400 years. Sometimes we have had problems but we've lived together. We share and live together and in my bishopric in Damascus; I have a mosque next to my room so I hear their prayer and they can listen to our prayer. We co-exist on a daily basis.

Q) Do you have a personal contact with the Imams and the other representatives? **(Continue next page)**

A) Yes of course, on many occasions. They come to us for Christmas and Easter and we visit them during Ashura or Ramadan or Eid-ul-Fitr. We are really one family.

Q) How is it that the tolerance of Christians in Syria has been preserved while all around like in Iraq and other countries, the Muslim - Christian relationship has broken down?

A) It has been preserved because of the government who looks after the minorities. They [the government] don't let problems arise between Muslims and Christians. The government plays a very big role in this and they have succeeded.

Q) The Church in Syria faces challenges. What are some of the challenges that you are facing, being a minority in a predominantly Muslim environment?

A) We are a very small minority between 5 to 8 % and this is the main challenge; there are very few of us in a predominantly Muslim society. The Muslims are not forcing us to convert but if one Christian family, for example, lives in a building of twelve Muslim families, the children play with their children, go to school with their children and little by little they [the Christian children] learn the Muslim more than their Christian Faith. We are losing our presence because we are few in number and we don't have enough local support to be together, to strengthen our faith, to teach our children and keep our children in our local churches.

Q) A Christian child goes to the local school which is majority Muslim, the majority are Muslims and the Christian children learn the Koran and then Islam. Do they come out Muslim?

A) Little by little they get to know more about the Koran and Mohamed, more than Jesus Christ, and we give them one hour of Catechism and we have to send a bus or a car to bring them and to take them back. Sometimes they come, sometimes they do not, and one hour of catechism is not enough. So we are trying to find out how we can keep our Church alive in this land of the Bible.

Q) The other problem is that in the Islamic faith, if a young lady wants to marry a young Muslim fellow, she must convert?

A) Yes, this is a problem and if a Christian man wants to marry a Muslim girl he too has to convert. This is a very old law and we cannot change it. Nobody obliges this man to marry a Muslim girl, but when 95 % of the girls are Muslim and 5% are Christians there are more choices on the 95 % side, so when he marries we too lose our people this way.

Q) What about the question of conversion? Do you have Muslims coming to the Maronite Catholic Churches interested in converting? How would you respond to this issue of conversion, because in Islam conversion is punishable by death?

A) That is fanaticism, but many Muslims come to our Church; they learn the catechism, they follow our meetings but they can't be baptized. They can be Christian if they want in their hearts but they cannot show it.

Q) So they are secret...hidden Christians?

A) They cannot show it, but we do receive them with open hearts and some of them come to daily mass, to the Bible studies and catechism. They come but they have to stay, outwardly, Muslim.

Q) You then have to be very careful as a Church; when a young person comes to you and wishes to convert, how would you handle this situation?

A) I can receive him but I can not baptize him otherwise I will have a problem with the government.

...But it's a happy Church. We are not many but we are very active and very dynamic little Church and we have a very beautiful ecumenical life. We work together; in Damascus we are nine bishops, five Orthodox and four Catholics and we meet once a month to share our pastoral work, pray together, and organize our pastoral work. This is very good. In the Church when people come to my mass, they are not only Catholics, some are Orthodox and other Christians and my people too go mass at the Orthodox which makes us nearly a family.

(Continue next page)

Q) This begs the question: What would the Middle East be without Syria? In a sense that the Catholic Church in Iraq is rapidly disappearing and so is the case all in of the Middle East except Lebanon, but even in Lebanon the young people are living...?

A) If you look at the Middle East now you have war between Turkey and Kurdistan; you have the war in Iraq; the war between the Palestinians and Israel and you have the war in Lebanon, and Syria is the only peaceful country in the area that is why everybody is coming to Syria because it's the only peaceful place to live, to work, to pray and learn; it's a university town. So without Syria the majority of the people will leave the Middle East. They will leave and emigrate.

Q) Are you hopeful for the Church?

A) I have to be. We are the Church of Hope. We can not be pessimistic. This is our faith and to become a martyr; I can see some Iraqi Christians who are happy despite the persecution. Jesus Christ after all was a refugee, a martyr and He gives me the strength in my faith in this world and this is very beautiful to show how important it is that we have to stay.

This interview was conducted by Mark Riedemann for "Where God Weeps," a weekly television and radio show produced by the Catholic Radio and Television Network in conjunction with the international Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need.

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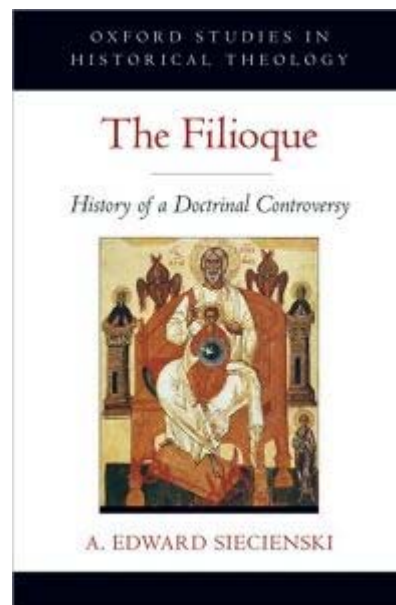
On the Net: For more information:
www.WhereGodWeeps.org

[1] Monophysitism (from the Greek monos meaning 'one, alone' and physis meaning 'nature'), or Monophysiticism, is the Christological position that Christ has only one nature (human-that-evolved-into-divine), as opposed to the Chalcedonian position which holds that Christ maintains two natures, one divine and one human.

[2] The Alawis or Alawites are a prominent minority religious group in Syria who describe themselves as a sect of Shî'ah Islam. Alawis are distinct from the Turkish-based Alevi religious sect, although the terms share similar etymologies, and the sects may share a common origin.

“The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy”

June 17, 2010 by [Irenaeus](#)



A. Edward

Siecienski [Oxford University Press \(April 2010\)](#)

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Description

Among the issues that have divided Eastern and Western Christians throughout the centuries, few have had as long and interesting a history as the question of the filioque. Christians everywhere confess their faith in the ancient words of the Nicene Creed. But rather than serve as a source of unity, the Creed has been one of the chief sources of division, as East and West profess their faith in the Trinitarian God using different language. In the Orthodox East, the faithful profess their belief in “the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father.” In the West, however, they say they believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father “and the Son”—in Latin “filioque.” For over a millennium Christendom’s greatest minds have addressed and debated the question (sometimes in rather polemical terms) in the belief that the theological issues at stake were central to an orthodox understanding of the trinitarian God. To most modern people, this may seem like a trivial matter, and indeed most ordinary Christians would be hard pressed to explain the doctrine behind this phrase. In the history of Christianity, however, these words have played an immense role, and the story behind them deserves to be told. For to tell the story of the **(Continue next page)**

filioque is to tell of the rise and fall of empires, of crusades launched and repelled, of holy men willing to die for the faith, and of worldly men willing to use it for their own political ends. It is, perhaps, one of the most interesting stories in all of Christendom, filled with characters and events that would make even the best dramatists envious.

The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy is the first complete English language history of the filioque written in over a century. Beginning with the biblical texts and ending with recent agreements on the place and meaning of the filioque, this book traces the history of the doctrine and the controversy that has surrounded it. From the Greek and Latin fathers, the ninth-century debates, the Councils of Lyons and Ferrara-Florence, to the twentieth- and twenty-first century-theologians and dialogues that have come closer than ever to solving this thorny problem, Edward Siecienski explores the strange and fascinating history behind one of the greatest ecumenical rifts in Christendom.

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Reviews

“The tragic schism between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Christianity has for more than a millennium centered on the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity, whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father, or from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*), and in particular on the Western addition of the phrase *Filioque* to the creed. It is a long and tangled controversy which is traced in all its twists and turns with admirable clarity by Edward Siecienski in this fine book. Siecienski explores the past and looks to the future. One of his more astonishing revelations is that it

is one of the earliest attempts at an irenic approach to the question-by the seventh-century monk and theologian, St Maximus the Confessor-that holds out the best hopes in the present for a final resolution of this controversy.”

–Andrew Louth, Author of *Greek East and Latin West: the Church AD 681-1071*

“At last we have the history of the *Filioque* controversy from beginning to end, free of confessional bias, engaging with both the theology and the historical context. An admirable presentation of the blend of Trinitarian theology, ecclesiastical rivalry, and historical events that sustained (and sometimes still sustain) the controversy, Siecienski’s book should be required reading for interested historians, theologians, and ecumenists. I have wanted this book for a long time and am thrilled to have it on my desk at last.”

–Tia Kolbaba, Author of *Inventing Latin Heretics: Byzantines and the Filioque in the Ninth Century*

“Siecienski excavates the intricacies of the *Filioque* controversy with magisterial ability in this excellent study. He is equally adept in telling us why the argument arose, and why it still matters. This is a book that is bound to become an authoritative classic on the subject.”

–John A. McGuckin, Author of *The Orthodox Church: Its History and Spiritual Culture*

About the Author Assistant Professor of Religion and Pappas Professor of Byzantine Culture and Religion, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Pope taps Swiss bishop for Christian unity; Cardinal Kasper to retire

By Cindy Wooden [Catholic News Service](#)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Benedict XVI has chosen Swiss Bishop Kurt Koch of Basel to be the new president of Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

Bishop Koch, 60, succeeds German Cardinal Walter Kasper, 77, who has been at the council for 11 years -- first as secretary, then as president since 2001.

The Vatican announced Bishop Koch's appointment July 1. It said the pope had also named him an archbishop. In a letter to Catholics in Basel June 30, Bishop Koch said the pope had asked (**Continue next page**)

him in February if he would take the job, stressing that he wanted someone who had both theological knowledge and practical experience in living and working alongside Protestant communities.

Pope Benedict's words, Bishop Koch said, demonstrate that improved relations with the Orthodox are not the pope's only concern, but that the pope sees the unity of all Christians as the will of Jesus.

Bishop Koch has served as a member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity since 2002 and has been a member of the international Catholic-Orthodox theological commission and a member of the international Catholic-Lutheran dialogue commission. In his farewell letter, the bishop -- a past president of the Swiss bishops' conference and a former professor of dogmatic theology and liturgy -- said that when he became bishop, he promised to personally answer every letter Catholics in Basel sent him.

"In recent years, however, so many new areas of work have been added and the time-consuming internal church conflicts and polarizations have grown, so it increasingly became impossible for me to honor my resolution. For that I apologize," he said.

Born March 15, 1950, in Emmebrucke, he was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Basel in 1982. He studied at Lucerne University and at the University of Munich. After three years' service in a parish in Bern, he began teaching at Lucerne, eventually becoming rector of the theological faculty in 1995.

Following special traditional procedures, he was elected bishop of Basel by the priests of the cathedral chapter in August 1995 and Pope John Paul II confirmed the election four months later.

As president of the Swiss bishops' conference, Bishop Koch was called upon to help smooth tensions with Protestants in 2007 when the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document reaffirming Catholic teaching that the Catholic Church is the one, true church of Christ, even if elements of truth and Christ's saving grace can be found in separated churches and communities.

Bishop Koch said at the time that he understood how the document could be confusing or even hurtful to Protestants and to Catholics who usually refer to the Protestant communities as churches.

The document, he said, was looking at the term in a "strictly theological" way, explaining that if the Catholic Church believes apostolic succession and valid sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, are essential aspects of the church established by Christ, it cannot recognize as "church" those communities who do not have them.

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, issued a statement June 30

saying the ecumenical organization rejoices at Bishop Koch's appointment.

"Bishop Koch is well known for his openness and deep ecumenical commitment. His book 'That All May Be One: Ecumenical Perspectives' is an excellent summary of the present state of ecumenical dialogue and relations," Rev. Tveit said.

Meeting reporters June 25, Cardinal Kasper said that a challenge he faced repeatedly in his 11 years at the pontifical council was clarifying the church's position when the wording of certain documents -- from the Vatican as well as from Orthodox and Protestant churches -- offended the other partner in ecumenical dialogue.

Particularly with the Anglicans and Protestants, he said, since the year 2000 there has been a noticeable loss of "the great enthusiasm" for the possibility of Christian unity that marked the years immediately after the Second Vatican Council.

"Errors, or better, imprudence in formulating the truth have been committed by both sides, including our own," he said.

Cardinal Kasper said his service at the council involved a lot of hard work, but the experience has left a deep mark on his life and his theological thought.

While he said he's ready at 77 to retire and get back to theological writing, he also said he will miss daily involvement in ecumenism, "which I always have considered to be the construction site of the church of the future."

Despite some continuing misunderstandings and new difficulties caused by differences over key moral and ethical issues, the cardinal said he is confident that he is leaving behind "a solid network of human, Christian relationships," which is essential for finding the truth together.

"Passing the torch" to his successor and to a new generation of ecumenists, Cardinal Kasper said he is confident that ecumenism will continue to move forward because in an increasingly secular, increasingly globalized world, Christians have to work together.

Good personal relationships also existed with leaders of the Jewish community involved in dialogues sponsored by the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, he said.

"At first, as a German I was afraid to take on this task, given the history of Germany and the Jews, but I must say our partners never mentioned this. I found not only partners, but many friends," he said.

When difficult moments arose -- including Pope Benedict's rewriting of a Good Friday prayer for the conversion of the Jews and his lifting the excommunication of a traditionalist bishop who denied the extent of the Holocaust -- **(Continue next page)**

the cardinal said the good personal relationships helped ensure the problems were clarified quickly. "For us, this dialogue with the Jewish community is fundamental because the church has its roots in the Jewish world. The relationship is essential for the church," he said.

Vatican cardinal calls on Melkites to be bridge between East and West

Buenos Aires, Argentina, Sep 2, 2010 / 02:06 pm (CNA).- The prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, called on Melkite Catholics in Argentina to be a bridge of communion between the East and the West.

Catholic Melkites, he said, "are very rooted in the Eastern world but they are also 'traditionally' united to the Petrine See."

Cardinal Sandri made his comments during a Mass in the city of Cordoba, at which he was joined by the Greco-Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, His Beatitude Gregory III Laham; the Apostolic Exarch Abdo Arbach of the Melkites of Argentina; and Archbishop Carlos Jose Nunez of Cordoba.

Cardinal Sandri said unity always begins with Christ, but "it demands our personal conversion to unity."

"Conversion to communion is a daily cross that we must bear so that the Church will be the unifying leaven of the whole human race."

Likewise, he called on Melkite Catholics to remember their spiritual roots. "I think of the spiritual effort needed to help the second and third Melkite generation in America maintain their authentic Eastern identity, especially in the area of the liturgy, without failing to adopt a necessary openness at the same time to the new ecclesial and social context.

"For this reason the renewal of family, youth and vocational ministries, even at the heart of the Church, is urgent," he said.

Cardinal Sandri called on the Melkite faithful and all Eastern Catholics to continue defending the family and traditional marriage.

The Sign of the Cross

Make the sign of the cross regularly to acknowledge the presence of our Lord. This signifies Christ's suffering, Crucifixion and Resurrection for our salvation.

This reminds us that we are called to follow in the steps of Christ.

This helps us bear our sorrows and deprivations in His name

This keeps the image of the cross in front of us.

This helps gain strength against our battle with the devil.

This keeps in mind the glory of Christ in the Second Coming which is preceded by the sign of the Cross in the sky.

We make the sign on our bodies by putting our thumb and first two fingers together symbolizing the Holy Trinity. We tuck the last two in the palm of our hand symbolizing the two

natures of Christ: Fully human and fully divine. Then we start with our

forehead moving our

hand down to the waist then to the right shoulder and then to the left. Some will close the prayer by bringing the hand to the heart.

We can say "Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" as we make the sign on our Body or some other short prayer.

This is a very simple way to make a prayer anytime during the day. When ever you are feeling distraught stop and make the sign of the cross. Make it before you have your meal. Make it in Church whenever there is reference to the Holy Trinity, Christ, Theotokos or a saint or loved one. Make it any time and it will bring you back to remembrance of God so the Holy Spirit can help you



09/06/2010

RUSSIA

Russian bishops conference: We can only grow in collaboration with the Orthodox. This is the assertion of Fr. Kovalevsky, Secretary General of the



Russian bishops' conference. In an interview, he gives an overview of common positions with the Orthodox Church and the problems of the Catholic community in Moscow. Papal trip to Moscow and the number of parishes in the capital.

Moscow (AsiaNews) - "The Catholic community in Russia is a minority and must cooperate with the Orthodox only then we'll be able to develop to the utmost. So, let's say we are interested in strong Orthodoxy". These are the words of the Secretary General of the Conference of Russian Catholic Bishops Fr. Igor Kovalevsky, interviewed by the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* newspaper.

In the interview the priest stresses the similarities rather than the differences between the two Churches: "We have almost the same teachings on many issues" and "the only thing that divides us is basically the role of the Pope, the bishop of Rome." The two communities, continues Fr Kovalevsky, have the same values and should protect them facing the challenges of modern secularism. For the priest, Europe today needs a re-evangelization after having lost its Christian roots, "It 'a very serious problem, the greatest challenge from contemporary European culture is its anti-religiosity, a front on which Benedict XVI has always been committed. Catholics - he added - are also having to disprove the stereotype that links Catholicism to contemporary Western culture, which instead tends to keep God out of society.

On the age old question of a possible meeting between Pope and Patriarch of Moscow Kirill, Fr.

Kovalevsky reiterates positions already expressed by the Russian Orthodox Church: "Neither Catholics nor Orthodox want the meeting to be mere protocol. And this is why, it is up to God to decide when this will be".

In the interview another age-old problem also emerges; that of a lack of parishes in Moscow. Today in Russia most Catholics are concentrated in the capital, where - the secretary of the Bishops' Conference points out- two churches and a third under construction "are too few." In Moscow and its environs, there are about 50 thousand faithful, but there are fewer churches than those in St. Petersburg. "It 's our main problem in the capital - he says - until the 1917 Revolution there was the church of St. Ludwig and the parish of Saints Peter and Paul in Moscow. The latter was confiscated and a new place of worship, the church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, was erected, which today is our cathedral. The church of Saints Peter and Paul, unfortunately, was privatized and the courts gave legitimacy to this act". The majority of Catholics are not Russian citizens, but Polish, German or Lithuanian and celebrations are all in Russian. (NA)

First Catechism of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church to Appear Soon

7 September 2010, 11:27 | UGCC |

"Catechism of our own is an indication of the maturity of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church," so commented one of the authors of the first edition of the Catechism of UGCC, Fr. Dr. Myron Bendyk on its publication, which is planned for the nearest future. The work on the text coordinated by the Patriarchal Catechetical Committee lasted for nearly 9 years. The planned number of copies is 50 thousand. The Catechism is to be printed in three languages, Ukrainian, English and Portuguese or Spanish.



PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!

